



Declaration of the International TERUHA Forest Conference (A Proposal)

21 May, 2011.

We held the “International TERUHA Forest Conference” here in Aya, where the largest expanse of Shoyojurin (an evergreen broad-leaved forest) is found. We discussed how this forest is fundamental in helping us humans coexist with nature and how we can properly conserve and utilize its resources.

I. Values and the present state of Shoyojurin

We reconfirmed and further recognized the significance of the following points.

1. Shoyojurin is a precious forest for various lives

The stretch of Shoyojurin in East Asia forms the northern margin of the evergreen broad-leaved forests that spread continuously from the tropic and the subtropic to the warm-temperate regions; it shares a border with the cool-temperate deciduous broad-leaved forests. Shoyojurin is home to various evergreen canopy trees and epiphytic flora as well as fauna, including large mammals such as deer and macaque. It is one of the most valuable forests that show high biodiversity.

2. Shoyojurin serves us with various natural blessings

We humans have received various benefits (ecological services) from Shoyojurin: supplies of food, water, and wood; genetic resources; mild weather; mitigation of floods; and peaceful spaces for refreshment and recreation, among others.

3. Traditionally maintained cultures to benefit from the blessings

The method for utilizing forest resources, i.e., harvesting by swidden cultivation, and the related food-processing techniques constitute the “Shoyojurin culture,” which forms the foundation of traditional East Asian cultures.

4. Remaining scarce forests face jeopardy

Shoyojurin, which once covered almost the entire land of East Asia, has long suffered from the intensive use for timber production and agricultural production; the forest area has largely reduced and has been segmented. On the other hand, factors such as global warming, damages from deer foraging, and the neglect of rural forests are causing other problems such as the deterioration of the biodiversity.

II What we can do for the future

We intend to promote the following plans in order to hand down Shoyojurin to next generation in a good condition.

1. Preservation and restoration of Shoyojurin

We will preserve the few remaining stretches of Shoyojurin and restore the forest that was lost from intensive use. We will also find a method to mitigate the jeopardy caused to the forest biodiversity by deer foraging and by the neglect of rural forests. These activities will accompany the promotion of environmental education and basic researches, and the research accomplishments will be used for social benefits.

2. Constructively hand down traditional culture by the way of the proper use of Shoyojurin

We will use Shoyojurin, particularly those stretches of Shoyojurin that are in rural areas, for purposes such as environmental education and biomass resources. This utilization will balance human life and forest biodiversity, while ensuring that the traditional culture is constructively handed down and global warming is prevented.

3. Promotion of civil participation

Institutions such as non-governmental organizations, industrial firms, nature conservation groups, research centers, municipalities, and the national government will each promote their own activities, but will also coordinate to promote general projects for civil participation.

III Declaration

We will actively conserve Shoyojurin, which is now under jeopardy, constructively hand down traditional knowledge, and widely promote sustainable forest use. We will also make attempts to implement communication networks among persons, institutions, and firms that approve of our objectives.