

Sacred Nature: The Role of Shinto in Japanese Environmentalism



Sveta narava: vpliv šintoizma na japonsko ekološko zavest

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the role of Shinto in Japanese environmentalism. It first presents perceptions of nature in Japan and the historical role of Shinto, then delves into the conservation of sacred shrine forests – *Chinju no mori* – within the Shinto environmentalist discourse. The role of Shinto in politics is demonstrated through the activities of the Association of Shinto Shrines – *Jinja Honcho*. Finally, presenting shrine groves as urban green spaces and community centres shows the potential of Shinto values working together with environmental conservation.

KEYWORDS: Japan, Shinto, environmentalism, nature, *Chinju no mori*, politics

IZVLEČEK

Članek raziskuje vlogo šintoizma v japonskem okoljevarstvu. Najprej predstavi percepcije narave na Japonskem in zgodovinsko vlogo šintoizma, nato pa ohranjanje gozdnih svetišč - *Chinju no mori* znotraj šintoističnega okoljskega diskurza. Vloga šintoizma v politiki je prikazana prek dejavnosti združenja šintoističnih svetišč - *Jinja Honcho*. Na koncu so predstavljena svetišča kot urbane zelene površine in skupnostni prostori, kar kaže na potencial povezovanja šintoističnih vrednot z ohranjanjem okolja.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: Japonska, šintoizem, okoljevarstvo, narava, *Chinju no mori*, politika

INTRODUCTION

My first visit to Japan in November 2023 through the MIRAI exchange programme as part of the “Environment and Green” group was an interesting experience, full of awe. It also made me wonder how religion, namely Shinto, fits into Japanese environmentalism, since during our visits to both government and private institutions this connection was never explicitly mentioned.

The shrines I visited were surrounded by sacred forests and even those in cities had lush vegetation, giving the impression of “urban oases”. The contrast to the grey urban sprawl of Tokyo was immense. Enchanted by the romantic notions of Shinto as a pristine and ancient way of worshipping nature, I was surprised when I discovered diverse cultural, historical, and political components through which a bigger picture started to emerge. In a sense I was disillusioned, yet still fascinated as I believe Shinto, even if intertwined with culture, ideology, and politics, can still provide a useful framework in addressing ecological issues and promoting an environmentalist consciousness, especially in urban areas.

Due to the rigid schedule and nature of the programme, focusing on technological and business practices within environmentalism, I was unable to do much fieldwork. Beyond surface-level impressions of shrines and the natural landscape in Japan, I resorted to studying existing research and literature on the topic and analysing news articles to deepen my understanding and draw conclusions regarding the relationship between Shinto and environmentalism. If given the opportunity to visit Japan in the future, it would surely be interesting to examine these phenomena first-hand through fieldwork and compare them to current findings.

For the purposes of this paper, I will begin by exploring Japanese perceptions of nature and the historical role of Shinto, focusing on sacred shrine forests and their conservation. This evolving environmental discourse plays an important part in contemporary Japanese politics. Examining this connection through the actions of the largest Shinto organisation, *Jinja Honcho*, I wish to show the role of Shinto in Japanese environmentalism. On the opposite end of the spectrum, on a local level, individual shrines and their forests can serve as urban green spaces and community centres. In the conclusion, I point out the potential of local movements to set a foundation for environmental awareness on a greater scale.

JAPANESE VIEW OF NATURE

Religion has played a pivotal role in Japanese perceptions of nature, strongly influenced by the idea of aesthetics. As Kishimoto Hideo, one of the most prominent Japanese religious scholars of the 20th century, put it: “In their achievements religious values and aesthetic values are not two different things. Ultimately, they are one for the Japanese” (Kishimoto 1962, as cited in Boyd 1999: 40). This close relationship between the aesthetic and the religious appreciation of nature can be observed in the worldview which posits divinity in natural features while at the same time not making a strict distinction between the “natural” and “manmade” world (Shaw 2009).



Photo 1: Rock tied with *shimenawa* (Author: Aljaž Mesner, 18 November 2023)

These perceptions of nature and the environment – whether “religious” or not – are not merely abstract ideas, “they influence and are influenced by daily life practices, social relations, and ways of using space” (Rots 2015: 211). This can be seen in the cultural landscape of Japan, “where Shinto beliefs and traditional agricultural practices knit together nature and culture, rendering the divide unseen” (Ishizawa 2018).

However, the concepts and discourses of nature and culture in Japan were historically not at all uniform (Bichler 2023). The concept of culture (*bunka*) in Japan is a recent phenomenon, entering popular consciousness only at the beginning of the 20th century (Morris-Suzuki 1995: 762) in the context of modernisation processes. In the 1930s it shifted from signifying the advancements brought from the West to representing their uniqueness through *Nihon bunka* – Japanese culture – in the formation of national identity (Morris-Suzuki 1995: 765).

The belief that, despite the social and economic ravages of modernity, Japan has somehow managed to retain an authentic ‘harmony’ with nature has been an attractive narrative, suggesting an ability to maintain a degree of cultural independence and authenticity in the face of modernisation and Westernisation. (Hudson et al. 2022)

With these diverse perceptions of nature and culture in mind, we must critically examine the myth of their love of nature, which has been corrupted by modernisation and

westernisation. This is connected to the claim that “Oriental” and Indigenous religions have fostered greater environmental stewardship than the monotheistic beliefs of the Judaeo-Christian tradition (see White 1967). However, “there is no empirical evidence that religious traditions have had any influence on cumulative anthropogenic impacts over the long term” (Hudson et al. 2022).

Environmental harm was already inherent in premodern Japan and, interestingly, aligned with their concept and understanding of nature. Industrialisation and the adoption of Western technology merely “released the potential for large-scale environmental impact” (Bichler 2023). In medieval Japan, ever-greater demands for timber and firewood led to collateral damage to the environment. Because of this, religious practices “sought to reconcile the ambiguity of revering natural phenomena and simultaneously harming them to meet human needs” (Bichler 2023). In the *Edo* period (1603–1868), agricultural expansion, construction, and mine pollution were accompanied by the proto-scientific study of natural phenomena, which only led to the further commodification of nature. In the *Meiji* period (1868–1912), environmental protection became part of preserving the Japanese identity. These efforts, however, were contradicted by the importing of new technologies for resource extraction and industrial processing as urbanisation and growing commercialisation further affected forest clearance and land use (Hudson et al. 2022).

SHINTO RECONSIDERED

This substantial increase in environmental damage in Japan beginning with the industrialisation of the late 19th century coincided with Shinto becoming the official state ideology and being valorised as Japan’s nature-friendly “indigenous religion” (Hudson et al. 2022). The romantic notions of Shinto being a prime example of the unique Japanese harmony with nature, a religion of the forest (see Jinja-Honcho 2023b), still dominate the public sphere, as seen in this excerpt from the official website of the biggest Shinto organisation in Japan:

The agricultural society based on rice cultivation, like that in Japan, cannot exist without unification and harmony among all things on this earth: mountains, rivers, the sun, rain, animals, and plants, not to mention the cooperation among people. (Jinja-Honcho 2023a)

The idea that Shinto is an ancient indigenous religion of Japan practised in its current form since ancient times goes against the consensus of research in religious history, as it has undergone huge changes over time. In his seminal work on the history of Shinto, historian Toshio Kuroda explores its reconceptualization, arguing that it was not an independent tradition until the modern period (Kuroda 1981). Shinto became identified as an indigenous form of religion at the end of the 15th century, constructed out of the corpus of folk religious practices and distinguished from Buddhism with which it previously syncretised. Through this separation, which was formally completed in the Meiji period, it acquired the features of a primitive religion (Kuroda 1981: 19).

[A]lthough traces of earlier myths and traditional ecological knowledge relating to forests may remain—or have been re-imagined—in Japan, concepts like the ‘civilisation of the forest’ are reductionist and ahistorical and can be placed within the trope of the invention of tradition, which has been so pervasive in modern Japan. (Vlastos 1998, as cited in Hudson et al. 2022)

The category of Shinto is still subject to ongoing negotiation, and “conflicting definitions represent different political agendas” (Rots 2015: 211). Most recently it has become a symbol of “important physical, cultural and ethical resources for tackling today’s environmental crisis” (Rots 2017: 19), a discourse which Aike Rots calls the “Shinto environmentalist paradigm” (Rots 2015). Before delving into the contemporary role of Shinto in environmentalism and politics, we should consider its historical influence in transforming the environment into a sacred landscape in which nature and forests were revered. Japanese villages were traditionally surrounded by rice paddies, vegetable fields, and most importantly woodland areas (*satoyama*) used for firewood and grazing (Environment and Ecology 2023). These forests have long been managed by local communities and were not only revered for their natural resources but also sacred places where spirits – *kami* – reside. The independent agency of the *kami* represented by the natural forces and their working resulted in humans trying to appease them by conducting various types of rituals, festivals, and offerings (Suhara 2020).



Photo 2: Soreisha at Kitaguchi Hongu Fuji Sengen Jinja (Author: Aljaž Mesner, 18 November 2023)

An example of this is the *Aenokoto* festival in Noto during which deities of rice fields are worshipped for prosperous growth and abundant harvest. It “integrates the climate, biodiversity, food security and spirituality, while bringing together the community” (Ishizawa 2018: 15), thus setting an example of a symbiotic relationship where cultural and spiritual practices positively impact biodiversity which in return influences them. This relationship between man and his environment is exemplified in the union of forest and shrine, or as writer Luis Diez del Corral eloquently put it, “the most compressed architectural expression of the forest as the home of the sacred” (Diez del Corral 2016).

PRESERVING SACRED SHRINE FORESTS

The forests surrounding shrines, called *Chinju no mori*, were an important part of the landscape and cornerstones of the community. Trees were grown around shrines to protect them, some of which were demarcated as especially sacred, known as *goshinboku* (lit. tree of god) (Kotera 2021). The ever-greater demand for natural resources at the turn of the 20th century meant that *Chinju no mori* were an issue to be addressed regarding land management (Environment and Ecology 2023).

Even though some shrines have made attempts to prevent people from logging and gathering natural resources from their lands (Rots 2015: 2012), not all have succeeded. In 1900 the government implemented *jinja seirei*, the “shrine merger policy”, to cut upkeep costs (Kotera 2021) which threatened the groves and opened them up to logging and development. The trees that grew on former shrine grounds were no longer deemed sacred and could be cut down without repercussions. Altogether around 70,000 shrines and the accompanying forests were destroyed.

Understandably, not everyone was in favour of this policy, however. One of its biggest opponents was Minakata Kumagusu, today regarded as the pioneer of ecology in Japan. Scientist, folklorist, environmentalist, and philosopher, he rejected the rigid academism and unquestioning veneration of Western civilisation that was prevalent in Meiji period Japan. In 1906, he entered politics on a crusade against the policy of shrine consolidation (Nakazawa 2017). He wrote two pamphlets in which he proved that the policy would be harmful in the long run, even economically (Kotera 2021), and gave countless speeches. In 1910, the policy was effectively halted before even more damage could be done. Minakata's efforts saved countless forests, some of which, like Kashima Island, have since been declared natural monuments (Nakazawa 2017).

In the 1970s, the *Chinju no mori* discourse resurged, linking Shinto with environmental issues, and it was only then that the first national study of shrine forests was carried out (Ishii 2010). Still, it wasn't until the end of the century that the concept of Shinto as an ecological tradition finally got widespread recognition. Shinto environmentalist behaviour was considered to be embedded in Japanese culture and *Chinju no mori* started to play a part in biodiversity education and conservation efforts (Kotera 2021). This paradigm shift is by no means unique to Japan since in the 21st century the preservation and cultivation of



Photo 3: *Goshinboku* (Author: Aljaž Mesner, 18 November 2023)

“sacred groves” as sites of both ecological and cultural importance has seen a resurgence in countries such as India (e.g. Parthasarathy 2019).

The recognition of *Chinju no mori* as heritage sites rich in biodiversity provides powerful incentives to prevent them from being used for other purposes, such as construction or resource exploitation. It also provides local religious actors with new funding opportunities, for instance, from international NGOs (Rots 2015: 217). While sacralisation can be employed as a tactic for environmental advocacy and preventing forest destruction, many *Chinju no mori* have still been destroyed where significant economic and political interests were at stake:

Shinto worldviews can be employed not only to argue for the preservation of particular designated areas but also for legitimizing the exploitation of other, ‘non-sacred’ areas, and for turning a blind eye to abstract environmental issues that transcend local particularities. (Rots 2017: 205)

Those that were not under threat of development or were recognised as having exceptional value have been subjected to conservation and heritagisation (Rots 2015). In this process, they acquired significant ideological potential concerning national identity and became politicised. This was possible since sacred sites possess profound symbolic capital, which can be employed for various purposes (Rots 2017:10). Thus Shinto, through the environmentalist paradigm, entered the mainstream as an attempt to revitalise religious tradition and its political role.

Shinto has had a long and complex history of entanglement with politics. The dominant tradition in the relationship between state and religion, up until the Second World War, was that of *saisei itchi*, “the unity of religion and politics”, in which religious organisations were considered to be of service to the state (Yanagawa 1979: 502). In 1889, the Meiji Constitution introduced the right to religious freedom resulting in a split between State Shinto, a nonreligious civil ritual concerning the imperial family, and vernacular practices corresponding to Folk Shinto (Ugoretz 2022).

After 1945, through Allied (GHQ) directives to the Japanese government, the policy of separation between religion and politics (*seikyō bunri*) was implemented (Yanagawa 1979: 502). With the new constitution, the state was required to refrain from involvement in religious activities and supporting religious organisations. Both constitutions, however, contained a guarantee of religious freedoms and “like other religions, Shinto continued to be involved in Japan’s politics” (Ugoretz 2022).

Through this historical development we can follow the process of discursive secularisation “by which beliefs, practices and institutions previously classified as ‘religion’ are redefined and reconfigured as ‘culture’, ‘tradition’, ‘heritage’, ‘science’ or even ‘nature’; in sum, as non-religion” (Rots 2017: 14).

Shinto shrines reorganised themselves as Shrine Shinto, which was not directly controlled by the state. This was done through the establishment of private organisations such as *Jinja Honcho* (Association of Shinto Shrines) which was founded in 1946 in opposition to postwar policies toward Shinto shrines. It is a central actor of the so called “Shinto establishment”, a concept used to describe several actors devoted to the idea that Shinto is a vital part of Japanese identity (Larsson 2017).

Today *Jinja Honcho* administers about 80,000 shrines throughout Japan (Larsson 2017) and is involved in various activities such as public information services, educational activities, and the training of Shinto priests. However, it should be stressed and emphasised that it does not represent all shrines in Japan and that even the individual shrines under its jurisdiction have a degree of autonomy and can hold independent views, even if they are still prone to being influenced by the wider discourse.

I chose to delve into the political connections of *Jinja Honcho* in greater depth because, despite the existence of other Shinto organisations in Japan, it stands out as the largest and most authoritative one. Although issuing statements concerning the environment (e.g. Machado 2004: 127–129), the organisation is on an environmental level dealing mostly with issues such as the preservation of shrines and the cultivation of timber for them:

Shinto shrine groves have been appropriated as ideological resources by influential conservative and corporate actors, who advocate small-scale forest conservation at selected sites without seriously engaging with more profound environmental challenges. (Rots 2017: 10)

The fact that scholars have expressed “scepticism at the commitment of the shrine establishment to environmental sustainability, other than as a rhetorical device” (Rots 2015: 208) should come as no surprise given its political ties. This can be seen in the 2014 inter-faith conference Tradition for the Future: Culture, Faith and Values for a Sustainable Planet, organised by *Jinja Honcho* and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) (Dougill 2014a) which took place at the Ise Grand Shrine.

It is no coincidence that both the 2014 conference and the meeting of G7 leaders in 2016 (Ugoretz 2022) were held at the Ise Shrine. While it is true that “recent years have seen a growing interest not only in religious cosmologies and belief systems as resources for environmental ethics but also in so-called sacred sites as places of ecological importance” (Rots 2017), that is not the only reason for the chosen location. In addition to discussing matters related to religion and environmental sustainability, the participants also collectively paid their respects to the sun goddess *Amaterasu* (Rots 2017: 3). Since both the goddess and the shrine relate to the imperial family and their legitimacy, some expressed concerns about rising nationalism and imperialism (e.g. Dougill 2014b). The Ise Grand Shrine serves as a symbolic centre of the “Shinto right”, a conservative movement that has a large lobbying influence on Japanese politics and strong ties to the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) (Institute for Security and Development Policy 2017) and *Nippon Kaigi*, another right-wing nationalist group (Ugoretz 2022).

The association of *Jinja Honcho* with such organisations is one of the reasons why no one is speaking up about the environmental issues at hand. *Jinja Shinpo*, the magazine of *Jinja Honcho*, clearly illustrates current trends in the organisation, featuring strongly pro-imperial articles and a conservative standpoint (Dougill 2014a), while topics regarding ecology and the environment are not represented. In one issue they even urged priests to take a stand in favour of whaling (Chart 2014). While contemporary environmentalism in the West is usually linked with the left, in Japan that is not the case: “Rather than saving the whales, it’s Japan’s ‘special’ traditions that people here want to save” (Rots 2017).

It should be emphasised, however, that nationalist motives are not *a priori* incompatible with a genuine concern for forest conservation and that the Shinto environmentalist discourse is not at all uniform as there are independent actors, namely priests and local shrines, with their own motivations and priorities. Even if they are under *Jinja Honcho*’s jurisdiction and their approaches are not in line with the organisation’s rhetoric, they are not sanctioned since most shrines operate autonomously (Rots 2015).

SHINTO SHRINES AS URBAN GREEN SPACES AND LOCAL COMMUNITY CENTRES

Because of their autonomy, shrines are usually embedded into their respective localities and often tended to by the local community. Returning to the concept of *Chinju no mori*, I will present the value of shrines as urban green spaces, with the potential to function as centres for ecosystem conservation in Japanese cities. The study of green space distribution sur-

rounding shrines in Utsunomiya City using satellite imagery has shown that “Shinto shrines in urban areas may be useful for the planning of urban green spaces as a spatial base point of green area distribution” (Takahashi 2018).

Environmentalist Hiroaki Ishii emphasises the importance of incorporating ecological principles into urban planning and landscaping through the utilisation of shrine forests, stressing that a holistic approach, one that integrates both biological and cultural components within the landscape, is required (Ishii 2010: 311). Fragmentation and insufficient vegetation management are two major issues for urban shrine forests, whose management depends on the owners. Largely private ownership is also making it harder to integrate them into the urban green space network. To overcome these issues, positive public recognition of their importance is needed “for the benefit of urban residents as well as to maintain ecosystem integrity of the region” (Ishii 2010: 312).

The 2011 tsunami was a catalyst towards greater recognition of *Chinju no mori*. Shrines with dense forests around them were spared from destruction, proving the value of such natural barriers. Shortly after the disaster, the Morino Project was established under the guidance of Prof. Akira Miyawaki (Namiki 2022). One of the main goals of the project was to grow new *Chinju no mori* by planting potential natural vegetation forests that serve as a dampener in the event of another natural disaster and simultaneously creating self-sustaining ecosystems (Morino Project 2023).

Beyond ecology, *Chinju no mori* are now seen as “local community centres that provide social cohesion and spiritual well-being” (Rots 2015). They serve as a meeting place and centre for cultural and commercial activities while also giving a sense of embeddedness to the residents participating in activities centred around their local shrines.

Usually, the focus of these projects is on small-scale issues and symbolic practices: activities include forest maintenance or reconstruction, tree planting and reforestation, cleaning litter, and various educational projects. (Rots 2015: 222)

For this paper, I only chose to present a few examples that I found interesting and considering the number of Shinto shrines in Japan – in some estimates exceeding 174,000 (Lucas 2023) – there are without a doubt many more. For further reading and detailed cases of shrines implementing green initiatives, see Aike Rots’ doctoral dissertation *The Forests of the Gods* (2013) in which he highlights the grassroots approach many of these initiatives have; a predominantly local orientation and dependence upon individuals such as shrine priests, environmental activists, volunteers, scientists, and school children, all of which are united around the shared symbolic and ecological capital of *Chinju no mori* (Rots 2015). In fact, “the most effective examples of Japanese environmental movements are mostly highly localised” (Rots 2017: 41).

CONCLUSION

Although these projects contribute to their local environment and provide much value to their respective communities, a paradigmatic shift and development of the national attitude

is necessary to tackle larger issues at hand, such as climate change. The natural environment throughout Japan is degrading and “other countries are suffering as a result of Japanese eco-politics (or lack thereof)” (Shaw 2009: 23), such as through offshoring.

While academics, religious leaders, forest planters and journalists continue to spread the myth of Japan as a nation of ‘nature lovers’ who can teach the rest of the world how to live in harmony with nature, Japanese state agencies and corporations continue to contribute to widespread construction, (toxic) waste production and large-scale deforestation abroad. (Rots 2017: 204)

The attitude towards ecology and the environment, which proved to work on a local level, would be, however, hard to foster on a wider, national level. Daniel Shaw (2009) believes that national media, combined with integrating values already present in the Shinto tradition, could play a crucial role in this:

It could take the form of a holistic ecological attitude of respect for nature and it would need to be assumed at the individual, communal and national levels in order to be truly effective for the nation. [...] [T]hese values can already be found under the surface of society and if they could be harnessed as a unity and driven forwards together, the result would be one of the easier ways of establishing a quick and acceptable change. (Shaw 2009: 46)

These values are and should be grounded in local knowledge involving heritage holders and local people, who are connected to places with environmental significance in both rural and urban environments. According to Ishizawa, “it is fundamental to look back upon our rural heritage and decelerate the effects of our alienation from what we call nature, to find the way forward with urbanisation” (Ishizawa 2018:17).

Many examples of religious figures and local communities joining forces with activists show that a spiritual connection to the land can go hand in hand with environmental advocacy. This can be seen in the younger generation of Shinto priests, many of whom are interested in environmental activism, and could be potential agents of social change:

Throughout history, shrines have negotiated and resisted central authority in numerous ways. There is no reason why local shrine priests cannot take the initiative in establishing alternative energy communities, preserving local ecosystems and protesting destructive construction projects, if they do so in collaboration with grass-roots citizens’ groups and non-profit organizations, possibly learning from similar initiatives in other countries. (Rots 2017: 205–206)

I have shown that the perceptions of nature among the Japanese are varied and constantly evolving. Their connection to the land through Shinto is best exemplified by the reverence for sacred shrine forests in which nature and religion physically overlap. The evolving discourse on their protection and conservation resulted in the environmentalist paradigm based on Shinto values. As a religion, Shinto has historically been redefined and politicised for nationalistic and ideological purposes, while at the same time inadvertently providing international recognition and empowering many individuals and initiatives to bring positive change to local communities and their environments.

Further research on the possible applications of sacred shrine groves for conserving biodiversity and increasing the quality of life in local communities would be beneficial, perhaps even useful beyond Japan. However, it would be necessary to examine how the framework informed by a specific religion would translate to a non-religious context. As respect and reverence for nature, even if completely secular, are gaining traction worldwide due to the looming environmental crisis, I believe that we can all find our own ways to “worship” nature through our actions and thus contribute towards the environment and our communities.

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POVZETEK

Prispevek proučuje vpliv šintoizma na japonsko ekološko zavest, pri čemer osvetljuje kompleksen preplet religije, politike in odnosa do okolja na Japonskem. Avtor se je, presenečen nad kontrastom med njihovo občutljivostjo do narave in vse večjo urbanizacijo, odločil raziskati zapleten odnos med japonskim pristopom k naravi in ekologiji ter vlogo šintoizma pri oblikovanju teh perspektiv.

Na podlagi proučevanja japonskih percepcij narave, na katere vplivata kultura in religija, ter z razbijanjem mitov o Japonski pred pozahodenjem prispevek prikazuje, kako se je v procesu razvijanja nacionalne identitete šintoizem izoblikoval v avtohtono japonsko religijo čaščenja narave.

Avtor na podlagi poglobljenega pregleda zgodovinske vloge šintoizma pri ohranjanju narave, izhajajoč iz koncepta *Chinju no mori*, s primeri povezav med šintoistično organizacijo *Jinja Honcho* in različnimi političnimi skupinami prikazuje, kako se je konec 20. stoletja razvila okoljevarstvena paradigma ter bila pozneje politizirana za nacionalistične in ideološke namene.

S primeri pokaže, kako lahko šintoizem s svojimi svetiščnimi gaji pomaga oživiti urbane zelene površine v obliki gozdnih pribežališč in skupnostnih središč. Na koncu prouči še potencial takšnih gibanj za širši vpliv v domačem okolju, s poudarkom na vlogi lokalnih skupnosti in pobud s pristopom od spodaj navzgor. Zunaj Japonske bi lahko takšne prakse dopolnjevale okoljevarstvo, tudi v nereligioznem kontekstu.