



Cross the border
connect with

ROOTS

COMPANY CATALOG

A group of people are working on a wooden structure, possibly a treehouse or a platform, built within a dense forest of tall, thin trees. The structure is made of light-colored wood and has a complex, multi-level design. Several people are visible: one person is standing on a high platform, another is climbing a ladder, and others are on the ground or lower levels, some holding tools or materials. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. The text "Connecting satoyama" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font, underlined with a yellow line. Below it, the text "wisdom with the world" is also in white, bold, sans-serif font, underlined with a yellow line.

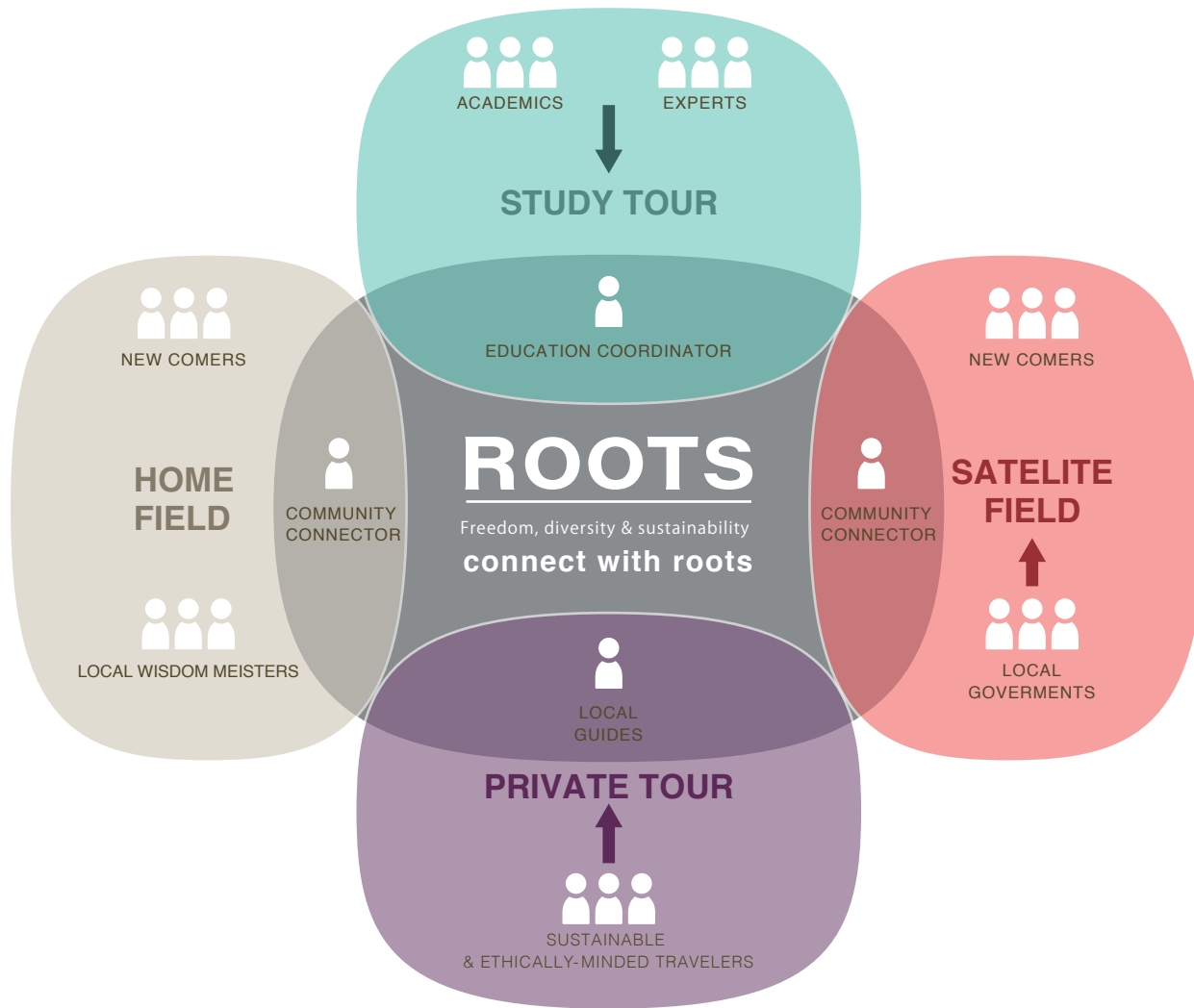
Connecting satoyama wisdom with the world



CROSS THE BORDER — CONNECT WITH ROOTS

If we continue our current way of life, by 2030 two planets wouldn't be enough to support us. This problem will not be resolved easily, and will require our generation to make great strides, to move past country borders and overcome the issue together.

In Japan the word 'satoyama' generally refers to the border zone between the mountain foothills and flat land near to a village. It is a place where people live in harmony with nature, harvesting its bounty but also being stewards of the land. When we moved to Kyoto's satoyama we discovered wisdom about sustainability dating back over one thousand years. If there's no one to inherit this wisdom, it risks being lost forever. This is why our approach is to gain a deep understanding of the region so that we can reinterpret that knowledge in a fresh way for the next generation, and where applicable, spread satoyama wisdom worldwide. For each project, we partner with creatives at home and abroad in order to create the ecosystem, and the international network that leads sustainable enterprise.



ROOTS' ECOSYSTEM

An 'ecosystem' that brings together satoyama wisdom for the next generation.

The satoyama is a place where nature and humans exist in harmony, passed down through generations. This sustainable ecosystem provides the base on which we create new ways of learning, working and living. By involving the new arrivals with local traditions we can create an ecosystem compiled of local wisdom to be passed on to the next generation.

00 | HOME FIELD

We moved to Keihoku from the city, and while spreading our roots we engaged with the locals on a person-to-person basis, building trust. Working together, we developed projects which sought to make the most of the resources in the region. These included a program for foreign visitors and an educational program by linking up with educational institutions overseas.

01 | STUDY TOUR

The *satoyama*'s a vast and flexible classroom. Focused study programs that aim to solve local issues by making the best of nature, local industry, people and culture. We offer a space where enterprises and students with a thirst for a challenge can try out new projects or business ideas.

02 | PRIVATE TOUR

Take in the beauty of the season in Kyoto's *satoyama* with a local guide who is experienced in tours that offer an authentic experience of local life. Why not step out of the hustle and bustle of normal life, and embark on a bespoke journey into the wilderness created just for you.

03 | SATELITE FIELD

We support other rural regions develop their hospitality industry and create tourism programs. We share our community tourism expertise, linking up with local government and regional players, working together to create an ecosystem for business and an environment open to outsiders, which in turn creates a self-propelling business.

00 HOME FIELD



KEIHOKU

The gateway to the wilderness of Kyoto

Just under an hour's journey from Kyoto city center you'll find the green oasis *satoyama*.

Since the Heian era (794~1185 AD), Keihoku has been home to a thriving forestry industry. Even today the locals' way of life is supported by the bounty of mountains. Here it's possible to glimpse scenery unchanged since olden times. It's still a place where foresters, farmers and devoted craftspeople support the traditional lifestyle and customs in harmony with nature.

In Keihoku nature is an integral part of daily life. While there are many people who have inherited this way of living and the local wisdom that comes with it, the realities of modern life; changes to the local industries; decreasing population; as well as an aging population pose an existential threat to this culture.

Here we are spreading our roots, making use of the local resources to create, grow and promote local businesses & tourism to share Keihoku with the world. Our goal is to grow together with the local community of businesses and creators.



SPOTLIGHT ON KEIHOKU



Traditions, folklore & skills

In the satoyama, there lies a wealth of knowledge about how we can live and work sustainably while protecting the natural environment. This wide-ranging wisdom which makes use of natural materials can give us some ideas about how to pass on a more sustainable society to the next generation.



Local Industry

93% of the region is covered in forest. In the old days timber would have been floated down the river to the city. Keihoku also supplied Kyoto with both raw materials and food. From sowing seeds, planting forests and cutting branches to shipping out the timber - behind the long history of this industry is a wealth of knowledge and skills that produces superior quality lumber, mainly cedar and cypress.



Life Wisdom

Keihoku has a rich food culture based around seasonal ingredients. In Spring you'll find tender wild plants, in Summer there are river fish. In Autumn there are chestnuts and persimmon and in Winter there's boar meat and salted or fermented foods. Experience the culinary wisdom that is part of daily life.

LOCAL WISDOM MEISTERS



Kayabuki thatch roof expert

Ikuya Sagara

Specializing in re-thatching and repairing traditional thatched roofs called *kayabuki*, Ikuya has worked on everything from country houses to cultural heritage buildings. He also organizes international events about thatching.



Owner of Sushiyone

Shuko Kurokawa

Shuko is the owner of Sushiyone, a generations old Gastro-ryokan in Shuzan Keihoku. Highly knowledgeable about traditional Japanese living, she teaches kimono dressing and tea ceremony.



Local life and traditions expert

Shigeri Kawarabayashi

Owner of a 650 year-old kayabuki thatched house. A fountain of information in regards to local traditions, food, lifestyle and culture.



Forester

Seigo Yotsutsuji

The wood handled by Yotsutsuji timber is a treasure of the mountains passed down from the Edo period. He has dedicated his life to passing the life cycle of the mountain on to the next generation.



Adventurer

Masakazu Asanome

An adventurer who turns his hand to everything from wood craft and herb dyeing to running an outdoor adventure school and mountain guiding.



Forester

Mamoru Tonoshita

In addition to his day job as a forester in Keihoku and Kyoto, Mamoru promotes the forests in variety of ways including running classes about lumberjack skills and forestry experience courses.



Ai-zome Artist

Naoko Omae

With a background in painting and woodblocks, Naoko turned her attention to the art of dyeing and studied it in depth in the USA. After returning to Japan she studied under the master Hiroyuki Shindo of The Little Indigo Museum.



Cook

Raica Toyama

Raica moved from Tokyo with her family to live in a country house in Keihoku. She loves to make original dishes using seasonal, local produce. Her cooking incorporates fermented food which is kind to the body.

01

STUDY TOUR





Sustainable study unique to the satoyama, surrounded by nature and culture.

An open field turned creative campus

We collaborate with domestic and international educational institutions and enterprises to design projects that open a path to the future for local business people, education institutes and local governments. We cultivate young people who can pursue a deeper understanding of the issues affecting an area and engage with the community to produce creative solutions.

We design and implement a tailor-made program where students experience nature and culture in the satoyama, as well as learn about design and communication. Students learn the process of discovering and understanding the regional components: the people, the things and the ideas (as well as the region's history, culture, environment, administration) and students can grasp the 'true nature' of the region and from there design new services or businesses that can lead to real regional development.



STUDY TOUR PROGRAM

STEP

1



Satoyama Lecture

Students are introduced to the region, they learn about the characteristics, the local environment, forestry, agriculture as well as the any social issues they might have.

STEP

2



Local Wisdom Meister

Students gain knowledge and skills from our local wisdom meisters - the foresters, the craftspeople, the farmers and so on.

STEP

3



Field Work

We visit the businesses and local people relevant to the topic of study and observe the local business in the context. Here we talk to the stakeholders and hear their thoughts.

Roots offers hands-on programs according to specific learning outcomes

STEP

4



Hands-on workshop

While learning from the meisters, get hands-on experience of sustainable skills.

STEP

5



Present to local stakeholders

Bringing all the new knowledge and skills together to design a solution for issue of the chosen theme. Students will present their research, findings and solutions to the regional stakeholders, strengthening their connection with the area and its residents.



CASE STUDY

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PROGRAM



For the Hong Kong Polytechnic University's service learning program (an extracurricular program where students contribute to local communities) students linked up with local lumberjacks and carpenters. They took trees damaged in a typhoon and processed them into usable lumber to build a treehouse in a week-long experience. At the end of the program locals assembled to hear the students' presentation of their ideas about how to reinvigorate the Keihoku region. There are plans to conduct two more installments of this program where new groups of students will build new treehouses and tackle other issues in the area.

MEISTER COLLABORATION PROGRAM



A visit from a group of Italian professionals loosely connected to architecture. Professions varied from interior designers to carpenters, managers from a construction firm based in the north of Italy with several centuries in business, engineering professors and PhD candidates. The group, who were interested in studying materials got to experience traditional kayabuki thatching methods.

The participants had a chance to converse with the kayabuki experts and lumberjacks. Questions fired back and fourth resulting in a meaningful dialogue for both guests and hosts alike. Our programs are for both students and professionals. We offer a space for learning and communication that leads to the regional growth.

Voice



" Japan's inheritance and perseverance in the tradition of craftsmanship can be said to be deeply rooted in the universal values of society. In recent years, even though Japan has been influenced by the West, this spirit is still alive today. We can't help but feel that this is the most needed and most lacking spirit in our Hong Kong society – a persistence transformed from cultural self-confidence. "

- Yeung Choi Kiu

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

VOICE FROM SCHOOL



Aaron J. Godlaski

Centre College

Roots provides a fully immersive learning experience that goes well beyond tourism to intimate engagement with local places and people. As a teacher I am always looking for ways to help students get closer to topics and ideas in a course. Roots beautifully curates opportunities to connect directly with the satoyama lifestyle and community. Working with such great people with shared values in a beautiful setting is a true pleasure!



Michael Chan

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Our students had a chance to meet with the villagers in remote Japan and implementing tree house and sustainable tourism projects. It also provides students with a real-life experience of executing a service project which has a direct impact. The sustainable development project inspires respect, appreciation, and preservation of Japanese local culture and environment, and promulgate the concept of sustainability.



Sam Shiman

Asian Education Co-ordinator

We share the same vision as our main purpose of design is to contribute to the creation of a better society, ROOTS is the perfect choice to work with.

Together we imagined the possibilities of combining the traditional wisdom with modern technology in future design - from the local to the global, from the schools to television programs. I believe this partnership and friendship provides an important foundation for the future.

02 PRIVATE TOUR





Travel where you get a taste of the local lifestyle

From sight seeing to life seeking

The community tourism which we offer isn't mere sight seeing, it's a chance to get a taste of country life. In Keihoku you'll find both long-term residents and, people from the outside who fell in love with the place and moved here. There is beauty in the way life here which people are happy to share with visitors. This is not a luxury to just be consumed, it is a gentle, simple luxury that warms the soul and forges bonds. Together you can harvest local vegetables, have locals share their bounty with you, learn how to identify edible plants, learn miso-making and other fermentation techniques. This is a journey in local wisdom.



KEIHOKU COMMUNITY TOURISM



Keihoku Cycle Tour

2-6 

What better than a leisurely cycle to really take in the beauty of Keihoku? Stamina is not an issue either as our electric bicycles make the hilly mountain roads a breeze.

Drop by peaceful temples where there isn't a tourist in sight, hike in the cedar covered north hills where you can get a glimpse of the lumberjacks at work as you climb until you reach a waterfall. Visit a local sake brewery where you can enjoy a drink while learning about local sake. All this at your pace. Finally for lunch how about Keihoku's hand-made soba or some wild meat like deer or boar?



Keihoku & Miyama Charter Tour

2-8 

On the charter tour, you will be taken around the rolling hills of Keihoku and Miyama in a private car. In Keihoku you can visit temples and the local waterfall before heading to see the thatched roofs in Miyama. You'll learn about life under these traditional roofs - the history and culture, and then on to visit an indigo dyeing expert to hear his story and stop for the local gelato somewhere along the way. This tour is ideal for days of less-than-ideal weather or when you want to see as much as possible in a short time.



Experience the *satoyama* like a local



Special tailor-made tour

2-8 

Imagine practicing yoga or having a massage under a kayabuki thatched roof, or having a temple to yourself for a meditation experience, harvesting vegetables and cooking with the chef, stopping by an artisan's workshop for a chat or maybe try making something yourself. We will design an experience to match your interests.

*An additional coordination fees may apply



Voice



" This was one of the highlights of my trip to Japan. It is a real treat to get a bit off the well-worn path trodden by tourists to Japan and get some 'real' experience in the countryside just outside Kyoto. Even better - having access to friendly and open-minded hosts who speak great English means you gain insights into culture, politics, and history that would be very difficult to find otherwise. and sake sampling. I can't recommend Keihoku highly enough! "

- James
Australia

ROOTS HOMES

Three houses, three homes for creativity



Imagined as a gateway to the artisan scene of Keihoku, tehen is a place that facilitates all kinds of creative endeavor. In the building itself, you can get a sense of the lives of the people who have come before, from the river side, the goémon bathtub, to the veranda. It's a place of crossover between the creatives of the past and the future.





英 roku

5   

This country house is situated near a pristine stream. Recently renovated, it features loft on the upper floor and an airy tatami room. It's easy to feel at home immediately in this hidden retreat.

♀ uma

5   

Nestled quietly in the countryside is this recently restored old-fashioned farmhouse. It's spacious and yet cosy enough to accommodate several families, use as a share house or for housing interns.



03 SATELLITE FIELD





Would you like to bring community tourism to your area?

Create new industries, connect up regions

In Keihoku we have developed a successful community tourism program including guide training and business support. We have packaged up all this knowledge and know how to share with other regional governments and corporations. We also travel to other rural areas all around Japan and abroad, investigate the situation on the ground and apply our experience to help reinvigorate the region. The community tourism model is mainly aimed at drawing in overseas tourists. We help develop local industries alongside residents who want visitors to know the great things about the place they call home. In order to do that, we work with locals to rediscover the 'hidden gems' and in the process, the locals' love of their home region deepens. Lifetime residents and the newly-arrived younger generation work together to develop the local industry. This also gives the older generation a chance to pass on the local way of life and traditions in turn encourages more people to settle down in the region long term.



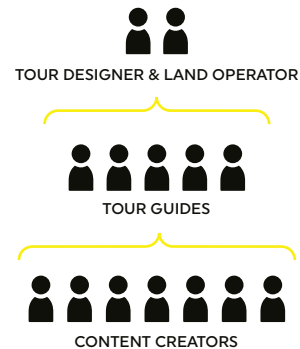
OUR SERVICE

Develop community tourism with Roots



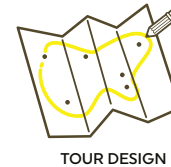
The local stars: people, places and things

We workshop with the local stakeholders to discover the untapped potential in the region.

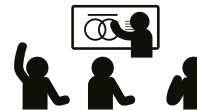


Creating the central 'ecosystem'

We create the tourism ecosystem while deciding who will be the tour operator and guides as well as the tour contents.



TOUR DESIGN



TRAINING

Tourism development and personnel training

We develop the specific tour itineraries while training the tour operators and guides.



BRANDING DESIGN



TRANSLATION

Design the business platform and promotion

Time to share your region with the world. We help with branding, website design, promotional and marketing materials aimed at Asia, America & Europe.

SERVICE CONTENTS

We share our know-how, including regional design, tourism development and guide training, with regional governments and corporations.



English guide training

On this hands-on developmental workshop you learn the skills to work as a local guide and how to deal with foreign tourists, followed by on-the-job training with a professional, certified guide. The lecturer has experience in projects overseas and presenting at international conferences, as well as has experience in interpreting and intercultural communication.



Nature guide training

On this course you learn how to make the most of the natural beauty in your region. How to design a tour program based around the seasons and the visitors' interests, as well as how to run outdoor activities and how to instruct visitors in those activities. Take lectures out in the field from our outdoor expert, who has years of experience as a nature guide in the Canadian Rockies.



Educational tourism link-ups

Plan and implement educational programs for overseas students where they get to learn about the local culture, intercultural communication. Students can experience the natural beauty of the region, the local culture, as well as learn about design and communication.

CASE STUDY

SONI VILLAGE



When Soni village wanted to build a community tourism industry from scratch, we were able to deliver our full satellite field service. ROOTS experts visited the village numerous times in order to dig out the resources that had potential while at the same time assembling the people who would shoulder this new industry. We also conducted courses on English communication and guiding skills. In order to simulate a real guest experience, we brought a group of students from Hong Kong and conducted some trial tours along with an experienced independent guide. Finally we compiled the most successful aspects together in a new website for the region as well as creating promotional and marketing material.

KYOTO BY THE SEA | KYOTO IN THE FOREST



From these respective DMOs we got a request for guide training as well as highly practical English communication lessons. While helping them to implement community tourism we uncovered the local points of interest (including people, things, facts etc.) and trained guides that would be able to connect up these points to create a cohesive story that would also be applied to the branding and promotion of the place. We did this while addressing any other client needs with support on the ground.

CASE STUDY

SHARING THE CHARM OF RURAL LIFE WITH THE WORLD



The issues that are affecting rural Japan are the same issues affecting rural regions worldwide. Trends such as the flow of young people out of the community, shrinking population. Meanwhile in cities everywhere we see the stress of the city life taking a toll. As these issues are universal, in order to tackle them we must look past our own borders.

At Sustainable Brand Bangkok, we conducted research on the start-up of community tourism in Bangkok's own satoyama, Bangkachao, delivered a keynote speech at the international conference as well as holding a workshop for locals and visitors alike.



- 1 Sustainable Brand Tokyo 2019
- 2 Sustainable Brand Bangkok 2018 - Keynote Speech

Voice



" They were amazing partners in helping us in Soni Village to develop our community tourism system. The way they employed a variety of perspectives to form the basis of their structures and proposals really outdid our expectations of an outside consultant. As a satellite village, I'm hopeful that we can leverage the regional resources and have meaningful interactions with students in future. "

- Sumina Hayashi

Soni Village

MEET OUR TEAM

Our diverse group of experts
connecting the local to the world





Founder/Social Designer

Feilang Tseng

In San Francisco Feilang was involved in design projects aimed at solving social issues. After returning to Japan she worked at healthcare company as a planner and design strategist. Currently she is involved in regional design and satoyama community building.



Founder/World Connector

Kei Nakayama

English/Chinese guide, interpreter, lecturer. Kei has traveled to over 80 countries, mainly for work while mastering seven languages through self-study. A travel editor & intercultural communication coordinator.



Tour Coordinator

Chisato Maeda

After gaining experience at a tourism company overseas, Chisato returned to Japan where she practiced as a professional registered guide. Currently she specializes in food tourism, coordinating tours around this theme.



Designer/Translator

Robin Hoshino

As a designer and an interpreter, Robin's work mainly focuses on communication. In Ireland she was involved in filmmaking and promoting local food through events and media. Lives in Kyoto since 2015.



Nature Guide/Cinematographer

Kazuki Fujimoto

Kazuki gained experience as a nature guide and a cinematographer in the Canadian Rockies, since returning to Japan he has been engaged in making films on Japan's unique craft and food culture.



Therapist

Akiko Hoshino

Originally from Tokyo, Akiko moved to Keihoku in 2013. She practices body therapy while also running workshops on traditional Japanese fermentation and other preserving techniques that are both delicious and fun.



Designer

Minami Shimizu

Formerly an in-house designer for a cosmetics company, Minami now works on a wide variety of projects around logo & branding, graphic design, packaging design and product development.



Researcher/Architect

Fumikazu Nishiyama

Deeply interested in nature, history, culture & intercultural communication. Fumikazu studied architecture and urban design in Japan and Germany. He moved to Keihoku in pursuit of ideas on how sustainability and nature can be incorporated into architecture and town planning.

ROOTS PARTNERS

Overseas coordinators



Sam Shiman

Hong Kong | Taiwan | China

Hong Kong resident. After visiting Keihoku as a tourist more than four times, Sam became an invaluable partner in helping us bring the satoyama to the world. She acted as coordinator on a wide range of projects such as on Roots' educational program with Hong Kong Polytechnic University at the satellite field Soni Village and the filming of a documentary in Keihoku.



Renata Piazza

Spain | Italy

Born in Sicily, Italy. She has worked on economic and cultural projects such as lectures, exhibitions & seminars in Japan and across Asia. After the Fukushima disaster she promoted exchange between businesses in Tohoku and Europe. In 2013 she set up the Hasekura Project NPO in Spain.



Georgi Ker

France | Thailand | Singapore

Thailand resident. Georgi can speak over seven languages fluently. She has connections with educational institutions and leaders of sustainable action all over the world, but especially in France, Thailand and Singapore. She collaborated with Roots in the early days of the company, spending one month in Keihoku and helping set up the website and educational program.

Local affiliated partners



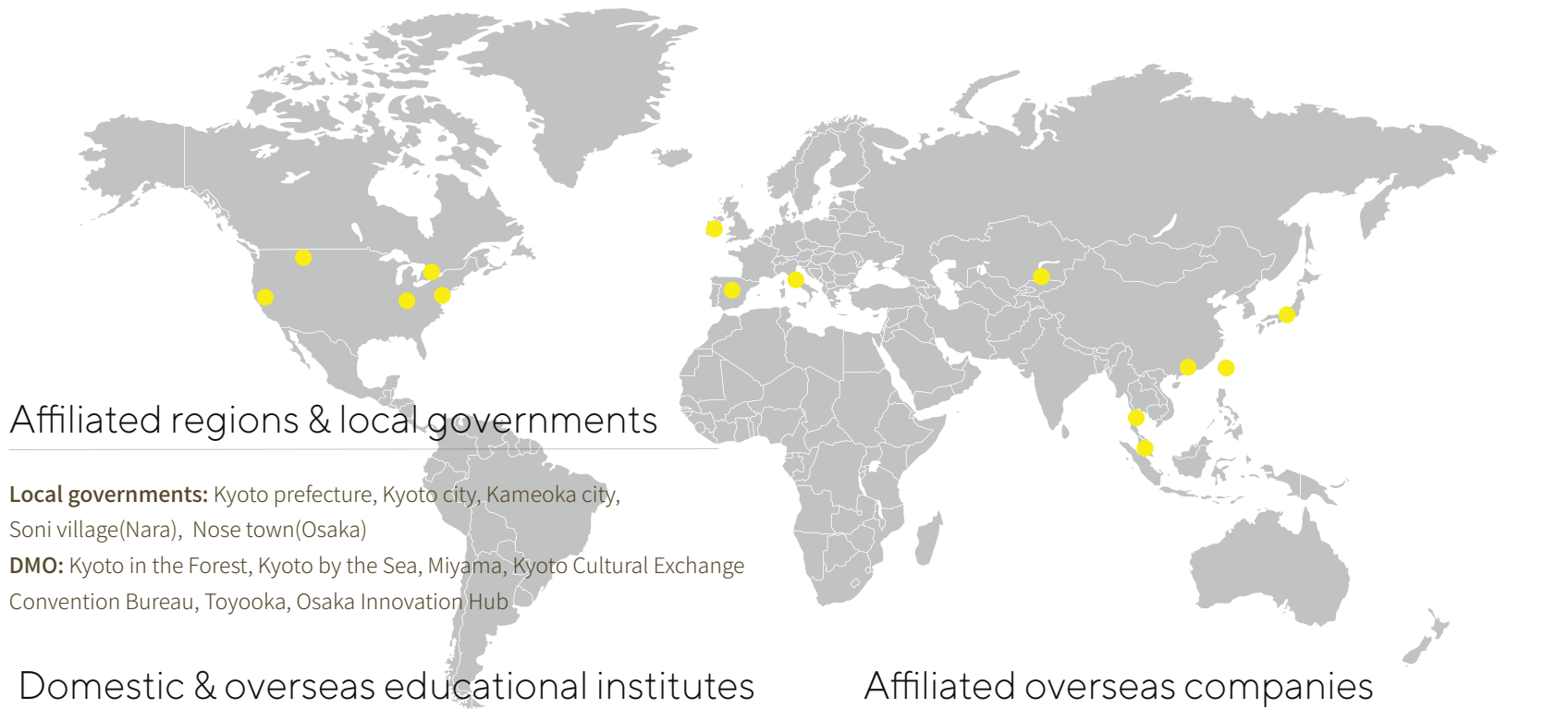
Satoyama Design are responsible for the identity design and branding for the Keihoku region. They aim to create a market by connecting together all the people and things related to the region and businesses



A community platform that aims to create a sustainable framework of production, distribution and consumption for organic producers in Kyoto as well as grocers and distributors in Kyoto city.



Perspective is working on new ways to bring urushi, a natural material in use in Japan for over 10,000 years, to the next generation. They pursue new possibilities for urushi that surpass the constraints of tradition and expand the cultivation of urushi trees.



Affiliated regions & local governments

Local governments: Kyoto prefecture, Kyoto city, Kameoka city, Soni village(Nara), Nose town(Osaka)

DMO: Kyoto in the Forest, Kyoto by the Sea, Miyama, Kyoto Cultural Exchange Convention Bureau, Toyooka, Osaka Innovation Hub

Domestic & overseas educational institutes

Kyoto University
Kyoto City University of Arts
Tokyo Keizai University
Ritsumeikan University
Kyoto Subaru High School
Kyoto Kitakuwada High School
The Affiliated High School of
Peking University (China)

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
(Hong Kong)
I-Shou University (Taiwan)
Trente University (The Netherlands)
Think Global School (NY)
Kyrgys Humanities University (Bishkek)
Stanford University (Japan Center)
Centre College (USA)

Affiliated overseas companies

Sustainable Brand Bangkok
Banma Tavel (China)
TAT(Tourism Authority of Thailand)
Local Alike (Thailand)
Japan Society (New York City)
Airbnb San Francisco
Traveling Spoon (San Francisco)

Nippon Travel (Canada)
Skyland Travel (Canada)
Air Canada (Toronto)
Unique Japan Tours (Ireland)
japan-ferien.ch (Switzerland)
FRIGATE AERO TOURS (Russia)



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