

Community Project

For nearly two decades Walk Japan has taken thousands of customers to many off-the-beaten-path areas of Japan. Whether deep in the mountains of central Japan, isolated villages or remote islands, these places offer insights, elusive to most visitors to Japan, into the nation and its people, its culture and natural beauty. They also highlight an often hidden side of Japan that is far from its common image as a technological advanced and crowded nation. Rural Japan is in a gentle but seemingly unstoppable decline.

Unused and overgrown paddies and arable fields litter Japan. Forests are often uncared for and slowly, decaying farmhouses are prominent almost everywhere. Through this landscape bamboo growing rampant seems to be on a destructive march through everything standing in its path.

Dick Irving, a founder of Walk Japan and Professor of social geography at Kwansai Gakuin in Kobe, is an expert in the field of issues facing rural Japan. For more than 30 years Dick has been researching and documenting rural Japan in his study area of Ayabe in Kyoto Prefecture. Dick's research paper, [Environmental caretaker - Who wants the job?](#), eloquently describes the problems of a declining and ageing population and their growing impact on rural communities.



[Community project gallery](#) [Walk, Japan](#)