

Protecting Trees and Sharing the Joy of Living with Nature



Fujieda City, Shizuoka Prefecture

Photo: spyder / PIXTA

Joshua Calfo from the United Kingdom came to Japan in 2016 and began working in forestry in Fujieda City, Shizuoka Prefecture. He is now an independent arborist,¹ working in tree maintenance and landscaping, while striving to communicate the value of nature.

Murakami Kayo

“**E**ven though I grew up in the big city of London, I’ve loved nature and animals since I was a child. I’ve always wanted to live in the mountains someday,” says Joshua.

Joshua was working in London in the apparel industry, but decided to move to Japan when his Japanese partner had to return home. He arrived in Japan in 2016, and for a

while lived in Tokyo. Every time he made a weekend visit to the home of his partner’s parents in Shizuoka Prefecture, however, he was amazed by the rich natural environment, with the mountains and the sea so near. He spoke with his partner about his wish to live there, and, after getting married in 2017, they moved to Fujieda City in Shizuoka Prefecture.

After moving to the area, the cou-

ple set up an atelier in the forest and launched the apparel brand, Shizen Design, inspired by their hope to work in the fashion industry in a place surrounded by nature. They create shirts with motifs of flowers, trees, coral, etc., envisioning designs that will bring those who wear them closer to nature.

In the beginning, however, their income was low, so Joshua went to work for a local forestry company on the introduction of a friend.

“Once I started working in forestry, I realized that this was what I had always wanted to do. I get to spend every day in the mountains that I love so much, and I enjoy every aspect of my work: from seeing trees, rivers,

1. The term “arborist” refers to a professional tree expert, who has acquired tree climbing and tree aerial rescue skills, as well as knowledge of trees, and has passed certain certification exams.

2. Techniques for working in high places while supporting the body using ropes, anchors, and other devices



Joshua joined others presented a variety of landscaping techniques for *tsubo-niwa* (small Japanese-style courtyard gardens) at a gardening event for an area of 3.3 square meters held on the roof of the JR Shizuoka Station Building.



Shirts and everyday items with nature-inspired motifs



Joshua at work

and animals, to climbing tall trees and working on them. The views I get to see when I travel by truck along the mountain roads are amazing, too.”

In 2021, Joshua retired from the company he worked for, and launched his own business. He studied arboriculture, the technology for tree management developed in the US and Europe, which includes tree cultivation and diagnostics, as well as soil management. In 2022, became an International Certified Jugoshi Arborist®. Today, he runs an organization called Calfo Forestry, which cuts and prunes large trees using rope access² techniques in temple grounds, gardens and mountains. Parallel to this work, he also undertakes landscaping projects, inspired by the desire to be involved in caring for trees that are

close to people’s everyday lives.

“When I lived in London, I had to travel far to get in touch with nature. In Japan, however, you can reach the mountains on just a day-trip from Tokyo. I want to help Japanese people enjoy the nature that is so close to them even more, and to understand that each and every tree has value.”

The number of people working in forestry declines with each passing year. Appropriate mountain management, however, is crucial in order to build a sustainable society. Joshua says his goals for the future are to take on the challenge of qualifying as a certified tree doctor to further enhance his expertise, and to convey the value of nature and the joy of living in harmony with it.



Joshua Calfo