

Research on forest traditional knowledge: Status and prospects

YOUN Yeo-Chang

Professor

Seoul National University

What is forest traditional knowledge?

- Parrotta and Trostler (2012) adopted the definition of *Traditional forest-related knowledge* (TFRK) from UN (2004):
- TFRK is ‘a cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief, handed down through generations by cultural transmission and evolving by adaptive processes, about the relationship between living beings (including humans) with one another and with their forest environment’.

Inquiries on FTK

- Value of FTK
 - Supporting individual livelihood, sustainable use of resources,
 - cultural identity of the locality and the people, adapting to climate change, etc..
- Change of FTK
 - Why is FTK rapidly being eroded? How can FTK be kept?
 - How can the benefits of FTK be shared equitably, especially by indigenous / local people?
- Role of local people and FTK in forest related decision making
 - How can we make FTK of local people to be appreciated by decision makers?

Status of forest traditional knowledge

- Lack of recognition of FTK in decision making of forest management
- Dominance of science over FTK in forestry education
- Rapid erosion of forest traditional knowledge (FTK)
 - Case of China ... findings of Huang & Youn(2017)
 - Case of Korea ... breaking down of communal forests management: disappearing 'Songye'
 - Case of Africa ?
 - Case of North America ??

Rapid erosion of forest traditional knowledge: the case of China

A study on the retention of forest-related traditional knowledge - a case of Deng-cen village in Guizhou province, southwest China (Huang Yinghe, YOUN Yeo-Chang, 2017)



Rapid erosion of forest traditional knowledge: the case of China

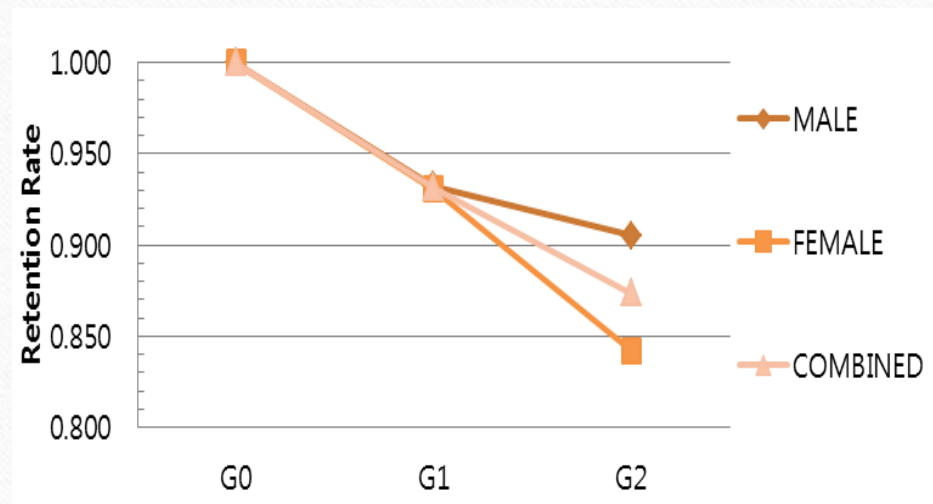


Figure 1. intergenerational rate of Conceptual Knowledge component

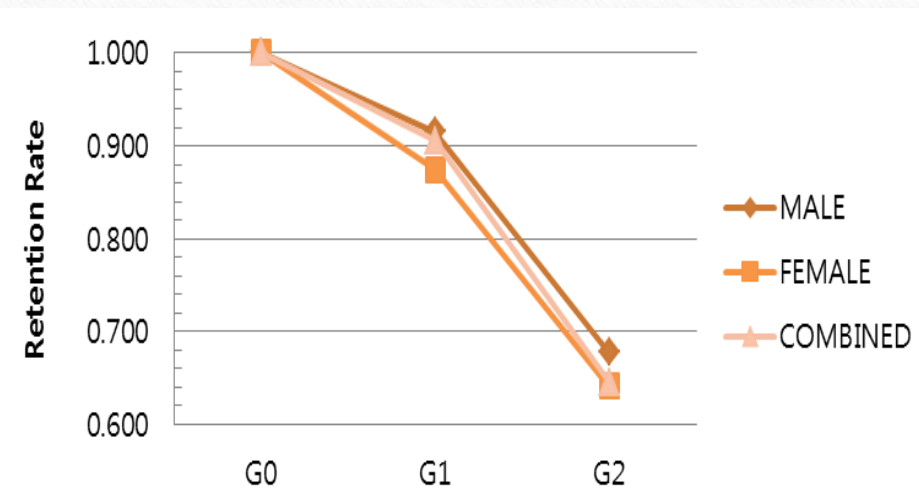


Figure 2. intergenerational rate of Practical Skills component

Citing source: Huang Yinghe, YOUN Yeo-Chang. 2017. A study on the retention of forest-related traditional knowledge - a case of Deng-cen village in Guizhou province, southwest China

Rapid erosion of forest traditional knowledge: the case of China

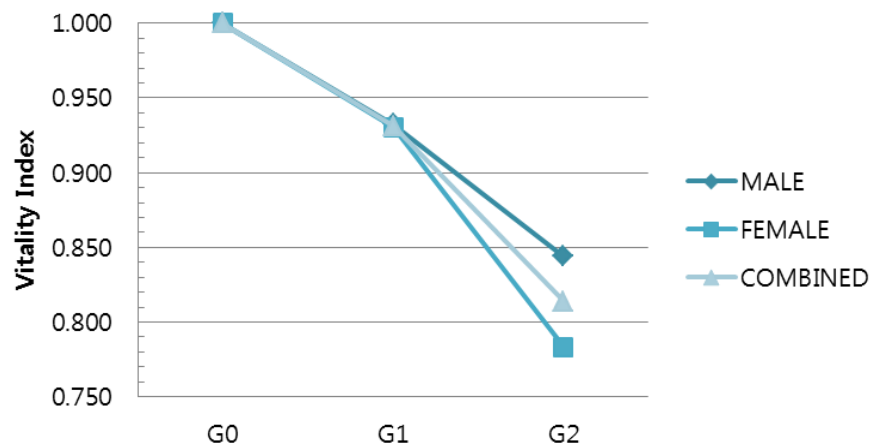


Figure 3. cumulative rate of Conceptual Knowledge component

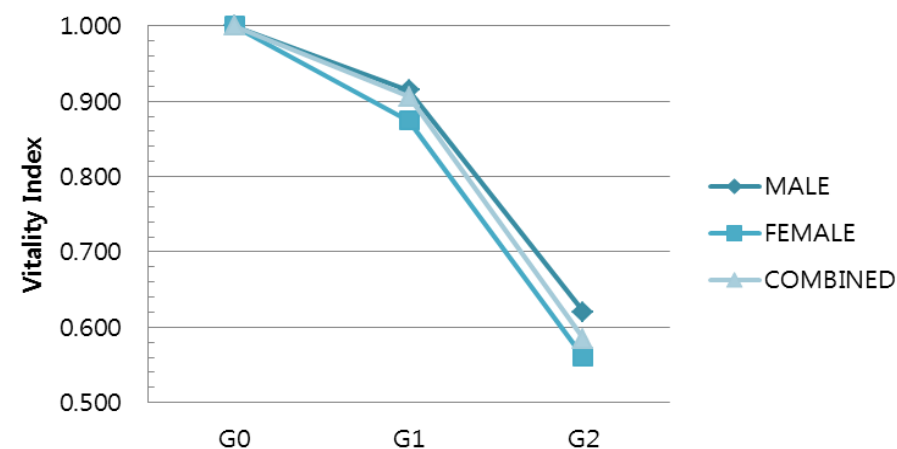


Figure 4. cumulative rate of Practical Skills component

Citing source: Huang Yinghe, YOUN Yeo-Chang. 2017. A study on the retention of forest-related traditional knowledge - a case of Deng-cen village in Guizhou province, southwest China

History of FTK research

- IUFRO activities
 - 2005-2012: a special task force on forest traditional knowledge
 - 2014-present: a working group with two working parties on FTK
- Activities of Asian FTK research network

IUFRO activities on FTK

- **IUFRO special task forces: Traditional Forest Knowledge (2005-2012)**

- Coordinator: John Parrotta, United States

- Primary Objectives: to increase understanding of the interrelationships between traditional and scientific forest-related knowledge and catalyze potential synergistic applications to sustainable forest management.

- Main contributions: prepared a state-of-knowledge report, organized a series of regional conferences; identified opportunities for IUFRO to contribute insubstantial ways to forest policy forums and processes.

- **FTK working parties: Traditional forest knowledge in temperate and boreal region (9.03.04) / in tropical and subtropical region (9.03.05)**

- Coordinator: Prof. YOUN Yeo-Chang (Seoul National University), Prof. Liu Jinlong (Renmin University of China)

- Established in 2014, IUFRO conference in Salt Lake City, United States

IUFRO special task force on FTK 2005-2012

- **A project supporting regional expert's meeting on FTK were held and the results were published:**
- Parrotta, J. A. & Agnoletti, M. (Eds.) 2007. Traditional Knowledge, Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Forest Management. *Forest Ecology and Management* 249: 1-139.
- John A. Parrotta, Alfred Oteng-Yeboah, Joseph Cobbinah, J. (editors) 2009. Traditional Forest-Related Knowledge and Sustainable Forest Management in Africa. Vienna, IUFRO, 213 p. IUFRO World Series No. 23.
- John A. Parrotta, Lim Hin Fui, Liu Jinlong, P.S. Ramakrishnan, Yeo-Chang Youn (editors) 2009. Traditional Forest-related Knowledge in Asia. *Forest Ecology and Management* (special issue) 257(10): 1987-2078.
- **Parrotta, J.A., Troster, R.L., editors. 2012. Traditional Forest-Related Knowledge: Sustaining Communities, Ecosystems and Biocultural Diversity. World Forest Series vol. 12. Springer, Dordrecht, the Netherlands. 621 p.**
- Parrotta, J.A., et al. 2012. Traditional Knowledge Contributes to Sustaining Forests and Biocultural Diversity. Article in *Bois et Forêts des Tropiques* 312 (2).

Asian FTK research network

- **2007.11:** Agreement on networking for Traditional Forest-related Knowledge in Asia in the International conference on Sustainable Forest Management and Poverty Alleviation: Roles of Traditional Forest-related Knowledge held in Kunming, China
- **2008.10:** The 1st Conference on Traditional Forest-related Knowledge and Culture in Asia (Seoul, Korea)
- **2009.11:** The 2nd Conference on Traditional Forest-related Knowledge and Culture in Asia (Kunming, China)
- **2010.12:** The 3rd Conference on Traditional Forest-related Knowledge and Culture in Asia (Kanazawa, Japan)
- **2011.09:** The 4th Conference on Traditional Forest-related Knowledge and Culture in Asia (Jeju, Korea)

Agreement of establish the Asian Center for Traditional Forest-related Knowledge

- the Asian Center for Traditional Forest-related Knowledge was established at KFRI (now NiFoS)

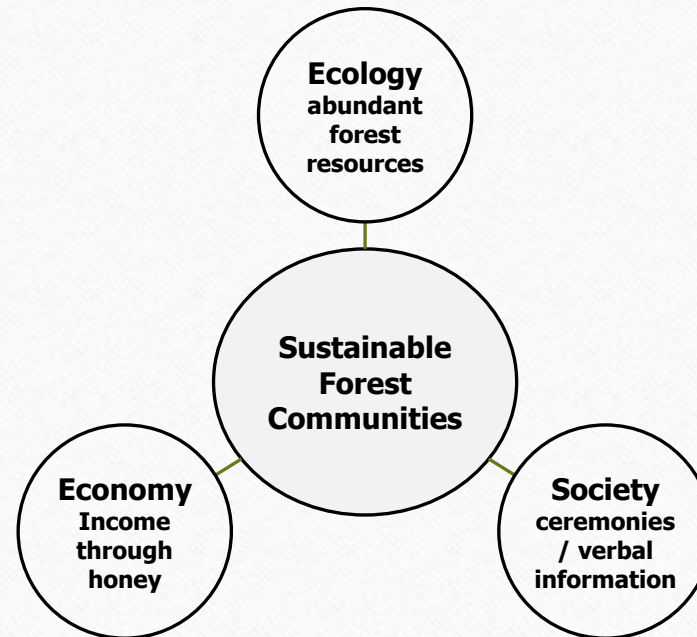
History of Asian FTK research network

- **2012.11:** The 5th Conference on Traditional Forest-related Knowledge and Culture in Asia (Yangling, China)
- A Minutes on the role of the ACTFOK as a platform to promote TFRK research, development and education in Asia was signed.
- **2013.11:** The 6th Conference on Traditional Forest-related Knowledge and Culture in Asia (Miyazaki, Japan)
- **2014.09:** The 7th Conference on Traditional Forest-related Knowledge and Culture in Asia (Seoul, Korea)
- **2015.10:** The 8th Conference on Traditional Forest Knowledge and Culture in Asia (Nanjing, China)
- **2016.08:** The 9th Conference on Traditional Forest Knowledge and Culture in Asia (Bogor, Indonesia)
- **2017.11:** The 10th Conference on Traditional Forest Knowledge and Culture in Asia (Seoul, Korea)

New forestry for Sustainable Society

- Forestry based on modern science is based on the utilitarian philosophy of European tradition.
- Gaps between tradition of the country and modern science applied to modern industrial forestry.
- Challenges faced by forestry decision makers can not be helped only by scientists who have ignored the traditional knowledge.
 - Ignorance of TK and culture can bring forest conflicts between forest administration and indigenous people.
- There are not-yet explored areas where forest scientists and decision makers can learn from TK and culture.

Sustainable forest-based society



Mi Sun Park and YOUN Yeo-Chang. 2012. Traditional Knowledge of Korean Native Beekeeping and Sustainable Forest Management. *Forest Policy and Economics* 15, 37-45.

Proposal for forestry science

- A systematic evaluation of research in forestry is necessary to test if
 - The methods are effective when TK and culture is applied.
 - The results are useful when TK and culture is applied.
- The first step toward new forestry respecting TK and culture is to collect FRTK and FC.
- The second step is to analyze the forestry practices using a balanced framework based not only Science but also TK and culture.
- The forestry curriculum should be reviewed and restructured such that the traditional knowledge and culture is incorporated in to forestry education.

Research agenda for FTK

- Assessment of FTK – the knowledge withheld, its value, and the changing patterns
- Recognition of FTK values in people's life and social decision making on forests
- Application of FTK for better utilization of forest resources
 - Resolving the conflicts between FTK and science
- Application of FTK for enhancement of ecosystem health and society's resilience
 - Use of FTK for climate change adaptation
- Governance of FTK for equitable society –adapting to the Nagoya Protocol

Thank you

- Please contact me at youn@snu.ac.kr if you have any inquiry.