

The Forests around Kyoto in the Period of *Rakuchurakugaizu*

— A Study on the Description of “*Rakugaizu*” —

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*Rakuchurakugaizu* are the colorful pictures of Kyoto and its surrounding area. Most of them are supposed to have been drawn in the period between late Muromachi (early and middle 1500's) and early Edo (1600's). Although they show the noted places and life of those days fully, they do not seem to be precise enough to study the past forests around Kyoto in general.

“*Rakugaizu*” which is one of *rakuchurakugaizu* and depicts only *rakugai* or the suburbs of Kyoto is unique in its precise description including forests and mountains. And it is possible to tell the reality of the forest description of “*Rakugaizu*” to some extent if it is compared with the descriptions of trees and forests seen in literatures and pictures contemporary with it. The comparison between the depiction of “*Rakugaizu*” with the state of today's hills and mountains is also effective to study the reality.

The outline of the forests around Kyoto seen in “*Rakugaizu*” is as follows. Forests were often seen in the hilly and mountainous area, especially nearby temples and shrines. Pine trees were most widely seen in those forests. It was usual that other sorts of trees like Japanese cedar were not always seen there. But the landscape of trees and forests was not so common in the area as it is now. Many and large grassy or naked places were also seen on the hills and mountains. In flat land, forests were also common nearby temples and shrines, and bamboo groves were often seen around villages and many other places.

Although it is hard to show the reality of the forest description of *rakuchurakugaizu* in general, you can find many similarities between “*Rakugaizu*” and other *rakuchurakugaizu*. For example, trees are not so many described on the hills and mountains, and pine trees are widely seen in most *rakuchurakugaizu*. And in some of them, you can see rocky parts and waterfalls which seem to show low vegetation around them. Such similarities seem to be evidences that the landscape of forests and mountains around Kyoto did not change largely through the time of *rakuchurakugaizu*.