

## **Kaori Onishi Report**

**The Osugidani Nature School is in Chubu District, Odai-cho, Taki-gun, Mie Japan. In 1980, the population of the Osugidani district was thought to be 2,986 people, however there is now only 270 people. It has decreased to approximately one-tenth of the previous population. The aging rate of Osugidani (65 years old or more a ratio among the population) was higher than 70%.**

**The Osugidani Nature School was an elementary school in the past. However the number of students decreased to four children, therefore the closing of the school was in 1998. Although the elementary school became inessential, the nature school was necessary for present Japan.**

**Present day Japanese children, have not experienced touching natural rocks, also have never been to the river, nor have seen fire. The children that had extremely few experiences naturally appeared to have had not walked on the natural soil. There are only a few children but also many people under their 50s that have not had an opportunity to feel nature through daily activities. People do not know where the food from nature comes from, and do not know the essentials of food and the energy from burning firewood. I believe the people in Japan forget the importance of nature and do not know how to effectively incorporate it into their daily life. However, it is believed that the key to understanding the world and nature is through the power of money, information and science, and hopefully fully understand the importance of nature.**

**But is it true that the key to understanding the world and nature is through the power of science, information and money?**

**The staff at Osugidani Nature School are under the age of 50. The staff learn from the local elderly every day; there is so much to learn from them, therefore we never stop learning. It's thought that the wisdom that came to the area was succeeded through learning experiences about everything nature and through deep admiration for it.**

**Odai-cho was hit by a powerful natural disaster in the end of September, 2004. Words from one of the locals from a nursery that lost all buildings from a land slide still have not been forgotten.**

**"Nature did an amazing job". The local did not regard nature as such as powerful and a hostile component. However, the thought is that there will always be a strong feeling of awe towards nature and how powerful and strong it can be.**

**But, how can we get the opportunity to utilise nature in our current daily life? How can we feel a strong feeling of awe towards nature? All elderly living in**

**Osugidani have succeeded a way of life and consciousness through living with nature; this has been accomplished for many years.**

**By no means that Osugidani is the only natural place in Japan to have remained, but also including other areas that are about to become extinct different places of Japan, and all parts of the world from leaving behind these types of places for the economy.**

**From now, people will obtain the sense of values. A variety of senses of values of the area will add to the importance more and more.**

**I believe that we need to have a balance with our lives through keeping in touch with nature and our spirituality. I believe that the conveyed message could be spread for the better. This is now a mission that the Osugidani Nature School pursues in.**

### **Kaori Onishi**

**I was born in Mie in 1972. After graduating from National Mie University Department of Education, I have been a science teacher and a member of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer in the Philippines to reeducated mathematics and science through various projects for three years from 1995. After returning home, I now teach an environmental education program and regional activation in Osugidani Nature School in my hometown Odai-cho from 2001, also I'm the present Principal of NPO (non-profit organisation) corporation Osugidani Nature School.**

