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To Governor Shintaro Ishihara / Members of Tokyo 2016 Bid Committee:

A few weeks ago I and members of my group, were invited by residents from the city of Inagi, to attend their event to 'Save The Forests Of Minamiyama Mountain'. Why this may be of interest to you, is because the mountain lies within the Tokyo District and at eighty seven hectares is as big as the forest set to be created on a mountain of rubbish dumped into the Tokyo Bay. This so called 'Sea Forest' has been lauded as an example of Tokyo's commitment to protect the natural environment in its campaign to bring the 2016 Olympic Games to the City. But while it may be nice to turn a rubbish dump into a park full of trees, it is nowhere near as good as protecting a well forested mountain of well established trees, just thirty minutes from the centre of the city.

Having visited Minamiyama Forest with 120 people from around Tokyo, I witnessed it's beauty and the appreciation of those who live and work in the town nearby and of those who make a living by harvesting sustainably the bounties of the forests.

In a meeting with Team Pom Poko, the group who invited us to draw attention to the efforts to Save The Forests of Minamiyama Mountain, we were introduced to a severe contradiction, to a City creating a tree park on garbage to display a green face to win the Olympic Games, while silently chopping down a much loved forest on the other side of town.

Quite frankly I was astonished and saddened to discover this contradiction. In it's literature that Tokyo 2016 Bid Committee proudly states that the 2016 Tokyo Games will be the first Carbon Neutral Games ever and highlights the Sea Forest as an example of the efforts to make this happen. How will such a statement appear to the international community when word gets out that while trees were being planted more were being destroyed on the other side of town? Could such a contradiction benefit other nations in their campaign to get the 2016 games?

Recently I walked though China drawing attention to the 'Green Olympics' of Beijing and witnessed a masses of contradictions, a green face for the games and black poisoned rivers everywhere else. So it came very easy for me to respond when asked by residents of Inagi, "How do you suggest we save the Forests of Minamiyama Mountain"

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*An International, Social-Profit Peace Messenger Organisation with United Nations Consultative Status (ECOSOC)  
International Secretariat for the Culture of Peace Initiative*



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My advice was quite straight forward, "Take the issue to your local government, tell them of this contradiction and how if they are deaf to your plea you will then take it to the Tokyo 2016 Bid Committee and the Governor of Tokyo, whom I am sure will be astounded to see how this forest destruction could hurt Tokyo's chance of getting the 2016 Games. Then, if they are not interested let them know that you will take the issue to the IOC in an ever expanding campaign to 'Save The Forests Of Minamiyama Mountain. My guess is that the Tokyo 2016 Bid Committee and the Governor of Tokyo don't know about the situation at Minamiyama Mountain, as the city is so large, but once they do know, I'm sure they'll recognise how damaging this could be to their campaign and will do what they can to change the situation."

I also added that I would assist them in their campaign, and that I would write a letter to the Tokyo 2016 Bid Committee and if that got nowhere I would write an open letter to the International Olympic Committee and call on members of the international community to join your campaign.

So I am writing you this letter requesting for you come to the aid of the forests of Minamiyama Mountain, to preserve and protect them for all to enjoy. There is a great benefit to the city of Tokyo in protecting those forests, which could be promoted as an Olympics environmental success story. A place near the heart of the city, protected for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike, where people can discover how the forests have been utilised for generations, and meet the farmers, mushroom growers, and the local teachers and naturalists who are collecting data on all the creatures that the forests support.

Please join the campaign to Save The Forests of Minamiyama. Let's make the world a better place and bring the Olympic Games to Tokyo where we can show everyone, that this city does care about it's environment and citizens. And is moving towards a more sustainable future.

Thanks you for your time and consideration.

Paul Coleman

Ambassador of the [Culture of Peace Initiative \(CPI\)](#), a United Nations-designated Peace Messenger Initiative

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