

Transition of timber usage in 17-19th century deduced from materials of coffin boards at Sugen-ji graveyard site, Tokyo

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Over the large part of the Japan's main islands, the use of forest resources had changed in Edo period. During the early half of the 17th century, timbers were produced from natural forests for constructing castles and cities, resulting in depletion of wood throughout Japan. Later on, felling activities were banned by law associated with efforts to regenerate forests by plantation. The enhanced measure of forest protection might have greatly affected to the pattern of timber consumption in cities. However, lack of documented records makes it difficult to reconstruct the historical change of timber use during the time period. Wood artifacts from urban archaeological sites can be a promising material to overcome this issue. In this study, we collected coffin boards used in the graveyards for commoners at the Sugen-ji archaeological site, Tokyo. The samples were dendrochronologically dated and the species were identified. The results will show the transition of timber use in the city of Edo during the 17-19th century.

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