



MASASHI KUTSUWA

Birth date: December 29, 1967

Language: Japanese-native, English-fluent

Nationality: Japanese

Job title: Professor

Gifu Academy of Forest Science and Culture

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PROFILE:

I am a professor of woodwork at a college called [Gifu Academy of Forest Science and Culture \(GAFSC\)](#) since 2006. Gifu Academy is a higher educational institution established by Gifu prefectural government to provide practical multidisciplinary education in the fields of forestry, environmental education, wooden architecture, and woodwork. The objectives of the school are to produce graduates who can develop innovative and sustainable ways for communities and individuals to use forest and wood resources. GAFSC has a partnership agreement with the [University of Applied Forest Sciences Rottenburg \(Hochschule für Forstwirtschaft Rottenburg, HFR\)](#) in Germany.

I teach basic woodworking technique, how to use hand tools, how to make chairs, etc, at GAFSC. The average age of my students is in their 20's to 50's.

Besides teaching, I have several focus areas in my research. One is to preserve traditional skills of professional craftspeople and to pass them on to the next generation. For this purpose, I am building a network of woodworking educational institutes in Japan to develop the quality of education. Woodworking is taught at various institutes, such as vocational schools and art universities, but there is little exchanges among them.

In addition, I established a non-profit organization called [GINOWA](#) (meaning “circles of skills”) in 2024 to help traditional craftspeople solve their problems.

Another focus area is to spread the joy of woodworking to a wide range of people through “green woodworking”. Green woodworking is a way of making small crafts and simple furniture by using green wood and hand tools. I learned this method in the UK and started promoting it in Japan since 2006. The population of Japanese green woodworking fans keeps growing.

EDUCATION:

April 1999 – March 2001 [Shinrin Takumijuku](#) (private woodworking college)

April 1986 – March 1991 [University of Tsukuba](#)

Bachelor of arts in international social sciences.

WORK EXPERIENCE:

February 2024 – present

Representative director of a non-profit organization GINOWA (meaning “circles of skills”).

The organization supports traditional craftspeople in solving their problems under a contract with Gifu prefectural government.

April 2006 – present

Full time woodwork teacher at Gifu Academy of Forest Science and Culture (GAFSC), teaching basic skills and knowledge of hand tools, and craft and furniture making, etc.

September 2004 – February 2006

Full time woodworker at Borders Forest Trust / Woodschool, Scotland, United Kingdom, made crafts and furniture for the gallery owned by the trust.

April 2004 –September 2004

Full time woodworker / office assistant at [David Colwell Design](#), Wales, United Kingdom, prototyped chairs, making drawings, building a website, for David Colwell.

September 2001 – March 2004

Full time woodworker at James Winby Furniture, England, United Kingdom, made specially commissioned furniture.

April 1991 – March 1999

Full time TV program director at NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation), Japan's biggest public TV station, produced news documentary programs.

PUBLICATIONS

2023

[“Green Wood Chair Making”](#)

This book introduces how to make various chairs using green wood and hand tools.

Author: Masashi Kutsuwa

Publisher: One Publishing
ISBN 978-4651203997

2022

“The Van Gogh Chair”, an article about indigenous greenwood chair making in Spain and Japanese arts-and-crafts leaders who were inspired by it, [Mortise and Tenon Magazine Issue Twelve](#), The United States.

2021

[“Green Woodwork \(expanded and revised edition\)”](#)

This book introduces basic ideas and skills of green woodworking for the beginners.

Author: Masashi Kutsuwa

Publisher: One Publishing

ISBN 978-4651201689

2019

[“Green Woodwork”](#)

This book introduces basic ideas and skills of green woodworking for the beginners.

Author: Masashi Kutsuwa

Publisher: Gakken Plus

ISBN 978-4058010723

2016

[“Van Gogh Chair”](#)

This is a book about indigenous greenwood chair making in Spain and Japanese arts-and-crafts leaders who were inspired by it.

Author: Masashi Kutsuwa

Publisher: Seibundo Shinkosha

ISBN 978-4416516065

November 2013, January 2014, March 2014

“Making the Van Gogh Chair”, serial articles about indigenous greenwood chair making in Spain and Japanese arts-and-crafts leaders who were inspired by it, Living Woods Magazine, The United Kingdom.

January 2012

“Fishing for a future”, an article about succeeding the technique of bamboo basketry to make traditional cormorant fishing baskets, Living Woods Magazine, The United Kingdom.

AWARDS

2024

[“The 5th MITSUI Golden Takumi Award”](#)

(as a group called “Egonoki Project” to harvest material for Japanese traditional umbrellas)

This award is given to craftspeople and organizations that are preserving traditions while looking to the future to sustain and develop traditional Japanese crafts.

2019

[“Wille Sundqvist and Bill Coperthwaite Slöjd Fellowship”](#)

This is awarded to craftspeople to further deepen the meaning, skills, and connections among those passionate about simple living and handmade objects.