

## Gatekeeper at Japan's Suicide Forest hopes music can save lives

From his **hut** on the edge of Japan's "Suicide Forest", Kyochi Watanabe blasts John Lennon's "Imagine" into the night—hoping that music can lift people from their despair before it's too late. The 60-year-old musician has been **waging** an eight-year battle to **banish** the vast forest's **morbid** reputation by reaching out to those who come to end their lives.

hut 小屋

wage 进行; 开展

banish 放逐

morbid 病态的; 恐怖的

The forest, known as Aokigahara, made global headlines last year when YouTube star Logan Paul filmed an episode of his online series there, showing a suicide victim at the site.

The **footage** sparked outrage and **infuriated** Watanabe, who was born nearby and has spent most of his life in and around the forest. He believes music is a way to reach people **engulfed** in inner **turmoil**, and describes seeing people turn around and leave the forest when they hear the blasting tunes.

footage 电影镜头

infuriate 激怒

engulf 吞没

turmoil 混乱; 骚动

Aokigahara's long history dates back to the middle of the ninth century, when Mount Fuji erupted and **lava** covered wide areas that have since transformed into a 30 square-kilometer forest.

lava 岩浆

It is a **foreboding** place, thickly planted with tall trees that **block out** the sun, and carpeted with **moss** and gnarled roots. That led in the 1970s to it being increasingly depicted in popular novels, movies and television dramas as the fictional setting for suicides. The association eventually became strong enough that suicidal people began travelling to the forest to die.

foreboding 预感的; 预兆

block out 封闭

moss 苔藓

Watanabe knows he faces an uphill struggle, but says he is committed to his campaign.

"Because I was born here, I have to protect this place," he says. "I'm a gatekeeper. I feel it's like my duty."