



Kagoshima
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(KICWNH)

NEWSLETTER

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The Project to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Yakushima's Designation as a World Natural Heritage Site



Tatsuro Suga

Governor
Kagoshima Prefecture

Yakushima was designated as the first World Natural Heritage Site in Japan in December, 1993, together with Shirakami Sanchi (Aomori and Akita prefectures). The main reasons for Yakushima's designation were, the altitudinal distribution of diverse vegetation ranging from subtropical to cool temperate zone created by the large precipitation, mid climate and altitudinal difference, and the characteristic forest of giant trees such as Yaku cedars aged for several thousand years. I would like to express my heartfelt welcome to the participants from the island of Yakushima and beyond to the symposium commemorating the 10th anniversary of the designation.

We have been promoting the "Yakushima Environmental Cultural Village Concept" in Yakushima, a type of community development unique to Yakushima where we try to conserve the natural environment and at the same time allow local people to live in harmony with nature. With the close cooperation and coordination of the parties concerned, we will hope to promote the conservation of the natural environment, improvement of environmental studies, and eco-tourism to encourage this unique community development.

In the past ten years since its designation as a World Natural Heritage Site, the number of visitors

to Yakushima has doubled, resulting in a favorable change in the local economy. However, there is a concern about the overuse of the mountainous area, hindering the conservation of the natural environment.

This symposium aims at finding out specific measures against the issues that people have to tackle in Yakushima in the future. We sincerely hope that this symposium will help develop the awareness of Yakushima, a World Natural Heritage Site, and its conservation as well as its unique community development.

I would like to conclude my greeting by expressing my deep appreciation to the people concerned who contributed to this symposium.



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Yakushima NOW

Report on the Hands-on Environmental Study Promotion Project of Kamiyaku Town

Yakushima High School in Yakushima is the only school in Kagoshima Prefecture that has an Environmental Studies Course where students can specialize in the study of the environment. The environmental education program has highlighted the non-existence of an environmental education system for the community and identified the following problems: 1) the lack of cooperation within the community, 2) the lack of communication among people of different generations, 3) the lack of teaching materials and teaching staff.

In order to solve these problems, Kamiyaku Town was commissioned by the Environmental Ministry to conduct "The Hands-on Environmental Study Promotion Project" in the fiscal year of 2002.

Contents of the project

Environmental Studies Group of High School Students

Provide high school students with opportunities to take on the role of leaders, understand the status quo of the environmental problems, environmental education and the endeavors to conserve the environment in order to encourage them to proactively participate in future independent projects.

Field Work Session in Yakushima

–Take part in basic field work projects with researchers who have conducted field work in Yakushima. The high school students' participation in this session will deepen their understanding of the natural and living environment of Yakushima. This will also provide a good learning opportunity to acquire research techniques.

Exchange Meeting with the local people

–The purpose of this Exchange Meeting is that people of different generations and social status such as high school students, local residents, and representatives of business entities can become aware of the local environmental problems, make suggestions for the solutions to those problems, then carry them out.

Practical training for environmental leaders

–The achievements gained by the high school students will be presented at sites such as elementary and junior high schools. This will verify the hands-on environmental study project conducted this year. This will also contribute to improve the awareness of being environmental leaders.



Implementation plan of The 10th anniversary of Yakushima's Designation as a World Natural Heritage Site

1.Objectives

In order to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Yakushima's designation as the first World Natural Heritage Site in Japan in December, 1993, a symposium will be held with the theme of the conservation of the natural environment of Yakushima. This will provide an opportunity to evaluate the efforts of the ten years and to obtain implications and opinions for future activities.

2. Dates and schedule

Dates: 28(Tue) and 29 (Wed), October 2003

Venue: Yakushima Development Center (Miyamoura, Kamiyaku Town, Kagoshima Prefecture)

Oct 28

17:30-18:00 Opening address

Organizer, guest, entertainment, Elementary, junior high, high school students, youth group

18:00-19:00 Presentation

19:00-20:00 Keynote Speech Mr. Wahei Tatematsu

20:10- Exchange Meeting

Oct 29

9:00-16:00 Site visits

Eco-tour participation

17:00-19:30 Panel Discussion

19:30-20:00 Plenary Session

20:00-20:05 Closing

3. Keynote Speaker

Mr. Wahei Tatematsu (writer)

4. Presentation participants

Theme: "The Future of Yakushima as a World Natural Heritage Site"

* Elementary and junior high school students: members of Yakushima Eco-kids

* High school students: students of Environmental Studies Course, Yakushima High School

* Youth Group: Youth Group of Kamiyaku and Yaku Town

5. Panel Discussion

Theme: "Eco-tourism and the environmental ticket system"

* Coordinator: Norizo Higeta, Director, Yakusugi Museum of Yaku Town

* Panelists

- Mr. Yusaku Oyama (Director of Yakushima Wild Plant

Research Institute, Special advisor to Yakushima Environmental Culture Foundation)

- Ms. Ai Okada (guide, Yakushima Outdoor Activity Center)

- Ms. Kimiko Ozawa (Tokyo Gakugei University, Environmental Education)

- Mr. Mineo Kato (Yokohama National University, Natural Environmental Law)

- Mr. Masaaki Hyodo (Representative, "Yakushima Islanders' Council 21")

6. Organizer

The Executive Committee of the 10th anniversary of Yakushima's Designation as a World Natural Heritage Site

(composed of Kamiyaku and Yaku towns, Yakushima Environmental Culture Foundation, Kagoshima Prefectural Government)



Kagoshima International Conference on World Natural Heritage - Participating Regions Heritage Corner

Overview Of The Sunderbans Natural Heritage II

In the previous issue, an overview of "Sundarbans", the only World Natural Heritage Site in Bangladesh was introduced. In this issue, various ecotourism spots within that site, its current state and its problems are described.

Ecotourism

The Sundarban is the Everest of Bangladesh. This is because of her majestic beauty, richness of biodiversity and quietness. There are many aspects to learn and enjoy from all over the Sundarban forest. The major ecotourism spots in the Sundarban are located in the World Heritage Site that can easily attract the tourist/visitors. These are as follows:

Katka: Katka is an eye catching and quiet island located in the north-west part of Sundarban bordering to Bay of Bengal. Katka is an excellent and most favorable tourist spot, where visitors can enjoy by watching bird, wildlife especially Royal Bengal Tiger and deer roaming around by country boat through small creeks and canals and also by walking through the forest. One can also enjoy by swimming and sun bathing at katka desolate white sand beach.

Kachikhali: Kachikhali is the safest roaming and breeding ground for the Royal Bengal Tiger and is also known as "Tiger Point". There is a Forest Department resort, which is used by the tourists. Visitors spend time by walking around the tiger point, Katka- Kachikhali beach and visiting the Egg island or Dimer Char, a small island close to Kachikhali.

Nilkamal: Nilkamal is a beautiful place, which stands beside the Bay of Bengal. The World Heritage plaque unveiled at Hiron Point, a very renowned place of Nilkamal. The oceanic beauty touches the green mangroves of Nilkamal must attract visitors from the watchtower of Keorasuthi another attractive spot of Nilkamal. Thousands of spotted deer, birds and sometimes Royal Bengal tiger can be seen from the tower.

Dublar Char: Dublar Char is an island famous for dring fish during the month of November- February in the winter season. This place is also famous for religious festival of Hindu community popularly known as "Rashmela" that takes place at the end of November. Visitors come here and enjoy livelihood of fisherman and drying of fishes which are exported to domestic and foreign markets.

Current State

The Sundarbans comprises 45% of the total productive forest of the country, contributing about one-half of forest related revenue. The major timber extraction activities are stopped due to banning timber extraction from natural forest since 1989. Yet about 50 to 60 thousand people work regularly and continuously for about six months, while the number of people entering the forest in a year can be as high as 3.5 million inside the Sundarbans for minor forest produce collection and fishing. Of these about 25 thousands people work in fish drying, 200 thousands people in shrimp fry collection inside Sundarbans and about 200 thousands people are engaged in shrimp fry collection in the rivers and creeks around the Sundarban. About 2.5 million people live in the villages surrounding the Sundarban, while the number of people within 20 km of the Sundarban boundary is 3.14 million. The main forest products are timber (top dying extraction and seized during illegal felling), firewood, thatching material, newsprint raw material, honey & wax, fish & crabs, shrimp fry and miscellaneous fuel wood etc. Of all the products the fishery of Sundarban represents the most important non-wood component of the forest, that constitutes 5% of the total fish harvest of Bangladesh. A study in 1994 showed that the fisheries value of the Sundarban has been estimated at 209.9 million US\$/km and the stock of fish in the areas has been estimated at 2.9 to 3.7 ton/km.

Problems in the Sundarbans World Heritage Site

The Sundarbans is under scientific management for over 100 years. So far, Sundarbans management mainly deals with plant resources through harvesting but could not be regulated properly, due to demand of the people and illicit removal of the forest produces. Other aspects of ecosystems like wildlife, fishery, tourism, biodiversity conservation and socio-economics aspects of the surrounding population have not been taken into due consideration. After declaration of World Heritage Site, all sorts of commercial operations have been banned in heritage areas but no remarkable development programme has yet been taken by

the authority. However, through the practical management, conservation and development of World Heritage Site, there are many more problems awaiting solutions. These include low community awareness of heritage protection, inadequate manpower and fund to protect illicit felling of timber and poaching in the heritage site and synchronous legal documents for heritage management and conservation. We must always strengthen and apply the necessary measures to improve the management capacity of the World Heritage Area.

written by Md.Abdul Latif, DFO, Mymensingh Forest Division



Map : 1 World Heritage Site of Sundarban RF.



Photograph 1: The partial view of World Heritage Site of Sundarban RF.



Photograph 2 :The partial view of fishing in Sundarban RF



Photograph 3: Collection of Gopata (minor forest produce) from Sundarban RF

Editor's note

It has been 10 years since Yakushima was designated as Japan's first World Natural Heritage Site. From March to May of this year, the selection of the next "candidate for the World Natural Heritage Site" was conducted in Japan. One of the three selected sites was the Ryukyu Archipelago which includes the Amami islands of Kagoshima Prefecture. Details of this will be reported in the next issue.

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