



Kagoshima
International
Conference
on World Natural Heritage
(KICWNH)

NEWSLETTER
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Activities of the Yakushima Environmental Culture Village Foundation

Following the explanation of the Yakushima Environmental Culture Village Concept and the Foundation listed in Newsletter No. 3, this issue explains the Yakushima Environmental Culture Village Foundation in more detail.

The core facilities of the Yakushima Environmental Culture Village Foundation are "The Yakushima Environmental Culture Village Center" and "The Yakushima Environmental Culture Learning Center".



Yakushima Environmental Culture Village Center

island designated as the World Natural Heritage Site. The center also provides information on environmental studies and exhibits special products.

[Role and function of the facility]

- To provide information on nature and culture of Yakushima –metrology, geology, flora and fauna, history, culture, other facilities
- To promote environmental studies –basic guidance, supporting activities, education on country codes
- To provide exchange meetings connecting in and out of the region
- sending and receiving information, creating exchange meetings, providing manpower to support activities
- Core to promote the Environmental Cultural Village Concept
- Secretariat of the Foundation, conducting joint activities, providing information materials

[Outline of the facility]

· Site area: approx. 4,500 m² · Total floor space: 2700 m²

[Major facilities]

- Large Screen Hall (capacity: 250 persons)
- A dynamic introduction to the scenery of Yakushima is given on the 14m x 20m screen.
- Exhibition Hall (An atrium with a spiral pathway)
- An introduction to the nature and lifestyle of Yakushima is made with picture panels and models.
- Yakushima Lobby, 3 lecture rooms, Produce corner, tea room

"Yakushima Environmental Culture Learning Center" is a core facility for environmental studies with Yakushima as a study field. It conducts a variety of seminars on environmental studies to learn how humankind can live in harmony with na-



Yakushima Environmental Culture Village Learning Center

ture, and the importance of environmental protection. The center is also entrusted with training guides and volunteers.

[Role and function of the facility]

- Promotion of environmental studies and training manpower

Providing a variety of training programs on environmental studies, training of volunteers and others, educating and promoting country codes.

- Promotion of mutual exchange among training participants
- Providing opportunities for mutual exchange, training, exchange between islanders and researchers related to Yakushima, etc.

Accommodation for training participants
Providing accommodation and other services

[Outline of the facility]

· Site area: approx. 20,000 m² · Total floor space: 2800 m²

[Major facilities]

- Audio-visual room (capacity: 80 persons)
 - Nature Library
 - Lodgings (15 rooms)
 - Dining Hall (also used as a gathering room)
 - Lecture rooms (3 rooms)
 - Camping site (with roofs, capacity: 50 persons)
- This site can also be used on rainy days

For more information, please contact :

The Yakushima Environmental and Cultural Foundation
823-1, Miyanoura, Kamiyaku Town, Kumage-gun,
Kagoshima Prefecture, 891-4205, Japan
Tel: 09974-2-2911 Fax: 09974-9-1018



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JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) Training Program to accept trainees

This project was started in 1997 in collaboration with JICA. This report is about the inspections by two participants Mia Md. Abdul Lat (Divisional Forest Officer, Myensingh forest Division) from Bangladesh, and Sher Singh Thagunna (Asst. Planning Officer, Department of National Parks & Wildlife Conservation) from Nepal, during the period 13th – 22nd November, 2002 in Yakushima and other locations.

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November 13th

An orientation program about the inspection program and courses was given by the Kagoshima Prefectural Government.

November 14th

Explanations of the prefectural policies on natural park management and the protection management of wild life was given in the morning at Kagoshima Prefectural Government's office.

In the afternoon an inspection took place on Sakurajima, a part of Kirishima Yaku National Park, which was designated as the first national park in Japan. Sakurajima is an active volcano. Inspections included the relations between a volcano and the people living in the neighborhood, and their disaster prevention measures.

November 16th

Participants travelled to Yakushima, which is registered as Japan's first World Natural Heritage Area. A visit was made to Yakushima's Nagatahama beach, where Japan's largest number of turtles come ashore. The protection activities of the volunteers and turtle ecology were inspected at "Yakushima Umigame-kan (Turtle Center)". Then, they inspected the exhibits about the lifestyle on Yakushima. Guidance was given on the "Yakushima Environmental Culture Village Concept" at the Yakushima Environmental Culture Village Center

November 17th

In the morning relations between Yakushima people and Yakusugi cedars at the Yakusugi Museum in Yaku Town were studied. Then an eco-tour was conducted in Yakusugi Land, a part of the Yakushima Recreation Forest (Arakawa District) by instructors of Yakushima Environmental Culture Learning Center in the afternoon.

November 18th

After guidance was given on the management system of the Environmental Ministry for the World Natural Heritage and National Parks at the Yakushima World Heritage Conservation Center, they visited the Seibu Rindoh Path of the World Natural Heritage Site. In this area the altitudinal distribution of plants varying from subtropical to cool temperate can be seen. It is the major reason why Yakushima was designated as a World Natural Heritage Area. They were also able to see Yaku deer and Yaku macaque.

November 19th

After studying the history and folk customs of Yakushima at the Museum on History and folklore of Kamiyaku Town in the morning, guidance was given on the forest protection policies and afforestation at "Yakushima Forest Envi-

ronmental Protection Center" of Forestry Agency in the afternoon. Inspection of the wooden sidewalks took place at Shiratani-Unsui Gorge of Yakushima Recreation Forest (Shirakawa District).

November 20th

They visited the town offices of both Kamiyaku and Yaku towns and guidance was given on their environmental preservation work. An inspection was conducted at the rhododendrons cultivation complex in Kamiyaku Town, and they also visited Yaku Town to see equipment that transforms waste cooking oil into fuels and the recycling plant of organic wastes.

November 21st

After returning to Kagoshima City, discussions on this inspection took place at Kagoshima Prefectural Government before they left for their home countries the following day.

Below are some comments by the participants

- Explanation and maintenance of mountain path sidewalks was conducted with great care.
- The Yakushima people had a high awareness of nature conservation.
- They also would like to introduce pre-guidance before site visits in their home countries.

Kagoshima Prefectural Government plans to continue to accept these inspections in cooperation with JICA and other organizations.



Inspection Tour



Yakushima NOW

Summit on the Environment of the World's Cedar Tree in Yakushima

Date: November 8th, 2002 (Fri)
Venue: Yaku Town Gymnasium



Summit on the Environment of the World's Cedar Tree in Yakushima

The first Summit Meeting was held in Imaichi City in Tochigi Prefecture 1999 under the title "Summit on the Environment of the World's three largest cedars". The meetings are scheduled to be held every three years, this is the second.

At the Summit Meeting, Mr. Tono Hidaka, Mayor of Yaku Town and chairman of the organizing committee delivered a greeting. Then, Mr. Yukio Kitazono, on behalf of the Governor of Kagoshima Prefecture said that it is important to consider the global environment through cedars, and pass on a message for environmental protection and peace to the rest of the world.



Lecture by Mr. Mamoru Mori, an astronaut

In the keynote speech under the title of "Gift from Space", Mr. Mamoru Mori, Japan's first astronaut, appeared in his uniform and stated that "nature is a common possession of all living things. We should recover the global environment". Students of Gakunan Junior High School who communicated with Mr. Mori while he was flying in the Space Shuttle 3 years ago also participated and they were delighted to see him again.

This was followed by a panel discussion entitled "Relations between cedars and people", coordinated by Mr. Norizo Higeta, Director of

Yakusugi Museum and participated in by seven panelists. Although 68% of the nation's land is forest, 80% of the total lumber is imported. Therefore it is necessary to develop a local community that fulfills its unique potential while utilizing local lumber. It was also noted that Yaku cedars are approximately 40% stronger than the lumber produced in Kagoshima Prefectural mainland. It was concluded that cases from Yakushima that utilize local cedars should be presented.

Finally, there was a presentation of the Cedar Environment Charter, and it was agreed that participants will meet again in the next meeting held in the State of California, USA three years later.

The Cedar Environment Charter

To all participants of the Summit on the Environment of the World's Cedar Tree Sites!

Let's join together in the efforts to improve our environment, and take an oath to:

- Love our green homeland and protect tradition and culture.
- Protect the precious heritage of the cedar tree sites, and make sure to pass it untouched to our future generations.
- Cope with the global warming threat on a multinational level and coexist with nature.
- Use the cedar tree sites to strengthen the multinational exchange, friendship and peace.



Overview Of The Sunderbans Natural Heritage

1. Outline

The Sunderbans is the largest single tract of mangrove forest in the world. It is unique because of its size and significance in balancing the local eco-system. Two-thirds of the Sunderban forest, that spreads from the southern end of the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta and stretches to the Hoogly river are in Bangladesh. It is said that Sunderbans is named after the principal tree sundari (*Sonneratia apetala*) found here abundantly. However, the exact origin of the name is hard to determine.

The forest is very rich in biodiversity. It is the only habitat of the famous Bengal tiger. The Sunderbans play an important role in the economy of the south-western region of Bangladesh as well as in the national economy. The forests provide raw material for wood based industries. In addition to the traditional forest produce like timber, fuelwood, pulpwood etc., large scale harvest of non wood forest products takes place regularly. The climate of the Sunderbans is humid maritime tropical with a marked seasonality shared between heavy monsoon rains and a dry relatively cool winter. There are mainly two seasons in the Sunderbans with two transitional months.

The Sunderbans World Heritage Site is composed of three Wildlife Sanctuaries namely East Wildlife Sanctuary, South Wildlife Sanctuary and West Wildlife Sanctuary. The total World Heritage Site is 1400 km² out of which 910 km² is land area and 490 km² is water area. The three sanctuaries are intersected by a complex network of tidal waterways, mudflats and small islands of salt-tolerant mangrove forest.

ii. Reasons for inscription on the World Heritage List

The World Heritage Committee of UNESCO inscribed the Sunderbans in the World Heritage list by a decision taken in its 21st session in December 6, 1997 as it is one of the largest remaining mangroves in the world, which supports an exceptional biodiversity with a wide range of flora and fauna including the Bengal tiger and provides a significant example of on going ecological processes like monsoonal rains, flooding, delta formation, tidal influences and plant colonization. The Sunderbans mangrove forest is unique in composition of its flora and fauna including threatened species like Bengal tiger, estuarine crocodile and Indian python. In no way it can be compared to the forests of similar kind in the Indo-Malayan realm. The Sunderbans is the co-existence of terrestrial and aquatic

plant and animal life in a delicate balance. This ecosystem is fragile and sensitive to interference. This is considered as a vital link in the estuarine fisheries because the tidal creeks of the Sunderbans act as a fish nursery both for marine and freshwater migratory shrimps. The natural process of regeneration of life in the Sunderbans is vital for both science and nature conservation. The Sunderbans has outstanding natural value.



The Sunderbans



Editor's note

Concerning the 2nd Conference on World Natural Heritage

The 2nd Conference on World Natural Heritage was to be held in the State of Queensland, Australia in the autumn of this year. However, the State requested to withdraw from holding the conference in consideration of the safety measures necessary in the current world climate.

As of now, discussion is taking place on the matter between the State of Queensland, Aomori Prefecture, which wishes to hold the 3rd conference, the UNESCO World Heritage Center and

Kagoshima prefecture. It is now clear that the conference will not be held in Queensland this autumn.

Kagoshima Prefecture ardently hopes to hold the Conference on World Natural Heritage in the coming years. Your further understanding and cooperation with this matter is appreciated.

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Nature Conservation Division,
Kagoshima Prefectural Government
10-1, Kamoike Shin-machi, Kagoshima City 890-8577
<http://chukakunet.pref.kagoshima.jp/home/kanhogoka/heritage>