

The islands of Kagoshima : culture, society, industry and nature

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Chapter 13

Tourism Around the Kagoshima Prefecture Islands

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1. Introduction

It would be too difficult for a tourist to visit all the islands in Kagoshima Prefecture. For example, more than 320 km separate Kagoshima city, the capital of the prefecture, and Yoronjima Is., which is at the southern end of the prefecture. Tourists therefore can not visit all of the islands at one time, and they go to one of four areas; Kumage, Amami, Koshiki, and Nagashima. Since few tourists visit Koshiki and Nagashima, we could focus on Kumage and Amami for our analysis.

In this paper, we describe the distinctive tourism areas in the Kagoshima islands and classify them by characteristic factors. It is possible that this classification will establish new trends of tourism in island areas. Among these eco-tourism sites that have been defined as World Natural Heritage sites. Eco-tourism is a form of tourism that has a low impact on the environment and economy of the islands. This form of tourism is conducted giving foremost important to the environment, and it has developed the islands more slowly than other forms would; in other words, they have achieved Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS). We find these trends in Yakushima Is. in the Kumage area.

The Kagoshima Prefectural Visitors Bureau (KPVB) furnishes a lot of information for tourists including on parks, monuments, beaches, natural resources, good views, traditional culture, and so on.¹ The data gathered by KPVB will be of use for our analysis. It is thus necessary to sum up the pertinent information as follows.

2. Tourism spots from geographic features in Kagoshima Prefecture

2.1. Kumage area: World Heritage site and space center site

The Kumage area consists of Yakushima Is., Tanegashima Is., and the Tokara Islands. It should be noted that Yakushima Is. was registered as a World Natural Heritage site in 1993. The Kagoshima Space Center, which has been located on Tanegashima Is. since 1969, is the only space rocket launching site in Japan. On the Tokara Archipelago, with its faraway solitary islands, the traditional life and culture reflective of the southern islands of Japan is sustained.

2.1.1. Impact as a World Natural Heritage site: Yakushima Is.

Yakushima Is. was cultivated as a wood resource by Satsuma-han in the seventeenth Century. In fact, Japanese cedar forests continued to be cut down there until the 1970s. The nature conservation movement in Yakushima Is, which is known as Yakushima-wo-mamorukai, was established in 1972 to prevent deforestation caused by lumbering and to make the region eligible for registration of as a World Natural Heritage site to encourage tourism. The founders of this movement were pioneers of eco-tourism in Japan.

The great number of tourists want to visit “Jomon-sugi,” a huge Japanese cedar tree that, according to popular belief, is more than 4,000 years old. These tourists need to hire an eco-tour guide to lead them around an 8-hour course. Tourists who would like to see other huge trees - the 1,000-year-old trees known as Yakusugi - that stand in the heart

1. Kagoshima Prefectural Visitors Bureau website. <http://www.kagoshima-kankou.com/for/>

of the mountains also require an eco-guide. There are more than 40 peaks rising to 1,000 m above sea level and a further 11 peaks at 1,500 m above sea level on Yakushima Is, which measures only 504.88 km².

After the island was registered as a World Natural Heritage site in 1993, eco-tour guides began preparing various services in anticipation of an increase in tourism. Among these services are scuba diving, sea kayaking, waterfall climbing, mountain biking and others. The number of eco-tourism guide was recently estimated at more than 200, among which are about 100 full-time guides. Many accommodations are available for tourists. All this might beg the question: Has tourism contributed to a better economy on Yakushima Is? The answer is “yes” and “no,” “yes” because the annual number of visitors in the 1980s was about 120,000, a number which had increased to about 320,000 in 2011 (an increase of approximately 200,000 visitors since Yakushima Is. was registered as a World Natural Heritage site) and “no” because the numbers of tourists are insufficient to rebuild the economy.² Indeed, tourism has created at best a slow economic growth. To demonstrate this, we will compare the numbers cited above to the numbers in another tourist area. It is known that 300,000 tourists visited the aquarium in Kagoshima-city during the same period (HAGINO 2011). Thus, eco-tourism to Yakushima Is. has only created moderate growth.

While it is sometimes difficult to balance the needs of tourism with those of nature conservation, it is certain that inhabitants of Yakushima Is. will find solutions to address the issues as they arise.

2.1.2. Japan's Space rocket launching site: Tanegashima Is.

All Japanese schoolchildren have heard of Tanegashima Is., an island on which guns were produced by Portuguese gunsmiths in the sixteenth century. A production of guns presented cutting-edge technology at the time, just as spaceflight represents the cutting-edge technology today. As both technologies were introduced on Tanegashima Is., tourists visit museums dedicated to each technology there.

Produce grown in Tanegashima Is. is a result of the “Collaboration Between Agriculture, Commerce and Industry” - a government policy that prohibits the import of foreign agricultural produce. This policy has increased local production of the delicious sweet potato, “*An-no-imo*,” so much that the price has stabilized at high levels all across Japan. Tourists should relish the taste of baked *An-no-imo*, and of *shochu*, Japanese spirits distilled from sweet potatoes.

It should be noted that while the residents of Tanegashima Is. have embraced new technology, it seems that they have no interest in tourism and so have left the development of tourism to the people of Yakushima Is.

2.1.3. A self-sufficient economy on the Tokara Archipelago

Jacques MAYOL was a world-renowned pioneer of free diving, who visited the Tokara Archipelago to film a movie in 1994. The Tokara Archipelago is made up of solitary islands that lie far off the mainland, which means that natural environment there has been well preserved. This Archipelago lies within a volcanic region, and so, its environment has been altered by volcanic activities. Tourists visiting Tokara are therefore typically interested in earth science, as volcanic activity has produced a hot spa on each island within the archipelago.

The Tokara Archipelago itself is composed of 12 islands, 7 of which - Kuchinoshima Is., Nakanoshima Is., Tairajima Is., Suwanosejima Is., Akusekijima Is., Kodakarajima Is., and Takarajima Is. - are inhabited. In the aftermath of WWII, Tokara Archipelago were administrated by the U.S. military from 1946 to 1952. This historical course created a peculiar administration, which today belongs to Toshima Village, in the Tokara area. Thus, the local government is not based in the Tokara area, but in Kagoshima City on the island of Kyushu.

In 1960s, hippie activists built a commune in Suwanosejima Is., one of the most active volcanoes in Japan and the world. This commune remains in place today because the original self-sufficient econ-

2. Yakushima World Heritage Conservation Center website (in Japanese). <http://www.env.go.jp/park/kirishima/ywhcc/np/cdata.htm>

omy of these islands has sustained it, allowing its members to barter with foods. All of this takes place in the Tokara area; southern islands far from Japan.

2.1.4. The Mageshima Is. problem

Mageshima Is. lies between Yakushima Is. and Tanegashima Is. and is a deserted island; the distance between each of these islands is just 10 km. The Japanese government and the U.S. Navy have agreed to “field carrier landing practice exercises” on Mageshima in the near future, and a lot of people are not in agreement with this plan because of the potential noise pollution. Such noise pollution would prove a nuisance to eco-tourists on Yakushima Is.

Moreover, since there are deer (Mage-shika) that are indigenous only to Mageshima Is., it is feared that the species will be threatened by this military exercise.

The economy of Yakushima Is. differs from that of Tanegashima Is. This is because the former derives its income from their tourism, while the economy of the latter is driven by technology. Thus, among the islands of Mageshima, Yakushima Is., and Tanegashima Is., there exists a conflict in the way of life adopted by their populations.

2.2. The Amami area: a zone proposed for World Natural Heritage

The Amami area belonged to Satsuma-han from the time of the Ryukyu kingdom in 1609. After WWII, however, it was occupied by U.S. forces from 1946 to 1953. These historical facts have created a diversified culture in Amami that is attractive to tourists.

The Amami area consists of five islands: Amami-Oshima Is., Kikaijima Is., Tokunoshima Is., Okinoerabujima Is, and Yoronjima Is. with a combined population of approximately 120,000, - a number higher than the population of other isolated island areas in Japan.

Although the area lies within the semitropical zone, tourists do not suffer from the heat as they are cooled by the crisp wind along the beaches.

2.2.1. Registration in the provisional list: Amami-Oshima and Tokunoshima Islands

Amami-Oshima and Tokunoshima Islands were added to the provisional list of World Natural

Heritage sites in 2013. The islands are home to a number of valuable species. One of which is Amamino-kurousagi (*Pentalagus furnessi*), a black hare that has lived on the island from ancient times. Although the Amami area has been called the Oriental Galapagos Islands, this area is not registered as a National Park of Japan yet because specific guidelines need to be met for registration. At present, there are not enough eco-tour guides valuable for tourists to enjoy nature in the Amami area.

However, tourists can participate freely in scuba diving there. At Oshima-channel, for example, divers frequently find new species of fish, because of the depth of the water. Indeed, the Oshima channel is one of the two places that were deep enough to provide anchorage for the all Japanese fleet in during WWII; the other is Asaji-Bay in Tsushima, Nagasaki Prefecture.

Among the cultural traditions of the Amami area is the weaving of Oshima-tsumugi, - a hand-crafted, smooth and feathery silk textile that is used in the production of traditional Japanese “kimono.” Perhaps surprisingly, it is an extremely expensive textile, with the most valuable pieces costing in excess of USD \$100,000 and so is looked on by many as a fine art. It is believed that if a tourist appreciates Oshima-tsumugi, he must check to have ample funds in his bank account.

Other cultural traditions enriched the life of Amami. For example, if an inhabitant of Amami invites tourists to stay in his or her home, the tourists must take part in annual events or dance when the Sanshin, a traditional instrument is played.

In brief, therefore, Amami-Oshima and Tokunoshima Is., are untapped island resources for tourism. An investor would also find an opportunity to develop a key industry in Amami.

2.2.2. Culture in the southern islands of Amami and the northern islands of Ryukyu: Okinoerabujima and Yoronjima Islands

Okinoerabujima Is. is an island famous for being a horticultural site in which lilies are grown. In fact, many lily bulbs were exported from the island to Europe in the early nineteenth century. Inhabitants of Okinoerabujima Is. have traditionally grown lily and freesia flowers as well as bulbs for lily, potato,

calf and so on. These people are hardworking and earn high incomes from the trade. Tourism is thus worthless to them, as their interest is already directed toward higher-income pursuits.

Yoronjima Is., by contrast, is ripe for tourism. It was devastated by a typhoon in 1899 and the great famine that followed. Thus, so many people migrated to the coal mines in northern Kyushu. After WWII, Yoronjima Is. was administrated by the U.S. military from 1946 to 1953. People tolerated this well, and accepted the lot that life handed them.

For a time, a business opportunity arose that made Yoronjima Is. the southern edge of Japan. This business opportunity was occasioned by its subtropical beaches. Indeed, Yoronjima Is. was reborn as a resort island that was often frequented by the Japanese until Okinawa was returned to Japan in 1972. After this, business on the island rapidly declined, supplanted by the large-scale and luxurious resorts on Okinawa. Today, the people of Yoronjima Is. have a very quiet life. It is a charming, small island for tourists.

2.2.3. Promotion of tourism: hardware to software; "Act on Special Measures for the Promotion and Development of the Amami Islands" (AMASHIN)

AMASHIN was constituted in 1954 to promote and develop the Amami Islands. At first, the policy required that all public funds be injected into public enterprises, that is, hardware enterprises (HAGINO 2005).

However, in 2012, the Japanese government budgeted monies originally earmarked for public enterprises, (approximately USD \$220 million), to inject funds into non-public enterprises, that is, software enterprises. Approximately USD \$7.7 million was made available for AMASHIN. This meant that a part of these software funds could be invested into developing tourism. Unfortunately, the amount injected into the economy was too small to promote eco-tourism, which has stressed on the importance of the software enterprises.

2.3. Remarkable points in other island areas

On Shimo-Koshikijima Is., which is in the Koshiki area, a traditional folk event wishing children hap-

piness 'Toshidon' occurs that is of sufficiently significant culture heritage to be registered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Sakurajima in Kagoshima City is one of the most representative and active volcanoes in Japan. It lies just 2 km by sea from urban districts. Thus, the urban population which numbers about 600,000, is often troubled with volcanic ash.

3. Tourism needs of Kagoshima Prefecture

3.1. Divisions and subdivisions to tourism

Spas are typically a priority for Japanese tourists. In Kagoshima Prefecture, famous spa resort areas are located in Kirishima and Ibusuki. Japanese tourists also seek spas in island areas. It seems that, for tourists, the presence of spas outweighs other attractions. Thus, the desires of tourists affect public facilities even in the island areas.

Data derived from the Kagoshima Prefectural Visitors Bureau (KPVB) distinguish tourism for each island. In this paper, four divisions are derived from the original criteria for Japanese tourists, criteria for UNESCO World Heritage sites, and domain for UNESCO Intangible Heritage sites. A number of tour spots characterize the areas of Kumage and Amami (Table 1).

3.2. Comparing the Kumage area with the Amami area

There are more heritage sites in Kumage than in Amami (Table 2, Figs 1-2). This is why Amami is not registered by UNESCO. The people concerned with registering World Natural Heritage sites should find a lot of natural resources in Amami and develop tourist spots there. It is important that tourist development and the ecology be balanced, however.

3.3. AMASHIN and the development of Amami tourism

Public facilities, including parks and swimming beaches, have been built into the AMASHIN budget. These facilities encompass more than half of the tourist spots and have been set up all around the autonomies in the Amami area. If you visit one of the parks, you might feel very isolated and that the park was set up for you alone. These facilities are

not to benefit the tourists, but the people living in Amami, “*Amanchu*”, which means they do not impact Amami tourism in other areas (Table 3).

In my view, this is wrong. The policy that is based on AMASHIN should change the direction of expenditure toward supporting tourism, such as eco-

Table 1. The divisions of facilities for tourism

Divisions	Subdivisions
Tour spot	Information, education and training institute
	Handcraft center and shop
	Monument
	Park and swimming beach
	Spa and hot spring
	Fishing point
	Museum and observatory
World Heritage (Cultural)	1) To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
	2) To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
	3) To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
	4) To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
	5) To be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
	6) To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);
World Heritage (Natural)	7) To contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance
	8) To be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
	9) To be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
	10) To contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.
Intangible Cultural Heritage	Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle
	Performing arts;
	Social practices, rituals and festive events;
	Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;L The Olonkho, Yakut Heroic
	Traditional craftsmanship.

Table 2. Comparison to Kumage and Amami from Divisions

Island area	Tour spot		Cultural heritage		Natural heritage		Intangible cultural heritage		Total	
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
Kumage	123	58.3	21	10.0	51	24.2	16	7.6	211	100
Amami	218	80.1	16	5.9	31	11.4	7	2.6	272	100

Table 3. Subdivision of tour spot

Island area	Tour spot							Total
	Information, education and training institute	Handcraft center and shop	Monument	Park and swimming beach	Spa	Fishing point	Museum and observatory	
Kumage	5	28	17	45	13	2	13	123
Amami	13	34	16	129	5	3	18	218

tourism. This is the quickest way to achieve registration of Amami World Natural Heritage sites through UNESCO.

4. Remarks: barrier to tourism in island areas³

Travel cost from urban areas

Tourists, such as island-hoppers, are put off by the cost of travel to the remote islands of Japan. Tourists from the mainland are similarly put off. This is because a return-fare ticket from Tokyo to the Kumage area costs about USD \$1,000 and about \$1,200 from Tokyo to the Amami area.

Tourism based on self-services

There are few public facilities available for travelers on the remote islands of Japan. For example, tourists must acquire a bike, rent-a-car, or walk long distances to see the sight.

Nevertheless, there are barriers

Nevertheless, tourists who visit Yakushima Is. will have a good time on its eco-tour, which is one of the best in Japan. Similarly, tourists who seek a quiet resort that is surrounded by an untouched environment would be well advised to visit Amami.

Island tourism in Kagoshima is in the early stages of development. If a tourist values time well spent more than the cost of travel, Kagoshima is the place that tourist should visit.

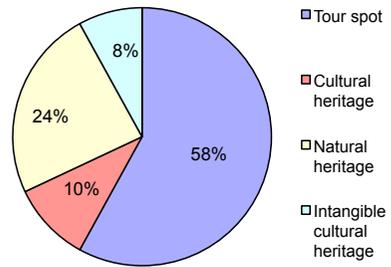


Fig. 1. Divisions in Osumi Islands area.

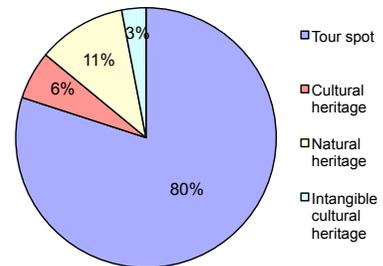


Fig. 2. Divisions in Amami Islands area.

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