

はじめに

鹿児島大学多島圏研究センターでは、平成12年と13年度に学長裁量経費の補助を受け「多島域における小島嶼の自立性」に関する総合研究プロジェクトを行った。

これは、小島嶼の自然環境や社会生活を学際的に研究することによって、過疎に悩む小島嶼が抱える問題点を浮き彫りにするとともに、その自立発展の方策を模索しようとするものである。換言するならば、経済的にもまた産業的にも厳しい環境下におかれている小島嶼における島民の暮らしや自然の研究から、混迷を極める現代社会のあり方を再考しようとするのが、本研究プロジェクトの上位目標である。

本研究では日本の離島特に南西諸島を対象としたものと、ミクロネシア共和国ヤップ州の研究に分かれる。一見すると関連性のない対象域ではあるが両者は過疎や遠隔性に起因する共通の問題を抱える点で共通している。

今後、当センターにおいて発展的継続が期待される鹿児島県以南の南西諸島の学術総合研究の端緒となることが本報告書に期待されるものであろう。

本研究を行うにあたっては、数々のご支援を賜った鹿児島大学長、田中弘允教授や研究協力課をはじめ関係の皆様に深く御礼申しあげたい。

鹿児島大学多島圏研究センター

プロジェクト委員会委員長

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Preface

We are pleased to announce the publication of the official report of the research project "Social Homeostasis of Small Islands in an Island-Zone" conducted by the Kagoshima University Research Center for the Pacific Islands (KURCPI) in the years 2000 and 2001.

This multi-disciplinary research project was started in 1999 as a three-year project by the four members of the KURCPI with the collaboration of more than forty researchers from other faculties of Kagoshima University. The term "homeostasis" describes, as its biological origin suggests, the actual and potential ways in which the stability, not necessarily static but also dynamic, and the sustainability of a society are achieved, without forfeiting its interaction and inter-dependency with the outside world. The goal of the project is to obtain an understanding of how social homeostasis may be achieved in a society on a small island. The term "island-zone" indicates that an island, though insulated by the sea, needs to be understood in the context of a group of islands, where networks of people, things, and information are formed and interaction between islands take place.

As the main research fields for the project, we chose the Satsunan Islands in Southern Japan and the island-zone of Yap in Micronesia. Both are island-zones consisting of a group of small islands with biological, social, and cultural relationships among themselves, and they share common difficulties, typical of small islands. The main difference between them is that the Satsunan Islands are a peripheral part of one of the most developed economies in the world, whereas the island-zone of Yap belongs to a modest island nation. This contrast enabled us to make a comparative approach to the studies on small islands.

The present report represents results of the research project in its second and third years. It consists of two parts, each forming an individual volume in the KURCPI Occasional Paper Series. Part One, in volume 38, is a collection of papers which involve the researches carried out in Japan in 2000 and 2001. These researches concern a variety of topics relating to island-zones and small islands in Southern Japan. Part Two, in volume 39, contains papers based on the researches carried out in 2000 and 2001 in Yap, Micronesia, including the research conducted by the Survey Party in Ulithi Atoll in 2001. The drafts of the papers in Part Two were reviewed by the Council of Tamol (traditional chiefs in the Outer Islands of Yap) to ensure accuracy before publication. Reflecting our multi-disciplinary approach, both Part One and Two are subdivided into sections on human activities, physical geography, and people-nature interactions. Each section involves, (1) history, society, culture, education, tourism, and human movement, (2) geology, geography, and ecology, and (3) agriculture, fisheries, public health, and the impact of natural disasters.

We hope this two-volume report will bring benefits to the people of the local communities with which the research was concerned. We also hope this provides us with an insight into the present conditions of the two island zones in the Northwestern Pacific and that it will further encourage studies on the small islands in this part of the world, so that researchers can exchange ideas and information and develop general theories on small islands in the future.

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