



OUIK Newsletter

CBD COP 12 and OUIK's Contribution

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Dear OUIK supporters,

Since its establishment in 2008, OUIK has been conducting policy-relevant research and dissemination of information from the grassroots and regional level up to the international research community level in the field of conservation of biological diversity.

As you may know, the Aichi Targets, which define the strategy of the Convention on Biological Diversity from 2010 to 2020 were agreed by the Convention's parties at COP 10, held in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture in 2010. Following discussions in Hyderabad at COP 11 in 2012, one of the important agenda items for this year is to evaluate the progress towards achieving the Aichi Targets at COP12, which will be held in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea.

For OUIK, COP12 would be a good opportunity not only to share our activities and outcomes with participants, but also to sharpen our mission and contribution to the global arena. To report on its activities, OUIK will hold an official side event titled "Traditional Agricultural Systems and Biological Diversity" on 7 October 2014, jointly organized with Rural Development Administration, National Academy of Agricultural Science, Republic of Korea. OUIK's Sustainable Primary Industries (SPI) team has been working to assess the impact of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) designation in the Noto Region of Ishikawa Prefecture, and the event will focus on the contributions of GIAHS designation to the conservation of biological diversity. Best practices and experiences of local governments of GIAHS designated sites in the Republic of Korea and Japan will also be shared.

The Satoyama and Satoumi (SAS) team is working on biological diversity and an ecological services assessment at the local scale by compiling a thematic map of the Hokuriku area. The team has also started to work on the Mt. Hakusan area (southern part of Ishikawa Prefecture) to support its revision process as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The Cities and Biodiversity (CAB) team is continuing with the conceptualization of the interrelationship between biological and cultural diversity based on the case of Kanazawa City.

I expect the activities described above will form the basis for an exchange of views with participants, especially from the local and regional level. Furthermore, through discussions at COP 12, I expect OUIK will find a way to play a key role in connecting policies and initiatives at various levels extending from the community, local and national government to the global level towards achieving the Aichi Targets by 2020.

OUIK's Objectives:

1. To contribute to international research activities, in collaboration with local partners, towards a sustainable society, and
2. To develop communication and networks with local stakeholders through public outreach and capacity building while sharing information on international trends.

Activity Report

Satoyama and Satoumi (SAS): Mt. Hakusan region selected as new area for research and collaboration

The Mt. Hakusan region, located in the southern part of Ishikawa Prefecture, will be the target research area of the SAS project. The Mt. Hakusan region was designated as the first Biosphere Reserve (BR) site of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme¹ in Japan along with three other sites. Since the launch of the programme in 1971, the number of BR sites has expanded to 631 reserves across 119 countries.

Since the 8th century, Mt. Hakusan has been considered one of Japan's sacred mountains along with Mt. Fuji and Mt. Tateyama. The region sees some of the heaviest snowfall in Japan and provides important natural resources for its downstream areas. Until around the 1960s to 1970s, traditional livelihoods such as slash-and-burn agriculture and sericulture were still maintained in the area. In recent years, some outstanding socio-educational facilities and activities have emerged, including the Hakusan Folk Museum, which preserves traditional houses and tools, and the



Tasting traditional food at Hakusan Folk Museum

Hakusan Nature Conservation Center for monitoring wildlife and promoting the nature of Hakusan to visitors. The local farmers and NGOs engage in new approaches to the utilization of satoyama resources, including the restoration of abandoned paddy fields and pasture for grazing weeds in the ancient Kinameri Village (Hakusan City, Ishikawa Prefecture).

The Hakusan region BR site involves six cities and one village spanning four different prefectures. They formed the Mt. Hakusan Biosphere Reserve Council for the revision of the site to extend and include the transition area with a greater scope of human activities and larger habitat in addition to the existing core area and buffer zone. In August 2014, OUIK was designated as one of the advisory members to the Council. Through its international network and close collaboration with UNESCO, OUIK would like to contribute to the council and provide support towards creating the scientific basis for natural resource management in the region in harmony with local communities.

Cities and Biodiversity (CAB): Series of Seminars on Biological and Cultural Diversity

From 12-13 August, the CAB team held a two-day seminar, inviting university professors, policy-makers from the Kanazawa municipal government and Ishikawa prefectural government, as well as local stakeholders. The aim of this series of seminars is to i) conceptualize biological and cultural diversity in the context of Japan's natural environment, ii) seek to identify the biological and cultural diversity of Kanazawa, and iii) make policy



¹ Biosphere reserves are sites established by countries and recognized under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme to promote sustainable development based on local community efforts and sound science.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-programme/>

recommendations on how these can be effectively sustained. During the discussions, Prof. Shikida (Hokkaido University) stated that the biological and cultural diversity should be considered as an interrelationship between cities and rural areas, while Prof. Nakamura (Kanazawa University) and Prof. Yumoto (Kyoto University) pointed out the importance of continuous data collection on the biological characteristics of Kanazawa and its socio-economic impacts. At the end of the seminar, Tsunao Watanabe (Director, OUIK) said that it is very important to propose the “Ishikawa-Kanazawa Model” as a policy recommendation whereby cities and rural areas can mutually provide support for the sake of their economic development and biological conservation. The seminar discussion will be compiled and presented at a UNU symposium, which will be held as a memorial event during the UNESCO Creative City Network Annual Meeting in Kanazawa, from 25-28 May 2015.

To empirically study the work conceptualized here, the CAB team and Kanazawa municipal government interviewed Mr. Koichiro Toshioka, a prominent local ceramics maker in Kanazawa. The interview was conducted to explore one of the traditional crafts of Kanazawa and to clarify how its manufacturing process has been interrelated with the natural environment of the city. According to Mr. Toshioka, it is important to collect the specific soil produced in and around the Kanazawa area to maintain the high quality of Kutani pottery. The results of the interview will be compiled in a database of biological and cultural diversity of Kanazawa, and will be presented at the aforementioned symposium.

Sustainable Primary Industries (SPI): Monitoring GIAHS Conservation

The SPI team conducted interviews and surveys in areas of Noto involved with the GIAHS designation. The surveys were conducted to assess the impacts of GIAHS designation and develop monitoring mechanisms for the conservation of GIAHS from the viewpoint of economic, social and biological diversity. The result of the surveys will be shared with local governments for their process of revising the ‘Noto GIAHS Action Plan’.

The team also joined farmers from Noto on their exchange visit to Sado City, Niigata Prefecture. This exchange visit was part of the joint collaboration between Noto and Sado, which were both designated as GIAHS sites in 2011. During the visit, farmers from Noto learned about Sado’s environmentally-friendly agriculture and its rice certification system for “Villages in Harmony with the Crested Ibis”. Participants visited the Iwakubi Rice Terraces, attended a lecture at the Sado City Hall and also experienced how to conduct surveys of living creatures in paddy fields. The learning experience during this visit provided inspiration and great encouragement to the farmers from Noto, who have also just implemented their own certification system of “Noto Terraces Rice” and “Noto Rice” this year. It also fostered their understanding of the importance and merits of environmentally-friendly agriculture. The team would like to continue the survey activities to involve more local governments and communities in order to synergize the activities of the stakeholders.

The team is also working closely with local stakeholders on the use and conservation of satoumi in Noto, and will organize a public seminar focused on Noto’s satoumi next year.



Survey at paddy field in Sado city

Climbing Mt. Hakusan (23-24 August 2014)

Marking the occasion of OUIK officially joining the Hakusan BR council as an advisory member, the OUIK team attempted to conquer the summit of the sacred Mt. Hakusan. As a registered Man and Biosphere reserve under UNESCO, Mt. Hakusan fosters tremendous biological resources and provides many kinds of natural gifts to the region, where it has been an object of worship through the ages. The team members enjoyed the natural and cultural blessings of the mountains.



Visit of SGA Mentee from the Philippines (26 August 2014)



Ms. Mawen (at the center), her mentor Prof. Nakamura, Kanazawa University (second from the left)

Ms. Mawen Inzon from the University of the Philippines, Los Bafios visited OUIK. She has been invited to Japan under the Sub Global Assessment Network mentoring scheme. Her research is focused on applying the Japan Satoyama Satoumi Assessment (JSSA) methodology to the Philippines. She presented the case of Mulanay Village of Bondoc Peninsula in her country, which has very different social and economic settings from those of Japanese satoyama and satoumi. We spent a wonderful time discussing the challenges and advantages of the research.

Participation in Shiroyone Senmaida Rice Harvesting Event (21 September 2014)

In spring, the OUIK team participated for the first time in rice planting event of the Shiroyone Senmaida terraced paddy fields, which are the symbol of the GIAHS "Noto's Satoyama and Satoumi" site. At the beginning of autumn, when the fields are covered in the golden colors of the mature rice, our team visited the paddy fields again, this time for the rice harvesting activities. All of the rice is cut by hand and then hanged on bamboo poles for drying. When the work was done, we enjoyed a locally made lunch of onigiri (rice balls) and miso soup, in front of the beautiful scenery of sea and paddy fields.



About our staff



Ms. Evonne Yiu from Singapore first came to Japan on an Okinawa prefectural scholarship, and has lived here for eight years in between her job with the Singapore government. She served as an intern with OUIK in the summer of 2011 and subsequently joined UNU after graduating from the Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Tokyo in the fall of 2012. Evonne is now the lead researcher for the Sustainable Primary Industries (SPI) project at OUIK, collaborating closely with local people and municipalities on the conservation of Noto's Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) and promoting the sustainable use of resources from Noto's Satoyama and Satoumi. Her hobbies include traveling, drawing, scuba-diving and eating!