

2. Overview of the study of Related Heritage in East Asia

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Introduction

In implementing this Special Research Project, a comparative perspective was sought with related and similar properties dating back to ancient East Asia. It was in response to this requirement that a three-year program of field visits and surveys of cultural heritage related to maritime navigation, exchanges, and associated beliefs in China, Korea, and Japan was planned.

In China, the plan was to visit the Zhejiang and Fujian areas where the development of maritime culture was observed; in Korea, the plan was to travel to the western and southern coasts that were regions connected with Japan and China; and in Japan the plan was to visit Noto, Iki, and Tsushima, which share common aspects and characteristics with Okinoshima. The field trips in Japan were planned to take place during the third year of the project, but due to the impact of COVID-19 the schedule was delayed, and the field trip to Iki and Tsushima was scaled back to Tsushima only. The trip to Tsushima was originally planned in September 2022, but due to the effects of typhoon Hinnamnorr it was further delayed to

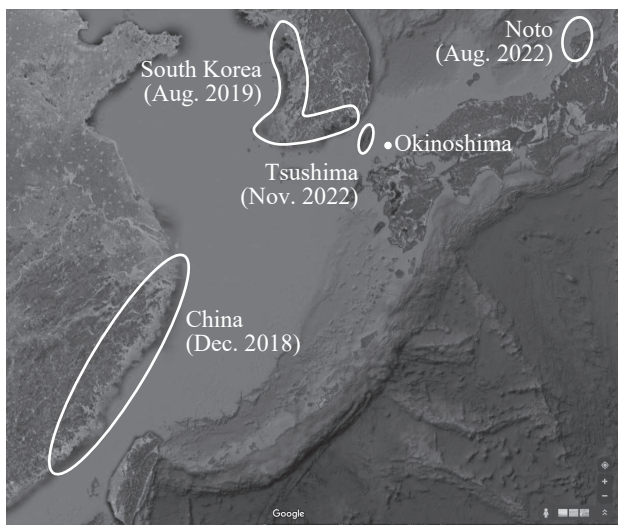


Fig.1 : Location of the visited site

November, with the outcome that many people who had originally intended to participate were unable to join. (Fig.1)

However, thanks to the efforts and cooperation of all participants and other persons involved the field visits all proved to be both memorable and fruitful, and their outcomes have been reflected into the research outcomes of this project, both directly and indirectly. The following is a summary of the various field visits and my personal impressions.

I . China field visit (Fig.2)

The visit took place from December 23 to 30, 2018, with the following researchers participating: AKIMICHI

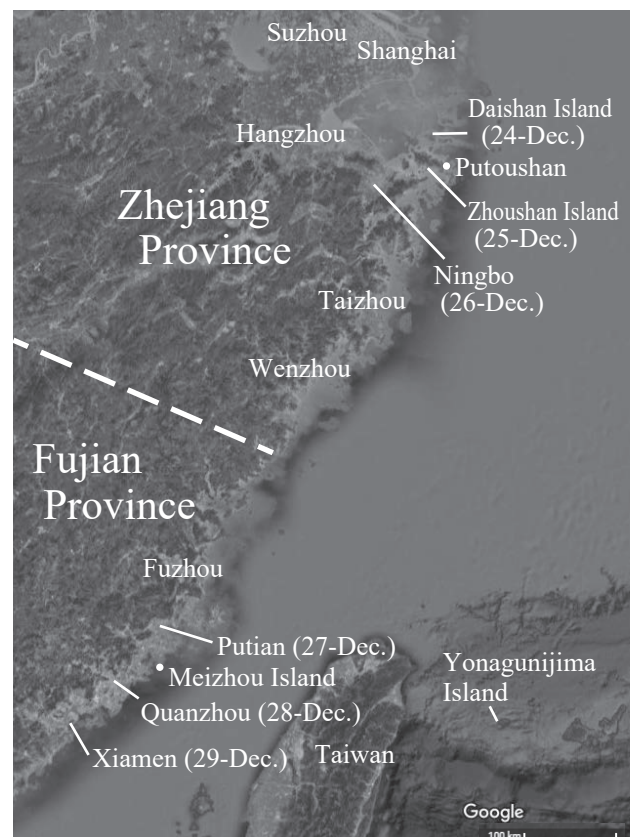


Fig.2 : Location of the visited site in China

Tomoya, SASO Mamoru, TANAKA Fumio, WOO Jae-Pyoung, LEE Kang-Seung, WANG Haiyan, OKADERA Miki (Fukuoka Prefecture), and OHTAKA Hirokazu (Fukuoka Prefecture). The field trip and study of related sites was greatly supported and enabled by WANG Haiyan (Professor, Zhejiang University; at the time a researcher at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies in Kyoto).

The areas visited during the field trip were the coastal areas of Zhejiang Province, including the Zhoushan Islands, where records survive concerning the arrival of Japanese envoys who travelled across the East China Sea to China, and the coastal areas of Fujian Province, which flourished in maritime trade from the Song Dynasty onwards and has many relics and artifacts related to maritime religions and beliefs, navigation, and international exchanges.

Needless to say, China is a large country, and this field trip only included a sampling of the major sites in the regions visited. In addition, there are only a limited number of historical sites related to maritime navigation and maritime-related beliefs that date to a similar period as the Okinoshima rituals, making it difficult to discuss the direct influence on the Okinoshima rituals. However, among the few sites that there are, there was a sense that there are some commonalities between Japan and China in the form of beliefs related to maritime navigation, in terms of such aspects as the topography of the sites, the conditions where they are located, and the surrounding natural environment.

Given these commonalities, it will likely be necessary to set out to examine the characteristics of the two countries and interactions between them. However, we need to identify and accumulate a broader variety of similar cases in order to discuss things in different time periods in parallel. It should also be noted that due to scheduling constraints it was not possible to visit the Shandong Peninsula and the Guangdong region, where maritime navigation developed in ancient times, so research in



Fig. 3 : Meizhou Island as seen from the top of Mazu Temple

these areas remains as an important issue requiring further attention.

II . Korea field visit (Fig.4)

The visit took place from August 19 to 26, 2019, with the following researchers participating: SATO Makoto, AKIMICHI Tomoya, SASO Mamoru, TANAKA Fumio, WOO Jae-Pyoung, LEE Kang-Seung, WANG Haiyan, OKADERA Miki, OHTAKA Hirokazu, and IKENOUE Hiroshi (Fukutsu City). The visit was facilitated with the full cooperation of professors Lee and Woo.

The areas visited were the west coast of Korea, facing the Chinese mainland across the Yellow Sea (Korean name “West Sea”) and the south coast facing Japan across the Tsushima Strait (Korean name “South Sea”). These are regions and maritime areas characterized by their ria coast and multiple small islands, which were the scene for interactions and sea crossings by Japanese, Chinese and Korean vessels in ancient times.

The opportunity to visit similar cultural properties in Korea less than a year after the field visit to China proved to be a very stimulating experience for the purpose of considering the exchange of beliefs in East Asia. It is beyond doubt that a common spiritual foundation, couple with direct and indirect exchanges existed in ancient



Fig.4 : Location of the visited site in Korea

times, and that the religious culture of each country (especially culture related to belief in the Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva (Kannon; Goddess of Mercy) developed in the course of these exchanges. The site of Namhaedo, which looks out over where there used to be an inlet to the sea, is also very suggestive when one considers the locations where port-related deities were enshrined



Fig. 5 : Cliff adjacent to the Jungmak-dong ritual site

in the Japanese archipelago, but as there is no evidence that can link such practices to before the 10th century, it must remain purely as a source of reference. However, the Jungmak-dong ritual site is the only one that can be directly compared to the Okinoshima ritual site, and we await the discovery of similar sites and the progress of research in this area in the future.

The field visit team were fortunate enough to be able to visit Heuksando, an island which is believed to have been a strategic point of navigation between Japan, China and Korea. However, we were not able to engage in sufficiently detailed visits to sites along the southern coast of the peninsula, which has a complex coastline, numerous islands, and is also the site of various Wa (Japanese)-style burial mounds. Neither were we able to spend sufficient time visiting sites on the eastern coast of Korea, such as the Donghae Sanctum and Ulleung-do.

III. Field visits in Japan

1. Field Visit in Noto(Fig.6)

Field studies in Japan were split into two visits, to Noto and Tsushima. The visit to Noto took place from August 10 to 12, 2022, with the following researchers participating: SATO Makoto, AKIMICHI Tomoya, SASO Mamoru, TANAKA Fumio, WOO Jae-Pyoung, WANG Haiyan, FUKUSHIMA Makiko (Munakata Taisha Cultural Office), OKADERA Miki, OHTAKA Hirokazu, and IKENOUE Hiroshi. The areas visited extended from Hakui City, Ishikawa Prefecture, at the base of the Noto Peninsula, called Kuchi-noto, to Oku-noto (Wajima City, Suzu City, Noto Town and Anamizu Town in Hosu-gun), including the Hegurajima island. This region was a key location for maritime transportation in the Sea of Japan, and from the eighth to tenth centuries there were also interactions with Balhae in Northeast Asia. It seems that this region served as a boundary to the northern world beyond for the ancient state of Japan, and it shares many similarities with Munakata.

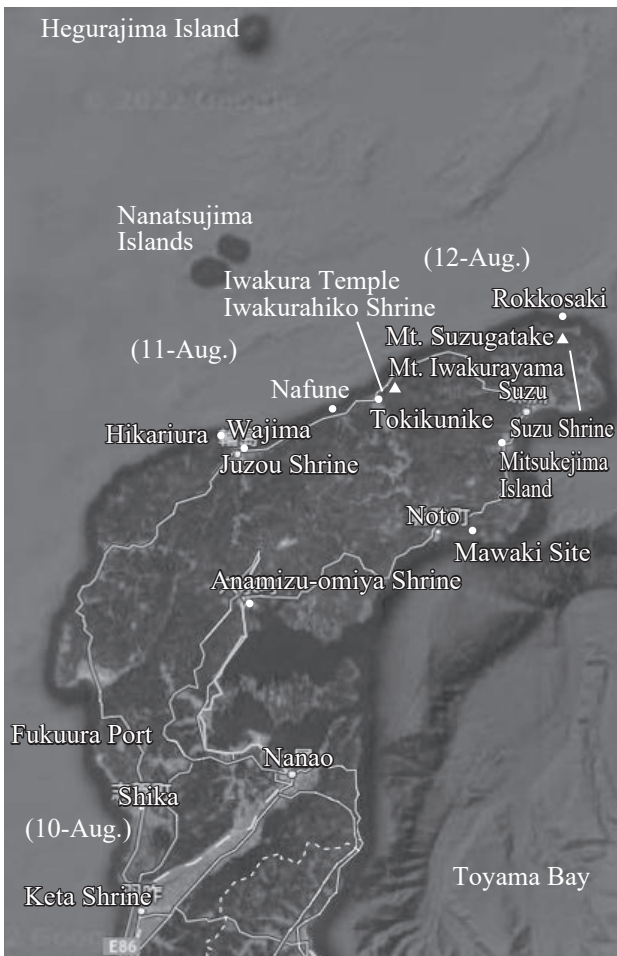


Fig.6 : Location of the visited sites in Noto



Fig. 7 : Northern Hegurajima, view westward from Konpira Shrine.

2. Field Visit in Tsushima(Fig.8)

The visit to Tsushima took place from November 4 to 6, 2022, with the following researchers participating: MIZOGUCHI Koji, AKIMICHI Tomoya, TANAKA Fumio, WOO Jae-Pyoung, OKADERA Miki, and OHTAKA Hirokazu. The area for the field visit encompassed all of Tsushima (Tsushima City, Nagasaki Prefecture), located west of the Genkai Sea, where it goes without saying that since the beginning of recorded history there have been records of external interactions, and it is considered that there are still many traces of ancient beliefs and how they were practiced. One purpose of the visit is to see the silhouette of Okinoshima from Tsushima.

The field visits to Noto in the Hokuriku region and Tsushima in the Genkai Sea close to the Korean



Fig.8 : Location of the visited site in Tushima



Fig. 9 : Okinoshima viewed from the entrance to the Oura Tunnel (Tsushima)

Peninsula took place in the midst of the global pandemic, and although this imposed some restrictions, such as many facilities being closed, the visits proved to be very informative. Particularly noteworthy experiences from a personal perspective were being able to visit Hegurajima in Noto, being able to make an almost full-circle trip around Tsushima from its southern to northern tips, visits to numerous sacred and revered places, and the “side” view of Okinoshima as seen from Munakata.

While all of these areas are considered to have well-preserved old forms of beliefs thanks to their remote location, conversely, they have yet to be fully researched and studied. Noto and Tsushima are also areas in Japan that nationally have a particularly large number of *shikinai* shrines (major shrines listed in the 10th century *Engishiki*), but since the Edo period there have been

many issues concerning their regulation and historical evidence for these shrines, meaning that today there some *shikinai* shrines of which no remains or traces exist, creating a barrier to further study about ancient beliefs and customs. Although this is an issue that cannot be easily resolved, I hope that further research will develop this area of study in the future, and also that the work completed through the Special Research Project on this occasion has made some small contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

Conclusion

The above summarizes the various field visits that were made under the auspices of this project. I believe that organically linking and verifying these experiences on a deep level will be meaningful not only for this Special Research Project, but also for continuing research and study of the Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region.

In terms of schedule and itinerary for the visits, we were perhaps too ambitious in including too many sites, which resulted in a heavy burden being placed on the participants. Even though the schedule was busy, there were still many places we should ideally have visited, but did not have the time to do so. I would like to conclude this overview by noting that such places should be considered as targets for future study or as areas for continuing research.