

Biodiversity Activities by Japanese Researchers to Facilitate Biodiversity Researches in Asia

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In 1991, Center for Ecological Research (CER), Kyoto University, was established when DIVERSITAS, an international programme on biodiversity science, was launched. In 1992, the research programme “SymBiosphere: Ecological Complexity for Promoting Biodiversity” proposed by CER was adopted by IUBS, SCOPE and UNESCO. Japanese ecologists were encouraged by the adoption, launching DIVERSITAS in the Western Pacific and Asia (DIWPA) at CER in 1993. DIWPA has organized many international meetings, conducted capacity building through international field biology courses, organized International Observation Year of Biodiversity (DIWPA-IBOY) in 2001, published several books, and been releasing newsletters.

Another important recent activities for Asian biodiversity is Asia-Pacific Biodiversity Observation Network (AP-BON) launched in 2009, collaborating with the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO-BON) which was launched by a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). GEO-BON collects and analyzes data on the status and trends of the world’s biodiversity with special attention to observations of ecosystems, species, genes, and ecosystem services. AP-BON has organized several international workshops and published one book for biodiversity researches in Asia.

DIVERSITAS, together with International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP), International Human Dimensions Programme (IHDP) and World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), is going to make the transition into Future Earth (FE) which is a new 10-year initiative on integrated Earth system research for global sustainability. Japanese ecologists have been supporting the startup of FE, because implementation of symbiotic society between human being and ecosystems, and between human being and biodiversity, is one of their important challenges.

Biodiversity is a global property of tremendous value to present and future human wellbeing. However, the threat to species and ecosystems has never been so serious as it is today. We have to continue our activities for sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems to have the symbiotic society.