

Culturlandscape of Sea Turtle Conservation and Folk Beliefs on Liuchiu Island

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Liuchiu Island is located in southwestern Taiwan, composed by coral reefs and covers an area of 6.8 square kilometers with the population of around 12,000 people. There are 34 temples registered by the Ministry of the Interior, local residents to “Guanyin mom” and “Wang ye” as the main religious beliefs. This research tries to find out why Liuchiu Island becomes an important habitat for sea turtles and how to reach a sustainable Island for next generation. Base on the results of Questionnaire for the Parents of junior high school students and in-depth interviews with around residents, this research found 1. Residents do not eat sea turtle meat 2. Religious beliefs have been a vegetarian 3. Most of residents’ occupation are fishermen or related to the tourism industry 4. Sea turtle is generally believed to be the representative of the Poseidon. Overall this research found the trend of tourism development on Liuchiu Island has also been closely linked with the ecotourism of sea turtles in recent years. Therefore, the Liuchiu Island residents’ protection works and concepts on sea turtles might serve as a model for sea turtle conservation in other area of Taiwan.

Keywords: Liuchiu Island, sea turtle conservation, folk beliefs, ecotourism, sustainable Island