

Discovering Tourism Resources in the Two Fishing Villages of the Ozaki Peninsula in Kamaishi City, Iwate, Japan

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After the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, many reconstruction efforts have been developed, and new houses and commercial facilities were built in the tsunami-hit areas. The rebuilding of lives and businesses is being continued in some regions, but the local economy is deteriorating or stagnating in others. The Ozaki Peninsula is one of the peninsulas located at the Sanriku Coast, the large-scale ria coast in Kamaishi City in eastern Japan. Before the disaster, a regular service of excursion boats had commenced and many people visited the peninsula for trekking or sightseeing. However, the excursion boats were abolished, and the number of visitors to the peninsula decreased after the disaster. The Ozaki-Shirahama village consisting of around 130 households and the Sasu village consisting of 23 households on the peninsula have the same challenges and problems, and local residents are trying to find a way to revitalize the villages. For the past three years, the Ozaki Hyakunen Gakusya (Ozaki 100-year-old School) has been supporting the efforts of the local people and conducting walking events using nature trails. These events have been regarded by the people as a way to revitalize the villages since some of them participated in the events.

This study aims to support the revitalization of the villages, and twin objectives were set up. One is to discover tourism resources in the two fishing villages, and the other is to propose a new method to bring back visitors and help the area recover from the earthquake and tsunami disaster.

Door-to-door visits and interviews were employed to collect information on tourism resources as evaluated by the local people; field surveys were conducted in 2015 and 2016. Major subject matters of the interviews included: (1) use of the trail and regional resources in the past, (2) change in their lifestyle and livelihood, (3) history and folklore of past disasters, (4) things to pass down to the next generation, and (5) relationship with the other village. A tea ceremony and drinking parties were also held for facilitating participation of both females and males, and the contents of the conversations were recorded as memos.

The results indicated that the trail on the peninsula was used in school excursions, manganese ore mining, religious festivals, and that it was closely related to the lifestyle and livelihood of the local people. At the time of the disaster, all of them survived miraculously and fishery households provided victims with marine products as emergency supplies. Traditional customs such as boat festivals, the Kagura Dance, mutual support, and so on were expected to be passed down to future generations. The relationship between the two villages has always been competitive, but their individual lifestyles were identified. Through the field surveys, some maps and inventories that show the regional resources and historical issues were created. They are thought to be useful in discussing the possibility for expansion into the tourism industry.

Keywords: The Great East Japan Earthquake, tsunami, fishing village, trail, reconstruction

