

TURTLES, PEOPLE, TEMPLES AND GODS: CULTURAL ADVENTURES AT XIAO LIUQIU ISLAND BUILDING CONNECTIONS FOR CONSERVATION BETWEEN TAIWAN, HONG KONG AND HAWAII.

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Successful sea turtle conservation programs that endure are best built with local communities as their foundation. National legislation and international conventions based on sound research findings clearly have importance. However, strategies for conservation are made robust and equitable when they integrate cultural and traditional components forged at the local level by the very people closest to the turtles and their environment. During 2011-2013, we (GB and KN) made five leisure visits to Xiao Liuqiu, a 6.8 km<sup>2</sup> island located at 22° 20'N, 120° 22'E, just 15 km off the southwest coast of Taiwan. The island is rich with numerous Tao and Buddhist temples serving as exquisite dwellings for an array of venerable Chinese Gods. Xiao Liuqiu's economy is substantially based on distant-water fishing and, increasingly, on ecotourism involving visitors from nearby Taiwan. The main purpose of our explorations has been to learn about and experience Taiwanese culture through the daily lives of Xiao Liuqiu's 12,000 residents. Paramount to these visits has been the nurturing of friendships with local families, based on a strong mutual interest in the conservation of green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) occurring prominently year-round in the island's 12 kms of coastal waters. Seasonal nesting at low levels also takes place on several small sand beaches. Numerous turtles can often be seen foraging while snorkeling and from shoreline cliffs, perhaps rivaling such sightings in Hawaii. As guests at Xiao Liuqiu, our principal activity has been to listen and learn from our hosts, and to freely share biological knowledge about sea turtles linked to our own personal experiences with turtles and people in the greater China region, Japan and Hawaii. The key to lasting partnerships for balanced and sustainable conservation action is to build genuine trust and respect, with patience, at the person-to-person level. This presentation explores and photographically illustrates unique aspects of the Xiao Liuqiu culture relevant to current conservation challenges and opportunities. The following web sites provide background and insights into two of our visits: <<http://akepa.hpa.edu/~mrice/turtle/liuqiu.pdf>>; <<http://akepa.hpa.edu/~mrice/st.htm>>. China and all of East Asia have vigorous and growing sea turtle conservation programs that deserve praise and partnership to improve the status of regional stocks. We thank Professor I-Jiunn Cheng for kindly introducing us to Xiao Liuqiu during our initial visit in October 2011.

海龜、人、廟宇及神: 從台灣小琉球的文化探索, 建立台灣、香港及夏威夷的合作

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成功及持久的海龜保育項目須以當地社區為主導及建立的基礎。以科學為理據的法例和國際公約固然重要; 然而, 要設立並執行更全面及合理的保育策略與措施, 須要以當地社區的力量為主導。在 2011 至 2013 年間, 我們 (佐治和家恩) 到訪小琉球共五遍。屏東縣的小琉球這島嶼 (北緯 22°20', 東經 120°22') 距離台灣西海岸約 15 公里, 面積約 6.8 平方公里。該島以其豐富的道教和佛教廟宇文化著名。居民主要以遠洋漁業和台灣本土旅遊業營生。我們到訪小琉球的主要目的是透過小琉球 1 萬 2 千名居民的日常生活, 了解和體驗當地文化。最寶貴的是與當地家庭及朋友建立深厚的友誼, 大家都共同關注綠蠵龜的保育。在沿島 12 公里長的海岸線, 全年均可找到綠蠵龜的蹤影。綠蠵龜亦在島上幾個沙灘季節性的上岸產卵。在浮潛時及沿海懸崖上的觀察, 我們經常見到一定數量的覓食綠蠵龜, 情景可媲美夏威夷。作為小琉球的旅客, 我們聆聽當地朋友, 從他們的經驗及知識學習, 並隨心地分享有關我們在中國內地、日本和夏威夷有關海龜保育及研究的個人心得。建立平衡及持久的夥伴關係以推行可持續的保育措施的關鍵, 在於彼此耐心地建立真誠的信任和尊重。本演說將探討及透過相片展示記載小琉球的獨特之處, 及與當地文化相承在海龜保育上的挑戰和機會。以下網站記錄了我們其中兩次在小琉球遊歷的見解及分享: <<http://akepa.hpa.edu/~mrice/turtle/liuqiu.pdf>>、<<http://akepa.hpa.edu/~mrice/st.htm>>。中國及全東亞地區擁有充滿活力和不斷增長的海龜保育和研究工作, 值得外界的了解、認同及合作, 以優化海龜種群的存活情況。我們感謝程一駿教授於 2011 年 10 月向我們介紹小琉球這美麗獨特的島嶼。

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