Foreword & Messages

Message from Organizer

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The 9th Kuroshio Science Symposium was successfully held at National Sun Yat-sen University in Kaohsiung City, Taiwan from Nov. 17 to 20, 2015. As the symposium chair, I would like to take the chance to reflect on the significance of this symposium, hoping this annual activity can bring benefits to more people in the research areas of marine biodiversity and environmental protection in the future.

The goals of this symposium are primarily to share research views and results with colleagues in Kuroshio and its upstream North Equatorial Current regions, and for young scientists' training in the cross-border format. Through presentations and exchange of views, new research collaborations might emerge. In this simple view, colleagues and students were invited from Guam (USA), the Philippines and Japan to Taiwan to attend this symposium. Dr. Tom Schils of the University of Guam took the chance to sample algae in the southern coast of Taiwan and two islands, Dongsha Atoll and Xiaoliuqiu with the assistance of Dr. Keryea Soong and myself. This was a good example of research collaboration what could be done on this platform. Other than this type of collaboration, there is very limited other kind of collaboration going on among the Kuroshio colleagues to my knowledge.

North Equatorial Current and Kuroshio connect the marine ecosystems of the countries above. However, another force interconnects the ecosystems of the Southeast Asia countries with the same power, which is the cargo shipping from Indian Ocean through Malacca strait to South China Sea and to East China Sea. Thousands of vessels travel back and forth on the route each day, which is the busiest shipping route in the world. As the consequence, marine lives including invertebrates, algae and microbes travel by attaching to the vessels (biofouling), and larvae of various species and microbes are transported in ballast water efficiently from one place to another. This phenomenon is further complicated in light of global warming, which allows tropical species to make home in higher latitudes. The influences of the man-made marine species dispersal are still not clear. Before we can study the influences, inventories of marine species in the seas of the countries along the route must be carefully examined and compared using all research tools available, so that we can trace the "invasive species" and study their roles in their new habitats. Countries along this route including Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia and Vietnam own great coast line altogether. Obviously scientists in a single country will not be able to complete the work, and collaborations among scientists in these countries are needed to accomplish the comparative studies.

Since the marine ecosystems on this route is now interconnected and this will not change in the near future, I would like to suggest that the symposium should expand its research territory and invite colleagues from these countries to attend this symposium in the future. This would greatly strengthen the function of this platform.