

Utilization of mangrove ecosystem in Batam Island, Indonesia

—Industrial development and Sustaining traditional use—

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Place of fieldwork: Indonesia

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<Research background and purpose>

Batam Island in the Strait of Malacca has been developed into an industrial region, largely because this island is closed to Singapore. Batam hosts many industrial parks constructed by multinational corporations and also plays a role of hub port for Singapore. Although there are laws in place prohibiting mangrove deforestation in Batam, mangrove charcoal products are still being produced in the south of the island. Especially in the decade, a growing number of people have been turning to this type of work in the public spaces in their villages. This practice represents a return to traditional direct use of the mangrove forest on Batam. The aim of this study is to shed light on social background that has influenced this practice and on the resulting current condition of the mangrove.



Photo 1. Industrial area in North Batam



Photo 2. Mangrove area in South Batam

<Results and achievements of fieldwork>

The most interesting finding of this study relates to village of “Tiang Wang Kang”, one of the oldest villages in Batam, consisting of 41 households. Twenty-four of its families were interviewed

for the present study. Although deforestation laws requiring a permit for mangrove charcoal production in Batam were passed in 1930, two charcoal kilns were built in this village in 1936, one holding 8 tons and the other holding 3 tons. At the time of their construction, these charcoal kilns were owned by Singaporeans, but since 1963 they have belonged to the village. Their products are currently shopped only within Batam prefecture, but until 2007 they were shipped to Singapore as well.

The coexistence of industrial development and traditional land use is one of the most interesting features of Batam Island. Yet there is little crossover between the two ways of life represented by these practices. Nearly all of the people involved in charcoal production are native to Batam, while nearly all of the people who work in the industrial zone have migrated from other places. The separation between industrial development and traditional land use is probably what has allowed traditional land use to continue.

<Implications and direction of future research>

In the future, I intend to analyze data on the current conditions of the mangrove forest in Batam and to suggest practices that will permit sustainable mangrove use.