

Strategic Young Researcher Overseas Visit Program for Accelerating Brain Circulation

Dispatch Report

Year: 23 December 2012~07 January 2013

Place of fieldwork: Ethiopia

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- Research background

People in Asia and Africa have invented many utensils and tools that are used on a daily basis to adapt to the natural environment, enhance social relationships in communities, and influence the outside world. This research contributes to the development of a sustainable human sphere in Asia and Africa by describing the process by which local knowledge (*ZAIRAICHI*) related specifically to the body and bodily techniques, the domain that is most vulnerable to changes in global conditions and social institutions, is shared and disseminated.

- Research purpose and aim

The focus of this research includes the following three components: 1) fieldwork in Southwestern Ethiopia; 2) academic collaboration with the South Omo Research Center and Museum (SORC&M) at Addis Ababa University as well as with local communities, such as the South Omo People's Ensete Research Center (SOPERC); and 3) academic exchanges related to the results of my research at international conferences. This year, I will focus on the second and third components.

- Results and achievements by fieldwork

I had an interesting discussion with Dr. Mamo, who is an Assistant Professor at Addis Ababa University and studies the distribution of agricultural products that contribute to the development of a sustainable human sphere in Asia and Africa. The price of commodities and agricultural products in Ethiopia has increased more than 10 times in the last 10 years. Thus, it was a good opportunity to learn about different case studies from Dr. Mamo, and understand things from an Ethiopian perspective. I will start thinking about organizing future seminars that are related to the distribution of agricultural products and crafts in the context of the recent economic situation in Ethiopia. A new concept for examining local perspectives involving the integration of processes of production and distribution is needed to inform approaches by researchers aiming to understand these situations.

- Implications and impacts on future research

I looked for future collaboration possibilities regarding the development of a sustainable human sphere in Asia and Africa through craft distribution. Production and distribution of crafts come under the auspices of the same person in my field, and locally in Ethiopia. Because craft distribution is strongly influenced by the cash economy, which is related to the relationship between supply, demand, and distribution of the amount of currency in the local economy, this topic requires a different approach in order to understand the craft

production process. We also need to integrate production and distribution by focusing on the products.



Photo1 Students in M village continue to produce ensete products that were made with ensete fiber and dried leaves



Photo2 Local students visit the South Omo Museum



Photo3 Ensete fiber products in the South Omo Museum