

Current status of tourism and a proposal for sustainable tourism development in the Lenin Peak area,
southern Kyrgyzstan

(キルギス南部, レーニン・ピーク地域における観光の現状と持続的な観光開発のための提言)

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The aims of this study are to examine current status and issues of tourism and to propose a basic framework for sustainable tourism development in the Lenin Peak area, southern Kyrgyzstan. Field works have been performed from the beginning of July to the middle of August 2012 in the following three areas: Sary-Mogol, Kashka-Suu and Lenin Peak Base Camp. The undertaken procedures are as follows: questionnaire surveys for 380 local residents and 400 visitors; interview survey for eight trekking/alpinism companies, and field observations on tourism resources in Tulpar-Kol Lake, Kosh-Kol Lake and Jiptik valley. A majority of local residents (234/380; 61.6%) regarded tourism as local development initiatives. Moreover, 50.3% (191/380) of the local residents preferred to construct homestays to acquire tourism income from visitors. On the other hand, 50.5% (202/400) of the visitors preferred to participate in a yurt-stay activity. Seventy-seven point five percent (310/400) of the visitors considered glaciers as the most attractive tourism resources, although there are many natural tourism resources except glaciers, which were examined by field observations. Due to geographic conditions and poor infrastructure in the Lenin Peak area, most visitors (324/400; 81%) regarded road improvement as an initiative for tourism development in the area. Through the interview survey to the trekking/alpinism companies, it was found that extremely limited tourism income as small as 52,470 U.S. dollar as of 2012 was dropped to the area because most tourism activities were arranged by the trekking/alpinism companies from outside. The results show that the current issues of tourism can be summarized as follows: limited and unstable tourism income to the local area, unawareness resulting from lack of knowledge on rich tourism resources, and poor infrastructure. On the basis of the current issues and case studies on successful geoparks in Japan and Nongjiale rural tourism in China, this study proposes establishment of a geopark, which is linked to geotourism and ecotourism for sustainable tourism development. For the establishment, development of income generation mechanism for the local communities, provision of manpower training for local people, development of yurt-staying program, preparation of tourism brochures and guidebooks, and development of a system for regular maintenance and improvement of infrastructure are suggested in the area.