



## Preface

Definitions of ecotourism can be summarized as a form of tourism which appeals to ecologically and socially conscious individuals. Because a sustainable environment is a key criterion, ecotourism should be sustainable with minimal impact on the environment.

There are many studies on ecotourism under the influence of recent global change, in particular, global climate change. The plants, vegetations, animals, birds, insects etc. and cultural heritage, which are the main elements of ecotourism, are put in danger themselves by the strong impacts of these changes. On the other hand, ecotourists are affected by the social, economic and health situations developing with the recent changes. In some occasions, they are influenced by the infectious diseases of the world scale, which have been occurring due to the global environmental change during the recent years.

The present special issue is dedicated to consider the problems on “Ecotourism and Global Changes.” Main points are first to describe the facts in the respective regions, such as South Asia, Southeast Asia, South Europe, East Europe and Central America, distributing from tropics, subtropics to temperate zone. They show the various problems region to region, which will be discussed in the next steps. Four articles deal with ecotourism in Japan, with special reference to biometeorological tourism/recreation, thermal bioclimatological conditions, ski industry/sports, and ruralities/forest/land use – based ecotourism. It is thought that these contain almost all problems in Japan to be considered at present stage. Due to the space, it was impossible to take up all kinds of regions in the world. I hope that the other, rest regions will be discussed in a next occasion. In the present issue, however, sea-level rise under the influence of global warming, colonial influences on landscape changing, SARS as a global scale infection, ethnic-cultural village, physiologically equivalent temperature and thermal comfort, etc. are discussed thoroughly, taking examples in the representative regions respectively.

I hope sincerely that the present issue will contribute to progress of the ecotourism studies related to the global change.

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