

## PREFACE

Tokyo Metropolitan includes island chains (archipelago) scattered over 1000 km of ocean, from the Izu Islands to the Ogasawara (Bonin) Islands. These islands have various characteristic natural environments and have historically developed unique cultures. Surrounded by the ocean and separated from the mainland, islands have developed unique ecosystems and cultures. Due to the limited area of the islands, such ecosystems are also vulnerable to environmental change and unbalanced social structures are observed. Along with being field laboratories for evolution, islands are laboratories for natural scientists to test hypotheses on the impact of environmental change on ecosystems. The opportunity to study empirically, the formation of new cultures after contact with foreign cultures and their changes through history, are a fascinating field of research for the humanities and social sciences.

The missions of this consortium named "Kenkyu-kan" are to integrate this interdisciplinary island study and to build a research network to promote the exchange of information on the interdisciplinary island study. In 2009, this consortium was organized to establish a new academic field that uses islands as research models to address the cultural, socioeconomic and natural conditions governing the sustainable symbiosis of humans and nature in spatially limited ecosystems.

This special issue of Ogasawara Research "A new era of island study" includes six reports and a note, which are based on the oral presentations at the international workshop on sustainable symbiosis of human and nature from the view point of "Island study", held at Akihabara Satellite Campus (ASC) of Tokyo Metropolitan University (TMU) on 19 February 2011 together with transcriptions of questions and comments by the participants of the workshop. Following these articles, two invited articles by Professors Daniel Long at TMU and Takakazu Yumoto at Kyoto University are published.

On behalf of the consortium, I appreciate all the contributors of the workshops which were held on Izu-Oshima Island in 2009, at TMU in 2010 and ASC in 2011 for their interdisciplinary attitudes and stimulative discussions to promote our network towards the interdisciplinary island study for the sustainable symbiosis of human and nature.

Naoki Kachi

The chair of the consortium

Graduate School of Science and Engineering, Tokyo Metropolitan University