

# **PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE OF TROPICAL FORESTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA VIEWED FROM THE PAST**

YAMADA Isamu

Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, Kyoto 606-8501, Japan

E-mail: [yamada@cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp](mailto:yamada@cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp)

## **Abstract**

The tropical rain forests in Southeast Asia have been suffered for nearly two decades because of their high quality of resources. After the second world war, the logging operations have started from the Philippines first and shifted to Indonesia in the 1960's and finally come to Sarawak and Sabah. Coincides with the good economic condition at the time, most of the logs were sent to Japan mainly, Korea, United States and European countries. As a results, the richest timber resources in the area have quickly been deteriorated.

Most of the countries tried to ban logging in the countries but they continued logging outside the countries. More over, in the case of Indonesia, large scale of forest fires occurred frequently from 1980's. The destruction of tropical forest ecosystems including mangroves, peat swamp forests and mixed dipterocarp forests have spread all over the area. The local people living in the forests have lost their original land.

Looking back this short history, we have to consider seriously about the future of tropical rain forests in the area. One unique advantage of SE Asian forests is easy approach to the sites. Most of the good forests are found in the bigger islands like Borneo and Sumatra. Because of this easy access to the resources, most of the forests have logged over, but in the future this good access to the forests could be advantageous for the rehabilitation of the damaged sites, invite eco-tourists from the world and supply materials for the bio-industry. For these purposes, we have to keep original ecosystem as much as possible not only to make effort for bio-diversity conservation, but we need more attention for the eco-resources protection.

Eco-resources have wider sence than bio diversity. From the basic elements of the earth to the outer atmosphere, we need total protection of whole ecosystem. For this purpose, multi-inter disciplinal approach is necessary. Tropical rain forests can still be served as a main stage of global environmental issues.