

PREFACE

The Slavic Research Center (SRC) and Institute of Low Temperature Science of Hokkaido University and the New Energy Resources Research Center of the Kitami Institute of Technology started a five-year project called the Establishment of the Network of Environmental Studies in the Pan-Okhotsk Region in 2007. The aim of the project is to analyze the environment and to deepen the understanding of the interaction of the natural environment and socio-economic activities in this region. The main topic for the SRC within the framework of this project is the possibility of the sustainable development of the Pan-Okhotsk region. An explanation of this project is given by Nobuo Arai in Chapter 9 of this volume.

This volume includes some of the first results of the project. All of them, except Chapter 9, were written on the basis of the papers presented at the annual summer symposium of the SRC, “Dirty, but Warm: Energy and Environment in Slavic Eurasia and Its Neighborhood” and an international workshop for young scholars held on July 4-6, 2007. The symposium was organized as a part of the 21st Century Center of Excellence program, entitled “Making a Discipline of Slavic Eurasian Studies.” A total of 27 presentations were made in English and Russian during the three-day period, and this volume includes some of those representing the preliminary results of the project explained above.

Part 1 of this volume is an analysis of the oil and gas development in East Siberia and the Far East in recent years and that planned for the near future. Its influence on the environment in the region is considered, and the possibility of sustainable development of oil and gas resources is pursued.

Part 2 is an examination of various environmental problems in the Pan-Okhotsk region, including the far eastern coast and the basin of the Amur River. Interrelations of the pollution, or potential pollution, in the Sea of Okhotsk, the far eastern coast, and the Amur River are clearly depicted.

Part 3 is a presentation of a variety of environmental research methods applied in the environmental studies carried out in Northeast and Central Asia. The methods show the possibility to further develop these studies.

We intend to promote our project by intensifying our cooperation with researchers in Russia and neighboring countries. Any comments, suggestions, and proposals are welcome (src@slav.hokudai.ac.jp).

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