Interview

Satellite Communications and I (16)

Ms. Rieko Hayakawa, Program Officer of the Sasagawa Pacific Island Nations Fund, who contributes to construct the satellite communication network for the Pacific Island nations, told her motivation and passion. (TI)

"I felt I was obliged to wonder whether satellite communications as the highest technology of the present age was really familiar with this area. However, as I communicated more and more with the people in the islands, I began to feel deeply that communication with the outside was important, because people were separated geographically from others and lived in an island in condition of life still weak economically…."

Rieko Hayakawa,
Program Officer, Sasagawa Pacific Island Nations Fund

At Ala Moana Beach, Hawaii
(Author in the left hand side).

The PEACESAT* policy conference was held in Sendai in 1992. It was an opportunity for me to have a relation with satellite communications when I met about 100 representatives from Pacific island countries who participated in this conference. These were the days that the PEACESAT lost a communications satellite, and the substantial activity stopped (cf. Space Japan Review, April, 1999). So the PEACESAT got an used satellite for its new one, and it held the Sendai conference to discuss what policy should be taken to revitalize its activity and the guideline under cooperation with the organization such as the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (those days), and Tohoku University. The Sasagawa Pacific Island Nations Fund (http://www.spf.org/spinf/spinf_j/), where I worked as a program officer, supported them with about 25 Million Yen in conferencing, and I was in charge of the business.

I got interested in Pacific area in fact from a long time past, although I has no concern with satellite communications. This is why I participated in "Japanese Youth Goodwill Cruise" enterprise of Japanese government in my student age, and I experienced really the very wide area of the Pacific by a process of a sea voyage of the Pacific onboard the "Nippon Maru" for about 50 days. Besides I had a chance to touch traditional cultures and present age cultures of various islands while young people of various islands of the Pacific were invited as a guest of "Nippon Maru", and staying with us in the same cabin. I remember clearly that I thought "I can not meet you again in my life because we were from islands scattered in so very wide Pacific". However, Pacific islands in a wide area become familiar by the spread of a personal computer from my narrow office.

When I began to support a PEACESAT enterprise, I felt I was obliged to wonder whether satellite communications as the highest technology of the present age was really familiar with this area. However, as I communicated more and more with the people in the islands, I began

to feel deeply that communication with the outside was important, because people were separated geographically from others and lived in an island in condition of life still weak economically.

I experienced preparations for Sendai conference in such a case. When I met with people of the islands and they succeeded in the conference, I was deeply impressed and I came to know that it was nothing but a right important matter for the fund, which I worked at, to provide environment of satellite communications for the education and welfare in the region.

PEACESAT policy conference in Hawaii with the people from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministers of Micronesian countries and educators (Author in the left hand side).

I am not an expert of satellite communications from the beginning. However, I have been in charge of the distance education related business that came to occupy an important position for an enterprise of Sasagawa Pacific Island Nations Found since 1991 and I have helped distance education programs such as investigation / study, PEACESAT, and USPNet (South Pacific University distance education network), although I have only a mite ability. Personally I made my master's thesis in 1999 based on my thought about Pacific islands and satellite communications with mixing business experience of myself. Its title was "Policy for Information Network Development in the Pacific Islands through International Cooperation: Case Study of PEACESAT Tele" (http://www.yashinomi.to/coconuts/kosuge/seisaku00.html/) and I would like to extend my thought based on the thesis in the following.

"Our old ancestors traded using a canoe. Then I just talk to all of you through an artificial satellite now in several hundred years later. But a message from me did not change." told Mr. Michael Somare on September 14, 1975, who was a father of independence of Papua New Guinea and acted as President after her independence. It was a satellite for "PEACESAT" network, and he continued to talk via test broadcast for education / welfare in the Pacific islands area using the satellite. "We are friends and neighbors each other. We have the original history / background and, through this regional cooperation, protect our profit, and can promote dispatch from us." The pacific occupies a one-third of a total area of the earth.

There is the history that the people came by a canoe from other Asian areas, and lived in the islands, the people of Polynesia and Micronesia made the navigation method advance using weather forecast by reading wind, and using positioning by reading a constellation, and they interchanged mutually. Under the colonial rule, interchange between islands were cut off, and the voyage culture was almost forgot. However, they were included into a network of space communication, and it was a right revolutionary change, because interchange among

people again. Then, for dozens of years, this change begins to deepen a degree of speedup. It is the spread of the personal computers. The fate of islands, which was isolated on information by air space, has been gotten over while utilizing Internet. Needless to say, the development of Internet was a corresponding to development of an advanced information society in a developed nation. On the other hand, Pacific islands area is still developing. Development of Internet in the developing area that has so big historical difference in time from a developed nation has a unique meaning.

Mr. Inamura, Deputy Director-General, Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications, for example, pointed out the following. "The country and social richness is measured by ≪How to treat handicapped persons and senior people or the social weak.≫ If only commercial utilization or economical success is a purpose for technology development and accumulation of knowledge, failure was not avoided sometime. If the next is the time of knowledge and information, I remember ≪Human background≫ of telephone invented by Graham Bell, and the construction of heartful knowledge and information network will be needed." It is a point out that the social weak should be placed in the center of a field of vision for construction of information related infrastructure. Such consideration will be needed for the social weak in the global community, namely the developing countries. Let's remember the historical role of information communications in a developed nation. The development of information communication was a background of rule control power of nation and a fundamental condition enlargement of industrial productivity. It contributed to expansion of colony and the basis of trade with a colony in an international relation, and the predominance by information communication is an important matter on military affairs. However, a benefit of spread of scientific knowledge in a colony, medical information in particular, is nothing but one aspect of development of an international network. By the present age, there is not a change in such situation either. A developed nation still has predominance on information as the important weapon. A geographer who acted as President of French Geographical Society said, "France can predict a quantity of crop of Algerian farm products through a satellite image much faster than Algerian government." You should not forget that predominance on such an information became advantage in international business of farm product by a developed nation."


Satellite conference with Pacific island countries using PEACESAT earth station of University of Guam with Prof. Kosuge and Prof. Tanaka of University of Electro-Communications.

The University of Hawaii and University of South Pacific have developed satellite communications network for education / welfare such as PEACESAT or USPNet since 1960's, and the space development race at the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union was its background. Because American president, J. F. Kennedy, of those days promoted INTELSAT plan as a part of the peaceful use of military satellite technology, these became feasible. I will try to watch an extremely recent example. At first the market liberalization enlarged world scale of an information communication market and market competition concept to be consistent with ≪Global Information Infrastructure (GII) plan≫ which

former Vice President Gore promoted. However, at the same time, ≪universal service≫ of information communication that offers equal communication service to every world area, that is bridging regional information divide, is a basic concept.

Inhabitants of Pacific islands can receive a benefit of PEACESAT and USPNet in this way. This is a global enterprise model of information network construction for the education / welfare and there is no other example than the regional cooperation that make a clear distinction from traditional market principle. It was sure that these were realized by appropriate display of the American international leadership on information communication by the past President Kennedy and former Vice President Gore. But the point that we should recognize from this example is not a little. At first a development policy of information communication includes basic character of development in the market principle of the leadership of developed nation. However, it is not always impossible to add bias aiming at offering of ≪universal service≫ with it. Recognition which must not include ≪The Missing Links≫ (a lost ring) in a world information communications network is possible in international scale. It can not avoid discrimination for the acquired information so long as an information network does not include every area in the world equally. The reason is because this is away for a purpose of construction of an information network.

Japan takes the original position that pursued only the peaceful use of a satellite in a developed nation. Japan has a condition to take international initiatives for the peaceful and humanitarian use of a satellite with the technology power and fund power. Besides, people in Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia, who are waiting for the support, are right Japanese neighbor in space of Pacific.

Introduction of book

The Sasagawa Pacific Island Nations Fund helped distance education related business using PEACESAT and USPNet for improvement of education / welfare for past ten years. This time, Pacific Research Institute, University of South Pacific, edited and published a book entitled as "Distance Education in the South Pacific: Nets and Voyages". This book explains how distance education was developed in detail in the South Pacific which began 25 years ago, and the historical aspect, the physical aspect, social and develop by diachronic and synchronic analysis. In addition, it is analyzed in detail how the people concerned improved this education in quality. Distance education using satellite in Pacific area was developed by the right innovative method, and various experiments were tried technically. It can be grasped by this book concretely what inhabitants learned and got result from that. Please contact for purchasing this book to follows.

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*Pan-Pacific Education And Communication Experiments by Satellites.