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Designing a Study Tour to Kinmen for Students as a Method of Outreach Activities in Taiwan Studies

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This article discusses two issues. The first is how Taiwan Studies has developed in Japan since the 1990s, and the second considers the educational effects that school field trips to the Islands of Kinmen (Quemoy) may have.

Taiwan's democratization process and its search for a new "national" identity stimulated academic interest among scholars. The Japan Association of Taiwan Studies (JATS) was established in 1998, and promoted studies on Taiwan. Initially, Japanese scholars in the field paid little attention to sharing their knowledge with society. However, younger researchers entering the field after the establishment of the association have been publishing introductory textbooks that serve a wide range of readers, and currently an increasing number of scholars are considering how they can make good use of their specialized knowledge.

There are several ways through which scholars can contribute to society. In an attempt to promote community outreach, the author and interested members of the JATS set up a scholars' network to support high schools that conduct school trips in Taiwan, which have also increased in popularity. However, learning resources that can enable high school students to learn more about Taiwan are quite limited. To make these trips more meaningful, scholars provide materials, including a series of YouTube lectures and an informative website.

A study tour guided by a specialist would be an effective educational tool for both high school and college students. The author conducted a study tour to the Island of Kinmen (Quemoy), and students who participated in the tour were able to learn a lot about the island thanks to support from National Quemoy University. The author believes that a well-designed study tour to Kinmen would be a good means for students to study topics such as Hokkien (Minnan) culture, the history of the overseas Chinese, and cross-strait relations between China and Taiwan. It would also help them reevaluate the debate on Taiwan's national identity and find their own answer to this question.