

Achievement and outcome from the 50 years of Japanese Antarctic Research Program since IGY

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Bottom up activities at Science Council of Japan was the major force to drive the Japanese government to decide the launching of the first Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition (JARE-1 in 1956/57) to join the International Geophysical Year (IGY). Since then, the JARE program has been continued under the JARE headquarters, which is chaired by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

During the past 50 years, the JARE has been operating three icebreakers one after another; the first one of Soya between the JARE-1 (1956/57) and JARE-6 (1961/62), the second one of Fuji between the JARE-7 (1965/66) and the JARE 24 (1982/83) and the third one of Shirase between the JARE-25 (1983/84) and the JARE-49 (2007/08). Capability of transportation of cargo has been expanded from Soya to Shirase and the number of observing stations has been increased.

At the beginning of JARE, the geophysical observations were carried out at Syowa Station, Antarctic. Later on, biological observations and medical sciences have been developed. Also, an observation area has developed over beared rock area and inland area. Every five years, a new term of program has been planned and implemented since the JARE-18 (1976/77) and the term VII program is now underway in the JARE-49.

Shirase will complete her 25 years Antarctic mission when she returns to Tokyo port in April 2008 after the JARE-49 operation. The succeeding fourth icebreaker will be launched at the same time and she will be ready for the JARE-51 in 2009/10.

Scientific achievements and interesting findings since the IGY are introduced.