Political Ecology of "Cormorant Fishing": Change of "Cormorant Fishing" under the Decrease of Fishing Area in the Lake Poyang, China

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In this article, the example of cormorant fishing in Poyang Lake in Jiangxi Province, in the middle reaches of the Chang Jiang, is considered. In this example, the area of fishing ground was reduced after implementation of the production subcontract system. This article examines how the fishermen addressed the situation and what changes occurred in cormorant fishing due to their actions.

In the survey, first, the area of the body of water was measured by RS (remote sensing) technology. The result showed that the area of the body of water where cormorant fishermen can operate has decreased by 76.4% in the past 15 years. Under the circumstances, the fishermen facing a decrease in the fishing area started collective fishing in the wide rivers and developed a system of selling fish such as carp and culter, which can be caught in large quantities, to smoked fish processors and fish culture dealers. As a result, in the cormorant fishing, (1) since the fish caught can be sold to specified dealers, the income was relatively stable, (2) since collective fishing is conducted in the rivers around the fishing villages, time spent on transportation in a series of operations became shorter than before and on the other hand, time spent on fishing (work of actually catching fish using cormorants) became longer, (3) since the time spent on fishing work requiring greater active strength increased, bodily activities per fishing session increased. Finally, a consideration of the mechanism of fishermen's actions against changes in the fishing ground environment is given.

Key words: cormorant fishing, production subcontract system, livelihood technology, Poyang Lake