

Mikasa Coalfield Geopark Plan: Relationship between the history and geological background

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The City of Mikasa, a local government in Central Hokkaido, Japan, is rich in nature and materials (coal and fossils) in spite of a short distance from the main cities of Hokkaido (e.g., the cities of Sapporo and Chitose).

Mikasa had flourished as a coalmine city, and had a population of over 60,000 in 1950s, whereas now the city only has a population of about 10,000 because of the closing of the coal mines.

The story of modern Mikasa began with the discovery of soft coal in 1868 (the first year of the Meiji era). The coal of Mikasa occurs from the fluvial succession, called the Ishikari Group (about 50 Ma).

Moreover, the city is a suitable area for researching the Cretaceous biotic history and paleoenvironments because the Cretaceous marine succession, called the Yezo Group (about 100 Ma), is widely distributed, and yields well-preserved fossils (e.g., ammonoids and marine reptiles).

In the presentation, we introduce the Mikasa Coalfield Geopark Plan and characteristics of geology, nature, and history in Mikasa.

Keywords: City of Mikasa, coal, coal mines, fossils, Geopark