

Supporting the geopark activity by the Volcanological Society of Japan

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Since Japan is one of island arcs showing geologically dynamical moving such as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, two thirds of 39 national geoparks in Japan, including 8 UNESCO global geoparks, have the Miocene-Quaternary volcanic fields and the related volcanological heritages. Therefore, regarding scientific interpretation and utilization of these heritages, especially increasing people's awareness for natural hazards, contribution by members of the Volcanological Society of Japan (VSJ) becomes very essential. In fact, staffs and supporting scientists of several geoparks are members of VSJ, which is one of 5 academic societies sending the members of the Japan Geopark Committee. In the VSJ Committee for Supporting Geoparks Activity, we are exchanging information on domestic/foreign movement of Geoparks and discussing the related issues raised through the VSJ members' personal activity; scientific confirmation of explanation contents on major volcanological heritages, how to issue the information outside from the geoparks faced to eruption crises, and so on. In every fall meeting of VSJ, special public session on "geoparks" is set for a half day and a pre-meeting geotour is organized by the geoparks of or near the venue.

The International Association of Volcanology and Chemistry in the Earth's Interior (IAVCEI), which is one of associations under the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG), organizes the Commission on Volcano Geoheritage and Protected Volcanic Landscapes (VGPL). CVGPL held the VOLCANDPARK international forums in Olot (Spain) in 2012, and Lanzarote (Spain) in 2015. Although its purposes noticed are similar to those in the guideline of Geoparks, any specific activity does not exist as of today, except for holding the above meetings; similar to the "Cities on Volcanoes Conference" by the Commission of Cities and Volcanoes in IAVCEI. The bottom-up activity of people involved in Geoparks, World Natural Heritages, and National Parks would not be promoted by these meetings, although they can be helpful for attendees to exchange information and ideas among those projects.

Combining the activities of Geoparks and IGCP, as IGGP, is one of appropriate processes to promote the transparent relationship between science and society. The scientific results from the IGCP research can be transferred directly to Geoparks and are utilized effectively for geotourism and for increasing the geological value of heritages. Especially, volcanological research results will be used effectively to increase the resilience of local society against volcanic disasters in the volcanic areas in and around Geoparks. By feedback through Geoparks from the society, we may be able to choose scientific research directions.

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