

Construction of a New Engine for Actualizing Geopark Potentiality of Sustainable Geotourism in Shikoku Island

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1 In the beginning

The intermediate and mountainous area in Shikoku region was abandoned from the industrial development and society in the late 20th century. As a result, population decrease and super-aging society took place there and they have caused the serious damages on the local administration and economies as well as education for the children, who are going to carry the future on their shoulders. Also, sustainable lifestyle derived from the ancestors, invaluable natural heritage and cultural heritage in those areas were hanging by a thread. Perhaps, it was difficult tasks for the social trend in the late 20th century to adapt the environment. It is hoped that the new lifestyle is constructed for today's human society which possesses many problems in the various fields, such as natural resources, energy and environment. Actualization of the concept of geopark has not only a possibility to reconstruct the local society but also it has a potential to be a study field beyond region or nation in the future. In other words, it can be recognized as a field of the value creation.

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2 The concept of geopark

According to UNESCO, the concept of geopark is composed of the following conditions. (1)The region which not only is geologically important, but also has an archaeological, biological or cultural value. (2)It has a plan that promotes sustainable society and economy. (3)It signifies the method to conserve and improve geological heritage, and contribute to the education in geology and environmental problems. (4)It possesses a collective action plan made by public entities, local society and private sectors.

3 New dynamics named geopark

Under the rapidly changing social and economical system, a lot of the intermediate and mountainous areas are unable to set a definite goal since they are under pressure of the daily tasks. In other words, the dynamics which have sustained the region cannot adapt to the environmental changes. In Japan, the new dynamics which are going to sustain local areas are not clearly proposed yet. Therefore, it is considered that there is a potentiality in the concept of geopark to become the new dynamics.

The figure shown above is the summary of the field that structures geopark. Each domain consists of the elements in each territory. In present, the abundant volume of the outcomes and knowledge about these elements have been accumulated, and it is tend to be more and more ramified and specialized. As a result of the excessive ramification, it has been difficult to assimilate or combine to other elements adjacent to. To begin with, it is necessary to intimately investigate those difficult situations, and to re-construct the desirable figure of the sustainable region. And then, by comparing them to the desirable figure and matching the seeds, which are the components of each territory, to them, the new organic combination beyond the current academic territory will be created. This is the dynamics that is going to lead new ages and the start of the value creation process. Today, Shikoku is looking for the new way to open up a new vista of the future by exploring a potential of sustainable tourism. In future, the study of the effect, the system, and the fuels for the engine are the challenges.

4 Conclusion

In order to inherit natural resources and other valuable resources to the future, it is necessary to construct the sustainable system which is supported by the region. Also, the occurrence of the new dynamics is necessary for the region. Therefore, it is considered that geopark is the new dynamics to open up the new way for the creation of the region. As there is no precedent yet in Japan, it is considered that independency of the value creation is secured within the principle of the planet earth.

ジオパークを構成する領域の概要

