

The San'in Coast Geo Park: A Museum of Terrain and Geology

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About 25 million years ago, fierce tectonic movement and volcanic activity started on the east coast of the Asian continent. Land began to separate, with rifts forming lakes and deltas, which expanded and resulted in the creation of the Sea of Japan and the birth of the Japanese archipelago. On the San'in Coast, volcanic and sedimentary rock produced by repeated intense volcanic activity was eroded by the powerful tides of the Sea of Japan, making it home to unique landscapes with a wide variety of geological conditions and strata.

The coast is truly a sight to see, with its granite from when the archipelago was still part of the mainland, fossilized footprints of elephants and rhinos in sedimentary layers made when the separation started, volcanic vents colored bright red from their activity 19 million years ago, and rhyolite flows/joints and dacite from when the island had nearly attained its present form several million years ago.

Genbudo Cave, which was created by volcanic activity approximately 1.6 million years ago, is the origin of the Japanese name for basalt and the place where south-pointing magnetism was discovered. The park is home to this and other precious geological features and terrain that allow us to come face to face with the dramatic birth of the Japanese archipelago, the changes in the coastline due to erosion, and other events in the history of earth science.

One of the coast of the San'in Coast Geoparks stretches 75 km from east to west was designated as a national park under the 1963 Natural Parks Law. In addition, Genbudo Cave and seven other locations have been designated as national cultural properties by the Cultural Properties Protection Law, ensuring its complete preservation and maintenance. The coast is loved by the many people who swim in the ocean and take boat rides to explore the caves, around the mouths and the coast.

In July 2007, 36 public organizations and local groups came together to form the San'in Coast Geopark Promotion Council to promote earth science and environmental education as well as geo-tourism using the area's geological heritage, and to contribute to the invigoration and sustainable socioeconomic development of the region.

Later on two groups joined, and 38 groups function now.

In December 2008, it was authorized as the Japanese Geoparks. To be affiliated with the Global Geoparks Network and to strengthen our knowledge through scientific fields, and establish professional and sectional meetings and groups from each prefectures in the promotion conference. As well as to promote Geo Park activities in a better way.