

OES005-03

Room: 302

Time: May 23 11:15-11:35

## Physiographical education for geotourism: a case study of University of the Ryukyus

Takayuki Ogata<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of the Ryukyus

The Ryukyu Islands present significantly valuable fields for geoparks. For instance, raised coral reefs (Pleistocene Ryukyu Limestone) have formed many caves, which produce archeological and anthropological sites as well as geoscientific fields. Shore landforms along fringing reefs, such as emerged notches, indicate tectonic processes and/or climatic (sea level) changes. Karsts with steep slopes show rapid chemical weathering under a high temperature condition in subtropical climate. Such landscapes are suitable for geoparks, while geoscientists should establish framework of geotourism because the Ryukyu Islands have very fragile natural environments. Comprehensive education on natural environments allows nurture of scientific interpreters, environmentally conscientious tourists and local politicians. Systematic education on physical geography, in particular, plays crucial roles in geotourism. The visitors benefit greatly from having guided tours that feature geoscientific interpretation enriched by field educational programs based on physical geography, which depend primarily on having established courses of physical geography in both school and lifelong education programs. This study demonstrates a case of field education program presented by a laboratory of physical geography, University of the Ryukyus.

Keywords: geoparks, geotourism, geosciences, physical geography, environmental education, Ryukyu Islands