

The traveling exhibition, "Usu Volcano -Its Disasters and Blessings"

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1. Introduction

We have started a traveling exhibition, "Usu Volcano -Its Disasters and Blessings" since June 2009. It is organized by the Network of Volcanological Museums in Japan and the Geological Museum, AIST, and a sequel to the traveling exhibition, "Miyakejima Volcano -Its Disasters and Blessings", held in 2006-2007.

Usu volcano is one of the most active volcanoes in Japan. The last eruption occurred in 2000; when ten thousand of people were forced to evacuate their towns, which were significantly damaged by volcanic ejecta, mud flows, and crustal deformation. Usu volcano has repeatedly erupted in an interval of 20-30 years, so that children living around the volcano would meet the next eruption. The volcano, however, gives people benefits as well, such as beautiful scenery and abundant hot spring resources.

This exhibition aims to help people to understand the eruptions, the disasters, and also the blessings of the volcano.

2. Organization and schedule

The office has been set in the Geological Museum, AIST. Members of the Geological Survey of Japan (GSJ), AIST, and the Network of Volcanological Museums in Japan made plans and prepared the display materials. Local information was also given by the Lake Toya Area Ecomuseum and others.

The traveling exhibition started on June 2009 at Tateyama Caldera Sabo Museum, then moved to Mt. Unzen Disaster Memorial Hall (from July 2009) and Aso Volcano Museum (from October 2009). This year, which is the 10th and 100th anniversary of the 2000 and 1910 eruption, respectively, the exhibition will be held at Bandaisan Volcano Museum (from April 2010) and Geological Museum, AIST (from July 2010). It is also planned to hold at the Usu area and possibly at other areas.

3. The contents

There are three parts.

The part one is entitled "Getting to know Usu volcano". It is with the introduction of volcanological aspects, including growth of the volcano, characteristics of the eruptions, the historical eruptions, the eruptive products, magma movement beneath the volcano, hot springs produced by an eruption, and other volcanoes similar to Usu.

The part two is entitled "Living together with the volcano". This part is a revised version of the contents selected from the previous exhibition, "Environment and Resources of Lake Toya and Usu Volcano Area", held at the Hokkaido University Museum in 2008. It deals with sociological aspects, including cooperative action of an administrative office with researchers, lives in a refuge

or a temporary house, activities to inform people about disasters and benefits of the volcano, the ecomuseum, and the mind of people on Usu volcano.

The third part is on the "Geoparks" because the Lake Toya area, including Usu volcano, has been selected as a Japanese Geopark in 2008 and a UNESCO Geopark in 2009. This part explains what is geoparks and introduces other geoparks in Japan.

Most of the contents are posters displayed on panels (ca. 20 sheets). There are also large posters (ca. 3 meters in width and length), displayed on the floor (on the wall in some venues). The most attractive one, especially for children, is "a 3D topography map of the area including craters of the 2000 eruption" (with red cyan 3D glasses), synthesized from an aerial photo and DEM data provided by Asia Air Survey Co., Ltd. Another attraction is a reproduction of the refuge site during the 2000 eruption, although we were not able to display it in some venues.

The poster images will be viewed at the GSJ website after the exhibition ends.

4. Ending remarks

The advantage of traveling exhibition is that many people in various areas will visit it. If there is a site where the exhibition can be held, please contact our office.

Finally this exhibition is supported by many persons and organizations providing photos and other data. We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this exhibition.

Keywords: Usu Zan, volcanic disasters, coexistence with a volcano, volcano education, museum, outreach activities