

Japan Geoscience Union Meeting 2011

(May 22-27 2011 at Makuhari, Chiba, Japan)

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GHE024-02

Room:301A

Time:May 22 14:30-14:45

History and present of the serpentinite quarries in Chichibu area

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History and present of the serpentinite quarries in Minano (Saitama-prefecture, east Japan) were investigated.

Minano had produced one of the most beautiful serpentinite building stones in the world (so it is said). "Kijamon" is the well-known name of the building stone. It has been used in the National Diet Building. Unfortunately it is not any more available in the building stones market and even the exact location of the quarry is half forgotten. It is very important to know what our lands have produced for us, and the knowledge will help us conserve our historic constructions.

This study unravels and records the historic quarry in Minano that produced Kijamon. The present state of the serpentinite quarries industry in Minano area is also investigated and several important factors that controlled the industrial state of the quarries will be discussed.

Keywords: building stone, quarry, Kijamon, serpentine, Chichibu