

# Japan Geoscience Union Meeting 2011

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

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0022-02

Room:303

Time:May 23 08:45-09:00

## Training of guide in Itoigawa geopark

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### Introduction

The role of a guide at the geopark is very essential. An excellent guide satisfies the intellectual curiosity of the geotourists, and at the same time he is a good educator who invites people to the world of 'the GEO'.

A good guide attracts geotourists to visit a geopark again. He will also elevate people's consciousness of the importance of resource preservation in the geopark. In short, a guide has a key role in three basic elements in a geopark: 'preservation', 'the education and research' and 'the trip' and thus the success of a geopark largely relies on them.

Here, we would like to report the training of the guide in Itoigawa geopark (abbreviate Itoigawa Geopark as IGP in the following).

### The guide in "Pre-Geopark period"

Before aiming for the Global Geopark, there was Itoigawa guide society and its members were used to guide cultural sciences, like the jade culture, Choujagahara remains, Princess Nunakawahime, the salt trail, festivals and the writer Gyofu Souma. Natural science was hardly included in the guide in those days.

### The guide in "Geopark period"

The importance of a guide was re-recognized and, various guide training have been done from 2006.

### Guide training field trip

This field trip has begun in 2008. An excursion was carried 4 times in 2008 and 2009, and 6 times in 2010 in major areas such as Itoigawa-Shizuoka Tectonic Line and salt trail Geosite, Kotaki-gawa jade gorge Geosite, Benten-iwa Geosite etc. We tried to share knowledge of not only curator's but also participant's who has special mastery in specific area. To keep learning quality, the number of participant was limited and the preliminary inspection had done to prevent accident.

### IGP exam

In 2009, the first IGP exam was held to generate geopark awareness. 464 people aged 8 to 80s, and 433 persons passed. The advanced examination was done in the following year. 121 persons took beginners and 136 people took advanced level.

### Official Geopark guide (the first term)

The authorized guide was chosen as the first term guide from the person who has actual guide experience and/ or passed Geopark examination.

### Official Geopark guide test

To see guide experience and motivation of candidates, the official guide test was held at Oyashirazu Geosite. Specifically, examinee had to show tourist, who were disguised by two geopark staffs, Oyashirazu Geosite in limited time by their own way. At the same time, dress, attitude, walking speed, talking and the correctness and so on were checked. As a result 16 people passed and certified as the second term official Geopark guide.

### Start of IGP official guide group

Now that official geopark guide totalled 35 persons, IGP official guide group made a start to share member's experience and skill up. On-the-job training and meeting of the guide is going to be held.

### The issue concerning Geopark Guide

The main issue is guide fee of the official guide. At the moment, tourist is charged only ¥1000 uniformly. When compared it with the guide charge of the Iwami silver mine for example (until 3 hours, 5000 yen), very cheap. Because the guide fee greatly

influences motivation and sustainability of the guide, it's important to discuss thoroughly among geopark staff, tourist association and guides.

Keywords: Itoigawa geopark, guide, training, certification, geotourism, guide fee