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Mount Shinmoe 2011 Eruption and Kirishima Geopark

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Mount Shinmoe (1421 m tall) which straddles both Kagoshima Prefecture and Miyazaki Prefecture has had small eruptions from time to time since its small-scale eruption in August of 2008. However, since the morning of January 26, 2011 it has been continually active. From 3:15 p.m. on the 26th, a large-scale sub-Plinian eruption continued for a few hours, spreading lapilli and volcanic ash made up of pumice over a wide area. Moreover, on January 28 a lava dome was detected inside the crater, and on February 1 an explosive eruption sent aerial vibrations that broke windows and injured some people. Given these circumstances, nearby neighborhood associations have offered information on regulations regarding entry into the mountains and traffic news and have called out to residents in nearby communities to stay alert for eruptions.

In the Pan Kirishima area, we have been putting much effort in disaster prevention as part of promoting Geopark activities. In March of 2009, we constructed a Kirishima Volcano Disaster Prevention Map and distributed the map to residents in nearby communities and from April to May held information sessions at every neighborhood association. We believe that the smooth evacuation of residents in communities near the volcano in response to the recent eruption was a result of such preparations. We also believe that the many lectures and geotourism events about Mount Kirishima we have thus far planned played a large role in educating the civil servants in nearby municipalities and residents of the area about Mount Kirishima, which in turn led to their calm response to the eruption.

The Mount Kirishima Mount Shinmoe eruption of 2011 has shown to the world for the first time that this Geopark plays an extremely important role in disaster prevention.

Keywords: shinmoe-dake, kirishima, eruption, geopark, disaster prevention