

## The link among Geopark, Biosphere Reserve, and National Park in Hakusan, Japan

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Mt. Hakusan (2,702m) is an independent mountain on the Japan Sea side of Central Japan. An area extending over 4 prefectures (Toyama, Ishikawa, Fukui, Gifu) was designated as a national park in 1962, and as a biosphere reserve in 1980 by UNESCO. In 2011, the whole area of Hakusan City (in Ishikawa Prefecture) including the peak of Mt. Hakusan was designated as a Japanese geopark. Therefore, 3 systems on conserving and utilizing nature became to coexist in Mt. Hakusan, and since then, the link among these three is not only a complicated issue but a big chance.

National Parks are locations where human activities are restricted to protect the superb natural landscapes that are representative of Japan and where facilities have been installed to provide essential information and other functions to help visitors come in closer contact with nature (31 national parks in Japan). Biosphere reserves are sites seeking to reconcile conservation of biological and cultural diversity and economic and social development, recognized under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme. To make the 3 functions (conservation, development and logistic support) effective, they have 3 zonations; core area(s), buffer zone(s), and transition area (5 biosphere reserves in Japan). Geoparks are sites enjoying earth and geotourism, supported by UNESCO (6 global geoparks and 27 Japanese geoparks in Japan).

Biosphere reserves and geoparks are both aiming at sustainable development. They attach importance to not only conservation but also utilization of nature, in contrast with the World Heritages. In addition, both form global networks each, which support each site together and diffuse their ideas. However, you can find some differences between these two. For instance, biosphere reserve is an official program of UNESCO, while geopark is a program supported by UNESCO. And the largest difference is that biosphere reserves pay most attention on ecosystems when geoparks pay most attention on earth.

However, they are not only focusing on ecosystems or earth, but they are also focusing on their connections formed with culture or lives. For example, there is a settlement called Shiramine around Mt. Hakusan, located on the river terrace which is a limited flatland in this mountainous area. In Shiramine, fire burned fields were established and forestry was conducted, which could say as a utilization of both topography and biological resources. In the summit of Mt. Hakusan, we could see various alpine vegetations affected by some topographical factors such as the quantity of snow or the formation of the earth. The earth, ecosystems and culture are connected tightly, which connection will be more clarified by both biosphere reserves and geoparks. From this context, you can say that geotours and ecotours might be held as same tours such called geo-ecotours, as it were which Koizumi (2011) said.

National parks are underlying biosphere reserves and geoparks. Both remain under national sovereign jurisdiction, but on the other hand are requested to take effective measures of nature conservation by each state's laws. National parks are representative institution of conservation in Japan, which have some zonations to restrict human activities in phases. Besides, national parks carry out some activities that could be more attractive by cooperating with biosphere reserves and geoparks which have more precise themes.

However, this cooperation depends on the link among the 3 organizations. So in Mt. Hakusan, the secretariats of Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark Promotion Council and Mt. Hakusan Biosphere Reserve Council are both carried out by Hakusan City, assigning the same staffs, to strengthen the link between these two. Moreover, Ministry of the Environment which manages national parks, takes part in both councils.

The link among the three has just started. We are aiming to create new values and attractions transmitting from Mt. Hakusan, using this beneficial opportunity.

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