

Program for broadening the knowledge base and awareness of geopark guides -An example of Amakusa Goshoura Geopark-

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It is very important for any geopark that its guides are actively involved in geo-tourism. Guides must strive to continually increase their awareness and broaden their knowledge base of not only their geopark, but also of neighboring areas. We will use the Amakusa Goshoura Geopark as an example to demonstrate a guide awareness-raising program in action with regard to the geology, geography, history and culture of its neighboring areas.

The Amakusa Goshoura Geopark contains strata and fossils in deposits spanning 100 million years. The strata were deposited in the Cretaceous and Paleogene periods of earth's history, and contain abundant fossils including dinosaurs from the Cretaceous period and large mammals common to the Paleogene.

From the peak of Karasu-toge, a geosite in the geopark, we can see a 360-degree panoramic view of the Yatsushiro Sea and landscape of Kyushu Island including Fugen-dake, Yatsushiro Plane, Aso Mountain, Hitoyoshi Basin, Mt. Shiraga, Ontake and Yahazudake on the Hisatsu Volcanic Plateau, Izumi Plane, Mt. Shibi, Nagashima, Shishijima and Koshikijima.

Members of the Association of Goshoura Tourism Guide group are trained to explain not only about the panorama from Karasu-toge including geologic composition and topographical features of Kyushu Island, but the wealth of information stored in its strata. As an example, the association had a tour to study the geology, geography, history and culture on the coastal area from Ashikita to Nagashima along the Yatsushiro Sea in 2014. Similarly, it will take part in the study of the Shimabara peninsula at the Shimabara Global Geopark in the near future. Training programs like these have been instituted as a means of support for the Amakusa Goshoura Geopark guide's continuing education.

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