

Mt. Naeba foot geopark concept -The person from 30,000 years before to the present, and relation of the ground -

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Here we present the outlines of the Mt. Naeba foothills geopark concept. The geopark is located in the northwest of Mt. Naeba, which area includes both Tsunan town of Niigata prefecture and Sakae village of Nagano prefecture. It is characterized by the facts that while the area has 3 to 4 meter of annual snowfall the population of over 10,000 is maintained, and that 30,000 years of history and cultures of people interacting with the earth can be learned. Numerous environmental changes have occurred on the earth, in the air, in the oceans and on the lands. Studies on the rocks, clays, volcanic ashes, plant and pollen remains in the peat layers, information from archaeological remains and various meteoric factors, enable us to know the influences of the environmental changes to the lives of the people. The Mt. Naeba foothills emerged about 3 million years ago and the base of the land was formed by the lava flow of the Mt. Naeba. Through the development of river terraces, snowfalls and waters from springs, a rich natural environment was formed. The present environment as the snowy country began about 8,000 years ago. Tendency towards the sedentary way of life increased in the prehistoric times with the development in the exploitations of resources. The land formation and the peoples lives are closely related. For example, during the Jomon period, 5000 years ago, people formed very unique flame-style pottery using indigenous clays, made stone tools using volcanic flows or sedimentary rocks and lived in the settlements constructed on the river terraces. There are plenty of archaeological data showing the relations of the land and the people. We began to think about our land seriously placing the Mt. Naeba foothills geopark as a keyword. This idea is to reflect our land which is a precious treasure with geo-eco-culture, to love, to learn, to protect and to pass on the region to the next generations. A group of local people called Geo-egg emerged recently, and many inhabitants began to have consciousness to learn more about the land they were born and bred visiting the local heritages. For us, the Mt. Naeba foothills geopark is one of the hopes for overcoming the disaster of the Northern Nagano earthquake.

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