Geopark Studies as a New Applied Geoscientific Discipline

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Geopark requires scientific supports by academic associations and geoscientists. Geoparks in Japan tend to concern only parts of geological and geographical topics, and rarely understand multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary geoscientific scopes. Geoscience also requires a method of effective outreach covering multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary topics since geoscientific problems are characterized as seamless phenomena. Geopark is an effective tool involving multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary outreach, if scientific and attractive geostories are produced by seamless geoscience. Although many staffs work in geoparks, they are difficult to understand a seamless geostory because almost all Japanese geoparks are controlled under a local government system. Academic staffs are also employed in Japanese geoparks, whereas young researchers and communicators seem to lack multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary scopes because of specialized and independent academic communities. The JpGU geopark session allows science communication among all geoscientific disciplines (space and planetary sciences, atmospheric and hydrospheric sciences, human geosciences, solid earth sciences and biogeosciences) and geoparks. Discussion in this session leads to geopark studies with academic status, which contributes to both geoparks and geoscience in terms of intersectional researches, geoscientific education and science communication supported by academic foundations. This session should produce a framework for geopark studies, linked with sustainability sciences, as a new applied geoscientific discipline.

Keywords: geopark, geoscience, outreach, geoscientific education, science communication, sustainability sciences