

Important role of resident earth scientists in Geopark-In case of Making Geopark Model Route in San'in Kaigan Global Geopark

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Geoparks is a "bottom-up" or community-led program. Local people approach to recognize geological significance of each Geopark and they conserve and promote geological heritage and regional resources for science, education and tourism etc. One of the important roles of geopark activities is resident understanding of the geopark concept, territory and its features. For this purpose, it is important that local residents participate in geopark activities positively. However, in Japan, where local development has been undertaken by governmental organizations, it is difficult for local residents to take part in geopark activities. This time, we planned "Geopark Model Route" across the San'in Kaigan Geopark in cooperation with local people, to promote better understanding and communication with local people, government and academia involved in geopark activities. In a geopark, creating a tour route and map which allow visitors to explore the geosites easily is required. We have therefore prepared a "Geopark Model Route" for walking tours, sea kayaking, driving in half-day or one day, and for enjoying the feature of each area. Each map includes outlines of about twelve must-see geological spots, allowing visitors to enjoy sightseeing and learn about the San'in Kaigan Geopark.

We were able to make "Geopark Model Route" useful for local residents, by involving experienced local people in the area. By working together by local residents and researchers, scientific information could be shared among local people. However, some problems were found in its operation. The map is not used effectively in the area which has fewer visitors and no local guides. From now on, it is also necessary to accept visitor's opinions and correct continuously so that the map may come to be more effective and useful for both visitors and local residents.

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