

Mt. Apoi Geopark

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1.Mt. Apoi geopark visitor center

Themes of Mt. Apoi Geopark is A Story of gifts from deep inside the earth connecting land and people together. Mt. Apoi is made up of peridotite that was thrust up from the depths of the earth by global-scale dynamic ground movement. Mt. Apoi Geopark is a stage featuring narratives that connect the planet's constitution, nature and people.

Sub- theme A: Peridotites- the interior and dynamic movement of the earth

The Hidaka Mountains formed as a result of a collision between two continental plates 13 million years ago. At that time, part of the mantle under the crust was thrust up onto the earth's surface to form the Horoman peridotite complex, which includes Mt. Apoi. The relatively fresh peridotites on and around the mountain contain valuable information from deep inside the earth's mantle, making them the subject of global attention. Mt. Apoi Geopark provides a variety of opportunities to learn about and enjoy phenomena relating to the earth's transformation. These include its status as the site of a plate collision, oddly shaped masses made of cooled and solidified magma, and rocks from far-off southern seas.

Sub- theme B: Alpine Plants- scarcity and the natural environment

Despite its low altitude, Mt. Apoi provides habitats for alpine vegetation due to its unique soil, weather and geographical conditions. Hidakaso (*Callianthemum miyabeanum*) and a host of other endemic species grow here, and the area's alpine plant communities have been collectively designated as a Special Natural Monument of Japan. In addition to alpine plants, the area is also home to the endemic Apoimaimai snail (*Paraegista apoiensis*) and Himechamadaraseseri (*Pyrgus malvae*; a butterfly not found anywhere else in Japan), as well as the Japanese pika (a relict species from the Ice Age). Mt. Apoi Geopark's valuable and diverse ecosystem provides opportunities to learn about and enjoy the natural environment.

Sub- theme C: Human History- the community of the nature and human life

The beautiful scenery of oddly shaped rocks (including masses called Oyako-iwa, Sobira-iwa and Cape Enrumu) along the Samani coast is a highlight of Hidaka's coastal road. Legends handed down by indigenous Ainu people in Samani, where Mt. Apoi Geopark is located, often feature these rocks. Cape Enrumu has long been known as a favorable natural harbor thanks to an ideal landform that shelters ships from strong winds, helping Samani to prosper as an important trading hub for Kitamaebune merchant vessels from the Edo period (1603 - 1868) onward. The rich history of people living with Mt. Apoi and the sea continues to the present day in Mt. Apoi Geopark, making it an ideal place to learn about and enjoy the symbiosis between humans and nature.

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