

The gaps on the way of thinking between scientists and local stakeholders

-A case study of Hakusan Tedorigawa Japanese Geopark-

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Introduction

Recently, scientists have been encouraged to carry out social contributions, and their cooperation with the local stakeholders are increasing. Geoparks, mostly lead by the local governments, have employed scientists as practical staffs. It can be said as a pioneer of a contact point between science and society. Most of them sit beside the local government staffs in their offices daily, and also they have opportunities to cooperate with citizens such as guides. However, there is a gap on the way of thinking between the scientists and these local stakeholders, which causes a variety of conflicts and troubles.

This paper will report the present situation and extract the issues, in cooperation between scientists and local stakeholders, through the cases of Hakusan Tedorigawa Japanese Geopark, focusing especially on geotours.

Gaps between scientists and local government staffs

Geotourism is one of the main geopark activities. Many geoparks train guides and conduct geotours. Geotours are expected as a method to get incomes from outside the area. Regarding the tourism promotion, its aim is to attract tourists from the outside. However, the methods are hard to say as effective.

In our geopark, the main method to attract tourists are flyers. Until a little while ago, most of them had been distributed inside the area. Geoparks are mostly managed by the local governments, which cooperates mostly with internal bodies such as community centers, road side stations, accommodations or tourist facilities. But if it is outside the area, under other local governments, local government staffs find it hard to take cooperation with the bodies.

However, considering objectively, if the aim is to attract tourists from outside, we should distribute most of the flyers outside. In this case, the objective and the method is not matching. In addition, as a background, we can point out that the local government staffs do not have many opportunities to train the cycle of Introduction - Methods - Results - Discussions, like scientists as in the process of presentation at academic meetings or scientific articles.

Gaps between scientists and citizens

Although geoparks are training some citizens as guides, in many cases, the age group of guides are based in the elderly. Since they can survive by the pensions, they are not eager to get incomes as guides, and tend to be volunteers.

In 2015, our geopark has conducted a monitoring of the geotours by college students. From this monitoring, many issues came to the front such as "There was no advance notice on dresses in a woodland tour, and I was the only one wearing town clothes." "Guide was only explaining to specific participants".

The guides were not malicious, and were just under their "common sense" which can be said as "guiding the children of relatives." However, the guides are not guiding "the children of relatives" but "customers" which they receive the fee, and it is necessary to adjust to the "common sense" of "customers".

Scientists could have opportunities to receive others' opinions through academic meetings and

objectively view themselves, but citizens scarcely have such opportunities. It is quite difficult to break this "common sense" that has been cultivated over the years. In order to let the guides view themselves objectively, there is no choice but to repeat the dialogue over time.

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Conclusion

Scientists fortunately have opportunities to train the cycle of Introduction to Discussions, and also to objectively view themselves. Whatever their discipline is, scientists can be said as specialists of logical thinking. On the other hand, local stakeholders scarcely have such opportunities. Scientists should understand the way of thinking of their partners well, and take the approach adaptive for their partners, in order to cooperate with the local stakeholders.

Keywords: scientists, local government staffs, citizens, geoparks, cooperation