

Development of Geotourism using eco-friendly cars

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Oita Himeshima Geopark is located about 5 km far from the coast of northern part of Kunisaki Peninsula in Oita Prefecture. Himeshima is an island, about 7 km far from east to west and about 3 km far from north to south. Our geopark is a compact, where geosites are closely located, characterized by Pleistocene sediments as Japan Geopark in 2013, several promotion activities are conducted for community residents and visitors.

In our geopark, we made an effective approach to geo-tour utilizing a special environment that is island. (The environment of tourism is limited. And the life path of residents is used for tourism too.) We are using eco-friendly cars such as electric vehicles and electric cart which provided by private company. Geo-tour with eco-friendly car have been gotten high evaluation from the point of user-friendliness tour which can be offered to the actual situation of the Himeshima area.

The eco-friendly cars are provided by T · plan Co., Ltd. that currently available with one or twin seater electric vehicle and the electric cart which is 4 or 5-seater. Tourists can easily access from Himeshima port to the rental space and rent those eco-friendly cars.

Geotourism using eco-friendly cars have several advantages on the ecosystem of island and resident's life such as little exhaust and noise of moving car. Compact sized eco-friendly cars are easily accessible to narrow driving roads and between the houses and stores which make explanation of Geo-story of resident's life and the structure of the village easier.

The 4-seater electric cart which provided since 2016 have been used as guide tour mobility. Currently geo-tours are conducted by geo-guides as a trial basis. They drive the mobility around Geo-sites and guide.

This electric cart is reorganized model of golf-cart that does not have doors and the speed is up to 19km/hour which makes the cart safe and non-stressful for both senior citizens and children because getting on and off is very easy. Electric cart does not make big noise which makes geo-tour easy to explain about the contents. Further, the cart does not have doors, which is merits to feel winds, sounds of sea waves and tweeting birds. It facilitates communication with residents in island too.

Geo-tour with electric cart is currently operated experimentally. However, we will try to enrich our geotourism with eco-friendly cars for our customers not only ordinaries but also senior citizens and people with disabilities feel and enjoy Oita Himeshima Geopark.

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