

## Learning about and Protecting Stones in the Itoigawa UNESCO Global Geopark: Stone Guide System

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Itoigawa City is the first region in Japan to be certified a UNESCO Global Geopark and promotes a variety of activities which make use of its natural resources. The Itoigawa-Shizuoka Tectonic Line is a massive fault which runs through the center of Itoigawa, splitting it between east and west. This fault line is responsible for Itoigawa's great diversity of rock types, including jade.

As part of a new city promotion campaign as "Stone Town Itoigawa" in 2019, a new Stone Guide System was established with the goal of promoting Itoigawa's many fascinating stones, including jade. The Stone Guides System was founded with a goal of promoting to local people and visitors not only the appeal of Itoigawa's many stones, but also the importance of conserving them for future generations, in accordance with the objectives of the Itoigawa UNESCO Global Geopark and the Sustainable Development Goals. The courses undertaken by these Stone Guides include both foundational and practical courses. Individuals who have passed both of these courses in addition to the Beginner Level of the Itoigawa Geopark Certification Exam are eligible to take the Stone Guide Certification Exam.

In the first year of the program (2019), 172 individuals participated in the foundational and practical courses and 42 individuals have signed up for the certification exam.

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