

Making Use of Mining Heritage in Mine-Akiyoshidai Karst Plateau Geopark

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In Mine-Akiyoshidai Karst Plateau Geopark, mining has been carried out since ancient times: from the Nara period, the mining of copper ore and the smelting of copper; from the Meiji period, the extraction of anthracite coal as well as the mining of limestone and marble, and the production of lime. Post-war, the large-scale mining of limestone began, supported by the demand for cement during the Economic Miracle period and which still continues today.

Within the geopark, the remains of mining activity can be seen all around, but several problems need to be solved before we can make use of this heritage. 1) Very few people who worked in the mines are still around today, and tales of what the mine was like have been lost. 2) Local mining companies do not allow the use of land they own on safety grounds. 3) Regular maintenance such as grass cutting is necessary. 4) Structures has become weakened by the inexorable ravages of time.

In order to overcome these challenges, particularly with regard to former coal mines and lime kilns, we have undertaken the following measures. 1) Conducting interviews with former miners. 2) The collection and digitisation of old photographs and other materials from the archives of local mining companies and libraries. 3) Negotiations with mining companies regarding the use of their land. 4) Collaboration with local groups.

We hope that by using this material as part of our geotours, the local people and tourists who take part in them will be encouraged to think about how they use and look after the earth's materials. This, we hope, will contribute towards achieving SDGs number 7, 'affordable and clean energy', and number 12, 'responsible consumption and production'.

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