

Systemization of the Certified Tourism Guide Program and its Significance –An Example by the Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark

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The Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark, which began in 2010, and was certified nationally in 2011, has been running for close to ten years. Tourism has been one of the focal points of the Geopark, with related activities being started since early-on.

There are many challenges involved in promoting tourism, one of which is increasing the quality of Geopark guides. In 2011 when the Geopark was certified, there was already a large volunteer-guide presence within the area, so we were unable to start up a Geopark guide group. Furthermore, many of these guides were very passionate about volunteering. In 2015, during the Global Geopark Screening Process, it was suggested that we implement a training course and certification for guided tours.

As a result, from 2017 we started the Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark Certified Guide Training Course, with the initial passing examinees being certified in 2018. In addition to the difficulty of the written test, we also held in-person interviews in the hopes that the examinees' nervousness throughout the exams further increased their confidence upon passing. While the number of people who pass the exam is quite low compared to the number of examinees, taking into account the current needs, we are approaching the Certified Guide Program with a "quality over quantity" approach.

While the results of this program will continue to compile from now, one of the challenges for the near future is the fact that there is currently no standard of quality, as the guide skill levels vary from person to person. Another problem faced is that the system for the training course and certification is not yet fixed.

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