

Promoting Sado Island Geopark while considering the local residents

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In order to promote a geopark, we need to consider opinions and thought of local residents and to work together with them. To that end, it seems to be necessary to create an environment with mechanisms that facilitates the exchange of opinions among the residents, specialists and the members of the promotion office. It takes time to create a geopark having committed residents and it might not give results before several years. However, the commitment of the residents makes them realize that they are responsible for its development. As a result, this enables to create a sustainable geopark. With this in mind, we will introduce the effect of the meetings with the local residents held by the Sado Geopark and then, our future plans.

We enter the area, organize the field trips and explain the concept of geopark to the local residents. We rediscover the charm of the area with residents and make proposals such as tours focusing on the relationship between Earth and the life of the people. We believe that it is necessary to include in our proposals not only our knowledge about the geology but also many charms existing in the area, for example its culture. The residents' awareness of geopark within Sado Island is still low. Therefore, the promotion office offers several briefing sessions to the local residents since 2015. We attend the community meetings and there, explain the geopark to the residents. At first, it was aimed to familiarizing them with the concept of the geopark. However, unexpectedly, we received ideas from several villages such as We will cut grasses at the geo spots and We want to try a geo tour with the view from the ocean. and so on. There are villages where concrete efforts have been initiated, such as the road maintenance on the way to the geo spots. This suggests that the residents have realized the value of their area and started their actions. Especially, in the Sawasaki district on the Ogi peninsula, the stairway maintenance was carried out mainly by the residents. This stairway leading to the coast had been neglected for more than 30 years and was covered with grass. After that, we walked around the coast and the area with the residents and realized again the value of the region. In the spring, we plan to carry out a tour organized mainly by the village related to the Natural *Iwanori* that can be collected on the coast.

Geoparks can be used for sightseeing. However, it depends on each village for what they aim when using geoparks. We visit villages and there, explain how to use the geopark in Sado Island while introducing the examples of other geoparks. If there is a demand from the residents to use the geopark for sightseeing, we believe that it is the role of the promotion office to help them create that mechanism.

We plan to continue to organize meetings with the local residents. Geoparks are used for various things such as tourism, education and community building, but we should not ignore the collaboration and the voluntary efforts of local residents for its success. Regarding the promotion of the Sado Geopark, it is necessary to always consider the residents for our activities.

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