

Progress on scientific research and science-popularization activities in Zhangjiajie Global Geopark of China

He-Qing HUANG

The Joint Research Center for Zhangjiajie Geomorphology, Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences
< E-mail: huanghq@igsnr.ac.cn >

The picturesque landscape in Zhangjiajie Global Geopark of China caught the attention of Wu Guanzhong, a master of Chinese paintings, in 1979 and since then it has attracted worldwide attention. In 1992 and 2004, it was declared as a World Natural Heritage site and a founding member of Global Geopark Network, respectively. The number of visitors from home and abroad to the geopark has been increasing in an exponential form, reaching over 10 million yearly nowadays.

Although the geologically and geomorphically distinct site has very important scientific, ecological and tourism values, difficulties remain in carrying out science-popularization activities due to the lack of detailed scientific studies.

Particularly, it has not been made clear what kind of scientific story the landscape in Zhangjiajie Global Geopark tells and how to effectively protect the distinct site with more and more tourists coming to appreciate the beautiful landscape. To provide a convincing scientific explanation about the formation of the landscape in Zhangjiajie Global Geopark and to promote the application of the geologic/geomorphic knowledge in managing the geopark, several research projects have been undertaken and their findings have been applied in science-popularization activities recently. This presentation introduces the major achievements of these research projects, typically on the evolutionary process and causes behind the development of the landscape.

Furthermore, it details how the science-popularization activities are pursued in light of the geologic/geomorphic knowledge within the context of geoheritage conservation and sustainable tourism development.