

Geoheritage and Geotourism in the Lichi Badland Geopark, Taiwan

Ying San LIOU

Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies, National Dong Hwa University, Taiwan < E-mail: yingsan@mail.ndhu.edu.tw >

The Lichi Badland Geopark, located in the southeastern part of Taiwan, is one of the Taiwan Geoparks Network launched at 2011. Geologically, the Lichi Badland Geopark is mainly composed of the Lichi Formation with prominent badland due to the widespread mudstone. Exotic blocks with various rock types and dimensions, such as sandstone, andesite, limestone, gabbro, serpentinite, basalt, etc. are embedded in the formation. The unlithified and chaotic formation, also was called as Lichi mélange, has long been considered to be the product of arc-continent collision between the Eurasian continent and the Philippine Sea plate, and is the principal evidence for the emergence of Taiwan Island. Because of these outstanding geoheritages in the geopark, more than 10 geosites such as badland gorge, exotic block hill, panoramic view platform, etc., and 4 trails equipped with panels, as well as 5 practical traveling routes have been explored through detailed surveys by a combination of Earth scientists, local people, and government institutions in the past years. These allow the visitor to appreciate and comprehend geological, geomorphological, cultural, and botanical elements in the geopark. Besides, four kinds of geology- and landscape-based programmes have been carried out for elementary school students and teachers, undergraduate students, and local people, as well as furthermore more than 200 persons have taken the courses in the last five years. In addition, a total of twelve propagation materials such as books, folders, brochures, posters, etc., were also published as supplementary for geotourism. In order to accomplish the goal of sustainable development, geotourism activities including orienteering event for bike riding, geopark week, badland exploration, drawing competition for kids, etc. organized and conducted by local community, which have been carried out and about 500 visitors attended in the past five years. These performed activities not only achieve the goal of landscape protection but also increase in the employment opportunities and income for the local people. Some preliminary results have been achieved, nevertheless, a lot of efforts on developing new trails and traveling routes, establishing a structured network of interpretation facilities, enhancing tour-guide services, and connecting geological and cultural heritages, are necessary to endeavour in the future.