

A first attempt of geopark management led by a civilian society in Japan

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The Tateyama-Kurobe region in north-central Japan, is characterized by the Hida mountain range, over 3,000m in elevation, and the Toyama Bay with steep slope falling down onto the 1,000m deep seabed, both of which are only about 50 km apart. From the plentiful snow and rain in the region, steep rivers flow seemingly to link mountainous and maritime areas, creating coastal alluvial fans. The people have formed a specific culture using this providence of plentiful water, land and marine resources. Geologically, the region is an important representative of tectonic development of Japanese archipelagoes, because it is comprised of relics of continental collision, continental drift during the Paleozoic, and volcanic activities since the Mesozoic, centering on the Hida metamorphic belt.

In the Tateyama-Kurobe region, there already were prolific activities, like volunteer guides and research groups through Toyama Prefecture's Naturalist guide politics; entertaining the possibility of including and maintaining the non-municipal civil perspective, which is a fresh approach different from what other Japanese Geoparks had performed until now. With organizing local businesses and guide associations, together with individuals, the civilian leading "TATEYAMA KUROBE Geopark Society" spearheads the Geopark operations, while the mayors of the local municipalities have formed a separate council on the matter. Both organizations maintain independent relationship as equal partners, and cooperate in promoting the Geopark making use of the respective merits each other. In April this year, the Society has been formally incorporated, and we are planning to raise the level of activity in tourism and other regional contributors.