

## Characteristics of map information on the websites of Geoparks

DAICHI KOHMOTO - *School of Tourism, Kobe Shukugawa Gakuin University, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan <daichizu@gmail.com>*

A map is a fundamental tool to describe and analyze “geo”-related information. Maps are also necessary to promote education, research, and tourism on geoparks. However, few studies have been conducted to analyze the relationships between geoparks and maps. Maps of geoparks have many possibilities for transmission of information if they are on the websites. Most of the geoparks have their own websites, because they can update them as needed by themselves and many people who become interested in geoparks or relevant areas can casually browse it. For these reasons, this study aims to assess characteristics of map information on the websites of geoparks and discuss the challenges and possibilities. All the contents on the official websites of GGN (Global Geoparks Network) and JGN (Japanese Geoparks Network) members were browsed, and varieties and numbers of maps on the websites were examined. As a consequence, large differences are found in the degree of map information on the websites. Geoparks in Asia other than Japan (the majority is China) tend to publish small number of maps on the websites, and introduce the contents by only texts and photos. Moreover, many maps of the territory and model courses maps are published in Europe. Some particular geoparks in Europe have rich maps showing the activities of the Earth through geological maps etc. Geoparks in Japan are characterized by many maps showing access from outside of the geoparks, model course maps, location maps of museums, restaurants, accommodations and so on. On the other hand, there is still great potential in geological maps and topographic maps as educational materials if they are on the websites of geoparks. In order to enrich the geopark as a “great place for learning geo”, roles of map information on the websites can perform crucial functions.

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