

Geo-gashi: a 'sweet' way of interpreting geological features

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This Poster Presentation explains the Geogashi Ryokodan—the Bitesize Landscape Creator and Geotour Promoter from Izu Peninsula Geopark in Japan. The word Geogashi is a combination of 'Geo' and 'Okashi'—the Japanese term for sweets, and Ryokodan means travel group. Our group designs sweets that look exactly like the rocks, lava flow, geological features and other beautiful landscapes found in the Izu Peninsula Geopark. Local children take part in the 'Geogashi Kitchen' where our idea takes the form of tasty sweets. As registered guides of the geopark, we also conduct Geogashi Tours explaining the unique landscape features and the story behind their formation and change through time. Geo-sweets are sold as a part of the tours, as well as in workshops and geopark booths in places like Tokyo. Our sweets are varied in appearance and taste just like the landscape of the Izu Peninsula, and are hand-made from local ingredients. The visitor can take the geogashi back with him/her, and can use it as a gift/souvenir. Each sweet pack contains a small paper map with explanation of the land feature, printed in both Japanese and English. The visitor has an idea of our geopark by buying a collection of these sweets as the package contains an explanation of important geosites. In this way Geogashi acts as a trip guiding tool spreading education about geological and cultural heritage, and geohistorical background of the area. We believe that by actually taking up a geogashi on the hand, by tasting it, or just by looking at it, one can have an idea of the land features in our geopark. The sweets also encourage visitors to visit and experience the actual landscapes. Today, the Geogashi Ryokodan is highly popular among visitors and appreciated by local communities for its unique way of interpreting geological landscapes.

Presented in Theme 3