



## **Commencement of Geoparks, Geology day and International Earth Science Olympiad, IYPE in Japan**

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The GSJ is the main supporting organization of IYPE Japan, which is an implementation body of IYPE in Japan, serving as its secretariat. During the IYPE triennial activity, the GSJ has been supporting development of Geoparks, establishment of "the Geology Day" and the Earth Science Olympiad activities with some academic societies, and has distributed geological maps with IYPE logo. The GSJ also established an outreach network "Geo-networks Tsukuba" as a local legacy of the IYPE, and has managed it with a local government, research organizations, non-profit corporations and local media to increase geological and environmental literacy of public, especially among young people. The GSJ-AIST has also contributed internationally to IYPE by joining two international projects, OneGeology and the CCOP Book project.

Geoparks in Japan are characterized by following features. The Japanese Islands and the surrounding seas are situated in the area of unique geologic features; the place where several tectonic plates meet and collide. This causes earthquakes and volcanic activities, and makes Japan one of most dynamic areas on the earth. The dynamics of the earth bring about not only geological hazards but also a lot of blessings.

In August of 2009, three Geoparks, the Toya Caldera and Usu Volcano Geopark, the Itoigawa Geopark and the Unzen Volcanic Area Geopark, were accepted to join the Global Geopark Network from Japan for the first time. Since its launch in 2006, the GSJ has been playing a major role in promoting Geoparks in Japan together with Geological Society of Japan. The GSJ hosts the Japan Geopark Committee (JGC) for quality evaluation, serving as the information center of Geoparks in Japan.

The Geology Day of Japan (10th of May) has been set up by the academic societies for geology in Japan and GSJ in 2007. The Geology Day is expected to provide the chances for the public to enjoy field trips and excursions and to understand the importance of geo-diversity. The Day commemorates the first publication of the geological map of Japan on 10th of May in 1878. A total of fifty-nine geology-related organizations including natural museums and academic societies have joined the eighty nine events for Geology Day all over Japan in 2009.

After the great success of 1st International Earth Science Olympiad (IESO) in Korea (2007), 2nd Philippines (2008) and 3rd Taiwan (2009), 6th IESO was decided to be held in Japan (2012). We also expect great success of 4th IESO in Indonesia and 5th IESO in Italy. Earth science communities in Japan including Societies, Universities, and Research Institutes take present-day environmental crisis seriously and throw strong messages to young people for saving the earth. Under such circumstances, IESO provides wonderful chances to think of the earth, to make friendships among worldwide participants and to understand each other. We, earth science communities in Japan, promise strongly to support 6th IESO in Tsukuba, Japan (2012) and then to organize this event efficiently. Through the triennial activity of IYPE we all learned the importance of international cooperation and public outreach.