

Sustainable development of Toya-Usu Global Geopark and creating safety culture at Usu volcano, Japan - through the activities by Mimatsu Museum and Sobetsu Information Center

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Masao Mimatsu(1888-1977) was a local post master at the time of Showa-Shinzan lava dome formation in 1943-1945. He had an experience guiding the visiting professors during the 1910 eruption. So he knew what to do, and had deeply engaged voluntarily volcano observations, and abundant precious data including "Mimatsu Diagram" were left behind. Saburo got married granddaughter of Masao and both experienced the 1977 eruption. The eruption caused Saburo's admiration for Masao's works and finally he opened Mimatsu Masao Memorial Hall (Showa-Shinzan Volcano Museum) in April, 1988. It is a private owned compact, but rich informative museum. It was a year of Kagoshima International Volcano Conference1988, and shortly after the Armero disaster, so the conference was a pre-COV one. Saburo was invited and asked to display Masao's work as a week-long special exhibition. He quickly learnt the true value of the Masao's left items and got a strong new linkage with the volcanologists. The Usu area had experienced a serious social difficulty since the 1977 eruption, because of the ignorance and refusal of volcano hazard maps considering possible negative effects on tourism. But, volcanologists headed by Prof. Y. Katsui of Hokkaido University who visited Armero started to establish the regional safety culture network, avoiding the direct impact by future eruption. So, it was Saburo Mimatsu, who became the bridge with the society. Soon after, effective linkage and collaboration work were established. The '95 International Workshop on Volcanoes Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Mt. Showa-Shinzan was the symbolic turning point accepting hazard map. Why neither casualty, nor injuries in the 2000 eruption despite eruption site was so near to the settlement? It was because collaboration between people, officials, scientists and media functioned better than our expectation, and they took an effective actions. Recovering period from the 2000 eruption impacts, local people including tourist businessmen found a new sustainable road for regional development. Many disaster sites were preserved and guided tours started by the people. First it was named "Eco-Museum", but soon it switched to UNESCO supporting Geopark program. Sobetsu town established Sobetsu Information Center (SBI) as one of its core centers. The Volcano-Hazards Study Room at SBI displays information panels and the rock samples (lava block-pumice-ash). Many shelves and cabinets stored abundant basic information on volcanoes, natural hazards, geoparks, and local histories. Most basic materials came from the retired professors and local individuals. We strongly believe such basic functions by local Museum-DataCenters are the key both for the sustainable Geopark-Geotourism development during the long volcano dormancy, and also for the future risk mitigation.