

Cave Features as a Tourism Resource

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I. Cave types and Features

1. Cave Types

Cave types are determined by the cause of its formation, forming process and the cave figure types. They could be distinguished as natural cave and artificial cave and could be subdivided to limestone cave, lava tube, erosion cave and joint cave. The cave shapes determine whether the cave is vertical or horizontal.

First of all, the limestone cave is widely found in limestone areas. It is known that there are approximately one thousand limestone caves in Korea, but this report has not been scientifically proved. The limestone cave is formed by the water (which is absorbed into ground) that dissolves limestone. The limestone stalactites, stalagmites and other stone

pillars present numerous different shapes and figures in the underground realm.

Lava tube is formed during the volcano eruption. The external of the lava tube is made while the lava is cooled off or flown off. On the while, the inside is a hollow tube that almost looks like the intestines of human.

The erosion cave type is divided into sea cave and fluvial erosion cave, and most of them are formed by the erosion processes of sea water and coast waves. Besides these, there is a joint cave type that is made by the wave's erosive actions through the rock joints. In fact, most of the joint caves are shown in granite joints.

Artificial caves are artificially made by human, and they are built for military or commercial purposes.

2. Cave features

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Most of limestone caves and lava tubes in Korea have similar formation period.

Most of limestone caves manifest rich landscapes spotted with stalactites and stalagmites, and it is estimated that they were formed approximately 100 thousand years ago. These caves are rich in geographical features and are known with its excellent cavern mini-topography. There were series of findings that confirm the traces of habitats for our ancestors. From this, we can conclude that these caves were used as prehistoric settlements, religious votive ground or shelters. Also, the discharged materials from bats and stalactites have been used in Chinese medicine even up to present.

It is known that there are around one hundred lava tubes in Korea, and 70 of them are located in Jeju Island. These lava tubes that are found in Jeju Island are not formed by the gas eruption (like those of lava tubes in foreign countries), but their entrance ways are made by the buried ceilings. They usually show narrow and long shape, but the inside of the cave present rather simple and monotonous views

II. Caves as a tourism resource

Most of scholars classify caves as topographical resources among the natural tourism resource category, and it is because scholars observed only the topographical aspects of caves. Caves are highly related with the topography and geological features, but the mysterious landscape of cave interiors are utilized as tourism resources; also, caves contribute to commercial, military and academic researches. In this regard, caves can be classified as multipurpose tourism resource.

The value of caves as a tourism resource does not end at the level of its artistic features of underground view. Rather, caves can teach us the features of prehistoric settlements, religious functions, wartime shelter, food storage, sports activity place for cave exploration and academic researches. Recently, caves are utilized as nuclear wastes storage.

Caves manifest characteristics of tourism as a natural resources and tourism as a humanity study, so caves are valuable as a multipurpose tourism resource.

III. Summary

The modern people spend more time with their family on weekends, and this changed the perspective toward leisure and tourism. Along with this, the recognition toward tourism resources have underwent various modifications with the increasing number of family tourists.

Caves are categorized as lava tube (formed by volcano activity), lime stone cave (formed by absorption of water into underground level), sea cave (formed by wave erosion) and artificial cave that were made for the fluent traffic activity of railways or roads.

Caves manifest characteristics of tourism as a natural resources and tourism as a humanity study, so caves are valuable as a multipurpose tourism resource.