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Preface

The first International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology was held in White Salmon in Washington, U.S.A., when the convention of National Speleological Society was held in 1972. Later on, the second one was held in Catania City, Sicily Island, Italy in 1975; the third in Bend, Oregon, U.S.A. in 1982; the fourth, again in Catania City, Italy, in 1983.

The 5th Symposium was decided to be held in the Japan-Korea Area. This region was chosen because the Japan Vulcanospeleological Society and Speleological Society of Korea had researched Billemot Kul Cave on Cheju Island since 1977. This cave is considered to be the longest in the world, and announced result of this study caused a respectable reaction among the scholars in this field worldwide.

The Speleological Society of Korea has initially decided to open the Symposium in Cheju Island, but this was cancelled in 1987 due to circumstances. We, the Society of Japan, therefore had to be in a position to act instead of Korea. The Korean Authority have permitted us to carry out research inside the lava caves in Cheju Island. This has been a restricted area to Koreans until now, including their scholars. Therefore we are very fortunate to have this opportunity. We will not be able to do research inside these caves in future.

Furthermore, Vulcanospeleology is a relatively new study, even in Japan which has 186 Volcanic caves, of which 111 are around Mt. Fuji in Central Japan. The reason why this study is new and there are few scholars in this field is because there are reliable vulcanospeleology books yet published anywhere.

Nevertheless, we of the Japan Vulcanospeleological Society have been studying these caves for 27 years with good results. The investigation of biology in volcanic caves has proven the existence of systemization for the creatures underground, which has reformed the existing theories.

This being the situation we have decided with much pleasure to open 5th Symposium at Izunagaoka Hot Springs in our country, and invite all of you concerned with this study to exchange the results of our studies mutually.

Takanori Ogawa

Convener: 5th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology