In spite of the extremely diverse geological settings that exist in Asia, relatively little attention has previously been paid to this region in terms of terrestrial analog studies for planetary application. Asia is emerging as a major center of studies in planetary geology, but no attempt had been made in the past to organize a broadly based meeting that would allow planetary geologists in Asia to meet with ones from more advanced centers, such as the United States and Europe, and that would include the participation of many geologists working primarily on terrestrial research.

The Planetary Exploration Research Center (PERC) of the Chiba Institute of Technology hosted the first planetary geology field symposium in Asia to present results from recent planetary geology studies and to exchange ideas regarding terrestrial analogs (http://www.perc.it-chiba.ac.jp/meetings/pgfs2011/index.html). About 80 scientists from 10 countries gathered at the Kitakyushu International Conference Center on Kyushu Island, a western Japanese island possessing diverse volcanic landforms and active geothermal features.

The 2-day symposium offered an opportunity for participants, including scientists otherwise focusing on terrestrial research, to be exposed to the most up-to-date results from recent planetary exploration. Invited and extended talks included presentations of results from the Mercury Surface, Space Environment, Geochemistry, and Ranging (MESSENGER) mission to Mercury, the Kaguya mission to the Moon, the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter (MRO) and Mars Exploration Rover (MER) missions to Mars, the Hayabusa mission to asteroid Itokawa, and the Dawn mission to asteroid Vesta. The symposium session dedicated to terrestrial analogs introduced various relevant geological environments in Asia and elsewhere, highlighting the importance of finding new terrestrial sites useful for the study of planetary processes.

Another session was dedicated to reflection upon the relationship between planetary geology and terrestrial geology, a topic of increasing importance for terrestrial geologists seeking to better understand how to apply their experiences to planetary research. The symposium also offered communication opportunities for engineers interested in instrument development for planetary missions, with a special emphasis on the rover technology essential to the geological investigation of planetary bodies.

The postsymposium field trip was attended by 43 people and included visits to hot springs and volcanic landforms in the Beppu-Shimabara graben. A strong association between tectonics and volcanism, common in the solar system, is particularly evident in this region. Participants observed a rich diversity of volcanic features at the Aso and Unzen volcanoes, systems that are still active today. The Beppu hot spring exhibits spring pools with high concentrations of various minerals and microbial life, making this locality relevant to the study of hypothesized ancient hydrothermal systems on Mars.

We would like to thank the people who were involved in the organization of these events. The Sedimentological Society of Japan, Society for Promotion of Space Science, and West Japan Industry and Trade Convention Association helped to finance the symposium and field trip. We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to the participants who visited Japan while the memories of the 11 March 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami and their consequent disasters were still fresh.

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