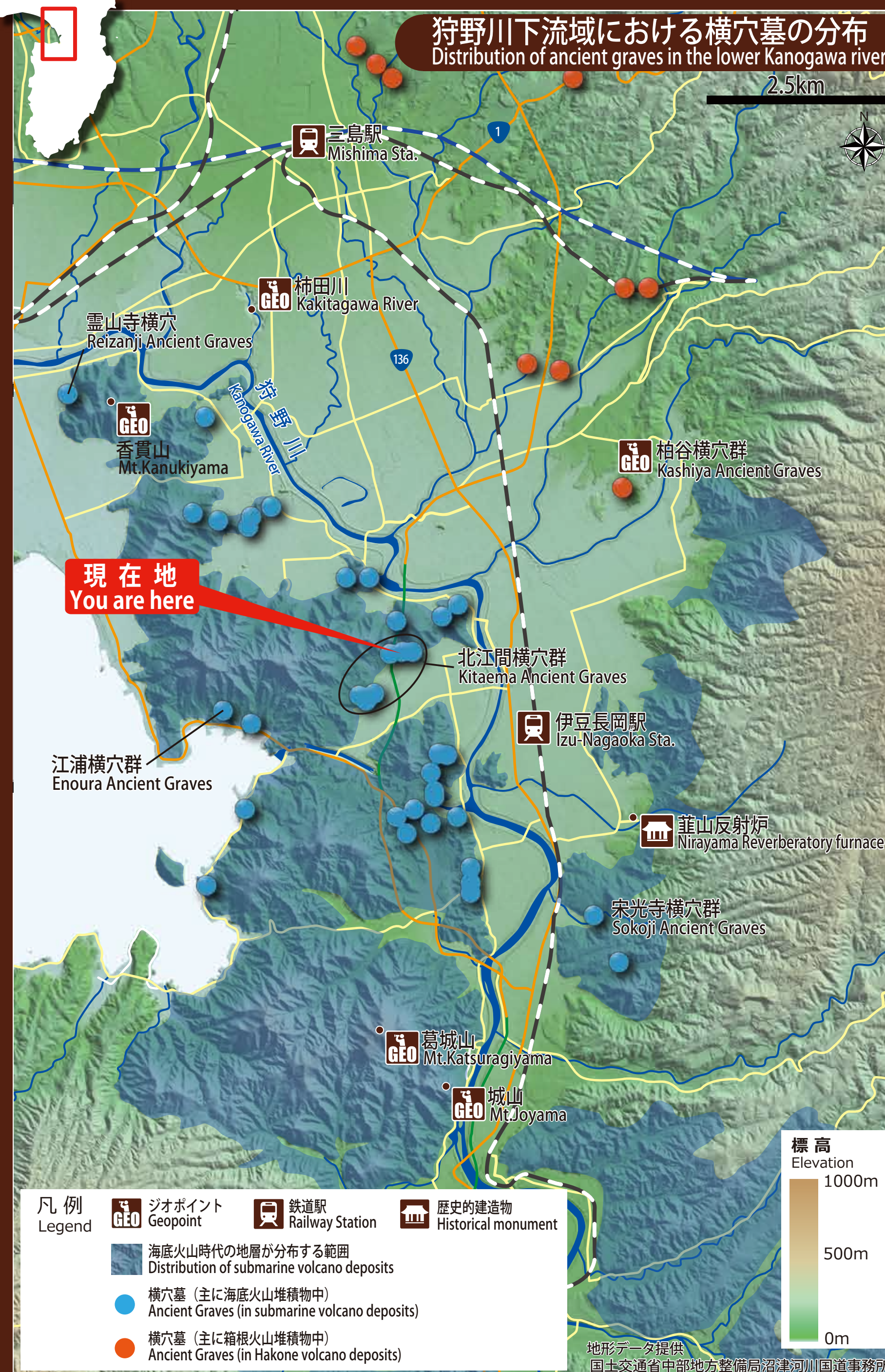


# 横穴群にみる海底火山のなごり

Traces of submarine volcanoes in ancient graves



北伊豆一帯には、斜面を横方向に掘って作られる「横穴墓」が分布しています。7世紀の中ごろから作られ始めたこれらの横穴墓は、簡単な道具でも掘ることができる地層の中に多く作られています。

北江間横穴群をはじめとする狩野川左岸側の横穴墓の多くは、数100万年前、伊豆が本州に衝突する前に海底につもった火山灰や軽石の地層の中に作られており、壁面には海底につもった際の縞模様などがそのまま残っています。このような掘削しやすい地層は石材としても用いられてきました。伊豆石と呼ばれるこの石材は、箱根山反射炉など、あちこちで使われています。

一方、柏谷横穴群など、狩野川の右岸側に分布する横穴墓は、箱根火山（数10万年前以降）の火砕流堆積物などの中に多く作られています。

掘りやすさだけで横穴墓の分布が決まるわけではありませんが、横穴群の分布から、大地のなりたちの一端を知ることができます。

“Ancient graves (with lateral holes)” that were constructed by excavating tunnels in hillside are distributed throughout the northern Izu. Many ancient graves whose construction begun around the middle of the 7th century are found in strata that can be dug even with simple tools.

Many of the ancient graves, including Kitaema ancient graves, on the left bank of the Kanogawa River are found in the strata of volcanic ash and pumice stone that had accumulated on the seabed before Izu collided with Honshu (the main island of Japan) several million years ago. The easy-to-dig soil of the strata has been used as building stone—known as “Izu Stone”. Izu Stone is used for various applications also in The Nirayama Reverberatory Furnace, for example.

On the other hand, ancient graves including the Kashiya ancient graves that are distributed on the right bank of the Kanogawa River are often found in pyroclastic flow deposits from Hakone volcanoes (formed several hundred thousand years ago).

Distribution of ancient graves does not always depend on ease of excavation, but judging from the distribution patterns of such graves we can understand some aspects of geological formation of this area.

