

Daikanbo Lookout

Daikanbo's lookout offers what is thought to be the most remarkable view of the Aso caldera. With a 100-kilometer perimeter, and measuring 25 kilometers from north to south and 18 kilometers east to west, this caldera is one of the largest in the world. It was created by a series of massive volcanic eruptions that occurred between 270,000 and 90,000 years ago.

Eruptions and subsequent erosion over the millennia created Aso's distinctive terrain, noted for its spring waters, grasslands, and volcanoes such as the active Mt. Nakadake. The caldera is also notable for supporting human life. Currently, about 50,000 people live inside the caldera, and there is evidence it has been inhabited since the Yayoi period (300 BCE–300 CE).

Though living in the shadow of an active volcano requires constant vigilance, it also offers residents many advantages, including fertile grasslands, abundant hot springs, and stunning scenery. The symbiotic relationship between nature and humans in the Aso caldera serves as an example of how populations can live sustainably and in harmony with the environment.

One example of this relationship is the yearly ritual known as *noyaki*, when locals carry out a controlled burn that prevents the grasslands from becoming overgrown with shrubs and trees. This preserves the grasslands for cattle and horses to graze, and for visitors to enjoy.