

## Mt. Rakanyama's Rock Formations

The jutting rock formations on Mt. Rakanyama, located on the southwestern region of Aso's outer rim, are some of the oldest in the area. The pyroclastic andesite rocks were formed before the Aso caldera and are between 2.2 million and 450,000 years old.

The unusual formations of these rocks made them a symbol of worship for centuries. Hundreds of years ago, Buddhist practitioners established a temple in this area that included statues of 16 *arhats*, or Buddhist disciples. The temple was destroyed during the turbulent Sengoku period (1467–1568), and only the statues remain.

As this area resembles some landscapes in China, it has been used as a filming location for movies and television series set in that country.

Another local sightseeing spot is Osoroshi ga Fuchi, a deep pool of water fed by a waterfall. A cave deep within is said to echo the sound of the falling water.