

Buddha Statues of Kurose

Tsushima's long and complex relationship with Korea is exemplified by two bronze statues enshrined in a modest hall in the fishing village of Kurose in the innermost cove of Aso Bay.

One of these is a likeness of a Buddha, perhaps Amida, believed to have been cast in the Korean kingdom of Silla in the eighth century. At 46 centimeters tall, it is thought to be the largest Silla-made statue of its period, and has been designated an Important Cultural Property. The statue's body and pedestal show significant burn damage. How the invaluable artwork ended up in Kurose is not known, but local people have worshiped the statue for centuries as a protector of childbirth.

The other statue, which depicts a bodhisattva, is believed to have been made in Korea in the late fourteenth century. It has also been badly burned, and parts of the body and base appear to have melted. Locally, this statue was traditionally considered to be male and the Silla Buddha female.

The hall housing the statues is kept locked, but visits can be arranged by contacting the city of Tsushima.