

The Topography of Mt. Bandai: Historic Eruptions

Mt. Bandai (1,816 m) is an active stratovolcano composed of igneous materials such as andesite, which is a rock that forms when lava cools and hardens after an eruption. The topographic model within the Urabandai Visitor Center is made to a scale of approximately 1:12,000. It affords a bird's eye view of Mt. Bandai and the surrounding landscape.

Numerous eruptions over a period of hundreds of thousands of years have given Mt. Bandai its conical form. The volcanic matter emitted during these incidents shaped the topography of Mt. Bandai and the surrounding landscape by damming rivers, which created new bodies of water, such as Lake Inawashiro.

A devastating eruption occurred on July 15, 1888. Mt. Bandai had a phreatic (steam-blast) eruption that buried five villages and 11 settlements in debris, killing 477 people. Ejected sand and debris covered the entire Urabandai area, destroying all of its vegetation. The explosion also caused one of the mountain's peaks to collapse, leaving a crater in the mountainside that remains visible to this day. Reforestation programs beginning in the early twentieth century contributed to the recovery of the now-flourishing ecosystem.