

This is because the statue was engraved in the soft rock that is only found in this area.

Is that true he is angry although he looks so calm?



Geoguide

Fukoji Temple

**1** Buddha Statue Carved in Rock at Fukoiji Temple (Fukoiji Magaibutsu)

There are three Buddha statues carved in rock at Fukoiji Temple. The large statue in the middle is Fudo-myo'o (Acala), the one on the right is Kongara-doji (Kimkara) and the left is Seitaka-doji (Cetaka).

Fudo-myo'o has his hair hanging down on his both sides, holding a sword in his right hand and a lariat rope in his left hand. Usually a Fudo-myo'o image has an angry expression, while the one here has the rounded appearance of his face that diminishes the angry expression. However, we can see upper and lower fangs, which shows that he is angry.



It is not likely that the statue's face was originally round. Being exposed to rain and wind for the past 800 years, he now has a gentle face.

**Buddha engraved in 120,000-year-old rock**

Bungo-Ono Geopark, which has a lot of Aso-4 ignimbrite, the cooled and hardened result of pyroclastic flow from the volcanic explosion of Mt. Aso 90,000 years ago, features many carved images of Buddha. In addition to the explosion from 90,000 years ago, Mt. Aso had another large explosion 120,000 years ago. At that time, there was also a large pyroclastic flow that covered the surrounding areas, which eventually cooled down and hardened to form Aso-3 ignimbrite. Aso-3 ignimbrite at Fukoiji Temple is a kind of rock that is delicate and falls apart easily. This may be why the expression of Fudo-myo'o is soft and gentle.

**Buddha Statues Carved in Rock and Hydrangeas at Fukoiji Temple**

Fukoiji Temple is also called "the hydrangea temple" because of the many hydrangeas that grow there. We can see the Buddha statues surrounded by many hydrangeas in bloom during the rainy season.

The hydrangeas are cared for by the temple and local residents.



**Traces of the large volcanic explosion of Mt. Aso and distribution of Aso ignimbrite**

In the past, Mt. Aso had four major volcanic explosions. We can understand the size of the pyroclastic flow during each explosion by observing the Aso ignimbrite.



Volcanic explosion about 270,000 years ago



Volcanic explosion about 140,000 years ago



Volcanic explosion about 120,000 years ago



Volcanic explosion about 90,000 years ago

1

2

3

Watch your step

Watch your step going up and down the stairs



Photo spot  
The picture on the cover was taken at this spot.

**2 Large Buddha Cave**

**3 Nagekomi-do (Thrown-in Temple)**

In the large butsugan (Buddha cave) on the left hand of the Buddha statue, there is a small shrine dedicated to Vairocana and a stage featuring a kake-zukuri structure where the scaffolding poles were placed into the hollow of the cliff. In the back of this there is a Gomado (ritual house), which is also called Nagekomi-do (the thrown-in temple). These are thought to have been built in the Edo period (1603-1868), and show that Fukoiji Temple long served as a training site. The surface of the rock cave has many black dots, which show that the rock is a pumice called scoria that was produced from pyroclastic flow.

A part of nature formed 120,000 years ago combines with this temple where priests were trained to create a unique atmosphere.