



The volcano is not just dangerous.

Explore



ASO GEOPARK!

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GEOPARK!!

Including research reports by students in Aso!

Five Prominent Peaks (Aso Gogaku)

A number of volcanoes are located in the caldera. Viewed from the lookout point of Daikanbo, these five peaks create the shape of a Reclining Buddha. The first peak from the left Mt. Nakodake (1423m) is the face, Mt. Takadake (1592m) the chest, Mt. Nakadake (1523m) the naval, while Mt. Eboshidake (1337m) and Mt. Kijimadake (1321m) make up the knees.

G-01 Nakadake Crater

A must for tourists to Aso! It's the only currently active volcano in the area. There's an emerald green lake near the summit of the mountain (as of Feb. 2011). In fact, though the water appears very beautiful, it's poisonous.

G-01 Nakadake Volcanic Gas

A great amount of volcanic gas is emitted from the crater. It is sometimes so thick that tourists must keep off the crater, while researchers investigate wearing gas masks.

G-02 Komezuka

A small mountain loved by the people of Kumamoto. Actually it's a volcano! It took its form during an eruption 3000 years ago and is composed of pumice stones called scoria.

G-03 Kami-Komezuka

A red wall along the trail. If you take a closer look, you can see accumulations of scoria (pumice stones). If you cut Komezuka in half, it would be like this. If you look carefully, you'll notice the path the magma took amongst the layers of soil!

G-04 Kusasenri Lookout

This spot offers panoramic views. You can see Nakadake giving off steam to the east, Kusasenri and Eboshidake to the south southwest, and to the west Tateno Valley and Kumamoto City in the distance. This is a great place to see the sunset.

G-05 Kusasenri

Kusasenri is a circular field of 1km in diameter. It is the remains of an ancient crater. Magma is actually still flowing 5 km underground. Shall we try digging the ground together?

L-01 Flood Control Basin (Uchinomaki)

A 7.2 flood disaster was caused by heavy rains that washed volcanic ash into Kurokawa River. Sudden flooding of the river can be prevented with this basin. Although it seems useless at first glance, the empty land is an awesome pool that will come into its own in an emergency.

G-06 Daikanbo

This place was named by Soho Tokutomi, a famous journalist in Kumamoto during the Meiji, Taisho, and Showa eras. Everyone who stands here can't help but say "wow!" The picture above is Aso's famous Nehanzo, reclining Buddha, taken from here.

G-07 Futaeno Toge

Under this mountain pass is an active fault that causes earthquakes. People used to use this valley formed by earthquakes as a road for sankinkotai, a daimyo's procession to Edo. Tateno Elementary School students predict that in tens of thousands of years if the fault continues to be active, the valley will become larger and will have a river running through it just like Tateno Vall

Tateno 5th and 6th graders (2007)

G-08 Tateno Valley

Tateno Valley is the only break in the caldera wall. It is called Tateno Fault. A legend says that Aso's god kicked the wall and made this valley, but Tateno Elementary School students believe that it was caused by earthquakes and river erosion.

Tateno 5th and 6th graders (2006)

G-09 Matsubori Wind

Matsubori Kaze is a local wind in Tateno. The word "matsubori" comes from "matsubori", which means to sweep away. As its name indicates, a strong wind is always blowing in Tateno even if it is calm nearby.

Tateno 5th and 6th graders (2010)

G-10 Sugaruga Fall

This waterfall is on the Kurokawa River. It is said that the name comes from a story about a deer that was saved here. The water erodes about 20cm off the edge of the cliff wall every year. How amazing the power of water is!

Tateno 5th and 6th graders (2008)

G-11 Choyo Bridge

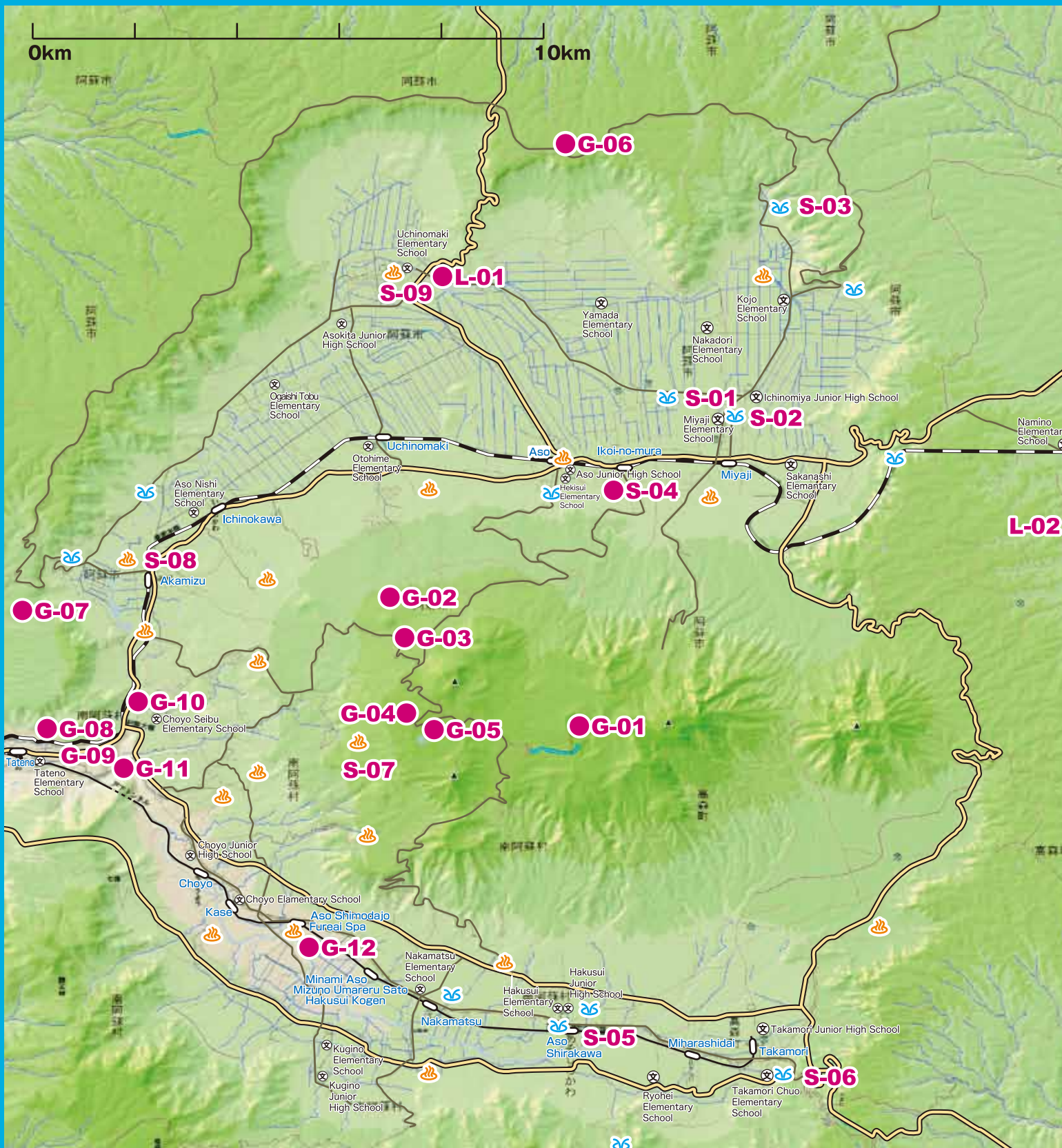
Under this bridge is the meeting of the two rivers running on the floor of caldera: Kurokawa from the north and Shirakawa from the south. You can observe Aso's lava (Tateno lava, 70,000 years ago) here. Columnar joints formed on the lava is a must-see!

A Choyo Seibu 6th grader(2009)
Tateno 5th and 6th graders(2006)

G-12 Sirakawa Riverside

At this point, you can observe Kugino Layer, which may prove that the Aso caldera used to be a lake. A fossil of leaves was found in this layer.

A Choyo Seibu 6th grader(2009)



Mechanism of underground water

The mountain was formed by the accumulation of lava and volcanic ash after eruptions. If you look carefully, you can see cracks, holes in the lava, gaps between the layers, and many other spaces. Rainwater goes down through those spaces, where it is cleaned and purified. The water also absorbs some minerals. The water coming through these spaces soon makes a pool, which is called an underground tank, while the water that bubbles up from the ground is called a spring.

GeoPark

This is a place where we can feel that Geo (the earth) is alive (This sounds very strange to me--How about this? This is a place where we can feel connected to Geo, the earth). People are living in harmony with Geo here.

S-09 Uchinomaki Spa

This spa is known for the fact that many famous figures including Soseki Natsume stayed here. The water temperature is 40 degrees centigrade, a perfect temperature for bathing. This spa water is thought to be heated not by magma but by hot granite.

S-08 Akamizu Spa

Being rich in iron, the water turns from light green to rusty red as time passes. Students at Aso Nishi Elementary School conducted an experiment on this foot spa. They found that feet soaked in this spa water stayed warm longer than those soaked in other warm water.

An Aso Nishi 4th grader(2008)

S-07 Tarutama Jigoku Spa

This spa is one of the few spas directly connected to a volcano in the Aso area. The spa is located near the Yoshioka District which became famous for its mud volcano and the Yunotani District which experienced an eruption in the Edo era.

A Miyaji 6th grader(2006)

S-06 Takamori Yusui Tunnel

When they were tunnelling a caldera wall, tons of water suddenly started to spout out. They could not complete the tunnel but the tunnel became a tourists' spot. During summer, it is quite comfortable inside the tunnel; the spring water keeps the tunnel cool.

A Miyaji 6th grader(2006)

S-05 Shirakawa Riverhead

The water here was chosen as some of the best in Japan. The water quietly comes out through the earth and sand (including volcanic ash) which accumulated in the mountain.

A Miyaji 6th grader(2006)

S-04 Odoriyama Shrine

The name of this shrine is stated in the school motto of Hekisui Elementary School. A survey of the students found that until the 1950s this was a large spring. They reasoned that the spring dried up not only because of volcanic eruptions and earthquakes but also because of land improvements and afforestation during the 1950s.

A Hekisui 5th grader(2006)
A Hekisui 6th grader(2007)

S-03 Teno Spring

This is a spring coming out of the caldera wall. On close inspection, you can see water seeping out through the cracks of the rock wall. The rock was formed when a pyroclastic flow chilled and became solid. The water has a plain taste. Why does the water taste different from spring to spring?

A Miyaji 6th grader(2006)
A Miyaji 5th grader(2007)

S-02 Aso Shrine

The spring here is an oasis for the students of Miyaji Elementary School. The underground water is thought to be in a layer of lava. Students compared the taste of spring waters in the Aso area. They found that the water near the caldera wall was plainer than that at the caldera floor. Just to let you know, the students preferred the water at Aso Shrine because of its mild and accustomed taste.

A Miyaji 6th grader(2006)

S-01 Yakuimbaru Spring

Water spouts from the ground. This is caused by the pressure of the surrounding earth on an underwater pool. It's amazing to see water spouting up into the air without the use of an electric device.

A Namino 4th grader(2010)

L-02 Namino Vegetable Fields

Namino is famous for its cabbages and tomatoes. Vegetables are grown in the well-drained soil of volcanic ash. As the volcanic ash is highly acidic, fields are limited to weaken its acidity. The amount of lime added varies from field to field. Why? Students at Namino Elementary School are trying to find out the reason.

A Miyaji 6th grader(2006)