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Aso Geopark- The people living with volcano-

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Aso Volcano, located on West-Japan Volcanic Belt and in central Kyushu, is one of the largest caldera volcanoes in the world. Four major explosive eruptions occurred 270,000 to 90,000 years ago, producing voluminous pyroclastic flows that covered central Kyushu. Post-caldera cones have arisen near the center of the caldera after the 4th major eruption about 90,000 years ago. The Aso volcanic area, located within the Aso Kuju National Park, is characteristic of grassy plains which spread to the base of the active volcano. Local people have lived side by side with the Aso volcano since ancient times. The volcano has given the people in this area sublime scenery, hot springs, pure water (from springs), geothermal plants, unlimited stone materials (to make stone walls, bridges, etc.), and many other things. The sequence of volcanic activities around the Aso caldera area has produced dramatic and inspirational scenery with its own dimensions of animals, vegetations, climates, life styles and cultures. The Aso volcanic region is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Kyushu. On the other hand, many disasters related to the volcanic eruption have occurred in this area. Nakadake, one of the post-caldera cones of Aso volcano, had repeatedly erupted at 10 - 20 year intervals and killed more than 20 people in the last 80 years. Local people appreciate the blessings and compensate the disasters brought about by volcanoes around the Aso area. These factors are very important in study earth's works for research, education and tourism. Valuable geological heritages of Aso caldera area have to be conserved for the establishment of Aso Geopark.

Keywords: Aso, geopark, volcano