



Great Buddha Of Shurakuen

- Japan's first reinforced concrete Daibutsu (Great Buddha) -

Great Buddha of Shurakuen and the precincts
No. 59 Cultural Property (Scenic Spot) Designated by Tokai City on November 24, 1983

Great Buddha and Nio Statue of Shurakuen
No. 76 Cultural Property (Building) Designated by Tokai City on February 18, 2021

About the Great Buddha of Shurakuen

The Shurakuen Great Buddha is Japan's first reinforced concrete Great Buddha and was completed in 1927. When it was completed, it was the largest in Japan. Saikichi Yamada, a businessperson, built the Great Buddha. He started the construction business by soliciting donations in 1916; since it was difficult to collect donations, he invested his own money. Construction began in 1924 as a Project to Commemorate the Marriage of Emperor Showa, and the project took three years to complete.

After the death of Saikichi Yamada, the statue was owned by a company. From 1983, it became the property of the religious corporation Daibutsu-ji, and large-scale repairs were implemented thanks to donations from citizens. It still welcomes visitors as a symbol of the region.

Since the Great Buddha of Shurakuen and its precincts are located on a hill facing Ise Bay, the landscape was highly regarded and became a city-designated cultural property (scenic spot) in 1983. After that, the Great Buddha and Nio Statue of Shurakuen became city-designated cultural properties (buildings) in 2021 because their value as statues became clear.

Cultural property survey (FY2018 to FY2020)

The Great Buddha of Shurakuen had few records at the time of its construction; it was unclear what kind of structure it had and how it was made. For this reason, we created accurate drawings and conducted structural surveys over three years to determine the cultural property value.

Findings

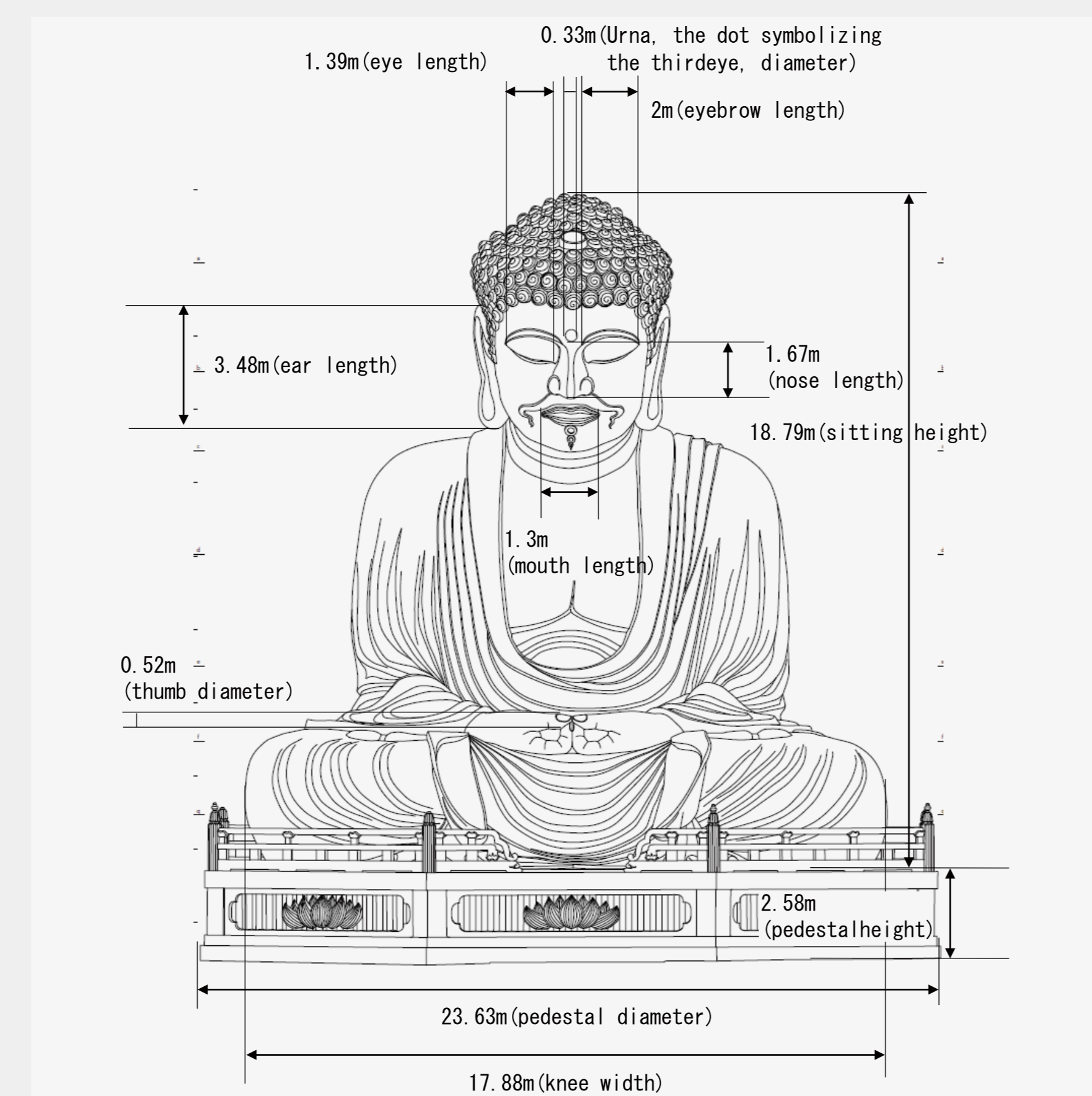
- (1) At the time of construction, it was the first and largest reinforced concrete Buddha statue in Japan.
- (2) The body with a complicated shape was made of reinforced concrete and the outside of mortar.
- (3) High-strength concrete was used and deterioration did not progress.
- (4) While showing the modeling advantages of reinforced concrete construction, its existence demonstrates the new technology that enabled constructing a huge Buddha statue.
- (5) As a public property that anyone can visit, many people have loved the statue since its construction and the statue played a central role in the formation of the local landscape.

* **Concrete** : Consists of cement, water, fine aggregate (sand), coarse aggregate (gravel), etc. Mainly used for structures.

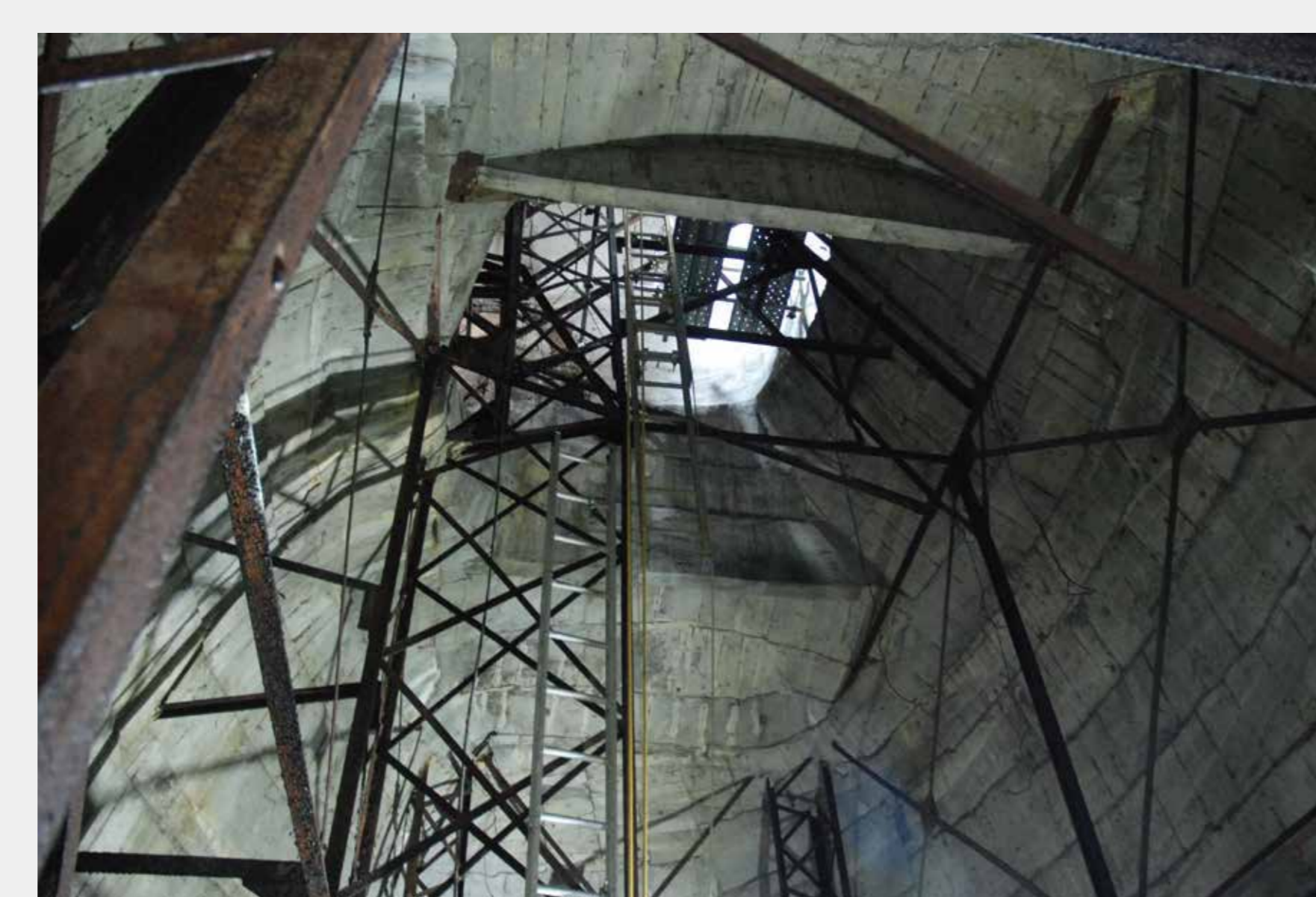
* **Mortar** : Consists of cement, water, fine aggregate (sand), etc. Mainly used for the exterior and finishing of buildings.



The Great Buddha of Shurakuen at the time of completion (from a picture postcard of the Great Buddha of Shurakuen)



The size of each part of the Great Buddha of Shurakuen



State of cultural property survey
The attic of the Buddhist temple is a wide cavity, and we built scaffolding up to the head to investigate the structure.

Structure and Construction Method of the Great Buddha

Great Buddha : Reinforced concrete construction
Nio statue : Reinforced mortar construction

The Great Buddha has a steel pillar like a spine inside and four pillars around it; the concrete central to the structure is approximately 10 to 60 cm thick, and the outside is smoothly finished with mortar. The head seems to have been remade during production, and an internal investigation found traces of this.

How to build the Great Buddha

- (1) Make a prototype with a size of 1/10 and cut it into round slices.
- (2) Enlarge the sliced mold and make a mold with a height of 60 cm in which concrete is poured.
- (3) Pour concrete into the mold and build one step at a time.
- (4) Concrete was carried by attaching an elevator to the steel frame of the spine.
- (5) Fix a lath (wire mesh) on the hardened concrete and apply mortar to finish the surface. At this time, it was colored by mixing the colors.
- (6) Completed by finishing the interior (Buddha Hall) and the pedestal.

The Nio Statue was made by wrapping reinforcing bar around the core of a steel frame and applying mortar many times.

Construction Personnel

The person who built this Great Buddha: Saikichi Yamada

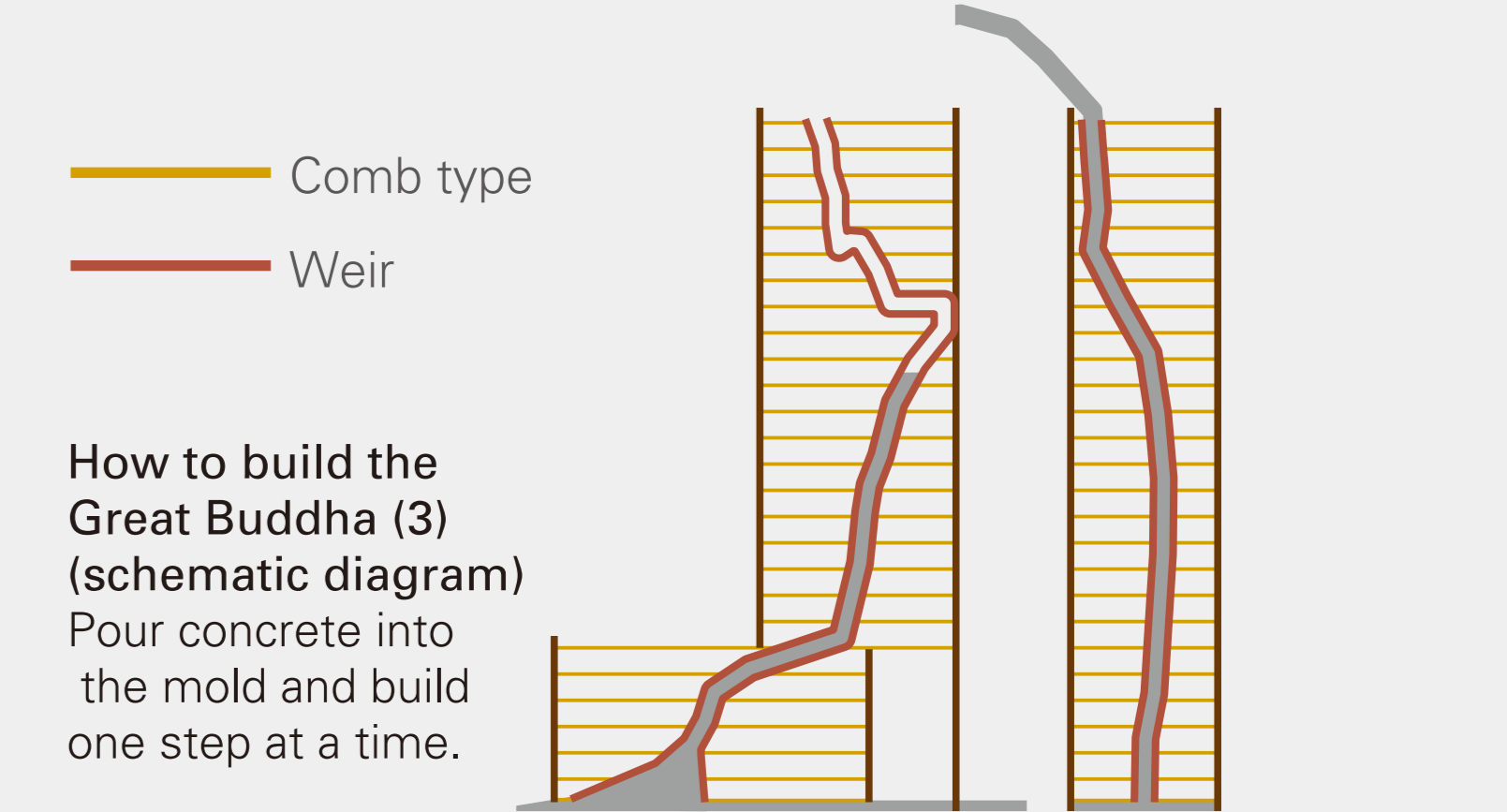
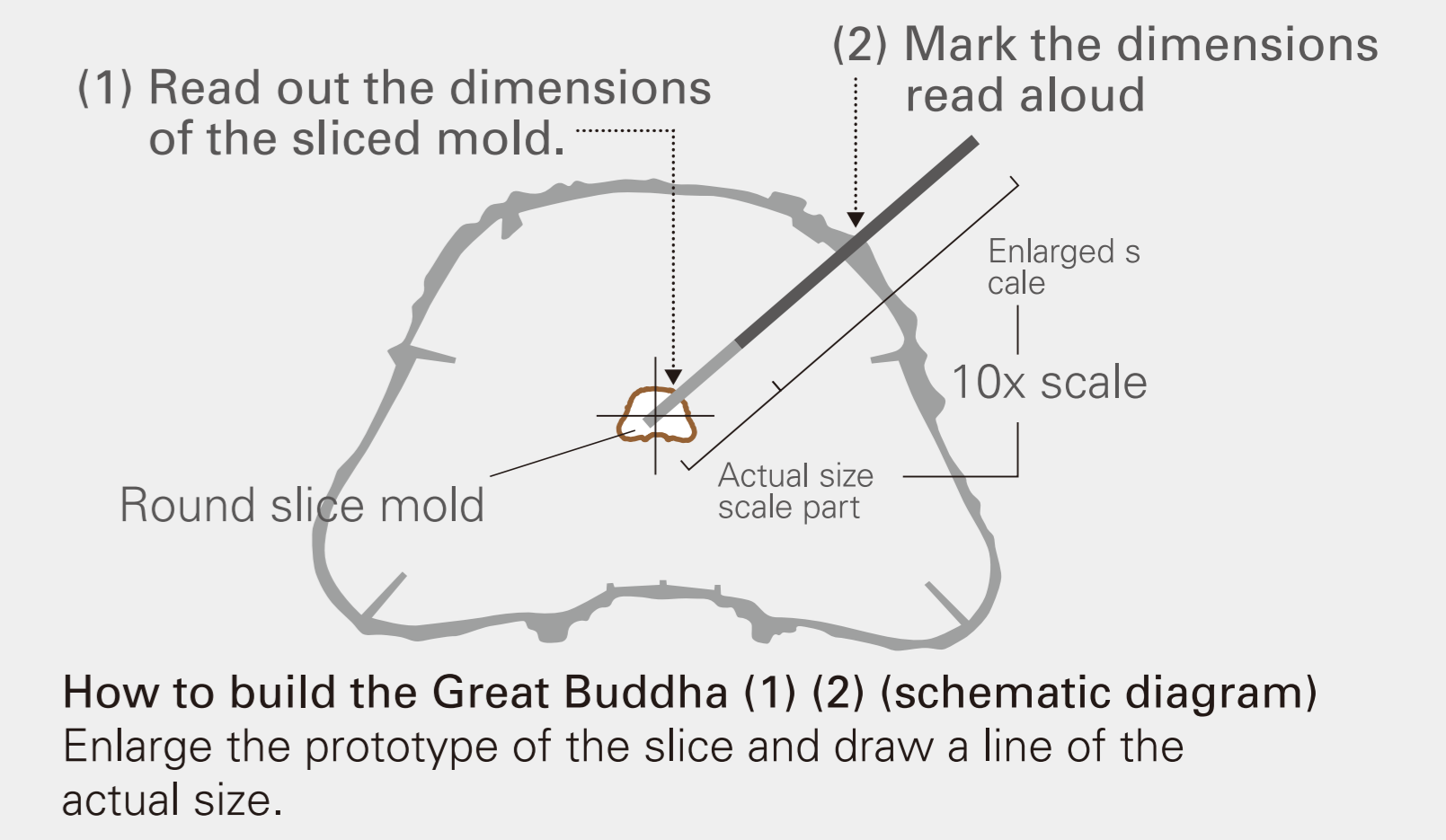
He came from Gifu and was a businessperson in Nagoya from the 1880s to early 1930s. The inventor of Moriguchi pickles, Saikichi was involved in multiple businesses, including Shurakuen Ryokan, which was known as a culinary inn. The Great Buddha of Shurakuen was built in Saikichi's later years by investing in private property on the site of the Shurakuen Ryokan. The construction cost was 150,000 yen at that time (currently 200 to 300 million yen).

Builders: Mitsukichi Yamada and Kuwagoro Goto

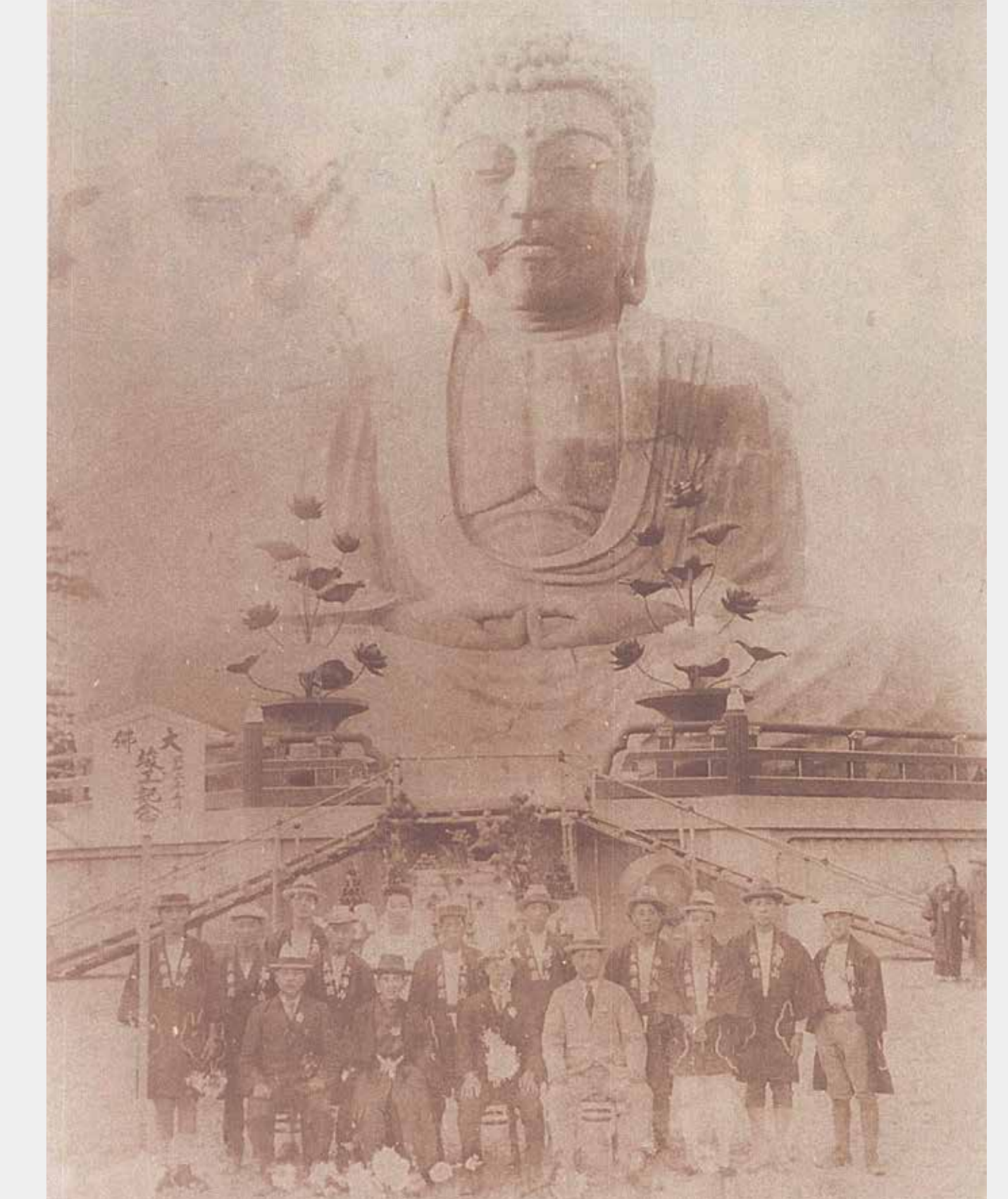
Mitsukichi Yamada was a painter in Nagoya. He and his disciple Kuwagoro Goto created an unprecedented reinforced concrete Great Buddha, modeled after the Great Buddha of Kamakura. Craftsmen such as local plasterers and carpenters were involved in the three-year construction work. After that, Mitsukichi Yamada made Gokoku Kannon, which no longer exists, in Yamanouchi Town, Nagano Prefecture in Yudanaka Onsen; Kuwagoro Goto made a whale statue in Dotoku Park (Minami Ward, Nagoya City) and the Great Buddha in Kariyado (Nishio City).

About Daibutsu-ji Temple

Daibutsu-ji is a temple of the Soto sect whose principal image is the great Buddha of Shurakuen and the temple was established in 1982.



Traces of the formwork that remain inside the Great Buddha



Completion commemorative photo by construction personnel