**An Accessible Island**

Ages ago, a section of the Earth’s crust in the area that is now the Goto Islands was deformed, and a compressed layer of mudstone and sandstone forced downwards. Parts of its upper surface broke off or were washed away due to erosion. What remained were the broken ends of the stratum that descended into the earth. You can easily see these shards sticking up from the ground at Tatekojima Island.

**Bypassed by the Rivers of Lava**

At first glance, Tatekojima is unimpressive—just a small outcropping of jagged rocks. However, those are the ends of the subterranean stratum that was bent and broken off eons ago. Now you can see the various rocky layers protruding upwards almost vertically.

The sharp outline of Tatekojima is a stark contrast to the flat plains in the surrounding area. Clearly, the lava flows that created the nearby plateau bypassed this area, leaving the sharp upright protrusions here to tell the story.

**A Dangerous Signpost to a Safe Harbor**

The lighthouse at the tip of Tatekojima seems to imply that all of this rocky coastline is dangerous and that ships should stay far away. But just the opposite is true. Tatekojima stands near the mouth of harbors such as Shiraishi Bay that have welcomed seafaring ships for well over a thousand years. In ancient times, Japanese ships would stop here on the way to China. These early missions were not only for trade, but also studies of technology, religion, and more. Today, the lighthouse not only warns of a rocky outcropping, but also welcomes ships to this safe harbor.

**Walking on Water**

Tatekojima appears to be separated from the mainland by a narrow channel, but the channel is actually quite shallow, and when the tide is low you can see part of the rocky spine connecting Tatekojima to Fukue Island begin to emerge. If you time it correctly, all you need is a pair of waterproof boots to walk from the main island across the exposed rock to Tatekojima to explore millions of years of geological history for yourself.