**Mushiroze: Rare Granite Formations**

The large slabs of flat granite that make up this stretch of coastline were formed more than 60 million years ago, approximately 10 kilometers underground. Tectonic shifts broke up the granite and gradually pushed it to the surface, where it cracked into distinctive formations as it cooled. This area’s name comes from the rocks’ resemblance to the woven straw mats called *mushiro.*

 Over the millennia, wind and waves have continued to shape the rock. One formation, locally known as “Candle Rock,” gives the area a somewhat other-worldly feel. The coastline differs markedly from most of the island’s shores, which are largely surrounded by coral reefs.

 The walkway leading over the rocks from the parking lot continues for about 200 meters. When walking close to the water, please exercise extra caution on days when the wind is strong, or the waves are high.

 Mushiroze is part of the Amamigunto National Park, which stretches across much of the Amami Islands.

**Flora and Fauna**

The shrubland around Mushiroze is rich in flora that serve the needs of the islanders. The pink flowers of the Japanese hawthorn (*sharinbai*) have been used for centuries by Amami dyers in preparing silk for weaving the local kimono fabric known as *oshima tsumugi*. A species of pandanus or fragrant screw pine (*adan*), is plentiful. Islanders use the leaves to weave baskets and traditional *zori* sandals.