

Spectacular Panoramic View

One of the best places on Fukue Island to see the geological history of the area is this scenic overlook, which, despite being only a little over 200 meters high, offers a stunning vista showing how massive lava flows spreading outwards created the land we see today.

Volcanic Transformation

This area was originally part of the Goto Group geologic stratum and probably had a jagged, rough surface of exposed layers of sandstone and mudstone, much like the saw-tooth profile of Tatekojima Island, which is visible off to the left side of this broad plain.

Around 900,000 years ago, a volcanic eruption released a huge outflow of lava, which spread out, leaving behind it a broad, flat plain, what is now the Kishuku Lava Plateau. Over hundreds of thousands of years this land became rich, fertile soil, and the jagged rocks of the coastline where the lava suddenly cooled ultimately became a home to various kinds of fish, shellfish, seaweed, and other aquatic life.

The contrast between the sharp spikes of Tatekojima and the relatively smooth surface of the plateau provides a vivid “before and after” view of volcanic activity.

A Safe Harbor That Changed Japan Forever

To the left of the Kishuku Lava Plateau, you can see Shiraishi Bay, which provided natural shelter for seafaring ships for over 1,000 years. From roughly 700 to 900 CE, several cultural missions led by Japanese scholars and Buddhist monks set sail in small wooden boats from the area near Osaka, worked their way down the coast, and made their final landing here in the Goto Islands before crossing the open sea. The ships would take advantage of the natural safe harbor you can see from this overlook and wait for favorable winds before making the perilous journey to China.

In various places on the shore below, you will see monuments dedicated to these brave missions that the Yamato (Japanese) people sent to Tang-dynasty China (618–907), which was arguably the pinnacle of world civilization at the time. The knowledge that passed through these ports on the return trip—religion, literature, writing, even the technique for making Goto’s famous udon noodles—had a profound influence on Japanese culture.