

Akiya Coast

On the northern end of Nakanoshima Island is a 1-kilometer stretch of rugged cliffs and weathered islets known as the Akiya Coast. The cliffs are colored a bright red by scoria (volcanic rock) that formed 2.8 million years ago, when magma was spewed high into the air. Iron in the magma oxidized as it was exposed to the air, giving the rock its vivid color. Over millennia, the wind and waves have eroded the porous rock, forming arches and other fantastic shapes along the shoreline.

Local mythology explains the unusual rock formations along the Akiya Coast as the product of a divine event: Hinamaji-hime, a goddess from neighboring Nishinoshima Island, is said to have given birth to her child by the coast. Afterward, the implements used during the delivery turned to stone. Rocks along the coast have been given names like “Folding-screen Rock” (Byōbu Iwa) and “Washbasin Rock” (Tarai Iwa) after their unusual shapes. A hole in one of the islets also forms a perfect heart shape when viewed from the shore.

The Akiya Coast has a small recreation area located at the bottom of a paved walkway that leads down to the beach from a parking area with restrooms and picnic tables. Camping spots are available for reservation, and the area is popular with local backpackers. The clear waters offshore are also a good place to dive for horned turban snails (*sazae*), a kind of edible marine snail.