Mt. Tadakariyama

The source of scoria

Mt. Tadakariyama is a gentle rise in the middle of the southernmost peninsula of Fukue Island. It is made up almost entirely of scoria, a porous basaltic rock. The holes in the rock are formed as gases are trapped within erupted magma, which then cools and hardens. Often this is caused by eruptions of pāhoehoe lava, the low-viscosity lava that results in the smooth ropelike or wavelike shapes found at several beaches around the islands.

While light in weight, scoria is strong and durable, and widely used as a building material. Walls made of scoria can be seen on the perimeter of the island's circular farm fields. It is also used in buildings, set along drainage ditches to prevent erosion, and used to construct everything but the roofs and doors of the area's distinctive storehouses.

While scoria is porous, it is not good at holding water in the soil. Instead of rice, therefore, *satsuma imo* sweet potatoes are the most common crop in the circular, rock-walled fields around Mt. Tadakariyama.