

## **Miyanoura**

On the northeastern coast of Yakushima, Miyanoura is the marine gateway to the island, as well as its most populated township, with more than 1,400 households. Its port serves cruise ships as well as ferries and high-speed boats for transfers to Kagoshima, the prefectural capital. Miyanoura is also the hub for ferry service to the smaller islands of Kuchierabu and Tanegashima. A brief walk from the landing wharf is the Yakushima Environmental and Cultural Village Center, a good place to get oriented to the island's many offerings or to arrange for a guided village tour. In town, both Yaku Shrine and Kuhonji Temple are steeped in history that attests to the mutual influence of Shinto and Buddhist traditions on Yakushima. Also in town is the former magistrate's office where, in 1708, the Italian priest Giovanni Battista Sidotti (1668–1714) was detained. Sidotti had smuggled himself into Japan to propagate Christian teachings during the isolationist period that spanned more than two centuries. While walking on the back streets nearby, look for *sekkanto*, stones with pointed tops, placed at intersections to ward off evil.