

Rock Formations Around Aoshima (“Ogre’s Washboard”)

The unusually shaped fields of rock that jut out of the sea around Aoshima are known locally as the “ogre’s (or devil’s) washboard,” because they are thought to resemble a giant washboard when seen from afar. This rock formation is made up of alternate layers of sand and mud that accumulated under water between 24 and 2 million years ago. The layered rock then emerged from the sea at a slight angle as a result of tectonic activity and land uplift. As the waves battered the rock, the soft mudstone layers were eroded faster than the harder sandstone, creating the ridges in the rock. These rock formations are found along an 8-kilometer stretch of the Miyazaki coastline, south from Aoshima past Tosakibana Cape toward the island of Kinchakujima. The “ogre’s washboard” at Aoshima is designated a Natural Monument of Japan.