

## **Kishiku Area**

The Kishiku area lies on the northeastern side of Fukue Island. A defining feature of Kishiku is Mizunoura Bay, which was divided by a long, thin basaltic lava flow around a million years ago. Called Gyogasaki Peninsula, this extension of land shelters the mouth of the bay and creates a well-protected harbor. Protection from the strong northern winds and currents was crucial for ships traveling west toward China, and this safe harbor made the Goto Islands a maritime gateway to Eurasia.

From Mizunoura Bay, winding inlets stretch farther inland, and many of these shallows have been filled in to create flat land for rice farming. Still, evidence of former waterways and mooring areas can be seen near the water—including a large hawser stone (called the Tomozuna Stone) once used to secure the boats of envoys setting sail for China.

### Highlights

#### *Gyogasaki Park*

Gyogasaki is a public park known for its broad lawns, sea views, and seasonal flowers that include cosmos, sunflowers, and in spring, some four million rapeseed blossoms. The strong sea breezes here also make this a good place to fly the Goto Islands' traditional paper and bamboo kites, called *baramondako*.

#### *Shirodake Observatory*

This observatory was built on the site of a mountain fortress that Fukue Island's rulers used in the fourteenth century. Today, this high ground gives expansive views of the Goto Islands and Fukue's unusual mosaic of geological features. From here, it is also easy to see how local communities have adapted to the land: rice paddies are nestled in flat stretches of land reclaimed from the sea, and fishing villages are sheltered in coves formed by ridges of ancient lava that jut across the bay.

#### *Iwatate Shrine*

The current shrine was built by the ruling Goto family at the end of the fourteenth century, making it one of the oldest shrine buildings on the island. It is surrounded by a primeval forest of osmanthus that has likely survived due to traditional prohibitions against saws or hatchets on shrine grounds. The trees are now protected as a Designated Cultural Property of Nagasaki Prefecture. The shrine also hosts a festival each September that includes a performance of *kagura* (shrine dancing).