

## **Tamanoura Area**

The remote Tamanoura area, which occupies the southwest part of Fukue Island, is a long peninsula that curves northward along the coast like a fishhook. The peninsula's sheer cliffs record the complex geological history of the Goto Islands. Horizontal bands of sedimentary brown sandstone and black mudstone are cut through with perpendicular lines of white rhyolite. The layered sandstone indicates that the area was once a continental lake or riverbed; sediment settled beneath the water, then hardened over millions of years. Then, 19 to 15 million years ago, the land was thrust upward and torn apart by crustal movement as the Goto Islands separated from the Asian continent. Two to three million years later, eruptions of silica-rich rhyolitic lava burst up through the older sandstone.

### Highlights

#### *Osezaki Lighthouse*

This lighthouse, still in operation today, was built in 1971 and converted to solar power in 2009. It stands on a 60-meter-high cliff at the island's westernmost edge, overlooking the open waters of the East China Sea. Its powerful lamp, which shines at 3,700 candela, guides ships up to 20 kilometers away around the craggy edge of Kyushu. There is a hike to the lighthouse that takes about an hour round trip and rewards visitors with an unbroken view of the sea. The lighthouse is also a prime location for autumn birdwatching, as crested honey buzzards make it their last stop before crossing over to mainland China.

#### *Imochiura Church Lourdes*

This was the first brick church built in the Goto Islands and was completed in 1879. In 1987, it was so damaged by a typhoon that it had to be demolished, but the church was reconstructed the following year.

Imochiura's importance as a holy site extends beyond its church. It also houses a holy grotto with a healing spring modeled after one in Lourdes, France, where the Virgin Mary supposedly appeared. Similar replicas, called "Lourdes Grottoes," have been built worldwide. The one in Tamanoura was created in 1899 at the suggestion of a French priest named Father Albert-Charles Pélu. Christian residents brought rocks from all around the islands to construct the cave, and Father Pélu sent to France for the statue of Mary that stands in the church's grotto today. He also had water sent from Lourdes and poured into the Imochiura spring. Today, pilgrims still come to drink from the spring, believing it has the same healing powers as its namesake.