

## **Cape Inutabu**

Cape Inutabu, the westernmost spot on Tokunoshima Island, offers a sweeping view of the geological formation that dominates the western coast of the island. The sloping plateau that juts out into the East China Sea is composed of limestone from uplifted coral reefs. This formation culminates in striking cliffs, sculpted from the rock by the forces of wind and sea. The cape is also known for its panoramic sunset views.

### ***The Yamato Memorial Monument***

The prominent structure at the far end of the cape is a memorial to the *Yamato*, a famous World War II battleship. Launched in 1940, it was one of the two largest battleships ever built—260 meters long, almost 40 meters wide, and weighing an astonishing 72,000 tons. (Fans of anime may recognize its name from the popular TV and film series *Space Battleship Yamato*.)

### ***A Tragic End***

The *Yamato* was sunk on April 7, 1945 by U.S. aircraft, losing more than 3,000 sailors. As the ship's last radio message referred to Tokunoshima, many initially believed the ship had gone down near this location. The monument, designed to resemble hands joined in prayer, was erected in April 1968 to commemorate the loss of the battleship. It stands tall at 24 meters, the same height as the bridge of the famous ship. While it is now confirmed that the *Yamato* went down off the southwest coast of Kyushu, far from this location, the town of Isen and the descendants of the fallen sailors continue to honor their memory by holding a memorial service here every April 7.