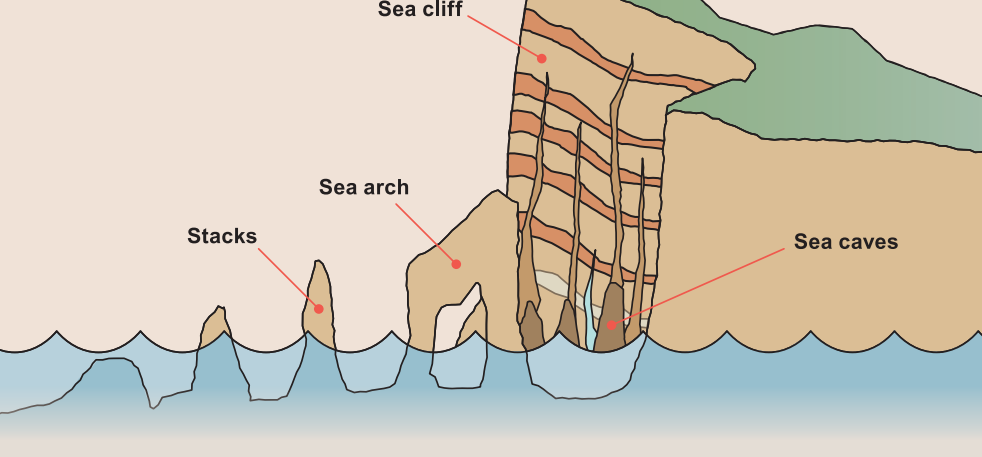


II The Beauty of the Islands' Naturally Occurring Scenery and Erosion Landscapes

Embrace the "Now" of Ever-changing Scenery

Many sheer, strangely shaped rocks, huge cliffs, flat shore platforms, and islets can be found throughout the coasts of the Oki Islands. Erosion by winter winds from the northwest causes this scenery. Because of this, the north and northwest coasts of Dōgo and the Dōzen Islands have largely been eroded, and both areas contain many landforms such as their tallest sea cliffs, sea caves, stacks, and sea arches.

Coastal Erosion Landforms



9 Kuniga Coast (Nishinoshima)

Many erosional landforms can be seen on Kuniga Coast, such as Matengai Cliff, which is among a handful of tall sea cliffs in Japan, sea caves, a sea arch, and stacks. Akao Lookout offers a panoramic view, while the trail from Matengai Cliff to Tsutenkyō Arch is recommended for hiking. Sightseeing boat tours delight visitors with sea caves, oddly shaped rocks, and the scenery.



18 Shirashima Coast (Dōgo)

The northernmost point of Dōgo Island. Its contrast of tall islands chiseled by erosion and low-lying islets and reefs is rooted in the differences between the rocks that form them. Additionally, streaked shearwaters (*Calonectris leucomelas*), which are not good at taking flight, nest on islands with developed cliffs like this.



Living with Gales: Geographically Remote Islands and Everyday Ingenuity

In the seabreeze- and wave-heavy north and northwest, houses are designed for the wind. Tree windbreaks are well-known, but wooden walls high enough to hide houses from view are also used as windbreaks on the islands. While these are presently only seen on Dōgo, bamboo fences were once used on Chiburijima, Dōzen Islands.

19 Wooden wall windbreak, Kumi (Dōgo)



20 Wooden wall windbreak, Yui (Dōgo)



Not Just Waves Chip the Land Away

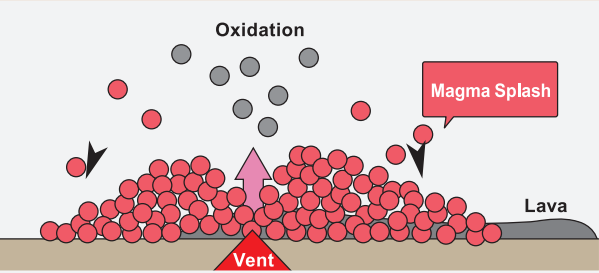
Dangyō-no-taki Waterfalls has cliffs formed by river erosion. The waterfalls' lower rocks are made of volcanic ash and other deposits; its upper rocks, lava. Since volcanic ash is softer and easier to chip away than lava, the wind and river have eaten away at it to create its characteristic overhang. There is a shrine next to the waterfalls. The rock face is the object of nature worship. Due to its connection to Ono-no-Takamura, its water has gained a reputation as "victory water" for winning competitions.

21 Dangyō-no-taki Waterfalls (Dōgo)



Why are the Oki Islands' Coasts Red? The Power of Earth Colors the Scenery

The reason that rocks at Akiya Coast and Sekiheki (Red Cliff) are red is because iron in high-temperature magma splashes from explosive eruptions met the air and oxidized, solidifying into red rock. Moreover, volcanic bombs and other features seen here tell us that volcanic vents existed in these areas.



22 Sekiheki (Red Cliff, Chiburijima)



23 Akiya Coast (Nakanoshima)



The view of Sekiheki by land is just as stunning as by sea. Try riding a sightseeing boat for a full view of the kilometer-long sea cliff. A Certified Geopark Guide can provide more information as you take in the terrific view. Or, for a cultural spot, visit the *kofun* burial mound near the parking lot.

Other than red-dyed cliffs, one can see volcanic bombs along walking trails that hint at dynamic eruptions. Lava that flowed out here enabled rice cultivation by forming Amagata Plain, the largest plain in the Dōzen Islands. Also, the impressive red walls and surrounding landforms led to a legend that a goddess gave birth here.

How to Enjoy This Theme

Only visible from the sea:
Scenery from a Sightseeing Boat



See it up close:
Scenic Kayak Tours (Dōgo Island)



Walk along the sea:
SUP Tour on an Uninhabited Island (Chiburijima Island)

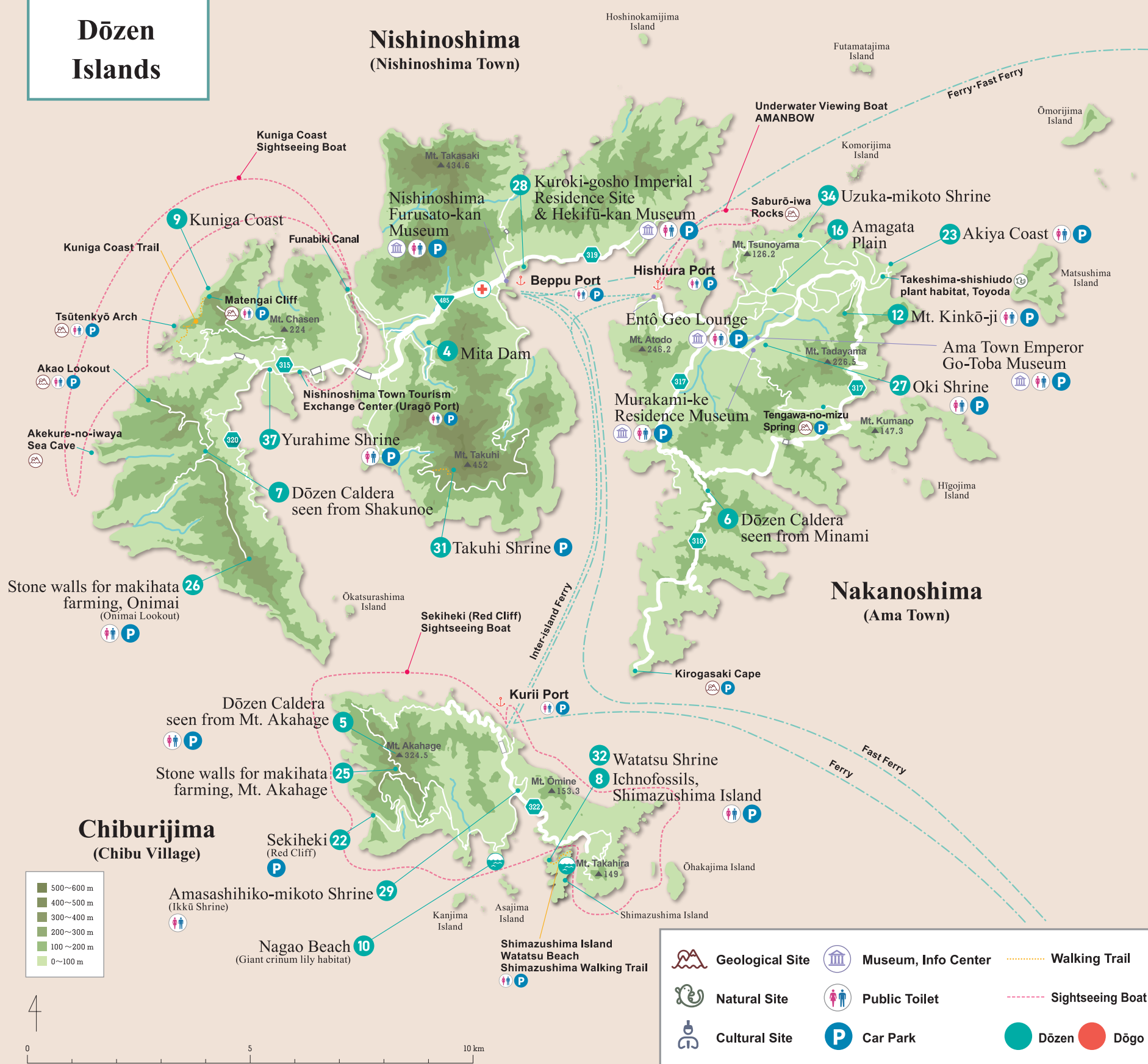


Watch the video
"The Story Hidden in the Scenery: Formation of the Coasts"



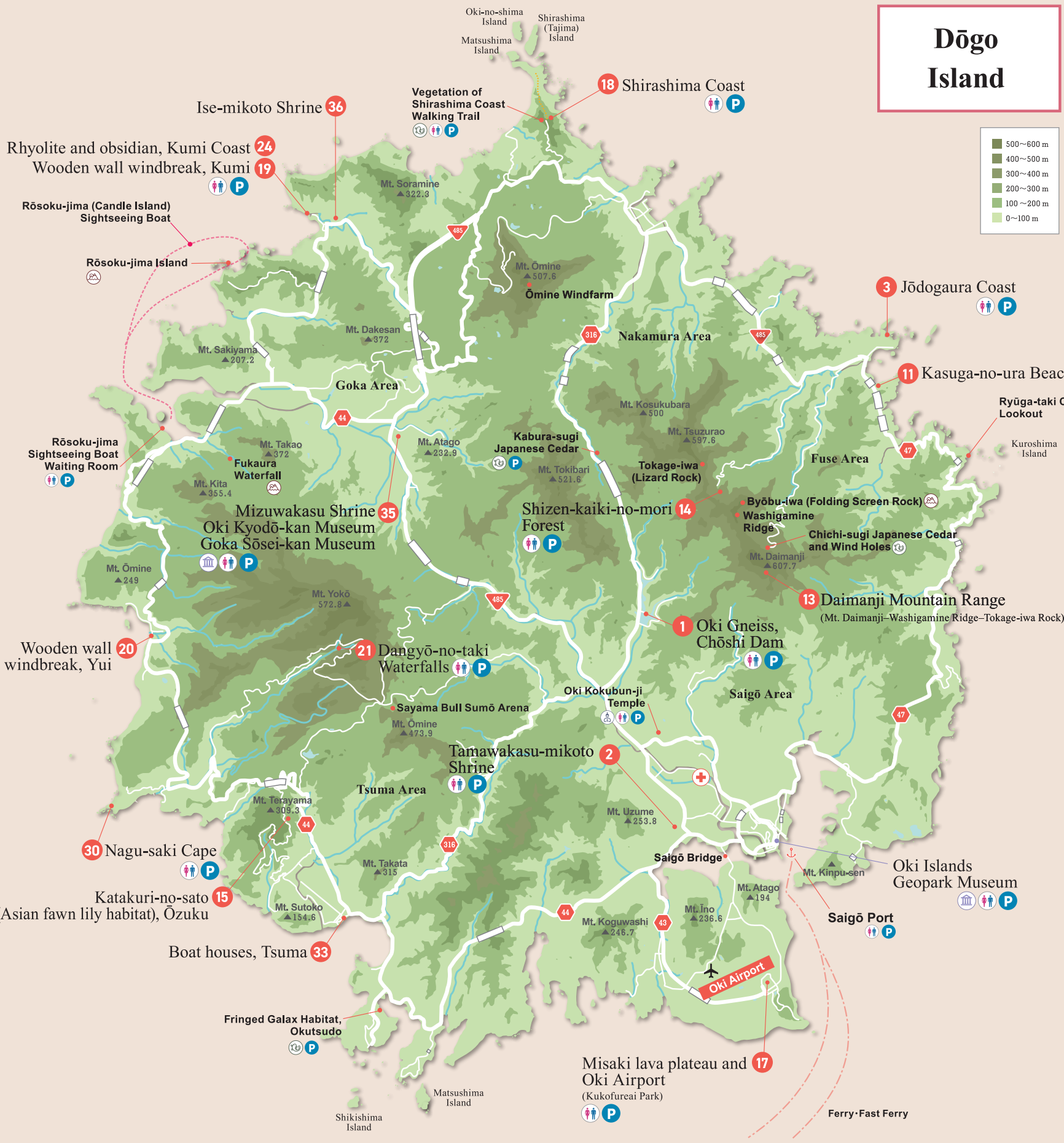
Dōzen Islands

Nishinoshima (Nishinoshima Town)



Nakanoshima (Ama Town)

Dōgo Island



IV Traditional Island Culture and Industries that Live with Nature

According to the *Kojiki*, the Oki Islands were created third of all Japan. It has 4 Myōjin Taisha shrines and was the land of emperors Go-Toba and Go-Daigo's exile. Cultural exchange flourished with other areas, as the islands were a port of call on the *kitamaebune* shipping route from the mid-Edo period (1603–1867) into the Meiji period (1868–1912). Exploring this history reveals how the geography of the Oki Islands matters. Unravel the islands' culture from a geopark perspective.

Origins in Obsidian

It is said the Oki Islands have long been famous due to its obsidian. There are about 100 places around Japan where obsidian is found and was used for arrowheads and knives since the Old Stone Age. Among them, the Oki Islands produced obsidian of exceptional quality, and trade as far back as 30 thousand years ago with the Chūgoku region at its center suggests social and cultural exchange through the obsidian trade.



Local Trick for Living on the Edge of Dōzen Caldera

The Oki Islands practiced *makihata* farming. Makihata is a farming method that cleverly uses the islands' many steep slopes and poor volcanic soil. Rock walls divided land to create pastures and cultivate crops like barley, grains, and beans in rotation. The people of the past's wisdom avoided depleting the soil through continuous cropping and allowed for efficient, continuous use of the land. While free ranging is the only part still practiced today, part of the stone walls still stand.

25 Stone walls for makihata farming, Mt. Akahage

The stone walls are called *myōgaki* on Chiburijima.



26 Stone walls for makihata farming, Onimai

The stone walls are called *aigaki* on Nishinoshima.



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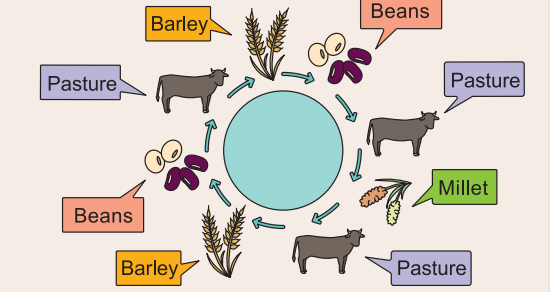
There are makihata info panels on the second floor of Kurii Port Terminal, Chiburijima.

24 Rhyolite and obsidian, Kumi Coast (Dōgo)

Some of the best quality obsidian in the Oki Islands was produced in just three places, one of them Kumi, Dōgo. Obsidian is a kind of glass made when viscous rhyolitic magma rapidly cools, and is found here in layers of the earth that are about 5.5 million years old. The whole cliff is rhyolite, and you can see pieces of obsidian here and there.



Example of a Makihata Farming Cycle



How to Enjoy This Theme

Discover the mysteries of the land!

Ama Town Geotour (Nakanoshima)



Watch the video

"The Oki Islands Lifestyles and Traditions"



A Land of Exile

The Oki Islands have long been a land of exile. Emperors and nobles from ancient and medieval times and various people from the early modern period on were sent to the islands. The culture that they passed on affected the islands' customs, which continue to this day as unique lifestyles and traditions.

27 Oki Shrine (Nakanoshima)



After being exiled for the Jōkyō Disturbance (1221), Retired Emperor Go-Toba lived the rest of his life on the Oki Islands. Oki Shrine was built near Gokasōzuka (the emperor's burial site) to mark the 700th anniversary of his death. Nearby are remnants of the temple where he lived and a stone engraved with a poem of his.

28 Kuroki-gosho Imperial Residence Site & Hekifu-kan Museum (Nishinoshima)



Emperor Go-Daigo was exiled to the Oki Islands for trying to overthrow the Kamakura shogunate in 1332. Kuroki-gosho Imperial Residence Site is one place he reportedly lived for the year before his escape. The site houses Hekifu-kan Museum, an archive concerning the emperor, and Kuroki Shrine.

29 Amasashihiko-mikoto Shrine (Chiburijima)



A shrine recorded in the *Engishiki Jimyōdō* (927) with the affectionate local name of "Ikku-san," it is worshipped as the general shrine deity of Chiburijima. Around 1765, a plague and large fires continued on the island, and in order to appease the deities, a dance was dedicated at the shrine. A monk who was exiled to the islands from Kyoto developed it later into a play. Today, it is dedicated at the shrine as a children's kabuki performance.



12 Mt. Kinkō-jī (Nakanoshima)

At the top of the mountain is Kinkō-jī Temple and a historical site where court official Ono-no-Takamura allegedly lived after exile to the Oki Islands. It is said that he prayed at the temple for 100 days to return to the capital. Near the temple is a spring and lookout from which Amagata Plain can be seen.



30 Nagu-saki Cape (Dōgo)

Dōzen Islands can be seen from up high at the lookout. A walking trail leads from there to the lighthouse at the tip of the cape. Next to the lookout is an old lighthouse used at the end of the Meiji period (1868–1912). It is said that one job the exiled had was to keep the fire in it from going out.

Culture Brought by Sailors

From the mid-Edo period until 1897-1906, the Oki Islands were a port of call for *kitamaebune* (trading ships that sailed between Osaka and Hokkaido) that brought culture and regional customs to the islands. Present Oki traditional folk songs and dances can be traced back to other areas of Japan.

31 Mt. Takuhi and Takuhi Shrine (Nishinoshima)



Mt. Takuhi is the tallest mountain in the Dōzen Islands, standing at its center since the volcanic eruption that made Dōzen. On its mountainside lies Takuhi Shrine, whose main shrine building is built in a cave. It shows that belief is tied to the land. Sailors have revered its deity as a deity of sea travel since the shrine's inception.

32 Watatsu Shrine (Chiburijima)



A shrine on Shimazushima Island. Fishermen worship its deity as a deity of fishing and safety at sea. The bridge to Shimazushima is O-matsu Bridge, and O-matsu Monument is near the shrine. A woman named O-matsu fell in love with a *kitamaebune* sailor, who taught her a traditional folk song from northern Japan. This song is now passed down locally as "Dossari-bushi."

33 Boat houses, Tsuma (Dōgo)



Boats of the past were wooden, so boat houses were built to shelter them on land from shipworm, wind, and snow damage. These boat houses are only seen in Japan on Sea of Japan coasts, where tidal differences are small and minimal tides only occur once per day, and not Pacific Ocean coasts, where tides occur twice per day. These qualities of the Sea of Japan are due to its size and shape.

Check Them Out! Myōjin Taisha Shrines on Oki Islands, Where Rich Oki Culture Persists

There are over 150 shrines in the Oki Islands that currently have existing buildings, among which are four prestigious Myōjin Taisha shrines, known for their high spiritual power. Two of them are located on Dōzen Islands, while the other two are located on the western side of Dōgo Island. It is believed that these shrines were strategically chosen to protect the islands from invaders from the continent.

34 Uzuka-mikoto Shrine (Nakanoshima)



Though Uzuka-mikoto Shrine currently sits in a plain in Uzuka District, Ama Town, it was once on top of a cliff. Together with Hinamachime, enshrined on the neighboring island of Nishinoshima, the two deities guarded the northern Dōzen waterways. The two combining forces to protect the Oki Islands eventually led to the shrine becoming a place for marriage blessings, and it can be inferred that this played a strong role in the legend of a deity giving birth on Akiya Coast.

35 Mizuwakasu Shrine (Dōgo)



An *ichinomiya** whose main shrine was built in Oki-zukuri architectural style, a style that incorporates the best parts of famous shrines. Every August, the prefecturally designated Intangible Folk Cultural Property of Dōgo Kumi Kagura is performed overnight here.

36 Ise-mikoto Shrine (Dōgo)



A shrine in Kumi District, an obsidian locality. The main shrine is in the Oki Islands' unique architectural style (Oki-zukuri). Every August, the prefecturally designated Intangible Folk Cultural Property of Dōgo Kumi Kagura is performed overnight here.

37 Yurahime Shrine (Nishinoshima)



An *ichinomiya** shrine built in front of Ikayose-no-hama (Squid Bay), where squid beaching occurs fall–winter. It is said that large groups of them do this every year as penance for biting this shrine goddess's hand. Squid riding the ocean currents and the shape of the bay is believed to play a part, showing that natural phenomena can have an effect on belief.

*Ichinomiya is the highest rank given to shrines within a designated region.

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Explore the shrines of the Oki Islands with the Oki Dōzen-Dōgo Shrine Map!

