



**ACCESS**

Kasaoka	Rail	JR Shin-Osaka Station(Sanyo Shinkansen) — Shin-Kurashiki Station(Sanyo Line) — Kasaoka Station(Walk) — Sumiyoshi Port (5 mins) / Fushigoe Port(10 mins) JR Hakata Station(Sanyo Shinkansen) — Fukuyama Station(Sanyo Line) — Kasaoka Station(Walk) — Sumiyoshi Port (5 mins)/ Fushigoe Port (10 mins)
	Car	From various locations — Kasaoka IC (Sanyo Expressway) — Sumiyoshi Port/Fushigoe Port (15 mins)
	Ship	Sumiyoshi Port to Takashima, Shiraiishijima, Kitagishima, Manabeshima, Ohbishima, Kobishima, Mushima (passenger vessel) Fushigoe Port to Shiraiishijima/Kitagishima (ferry)
Marugame	Rail	JR Okayama Station(40 minutes by limited express train bound for Matsuyama or Kochi) — Marugame Station — Marugame Port (10 mins walk) JR Takamatsu Station(30 minutes on the Yoson Line(rapid service)) — Marugame Station — Marugame Port (10 mins walk)
	Air	Takamatsu Airport (40 minutes by taxi, 50 minutes by share taxi *1,75 minutes by limousine bus *2) — Marugame Station — Marugame Port(10 mins walk) *1 Takamatsu Airport Shuttle Service *2 Marugame/Sakaide/Airport Limousine Bus
	Car	From various locations — Sakaide Kita IC (Seto Chuo Expressway) — Marugame Port (15 mins) From various locations — Sakaide IC/Zentsuji IC (Seto Chuo Expressway) — Marugame Port (15 mins)
	Ship	Marugame Port — Honjima (35 mins by ferry, 20 mins by passenger vessel) Kojima Kanko Port — Honjima (30 mins by passenger vessel) Marugame Port — Hiroshima (45 minutes by ferry, 20 mins by passenger vessel)
Shodoshima	Rail	JR Okayama Station (Sanyo Shinkansen) — JR Okayama Station(Marine Liner) — JR Takamatsu Station — Takamatsu Port (ferry) to various ports on the island JR Okayama Station — Shin-Okayama Port (ferry) — Tonosho Port JR Himeji Station (Sanyo Shinkansen) — Himeji Port (ferry) — Fukuda Port
	Air	Takamatsu Airport — JR Takamatsu Station — Takamatsu Port (ferry) to various ports on the island Kansai Airport — JR Shin-Osaka Station — JR Himeji Station — Himeji Port (ferry) to Fukuda Port
	Ship	Takamatsu Port to Tonosho Port, Ikeda Port, Kusakabe Port (60 mins by ferry) Takamatsu Port to Tonosho Port (35 mins by high-speed ferry) Shin-Okayama Port — Tonosho Port (70 mins by ferry) Hinase Port — Ohbe Port (60 minutes by ferry) Uno Port — Teshima Ieura Port — Teshima Karato Port — Tonosho Port (60 mins by passenger vessel, 90 mins by ferry) Himeji Port — Fukuda Port (100 mins by ferry) Kobe Port — Sakate Port (200 mins by ferry) — Takamatsu Port (70 mins by ferry)
Teshima	Ship	Tonosho Port to Karato Port (20 mins by passenger vessel, 30 mins by ferry) — Ieura Port (15 mins by passenger vessel, 20 mins by ferry) Takamatsu Port — Karato Port (35 mins by passenger vessel) *Saturdays and public holidays only Takamatsu Port — Ieura Port (35 mins by passenger vessel) Uno Port — Ieura Port (25 mins by passenger vessel, 40 mins by ferry) — Karato Port (15 minutes by passenger vessel, 20 minutes by ferry) — Tonosho Port

**Setouchi Bisan Islands Japan Heritage Promotion Council**

**Kasaoka Industry Department,  
Commerce and Tourism Division,  
Japan Heritage Promotion Office**

TEL:0865-69-1177 <https://www.city.kasaoka.okayama.jp/site/japan-heritage/>

**Marugame Civil Life Department,  
Living Environment Division**

TEL:0877-24-8809 <https://www.marugame-happy-life.jp/islands/>

**Tonosho Commerce and Tourism Division**

TEL:0879-62-7004 <https://www.town.tonosho.kagawa.jp/kanko/>

**Shodoshima Commerce and Tourism Division**

TEL:0879-82-7021 [https://www.town.shodoshima.lg.jp/kanko/other\\_info/heritage/](https://www.town.shodoshima.lg.jp/kanko/other_info/heritage/)

**Setouchi Bisan Islands Website**

<https://stone-islands.jp/>





**Japan Heritage Portal Site**  
<https://japan-heritage.bunka.go.jp/ja/>

"Japan Heritage" refers to stories of culture and tradition highlighting the historical charms and characteristics of regions of Japan as certified by the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

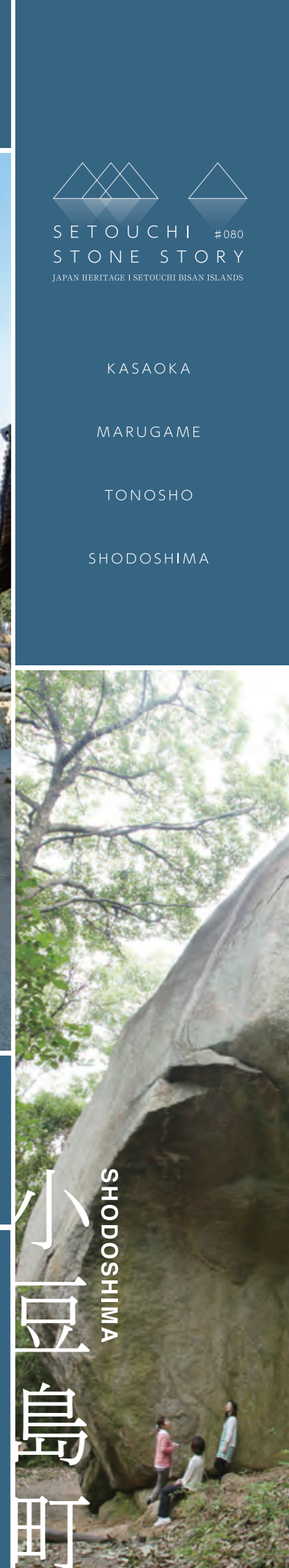
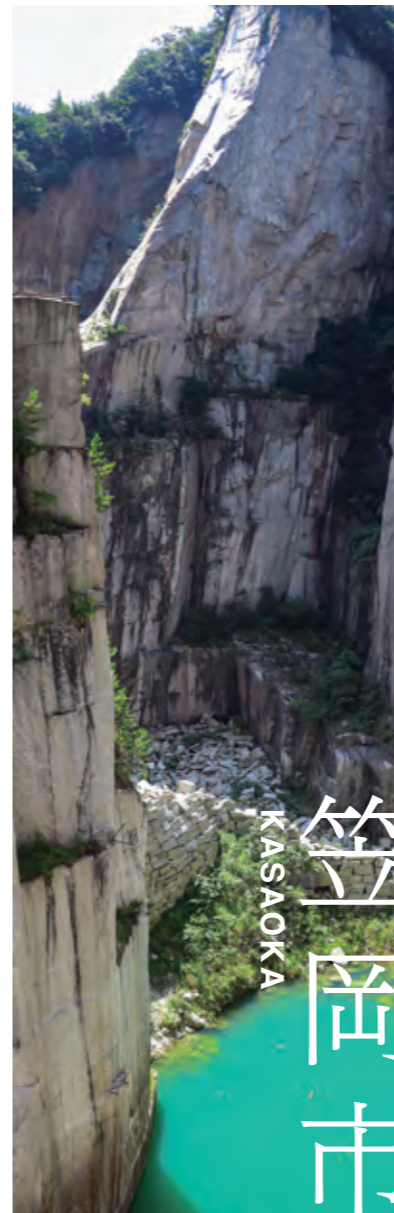


2020 Agency for Cultural Affairs Cultural Resource Utilization Project Subsidy (Tourism Promotion Business)



JAPAN HERITAGE

日本遺産



SETOUCHI #080  
STONE STORY  
JAPAN HERITAGE | SETOUCHI BISAN ISLANDS

KASAOKA  
MARUGAME  
TONOSHO  
SHODOSHIMA

JAPAN  
HERITAGE  
GUIDE

知ってる!?! Do you know?  
Islands of stone, where time leisurely drifts by.  
~The stone of Setouchi Bisan Islands, which laid the foundation of Japan by crossing over the sea.~

悠久の時間が流れる石の島  
~海を越え、日本の礎を築いた せとうち備讃諸島~

美しいだけじゃなく  
楽しいだけじゃなく  
うれしかったのは、  
時を超えたあの日に  
出会えたことです。

More than beauty  
More than enjoyment  
What made me truly happy  
Was the day that I discovered  
What lays beyond time.

Japan Heritage  
#080

Do you know?

## Islands of stone, where time leisurely drifts by.

~The stone of Setouchi Bisan Islands, which laid the foundation of Japan by crossing over the sea.~

### STORY

Take a break from the tough daily life to feel gentle wind breezing over and experience unspoilt maritime cultural landscape in the Seto Inland Sea, where the Setouchi Bisan Islands are located.

The Setouchi Bisan Islands have produced high quality stone material for constructions over centuries. Many historic buildings were constructed with stone from the islands, including Osaka Castle, the Bank of Japan of the Head Office Building, and the Tokyo Station Marunouchi Main Building. The remains of stone quarrying engraved on the islands forms magnificent landscape, and wealth brought from stone trade by sea have left unique and historical townscapes there. Why don't you set out for the islands of stone, where the legacy of the stone quarrying, inscribed on the Japan Heritage, has remained.

400年の歴史浪漫を巡る旅に出かけよう  
Take a journey through 400 years of history



JAPAN HERITAGE



せとうち備讃諸島

# 石の島のものがたり



Japan Heritage #080

Do you know?

## Islands of stone, where time leisurely drifts by.

~The stone of Setouchi Bisan Islands, which laid the foundation of Japan by crossing over the sea.~



The sea routes that were used to transport the stones brought abundance to the islands.

The Bisan Seto waters are dotted with islands. The landform varies from sandy beaches to small flatlands, steep hills, deep gorges, and stony mountains. Granite is exposed everywhere on the islands.

The proximity of the quarries to the seaports on the islands made easy to carry huge stones out of the islands. It was important for the development in the stone quarrying to have access to sea routes as well as improve stone-cutting techniques as the Seto Inland Sea was a vital means to transport extracted stones all over Japan.

There were used to be groups of prominent seaman operating ships on the rapid tidal current of the Inland Sea and transporting stones. Shiwaku merchant shippers, traced back to the Shiwaku naval forces in the medieval era, for example, had outstanding ship navigation technique during Edo period. They are said to have carried huge stones weighing more than 100 tons by sea.

Villages on the Bisan Islands are a maze of narrow lanes without regular intersections and cross streets, a defensive design typical of the Warring States Period. The Kasasima district in Honzima of the Shiwaku Islands, particularly, is enclosed by mountains with a fort on three sides and is a complicated and confusing arrangement of narrow alleys, blocking views of intruders. On the other hand, tasteful merchants' houses along the main street

in the district show wealth and prosperity created by shipping.

Building a fortune through marine transportation of stone extracted on the Bisan Islands, the islander have created a unique culture as well as the affluent community there.



Even now, rare traditions created by stone, sea, and people abound in people's lives.

Starting in the Edo period, the stone quarrying has developed as a local industry since the Meiji period. The islands thrived as a centre for stone-cutting, processing, trading, and transporting at its peak. The prosperity of the islands created a unique culture of the stone miners there.

Labour songs sung by the miners and a traditional dish 'Ishikiri Sushi' served on celebrative occasions in Shodoshima have been handed down from generation to generation. This precious culture created by the stone miners has been established in the Bisan Islands.

Stone quarrying is recognised as its key industry in Shiraishizima and Kitagishima in the Kasaoka Islands, Hiroshima in the Shiwaku Islands, and Shodshima.

The Bisan Islands are home to a stone industry. Stone has, however, not been just means of generating profits. Huge stones in the mountains have also been a subject of worship for centuries. The primitive religious belief integrates into and is well-established in daily life in the islands. Why don't you experience legacies of the stone and industrial heritages remaining on the islands.



With 400 years of stone-cutting history.

The Seto Inland Sea and the Bisan Islands are full of fascinating stories that the stone can tell.

Many of Japan's landmark structures were built with stone cut from these islands. They include Western-style buildings that symbolize the country's modernization such as the Bank of Japan head office building, as well as Osaka Castle and other major ramparts representative of the feudal era.

The Bisan Islands are located in the Seto Inland Sea off the shores of Okayama Prefecture and Kagawa Prefecture, and include islands of various sizes, such as Shodoshima, Teshima, the Shiwaku Islands, and the Kasaoka Islands. Narrow flatlands along the coastlines, and mountains and shores with stone outcrops shape unique landscapes on the islands. Stones from the outcrop have been mined to construct the stone wall of castles and buildings since Edo period.

The stone was extracted at quarrying sites called 'Choba'. A method was used to cut the hard stone which an iron wedge was tapped into rock. As

advanced techniques were required for stone cutting, the stone miners had to acquire the skill of reading the grain in the stone and use specialised tools for quarrying. Stone-cutting artisans visited this place and passed on those techniques to the island people, which allowed quarrying techniques to spread throughout the islands.

There are old quarrying sites in Shodoshima where stone was extracted to construct the stone walls of Osaka Castle. Stones more than 2-3m in diameter, separated from huge rocks, have lain around in the site. Those abandoned stones have rectangular holes in a row by driving iron wedges into them and a symbol of a feudal Daimyo enclaved on them, showing the ownership.

Stones quarried in the Bisan Islands were shipped all over Japan. The stone has been used to build structures representing this country, telling the history of the Japan's modern architecture. The traces of 400-hundred-year-stone-cutting-history are found in the Bisan Island, the home of the stone material.



### Learning about Stone Cutting

This painting tells us stone quarrying techniques by highly skilled miners in Edo Period. Iron wedges and hammer were main tools for breaking stone apart.



### Before mechanization

This photograph, taken in the early 1960s, shows a stone miner driving wedges into a rock to split it with human strength.



### Shipping backing the stone quarrying industry in the Bisan Islands

Stone blocks were shipped across Japan through the Seto Inland Sea. The shipping industry brought wealth and prosperity to the Bisan Islands and promote the stone quarrying industry there.

### 1896

#### The Bank of Japan's Head Office Building

The exterior wall of the Head Office Building was made of white stones, many of which were from Kitagishima. As the construction work was deemed as a national project to modernize Japan's financial system, Kitagishima was privileged to provide the material for it.



### 1933

#### Yasukuni Shrine Stone Torii Gate

This is one of the tallest stone torii gates in Japan. Each pillar stone is 12m long, 1.2m in diameter and weighs 50t. The huge stones of the Torii were produced on and transported from Kitagishima by sea.

### Edo Period

1603~

### 1620

#### The Stone Walls of Osaka Castle

Osaka Castle was reconstructed in 1620s. The Tokugawa Shogunate assigned the task of constructing its new stone walls to more than 60 feudal lords. Huge rocks were brought from granite quarries on the Bisan Islands.



### Meiji Period

1868~

### 1888

#### Imperial Palace Main Gate Stone Bridge

Two wooden Bridges of the main gate had led over the moat around the Imperial Palace, which were replaced to a stone bridge and an iron bridge in 1888 while the palace was being constructed. The Stone Bridge was built with stone blocks from Shodoshima.



### Taisho Period

1912~

### 1914

#### Tokyo Station Marunouchi Main Building

This red block building is the iconic symbol of the Tokyo station, known as the hub of the Japan's railway network. Stone blocks used for a part of the exterior wall were from Kitagishima.



### Showa Period

1926~

### Heisei Period

1989~

### Reiwa

2019~

### 1934

#### Meiji Seimei Building

The granite used for this building exterior, featuring monumental pillars, was from Kitagishima. The building represents modern Western-style architecture in Japan.



# 笠岡市

Kasaoka City, OKAYAMA

P.18▷21

Views of the Seto Inland Sea and 31 islands of varying in size. The wonderful natural scenery is interwoven with giant stones and unusual rock formations, and are not seen anywhere else. Please enjoy strolling along the walking paths to the mountaintops, and the scenery at the quarrying sites that represent the industrial heritage of the islands.

- Takashima Island [Takashima]
- Kairyuji Temple [Shiraishijima]
- Shiraishijima Island [Shiraishijima]
- Stone Quarry of Kitagi Stone [Kitagishima]
- Lake in Abandoned Quarry in Kitagishima [Kitagishima]
- Stone Quarrying and Processing Tools in Kitagishima [Kitagishima]
- Stone Masonry Pier on Chinohama Beach [Kitagishima]
- Kitagishima Stone Miner's Labour Song [Kitagishima]
- Former Movie Theater – the Hikari Cinema [Kitagishima]
- The Manabe Family's Residence [Manabeshima]
- Obishima Ancient Ritual Site [Hishima]
- Mt.Oishi [Mushima]

# 丸亀市

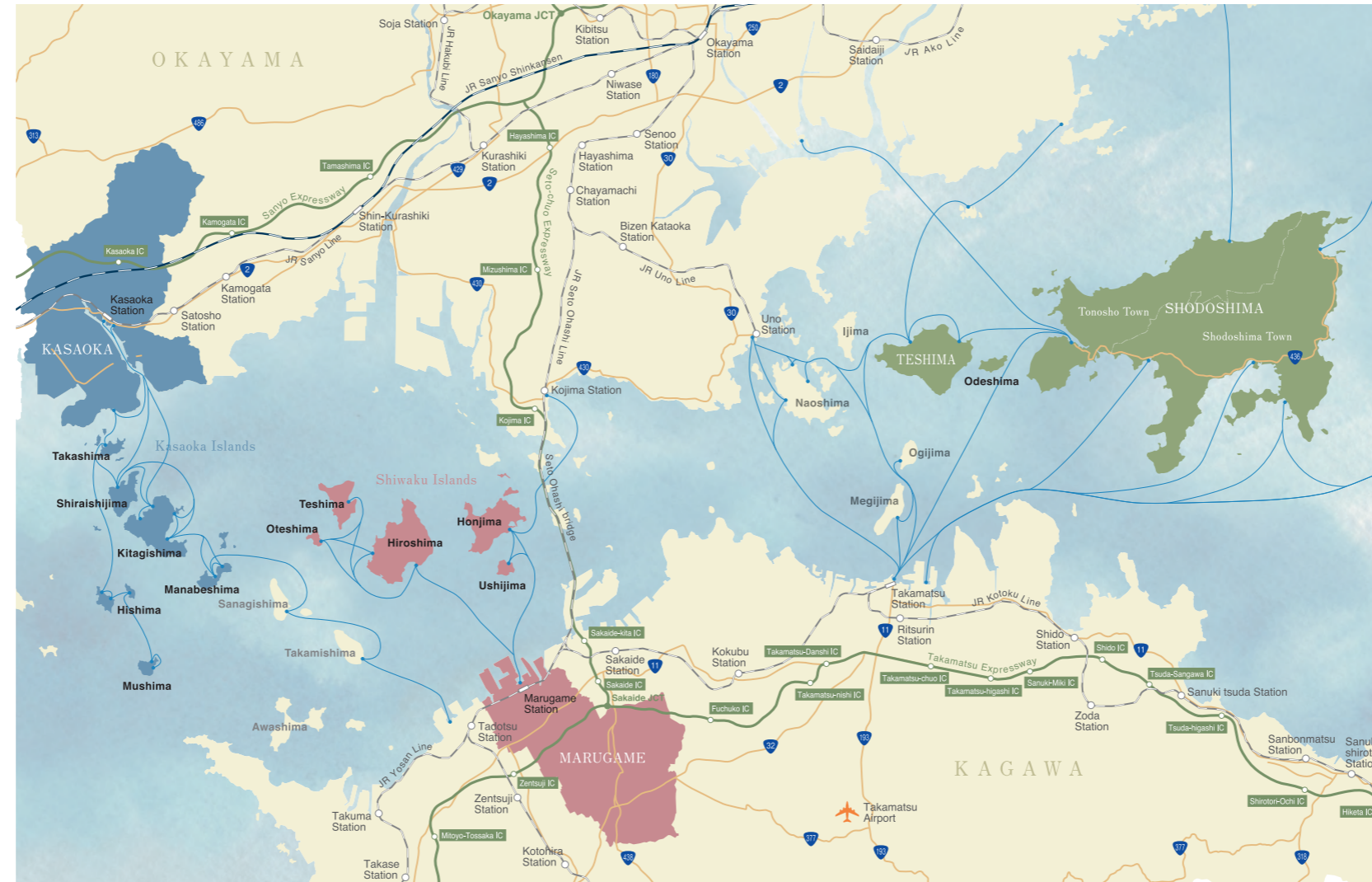
Marugame City, KAGAWA

P.14▷17

Out of the Bisan Islands, the Shiwaku Islands are an area that is particularly connected to the navy. In Honjima, there is a Shiwaku government outpost called the Shiwaku-Kinbansho, and the historic port town of Kasashima prospered as a base for Shiwaku cargo ships. There are plenty of places to see in Hiroshima, such as the natural granite scenery of Oto-Zan (Mt.Oto), as well as a stone lighthouse and a stone warehouse.

- Mt. Takanbo Quarry Site in Shiwaku Honjima [Honjima]
- Graves of the Local Headmen [Honjima]
- Kogarasu Shrine Torii Gate [Honjima]
- Shiwaku-Kinbansho(Shiwaku Administrative Office) [Honjima]
- Kasashima District for Groups of Buildings [Honjima]
- Chitose-Za (Chitose Theater) [Honjima]
- Ishi no Sato Museum [Hiroshima]
- Habushi-iwa Beacon [Hiroshima]
- Habushi-iwa Beacon Light Oil Storehouse [Hiroshima]
- Onoe-tei (Onoe Residence) [Hiroshima]
- Oto-Zan (Mt.Oto) and Oto-Sabaku (Oto Desert) [Hiroshima]
- Shingyo-Zan (Mt. Singyo) [Hiroshima]

## Setouchi Bisan Islands: 400 years of stories. ~The stone relates closely to history, culture, and life in the Islands~



# 48 STORIES AND 48 CULTURAL PROPERTIES

A collection of 48 stories of this Japan Heritage entitled 'Islands of Stone, where time leisurely drifts by' are in Kasaoka City, Marugame City, Tonosho Town and Shososhima Town. Cultural properties involving the stone industry in the Bisan Islands narrate vividly the 48 stories.

**Icons**

- Stone Cutting Techniques**  
Places of cultural significance in the history and culture of stone cutting.
- Shipping**  
Places where the islands have made a deep connection with the sea.
- Stone Landscape**  
Places where people can experience the history of stonework, from ancient times to the present.
- Lifestyle Developed with Stones**  
Places where you can experience unique cultures and towns built around stonework.



# 小豆島・豊島

土庄町・小豆島町

Tonosho Town, Shodoshima Town, KAGAWA P.06▷13

In Shodoshima Town, the entire Kankakei mountain area is a sacred place related to the local people's faith, and it is filled with symbolic giant rocks and unusual rock formations. The Memorial Park and Museum of Osaka Castle Stone Quarry Remains is at the roadside station in Tonosho Town, which tells the history of stone cutting. On this island, there are many places where visitors can feel the connection between people and stone.

- Osaka Castle Wall Stone Quarry Remains [Shodoshima Town]  
The Tenguwa, Tenguwa-iso, Minamitani, Tofuishi, Kamesaki, and Hachinin-ishi quarry sites.
- Quarry Guardhouse (Shichibei Residence) [Shodoshima Town]
- Osaka Castle Wall Stone Remains in Fukuda [Shodoshima Town]
- Osaka Castle Wall Stone Remains in Ishiba [Shodoshima Town]
- Tobikoshi Quarry Site and Omi Remnants  
Osaka Castle Stone Remnants Park [Tonosho Town]
- Omi Quarries [Tonosho Town]
- Senge and Kosebara Quarry Sites [Tonosho Town]
- Morigataki Quarry Remains [Shodoshima Town]
- Yamanokami Festival [Shodoshima Town]
- Hachiman Shrine's Stone Gate [Tonosho Town]
- Soy Sauce Village and Their Stone Tools [Shodoshima Town]
- Townscape of Tonosho Honmachi (City of Maze) [Tonosho Town]
- Obe Rokuro Wharf Site [Tonosho-cho]
- Pictorial Map of Shodoshima in the 17th Century [Tonosho Town]
- Kankakei Gorge [Shodoshima Town]
- Ikeda Grandstand [Shodoshima Town]
- Seating Platforms of the Tomioka Hachiman Shrine [Tonosho Town]
- Mountain Sacred Sites of Shodoshima [Tonosho-cho, Shodoshima Town]
- Farm-Village Kabuki, Stages, and Grandstand of Shodoshima [Tonosho Town, Shodoshima Town]
- Kasane-iwa Rocks [Tonosho Town]
- Ishikiri Sushi [Tonosho Town]
- Stonecutters Song [Tonosho Town, Shodoshima Town]
- Shishigaki-Stone Wall to Protect Crops from Boars and Deers [Tonosho Town, Shodoshima Town]
- Communal Watering Facility in Karatooka [Tonosho Town]



Japan Heritage Constituent Cultural Properties

# Shodoshima, Teshima

| Tonosho Town | Shodoshima Town |

Shodoshima is a gorgeous region with its rich history, culture, and scenic beauty. Kankakei Gorge is one of many representations for it. The island's history strongly connected to stone is everywhere on the island - quarries that played significant part of Osaka Castle's stone wall, local stone grandstand, and rocks being part of everyday lives. These impressive rocky mountain megaliths standing in awe are treasured to this day.



Tobikoshi Quarry Site and Omi Remnants



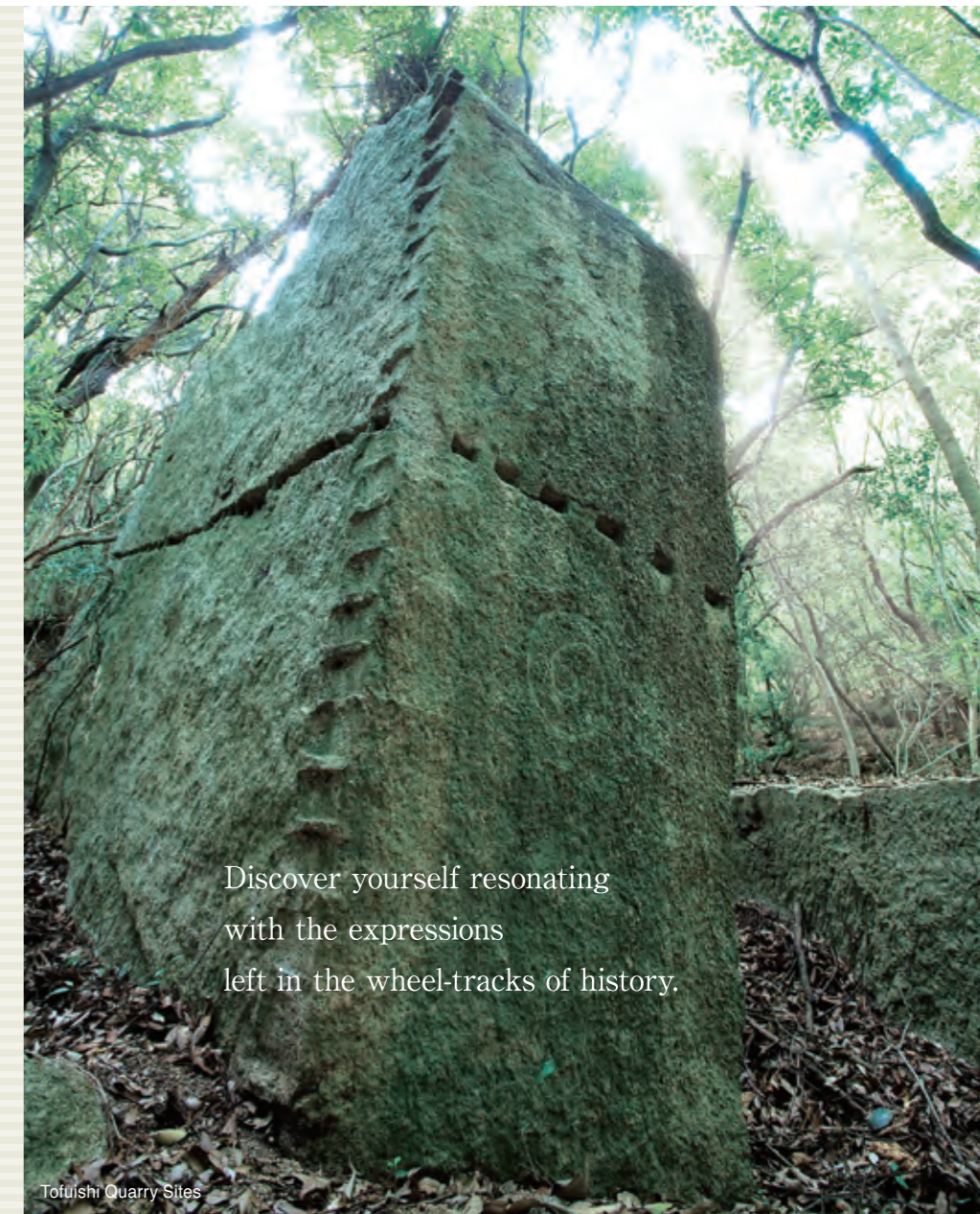
## Osaka Castle Wall Stone Quarry Remains

The Tenguwa, Tenguwa-iso, Minamitani, Tofuishi, Kamesaki, and Hachinin-ishi quarry sites.



Four hundred years ago, when the Tokugawa shogunate was rebuilding Osaka Castle, the daimyos of several domains opened quarries in the Bisan Islands to deliver huge stones to construct magnificent castle walls. The flavor of that time is still strongly in evidence at the quarries opened by the Kuroda daimyo in the Iwagatani district. With a total of more than 1600 stones still visible, these sites are important showcases for traditional masonry techniques.

National Historic Site



Discover yourself resonating with the expressions left in the wheel-tracks of history.

Tofuishi Quarry Sites



Osaka Castle Stone Remnants Park

## Tobikoshi Quarry Site and Omi Remnants

From the quarry that operated here, the Hosokawa clan shipped stones that would be used in the rebuilding of Osaka Castle. There are two large blocks from the time, engraved with a code number and the quarry's triangle mark. In the Meiji era the remnant stones were placed along the Omi wharf. Most of them were moved to this park when it was created in 1999. The stones show the skills of the Edo period masons, and there is a building with exhibits of stonecutting tools and information about the Osaka Castle walls.

Prefectural Historic Site



## Senge and Kosebara Quarry Sites

The quarries were operated by the Kato daimyos of the Higo domain and Kumamoto Castle, to produce stone for the rebuilding of Osaka Castle. There are stone pieces engraved with the Kato family crest, a pair of concentric circles (snake eye), a sword and other items passed down from the Kato clan are kept in a building that was the village headman's home at the time.

Prefectural Historic Site



## Omi Quarries

The Omi district was virtually encircled by three quarries operated by the Hosokawa clan to produce stone for the rebuilding of Osaka Castle. The quarry sites are still scattered with flat stones and stone scraps.

Municipal Historic Site



## Quarry Guardhouse (Shichibei Residence)

About 400 years ago, quarries were opened in various places on Shodoshima to supply stone for the rebuilding of Osaka Castle, and there are many leftover finished stones from that time, especially in the Iwagatani district. The guardhouse is evidence to show that, after the business ended, the Kuroda clan who owned the quarry were still kept the record of the quantity and quality of the leftover stones. It is also a place for the spirit of Shichibei, a guard who lived here, to keep watch.

Prefectural Historic Site



## Osaka Castle Wall Stone Remains in Ishiba

This quarry was operated by Tanaka daimyos of the Chikugo domain, and was adjacent to a busy shipping wharf. Worked stones that were left at the site long ago are engraved with a Tanaka Chikugo mark, similar to marks found on stones in the walls of Osaka Castle.

Municipal Historic Site



## Osaka Castle Wall Stone Remains in Fukuda

Old village records show that Todo Takatora (1556-1630), the famous designer and builder of many Japanese castles, operated four quarries in the Fukuda district of Shodoshima, the Higashidani, Nishinotani, Tochimenji and Taijuro quarries.

Municipal Historic Site

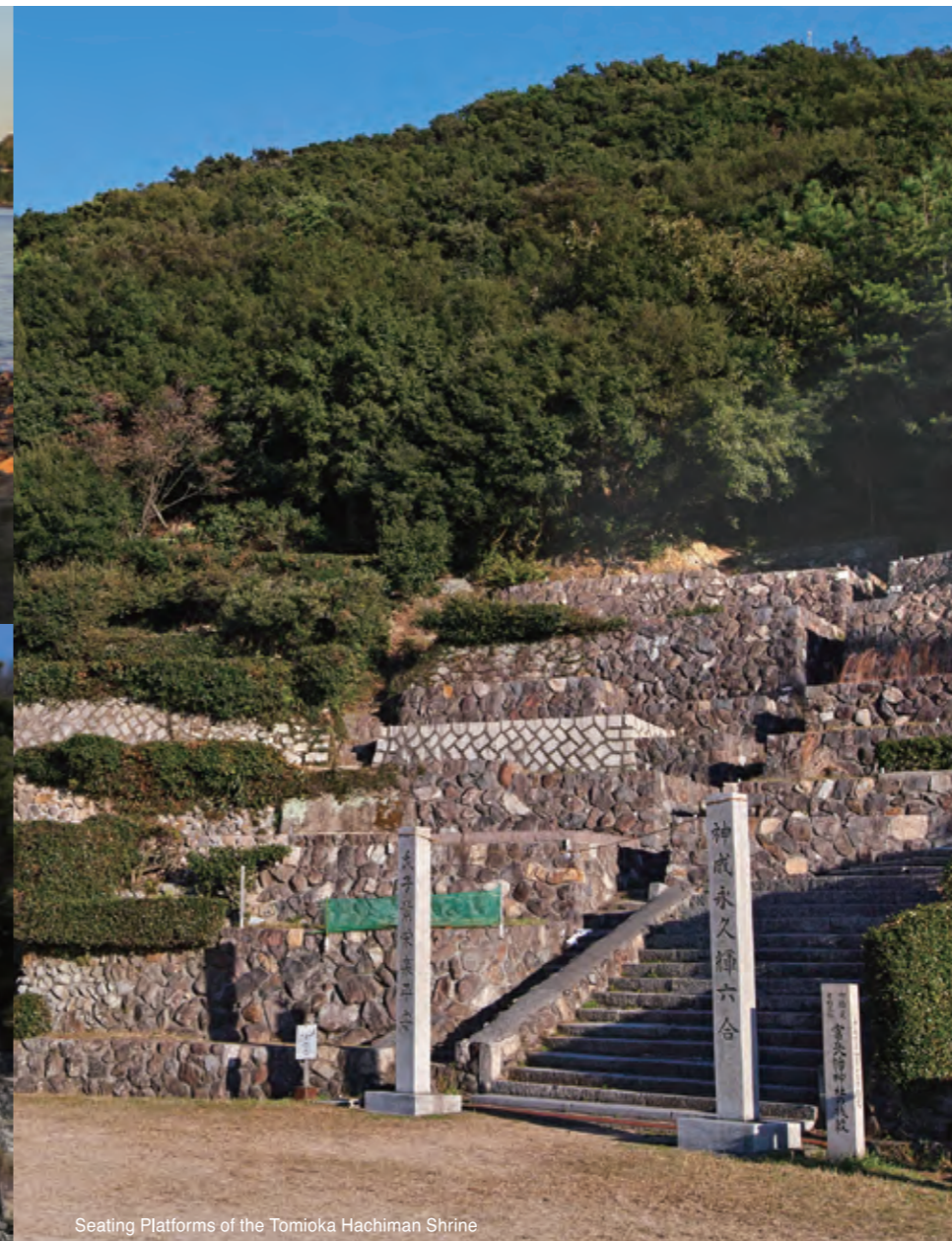


The timeless and rare stone-cutting culture brings people together.

Tenguiwa-iso quarry sites



Ikeda Grandstand



Seating Platforms of the Tomioka Hachiman Shrine



Kasane-iwa Rocks



This pair of stacked (kasane) granite boulders which look like they are about to fall were the superhard core of a much larger granite deposit that decomposed over time and fell away. The awesome megalith became an object of spiritual veneration and the center of the Kose Ishizuchi Shrine.

Even now stone culture is rooted in these islands, with their lovely countryside scenery.



Kankakei Gorge



The Kankakei Gorge was carved by weathering and erosion of rock that was formed about 14 million years ago by volcanic activity. It is recognized as one of the three most beautiful gorges in Japan. The gorge area, approximately four kilometers long and eight kilometers wide, contains many unique rock formations. The surrounding mountains have been regarded as sacred ground since ancient times.

**National Place of Scenic Beauty**



Morigataki Quarry Remains



From the Meiji era, this quarry was an important part of the stone industry in the Fukuda district. There are records of stone being shipped from this quarry for use in the bridge to the gate of the Imperial Palace, and in the tomb of Emperor Meiji at Fushimi Momoyama. What remains today of then prosperous quarry site are only the tool marks on the rock surfaces and the lake that has been filled with rainwater.



Ikeda Grandstand



Facing the Seto Inland Sea, this grandstand makes the most of the natural terrain. Standing 80 meters long and 18 meters high, it was built for viewing the annual Autumn Festival performance. While the date of completion is unknown, the groundstand is painted in a drawing of the festival that was donated to a shrine in 1812.

**Nationally-designated Important Tangible Folk Cultural Property**



Seating Platforms of the Tomioka Hachiman Shrine



On the hill at the northwest edge of the Tomioka Hachiman Shrine is a set of seating platforms built up with masonry. These stands, built at the latter part of the Edo period (1603-1867) and extended gradually since then for viewers of the annual Autumn Festival, are still used each year.

**Municipal Registered Tangible Folk Cultural Property**



Hachiman Shrine's Stone Gate



Near the entrance to the Teshima leura Hachiman Shrine, this imposing gate is made of tuff breccia, which is commonly called Teshima stone. The posts are 39 centimeters in diameter. Engraved on the left post is a date corresponding to the year 1474, and on the right post is the name and title of an official construction inspector.

**Prefecture-designated Tangible Cultural Property (Structures)**



Communal Watering Facility in Karatooka



At the foot of Mt. Danyama in the Karatooka district of Teshima, the stone cisterns were constructed in 1929 to provide clean water for area residents. Above them is a tiered masonry wall of granite blocks in even rows. Spring water from the mountain flows from an upper reservoir into three small cisterns and one large cistern, each providing water for different purposes. This facility is an example of the important role stone has traditionally played in the living environment of the island of Teshima.

**Nationally-registered Tangible Cultural Property (Structures)**



City of Maze



Stonecutters Song



Warm encounters make your trip unforgettable.

Farm-Village Kabuki, Stages, and Grandstand of Shodoshima The Nakayama Stage

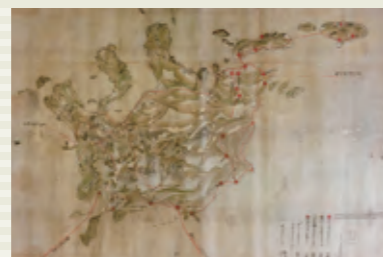


### Obe Rokuro Wharf Site



The wharf was for loading locally quarried stones for shipment to Osaka Castle. There was a quarry nearby that was owned by Nakagawa Hisamori, daimyo of the Bungo Takeda domain. It is known that even after the completion of Osaka Castle, Matsudaira Naomasa, daimyo of the Izume Matsue domain, kept the quarry in operation under a license from the shogunate.

**Municipal Historic Site**



### Pictorial Map of Shodoshima in the 17th Century



The shogunate ordered the drawing of pictorial maps of all Japan during the Keicho period (1596-1615) and the Shoho period (1644-1648). This Shodoshima map is dated 1605, and as one of only a few surviving maps from the Keicho series, it is a very important historical document. The map was drawn with the use of the advanced survey techniques known to the Inland Sea mariners who transported stone from the island.

**Prefecture-designated Tangible Cultural Property (Historical materials)**



### Farm-Village Kabuki, Stages, and Grandstand of Shodoshima The Hitoyama Stage



Each year on May 3rd a kabuki performance is presented as a sacred offering at the Rikyu Hachiman Shrine in the Hitoyama district. Stone was used to turn the gentle slope in front of the stage into a twelve-tier viewing area which the audience fills each year, designated Intangible Cultural Property In Nakayama. Located in the upland district of Shodoshima between the mountains and the sea, there is a long tradition of farm-village kabuki theater. It is performed on a permanent stage with a grandstand made of stonework. The Nakayama area is known for its terraced rice fields called Senmaida (Thousand Rice Terraces), which were built up with stonemasonry in order to create fields on this island with little arable land. The people of Shodoshima continue to use their wisdom, skills, and knowledge of stone to maintain the scenic terraces, while praying for good harvests and maintaining the tradition of farm-village kabuki.

**Stages and Grandstand : Nationally-designated Important Tangible Folk Cultural Properties**  
**Kabuki : Prefecture-designated Intangible Cultural Property**



Nakayama Senmaida ("Thousand Rice Terraces")



### Farm-Village Kabuki, Stages, and Grandstand of Shodoshima The Nakayama Stage



In Nakayama, located in the upland district of Shodoshima between the mountains and the sea, there is a long tradition of farm-village kabuki theater. It is performed on a permanent stage with a grandstand made of stonework. The Nakayama area is known for its terraced rice fields called Senmaida ("Thousand Rice Terraces"), which were built up with stonemasonry in order to create fields on this island with little arable land. The people of Shodoshima continue to use their wisdom, skills, and knowledge of stone to maintain the scenic terraces, while praying for good harvests and maintaining the tradition of farm-village kabuki.

**Stages and Grandstand : Nationally-designated Important Tangible Folk Cultural Properties**  
**Kabuki : Prefecture-designated Intangible Cultural Property**



### Soy Sauce Village and Their Stone Tools



Hishio-no-Sato (Soy Sauce Village) is a neighborhood of old soy sauce factories. Heavy stones that were used for crushing soy beans are lined up and blend into the townscape. For centuries, these commonly used large stones were indispensable tools in the production of soy sauce, or shoyu in Japanese. The culture of shoyu reached the island of Shodoshima from the Kansai area approximately 400 years ago, as a result of inter-regional marine trade of stone from Shodoshima to Osaka for building moats around Osaka Castle.

**Including Nationally-registered Tangible Cultural Property(Structures)**



### Townscape of Tonosho Honmachi (City of Maze)



Tonosho Honmachi is a neighborhood with an intricate network of narrow lanes where it is easy for an outsider to lose their way. It is a fine example of the defensive maze town layout of the old towns of the Bisan Islands. Standing out in the middle of the neighborhood is the red-painted three-story pagoda at the Saikoji Temple. It is a symbol of the neighborhood, a landmark for the visitor, and the place to get an overview of the maze town.



### Stonecutters Song



The stonecutters of Shodoshima developed their own work song which was passed down through the generations. The rhythm of the words evokes the manual striking work of the masons. Today the song is performed on festive occasions with the addition of instruments and dance.



### Ishikiri Sushi



The traditional local sushi with precise blocks of rice is called ishikiri (stone cut) sushi. It was probably eaten regularly by the stonecutters during their days of hard labor. It is always served at various annual festivals on Shodoshima including the Fuigo Festival, Yamanokami Festival, and other events in northern Shodoshima.



### Mountain Sacred Sites of Shodoshima



There are many places in the mountainous landscape of Shodoshima that are traditionally held sacred. The Shodoshima sacred site pilgrimage route, with a total length of about 150 kilometers, links 88 sites, many of them in caves along stone bluffs. The spiritual life of Shodoshima was closely tied to stone.



### Shishigaki-Stone Wall to Protect Crops from Boars and Deers



A stone walls were erected to protect fields from wild boar, deer and other animals. A government document from 1790 records that a stone gate walls with a total length of about 120 kilometers were erected around the interior of Shodoshima. Other records show that all villagers were engaged in the building and maintenance of their sections of the wall, indicating that masonry skills were very widespread among the local people.

**Tonosho-cho designated Historic Site**  
**Shodoshima-cho designated Tangible Folk Cultural Property**



### Yamanokami Festival



This ancient festival is the event of prayer for skillfulness and safety. Local residents continue to hold the festival each year on January 9 at Oyamazumi Shrine, near the Nishiotani quarry that used to be operated by the famous castle builder Todo Takatora. The festival is an important part of the area's heritage which depended on the masonry profession and seagoing ships.





Kasashima District for Groups of Buildings

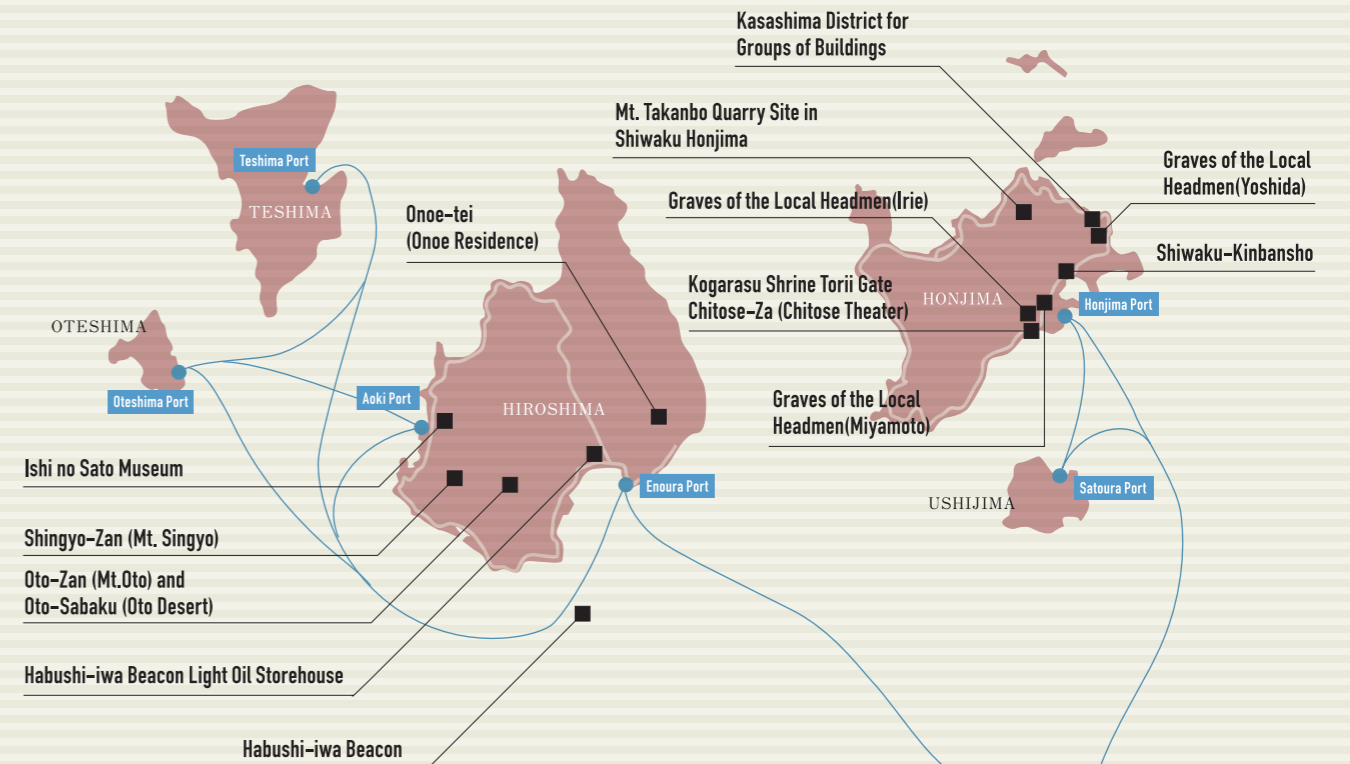
## MARUGAME KAGAWA

The city of Marugame is located near the center of the coastline of Kagawa Prefecture. The Seto Inland Sea National Park lies to the north, mountains that lead to the Sanuki Mountains lie to the south, and between those are the rural areas of the Sanuki Plain. Marugame became a trading center for goods early on and developed into a point of strategic importance for transport by sea. Most importantly, the Shiwaku Islands have always had a close connection to the navy and stone. Even now, the sea breeze is redolent with historic stone stories.



Onoe-tei (Onoe Residence)

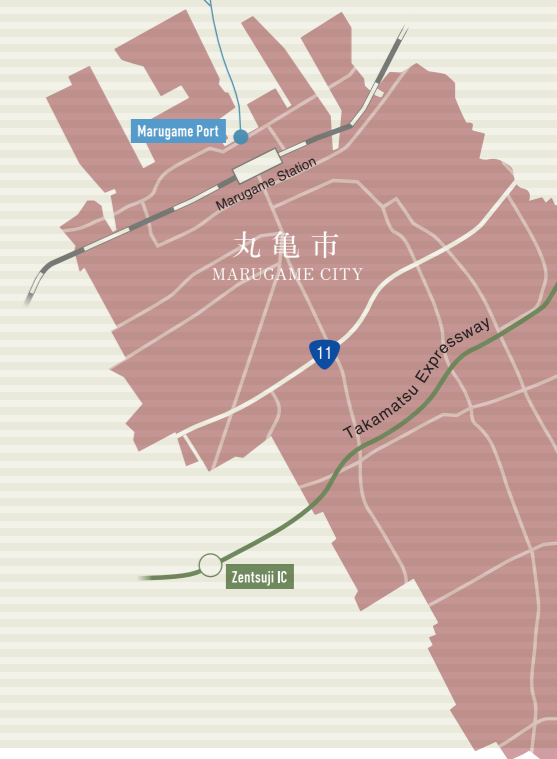
Even now, the dreams of strong men from the sea float in the air over the five temperate islands of Shiwaku.



## 塩飽諸島

SHIWAKU ISLANDS

The Shiwaku Islands consist of 28 islands of various sizes in Nishi Bisan Seto. Out of these islands, there are 5 inhabited islands that belong to the city of Marugame: Honjima, Ushijima, Hiroshima, Teshima, and Oteshima. These islands have had a strong connection to the navy since olden times, and many history buffs have heard of the Shiwaku Navy and Shiwaku cargo ships. The Shiwaku-Kinbansho and Kasashima District for Groups of Buildings in Honjima are places of interest for historic culture. Visitors can use the city of Marugame as a starting point for visiting these islands.



Japan Heritage Constituent Cultural Properties

# Marugame City

The Shiwaku Islands once thrived in shipping trade, which brought prosperity there. Wealthy families prospering in the trade built their houses along narrow streets, which eventually has formed unique townscapes in Honjima Island. Apart from the townscapes, historical places including stone quarries and affluent family residence enrich the visitors experience while they are strolling in the Shiwaku Islands.



These historic places give you the feel of traveling to another time. That kind of experience awaits you.

Shiwaku-Kinbansho(Shiwaku Administrative Office)



## Mt. Takanbo Quarry Site in Shiwaku Honjima

This site is on the island of Honjima, which was the home base of the long standing Shiwaku Navy, a corps of master mariners. The quarry was operated by the Hosokawa clan during the time Osaka Castle was being built, and the family records state that in a period of a little less than nine months, from March to November 1623, a total of 149,228 work days were logged by four different work teams. This quarry provided 1,889 of the huge stones in the walls of Osaka Castle.

**City-designated Historic Site**



## Shiwaku-Kinbansho (Shiwaku Administrative Office)

Control of the Shiwaku Islands was granted to 650 master mariners from the islands in return for their service to the Toyotomi clan during the wars for unification of Japan in the late 16th century. Government administration under the shogunate was handled at first by four representatives, called toshiyori (elders), who took turns keeping the official seals in their homes. As a result of government reforms, an administrative office was built in 1798 and the duties alternated among three representatives. The Shiwaku Kinbansho is the rebuilt administrative office from 1860, which now holds exhibits relating to the history and achievements of the famed Shiwaku mariners.

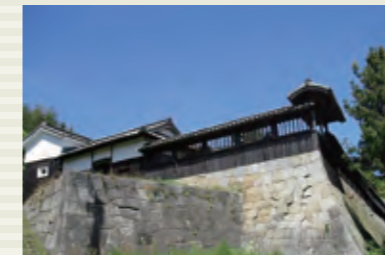
**National Historic Site**



## Graves of the Local Headmen

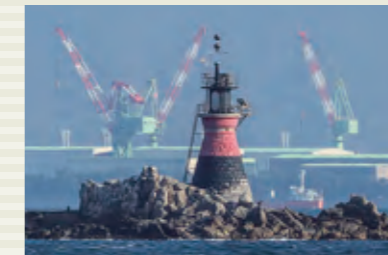
In the late 16th century, leaders of the Shiwaku Navy were named as the official headmen of different districts, and the positions were inherited by their descendants. The first headmen were from the Irie, Miyamoto, Yoshida and Sanaqi families, and the graves of some of those families still stand on Honjima. The earliest is from 1626, during the time when Osaka Castle was built, and in later years graves more than three meters high were erected for successive generations.

**National Historic Site**



## Onoe-tei (Onoe Residence)

The Onoe family prospered in shipping, with records showing their junks transported stone lanterns and other stone products as far as Aomori in northern Japan. Surrounded by castle-like high stone walls, the magnificent mansion is a testament to the shipping industry of the Edo period (1603-1867), and has many details showing the skills of the famed Shiwaku carpentry tradition. It was built about 200 years ago, with the walls made from attractive Aoki stone quarried on the island, and the house built entirely of zelkova wood.



## Habushi-iwa Beacon

The light stands on the Habushi-iwa reef, which has a diameter of about 50 meters, one kilometer south of Hiroshima. It is 13 meters high and built of granite blocks.



## Habushi-iwa Beacon Light Oil Storehouse

Built to store oil for the beacon light on the Habushi-iwa reef. The contrasting finishes on the granite exterior give the structure its own beauty. Both the beacon and the storehouse were completed in 1895.



## Ishi no Sato Museum

On the island of Hiroshima, part of the former Nishi Elementary School is a history museum with displays of tools and documents relating to the island's well-known Aoki granite, and utensils from daily life in the pre-mechanization era. Hiroshima was long one of the Shiwaku Islands with a strong culture centered on stone production.



## Oto-Zan (Mt. Oto) and Oto-Sabaku (Oto Desert)

Mt. Oto occupies half of Hiroshima Island. Near the summit is the Oto Desert, a dry aerial garden of sand-like decomposed granite soil, dotted with granite boulders. Tradition says that there was once a splendid temple in this area. However, all the buildings were lost by fire and there is nothing left at present.



## Shingyo-Zan (Mt. Singyo)

Shingyo-Zan (Mt. Singyo) which commands a fine view of Seto Inland Sea is one of the sacred places related to the famous Buddhist monk Kobo-Daishi (Kukai). Mountain top area with megalithic stones and monstrous rocks are places for worshipping the god and Buddha. Granite which is mined on the quarry of Shingyo-Zan is well known as "Aoki stone".



## Kasashima District for Groups of Buildings

A National Important Preservation District of Historic Buildings, the Kasashima District flourished as the base of the Shiwaku naval forces and merchant shippers during the Edo period (1603-1867). Enclosed by mountains on three sides and a fine natural harbor to the north, the district is crisscrossed by narrow alleys and two wider streets, Toshiji running north-south and Machodori running east-west along the harbor. Many residential buildings along the streets have latticed bay windows and clerestory insect cage lattices, legacies of the celebrated Shiwaku carpentry tradition.

**Important Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings**



## Kogarasu Shrine Torii Gate

The main gate of Kogarasu Shrine. The gate is in the classic myojin torii form with two lintels and curving ends on the top lintel. It was built in 1627 by a famous mason from Satsuma named Kinokahai, about whom there are stories in connection with the contemporary building of Osaka Castle, and a local mason named Kurobei.

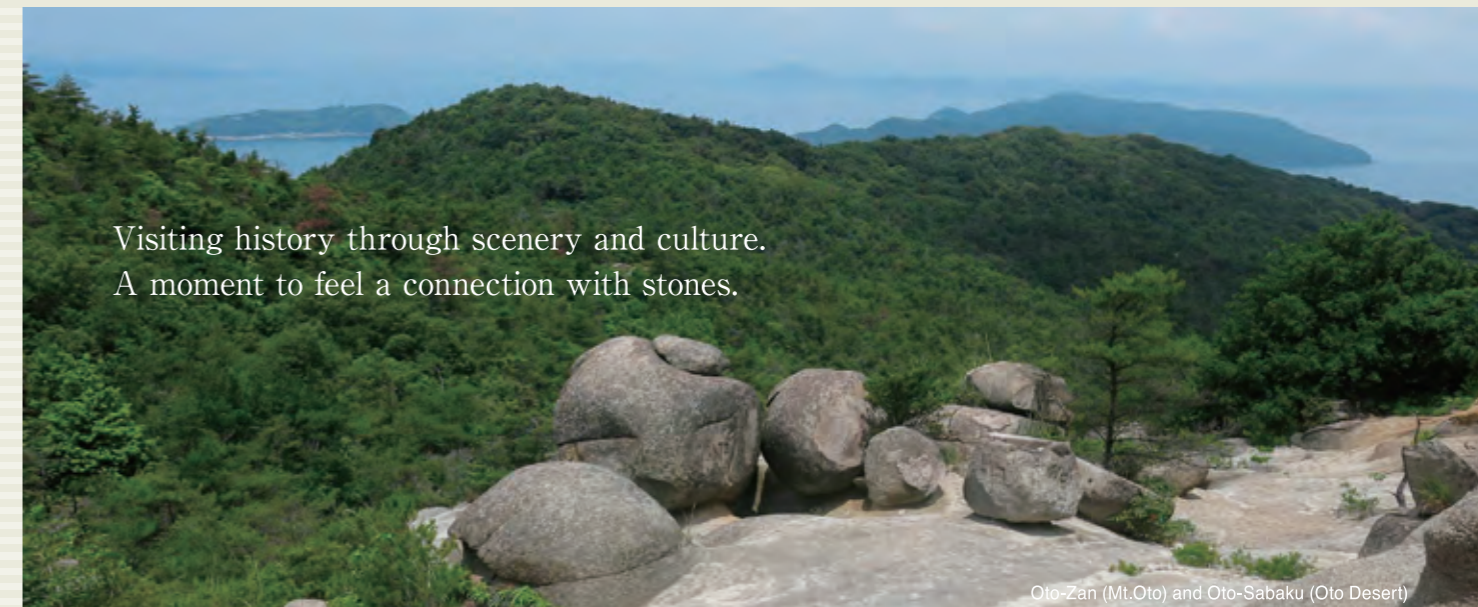
**City-designated Tangible Cultural Property (Structures)**



## Chitose-Za (Chitose Theater)

Chitose-Za Theater was built in 1862 by the Shiwaku-Daiku (carpenters of Shiwaku Islands) flourished as descendants of The Shiwaku Marine (A group of skilled sailors) in various places in Japan. Granite mined on Honjima Island is used for the theater's stone foundation, and the entire building shows the Shiwaku carpenters' marvelous craftsmanship. This theater is still used by Honjima Islanders to hand down the Island's prosperous history and culture from generation to generation.

**City-designated Tangible Cultural Property (Structures)**



Oto-Zan (Mt. Oto) and Oto-Sabaku (Oto Desert)

# 笠岡市

## KASAOKA OKAYAMA

The City of Kasaoka is in the southwest part of Okayama Prefecture, and is adjacent to Fukuyama City in Hiroshima Prefecture on the west. The city faces the Seto Inland Sea, and has ports to the Kasaoka Islands, vast reclaimed land developed in the Kasaoka Bay and the Kabutogani Museum renowned as the only horseshoe museum in the world.

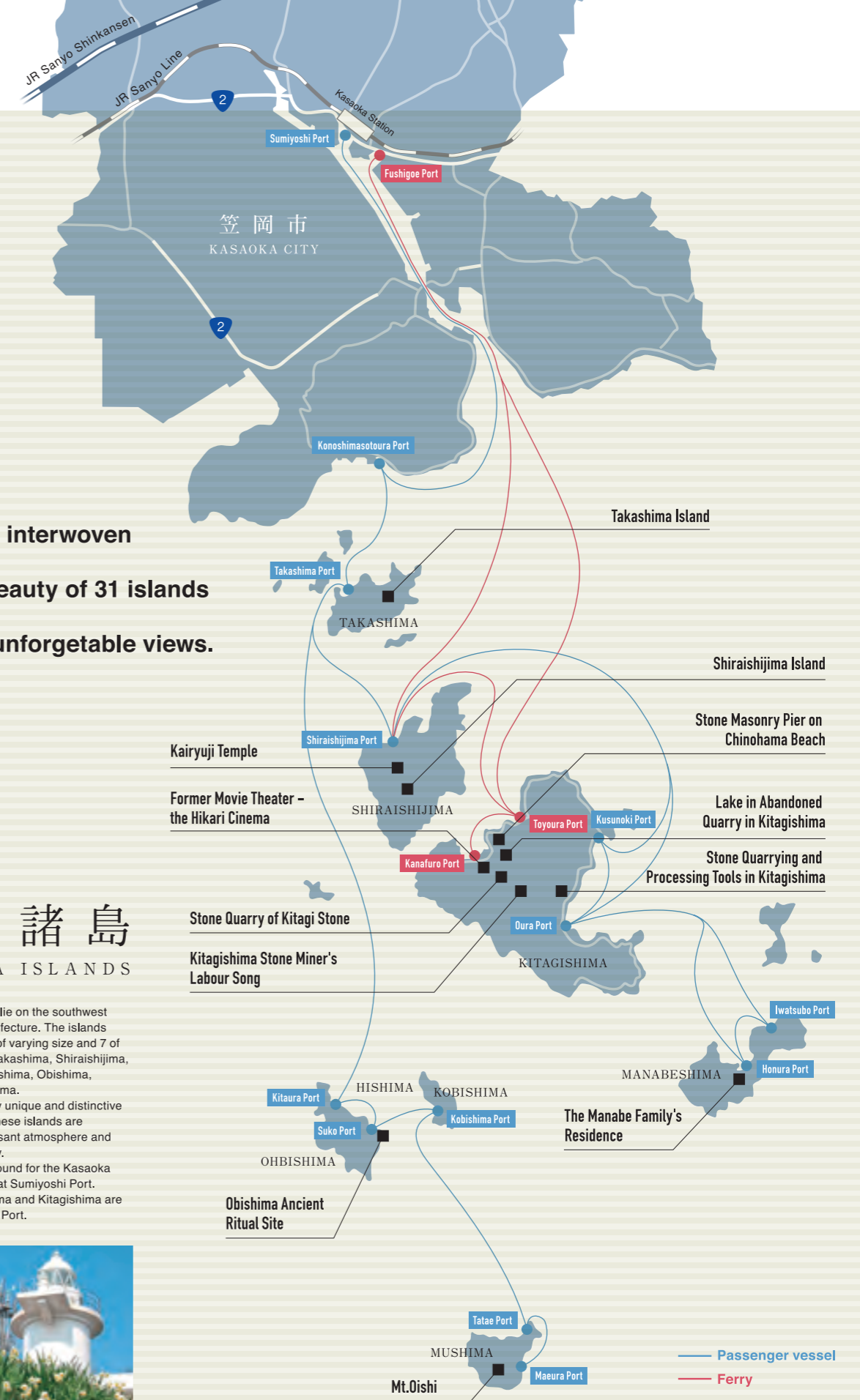
The Kasaoka Islands, blessed with scenic beauty, have seven inhabited islands, where visitors enjoy the unique history of and cultures of stones.

Full view of the Kasaoka Islands

The sea is interwoven  
with the beauty of 31 islands  
and truly unforgettable views.

## 笠岡諸島 KASAOKA ISLANDS

The Kasaoka Islands lie on the southwest edge of Okayama Prefecture. The islands consist of 31 islands of varying size and 7 of them are inhabited: Takashima, Shiraishijima, Kitagishima, Manabeshima, Obishima, Kobishima and Mushima. Each island has many unique and distinctive features. Visitors to these islands are surrounded by a pleasant atmosphere and unforgettable scenery. Passenger vessels bound for the Kasaoka islands are available at Sumiyoshi Port. Ferries for Shiraishijima and Kitagishima are available at Fushigoe Port.



Japan Heritage Constituent Cultural Properties

# Kasaoka City

Granite megaliths are part of this region's distinctive natural landscape, and were objects of worship where people sought spiritual refuge. The abundance of and admiration for the stone of the Kasaoka Islands eventually led to the development of stone quarrying, thriving, mainly in Kitagijima. Extracted granite was transported by sea and used to build structures throughout Japan.



Stone Quarry of Kitagi Stone



## Stone Quarry of Kitagi Stone

This quarry produces a specialty granite that is named for its location on the island of Kitagishima. The quarry was opened in 1892, and Kitagi granite has been used in buildings that are designated as Important Cultural Properties including the Meiji Seimei Kan and Tokyo Station. Digging deep into the earth in search of the best-quality stone has left a towering rock wall. There is a magnificent view from the observatory.



## Stone Quarrying and Processing Tools in Kitagishima

Tools that were used for quarrying and processing Kitagi granite are on permanent display in the Kitagi Granite Commemoration Room at the Kitagi Middle School. There are quarrying tools for taking stone from the earth, processing tools for finishing stone blocks, and blacksmithing tools for tool maintenance. Among the quarrying tools are wedges for breaking stone apart, chisels of various lengths for cutting stone with human strength, and hammers, as well as a mechanized drill and chipping hammer that were introduced in 1952. Including traditional tools from the Meiji era as well as mechanized tools from the Showa era, this remarkable collection showcases the development of masonry technology and the quarrying industry in Japan. **Nationally-registered Tangible Folk Cultural Property**



## Lake in Abandoned Quarry in Kitagishima

At abandoned quarry sites on Kitagishima, rainwater filled the quarry pits to make lake-like scenes called worksite lakes. The lake in the Chinohama district is especially beautiful, like a landscape painting. This is also a heritage site that shows the history of the quarrying industry. An old shed is still standing where tools for quarrying were maintained.



## Stone Masonry Pier on Chinohama Beach

The Chinohama shoreline is supported by a long wall made of waste rock pieces from the nearby Kitagi granite quarries. The skillful masonry work combining large and small stones, many with visible chisel marks, is a display unique to this home of the quarrying industry. The port at Chinohama was a shipping point for small stone products.



## Takashima Island

All of Mt. Kamiura is a designated National Place of Scenic Beauty, with fine views of the Seto Inland Sea. Tradition holds that this island is the site mentioned in two histories written more than a thousand years ago, the Kojiki (Records of Ancient Matters) and Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan), which record the establishment of an Anju (temporary imperial palace) in Takashima by Emperor Jimmu. At the top of Mt. Kamiura is the Takashima Anju Ishihii (ruins monument), eight meters high and made from a large stone. On the slopes of the mountain is a well called Manai where Emperor Jimmu is said to have drawn water for offerings to the heavenly deities. **National Place of Scenic Beauty**



## Kairyuji Temple

Officially named Kobo san Kairyuji, the temple was founded in 806 by the high priest Kobo Daishi. The Taishido hall is set beneath a gigantic rock at the spot where Kobo Daishi is said to have performed practices during his stay. A temple was built on the site to commemorate the dead from the Genpei War naval battle at nearby Mizushima in 1185, and in 1625 Mizuno Katsumari, the lord of Fukuyama Castle, rebuilt it as a temple for prayer and named it Kairyuji. Taishido is the inner and head temple of the 88-temple Pilgrimage of Konoshima, where those who have completed the circuit of sacred sites visit to end their journey.



## Shiraishijima Island

White granite is exposed everywhere on the island of Shiraishijima, which is where the name comes from: shiraishi means white stone. Promenades between the mountaintops pass many boulders and interesting rock formations and offer fine views of the Inland Sea, and there are hiking and orienteering courses. Must-see rock formations include Armor Rock, a Japan natural monument with natural cross-hatching that makes it look like a giant's suit of armor, as well as the Hatoiwa and Odama-iwa megaliths. The giant rocks dotting the island were associated with the spiritual culture of the islanders, and some became objects of prayer. There are stone buddhas beside them at 88 stations around the island, filled with the deepest wishes of the local people. **National Place of Scenic Beauty**



## Obishima Ancient Ritual Site

The ancient site is on the grounds of the former Hishima Elementary School. Prayer rituals for the safety of ships and sailors were held here during the Nara and Heian periods (8th to 12th centuries). In 1962, a buried trove of bronze mirrors, copper bells and earthenware was discovered by chance on the school grounds. It included items typically used in religious rituals, such as a small Narasansai tricolor ceramic jar, bronze coins, and miniature clay stoves, which had been placed around the base of a large rockface. The ritual items were presumably brought from the capital cities of the time (present-day Nara and Kyoto). Researchers believe the site may have been used for one of the key rituals of the Imperial Court during those eras, praying for safe journeys for the periodic Japanese missions to Tang China. The relics excavated from the site are exhibited at the Kasaoka City Local History Museum. **City-designated Historic Site**



## Former Movie Theater - the Hikari Cinema

When the Kitagi granite industry was at its peak, the tiny island of Kitagishima had four movie theaters. The Hikari Cinema operated from the early 1950s until 1967. The projector and other equipment remain in place, and the screen and chairs are still set up as if on a stage, providing an authentic retro atmosphere. The theater was unused for a long time after the closing, but island residents have come together to revive it. It is currently used for Friendship Club meetings, and to screen a documentary film about Kitagi granite and the history of the stone island Kitagishima.



## Kitagishima Stone Miner's Labour Song

In the days when stone was cut by hand, the workers sang as they performed the hard work of removing stone from the earth and breaking and shaping it. The singing helped them wield their chisels with a steady rhythm to make the work efficient. This local song includes the lyrics: 'The fixtures of Osaka, even the castle, are held by stone brought from Kitagi. The singing stopped when the work was mechanized, and the songs are kept by the local preservation society.'



## The Manabe Family's Residence

In medieval times the island of Manabeshima was home to a corps of master mariners called the Manabe Navy. The community they founded is a symbol of the heritage of the Bisan Islands as a maritime traffic center. The village is a maze of narrow lanes without regular intersections or cross streets, a defensive design typical of the Warring States period. The residential compound of the island's long-established Manabe family contains fine examples of the local style of traditional architecture. The house was built in 1870, and the other structures are a post office, storehouses, the gate, and a shed. **Nationally-registered Tangible Cultural Property (Structures)**



## Mt. Oishi

The name means big stones, and indeed there are granite boulders all over Mt. Oishi in Mushima Island. The mountain overlooks the east-west trunk route of the Seto Inland Sea passing through waters between the island and Shikoku. Particularly, the lighthouse on the southern flank of the mountain, built in 1922 and rebuilt in 1984, takes the impressive view of large and small vessels plying the 'maritime route' of the waters. This view shows exchange between Bisan Islands and all over Japan in the past.



Shiraishijima Island