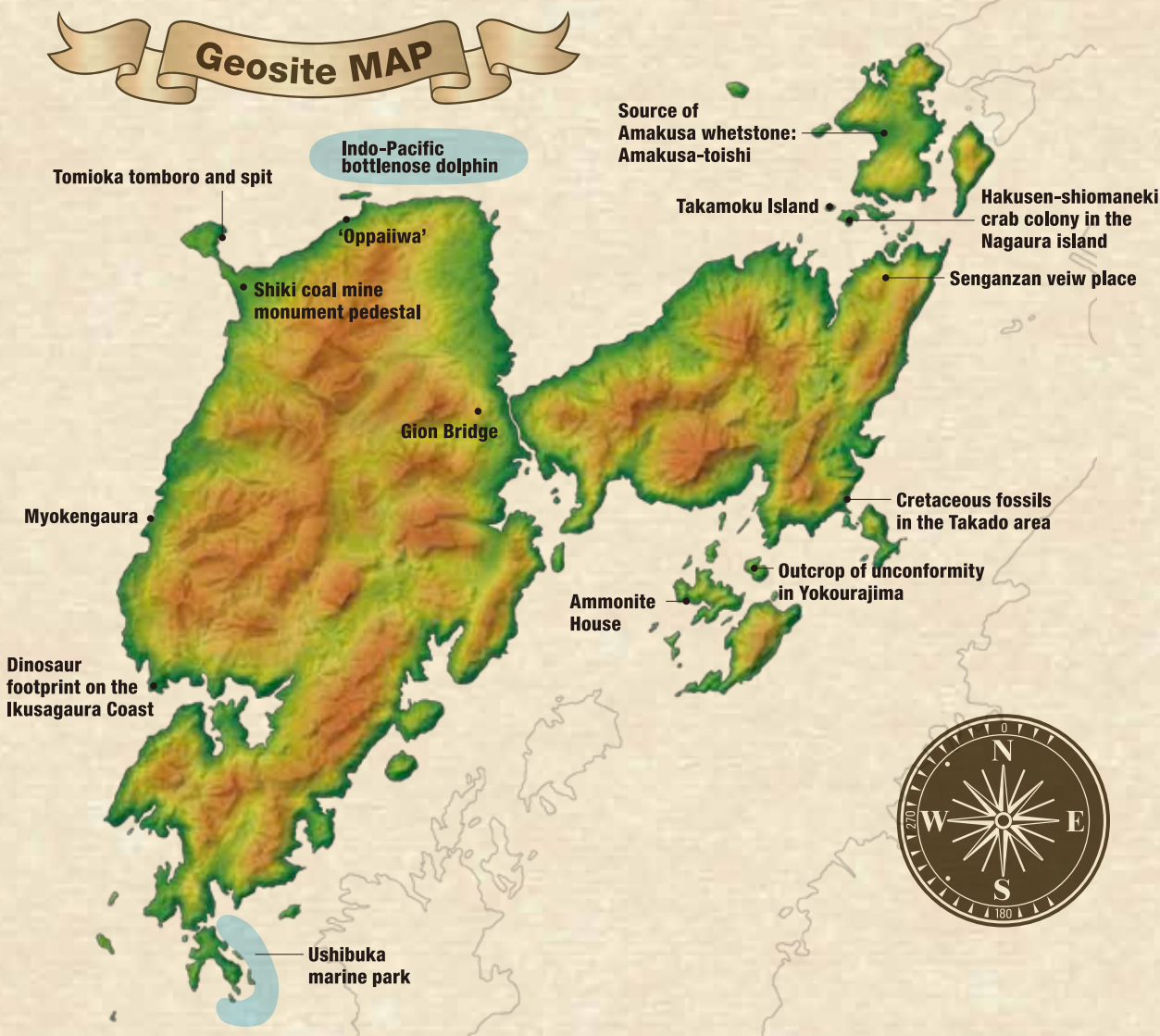


Information of the geosites:

Earth History embodied in the Islands Amakusa; a museum surrounded by sea water

60 geosites demonstrating earth activity are difined in the Amakusa Geopark Plan. Here is a representation of some of those sites.



1. Record of the earth over 100 million years

Takamoku Island



There were volcanoes which erupted about 3 million years ago in the northern part of the Oyano islands. One of them is Takamoku Island consisting of andesite containing large amounts of hornblende. It is known as Amakusa-Fuji from the beauty of the form of its mountain.

Outcrop of unconformity in Yokourajima



The Akasaki Formation of the Paleogene which was deposited on land overlaying the Himenoura Group deposited on the deep sea floor can be seen. The boundary layers had a time gap of 35 million years and show the change from dinosaur to mammal ages.

'Oppaiwa'



A large rock called "Oppaiwa" resembling the form of a female breast rests on the seashore in Nishikawachi, Reihoku town. A hard clod in the Sakasegawa Formation exposed to the seashore there is what produced such a form through weathering and erosion.

2. An abundant variety of fossils

Cretaceous fossils in the Takado area



Many shells and ammonites have been found from the Hinoshima Formation of the Himenoura Group which was distributed at Wadanohana next to the Takado swimming coast.

Ammonite House



A 60cm diameter ammonite was included in a stratum of about 85million years ago and is now observable at the Ammonite House. A rare plant and insect species can also be seen in that area.

Dinosaur footprint on the Ikusagaura Coast



At the coast of Ikusagaura between Kawaura and Oe towns at the north side of Yokaku Bay, a foot print and tooth fossil of a herbivorous dinosaur of about 70 million years ago were discovered.

3. A vision of scenic islands

Senganzan veiw place



From this veiw place, the view opens toward Oyano island. Many beautiful green-capped islands bordered by white, 50 million year old sandstone beaches from the Shiratake Formation, lay before you as a vision floating on the blue sea and all 5 bridges connecting the Amakusa islands can be seen.

Tomioka tomboro and spit



Although the Tomioka peninsula was originally separated as an islet from the Shiki plain, pebbles and sand carried by the littoral current were deposited connecting them into a tomboro. The Tomioka spit; a narrow beach in the form of the beak of a bird was made by similarly carrying sand and pebbles to the east side of the penin-

Myokengaura



Myokengaura's sea cliffs, reaching a height of 100m of the Himenoura Group make up the brilliant natural scenery representative of Amakusa's west coast. This area is a National Site of Scenic Beauty. A point of interest gives the impression of an elephant walking when viewed from the Jusanbutsu park.

4. A rich ecosystem

Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin



There is a high probability of observing Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin of which about 200 live in the Hayasaki strait between Amakusa-shimoshima and the Shimabara peninsula. Dolphin watching adventures allow participants to catch a glimpse of the strait and its ecosystem.

Hakusen-shiomaneki crab colony in the Nagaura island



The tidal flats on the circumference of Nagaura island are known as a leading habitat of the fiddler crab in Japan, which bears the Japanese name 'hakusen shiomaneki'. This crab is about 2 cm in length, and the male sports a single large, white scissor-claw on one of its front appendages.

Ushibuka marine park



Visitors to the area enjoy the sight of many colourful fish swimming and the bountiful coral from the vantage point of glass-bottom boats. The Shishiboe-misaki looks like the shape of the head of a lion and consists of eroded volcanic sediments (tuff breccia) which build along the seashore.

5. Underground resources and stone culture

Gion Bridge



The Gion Bridge, a national important cultural property, was constructed in 1832. This multi-leg bridge supported by 45 stone pillars with a span of 28.6m in length and a width of 3.3m was constructed of sandstone (called Shimoura-ishi) from the Toishi Formation mined from the Shimoura area in Amakusa-kamishima.

Source of Amakusa whetstone: Amakusa-toishi



Amakusa whetstone (Amakusa-toishi) from Amakusa in the Oyano island has a beautiful grain-pattern of light brown iron hydroxide in an intrusive rhyolite base which originated from magma. Amakusa-toishi has been used as whetstone from ancient times and as a construction stone in recent years.

Shiki coal mine monument pedestal



In the Amakusa area, coal mine production continued from the middle of the Meiji period to 1975. The only railway in the Amakusa area operated from the mine to the harbor with the purpose of moving coal to waiting barges. The "Shiki coal mine monument pedestal" is a pedestal of the safe prayer bell that once sat at the Hisatsune entrance gate of the Shiki coal mine.

"AMAKUSA GEOPARK PLAN" MODEL COURSE



Crusing around the dinosaur island

1. Shiosai-kan

It is the Goshoura harbor which is a vestibule leading into the inside of Goshoura. There, arrangements for marine taxi hire can be made. Also, marine products and souvenirs are sold and sightseeing information is given.

2. Bentenjima

A dinosaur footprint fossil was found in Kyushu for the first time in May, 1997 on Bentenjima where the Karakizaki Formation of the Goshoura Group is distributed. The 38cm sized footprint is thought to be of a 5m tall carnivorous dinosaur. The fossil was removed to the Goshoura Cretaceous Museum and its replica was put in its place.

3. Kyodomari

The location where the fossil of a dinosaur was found for the first time in Amakusa is the Kyodomari seashore where the Karakizaki Formation of the Goshoura Group is distributed. In March 1997, a team from Kochi University invited by Goshoura town, discovered a fossil of a part of a dinosaur leg thought to be of a herbivorous dinosaur.

4. Abandoned quarry

If you go around the southern extremity of Nosabasaki, and continue to the north along the coast, you'll see a quarry where it is possible to clearly observe a collapsed stratum made by a fault.



5. The Cretaceous wall

The highest point is more than 200m and is an excellent visual representation of the Goshoura Group. The characteristic colors of the stratum clearly depict the environmental conditions of the time it was produced. This cliff is the most abundant location of dinosaur fossils in Goshoura islands.



A driving course to enjoy scenery of the western coast of Amakusa

1. Kurosaki Coast

Stones quarried and processed from the northern part of Amakusa Shimoshima named Goryo stone or ash stone are distributed on the Kurosaki Coast. The stones originate from welded tuff of the Aso 4 pyroclastic flow deposit which was caused by the large-scale eruption of Aso Caldera about 90,000 years ago.

2. 'Oppaiwa'

A large rock called "Oppaiwa" resembling the form of a female breast rests on the seashore in Nishikawachi, Reihoku town. A hard block in the Sakasegawa Formation exposed to the seashore there is what produced such a form through weathering and erosion.



3. Tomioka spit

Although the Tomioka peninsula was originally separated as an islet from the Shiki plain, pebbles and sand carried by the littoral current were deposited connecting them into a tomboro. The Tomioka spit; a narrow beach in the form of the beak of a bird is made by similarly carrying sand and pebbles to the east side of the peninsula.

4. Kumamoto Prefectural Tomioka Visitor Center

Tomioka Visitor Center is a building within the main enclosure of the Tomioka castle offering information about the natural environment of the Unzen-Amakusa National Park, its history and culture.

5. Myokengaura

Myokengaura's sea cliffs, reaching a height of 100m of the Himenoura Group make up the brilliant, natural scenery representative of Amakusa's west coast. This area is a nationally appointed scenic spot and a natural treasure. A point of interest gives the impression of an elephant walking when viewed from the Jusanbutsu park.



AMAKUSA GOURMET & SPECIALITIES

Buenzushi

'Buen' means that fish is so fresh, it doesn't need salt to preserve it. Buenzushi is a traditional local food of sushi rice with fresh, seasonal fish, shiitake mushroom, carrot and dried Japanese radish which is inherent in Matsushima town, Kamiyamakusa city.



Tai cha zuke

(Boiled rice with raw sea bream in a tea broth)

Left-over pieces of raw sea bream are marinated in soy sauce, Japanese sake and ginger then left to dry. The dried, marinated fish is then put on top of boiled rice over which hot tea is poured. This method of marination was found to have a natural preserving effect allowing the fish to keep for 2 to 3 days and represents one aspect of the local wisdom derived from daily life in Amakusa.



Koppa Mochi

A combination of a lack of flat, arable ground and the existence of sweet potato as a dominant crop lead people to create many favored dishes from the tuber in Amakusa such as Koppa Mochi. Koppa mochi is a rice cake made by kneading dried sweet potato and steamed glutinous rice together.



Chirimenjako

Boiled and dried anchovy fry from the East Coast of Amakusa are a widely enjoyed specialty from ancient times. Boiling and sun-drying are the key to maintaining the fish's natural goodness.

