

### **Heisei Shinzan Nature Center**

The Heisei Shinzan Nature Center was built in 2003 on top of the lava, rock, and ash that covered the Taruki Plateau during the 1990–1995 eruptions of Mt. Fugen (1,359 m). The center was created to educate its visitors about the powerful volcanic forces that have shaped this region.

After a volcanic eruption, it usually takes only a few decades for the plant and animal species to recover, but traces of the devastation caused by an eruption can be seen in the soil for centuries afterward. An exhibit comparing nearby Mt. Mayuyama (819 m) with the Taruki Plateau shows just how signs of past eruptions can still be seen in the forest's rocks and soil.

The Heisei Shinzan Nature Center also has a set of exhibits that explain how different volcanic conditions create different kinds of rock. Scientists monitored Mt. Fugen during the entire period of its eruptions, providing crucial information about exactly when and how these rocks were formed. These hands-on exhibits are complemented by a video showing the peak before and after the eruptions.

After viewing the exhibits, visitors can see the recovering ecosystem from a boardwalk and trail that winds through the forest around the nature center. Because Mt. Heisei Shinzan (1,486 m) is still an active volcano, there are bunkers along the path in case of an eruption. The small observation deck on the top of one of these bunkers offers a spectacular view of the mountain's peak.