

Cape Hedo

Cape Hedo, at the northernmost tip of Okinawa Island, is regarded as a place of beginnings. According to legend, when the goddess Amamichu created the Ryukyu Islands, she began with the sacred mountain Asumi Utaki, also known as Mt. Hedo. Interestingly, geologists have since learned that the Hedo region is indeed much older than the rest of Kunigami, as its mountains formed some 250 million years ago. The Fushikubu or “Star Hollow,” which local residents believe is a meteorite crater, is another geological curiosity of the area.

Despite its location far from the centers of power and culture to the south, Cape Hedo plays a prominent role in Okinawan history. It is believed to have been the place where the son of the goddess Amamichu, founder of the Tenson dynasty, first appeared on the islands, making it the birthplace of the entire Ryukyu Kingdom. Even today, emissaries from Shuri Castle visit Hedo Village at the end of each year to fetch water from the sacred Ukka River in a ritual known as *o-mizutori*. Other sights in the area include a mausoleum north of the village believed to belong to the thirteenth-century ruler King Gihon, who disappeared mysteriously after a hurried abdication.

Cape Hedo looks out over the Pacific Ocean to the east and the East China Sea to the west. From the observation point, on a clear day it is possible to see Yoron Island in Kagoshima Prefecture to the north, and between the trees to the right, the gigantic Yambaru Kuina Observation Deck.