

Udo Shrine: Mt. Ahira Mausoleum

The Mt. Ahira Mausoleum is located on the hillside above the grounds of Udo Shrine. In local lore, this forested plot of land is considered the burial site of Ugayafukiaezu, the deity enshrined at Udo, who in Japanese mythology is the father of Jimmu, the first emperor. It is one of several sites in Kyushu administered by the Imperial Household Agency, the government body in charge of matters concerning the court and the imperial line. After the Meiji Restoration of 1868 returned the emperor to power following centuries of rule by the warrior class, the Agency's predecessor institution went about identifying ancient graves throughout the country as "imperial" based on a list first published in the *Nihon Shoki* (The Chronicles of Japan), a record of early Japanese history compiled in the year 720. For some of the graves listed, however, there were multiple candidate sites. As a result, some of the mythical ancestors of the imperial family, including Ugayafukiaezu, officially have more than one tomb.

The Mt. Ahira Mausoleum is fenced off and cannot be entered, but visitors can reach the fence around the site in approximately 20 minutes by following a trail from the edge of the woods. Note that the trail can be difficult to traverse, especially after rain.