Myogan Forest

This old-growth forest is made up predominantly of Amami *arakashi*, a variety of Japanese blue oak (*Quercus glauca*). The species is endemic to Tokunoshima Island and thrives in shallow topsoil on an uplifted limestone rock plateau. Japanese blue oak trees have historically been cultivated and harvested for their excellent timber. Myogan Forest, however, has remained in a rare natural state thanks to its long history as a spiritual site. It was known as a place for *fusobo*, or "wind tombs," an ancient burial practice where bodies were left in caves to decompose. The forest is also linked to the presence of *noro*, influential women who served as powerful administrators of the Ryukyu Kingdom (1429–1879), but who also played crucial roles in religious functions. Recognizing its ecological importance and cultural value, the park was designated a National Natural Monument in 2012.

Trail Details

The trail through this forest covers approximately 700 meters at a mostly gentle incline, though there are sections of steps to climb. Just off the trail about 200 meters from the trailhead is a shallow cave with the remains of urns. This was historically used as a funeral site, and is believed to date back to the Edo period (1603–1867). Along the trail are several prayer spots, marked by distinctive natural formations of rocks and trees.

Trail Tips

As on all nature walks on this island, keep an eye out for the venomous habu viper endemic to the Ryukyu Islands. Hikers are advised to sweep any overgrown areas on the trail with a walking stick and make noise to alert the snakes to your presence. Please leave the forest the way you found it, respecting its natural beauty and religious heritage.