

A Guide to  
**Nature**  
in Unzen Jigoku



● Shirododan  
(*Enkianthus cernuus*)

Published by the Unzen Park Visitor Center.  
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Agency

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Around in  
**Unzen Jigoku**



Kindly do not disturb the plant and animal life within the  
park in any manner.

Carry away and deposit all refuse outside the park.

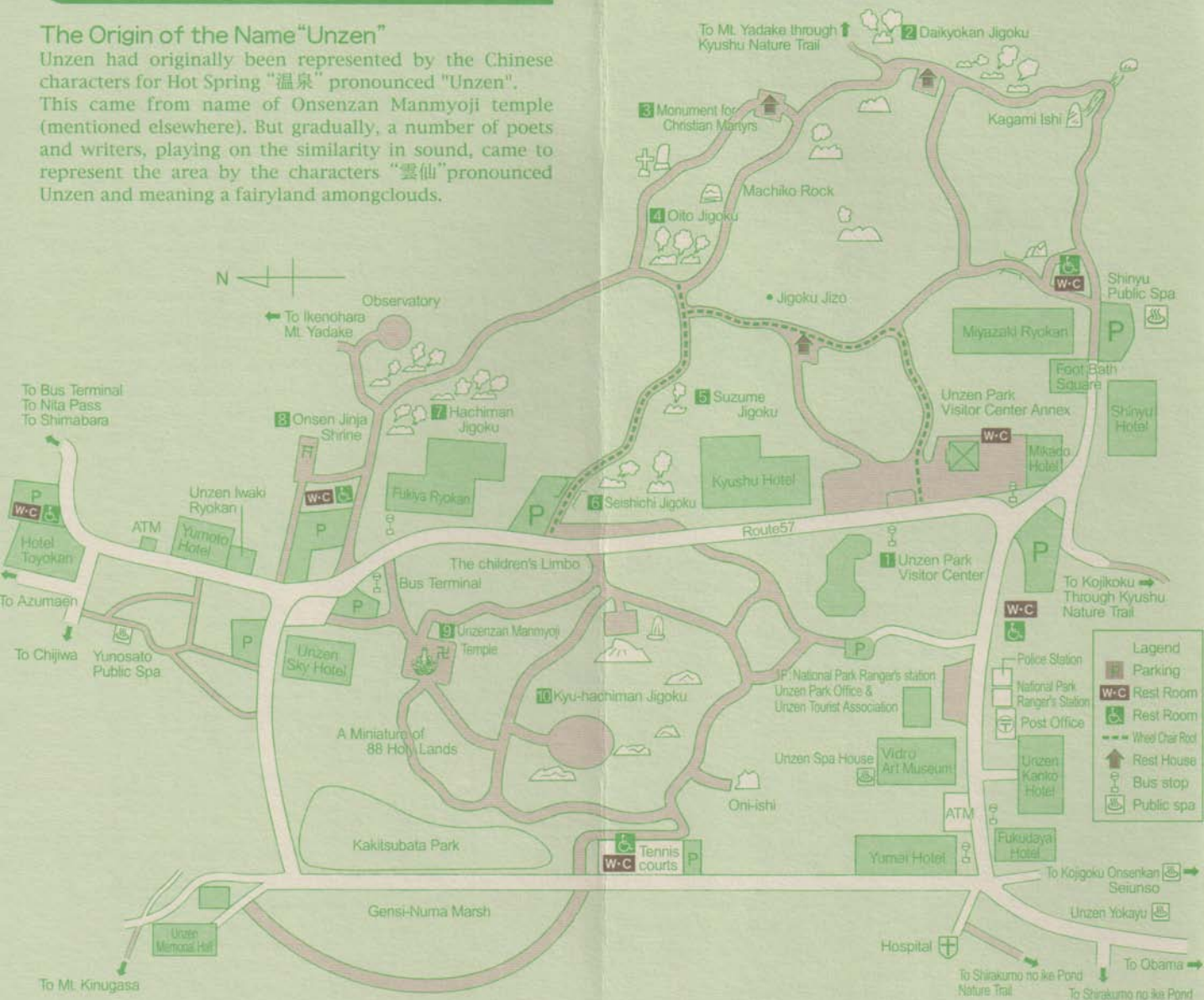
Keep to the foot paths and public squares.

Do not make undue noise and refrain from use of radios,  
with earphones or otherwise.

# Map of "Unzen Jigoku"

## The Origin of the Name "Unzen"

Unzen had originally been represented by the Chinese characters for Hot Spring "温泉" pronounced "Unzen". This came from name of Onsenzan Manmyoji temple (mentioned elsewhere). But gradually, a number of poets and writers, playing on the similarity in sound, came to represent the area by the characters "雲仙" pronounced Unzen and meaning a fairyland among clouds.



## Places of Interest in Unzen Jigoku

- 1 **Unzen Park Visitor Center** : Its function is to relate the history of the Park as well as to inform the visitor about pertinent geological, plant and wild life facts. A beautiful slide show is given here free of charge.
- 2 **Daikyokan (Great Shout) Jigoku** : Located at the highest elevation in the Park, the noises produced here remind one of the violent cries and shouts one imagines those suffering in hell must make.
- 3 **Monument for Christian Martyrs** : This monument pays due respect to the more than thirty people of Christian faith who were martyred in the Unzen hot springs during the early Edo Era.
- 4 **Oito Jigoku** : The birth of this hot spring coincided with the execution of a woman from Shimabara by the name of Oito early in the Meiji Era. She had been accused of killing her own husband with the assistance of her lover.
- 5 **Suzume (Sparrow) Jigoku** : The emerging steam and vapor in this area sound very much like the twittering of sparrows.
- 6 **Seishichi Jigoku** : This is the site of the martyrdom in the early Edo Era of a Christian by the name of Seishichi.
- 7 **Hachiman (80,000) Jigoku** : Here supposedly is a site similar to that in Buddhist mythology where people suffer after death for any or all of the eighty four thousand lusts.
- 8 **Onsen Jinja (Shrine)** : This was originally called Shimengu and was part of the Daijoin Manmyoji Temple complex. It was given its present name in 1916.
- 9 **Unzenzan Manmyoji Temple** : This was built in place of Daijoin Manmyoji by the great monk, Gyoki. Here within the temple complex, at the Shaka Shrine is a gold statue of Buddha.
- 10 **Kyu (Ancient) Hachiman Jigoku** : Looking like the surface of the moon, this area presents wonderful natural exhibition where one can see the effects of a volcanic eruption , its natural denouement and the hardy plant life that returns to reclaim the land.

## A Bnef Summary of Unzen History

- 701 Gyoki, a renowned monk of the Nara Era, established Daijoin Manmyoji Temple as a place of pilgrimage for the Shingon Sect of Buddhism.
- 1151 After a decline of a number of years, the monk Teizo reestablished Manmyoji Temple. It flourished for about 400 years after this and the small monks' residences numbered as high as a thousand.
- 1571 The year of the White Sparrow Revolt. The tragic result of this revolt was that the young (sparrow) monks were forced to fall to their deaths over a waterfall.
- 1627 The lord of Shimabare clan and the magistrate of Nagasaki martyred the Christian people by throwing them to their deaths in the boiling waters of Unzen.
- 1637 The Shimabara Revolt occurred.
- 1653 Zenzaemon Kato opened the spa, "Enryaku" in Furuyu.
- 1690 Doctor Kampfer, who was with the Dutch factory and later introduced Unzen to Europe, arrived in Japan.
- 1693 The lord of Shimabara placed a guard for the spa and set up a notice board to protect it.
- 1823 Doctor Siebold, who later wrote about Unzen in his book, "Japan" , arrived in Japan.
- 1870 Some Americans in their travels stayed over in Unzen. From this point the number of foreign residents of Kyushu visiting Unzen markedly increased.
- 1878 The spa "Shinyu" opened.
- 1889 Introduced in an English paper in Shanghai, Unzen received many summer visitors from Shanghai, Hong Kong and Russia.
- 1911 Designated as a prefectural park.
- 1913 Unzen Golf Course opened.
- 1934 Designated as a national park.

## Unzen Jigoku

This is the white earth covered space between Furuyu ( old spring area ) and Shinyu ( new spring area ). Here heated gas, steam and hot water all rise up continuously and often violently, giving off a strong sulfuric odor. All this works to conform to popular image of the place we call Jigoku ( which means Hell ) where men are condemned to suffer for sins committed while alive on earth.

The source of all this activity is thought to be in the magma at the bottom of Chijiwa Bay. The hot magma gives off gas that is highly pressurized. This gas while rising through cracks in the rocks undergoes a chemical change becoming boiling hot water. Unzen stands 700 meters above sea level so only vapor from boiling water can reach the surface. The hot spring at Unzen is both from this water and the runoff from the surrounding mountains.

## The Hot Springs and Gas

Due to the sulfur content the hot water has a high acidity.

The highest temperature of the water is 98°C and it contains the elements of ferrous ion, aluminum ion and sulfuric acid ion. The gas reaches 120°C mainly in the form of steam but it also contains carbonic acid and hydrogen sulfide which gives it its strong sulfuric smell. The spa has effect on rheumatism and diabetes.

## Sinter (Sulfer Flowers)

The Unzen Jigoku ( which means Hell ) area is notable throughout for the white to light yellow "sulfer flowers" that mark it. These "bloom" wherever the gas has found outlets. The gas, heat and acidic water all interact to form these deposits that look like white clay flowers.

## The Plants

Because of the hydrogen sulfide gas, terrestrial heat and the strong acidity of the water this area is not conducive to plant life. Only a small variety of plants such as eulalias, azaleas and red pines are tenacious enough to survive here. Note the plants growing near the gas outlets and also note where the plants grow in abundance.

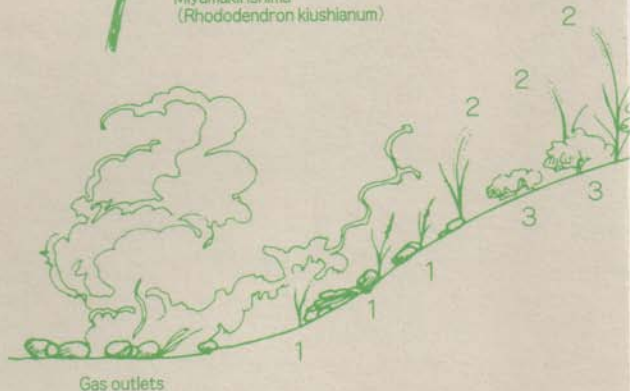


Nejiiki  
(*Lyonia ovalifolia*)

Shashambo  
(*Vaccinium bracteatum*)



Miyamakirishima  
(*Rhododendron kiushianum*)



Gas outlets

**Nejiki (*Lyonia ovalifolia*)** : The same family of azalea with twisted trunks. Bell-shaped flowers open in June in line.

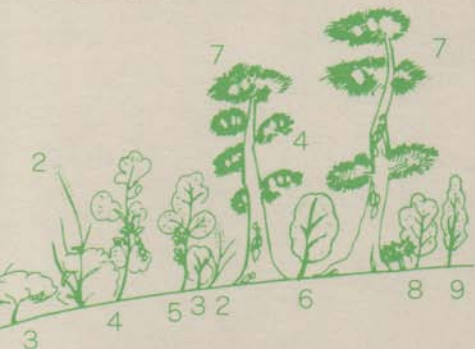
**Tsukushitentsuki** : Looking like an ordinary grass, it is resistant to heat and acidity. Can be seen just near the gas outlets.

**Shirododan (*Enkianthus cernuus*)** : About three meters high, it has clusters of small creamy blossoms in May. The leaves turn to crimson in autumn. Many are seen around the Park and are designated as a natural treasure. (Seen on the cover)

**Miyamakirishima (*Rhododendron kiushianum*)** : The same family of azalea with small flowers and thin leaves. In May it has many flowers of various colors, such as reddish purple, Chinese red and slight rouge. Great , stratifications are seen here and there in Unzen.

**Shashambo (*Vaccinium bracteatum*)** : The same family of azalea with bell-shaped flowers which open in July. In autumn around October, it bears small green fruit. The fruit tastes as good as apples.

**Akamatsu (*Pinus densiflora*)** : Almost every tall tree in Unzen Hell is Akamatsu, a female pine, with soft bark and leaves.



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|--|---|
| 1. Tsukushitentsuki                                      | 6. Nejiki<br>( <i>Lyonia ovalifolia</i> )         |
| 2. Susuki<br>( <i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> )              | 7. Akamatsu<br>( <i>Pinus densiflora</i> )        |
| 3. Miyamakirishima<br>( <i>Rhododendron kiushianum</i> ) | 8. Shikimi<br>( <i>Illicium religiosum</i> )      |
| 4. Shirododan<br>( <i>Enkianthus cernuus</i> )           | 9. Takanotsume<br>( <i>Evodiapanax innovans</i> ) |
| 5. Shashambo<br>( <i>Vaccinium bracteatum</i> )          |   |

## The Birds

**Great Tit** : Can be seen everywhere in Unzen. A little smaller than a sparrow, it has a peculiar head like a black cap, white cheeks and a wide black stripe like a neck-tie around the breast. It moves actively.

**Long-tailed Tit** : During the summer it stays in woods and from autumn to winter it can be seen in groups around town. Smaller than a sparrow, it has very long, graduated tail for its body.

**Siberian Meadow Bunting** : A little bigger than a sparrow, it has a chestnut stripe on its back and a white and black one on its face. Its throat is gray. Can be seen everywhere in Unzen. From spring to summer, it makes beautiful sounds.

**Gray Wagtail** : It has a prominent yellow stomach. Often wagging its long tail, it is also called a stone beater. It flies rising and falling and makes a nest even near the gas outlets. Can be seen through the year.

