

【英訳】

## The Origin of the Name "Akogigaura"

Akogigaura is about 2.6 kilometers in circumference and has a maximum depth of about 4 meters. It is a sacred pond of the Daijingu Grand Shrine, known as the "Oise-san of Ibaraki" (Inner Shrine), and has been carefully protected and managed as "Mitarai-ike" (fish from Aokogigaura are offered to the Daijingu Grand Shrine as a food offering), where killing is forbidden. Until the 1960s, there was a Torii gate on the shore, creating a solemn atmosphere.

The origin of the name "Akogigaura" is old. According to one theory, it was named after Aokogigaura in Mie Prefecture (the name refers to the area around the beach in Tsu City, Mie Prefecture). Mitsukuni Tokugawa changed the name of the shrine from "Muramatsu Goshō Daimyōjin" to the Daijingu Grand Shrine in 1696, enshrining a branch spirit of Ise Jingu Shrine.

There are no rivers flowing into or out of Aokogigaura. Its water source is mainly natural spring water, which never overflows or runs dry, although the water level fluctuates with the seasons.

The water used to be utilized for industrial purposes by organizations such as the Japan Atomic Energy Research Institute. Due to the mysterious water that "never overflows or runs dry" and the history and spirituality of the sacred pond, people believed folklore that Akogigaura was connected with "Izumigamori" (Mizuki Town, Hitachi City) by underground waterways or the legend of "the one-eyed fish". However, only a few people know of these stories nowadays.

In terms of nature, you can find a perennial plant called Joro-suge (*Carex capricornis*), which can only be seen here in the village, marsh plants such as Ukiyagara (*Bolboschoenus fluviatilis*) and Yoshi (reeds), and a beach plant Hama-hirugao (*Calystegia soldanella*). In this rich natural environment, you can also see ducks swimming on the surface of the pond, and birds of prey such as goshawks and kites soaring in the sky, as well as herons. In the bushes along the shore, a wide variety of creatures can be found from season to season, including small insects such as grasshoppers and katydids, and animals such as raccoon dogs and hares.

Akogigaura, a mysterious pond in pristine nature, has been full of water and will continue to be filled, passing on the beautiful nature and plenty of legends.

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Daijingu

NPO Masagoyama FUN Club

Tokai Village

Tokai Village Tourist Association

In March 2023, NPO Masagoyama FUN Club and Tokai Village concluded a "Partnership Agreement" for the purpose of revitalizing the Muramatsu area including Akogigaura. This signboard was installed as part of the revitalization efforts.

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