Alexis Henry

Ms. Griffith

National History Day

19 February 2019

History of the Suicide Forest

Have you heard of Aokigahara forest? Or also known as the suicide forest. Maybe you have, but what do you really know about it? If you don’t know much about it, that’s fine, that’s why I am here. Aokigahara is known by many people, the forest lies in Japan. According to mental floss, one of the reasons it became so popular was because of a book that was written about it. Another reason was because of Logan paul and his blog where he found the body and made fun of it. Many people don’t take suicides seriously, but hopefully this paper will change the way you see things like that, like suicide.

One of the first things on many people’s to-do lists are visit the suicide forest while in Japan. While many people plan on going on hikes, some people are sadly thinking about taking their own lives. The suicides have become so bad that the police have started sending rangers out there and placing cameras and signs saying stuff like. “Your life is a gift from your parents.” and more. The forest is so dense that some bodies may never be found. The number of deaths in 2003 alone was 105. It is the 2nd most popular place to commit suicide.

According to MInd Amuse, many spiritualists believe that the forest is haunted by yurei, or Japanese ghosts who cannot cross over. Even with all the security and signs the police have, it is estimated that 100 people successfully kill themselves every year. Japan is known to have one of the highest suicide rates in the world with 2,645 deaths in January of 2009. There is very little
people that go hiking there because of the eerie vibe the place gives off. Yes, there is still people that continue to go there for views and challenges, but I suggest you stay away.

Since the forest was so dense, hikers would tie ribbons to the trees to help them back out. Sadly, it wasn’t just the hikers who would do this, people who were thinking about taking their lives would also tie ribbons and ropes in case they decided to change their minds. If someone has tied a ribbon to 2 trees, that usually means that they are blocking their paths out so they can’t turn back. Sometimes instead of people tying ribbons, they tie ropes to grab onto when going down a hill or back up it. They can also use the rope to find their way back easily.

Most people who plan on dying set up small camps that usually contain shoes, food, usually an umbrella that has been dropped and empty alcohol bottles. If you decide to go camping there, you would most likely be talked to by a forest ranger. They check people regardless if they want to kill themselves or not because of the suicide rates. Their belongings sometimes are not left by their camps, they can be spread around the surrounding area.

Although many people think it’s a cool forest being by a famous mountain and all, the Japanese locals are ashamed of it. They usually won't help a person find their way there and tell them how to pass through. It is hard for the people that live by the forest because it is such a popular place for suicide victims and tourists. The address is: Narusawa, Fujikawaguchiko, Minamitsuru District, Yamanashi Prefecture 401-0300, Japan. It is a 2 hour drive West-Southwest from Tokyo.

Although hanging is a common way for people to die there, there is also recordings of self induced poison and overdose the forest rests near/on a volcano. The paths throughout the forest were created by the eruption of Mount Fuji. the lava hardened after hitting the ground and
resting, creating a hard surface. The most deaths that occur there usually happen during March. Long ago it was home to yurie, but now it is the final resting place to over 1,000 people. Some people may find it a joke and go in to explore, making fun of the people who died, but they soon change their attitudes when they find something the can never unsee. Don’t be like them.

Because of the high number of deaths, there is a holiday where volunteers go out and search for bodies and try to identify them. The last time the record of people who died were last sent to the public was in 2003. Some of the people who died may have thought that death was the only thing they could’ve done to atone for their sins they have committed. Some believed that in the 19th century people carried their elders out there to die of starvation. Some people may go in for a hike, get lost and never come back.

Japanese businessmen have walked in there and at least 500 haven’t come back out. They have a house specifically for suicide victims. Devices such as cell phones and compasses malfunction once you enter the forest. The forest is also known as “the perfect place to die.” i don’t see anything beautiful about dying, nevermind dying in a place where wild animals live and feed off the victims as bad as that sounds, it’s true and when some people can’t find someone so long that they start to decay. According to mysterious facts, even though there is animals and decaying, the forest is an eerily peaceful place.

Like said in the earlier paragraphs, there is signs saying encouraging things, the signs still don’t stop the determined people. The reason for the compass and phone malfunctions is because of the underground deposits of iron. Most people believe that the yurei are angry spirits of the people that were left out there to die. Spiritualists believe that the trees contain evil energy from
the past suicides. Some people say that frustrated or depressed people are drawn to the forest to die by a supernatural force. The force tells them to come.

The people who didn’t decide to end their lives tell that they felt they were being told to go and end their journey there. The bodies are taken to a house where the unfortunate victims go. The workers then sleep next to one on a bed to keep the spirit from screaming all night and to keep the body from moving. The Golden Gate Bridge takes the number one spot for the most suicides from the forest. According to bestlife, it is also home to tengu, or a Japanese bird spirit. The reason behind all the suicides in March is because March is when the country’s fiscal year ends. If a body is found, fast workers are responsible for removing it.

It’s not just people from around there to die, people travel from all around the world to die there. Around 100 people who aren't from around there committed suicide in the forest. The local government is teaching volunteers how to talk a person out of killing themselves and placing ropes and railing on the bridges to discourage jumping. The narusawa cave is located in the forest. The cave is a naturally frozen cave. Even the most advanced hikers are told to stay on the trails.

Even though there seems to be no trace of animals there, the forest is home to more than 9 species of butterfly. Because of the density of the trees and the lava floor, it is eerily quiet there. Many people claim that screams are virtually undetectable in the forest. Aokigahara is also home to a famous bat cave. Logan Paul lost his sponsors and he lost his Google Preferred status with YouTube. Mount Fuji is also full of mythical lore. Mount Fuji which also happens to be the base of Aokigahara is home to the Gods Ninigi and his wife, Konohanasakuya-hime. According to Graveyard Shift, the forest is also known as jukai by the locals, or sea of trees. The reason that
the forest is so haunted is because the people who died of their own hand cannot go be with their ancestors because of the sin they committed. The forest is in the shadow of Mount Fuji. The forest is more than just trees, it is filled with caves with ice and bats.

Nobody actually knows how many deaths have taken place there since the government stopped reporting the deaths. Aokigahara is a fixture of films, music and video games. I hope this paper has taught you a thing or 2 about the forest and how the locals have dealt with it these past years.
Works Cited

This was a book about the Suicide Forest and its history.


This was a news article about the blog and videos.


This was an article about the Suicide Forests’ history.
