





Mt. Jade: The name, mountaineering history, and indigenous peoples

The name of Mt. Jade

The main peak of Mt. Jade, which rises where the areas of Nantou, Chiayi, and Kaohsiung come together, has been given different names at different times by different people.

■ Tsou name: "Patungkiomu." Quartz is a tough and beautiful stone, and the Tsou tribespeople who have lived below Mt. Jade for generations call it Quartz Mountain in their own tongue: Patungkiomu.

■ Bunun name: "Tongku Saveq." "Tongku" means "mountain peak" in the Bunun language, and "Saveq" means "piled up" or "refuge." The first word refers to the snow that piles up on the mountain, and the second to its function as a place of refuge.

■ Qing Dynasty Chinese name: "Yushan." As recorded in the Fujian Gazetteer in 1676, "Yushan is extremely high... and is all white stone like jade." "Yushan" is translated as Mt. Jade.

■ Western name: "Mt. Morrison." When the American freighter SS Alexander sailed through the Taiwan Strait in 1857, its captain, W. Morrison, spied the mountain from off the shore of Anping and recorded it in his naval log; the British consul, Robert Swinhoe, then named the mountain after him.

■ Japanese occupation name: "Niitakayama." After China ceded Taiwan to Japan in the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895, the Japanese occupiers discovered that Mt. Jade, at 3,952 meters, was taller than their own Mt. Fuji, at 3,776 meters, and so named it Niitakayama, or "New High Mountain." When Taiwan reverted to Chinese administration in 1945, the name was changed back to Yushan, or Mt. Jade.



Mt. Jade mountaineering history

Human beings lived or hunted in the Mt. Jade area back in prehistoric Stone Age times. Judging from the earliest records, people have been climbing the mountain for almost 150 years.



■ First known recorded climb: In 1866 the British consul and naturalist Robert Swinhoe proposed to cross the Yushan and Central mountain ranges for the purpose of carrying out an ecological survey, but after a climb of more than 10 days he received an urgent recall from the queen.

■ First recorded ascent to the peak: In 1896, Japanese Lieutenant Nagano Yoshitora started from Pushige (today's Yuli) in Hualien and followed the Batongguan Trail to Mt. Jade, proclaiming this to be the first climb to the peak. He was followed by a number of others, both local and foreign, who also followed the Batongguan Trail and climbed the mountain. In fact, none of them really made it to the main peak. That accomplishment came only in 1900, when Japanese anthropologists Torii Ryūzō and Mori Ushinosuke hired aborigines to help them follow the western ridge of Mt. Jade to the peak from the direction of Alishan.

■ The Alishan Forest Railway and the Mt. Jade Trail: The Alishan Forest Railway went into service along its entire length in 1914. The trail up Mt. Jade, starting from the railway terminus at Niitakayama Station, was built in 1926 and three shelters were constructed: Lulin Lodge, Qianshan, and today's Paiyun Lodge. Three branch railway lines were later built—Tataka, Tashan, and Mianyue—and the starting point of the main peak climb was switched to the Tataka Saddle. After the New Central Cross-Island Highway (part of which was built along the route of the Tataka Branch Line) was opened in 1991, the trail to the main peak became a hot target for trekkers.

The Bunun and Tsou tribes

The area around Mt. Jade is the traditional territory of the Tsou and Bunun tribes. According to the oral history as told by Bunun elders, the Tsou who originated on Mt. Jade and the Bunun who had migrated from the Junda River Valley engaged in constant warfare over hunting territory, until finally the Tsou were forced to withdraw to the area of Alishan. When the Japanese occupied Taiwan they moved the Bunun who lived in the Central Mountain Range and around Mt. Jade and Batongguan to the area of the Chenyulan and Zhuoshui rivers, the better to control them.



■ The only tribal village in Yushan National Park: Dongpu sits at the confluence of the Chenyulan and Shalixian rivers. The Tsou who once lived there named the place "Tonpo," or "Axe," after the tools they made there. In early times the Bunun (who now inhabit the village) considered it a hunting ground and gave it that name: "Hanupan." Today Dongpu's Neighborhood 1, which is located at the western head of the Batongguan Historic Trail, is the sole tribal village within the territory of Yushan National Park.

■ A Tsou legend: In the mists of prehistory, the god Hamo descended from heaven and shook a maple tree on Mt. Jade, causing its leaves to fall to the ground where they transformed into the ancestors of mankind. The people multiplied as time went by and finally they came down the mountain, each seeking his own place to farm and hunt. Then a great flood inundated the land; the people and animals returned to Mt. Jade for refuge, going down the mountain again only after the floodwaters receded. This is how Mt. Jade became the cradle of mankind.

■ A Bunun myth: In the distant past, the ancestors of the Bunun encountered a great flood. Some escaped to Mt. Jade and some to Great Mt. Zhuoshe. But there was no fire on Mt. Jade, so Toad was sent to Great Mt. Zhuoshe, where smoke had been seen, to get some. On his way back with the fire, however, Toad fell into the water and the flame was extinguished. Then the bird Liakuliaku was sent for the fire, but did not want to go; smearing ash on its hair, Liakuliaku reported that it had looked until its hair turned white, but could find no fire. It was thereupon transformed into the white-headed Chinese bulbul. Finally the bird Kaibisi volunteered, and succeeded in bringing fire back to Mt. Jade; but the fire burnt its body black and its beak red, transforming it into the black bulbul.



Trails to Mt. Jade main peak and surrounding peaks: Environmental characteristics and history

The Jade Mountain Range rises in the center of Taiwan, its multitude of majestic peaks straining toward the sky. The main peak reaches 3,952 meters, making it the tallest peak in Northeast Asia. The Mt. Jade peaks range in altitude from 3,238 to 3,952 meters and form a cross, with the Main Peak at the intersection and the East, West, North, and South peaks serving as satellites. Vegetation that varies with altitude provides a good habitat for monkeys, weasels, muntjacs, sambars, other animals, and birds of all kinds. The North and Northern North peaks look like the twin humps of a camel, and Fengwei (Phoenix Tail) Rock soars like a needle toward the sky. The East Peak with its precipitous north face rises like a bulwark from the earth, and the West Peak, covered in Taiwan fir and Yushan cane, is home to a Shinto-like shrine. The glacial cirque and rock-stream terrain of the North Col between Yuanfeng (Round Peak) and the South Peak add to the majesty of the scenery of the Mt. Jade peaks.

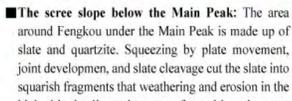
Geology and topography

The trails to the main and subsidiary peaks of Mt. Jade are the best places for observing the geology and topography of the mountain. The rise of the Jade Mountain Range was caused by crustal movements mainly during the Cenozoic period; the folds, faults, joints, landslide areas, scree slopes, and precipices that you see everywhere here are the result of those crustal movements.

■ Trace fossils at the Front Peak trailhead and the Great Precipice: In remote antiquity the Great Precipice was a horizontal accumulation of sedimentary rock on the bottom of a shallow sea. The collision of the Philippine Sea Plate and the Eurasian Continental Plate caused the sea floor to fold and fracture, and to rise above the surface. In the strata that are exposed near the Front Peak trailhead you can see wave ripple sedimentary structures and trace fossils, proving that Taiwan rose from the bottom of the sea.

■ The scree slope below the Main Peak: The area around Fengkou under the Main Peak is made up of slate and quartzite. Squeezing by plate movement, joint development, and slate cleavage cut the slate into squarish fragments that weathering and erosion in the high-altitude climate have transformed into the scree slope we see today.

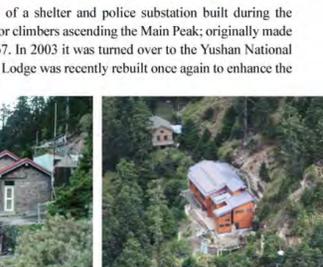
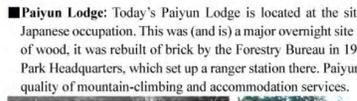
■ The cirque between the Main Peak and Yuanfeng: The arch-shaped cirque between Mt. Jade Main Peak and Yuanfeng (Round Peak) is surmised to have been an expanse of glaciated terrain during the Ice Age, but later on headward erosion by the upper Nanzixian River ate away most of the cirque terrain, leaving only the remnants we see below Yuanfeng.



Major structures

The land around Mt. Jade was once the living area of the Bunun and Tsou peoples, but most of them have now moved off the mountain. Today, we can catch a glimpse of their culture only in such things as the head straps of Bunun porters. About the only structures of historical significance remaining here are Paiyun Lodge and the shrine on the West Peak.

■ The Mt. Jade Shinto Shrine and West Peak Shrine: During their occupation of Taiwan, which lasted from 1895 to 1945, the Japanese built Shinto shrines on major peaks such as Mt. Jade and Snow Mountain for the worship of the sun goddess Amaterasu. After the island reverted to Chinese administration, almost all of the Japanese religious buildings were destroyed, including the shrine on Mt. Jade Main Peak. The current shrine on the western shoulder of the West Peak was rebuilt by the Yushan National Park Headquarters; made entirely of wood, with no metal, it retains the rustic elegance of the Japanese shrine.



■ Paiyun Lodge: Today's Paiyun Lodge is located at the site of a shelter and police substation built during the Japanese occupation. This was (and is) a major overnight site for climbers ascending the Main Peak; originally made of wood, it was rebuilt of brick by the Forestry Bureau in 1967. In 2003 it was turned over to the Yushan National Park Headquarters, which set up a ranger station there. Paiyun Lodge was recently rebuilt once again to enhance the quality of mountain-climbing and accommodation services.



The Western Section of the Batongguan Traversing Trail: Environmental Features and History

The western section of the Batongguan Traversing Trail reaches from the Dongpu trailhead through Guangao and Batongguan to the Mt. Jade Main Peak. It runs about 14 kilometers from Dongpu to Guangao, 2.2km from Guangao to Batongguan, and 7.2km from Batongguan to Mt. Jade Main Peak, with majestic scenes of step terraces, U- and V-shaped valleys, the Yunlong and Yinyu waterfalls, and Jimmendong Cliff along the way. On the trail you can also see remains of Japanese substations, millennium-old cypress groves, the Batongguan Grasslands, and all kinds of warm temperate zone forest cover. There has been relatively little human intervention here, so there are rich bird resources as well as frequent activity by mammals such as muntjacs and sambars. You might even find traces of the Formosan black bear here.



Geologic and topographical features

The western section of the Batongguan Traversing Trail mainly follows the bank of the Chenyulan River to the Batongguan Grasslands, along the way allowing observation of varying types of terrain resulting from the influence of different lithographic characteristics during the period of river development.

■ Step terraces on the Shalixian River: "Step terraces" are a terrain feature made up of several river terraces. There are a number of terraces, not very large, at the confluence of the Shalixian and Chenyulan rivers, most of which are now cultivated by local farmers.

■ Fuzi Cliff: Fuzi (Father-and-Son) Cliff is on one of the routes taken by the local Bunun tribesmen on the way to their hunting grounds. Here the rock falls directly down from the ridge; the fallen debris is extremely fragile and fragmented, forming loose talus deposits that easily slide away. Whenever it rains, the trail cut into the cliff is difficult and subject to danger from falling rocks.

■ Hanging tributary waterfalls: The Yunlong and Yinyu waterfalls have developed in areas of hard quartz sandstone, which is strongly resistant to erosion. This factor, plus the large volume of flow in the Chenyulan River and its powerful downcutting action, lowered the bed of the main river below the beds of its tributaries. Where the tributaries flow into the main river, therefore, they form "hanging tributary waterfalls" that plunge large distances and precipitous cliffs develop on the two sides of the main stream.

■ The ancient landforms of Batongguan and Jimmendong Cliff: In its ancient landform period, the Batongguan Grasslands were the broad riverbed of the ancient Laonong River's headwaters, and the shapes of circular hills and oxbow lakes left by meander cutting can still be clearly distinguished here. With crustal uplifting and increased waterflow, the downcutting of the Chenyulan River accelerated until it captured the headwaters of the Laonong River and created the precipitous terrain of the Jimmendong Cliff. With the exception of Siyan Pass, this is the largest river-capture location in Taiwan.



The Bagongguan Historic Trail and Batongguan Traversing Trail

In Qing Dynasty times there were three trails that crossed Taiwan's mountains west to east, one each in the north, center, and south of the island. The central one, which today is known as the Batongguan Historic Trail, was one of the earliest cross-island routes. The present trail, called the Batongguan Traversing Trail, was developed during the Japanese occupation period.



■ Qing Dynasty, Batongguan Historic Trail: This trail was built by the military and completed in 1875; it stretched 152 kilometers, from what is today Yushan through Lugu, Batongguan, Dashiuku, and past the northwest shore of the Lakuaku River to Yuli. It was abandoned after a few years because of the difficult environment and the opposition of local indigenous tribes. In 1987 it was designated a national historic site; it all lies within the Yushan National Park, but only part of the route is distinguishable today.

■ Japanese occupation era, Batongguan Traversing Trail: This trail, completed in 1921, was built for the purpose of controlling aborigines and providing transportation between western and eastern Taiwan. From Dongpu in Nantou County, it crosses the Central Mountain Range and ends at the Shanfeng trailhead in Hualien County, a distance of about 96 kilometers. It is divided at Dashiuku into eastern and western sections. Batongguan is where the Batongguan Historic Trail, Batongguan Traversing Trail, and the trail to Mt. Jade meet. Here you can still see potsherds and remnants of rammed-earth walls from the Qing Dynasty camp. The Japanese police established a substation here, with a hostel, office, barracks, porter accommodation, and bathroom. It even had a telephone. It was the largest and best-equipped overnight stop on the trail to Mt. Jade at the time. The old substation, boardwalk, and water trench have disappeared with the passage of time, but remains of the stone walls are still here and you can still see evidence of Japanese techniques for road building and repair, such as the herringbone pattern of clay-slate pavement and the stone walls that lined the route.



"Leave No Trace" Rules

I. Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Acquire training in fitness, carrying loads, mountain-climbing skills, self-rescue, and emergency response, and plan an appropriate climbing itinerary according to the weather as well as your fitness and climbing experience.
The weather in high-altitude mountain areas is highly changeable, and special attention should be given to the season and the temperature gap between day and night. Guard against cold, UV rays, dry climate, snow, strong winds (wind chill), and other altitude-related threats.
Take a map and GPS or other position-finding device as well as signal mirror, whistle, rope, mobile phone, or walkie-talkie. Before setting out, inform the trail administration agency, family members, or close

friends of your itinerary.

II. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

- Keep to the trail and do not walk along its edges to avoid creating new trails or widening the original one. Stay away from important animal or plant habitats, restoration areas, and other environmentally fragile areas.
Keep camping and cooking areas as small and concentrated as possible to avoid denuding land outside campsites.
Dispose of waste properly: For the disposal of excreta choose a place far from water sources, campgrounds, trails, and drainage systems. When temperatures are freezing, the best disposal option is to carry it out with you.
Use toilet paper and biological waste should be

taken out with you; do not bury it, because animals will dig it up and scatter it around the environment.

IV. Leave What You Find

- Leave the environment in its original state. Avoid leaving traces of human activity.
Protect trees around the campsite; do not climb them or break their branches. Do not use cabin floorboards as firewood. If you need to tie something around a tree, use a soft pad to protect the bark from damage by insect pests.
When you leave the campsite, restore the surrounding environment to its original state.
Minimize Use and Impact of Fires: Use stoves instead of campfires for cooking. In addition to being quick and easy, stoves can be used in all kinds of weather to avoid leaving fire traces and smoking up the surrounding environment.

VI. Respect Wildlife

- When observing wildlife, keep a suitable distance away and leave an undisturbed environment for them.
Keep your tent and campsite clean, and dispose of garbage and food waste properly to prevent threatening the health of wildlife.
Be Considerate of Other Visitors: Respect the quality of the experience of others. When using public spaces (such as cabins), avoid loud talk and other noise.
Please rest on trailside rocks or at wide spots in the trail, allowing other users to pass quickly by. When advancing in procession, keep a watch on the length of the procession and the state of its members.

Telephone Numbers

- Emergency units: Rescue : 119 (For mobile phones, please dial 112.) Crime reporting : 110 Yushan National Park Headquarters : (049)2773121-6 Yushan Brigade, National Park Police Corps : (049)2775110 / 2775119 Tataka Visitor Center : (049)2702200-2 Tataka Squad, Yushan Brigade : (049)2702203 Dongpu Police Station : (049)2701321 Nantou Hospital, Department of Health : (049)2231150 Xinyi Township Public Health Center : (049)2791148 Chiayi Hospital, Department of Health : (052)319090 Alishan Public Health Center : (052)511007 Xinyi Township Fire Brigade : (052)679900 Alishan Police Station : (052)679975

Service Units

- Yushan National Park Headquarters-Shuili Visitor Center Telephone : (049)2773121-6 Fax : (049)2348274 Website : www.yshp.gov.tw E-mail : yushan@msl.gsn.gov.tw Tataka Visitor Center : (049)2702200 Fax : (049)2702250 Paiyun Mountaineering Service Center : (049)2702288 Fax : (049)2702230 Dining and accommodation service units: Tataka Visitor Center Restaurant : (049)2702257 Dongpu Lodge : (049)2702213 Dongpu Indigenous Youth Activity Center : (049)2701515 Alishan Youth Activity Center, China Youth Corps : (052)679561