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Article : Mystical Quarry [Ruins](#) in Fukui Prefecture

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

Surrounded by nature, visiting the former quarry in Awara city feels like stumbling upon the remnants of an ancient civilization.

I make my way through a narrow tunnel, parting the vegetation with my hands. Suddenly, I find myself in what resembles an ancient stone temple. The moss-covered rock surface and the echoes of dripping water create a strange sensation [as if](#) I've been transported to another world. In reality, I am at the Miyadani Quarry Site in Awara, Fukui Prefecture. The former stone mine, near the famous hot spring resort Awara Onsen, has been gaining popularity as a tourist attraction.

The Stones of Miyadani

Stone quarrying began in Japan around 1887 when it started [adopting](#) Western building techniques. However, the practice ceased in the late 1950s with the rise of cement-making technology.

The stones of Miyadani were easy to process and fire-resistant. They were not only made into foundations for houses but were also used to make tools for daily life, such as braziers and stoves.

Excavations have left six beautiful spaces in the quarry, which are connected by tunnels. Some of these spaces have an opening at the top, allowing sunlight to filter through the trees in the summer. The interplay of light creates the perfect atmosphere for shooting movies, commercials, and prenuptial photos.

Looking to the Future

Since guided tours began in 2020, the number of visitors has [been on the rise](#). In fact, they are expected to reach 1,000 this fiscal year ending in March 2024. The extension of the Hokuriku Shinkansen bullet train to Tsuruga Station in Hyogo Prefecture and Awaraonsen Station is expected to boost tourism even further.

Toshio Sakai is the chairman of the NPO Hosorogi Souseikai, which operates tours to the former quarry. He says, "Visitors come here looking for places off the beaten track. But we need to strike a balance between conservation and expansion to prevent overtourism."

As the quarry is on private land, visitors must join a guided tour. No tours are available during the winter season from December to February of the [following](#) year.

As I emerge from the other end of the tunnel, the bright rays of the setting sun make me squint. The mysterious silence that surrounded me earlier has been replaced by the songs of insects and birds.

2 Key phrases and vocabulary

Directions: First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. ruin 遺跡、廃墟、(建物などの) 荒廃・崩壊、台無しにする、損なう、粉々に破壊する

The ancient **ruin** was a fascinating sight to behold during our trip.

2. as if まるで～であるかのように、～と言わんばかりに

He ran so fast, it seemed **as if** he had wings on his feet.

3. adopt

(選択肢の中から)採用する・導入する・選ぶ、(議案などを)採択する・承認する、養子にする、(習慣などを)身につける

The company plans to **adopt** a new policy to improve customer satisfaction.

4. be on the rise 増加の一途をたどっている、増えつつある、増加している、増加の傾向にある

Housing prices in the city **are on the rise**, making it difficult for people to buy homes.

5. following ~の後に続く、~の次の、~を受けて、次に述べる・挙げる、下記の(事項)

She's starting her new job the **following** week after completing her training.

3 Questions

Directions: Read the questions aloud and answer them.

- 1. What strange sensation does the narrator experience upon entering the Miyadani Quarry Site?**
- 2. What are some uses of the stones from Miyadani?**
- 3. Why is it necessary for visitors to join guided tours when visiting the former quarry?**
- 4. Have you ever visited a historical or unique site that made you feel as if you were transported to another time or world?**
- 5. Do you prefer visiting popular tourist attractions or seeking out less-known places off the beaten track when you travel?**

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**日本語関連記事：
眼前に「石の神殿」神秘体験 宮谷石切場跡（福井・あわら市）**

草木をかき分け狭いトンネルをくぐると、そこには石造りの神殿を思わせる空間が広がっていた。苔むした岩肌、反響する水滴が落ちる音。まるで異世界を旅しているような、不思議な感覚に包まれた。

いま、「関西の奥座敷」あわら温泉（福井県あわら市）にほど近い採石場跡地「宮谷（みやだに）石切場跡」が観光資源として注目されている。

西欧の建築技術が日本に浸透し始めた明治20年頃から、セメントが普及する昭和20年代後半の廃坑まで石が切り出されていた。

「宮谷石」は加工しやすく耐火性があるため、家屋の基礎石に加え、火鉢やかまどなどにも使われる「庶民の石」だったという。

石切場の内部は「間府（まぶ）」と呼ばれる、石を切り出した後の空間が6つ横穴でつながっている。幾つかの間府は地上に口を開け、夏場は木々の間をすり抜けて陽光が差し込む。光線が演出する非日常的な空間は、映画、CMの撮影や結婚式の前撮りなどに人気だ。

令和2年にガイド付きツアーを始めると客足は伸び、今年度は1千人に迫る勢いだという。来年3月には北陸新幹線が敦賀駅（同県敦賀市）まで延伸される。芦原（あわら）温泉駅にも新幹線が止まるようになるため、観光客はますます増えそうだ。

ツアーを運営するNPO法人・細呂木地区創成会の酒井敏雄会長（74）は「お客さんは秘境感を求めてやってくる。オーバーツーリズムにならないよう、保全と活用のバランスを取ることが今後の課題」と話す。

再びトンネルを通り、外へ出た。傾き始めた西日に思わず目を細める。さっきまでの静寂が嘘のように、あたりは虫や鳥の声であふれていた。

出典：眼前に「石の神殿」神秘体験 宮谷石切場跡（福井・あわら市）
[JAPAN Forward](#)