

## Column: Kijimun's Monologue No.2

### A strange stone

Keywords: *Ryukyu Shintōki*, a construction of Naminoue, a stone of Tametomo



Hi everyone, how are you? In this month, I am going to introduce a story of strange stone contained in *Ryukyu Shintōki*!

Naminoue Shrine is a venerable shrine which is described in *Ryukyu Shintōki* (Completed in about 1605) written by Taichū (a Buddhist monk, 1552-1639). The Naminoue Shrine was the primary shrine among the Eight Shrines of Ryukyu (*Okinogū*, *Naminouegū*, *Amekugū*, *Asatohachimangū*, *Sueyoshigū*, *Shikinagū*, *Futenmagū*, *Kingū*) in the era of Shuri Ōfu. There is a mysterious story about a construction of *Naminouegū* as follows:

#### An origin of the construction of Naminoue.

A long long ago, there was a fisherman named Sakiyama-no-Satoshu. One day, he heard a voice from behind. But there was nobody other than a stone. He took the stone and put it on a high place, then he prayed for a big catch of fish. He thought if the stone was divine, his prayer would be granted. And it was granted. Therefore, he prayed again and again with great glee. One night, as the stone emitted light, he was convinced its divinity.



The worship hall of Naminoue shrine

After a while, the Gods of Ryukyu envied the power of the stone, they tried to take the stone from Sakiyama. He moved around to find a place to where he could enshrine the stone safely, then he finally arrived at Naminoue. For the first time, the stone told him that the stone was Kumano Gongen (God of Kumano). And Sakiyama needed to construct a shrine here to protect the nation. Therefore, he reported this message to the king of Ryukyu, and then the shrine was constructed. ("Naminoue Gongen goto", *Ryukyu shintōki*, 5<sup>th</sup> volume.)

It was not a monster at all, the mysterious stone, it was a God of Kumano, in fact! In *Ryukyu Shintōki*, there is also a story of a stone thrown by Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo (Minamoto Tametomo). It is said that Tametomo



Ryukyū/Okinawa Special collection, Digital Archive, Sakamaki/Hawley collection

(1139-1176?) was more than 2 meters tall, he was a master of bow and his left arm was 12cm longer than his right arm. According to historical fact, he was defeated at *Hōgen no Ran* (*Hōgen War*) and he killed himself. However, according to legend, Tametomo reached Ryukyu and he married a younger sister of Ōzato Aji (*Aji*: a lord), then he had a boy who would be Shunten later. Shunten grew up to become Urasoe Aji and he founded Shunten Dynasty.

#### A stone of Tametomo

Chinzei Hachirō Tametomo came to Imakijin (present-day, Nakijin) running after rebels. He threw a stone which was as big as a human being from there to Naminoue (at that time, it took one day on foot from Nakijin to Naminoue.)

You can find some stories about the Eight Shrines of Ryukyu on the Digital Archive for Ryukyu/Okinawa Special collection, please check them up! (Pictures of Naminoue Shrine were taken by the writer of this column.)



Naminoue Shrine, on the January 3<sup>rd</sup>