



Column : Kijimun's Monologue No.8

Hidama

Keyword : *Hitodama, Ininbi*



Haisai, Kijimun yaibin! You know, about 100 years ago, *Kaidan* (a ghost story) was telling in winter. Does anyone know why it is telling in summer in our time? By the way, our library will hold an exhibition of "Life and landscape of Miyako Island" in Miyako Island in this month, you should come!

This month's topic is *Hidama*. It is the *Hinotama* with red or blue color which appears before a bad thing happens. It is said that the dying of a person or a fire will be followed after its appearance. When it is a soul of human beings, *Hidama* is also called as *Tamagai* or *Chudama*. It often appears in mountains or in a slope way. When a man and a woman were in a romantic relationship and they died violently, they show themselves as *Hinotama*. The most famous *Hidama* is the *Ininbi* of Shikinazaka (in Shuri). And in Miyako Island, it is said that as darkness sets in, *Hidama* starts dancing around banyan trees with its flickering light.

According to a legend, the *Ininbi* of Shikinazaka (Shichinandabira, in Okinawan dialect, *zaka* (=saka) means a slope.) are the *Hinotamas* of a young married couple living in Shikina village of Shuri. As they were separately killed by a villain in different places, they cannot rest in peace and they appear as *Hidama* around the Kanagusuku bashi (*bashi* (=hashi) means a bridge) at the foot of Shikinazaka every night. This legend was played as *Uchinā shibai* (Okinawan Plays) in 1909, and then it was established as one of programs of *Ryukyū Kageki* (Ryukyuan Operas).



We can see *Hidama* once in a year.

In the night of *Yōkabi* (means August 8th in the lunar calendar), if you look down a village from hills, you can see *Hidama* which goes up from a house of the village. It tells us somebody of the residents of the house will die within a year.

Ininbi which we could see in each place of Okinawa cannot be hardly seen after the battle

of Okinawa. People say, "They might be shot and killed with a gun.", or "It cannot be seen because the artificial lights are too bright through the night in our time." If you encounter a *Hinotama* when you go by night, be sure to let me know that! I'm gonna chase and catch it!

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