

Kijimun's Monologue —No.8—

Topic: *Tanadui* (*Tantwui*) Festival

Haisai&Haitai (Hi,) everyone!

Autumn is coming, and autumn is the best season for food lovers! It's a harvest season! In ancient times, the harvest of cereal crops including a rice plant directly gave a big impact to the national prosperity. Therefore, our ancestors held a lot of ceremonies to pray for a huge harvest of the five grains. In this month, I am going to report *Tanadui* Festival, one of these ceremonies. Here we go!

What is *Tanadui*?

It is said that "*Tanadui* (it is also pronounced as "*Tantwui*") Festival" began to be held about 600 years ago to pray for a huge harvest of all of the cereal crops, like millet, wheat, or rice. It is held on a lucky day in September or October with a lunar calendar. It was held in all over the Okinawa islands before; there is a description about this festival in Vol.1 of "*Ryukyu koku yuraiki*," according to the article, a person who had purified himself seeded the unhulled rice which had been soaked in water on the day before the festival. Even now after female priests pray to *Hinukan* (God of kitchen stove) or go to *Utaki* (a place of worship in Ryukyu/Okinawa) to pray to God of grain, all participants of the festival share offerings to the gods (this is one of Okinawan customs, called *Usandē*) and then they dedicate various folk entertainments to the gods. Through this festival, all villagers show their devotion to the god of grain.

Tanadui in Taketomi islands

In the main island of Okinawa, *Tanadui* is not anymore held now, but in Taketomi Island, it is an age-old traditional event, and it was designated as a national significant intangible folk cultural property in 1977. *Tanadui* in Taketomi Island is well known with its number of programs to offer to gods, and it is held for ten days in October or November with the Gregorian calendar. In 2013, it will be held from November 15th to 24th. If you need more information, please refer to a town office of Taketomi town.

If you can visit Taketomi Island in this season, why don't you have a look around the *Tanadui* Festival?!