

Kijimun' s monologue



—No. 1—



Main building of University of the Ryukyus built at Shuri Castle site

Keywords: The opening of the University of the Ryukyus, Monument of Shuri Castle, Shuri no Mori

In this FY 2014, we are going to introduce historical sites and relics of the past within and out of the University of the Ryukyus which you already “know,” but do not know very well. I bet you’ll like them, don’t miss them!

The first topic is a monument of Shuri Castle.

**** History of Establishment of the University of the Ryukyus ****

Following “Civil Administration Ordinances No.30”, the University of the Ryukyus was opened on May 22nd, 1950, at Shuri Castle site which was destroyed in World War II. There were three potential locations for the construction area before the establishment; 1. Ameku, Naha-city, 2. Oroku, Naha-city, 3. Shuri Castle site. It was Yamashiro Atsuo (1888-1968, Director of the Civil Information and Education Division of Okinawa Civil Administration) who had strongly recommended building the University at Shuri Castle site to Arthur E. Mead, Director of the Civil Information and Education Department of the U.S. Military Government and Brig. Gen. John H. Weckerling, Chief of GHQ’s Ryukyus Military Government Section. Though there were various opinions about the construction at Shuri Castle site, Yamashiro and the others argued that Shuri Castle site was the most appropriate location for the University because it had been a cultural, historical and political symbol handed down through generations, and this argument was eventually adopted.

**** Monument of Shuri Castle ****

In January 1949, at Shuri Castle site, ground leveling work started for the construction of the University. Administration building, eight wooden classrooms with tile roofing, a library, twelve Quonset huts as men’s dormitories and ten staff quarters were built one after another, a Monument of Shuri Castle was then set up by U.S. Army in 1950. The monumental inscription is as follows (Japanese translation is carved on the back of monument);

SHURI CASTLE

SHURI CASTLE WHICH WAS TOTALLY DESTROYED DURING THE BATTLE OF OKINAWA WAS THE TRADITIONAL HOME OF KINGS BETWEEN 1166-1879 A.D. DURING OKINAWAS GOLDEN AGE 1477-1526 A.D. MAGNIFICENT BUILDINGS WERE CONSTRUCTED THE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING IS LOCATED ON THE SITE OF THE THRONE ROOM



Monuments of “Shuri no mori” and “Shuri Castle”

**** Monument of “Shuri no Mori (Grove of Shuri)” ****



“Nami”, a sculpture in Shuri no Mori

In July 1966, administration of the University was transferred to the Ryukyus Government, and following the reversion of Okinawa to Japan, the University became a national university in February 1972. In April 2004 the University was turned into a national university corporation. Along with a restoration of Shuri Castle in progress, the University had to be moved to another location; then, it was moved to current campus, “Senbaru campus” and “Uebaru campus.” “Shuri no Mori” was made in 1989 by Alumni Association of the University of the Ryukyus to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the Establishment and completion of the relocation. On the back of the Monument of “Shuri no mori”, there is an inscription to explain why the open space was made and why a replica of “Gokokuji no Kane (Gokokuji Bell)” and “Kaigaku no Kane (a used gas cylinder of U.S. Army, which was used as Opening Bell at Shuri campus)” were placed there. You can read these all stories with Memorial magazines of the University at the library, please come and enjoy reading!