

Kijimun's Monologue No.7

A birthplace of tea plantation • A site of Itokama temple • A birthplace of *Tānmu*

Haisai, Kijimun yaibin!

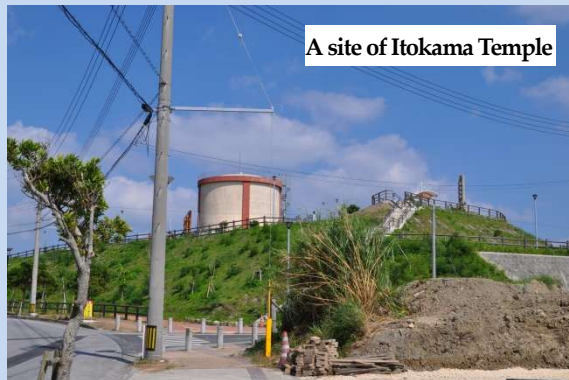
In this month, I'm going to introduce a site near the East gate of *Ryūdai*.

A birthplace of tea plantation

Near a gymnasium of *Ryūdai* present-day, there was a mountain called *Chāyama* which was used as the Ryukyu's first tea plantation in Ryukyu Kingdom era. The article, "Shō kei ō (King Shō kei), 1733" in a history book, *Kyūyō* provides its description. It is unfortunately not what it used to be.



A site of tea plantation



A site of Itokama Temple

A site of Itokama temple

Outside of the East gate, there is a small hill on the east side. In Ryukyu Kingdom era, Itokama temple was there.

According to a description in chapter 212-1 of vol.14 of *Ryukyukoku yuraiiki*, it was Fudarakuō from Japan who served as chief



Itokama Tower

priest of the temple. There is a famous story regarding this temple, the story of Itokama *Noro* and the chief priest.

One day, Itokama *Noro* and the priest was talking inside the temple with chasing her little daughter outside, then, the daughter told about that to her father. He suspected that his wife, Itokama *Noro* and the priest had sinned. It made *Noro* and the priest furious, *Noro* spat out a curse as "The female line of this family will be extinguished hereafter." Then, she killed herself by biting her breasts. The priest hid a treasure of the temple in Itokama *utaki*, and he entered in a chest. Right after that, the temple went up in flames and was burnt down. The chest was emptied (= it means that the priest ascended to heaven.) After that, no girl was born to her family. The temple was not reconstructed anymore; there were only stone steps of the temple remained in the 1700s. There is also a legend that the principal image of Buddha of the temple appeared in *Rōkokumon* (*Rōkoku* gate) of Shuri Castle at the moment when the temple was burnt down.

The east side of Itokama temple, there is Itokama site which is of *Gusuku* era, from where *Gusuku Doki* (earthenware) and fragments of celadon are excavated. The eastern road of the temple was the main road in *Ōfu* era, and it is now called "Road of history."

Besides, on the hill, there is a memorial tower built for paying respects to 800 victims of Battle of Okinawa, called "Itokama *no tō* (Itokama Tower)."



Road of history

A birthplace of *Tānmu*

Around the Itokama temple, there was a birthplace of *Tānmu* in Ryukyu. Fudarakuō of Itokama temple brought *Tānmu* from Japan and planted it near the temple. It is said that *Tānmu* prevailed throughout Okinawa.



Around the birthplace of *Tānmu*

I will show you more historical sites around *Ryūdai*, don't miss the next column! See you!