

Kijimun' s Monologue No.9

Ishigusuku in Faculty of Agriculture

Haisai, Kijimun yaibin!

I'm going to introduce *Ishigusuku* in Faculty of Agriculture.

Usually, it is not open to the public; we got special permission to visit and to take a picture.

What is *Ishigusuku*?

In the grounds of the Faculty of Agriculture (have a place in Senbaru), there is *Ishigusuku*, designated as cultural property by Nishihara town. It is a small artificial hill built using a cliff of nature in Ryukyu Kingdom era.

At 400 m west of *Ishigusuku*, there is *Tanabaru gusuku* (a castle constructed around 14th and 15th century.), it is said that *Ishigusuku* was built as a branch castle to protect *Tanabaru gusuku*.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to see the figure used to be because the creation of new Okinawa Expressway and a private land reclamation work held in July 2002 have destroyed a part of *Ishigusuku*.

Near current *Ishigusuku*, there are old tombs of Tanabaru clan like *Tsuhataka baka* and *Ufudunchi monchū ajibaka* which I have already introduced in the 5th column. According to Excavation and Research report by Okinawa Prefecture, there were hundreds of old graves before the destruction. Among them, the existence of 21 tombs was confirmed.

War remains at *Ishigusuku*

There are also war remains of the battle of Okinawa, World War II.

From around August 1944, one of Japanese Army troops was stationed at Senbaru area. It is said that there were about 100 soldiers in the troop. They mobilized all residents to dig a trench for the troop and to make anti-aircraft artillery or the uplands of 210.

Once the American Forces landed at Sunabe, Chatan town in April 1st, 1945, they shortly arrived near Senbaru. A fierce battle was soon fought there, and the area was burned down, nothing could be seen but burnt-out ruins. After the battle, *Ishigusuku* turned into a white rocky hill, and there were so many human bones lying all around. Only a few soldiers survived including Takemi lieutenant general. On extant tombs, there are innumerable bullet holes; they show us how the battle of Okinawa was fierce. Descendent visit their ancestor's tombs even today.



A picture of *Ishigusuku* taken from the Faculty of Agriculture



Rare five tombs in a row. A part of them is broken. Some bullet holes can be seen on the wall of tombs.



A bullet hole above the entrance of the tomb

There are more historical spots in *Ryūdai*; please wait for the next column!

*Many thanks to Subtropical Field Science Center, Faculty of Agriculture, University of the Ryukyus