

## Column: Kijimun's Monologue No.3

# Inafukubā who went to Ryūgū

Keywords: *Irō setsuden*, Tanahara no *Īnu Utaki*



Haisai, Kijimun yaibin! This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> column of Ryukyū/Okinawa ghost story.

I will introduce a story of Tanahara, Nishihara Town situated near the University of the Ryukyus.



*Īnu Utaki* at Tanahara, Nishihara town

(Photo by the writer of this column, May 23rd 2015)

Eating only shellfishes, no word about Ryūgū, for Inafukubā, Ryūgū was not a paradise at all!?

Do you know *Īnu Utaki* (*Utaki*: a sacred place of Ryukyū/Okinawa) at Tanahara, Nishihara town? There is a legend of *Ryūgū* (means a palace of Dragon King which is considered a paradise under the sea) around this area. The story can be found in *Irō setsuden*, the summary is as follows:

Once upon a time, there was *Noro* (an official priestess of Ryukyū Kingdom) named Inafukubā in Tanabaru village of Nishiharu *Magiri*. One day when she held a religious service with her colleagues at *Īnu utaki*, only Inafukubā has disappeared.

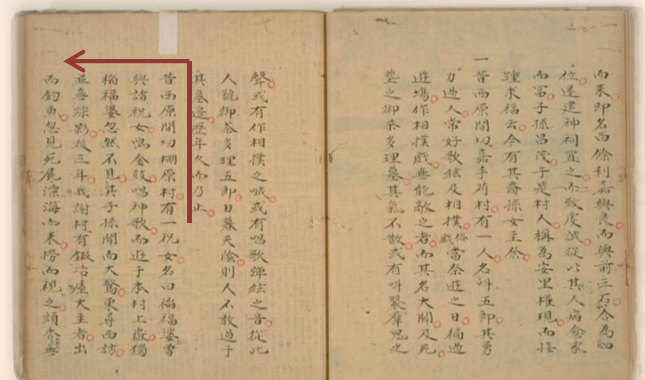
Three years later, when *Kajīya ufushu* from Gaja village of Nishiharu *Magiri* did fishing, he found a baldheaded parson with lots of shells all over the body was floating on the sea. He saved the parson and gave a rice gruel, but the person could not speak a word. Many people got together but nobody could recognize who the parson was. After a moment, the person said, "I am Inafukubā. I unexpectedly went to *Ryūgū* under the sea, but, there I received only shellfishes as food." Then, she vomited something yellow. Ever since people called her *Niraibā*", because another name of *Ryūgū* was *Niraikanai* (In

Ryukyū/Okinawa, it is believed there is a paradise called *Niraikanai* across the sea.) Her family asked to her about *Ryūgū*, but she was unwilling to speak about it. Even the king of Ryukyū invited her to the castle, but she could not bear to be curiously stared by many people, she held her hands under her arms and then disappeared again. After a while, she was found at *Īnu utaki*. She lived to be more than 80 years old. It is said that this is the legend of 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century.

*Irō setsuden* in which this story is contained is a collection of legends completed in early 18<sup>th</sup> century, and it was edited as an appendix of an history book, *Kyūyō*. In this collection, 142 stories told by patriarchs of Ryukyū are contained, which could not be included in *Kyūyō*. There are plural manuscripts of *Irō setsuden*, in our library we have three of those. The details are as follows:

1. Iha Fuyū Collection No.13, 3 volumes
2. Iha Fuyū Collection No.14, 4 volumes
3. Miyara Dunchi/Douchi Collection No.26

We open these materials on the web site of the library, there are not only the images but also the explanations. It is possible to access the site via smartphone or via tablet. Please check our web site!



Page 8 to 9, from *Irō setsuden*, the 3<sup>rd</sup> volume,

Iha Fuyū Collection No.014 (3), Digital Archive of the library

