

Column: Kijimun's Monologue No.6

Mimichiri bōzu



Keywords: Ufumura *udoun*, Kurugani *zāshi*, Seikai *shōnin*, Godōin

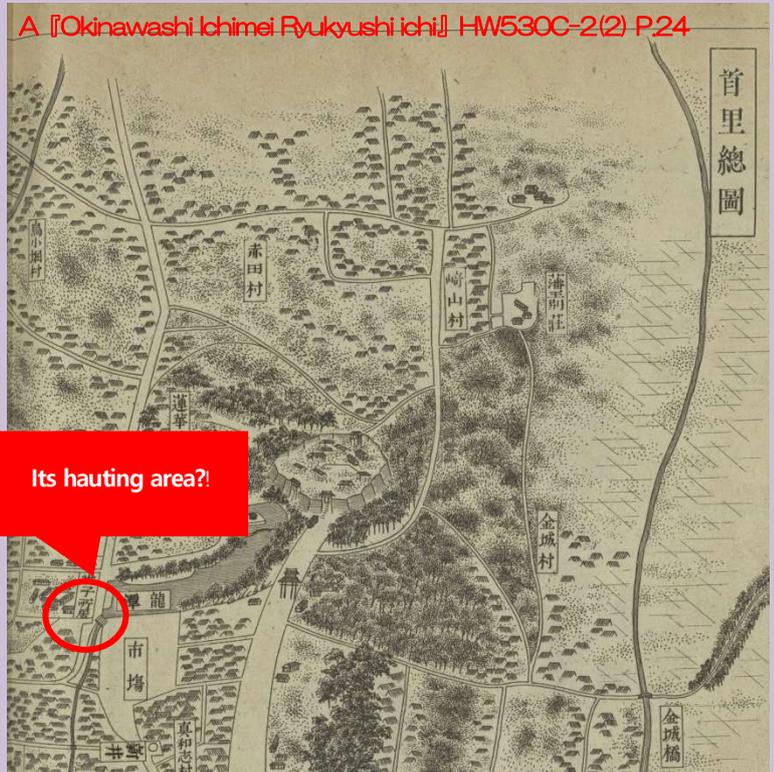
Hi, everyone! It's getting cooler, but I'm gonna get you further cooler with this scary story...

During the Ryukyu Kingdom era, there was a palace of Shō royal family at the site of ex-Okinawa Prefectural Museum in Shuri ōnaka chō, Naha city present-day. At that day, the palace was called as Ufumura *udoun* (a palace of Ufumura) and it was the residence of Chatan *ōji* (Prince Chatan) who was both a good warrior and a good scholar, and he was also very good at playing Go game. In obedience to the commands of King of the Ryukyu, he investigated Kurugani *zāshi* who was under suspicion for a rebellion. As he was convinced of Kurugani *zāshi* plotted a rebellion, he decided to have a showdown with Kurugani *zāshi*. As Kurugani *zāshi* was also a good player of Go game, they played a Go game on betting *Katakashira* (a Ryukyuan chignon) of Chatan *ōji* and ears of Kurugani *zāshi*. Chatan *ōji* won the game and he cut off the ears of Kurugani *zāshi* and Kurugani *zāshi* was killed then.

After his death, the ghost of Kurugani *zāshi* appeared at Ufumura *udoun*. Boys who were born in Ufumura *udoun* would die very young because of the curse of Kurugani *zāshi*. Therefore, to avoid the curse, the family of Chatan *ōji* shouted, "A big girl was born!" even when they had a boy.

The model of Kurugani *zāshi* is Seikai *shōnin* who was

a chief priest of Naminoue Gokokuji temple. He was a great monk, but at the same time, he had a big influence in politics. It is said that because his influence was too big, such a legend was born. Of course, nothing certain is known.



A 『Okinawashi Ichimei Ryukyushi ichi』 HW530C-2(2) P.24

Its haunting area?!



An explanation about Mimichiri bōzu. This plate is found on a side of stone wall of the site of ex-Okinawa Prefectural Museum. (Picture taken by the writer of this column)

Have you ever heard a lullaby of *Mimichiri bōzu*? It is very scary song of which lyric means as follows:

"At the gate of Ufumura *udoun*, *Mimichiri bōzu* is standing.

How many are they? Three or four are standing.

They are holding a sickle and a knife.

They will cut ears of crying baby. So, don't cry baby, sleep tight."

It is said that Kurugani *zāshi* became a *Yōkai* called "*Mimichiri bōzu*" after his death and he appears at the gate of Ufumura *udoun* to cut off ears of crying baby.

The picture above is found in the page 24 of No.530(C-2) of the Sakamaki/Hawley Collection, Digital Archive. If you would like to know more about Kurugani *zāshi*, we have many references here, in the library. Let's check them up!

