

Column : Kijimun's Monologue No.9

Kijimun and his merry friends

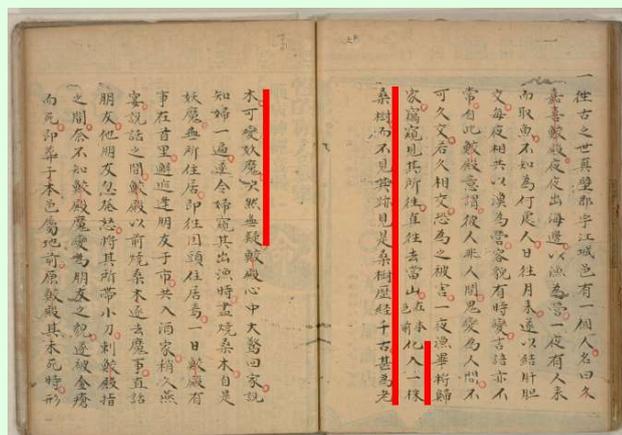


Keyword : Kijimunā, Bunagaya, Sēma, Akagantā, Kenmun

Haisai! Kijimun yaibin!

In this month, I'm gonna introduce my friends and myself.

First of all, let me talk about myself, "Kijimunā". *Kijimunā* is one of Okinawan *Yōkai*, it is also called a spirit of tree. FYI, I am from a banyan tree at the Senbaru pond of University of the Ryukyus. In general, *Kijimunā* is nearly as tall as elementary school child, it has a red face and red bushy hair. It loves eyeballs of fish, especially the left eye. People say that fish without its left eye is a leftover of *Kijimunā*. In contrast, it dislikes an octopus and a fart. Sometimes it befriends with human beings and brings wealth to them, but when it gets angry, it becomes brutal and hurts human beings. In Okinawa, there are many folk tales and legends about *Kijimunā*, among them, the oldest record is found in *Irō setsuden* which was edited in 1745. (There is a description that "The old tree must have become a monster." In *Irō setsuden*. Indicated with red lines here.⇒)



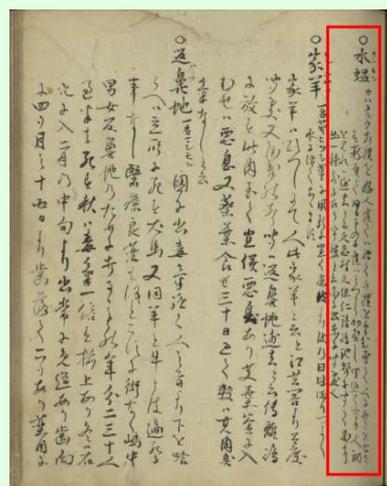
P24, *Irō setsuden vol.3, Iha Fuyū Collection No.14*

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There are large variety of *Kijimunā*, its name or its character are different for each region. Here are some of them.

"*Bunagaya*": It is handed down in the northern part of Okinawa Island mainly. Its body is red and it is as tall as a child. It stays away from human beings. It uses of fire (*Bunagaya bī*: Fire of *Bunagaya*), it burns human beings when they hurt it. In Kijoka, Ōgimi village, there was a traditional event called "*Arami*" until the postwar, in this event, people watched the line of *Bunagayas* who came down from mountains with *Bunagaya bī*.

"*Sēma*": It is handed down in the Kouri Island and in the northern and the central of Okinawa Island. It is small like a baby, it has red hair and red skin. There are snail shells at the foot of tree where *Sēma* lives, because it eats snails. It is said that there are both male and female.



P61, *Nantōzatsuki zen,*

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"*Akagantā*": It is handed down in all over the Okinawa Island. It is as tall as a child, and it has a red body. It appears in a house of human beings and it upsets a pillow or makes human beings sleep paralysis when they sleep. People say that *Akagantā* brings prosperity to the house, but at the same time, it is believed that it causes a fire in the house. So, it is two-faced monster.

"*Kenmun*": It is handed down in Amami Island. It is a spirit of banyan tree, it is as tall as a child and it has very long limbs. It also has a red face and red hair, besides, like *Kappa*, it has a saucer-like depression on the top of its head and it loses the power if the water on the saucer completely evaporates. As it loves *Sumō*, it offers *Sumō* battle to human beings when it sees them. Sometimes it causes to lose a way of islanders and misleads them to mountains.

Did you ever heard that someone had encountered *Kijimunā*?

In our library, there are some books written about experiences of meeting *Kijimunā*, if you are interested in the experiences, please check the books. Also, you can find materials about *Kijimunā* or *Yōkai* with "Bibliographic Information Database of Okinawa: BIDOM).

We, *Kijimunās* will be very happy if many of you have an interest in us! <for BIDOM, click here!> ⇒

