



## No.8 Kijimun' s Monologue, November 2017

### The mathematics from *Komonjo*

Keywords: *Yaeyamajima Kuramoto Kujichō, Warazan, Fujukan*

The autumn is coming in Okinawa, finally! In this month, I will introduce a traditional recording method of numbers used in Ryukyu.

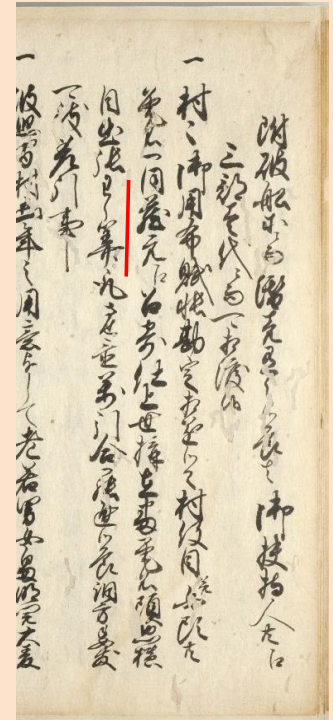
#### From *Yaeyamajima Kuramoto Kujichō*

Here is an excerpt from *Yaeyamajima Kuramoto Kujichō* which our library own. *Yaeyamajima Kuramoto Kujichō* is a document recorded the rules of administrations of *Yaeyama Kuramoto\** in the *Ōfu\** era. The document in the library is a copy of the article which was completed in 1857, and the copy was made in 1873. In this article, we can find the word “*Warazan.*”

According to the excerpt on the right, in which the duty of *Zaiban\** and *Kashira\** was noted, they should summon *Yakume\** of villages or *Onnazu\** to *Kuramoto* after they finish checking *Goyōfu Kubarichō\**, and they should make them record the contents of *Kubarichō* using *Warazan.*

The officers in those days did not notify people in writing how much people must give fabrics as tax, but they used *Warazan* to make them record the quantity.

Well, what is this *Warazan*?



#### What is the “*Warazan*”?

The image on the left is an example of *Warazan*. *Warazan* was used as a recording tool for the illiterate people from the *Ōfu* era to the beginning of the Meiji era. People used it to note the number or the quantity of what to pay as tax or to record trade and delivery of goods. The number of straws and the types of knot show its contents.

In the present day, we do not use it in our daily life, but the tradition ceremonially remains on the festive occasion. At *Itoman Tsunahiki\** held in every August of the lunar calendar, *Warazan* is still used to record the quantity of *Miki* (sacred sake) devoted to *Hakugindō\**.



If you want to know more about *Warazan*, let's go to University Museum, Fujukan near the Faculty of Agriculture, there you can find the example displayed!

- \* *Kuramoto*: a regional office which Shuri *Ōfu* set in Yaeyama, Kumejima, and Miyako
- \* *Ōfu*: the Government of Ryukyu Kingdom
- \* *Zaiban*: an official dispatched from Shuri *Ōfu* to administrate *Kuramoto*
- \* *Kashira*: a head of *Yaeyama Magiri*
- \* *Yakume*: villagers who play a role as local facilitators
- \* *Onnazu*: a woman who supervise women weaving cloth
- \* *Kubarichō*: an allotment book (for taxation)
- \* *Tsunahiki*: a tug-of-war
- \* *Hakugindō*: a name of the place of worship in Itoman city