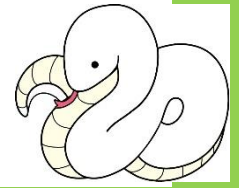




Column Kijimun's Monologue - Series of the Oriental Zodiac -  
No.1 *Mi* (means snake), a legend of *Harimizu utaki* in Miyako Islands

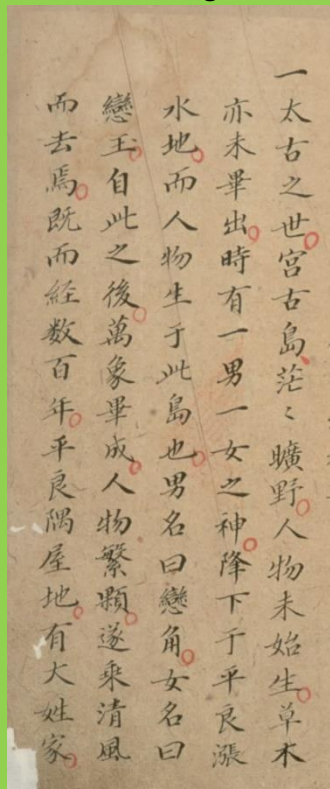
Keywords: Snake, *Harimizu utaki*, *Miwayama densetsu*, "*Irōsetsuden*",  
"*Ryukyukoku yuraiki*"



*Haisai! Kijimun yaibin!* It marks the 6th year, this column. In this fiscal year, I'm going to introduce some interesting stories concerning about the Oriental Zodiac and Ryukyu/Okinawa.

April is the 6th month of Oriental Zodiac; it is the month of the Snake. One of the famous stories of snake in Okinawa is a legend of *Harimizu utaki* (*utaki* means a sacred place in Okinawan dialect) in Miyako Islands. From

"*Irōsetsuden*" (Iha Fuyū collection, the University of the Ryukyus Library), a collection of narratives which was edited by Shuri Ōfu, I introduce the legend as follows:



A long, long ago, a god "Koitsuno" and a goddess "Koitama" came from heaven to Miyako Islands, and they gave birth to the whole universe. Hundreds of years later, there was a beautiful girl in Hirara, Miyako Islands. One day, a beautiful boy came to her room in the night, then she lost consciousness; when she recovered consciousness, she noticed that she conceived a child. She mourned her tragic fate. When the boy came to her room for the second time, she hung a needle with long thread on his hair to work out his true identity. On the next morning, she followed the thread; she arrived at a cave of *Harimizu utaki*. There was a big snake with the needle in its head. In the night, she had a dream of the snake, it said,

Image, Iha Fuyū Collection  
No.13 (2) "*Irōsetsuden*" vol.2,  
page3 (in part)

"I am an avatar of Koitsuno. You will bear three daughters. Bring them to *Harimizu utaki*,

when they reach the age of 3." Later, she did as he said, then, the big snake appeared, the children willingly embraced the snake. After that, the children went away into the *utaki* with the snake; they became guardian angels.



*Harimizu Utaki*, Miyako Islands (taken by the author)

This story is very similar to the legend of *Miwayama* (Mt. Miwa) in Japan. From this, we can see a broad-based connection of Okinawan legends. In Okinawa, there are other legends regarding a snake. Why don't you look for the legends!



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