



No.9 Ushi (a cow)

Keyword : cow, cattle breeding

x *Haisai and Haitai! It's Kijimun!*

This year is closing soon. Are you prepared for Christmas and New Year? I imagine you students are incredibly busy with their assignments, especially those of with your thesis. Make sure to save your work frequently. Anyway, this month's theme is 「丑」(a cow). The cow forms one of the Chinese zodiac. It became known as an unfortunate animal because it was overtaken by a mouse just as it was about to set foot in the house of a God.

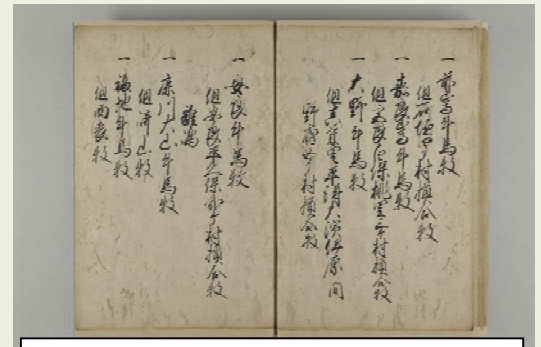
This allowed the Rat to be the earliest arrival of all the 12.

The literal interpretation of 「丑」(cow)

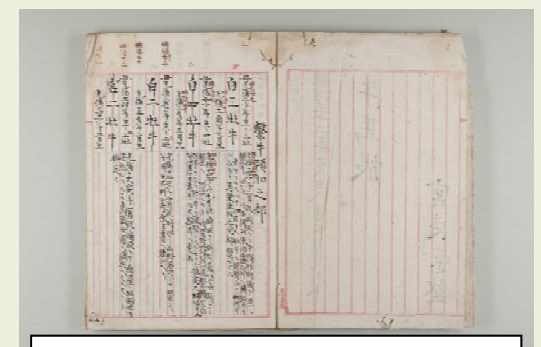
December, in accordance with the lunar calendar, indicates that people are just about to roll up their sleeves in labor, however, because of the lingering cold things have not been consummated thus they wait with patience for dissolution of the cold.

The relationship between people and cows in Yaeyama

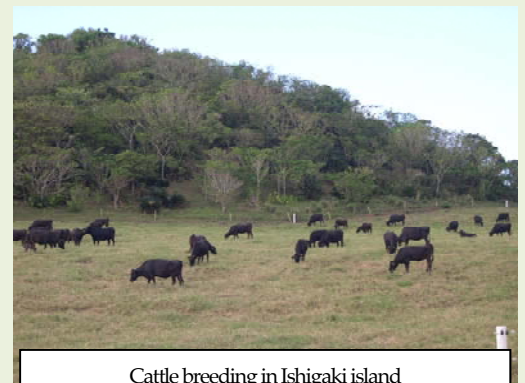
According to "*Ryūkyūkokuyuraiki*", *Shōruimon*, since ancient times, cows were seen as an essential domesticated animal, useful in agriculture to plough fields. There is a statement "Cows are supposedly came from China or Japan", though further details are not stipulated. Cattle breeding has flourished in Yaeyama and community livestock farming called "*Maki*" was developed around the whole mountain sides. Moreover, evidence from "*Yaeyamajima Somayama Shokumuchō*" indicates there were community farms called "*Moaimaki*", where people from different districts operated the farms as a team. Even the government oversaw some of the management of cattle breeding. "*Yoseyamaoyakata Yaeyamajima Kimochō*" is a document delivered in 1768 from the Shuri Government to implement its policy through its officers in Yaeyama. It prescribes that each of farmers was ordered to pursue cattle breeding during the cattle plague as it recognized that the plague threatened to annihilate the entire population of cattle. In addition, information has been found in a ledger called "*Gyūbachō*" which was used by cattle management to record the profiles of each cow; their birth date, maternal cattle, a history of their movements.



Yaeyamajima Somayama Shokumuchō
(Miyara Dunchi/Douchi Collection No.13.)



Gyūbachō
(Miyara Dunchi/Douchi Collection No.253)



Cattle breeding in Ishigaki island
(photo by Prof.Kawamoto)

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