

Column Kijimun's Monologue - Series of the Oriental Zodiac

No.10: *Tora* (a tiger)



Keywords: a Tiger, a story of a tiger and a cat, "Force a tiger out!", a flag of a tiger

Haisai & Haitai, Kijimun *Yaibin!* Happy New Year! The year of a boar starts, but this month's topic is "a tiger".

A tiger is the third animal of the Oriental Zodiac which starts with a mouse. As a time, it indicates between 3 a.m. to 5 a.m., and as a direction, it indicates the east-northeast. The Chinese character "寅" was originally derived from "蟻 (in•en)", and it shows a scene of sprouting grasses and trees in the spring. "虎" means a tiger, a wild beast.



① No27, a collection of Nishiwaki postcards, University of the Ryukyus Library

*A picture of the Naminoue Shrine from the viewpoint of the sea. (where the cat and the tiger fought?)

There is a folk story in Okinawa such as "Ikkyu-san's Witty Stories."

*Ikkyu-san is a Zen Buddhist monk in Muromachi era. As he left many anecdotes, his stories were compiled as "*Ikkyū banashi* (Ikkyū's stories)." He is very popular with his witness.

●Force a tiger out!

One day, a great man ordered to a man who was known as a person of wisdom: "Bind the tiger of a picture painted on a folding screen in an alcove!"

The wise man answered: "Certainly. Well, could you force a tiger out from the picture so that I can bind it with a rope, please?"

The great man lost for words.



●A story of a tiger and a cat

A long ago, a tiger was big but a weakling. The tiger wanted to be strong, so he became a pupil of a cat *Karate* master. As the tiger made progress in *Karate*, it began to hector.

Finally, the tiger offered battle to his master cat, and they went to fight at Naminoue.

When the tiger sprang at the cat, the cat jumped on a branch of pine tree which spread over a precipice. The cat, intentionally, did not teach how to climb a tree to the tiger, because the cat thought the tiger had a lousy attitude.

Time passed by glaring at each other, the tiger who had gotten impatient got away with a painting shot: "You, cheater! But you can't stay there forever. Once you get down from the tree, I will find you by smelling your feces, and I will eat you at any price."

It is said that from that day, a cat surely covers its feces with soil to hide from a tiger. And a tiger can't still climb a tree, because the tiger didn't learn how.

In the end, let me introduce a flag of tiger which was shown at the Edo procession. (See the picture below.) That's all for this month, be sure to read next month!

I am a tiger! I have wings on my back like an angel. I accompanied to the 16th Edo procession in 1832.

