

Ryukyu Kingdom & Island of God (Kudaka Island)

Spiritual Journey to Sacred Place

Okinawa, Japan



What is the RYUKYU ?

Okinawa is located between Japan mainisland and Asian countries.
The mythical era when God began to build a nation, the dynasty era when he was actively trading with the world, and the era of prayer for peace after a fierce war.
The vestiges of its own historical culture still remain strong.

[Ryukyu Opening Myth]

It has been worshiped since ancient times as the stage of the Ryukyu Kaibyaku(Beginning) myth that "Amami Kiyō" who descended from the absolutely inviolable god country "Niraikanai" created the land of Ryukyu. , Okinawa's first sacred place. "Kudaka Island", which floats off the southeastern part of Okinawa Prefecture, is a "God Island" where rituals are held more than 20 times a year even today under strict rules.

[Ryukyu dynasty]

Okinawa had been hunting and collecting for a long time until the Heian period (around the 10th century), but it became an agricultural society in the 12th century.
The three powers at that time were unified (Miyama unification), and Ryukyu in the 15th century.
The dynasty has risen. Ryukyu will continue to develop as a maritime nation.

Actively traded with neighboring countries such as China, East Asia, Southeast Asia, Korea, and Japan, and built an era called the "Great Trade Era." After that, Ryukyu came under the control of the Satsuma Domain due to the armed invasion of the Satsuma Domain in 1609, but trade with other countries continued, and while absorbing the culture of Japan and China during the Edo period, it was unique. We will form the Ryukyu culture.





Ryukyu Kingdom

The Ryukyu Kingdom is a royal country that was established about 570 years ago (1429) and existed in the Nansei Islands of Japan for about 450 years until about 120 years ago (1879).

In Ryukyu, a unique national unification different from that of the main island of Japan has progressed, and it has developed into a maritime kingdom through diplomacy and trade with China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asian countries. Shuri Castle was the political, economic and cultural center of the maritime kingdom.

The ruins of Shuri Castle stand out among the Gusuku sites registered as World Heritage Sites. By the time Sho Hashi unified Ryukyu, it had already appeared on the front stage of history. It has since become the political, diplomatic and cultural center of the kingdom for nearly 450 years.

Shurijo Castle is not only the largest wooden building in Okinawa, but also best represents the wisdom of the people at that time and the uniqueness of Okinawan culture, which perfectly adopted the architectural styles of Japan and China.





Sefa Utaki

Sefa Utaki is one of the seven Utaki - a place where the mythical gods of Ryukyu visit and a sacred place where ancestral gods are enshrined.

During the Ryukyu Kingdom era, Sefa Utaki was a place where the ruling king would come to worship the gods as well as the place for inauguration ceremony of Kikoe-Ogimi (highest ranking priestess of Ryukyuan religion).

For these same reasons, it came to be regarded by many as the "highest sacred site". Sefa Utaki was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in year 2000 as one of the "Gusuku Sites and Related Heritage Sites of the Kingdom of Ryukyu". Since then, the number of visitors has increased and now it is a popular sacred ground that is visited by more than 400,000 people a year.

On the other hand, it is also true that many people visit Sefa Utaki without sufficient knowledge or understanding. This is where a professional guide comes into the picture to explain the details as to why Sefa Utaki is a World Heritage Site, what was the primary purpose of it and how important Sefa Utaki is to Okinawa. During the tour, looking over to "Kudaka Island", an island opposing Sefa Utaki, will make you feel the connection with mythology of the Ryukyu.



Island of God (Kudaka Island)

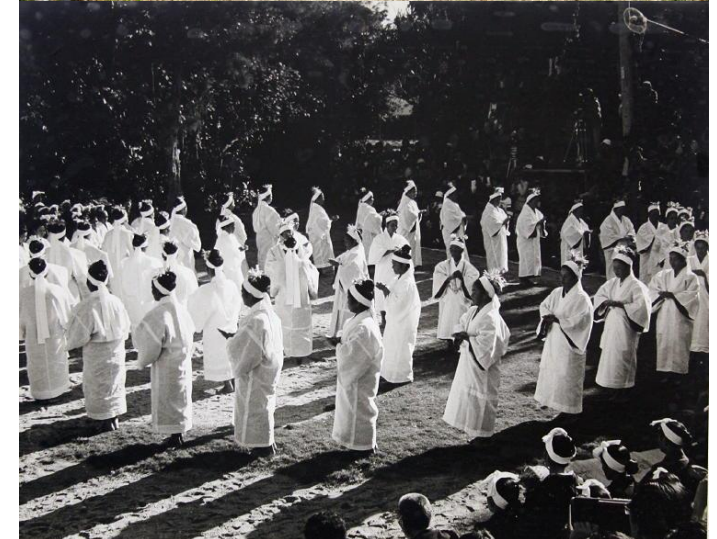
While there are various theories as to why Kudaka Island became a place of faith, the most famous is based on the concept of Niraikanai, a belief that God comes from the utopia of Niraikanai which lies beyond and deep under the sea. Kudaka Island, which is said to have been visited by the kings of Ryukyu over generations, continues to be the “Island of Prayer,” a famous subject pertaining to the faith of the people of Okinawa.

Sefa Utaki, one of the most notable sacred places on the main island of Okinawa is also believed to have been built to worship Kudaka Island.

There is a ritual that has been performed continuously on this island since the Ryukyu Dynasty (15th century), which is still performed today.

The whole of the Kudaka Island is a sacred place, and has an atmosphere different from other islands, where time passes in a special way.

Local tour guide certified by Mayor Kudaka will guide you.





Tamagusuku Castle Ruins

The ruins of a castle built in a natural fortress at an altitude of about 180 meters.

Climbing up the steep stairs, you will find an impressive circular castle gate with a hollowed out limestone, from which you can overlook Kudaka Island and the central and southern parts of the main island of Okinawa.

From that time to the present, worshipers are constantly worshipping as one of the worship places of the "Agari Umai" that goes around the sacred sites.



Nirai Kanai Bridge

Nirai Kanai is an old Okinawan word that means "beyond the eastern sea far away" and "the bottom of the sea, the other world that is said to be at the bottom of the earth."

Therefore, it is said to be the land where the gods live and is close to heaven.

The Nirai Kanai Bridge is about 40 minutes by car from Naha.

Time Schedule

Spiritual Journey to Sacred Place

