

《Session 1》

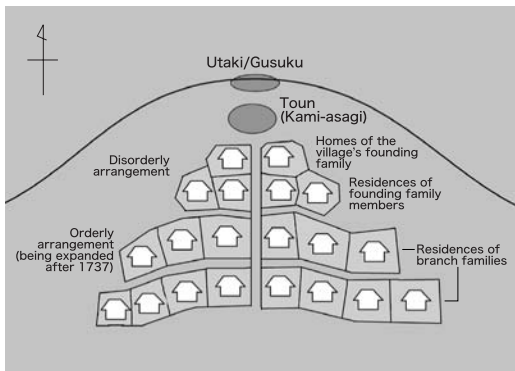
From *Gusuku* to *Utaki*: Okinawa's Sacred Areas from an Archeological Perspective

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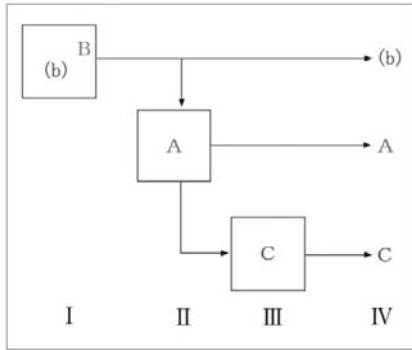
In a traditional Okinawan village, you will find a sacred area called an “*Utaki*” where the residents’ ancestors are honored. In my report, I will examine how the *Utaki* of Okinawan villages came to be by looking at their relationship with the *Gusuku*.

Here, I will explain the relationship between *Utaki* and villages in a schematic manner. *Utaki* is located in the forest of a hilly region found behind a village, and a small settlement is located on the slopes of these hills. Adjacent to the settlement and the *Utaki* are open areas called “*toun*” or “*kami-asagi*”. Because ordinary residents are not allowed to enter the *Utaki*, the gods are invited to these open areas where people gather and hold festivals. Near the *Utaki* and *toun* is the home of the village’s founding family, and below this are the residences of founding family members and branch families. In principle, a village that is made up of a single collection of houses contains one *Utaki* and one *toun*, while a village that is made up of multiple groups of houses may have several *Utaki* and *toun*.



the relationship between *Utaki* and village

This traditional village-*Utaki* formation in Okinawa is closely connected with the history of the *Gusuku*. In the Ryukyu Islands, there are over 300 ancient sites called *Gusuku*, and almost all villages on the Okinawa Islands have *Utaki*. In the 1970s, what was called the “*Gusuku* Dispute” regarding the



Mr. TAKARA Kurayoshi's Gusuku Model
Reference: Takara "Okinawa Rekishiron Josetsu"
(Preface of Okinawa's historical essay)

nature of the *Gusuku*. This dispute centered on three theories: 1) that the *Gusuku* were castles in which local chieftains (called "aji") lived, 2) that they were sacred areas having the same characteristics as *Utaki*, and 3) (based on archeological digs) that they were settlements built for defensive purposes.

This dispute was arranged and given order by Mr. TAKARA Kurayoshi's "Gusuku Model".

According to the model, the first *Gusuku* appeared at the beginning of the "Gusuku Period" (latter half of the 11th Century to mid-15th Century) as highland settlements (defensive settlements) (B) having sacred areas (b) within them. Then, *Gusuku* that survived conflicts with other *Gusuku* developed as castles (A) in which the *ajis* resided. On the other hand, in *Gusuku* that were defeated in these conflicts, the settlements were moved outside of the *Gusuku*, with their sacred areas remaining behind. Thus, the *Gusuku* themselves transformed into sacred areas. Furthermore, special *Gusuku* (C) also arose as fortifications and tombs. Thus, according to Mr. TAKARA's Gusuku Model, the forms and functions of the *Gusuku* changed through time.

I see the transformation of *Gusuku* using a "large *Gusuku*" and "small *Gusuku*" concept, which puts a different slant on the Gusuku Dispute. Many *Gusuku* are "small *Gusuku*" having an area of 1,000 m² or less. Although small *Gusuku* include tombs to protect Naha Port or trade warehouses, there are many that are made of low stone masonry that encloses areas of around 100 to 500 m², and others that are made simply of rocks without a stone-masonry enclosure. These have become the *Utaki* seen in today's villages.

Large *Gusuku* emerged in the 13th Century, with some large *Gusuku* developing around a small *Gusuku* at their core. Large *Gusuku* are typified as having a "seiden" (large building for ceremonial purposes) with an *una* (open area) located in front. They range in size from 2,000 m² to Shuri Castle, which extends over 40,000 m². These *Gusuku* are thought to have been the residences of *aji* and kings. Large *Gusuku* always contain a sacred area, and almost all of these sacred areas have become *Utaki* in modern villages. Shuri Castle contains Shurimori



Neishi Gusuku



Shuri Castle



Toun of Itokazu Gusuku



Zakimi Gusuku

Gusuku and other sacred areas, and Nakijin Gusuku, Nakagusuku Gusuku, and Katsuren Gusuku contain *Utaki* of modern villages.

Many of the large *Gusuku* that emerged in Okinawa during the Gusuku Period were abolished during the first Shoshi Period (15th Century) when the Ryukyu Kingdom was unified. Of the *Gusuku* in which royal families resided, only Shuri Castle, Urasoe Gusuku, and Nakijin Gusuku remain from the Second Shoshi Period (16th century), when a central authority was established. These sites ceased to function as large *Gusuku* in 1609 when the Shimazu Clan conquered the Ryukyu Islands.

However, the sacred areas of both large and small *Gusuku* remained, and

they came to function as village *Utaki* in modern times. The names of *Utaki* in various villages are recorded in “*Ryukyukoku Yuraiki*” (Origin of the Ryukyu Nation), which was compiled by the Ryukyu royal government in 1713. Looking at this work, we know that the sacred areas of both large and small *Gusuku* are among the *Utaki* found in today’s villages. In fact, the sacred areas of almost all *Gusuku* have become *Utaki* in modern villages. Furthermore, it is thought that not only these sacred areas themselves but also the forests stretching through the *Gusuku* became seen as *Utaki*.

Here, I would like to present an example of the process by which a sacred area within a *Gusuku* came to be an *Utaki* in a modern village using the modern village of Ozato Magiri Inafuku and the Inafuku Ruins of the Gusuku Period. According to “*Ryukyukoku Yuraiki*”, Inafuku Village had four *Utaki* (Yamagusukun *Utaki*, Uin *Utaki*, Nakamui, and Hakemui) and the Inafukunu Toun. Today, these sites are known as Inuugan (combined Yamagusukun *Utaki* and Uin *Utaki*), and Nakamui, Nakamuranu *Utaki*, and Inafukunu Toun. Inafuku Village is located on a hill, with Inuugan located on a rise to the north and Nakamui and Nakamuranu *Utaki* on the east. Near Inuugan are Inafukunu Toun and a collection of founding family residences.

The Inafuku Ruins of the Gusuku Period are an area in which Inafuku’s *Utaki* and village overlap. There are three sets of ruins in the area: the Inuugan Ruins (12th to 14th Century), Nakamuranu *Utaki* Ruins (14th Century), and Inafukunu Toun Ruins, which include Inafukunu Toun and an area of founding family residences (14th to 16th Century). The Inuugan Ruins - with its large building (=seiden), open area (=una) around which residences, warehouses, and a blacksmiths shop were built, and sacred areas - are thought to be an early large *Gusuku*. The other two sets of ruins are thought to be small residential areas having sacred areas. The Inafuku Ruins were integrated as a settlement into the Inafukunu Toun Ruins in the 14th century and later developed into today’s Inafuku Village.

The Inafuku Ruins are thought to have been from a ruling clan made up of two small groups, primarily including the Inuugan group of the large *Gusuku* that ruled the Ozato region. Later, when the Inuugan group lost control of the Ozato region in the latter half of the 14th Century, each group was unified into the site of the Inafukunu Toun Ruins, which became the origin of the Inafuku settlement. It is thus thought that the sacred areas of the Gusuku Period (and, later, the forests of this region) became the sacred areas (i.e., *Utaki*) of Inafuku Village in subsequent years.

