

# Ishiganto (Talismanic Stone) and Cultural Interaction Mainly in Amami Islands

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# *Ishiganto* (Talismanic Stone) and Cultural Interaction

— Mainly in Amami Islands —

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**Key words:** *Ishiganto*, Ryukyu, Amami Archipelago, Kikai-jima, traditional geographical outlook, Cultural negotiation

## 1 *Ishiganto*– An Overview and Past Research

Introduced from China, *ishiganto*, talismanic stone tablets, are one aspect of so-called traditional geographical thoughts or outlook. Found not only in Okinawa, *ishiganto* spread to the Amami Archipelago, which is only natural considering the archipelago was once a part of the Ryukyu Kingdom, and areas throughout Japan.

In China, it was a commonly thought that T-intersections and four-way intersections were rife with evil spirits, and *ishiganto* were placed at such locations to ward off these evil spirits. However, the origins of this custom are unclear. A variety of research has been conducted regarding this, and for various reasons including the fact that an *ishiganto* was discovered that dates back to 770 (the fifth year of the reign of Emperor Daizong of the Tang Dynasty), it is assumed that the custom had already been introduced by the Tang dynasty. Therefore, it is generally thought the practice of erecting *ishiganto* spread throughout China in the latter half of the eighth century, and this custom traveled via the Fujian Province region to the Ryukyu Archipelago and various regions in Southeast Asia. While not certain, it is thought that the custom reached the Ryukyu Archipelago around the middle of the fifteenth century and Japan at the end of the sixteenth century, spreading as far north as Akita, Aomori and Hokkaido.

A vast amount of research has been conducted regarding *ishiganto* in Japan.<sup>1)</sup> Among this research, special mention should be given to the extensive and vigorous research conducted by Masato Kodama and Mototoshi Hisanaga.

The results of Masato Kodama's research have been compiled in two lengthy volumes.<sup>2)</sup> In these books, Kodama not only examines the origins and history of *ishiganto* by scouring a wide range of historical documents, but also includes detailed reports on the distribution and actual condition of *ishi-*

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1) For example, there is the series of research conducted by Kubo Noritada. Detailed research on *ishiganto* can be found in the works of Masato Kodama discussed below.

2) Masato Kodama. *Ishiganto* (Ryukyu Shinpo Sha, June 27, 1999), 1-342.

Masato Kodama. *Minzoku-Shinkyo Nihon No Ishiganto* (Keiyusha, December 21, 2004), 1-473

*ganto*, which is based on information from fellow *ishiganto* enthusiasts.

The following outlines the distribution of *ishiganto* in Japan based on research conducted by Kodama. According to Kodama, *ishiganto* have been found in 29 prefectures throughout Japan as of April 2004. The largest number of them are located in Okinawa Prefecture, and though the actual numbers are unconfirmed, Kodama estimates that there are over 10,000 such tablets in the prefecture. With 1,000 tablets, Kagoshima Prefecture, which includes the Amami Archipelago, is home to the second largest number of *ishiganto*. Following Kagoshima Prefecture comes neighboring Miyazaki Prefecture, which has 94 tablets. This is only natural considering the fact that Miyazaki is next to Kagoshima which has a deep relationship with the Ryukyu Archipelago.

After Miyazaki Prefecture, the ranking of prefectures is as follows: Akita with 38; Tokushima with 13; Osaka with 11; Saga with 9; Tokyo with 8; Kanagawa with 6; Hyogo with 5; Aomori with 4; Nagano and Miyagi with 3 each; Nagasaki, Hiroshima, Wakayama, Kyoto, Chiba and Saitama with 2 each; and Oita, Ehime, Yamaguchi, Okayama, Nara, Shiga, Shizuoka, Tochigi, Yamagata and Hokkaido with 1 each. The numbers Kodama gives are not definitive. As Kodama himself observes, even today there is a tendency for the number of *ishiganto* to increase. Even if the time frame is limited to up to 2004, it cannot be denied that a considerable number of *ishiganto* may have been missed in his investigation. Actually, I have also frequently discovered *ishiganto* that do not appear on Kodama's list, and based on investigations conducted on the Amami Archipelago by Hisanaga, who is discussed below, there are a dramatically larger number of *ishiganto* than that the figure given by Kodama. Therefore, the number of *ishiganto* discussed here should be taken as rough figures.

However, it is possible to pick out particular patterns even using Kodama's estimates. In fact, Kodama also points out the following based on the distribution of *ishiganto*. They are heavily concentrated in Okinawa and Southern Kyushu; in the north they are scattered up to Hakodate in Hokkaido. Although none have been found in Sanin, Hokuriku, and Echigo along the Japan Sea, there are old *ishiganto* in Yamagata, Akita, and Aomori. With 38 tablets (formerly 47), Akita has the largest number on Honshu. Furthermore, it is interesting that the 13 tablets in Tokushima on Shikoku used to be counted as 27, and several of them are very old. It is also strange that there are few *ishiganto* in both Fukuoka and Nagasaki, which used to be and still are hubs of cultural exchange with China.

With regard to the distribution of *ishiganto* in areas such as Akita, Saitama, and Nagano prefectures, Kodama hypothesizes that the use of *ishiganto* spread from Edo (the former name of Tokyo) and was introduced by Confucian scholars. While there is little argument regarding the view that *ishiganto* spread from Edo to Saitama, Akita, and Nagano prefectures, there is room for debate regarding the idea that the diffusion was driven solely by Confucian scholars who studied literature from China. It is widely accepted that influences from numerous other cultures spread from China to the Ryukyu Islands and then to Edo via Satsuma. If consideration is also given to the early modern Ryukyu boom, it is probably inappropriate to ignore the Ryukyu Islands' role in the spread of *ishiganto* to Edo.

Another researcher who should not be forgotten is Mototoshi Hisanaga. In addition to running a cafeteria in the Kashima area of Yodogawa-ku, Osaka, Hisanaga conducts research on *ishiganto*.

Hisanaga has created not only a highly detailed and exhaustive map of *ishiganto* in various regions including the Amami Archipelago, but also a report that includes details on the *ishiganto*, such as location, size, shape, estimated age, material, inscriptions, and name of the house where it is located. According to Kodama's research, there were 377 tablets in the Amami Archipelago in 1999, but the figure had fallen to 361 by 2004; however, according to Hisanaga's report there are 642 tablets

throughout the Amami Archipelago.<sup>3)</sup> The number of tablets in the Amami Archipelago provided by Hisanaga is closer to the actual figure. On the other hand, though Hisanaga's report is backed by exhaustive fieldwork, it should be kept in mind that the number of *ishiganto* increases every year even in the Amami Archipelago. For example, a beautiful, new *ishiganto* has been placed in front of the Kunigami post office in Wadamari-cho on Okinoerabu-jima (Okinoerabu Island). This post office was built in either 2003 or 2004, and according to interviews I conducted in 2005, a relative from Okinoerabu-jima living in Tokyo said that since the new post office was located at a T-intersection, an *ishiganto* should be placed there. The relative ordered one from a business in Okinawa and provided it as a gift. In this way, there are *ishiganto* that have been left out of Hisanaga's study, and it is highly probable that the number of *ishiganto* will increase in the future, which means that the figures in the study are not fixed. While conducting an exhaustive study of *ishiganto* on both Yoron-to (Yoron Island) and Okinoerabu-jima, I was able to confirm that there are *ishiganto* that are not included in Hisanaga's study. Nonetheless, there is no other material comparable to Hisanaga's detailed investigation of the whole of the Amami Archipelago, and I would like to use his figures as the basis for this paper. As for *ishiganto* in Okinawa Prefecture, I have conducted fieldwork in the Shuri and Tsuboya areas of Naha-shi, but the results of that research will be covered in different papers.<sup>4)</sup>

## 2 *Ishiganto* in the Amami Archipelago

### (1) *Ishiganto* on Yoron-to

Yoron-to is a low-lying island with an area of 20.8 km<sup>2</sup> located at the southernmost tip of the Amami Archipelago. There is a section in the *Nanto-Fudoki* (ancient records of the culture and geography of the southern islands of Japan) that includes the line ““Kinoetora yoruno jitoshiki”, and the name *Kaifuta* (Old name for Yoron-to) appears in the *Omoroshoushi* (a collection of ancient Okinawan poems compiled by the Shuri King). Viewed from Okinawa, Yoron-to looks like a bow or a low-lying “great green turban”

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3) Mototoshi Hisanaga. *Ishiganto Tanbo Daiisshu Kikai-cho-hen*. (Yukiya Shobo, November 11, 1989), 1-84; Mototoshi Hisanaga. *Ishiganto Tanbo Dainishi*. (Yukiya Shobo, July 7, 1991), 1-167  
*Daiisshu* was sponsored by Kikai-cho City Offices and *Dainishu* by Mitsunobu Sakita, the head of the Okinoerabu Local Research Society (Okinoerabu-kyodo-kenkyukai). In addition, I directly met with Hisanaga in June 2006 and he taught me various things. I would like to express my thanks to him.

4) Research on the Shuri area of Naha-shi has appeared in the following: *Naha-shi To Sono Shuhen No Chiri-2004 Kansai Daigaku Chirikyoshitsu Jisshu Chousa Hokokusho 29* (Department of Geography at the Kansai University, Mach 1, 2005) 1-150; a presentation given at a seminar held by Minoru Senda on October 29, 2005, which was mainly about the process of change through the introduction of modern geography into traditional geographical thought in East Asia and the surrounding area; 2004-2006 Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research A (1) Newsletter No. 6 (Minoru Senda representative), January 12, 2006; and *Ryukyu Ni Okeru Ishiganto-Naha-shi Shuri-chiku O Jirei To Shite*, which will appear in the forthcoming book *Ajia No Jidai No Chirigaku- Dento to Henkaku* edited by Minoru Senda and to be published by Kokonshoin.

Research on *ishiganto* in Tsuboya has appeared in the following: the paper *Ryukyu No Shuraku-keikan To Ishiganto-Shuri to Tsuboya*, which was presented at the symposium, Okinawa And Vietnam Amidst Cultural Exchanges in Asia that was sponsored by the Center for The Study of Asian Cultures, Kansai University, and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research B (research representative Seiichi Takahashi), and held at the Okinawa Prefectural Archives on February 17, 2007. This is expected to be recorded as *Naha-shi Tsuboya-chiku Ni Okeru Ishiganto To Shuraku-keitai for Ajia Bunka Koryu Kenkyu* Vol. 3 (2008).

shell, which is said to be the origins of its name.

After paying tribute to the Ryukyu King Eiso in 1266, Yoron-to came under the control of the Ryukyu Kingdom and remained so for the following 343 years. It is said that Oshan, the third son of the Ryukyu Hokuzan King Haneji traveled to Yoron-to as the master of the island and launched construction of Yoron castle in 1405. After that, Shochoei (Shinzaburo Hanashiro), the second son of the Ryukyu King Shoshin, traveled to Yoron-to as the lord of the island in 1512 and established the foundations of a system of rule where the king was worshipped as a god. However, in 1609, the Kagoshima clan invaded the Ryukyu Kingdom and tore the Amami Archipelago away; and the Amami Archipelago came under the direct control of the Kagoshima clan in 1611. A local magistrate (*daikan*) was assigned to Daikuma located on Amami-oshima in 1613, and the magistrate governed all the islands. In 1616, a local magistrate was assigned to Kamezu on Tokuno-shima (Tokuno Island) and ruled both Okinoerabu-jima and Yoron-to. In 1690, the offices of a local magistrate were built in Wadomari on Okinoerabu-jima, and the magistrate governed both Okinoerabu-jima and Yoron-to. After that, a magistrate's office was established in Omizu on Yoron-to in 1860, and two clerks (*shoki*) were assigned to the office; the island was governed as two separate administrative districts (*magiri*)—the west *magiri* was called Omizu *magiri* and included the current areas of Gusuku, Riccho, Chabana, and part of Asato while the east *magiri* included the current areas of Nishi-ku, Higashi-ku (*Oaza-mugiya*), Furusato, and part of Asato. The island is said to have had an agricultural output of 1,270 koku (1 koku = 180.39 liters) in 1664, which rose to 2,413 koku by 1727.<sup>5)</sup>

On Yoron-to, 8 *ishiganto* have been confirmed in Oaza-mugiya and 1 in Asato. For Yoron-to, the size of an *oaza* (an administrative unit of a municipality) and the relationship among villages is complex, and Mugiya is an expansive area. Therefore, it is probably better to say that the 8 *ishiganto* in Mugiya are limited to the Gusuku-shuraku (village of Gukusu). Also, the *ishiganto* in Asato adjoins Gusuku-shuraku, so the *ishiganto* on Yoron-to can be said to be concentrated in the area adjoining Yoron Castle. On the other hand, it is assumed that there are no *ishiganto* in Chabana, Hama, Furusato, or Riccho (the *oaza* are listed in order of the Japanese syllabary). *Ishiganto* can be found in 2 out of 6 *oaza*. However, these figures are based on Hisanaga's research; based on my own research, it looks like there were *ishiganto* in Chabana-shuraku (the village of Chabana).

Even though it was noted that 8 *ishiganto* were found in the Gusuku-shuraku, 4 of them are concentrated in 1 residence—2 are facing each other at the entrance to the premises from the road, 1 is at the corner of a small path that runs along the premises, and 1 is at a bend in a path that leads to the residence<sup>6)</sup>. In other words, the *ishiganto* are placed at different spots than the dead-end of village roads, which is the common location in Okinawa Prefecture. Having said that, focus should be on the fact that the *ishiganto* on Yoron-to are basically concentrated around the vicinity of Yoron Castle. This area is not only the central village on Yoron-to, but also has the strong feeling of an old Ryukyu village. Although it is said that placing *ishiganto* in this manner started in the Meiji Era, some referred to as *hinpun* are located at residences, which is also seen on

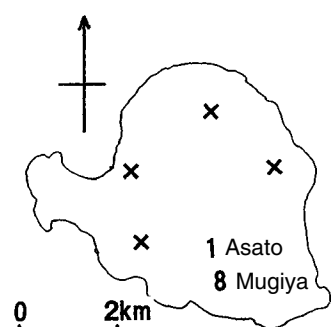


Figure 1. *Ishiganto* on Yoron-to

5) The outline regarding Amami Archipelago, including Yoron-to, is based on various sources including *Kakugawa Nihon Chimei Daijiten 46 Kagoshima* (March 8, 1983)

6) The fieldwork related to *ishiganto* on Yoron-to was conducted in 2005 with Mayumi Take and Morikubo Take.

Okinawa, and this placement was considered important for *shinigu*, a place to hold harvest festivals which had been supported by tradition since long ago.<sup>7)</sup> Another fact that should be stressed is that the word “*ishiganto*” was carved on one *ishiganto* located in Gusuku-shuraku, which is extremely similar to an *ishiganto* located on Okinoerabu-jima.<sup>8)</sup>

Looking at Yoron-to as a single unit, the island has an area of 20.8 km<sup>2</sup> and population of 1,939 households, which translates into 1 *ishiganto* per 2.3 km<sup>2</sup> or 215 households.<sup>9)</sup> In the Mugiya and Asato areas, where the *ishiganto* are concentrated, there are 676 households, which translates into 1 *ishiganto* per 75 households. Even within these areas, the *ishiganto* are mainly located in Gusuku-shuraku and the surrounding area; therefore, it can be said that *ishiganto* on the island are highly concentrated in a very small area.

There is another particularly notable point regarding the *ishiganto* on Yoron-to. Although there is no proof that this is true for all the *ishiganto* on the island, at least among the ones that I observed, there were no new nameplate-type *ishiganto* that are commonly seen in places such as Okinawa-jima (Okinawa Island). Even on the other islands that make up the Amami Archipelago, which is discussed below, there are many of these new nameplate-type *ishiganto*, which can be called a recent fashion, but they are nowhere to be found on Yoron-to. In addition, I got the impression that the word *ishiganto* and significance of the tablets are widely known on Okinoerabu-jima and islands farther north in the Amami Archipelago; however, on Yoron-to, it seemed that most people, even people with a deep understanding of local history, were not aware of the location or significance of *ishiganto*. In other words, it is probably safe to say that people on the island have a limited awareness of *ishiganto*. This may be evidence that the *ishiganto* that are thought to have spread from the Ryukyu Islands to the Amami Archipelago in fact reached the Amami Archipelago through the Kagoshima clan, the opposite direction than originally assumed, and did not reach Yoron-to, the far end of the Amami Archipelago. (figure 1)

## (2) *Ishiganto* on Okinoerabu-jima

Located between Yoron-to and Tokuno-shima, Okinoerabu-jima is an island with an area of 94.5 km<sup>2</sup>. The name was given to contrast it with the Kuchinoerabu-jima ( Kuchinoerabu Island) of the Osumi Archipelago. The island forms a flat terrace on a protruding coral reef. Centered on Mt. Oyama (elevation 245 m), which is composed of Paleozoic rocks, the island has a karst topography covered by pleistocene coral reef deposits called the Ryukyu Group.

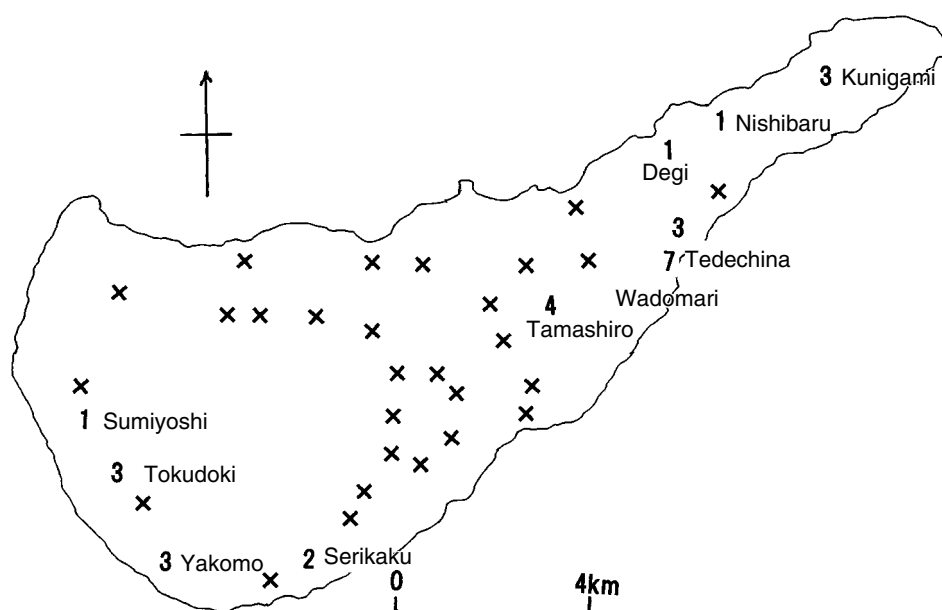
It is said that in 1266, the island came under the control of the Ryukyu King Eiso and the following year, a member of the royal family of the Ryukyu Kingdom referred to as *anji* was dispatched to the

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7) Seiichi Takahashi and Morikubo Take. *Yoron-to Ryukyu No Genfukei Ga Nororu Shima* (Nakanishiya Shuppan, April 1, 2005), 1-208

8) Based on discussions with Mitsunobu Sakita, a resident of Okinoerabu-jima

9) Some figures for the area of the islands and municipalities discussed below are different than the figures released by bodies such as the particular municipality. As a general rule, figures appearing in this paper are those appearing in *Kakugawa Nihon Chimei Daijiten 46 Kagoshima-ken* (March 8, 1983). There are also major differences in annual figures for the number of households. Figures from the *Daijiten* are used for several reasons. First, in this paper, it is important to use, as much as possible, figures for particular *oaza* that are from the same period. Furthermore, it is also more important to consider the situation in the recent past when the population and number of households were stable than the current situation when both are dramatically declining. Therefore, I decided to use figures for the number of households in the 1980s, eliminating the problem that at the present time the number of households is declining. For Kikai-cho, both figures for that period and those as of February 1, 2006, are used.

Figure 2. *Ishiganto* on Okinoerabu-jima

island and established a system of rule where the king was worshiped as a god. Mamachichiyo, the second son of the Hokuzan King (the king of one of the three sub-kingdoms that comprised the larger Ryukyu Kingdom), and the niece of Nishime-Noro of Okinoerabu-jima, was given the island as a fiefdom to rule in 1395. The remains of Mamachichiyo were buried in a traditional Ryukyu-style crypt, which is located in Uchijiro, Wadamari-cho.

Starting in 1609, Okinoerabu-jima came under the direct control of the Kagoshima clan as had Yoron-to. In 1616, a local magistrate (*daikan*) was assigned to Kamezu on Tokuno-shima, and the magistrate governed both Okinoerabu-jima and Yoron-to. A magistrate's office was established in Wadamari on Okinoerabu-jima after administration of the island was separated from that of Tokuno-shima in 1690. This continued until 1869, and the office was transformed into a *zaibansho*. During the Edo Period (1603-1868), Okinoerabu-jima was governed using the system of *magiri*, administrative zones, employed during the Ryukyu Period—the island was divided into three *magiri* (Kibiru, Ojira, and Gushiken) and the island was administered by three *yonin*. In 1727, the land was appraised to have an agricultural output of 6,410 *koku*, but it struggled under the burden of the clan's tight sugar monopoly.

On Okinoerabu-jima, there are 19 *ishiganto* in Wadamari-cho and 9 in China-cho. The island has an area of 94.5 km<sup>2</sup>, which translates into 1 *ishiganto* per 3.4 km<sup>2</sup>. In addition, there are 5,252 households on the island, which means there is 1 *ishiganto* per 187.6 households. In terms of area, Okinoerabu-jima has a lower density of *ishiganto* than Yoron-to, which has on average 1 *ishiganto* per 2.3 km<sup>2</sup>; however, Okinoerabu-jima has a slightly higher density in terms of household. Overall, it is impossible to avoid the impression that Okinoerabu-jima has a higher density of *ishiganto*. This is because there are *ishiganto* throughout the island, and it appears that many of the islanders are fully conscious of them. For example, in Kunigami-shuraku (village of Kunigami) an *ishiganto* that had been facing a street in front of a house was moved to a garden on the grounds of the house since the *ishiganto* was valued. As can be seen from this case, there appears to be awareness that the *ishiganto* are valuable and should be preserved. On the other hand, it is likely that the islanders' understanding of where *ishiganto* were originally supposed to be placed is fading. Even on this island, there are slight variations in *ishiganto* density.

A total of 2,735 households live in Wadamari-cho, which translates into 1 *ishiganto* per 143.9 households, but China-cho with 2,517 households has 1 *ishiganto* per 279.7 households. Wadamari-cho, which is close to Kagoshima, has a higher density of *ishiganto*.

Looking at the distribution of *ishiganto* in terms of *oaza*, within Wadamari-cho, there are 3 *ishiganto* in Kunigami, 4 in Tamajiro, 1 in Degi, 3 in Tedechina, 1 in Nishibaru, and 7 in Wadamari, but none in Azefu, Uchijiro, Ojiro, Kibiru, Goran, Sena, Taniyama, Nagamine, Neori, Furusato, Minakawa, and Wa (the *oaza* are listed in order of the Japanese syllabary). This means that *ishiganto* are located in 6 of the 18 *oaza*. Within China-cho, there is 1 *ishiganto* in Sumiyoshi, 2 in Serikaku, 3 in Tokudoki, 3 in Yakomo, but none in Akamine, Asikiyoura, Amata, Otsukan, Kamishiro, Kamihirakawa, Gushiken, Kuronuki, Saozu, Shimojiro, Shimohirakawa, Sinjyo, Tamina, China, Masana, and Yakomo (the *oaza* are listed in order of the Japanese syllabary). *Ishiganto* are located in only 4 of the 20 *oaza* within China-cho.

Looking only at these numbers, it appears that there is no significant difference from Yoron-to, but I have the impression that there are many more *ishiganto* than the actual (recorded) number in the villages along the northeast and southwest shorelines. Special attention should be paid to the fact that there are many *ishiganto* in areas around the two major harbors of Okinoerabu-jima, such as Wadamari, Tedechina, Serikaku, and Yakomo. While there are many old *ishiganto*, the residents are also strongly conscious of these tablets as is evident by the fact that there are many new *ishiganto*, such as the one placed at the newly built Kunigami post office, which I mentioned earlier, and that one was displayed at the China-cho Records Office. We can say that this demonstrates a different attitude than that found on Yoron-to, which lies close to Okinawa. (Figure 2)

### (3) *Ishiganto* on Tokuno-shima

With an area of 247.9 km<sup>2</sup>, Tokuno-shima is the second largest island in the Amami Archipelago (Amami-oshima being the largest). A Paleozoic-strata mountain range, whose main peak is Mt. Inogawa (elevation 645), runs along the center of the island. Tokuno-shima has the largest area of agricultural land among the islands composing the Amami Archipelago and fell under the tyranny of the Kagoshima clan, which ran the island, along with the Amami-oshima and Kikai-jima, as black sugar factories between 1831 and 1873.

References to Tokuno-shima first appear in the *Shokunihonki* in which it is recorded that people from areas including Amami and Toku visited Kyoto in 699. It is likely that the island continued to pay tribute after that visit. Based on material including references to the duties of Amami-language translators during the era that Japanese missions were dispatched to the Tang Court via the southern islands, Tokuno-shima is thought to have functioned as a way station on the journey to the Ryukyu Islands and China.

On the other hand, it is assumed that there was an *anji-kanashi*, a class-based ruler, on Tokuno-shima since before the Nara Period. Although it is said that Tokuno-shima was incorporated into the Okuma State in 824, the island strengthened its overtures to the Ryukyu Kingdom throughout the era of *anji* rule as its relationship with the Yamato Imperial Court grew weaker. In 1263, Shuri-no-Nushi, the highest lord of Tokuno-shima, arrived on the island, and the island came under the rule of the Ryukyu Kingdom. The island started paying tribute to the Ryukyu King in 1266, which was the beginning of its subjugation by the kingdom. This fact is clearly depicted in the *Noro-honin-jireisho* of 1600, an assignment record for the hereditary caste of female mediums of Okinawa (*noro*).

However, in 1609, the Satsuma army led by Kabayama Minomori Hisataka attacked Tokuno-shima



during its invasion of the Ryukyu Kingdom, and the island fell under the direct control of the Kagoshima clan. Subsequently, the magistrate (*bugyo*), Sagara Kadenō began to rule the island in 1616. The name of the position was changed to local magistrate (*daikan*) in 1640, and the island was ruled under this system until 1867. Under the local magistrate, five officials—3 *tsukeyaku* and 2 *yokome*—were stationed in Kametsu, and these officials ruled the whole island, which was a continuation of the previous oppressive regime. During the clan rule, the five islands of the Amami Archipelago had an agricultural output of 35,614 *koku* in 1610 and this was revised to 43,217 *koku* in 1621 according to the cadastral register, but there are no clear figures for individual islands. However, based on the *Tokunoshima Eizu* (a pictorial map of Tokuno-shima), the agricultural output of Tokuno-shima appears to have been 15,318 *koku* in 1851.

A total of 101 *ishiganto* have been confirmed throughout Tokuno-shima, which has an area of 247.9 km<sup>2</sup>. This translates into 1 *ishiganto* per 2.5 km<sup>2</sup>. There are 10,917 households on the island, which means there is 1 *ishiganto* per 108.1 households.

In terms of area, Tokuno-shima has a higher density of *ishiganto* than that of Okinoerabu-jima but has about the same density as Yoron-to. In terms of households, Tokuno-shima has the highest density among the three southern most islands of the Amami Archipelago.

However, a breakdown in the number of *ishiganto* by municipality reveals that there are substantial differences in *ishiganto* density among cities. For example, Tokunoshima-cho has 19 *ishiganto* (which translates to 1 *ishiganto* per 5.5 km<sup>2</sup> or 258.2 households), Amagi-cho has 7 *ishiganto* (1 *ishiganto* per 11.5 km<sup>2</sup> or 395.4 households), Isen-cho has 75 *ishiganto* (1 *ishiganto* per 0.8 km<sup>2</sup> or 43.3 households). It should be noted that Isen-cho has an extremely high *ishiganto* density.

Within Tokunoshima-cho, there are 9 *ishiganto* in Inokawa *oaza*, 4 in Kametsu, 3 in Kametoku, 1 in Tokuwase, and 2 in Boma, but none in Omo, Kanami, Kaminomine, Kedoku, San, Shimokushi, Shirai, Tete, and Todoroki (the *oaza* are listed

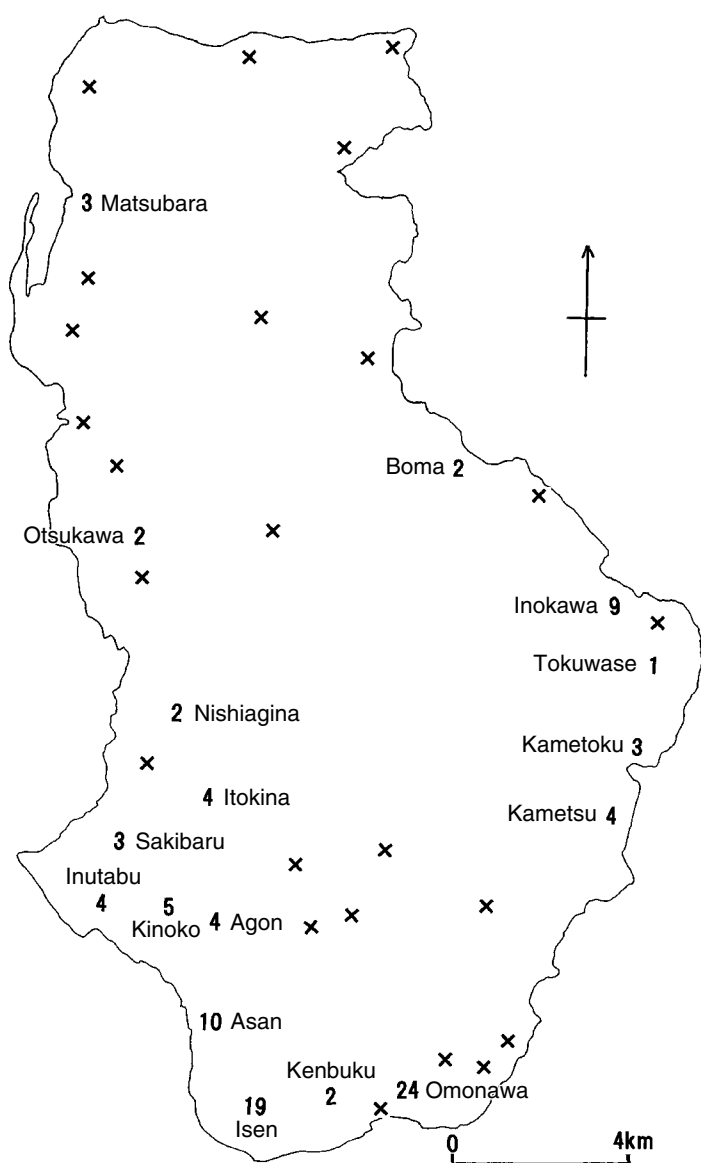


Figure 3. *Ishiganto* on Tokuno-shima

in the order of the Japanese syllabary, which is the same for the following). *Ishiganto* are present in only 5 of the 14 *oaza*. In a similar manner, within Amagi-cho, there are 2 *ishiganto* in Otsukawa *oaza*, 2 in Nishiagina, and 3 in Matsubara, but none in Asama, Amagi, Okazen, Kaneku, Setaki, Tobe, and Yonama. Only 3 of the 10 *oaza* contain *ishiganto*.

On the other hand, within Isen-cho, there are 4 *ishiganto* in Agon *oaza*, 10 in Asan, 19 in Isen, 4 in Itokina, 4 in Inutabu, 24 in Omonawa, 5 in Kinoko, 2 in Kenbuku, and 3 in Sakibaru, but none in Kinen, Kojima, Saben, Nakayama, Bane, Furusato, Meteku, and Yaezo. There are *ishiganto* in 9 (more than half) of the 17 *oaza*.

What could possibly be the reason for this type of variation in the density of *ishiganto* on Tokunoshima? A quick look reveals that there is a high density along the coastline, but a low density inland. In addition, on the coastline, there is a higher density on the central eastern and southwestern parts, which have particularly large flat areas compared to other coastal areas. Looking at population density (Amagi-cho 109 people/km<sup>2</sup>, Tokunoshima-cho 144 people/km<sup>2</sup>, and Izen-cho 159 people/km<sup>2</sup> (all as of around 1980)) which is likely integrally connected to the amount of flat land, reveals the fact that the higher the population density, the higher the *ishiganto* density. In addition, a local magistrate's office was set up in Kametsu of Tokunoshima-cho, and the site of Kametoku, which bordered Kametsu, served as a harbor, that is, a gateway to Tokuno-shima, and Isen-cho's Omowana. Contained here are an extremely large number of *ishiganto* with the remains of structures that are said to have been rice and sugar warehouses for the Kagoshima clan. Therefore, there are likely large numbers of *ishiganto* in areas that were highly productive due to the flat land and that were open to foreign cultures. (figure 3)

#### (4) *Ishiganto* on Yoro-shima and Uke-shima

Both the 13.7-km<sup>2</sup> Uke-shima (Uke Island), which lies south of Kakeroma-jima (Kakeroma Island), and the 9.5-km<sup>2</sup> Yoro-shima (Yoro Island) are semi-submerged remote islands formed from the Paleozoic strata, which is similar to both Amami-oshima and Kakeroma-jima. Currently, both islands are part of Setouchi-cho, but Uke-shima has the villages of Ikeji and Ukeamuro and Yoro-shima has the village of Yoro.

There are 5 *ishiganto* in Ikeji, 1 in Ukeamuro, and 14 in Yoro. For Uke-shima, this translates into 1 *ishiganto* per 2.3 km<sup>2</sup> or 25.3 household. For Yoro-shima, there is 1 *ishiganto* per 0.7 km<sup>2</sup>, and considering that there are 125 households on the island, there is an astounding 1 *ishiganto* per 8.9 households. While the extremely large number of *ishiganto* on Yoro-shima is noteworthy, the reason is unknown. (figure 4)

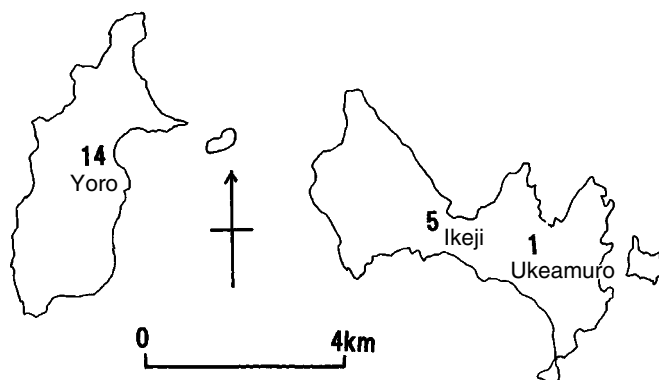
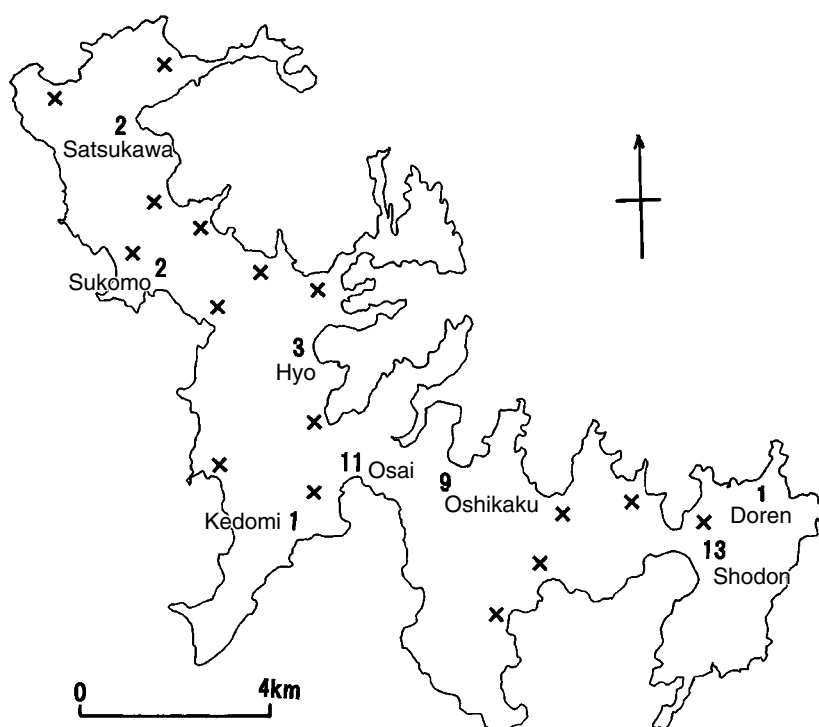


Figure 4. *Ishiganto* on Yoro-shima and Uke-shima

#### (5) *Ishiganto* on Kakeroma-jima

Located southwest of Amami-oshima, Kakeroma-jima lies across the Strait of Oshima from Amami-oshima. The central village of Kakeroma-jima, which is part of Setouchi-cho, is Shodon and there are

Figure 5. *Ishiganto* on *Kakeroma-jima*

several other villages, most of which are on the coast. Although the villages neighbor each other, there are differences in language and customs, which is interesting in terms of folklore. The partially-submerged island has an extremely winding coastline, and although possessing an area of only 77.2 km<sup>2</sup>, the island has 147.5 km of coastline. Therefore, the island is blessed with many natural deep harbors; Satsukawa Bay has also been used as a military harbor and is also currently used as a safe harbor when typhoons

hit. However, the whole island has a mountainous terrain with few flat areas since it was formed from Paleozoic strata, and there only small rice paddies on the downstream part of small rivers. The main industries are fishing and agriculture, which is centered on raising cows and pigs and growing sugarcane and sweet potatoes.

There are a total of 42 *ishiganto* on Kakeroma-jima. In terms of area, the island has an *ishiganto* density of 1 *ishiganto* per 1.8 km<sup>2</sup>. The island is home to 1,052 households, which means that there is 1 *ishiganto* per 25.0 households. A breakdown by *oaza* reveals that there are *ishiganto* in 8 *oaza*—11 in Osai, 9 in Oshikaku, 1 in Kedomi, 2 in Satsukawa, 13 in Shodon, 2 in Sukomo, 1 in Doren, and 3 in Hyo. There are no *ishiganto* in the remaining 16 *oaza*—Akitoku, Adachi, Ikenma, Ikomo, Kachiyuki, Kanyu, Kiji, Saneku, Shiba, Shokazu, Seso, Setake, Takena, Nishiamuro, Nomiya, and Miura (the *oaza* are listed in the order of the Japanese syllabary). A total of 33 *ishiganto* are concentrated in the three *oaza* of Shodon, Osai, and Oshikaku, which could be due to the fact that Shodon has a first-class harbor and is the most central *oaza*, Osai is located deep in Ikomo Bay and functions as a transit port for various locations including Uke-shima, Yoro-shima, and Koniya *oaza* where government offices are located, and Oshikaku is well located facing the Strait of Oshima. *Ishiganto* are located in only one-third of the 24 *oaza*. (figure 5)

## (6) *Ishiganto* on Amami-oshima

Amami-oshima is the main island of the Amami Archipelago and has an area of 710 km<sup>2</sup>. Mt. Yuwan, the highest peak on the island, has an elevation of 694 m, the island is very hilly, and there are numerous good harbors on account of the winding coastline on the north, west, and south sides of the island. In ancient times, Amami (islands) had strong connections with the Yamato Dynasty as is evident

by the fact that it appears in court records (the name of the island was written several different ways). Like the other islands in the Amami Archipelago, Amami-oshima was governed by the Ryukyu Kingdom. However, following the Kagoshima clan's invasion of the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1609, Amami-oshima came under the direct control of the Kagoshima clan. Particularly near the end of the period of clan rule, the island was governed harshly, which included being forced to grow sugarcane.

In early-modern times, the island was removed from the domain of the Kagoshima clan, and was placed under the control of a local magistrate (*daikan*). The island was divided into 7 administrative districts (*magiri*)—Naze, Yakiuchi, Nishi, Higashi, Sumiyo, Komi, and Kasari— and under the *magiri* there were 13 *kata*. In the *Ryukyukoku Gocho*, a registry of villages in the Ryukyu region, the total agricultural output for the *magiri* was given as 10,455 *koku* or more. Different historical sources give different locations for the offices of the Oshima magistrate (*bugyo*), who was later referred to as the Oshima *daikan*; after being shifted to various locations including Kasari-kata-kasari, Akaginakaneku-mura, and Daikuma-mura, the office finally settled in Itsubu-mura.

During early modern times, efforts on Amami-oshima were focused on bringing new land under rice cultivation, and more than 494 *cho* (1 *cho*  $\approx$  99.2 acres) of new land was farmed between 1712 and 1738. In addition, between 1688 and 1703, the Oshima local magistrate ordered the Yakiuchi *yokome*, whose name was Kawachi, to travel to Okinawa and learn how to make sugar, which resulted in a gradual expansion in the cultivation of sugarcane and production of sugar on Amami-oshima. This resulted in the Kagoshima clan starting to purchase the sugar and harshly exploiting the farmers.

There are 177 *ishiganto* throughout Amami-oshima, which means that there is 1 *ishiganto* per 4.0 km<sup>2</sup> or 165.8 households. The figures for Amami-oshima are not large in terms of either area or households. The following are the figures broken down by municipality.

In Kusari-cho (present-day Amami-shi), there are 15 *ishiganto*—1 in Usuki *oaza*; 3 in Kasari; 3 in Akagina, which includes Sato, Sotoganeku, and Nakaganeku; 3 in Setta; 2 in Many; 1 in Yo; and 2 in Wano. There are none in Kawakami, Kise, Sani, Suno, Taira, Tekebu, Beru, Yani, and Yoan. (the *oaza* are listed in order of the Japanese syllabary, which is the same for the following). *Ishiganto* are located in 7 of the 16 *oaza*.

There are a total of 26 *ishiganto* in Tatsugo-cho—3 in Akaogi *oaza*, 4 in Ikusato, 1 in Ura, 2 in Ogachi, 2 in Kado, 3 in Tatsugo, 4 in Toguchi, 6 in Nakagachi, and 1 in Ya-nyu. However there are none in Akina, Ashitoku, Ankiyaba, En, Kuba, and Sedome. *Ishiganto* are located in 9 of the 15 *oaza*.

In Nase-shi (present-day Amami-shi), there are a total of 50 *ishiganto*—1 in Ariya *oaza*, 3 in Angachicho, 1 in Ishibashicho, 4 in Inecho, 4 in Irifunecho, 1 in Kasugacho, 1 in Koshuku, 1 in Kohamacho, 1 in Kominato, 3 in Saiwaicho, 1 in Shiohamacho, 1 in Daikuma, 10 in Chinase, 2 in Nagatacho, 1 in Nishinakagachi, 2 in Nezebu, 2 in Hatohamacho, 1 in Manazucho, 3 in Minatomachi, 6 in Yanagimachi, and 1 in Yanowakicho. There are no *ishiganto* in the following *oaza*: Asato, Asani, Asanishincho, Asanicho, Ashikebu, Arira, Itsubugachi, Itsubucho, Urugami, Kanekucho, Masatocho, Komatacho, Sakibaru, Sadaikumacho, Suehirocho, Nakagachi, Nagahamacho, Nazegachi, Hiratacho, Furutacho. There are *ishiganto* in 21 of the 41 *oaza*.

There are a total of 29 *ishiganto* in Yamato-mura—4 in Oganeku *oaza*, 5 in Odana, 1 in Ongachi, 1 in Kuninao, 2 in Tsunagu, 4 in Toen, 11 in Naon, and 1 in Yamatohama. There are no *ishiganto* in the following *oaza*: Imazato, Shidokan, and Yuwangama. There are *ishiganto* in 8 of the 11 *oaza*.

In Uken-mura, there are a total of 20 *ishiganto*—3 in Ashiken *oaza*, 5 in Ikegachi, 2 in Uken, 2 in Kushi, 1 in Sanen, 3 in Taken, 1 in Nagara, and 3 in Yadon. There are no *ishiganto* in the following *oaza*: Amuro, Suko, Buren, Heda, and Yuwan. There are *ishiganto* in 8 of the 13 *oaza*.



In Sumiyo-mura, there are a total of 3 *ishiganto*–1 in Ichi *oaza* and 2 in Yanma. There are no *ishiganto* in the remaining *oaza*: Ishihara, Kamiya, Kawauchi, Gusuku, Surigachi, Nishinakama, Higashinakama, Mizato, Yakugachi, Wase. There are *ishiganto* in only 2 of the 12 *oaza*.

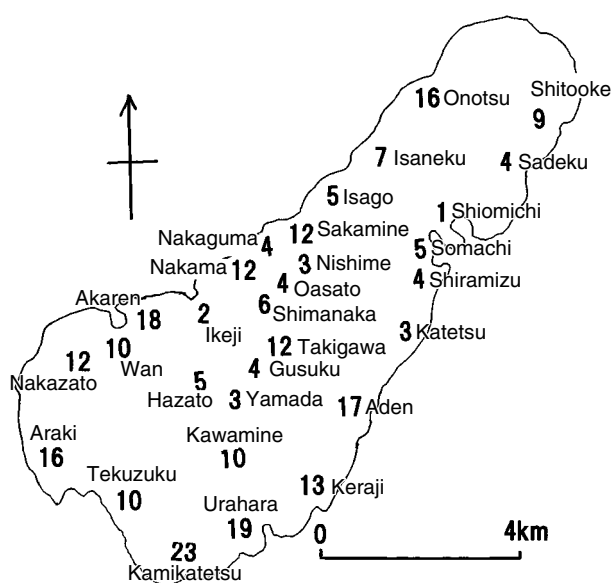
There are a total of 96 *ishiganto* in Setouchi-cho, of which 34 are on Amami-oshima–1 in Agina *oaza*, 2 in Aminoko, 2 in Isu, 1 in Kachiura 1, 6 in Katetsu, 3 in Koshi, 2 in Koniya, 1 in Shinokawa, 5 in Seisui, and 11 in Setsuko. There are no *ishiganto* in the following *oaza*: Atetsu, Amurogama, Katoku, Kuji, Kudadon, Kunetsu, Keten, Konase, Sokaru, Tean, Nishikomi, and Yui. There are *ishiganto* in 10 of the 22 *oaza*.

As for trends in the distribution of *ishiganto*, many are located in villages on the shoreline and there are few in interior areas. One can likely say that there are many in the central part of each area that functions as a port and is blessed with hinterlands, which include Akakina Bay and the southwest coast of Kasaricho, Tatsugocho's villages such as Tatsugo that face Tatsugo Bay, the central urban areas around the Port of Nase, the coastal area of Yamato-mura, Ukencho's villages that face Yakiuchi Bay, and villages including Setouchicho's Setsuko located on the Ise Bay and Katetsu and Seisui located in the western part of Point Kaitsu. (figure 6)

### **(7) *Ishiganto* on Kikai-jima**

Kikai-jima (Kikai Island) lies around 35 km east of Amami-oshima and around 375 km south of Kagoshima. The island is an atoll with an area of 56 km<sup>2</sup> and a circumference of 48 km. The highest location on the island is 224 m above sea level, and in the central part of the island, there is a plateau called Hyakunodai, which rises between 160 and 200 m high. However, the island is overall flat with few hills. Kikai-jima has a long history of development and has many archeological sites, including shell mounds from the Jomon Period. Recently, the remains of a village have been found that is assumed to have acted as a large-scale government office. Similar to other islands in the Amami Archipelago, the history of Kikai-jima can be broken down into various periods including the following: the period when it paid tribute to the Yamato Court; the period when it was under the direct control of the Dazaifu, an early local government located on the island of Kyushu; the period when it paid tribute to the Ryukyu Kingdom; and the period when it was merged with the Kagoshima clan. However, there is extremely little historical material related to the island for various reasons including the fact that its genealogical charts were confiscated by the Kagoshima clan in the 17th century. It is said that various notable people visited the island, including Minamoto-no-tametomo, the Buddhist monk Shukan, Taira-no-Sukemori, Taira-no-Arimori, and Taira-no-Yukimori, but all these accounts have only been passed down by word of mouth.

For more than 340 years, from 1266 through 1609, the island was under the rule of the Ryukyu Kingdom. The island was divided into five *magiri*–Araki, Shitotsu, Nishime, Higashi, and Wan–and an official such as *fuya*, *yonin*, *mezashi*, *fudeko*, or *okichi* was appointed to administer that area. While at times, the *fuya*, the head of the *magiri*, was directly appointed from the Ryukyu Dynasty, there were other times in which the *fuya* was a member of an illustrious local family. In 1466, King Shotoku himself led an army and attacked the island since they stopped paying tribute. Deploying his main force on Wan's (bay) Goten beach, the king fought a fierce battle, which resulted in the defeat of Kikai-jima. However, during the Keicho Period (1595-1615), the island, along with the other islands in the Amami Archipelago fell under the direct control of the Kagoshima clan, and after sugar production technology was introduced to the island, the island was oppressed by the Kagoshima clan.

Figure 7. *Ishiganto* on Kikai-jima

In 1613, the office of a local magistrate (*daikan*) was established on Amami-oshima, and the magistrate also governed Kikai-jima. A local magistrate's office was established on the Wan on Kikai-jima in 1693; the five administrative zones (*magiri*) used during the Ryukyu period were resurrected and a sixth one was added—Wan-*magiri* (Wan, Akaren, Nakazato, Kawamine, Hazato, Yamada, and Gusuku), Nishime-*magiri* (Nishime, Oasato, Shimanaka, Sakamine, Nakaguma), Isago-*magiri* (Isago, Isaneku, Nakama, and Takigawa), Higashi-*magiri* (Somachi, Shiomichi, Nagamine, Shiramizu, Kadon, and Aden), Araki-*magiri* (Araki, Tekuzuku, Kamikatetsu, Urahara, and Keraji), and Shitooke-*magiri* (Shitooke, Sadeku, Onotsu). The same villages mainly still exist

today. According to a land survey in 1726, there were 1,670 *cho* and 2 *tan* (1 *tan*  $\approx$  991.7 m<sup>2</sup>) of rice paddies and residential land and at least 29 *cho* and 3 *tan* of wilderness. Agricultural output by *magiri* was 2,057 *koku* or more for Wan, 1,893 *koku* or more for Araki, 1,776 *koku* or more for Higashi, 1,690 *koku* or more for Shitooke, 1,550 *koku* or more for Isago, and 1,869 *koku* or more for Nishi, which gives a total agricultural output of 10,836 *koku*. The population is assumed to have been 8,828 people. Later, the clan prohibited the production and trafficking of sugar, and in 1744, islanders had to pay taxes in sugar, not rice. During the Bunsei Period (1818-1829), residents were forced to produce sugar cane on good land for various reasons including the Kagoshima clan's order that it would purchase all sugar and the prohibition on the use of money. This oppression continued until the Meiji Period.

Unlike other islands of the Amami Archipelago that have been discussed, there is an extremely large number of *ishiganto* on Kikai-jima. The number of *ishiganto* by *oaza* are provided in table 1 (While previously, the *oaza* were listed in order of the Japanese syllabary, for Kikai-jima, they are listed in order of the municipal office). Kikai-jima has a total of 269 *ishiganto*. Since the island has an area of 56 km<sup>2</sup>, there is 1 *ishiganto* per 0.2 km<sup>2</sup>. Around 1980, there were 3,781 households on the island, which translates into 1 *ishiganto* per 14.1 households. As of February 1, 2006, the number of households had grown to 4,046 according to city offices, and even with this figure, there is 1 *ishiganto* per 15.0 households. Kikai-cho has a total of 30 administrative zones (32 *oaza* and villages), and all have *ishiganto*, which makes the island unique. (figure 7)

While discussed previously, I would like to take another look at the distribution of *ishiganto* throughout the Amami Archipelago. Starting from the south, Yoron-to has 1 *ishiganto* per 2.3 km<sup>2</sup> or 215 households and *ishiganto* in 2 of its 6 *oaza*. Okinoerabu-jima has 1 *ishiganto* per 3.4 km<sup>2</sup> or 187.6 households and *ishiganto* in 10 of its 38 *oaza*. Tokuno-shima has 1 *ishiganto* per 2.5 km<sup>2</sup> or 108.1 households and *ishiganto* in 17 of its 41 *oaza*. Uke-shima has 1 *ishiganto* per 2.3 km<sup>2</sup> or 25.3 households and *ishiganto* in both of its *oaza*. Yoro-shima has 1 *ishiganto* per 0.7 km<sup>2</sup> or 8.9 households, and only one *oaza*. For these two islands, there is an *ishiganto* in every village. Kakeroma-jima has 1 *ishiganto* per 1.8 km<sup>2</sup> or 25 households, which is clearly a high density, but there are *ishiganto* in only 8 of its 24 *oaza*. For Amami-oshima, there is 1 *ishiganto* per 4.0 km<sup>2</sup> or 165.8 household, and *ishiganto* in 65 (half) of its 130 *oaza*.

Of course, whether in terms of area or households, these figures are not appropriate for considering the density for the whole island since the *ishiganto* are located in particular parts of villages. However, even if they are considered superficial figures, the facts that on Kikai-jima, there is 1 *ishiganto* per 0.2 km<sup>2</sup> or 14.1 households and that there is an *ishiganto* in every *oaza* have to be considered significant.

### 3 Spread and Diffusion of the *Ishiganto* and Cultural Negotiations

#### (1) Kikai-jima's *ishiganto* via Kagoshima

How should the extremely large number of *ishiganto* on Kikai-jima be understood?

Starting with the conclusion, a large majority of the *ishiganto* on the island should be considered to have come from Kagoshima. The Amami Archipelago used to be under the control of the Ryukyu Kingdom; therefore, it is likely that some *ishiganto* came from Ryukyu, present-day Okinawa. However, compared to Yoron-to and Okinoerabu-jima, there is a greater concentration of *ishiganto* on the more northern islands. The source of these *ishiganto* may be Kagoshima, which was the heart of the Kagoshima clan and may have had a particularly strong impact on Kikai-jima. The following are the reasons for this.

The placement of *ishiganto* on Kikai-jima is the same as that for Okinawa and other islands in the Amami Archipelago. For example, consider the case of Aden-shuraku (the village of Aden) shown in figure 8. Of the 17 *ishiganto* located in the village, 9 are at the most appropriate location, the dead-end of a T-intersection or at a four-way intersection. In addition, 6 are located at the bend in an L-intersection or a bend in the road. There is 1 *ishiganto* at a crossing intersection with the aware-

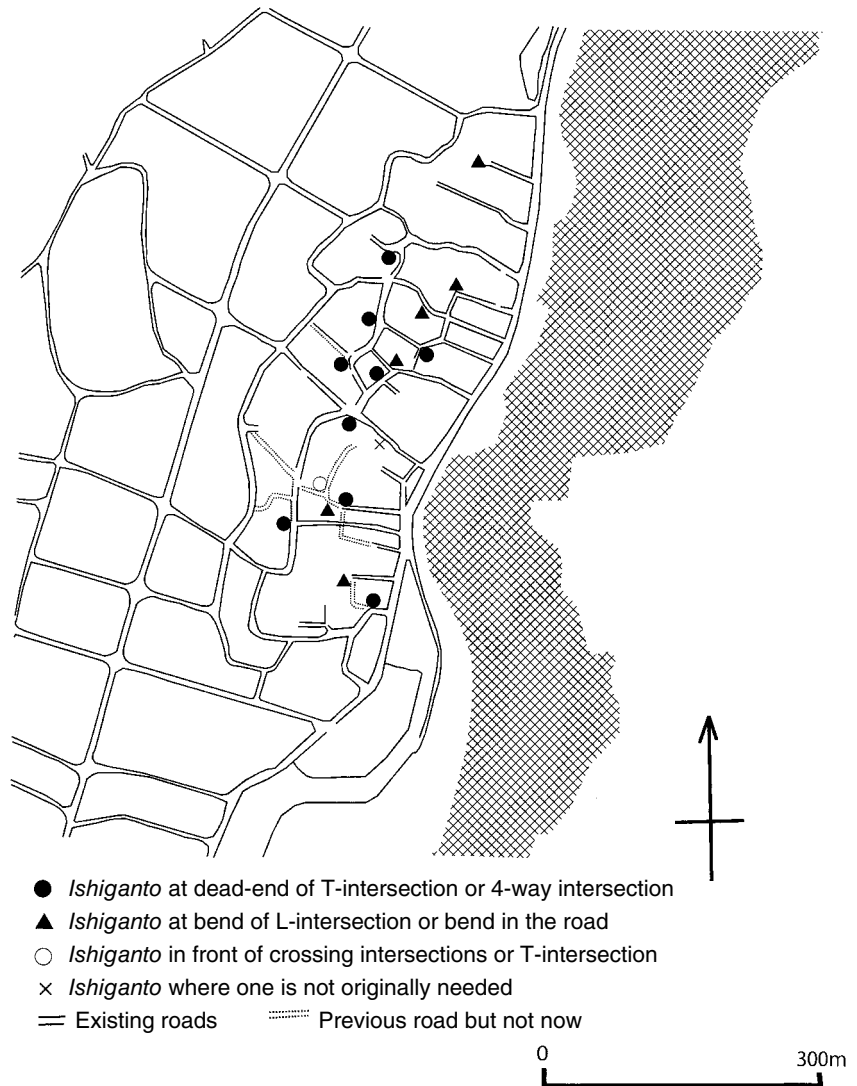


Figure 8. *Ishiganto* in Aden, Kikai-jima, Oshima-gun, Kagoshima (hatched area is reef flat)



ness of the end of the road changing amplificatorily, and this one can likely be considered to be a reinforcement. Therefore, only 1 was placed at a site that was not originally necessary.

Looking at the whole of Kikai-jima, as shown in table 1, of the 269 *ishiganto* throughout the island, 181 are located at an appropriate location, the dead-end of a T-intersection or four-way intersection. In addition, 54 were similarly located at the bend of an L-intersection or the bend in a road. Furthermore, based on fieldwork conducted in the Shuri area of Nara-shi, Okinawa, only 3 *ishiganto* are located in front of a house at the dead-end of a road, which ultimately may be considered exceptions. There are 27 *ishiganto* at a crossing intersection with the awareness of the end of the road changing amplificatorily or in front of a T-intersection, and these *ishiganto* can be considered reinforcements. Therefore, only 4 *ishiganto* throughout the island are at locations where there is no need for one. Taking these facts into consideration, one could say that the placement of *ishiganto* on Kikai-jima does not substantially differ from the general rule, which is also true, on the whole, for Okinawa and the other islands in the Amami Archipelago.<sup>10)</sup>

However, the information shown in table 1 is merely the horizontal placement, and if a detailed examination is made, some *ishiganto* have been placed in a manner that is not quite in line with the general rules. As for the shape of *ishiganto*, some on Kikai-jima are rather different from those found on Okinawa.

Traditional *ishiganto* were considered to drive away evil spirits that entered the area by crawling along the ground. Therefore, *ishiganto* in Okinawa are generally placed in a low position, 20 or 30 centimeters above the ground. Recently, even in Okinawa, some *ishiganto* have been embedded in the middle or upper part of a wall. However, most relatively old ones are placed low, almost touching the ground. On Kikai-jima, although some *ishiganto* are located low to the ground, many have been placed on the top of walls that surround a house or have been embedded into tall walls, 1 meter or more above the surface of the ground. As for the shape, some have a triangular front like that found on the pieces used in *shogi*, a Japanese type of chess. This type of *ishiganto* can also be found in Kagoshima, but are very different than the ones in Okinawa. They are not limited to Kikai-jima, but can be found on islands in the northern part of the Amami Archipelago. In addition, many *ishiganto* have been engraved with Buddhist symbols such as Sanskrit characters and the manji and the so-called *kyuji-mon*, a *shudoken* (mountain asceticism) symbol of nine intersecting horizontal and vertical lines. Furthermore, compared to Okinawa, there are also a dramatically larger number of *ishiganto* on Kikai-jima that are inscribed with the word “ishiganto” but use incorrect Chinese characters.

It is not clear when *ishiganto* arrived in Japan, but according to Kodama, the oldest *ishiganto* with the date it was made inscribed in it is located in Ebino-shi, Miyazaki Prefecture. The inscribed date is 1689. It can be assumed that there are older ones that do not have a date inscribed on them; therefore, of course, it cannot be said decisively when *ishiganto* first appeared in Japan, but it is likely not too much to assume that they arrived around the end of the middle ages or the beginning of early-modern times.

However, the use of *ishiganto* on Kikai-jima is likely very modern. According to the report compiled by Hisanaga, the oldest one on Kikai-jima that has a year inscribed is located in Kamikatetsu. The year inscribed is 1953. Within the Satsuma and Osumi region, old *ishiganto* are mainly located in the Fumoto area, where primarily the literate warrior class resided. Therefore, on Kikai-jima, which did not have an area where the warrior class resided, Hisanaga considers it unlikely that there would be many *ishiganto*

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10) To create table 1, sites were classified after confirming the location of the *ishiganto* listed in Hisanaga’s Kikai-jima report (see note 3) on a 1:2500 map recently published by Kikai-cho.

*Ishiganto* (Talismanic Stone) and Cultural Interaction (TAKAHASHI)

Table 1: Kikai-jima–Households/population and *ishiganto* by administrative zone (*oaza*)

Administrative zone	<i>Oaza/shuraku</i> (village)	Households (around 1980)	Households (2006)	Population (around 1980)	Population (around 2006)	<i>Ishiganto</i>	T-intersection/ Four-way	Bend	Dead-end in from of house	In front of intersection	No reason
Wan	Wan	452	645	1,488	1,549	10	10	0	0	0	0
Akaren	Akaren	565	615	1,775	1,287	18	17	0	0	1	0
Nakazato	Nakazato	188	319	562	765	12	11	1	0	0	0
Araki	Araki	253	279	846	637	16	13	3	0	0	0
Tekuzuku	Tekuzuku	99	90	265	182	10	9	1	0	0	0
Kamikatetsu	Kamikatetsu	238	245	781	563	23	8	11	2	2	0
Urahara (including Sakiyama)	Urahara (including Sakiyama)	149	128	453	255	19	13	5	0	1	0
	(Sakiyama)		61		132		5	3	0	0	0
	(Urahara)		67		123		8	2	0	1	0
Kawamine	Kawamine	100	81	226	147	10	7	2	0	0	1
Hazato	Hazato	70	68	193	125	5	4	1	0	0	0
Yamada	Yamada	14	14	30	22	3	2	0	0	1	0
Gusuku	Gusuku	47	47	132	101	4	4	0	0	0	0
Takigawa	Takigawa	30	29	87	48	12	8	1	0	3	0
Shimanaka	Shimanaka	46	47	127	83	6	5	1	0	0	0
Ikeji	Ikeji	46	57	112	115	2	2	0	0	0	0
Nakama (including Sakinai)	Nakama (including Sakinai)	53	49	116	90	12	8	2	1	1	0
	(Nakama)		33		59		5	2	1	1	0
	(Sakinai)		16		31		3	0	0	0	0
Nakaguma	Nakaguma	42	34	112	78	4	2	1	0	1	0
Oasato	Oasato	51	52	115	90	4	1	1	0	2	0
Nishime	Nishime	17	11	41	22	3	1	2	0	0	0
Sakamine	Sakamine	95	81	260	159	12	7	3	0	2	0
Isago	Isago	35	26	109	54	5	1	3	0	1	0
Isaneku	Isaneku	77	66	201	119	7	6	0	0	0	1
Onotsu	Onotsu	247	236	653	441	16	12	4	0	0	0
Shitooke	Shitooke	245	263	749	594	9	5	2	0	2	0
Sadeku	Sadeku	106	115	362	263	4	1	0	0	3	0
Shiomichi	Shiomichi	98	99	281	218	1	1	0	0	0	0
Somachi	Somachi	75	71	222	156	5	3	2	0	0	0
Shiramizu	Shiramizu	70	58	177	120	4	2	0	0	2	0
Kadon	Kadon	73	63	205	134	3	1	1	0	1	0
Aden	Aden	64	49	153	100	17	9	6	0	1	1
Keraji (including Kamo)	Keraji (including Kamo)	136	109	331	179	13	8	1	0	3	1
	(Kamo)		23		39		6	1	0	0	0
	(Keraji)		86		140		2	0	0	3	1
						269	181	54	3	27	4

from the Edo Period. He assumes that *ishiganto* were introduced only in the latter part of the Meiji Period when various restrictions had been removed and farmers possessed the economic ability to purchase *ishiganto*. Precisely at this time, on Kikai-jima, various renovation projects, such as replacing the thatched roof of schools with tile roofs, were being undertaken and Buddhist temples and Shinto Shrines began to be built. A master craftsman named Don Seigoro and numerous carpenters and masons were brought to the island, and these people are likely the ones who passed on the custom of *ishiganto* and constructed them. Many pieces of work including headstones, wash basins, and stone lanterns, which were made from limestone called *ura-genseki*, can still be found on the island. Therefore, it is likely that Hisanaga is correct.

At any rate, considering facts such as the distribution of the *ishiganto* on Kikai-jima, it would likely be correct to assume that the *ishiganto* did not arrive from the Ryukyu Islands, but came back south from Kagoshima (Satsuma and Osumi regions) after first reaching Kagoshima.

## **(2) Spread and diffusion of *ishiganto* and their changing forms**

As previously discussed, Kodama notes the following about the distribution of *ishiganto* in Japan: they are heavily concentrated in Okinawa and Southern Kyushu; in the north they are scattered up to Hakodate in Hokkaido; there are old *ishiganto* in Yamagata, Aomori, and Akita (Akita has a particularly large number); none have been found in Sanin, Hokuriku, and Echigo along the Japan Sea; there are 13 (previously 27) in Tokushima, Shikoku, and several of them are very old; there are few in Fukuoka and Nagasaki, which are hubs of cultural exchange with China. How should one look at this distribution of *ishiganto*?

First of all, the most important flow for China should be considered the flow from areas such as Fujian to the Ryukyu Islands. In this case, instead of thinking that *ishiganto* spread from the southern part of China to Okinawa-jima via Yaeyama and Miyako, it is more natural to think that, as one part of the idea of *feng shui*, which was the latest view of geography at the time, *ishiganto* first spread to Okinawa-jima, the heart of the Ryukyu Kingdom, and then from the Chinese Village Kume to Shuri and Naha, and only later, did they spread throughout the kingdom. It is possible to envision a flow in the reverse direction to Yaeyama and Miyako. *Ishiganto* gradually spread to the Amami Archipelago, which was under the control of the Ryukyu Kingdom. It is also possible to envision that the custom spread to Tokuno-shima and Amami-oshima via Yoron-to and Okinoerabu-jima, which are near Okinawa, and then partially to neighboring Kikai-jima and Kakeroma-jima. However, when thinking about the custom reaching Kagoshima, it is hard to imagine that it spread to Kagoshima by gradually moving northward from Okinawa-jima to the Amami Archipelago.

Rather, *ishiganto* likely spread directly to Kagoshima (Satsuma and Osumi regions) from Naha and Shuri as a result of the Kagoshima clan's conquest of the Ryukyu Kingdom. The custom was then passed on to Edo by the Kagoshima clan, and then from Edo to the rest of Japan, particularly eastern and northern Japan. As for western Japan, it is probably certain that *ishiganto* spread from Kagoshima to

other regions in Kyushu, such as Miyazaki, but one needs to be careful when considering how they reached the Kinki region. For example, in terms of the custom diffusing from Kagoshima to Edo, it is possible that this occurred when envoys from Ryukyu traveled to Edo. As for Shikoku, the custom could have spread from areas such as Tokushima to Osaka, and then from Osaka to other parts of the Kinki region. This hypothesis would have to be examined carefully, but what I would like to stress in this paper is the fact that *ishiganto* spread from Ryukyu to Kagoshima and then back to the Amami Archipelago.

In other words, when discussing cultural exchanges and cultural negotiations, only single-direction diffusion or routes are often stressed. However, flows that can be understood in terms of movement in a single direction are likely extremely rare. As can also be seen by the spread of *ishiganto*, which was discussed in this paper, the process should be understood as a multi-directional or mixed-directional flow even more than a bi-directional one.

In addition, examinations of phenomenon like *ishiganto*, which at least in China date back to the Tang dynasty, should be made using a broad time frame that extends to the present. I would also like to stress that even through *ishiganto* are based on ancient traditions, they are still alive today and are continuing to change shape.

For example, *ishiganto* are still currently being made, and I have interviewed members of the Okinawa Stone Enterprise Cooperative Association regarding current conditions.<sup>11)</sup> The construction of *ishiganto* accounts for only a minor fraction of the masonry work in Okinawa, which is quite diverse in terms of civil engineering projects. A large percentage of masonry work involves repairs to historical and cultural assets, particularly Shuri Castle, and the construction of stone walls around houses and graves, which is unlike other areas in Japan. While the construction of *ishiganto* is only a small part of the masonry industry in Okinawa, which is deeply tied to this tradition, there are 5 or 6 companies that make *ishiganto* in addition to their main products. A 50-cm *ishiganto* made from sandstone obtained within the prefecture costs between 30,000 and 50,000 yen (this includes the carving fee of 2,000 yen per character). Of course, a large *ishiganto* can cost between 300,000 to 500,000 yen; the material is a major factor behind the difference in prices.

Demand is greatest for the nameplate-type *ishiganto*, and 5 or 6 businesses within the prefecture account for more than 90% of the production of these. Looked at another way, almost all nameplate-type *ishiganto* are produced within Okinawa Prefecture; almost none are made in the Amami Archipelago, other parts of Japan, or overseas. The average price for one is 10,000 yen (including material), and the carving is done almost completely by machines. These *ishiganto* are made by workmen wearing goggles, masks, and rubber gloves, who hold the stone in a “box” and inscribe the letters from behind a glass cover. The surface of the stone is covered with rubber, then the wording is written on the rubber, and the rubber within the letters is removed. Fine particles of steel referred to as *tetsusuna* (literally steel sand) is blown against the stone by a compressor. The area covered with the flexible rubber repels the *tetsusuna*, but the area of the stone not covered by rubber, the lettering, is carved away. *Ishiganto* made in this way are the most commonly seen ones in Japan, particularly in Okinawa Prefecture.

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11) I learned various things about current conditions from Osamu Omine, the Sales Department Manager of the Okinawa Stone Enterprise Cooperative Association, which is located in Makiminato, Urasoe-shi, Okinawa. In addition to what he taught me, I was also provided with various material including the following: *Okinawa Sekizai Jigyo Kyodo Kumiai Soshiki Gaiyo* (date published unknown) 1-8; *Sekizai No Antei-teikyo To Jigyo No Shoryokuka Ni Tsuite Heisei 7 Nendo Katsuro Kaitaku Bijon Chosa Jigyo Hokokusho* (Okinawa Stone Enterprise Cooperative Association, March 1996) 1-57; *Okinawa Sekizai Jigyo Kyodo Kumiai 1997 Sekizo Katarogu* (March 1997), 1-94.

However, various other types of *ishiganto* can be found at tourist souvenir shops in Okinawa. Many are made of porcelain or glass; some are less than 10 cm large and can be used as an ornament for a desk or decorative table in the entrance to a home. These type of *ishiganto* cost several hundred yen. Although there are no concrete statistics on these types, many are probably made in China, Taiwan, or recently Vietnam. There are also plaster *ishiganto* costing several thousand yen, which are works created by highly-skilled Okinawan craftsmen.

Recently, one can also find stickers printed with the word “ishiganto” and souvenir mobile phone straps in the form of an *ishiganto*. In the past, craftsmen used to inscribe the natural stone *ishiganto* with words, and these were placed at the dead-end of T-intersections, but *ishiganto* have become more diverse in terms of material, production technique and use.

In this paper, I looked at *ishiganto*, which arrived in the Ryukyu Islands from China, and when one considers their spread and diffusion, the process can be considered the essence of “cultural negotiation”. In other words, even through *ishiganto* are rooted in history and tradition, culture is continually changing and spreads in various manners as it changes. It is important to examine the route customs spread and diffuse from various perspectives, and traditional items give birth to new ones in areas where they come into contact with different cultures. In addition, in many situations, the communication of certain types of cultural items is brought about by particular people and groups, which is not limited to *ishiganto*.

**Note:**

This paper is strongly based on the passionate, detailed research undertaken by Mototoshi Hisanaga, who taught me many things when I met him, and I would like to express my deep respect and thanks to him. In addition, some of the material in this paper was presented on December 14, 2007, at the 5th Cultural Negotiation Studies Development Committee, the Kansai University Cultural Education and Research Base, and I received thought-provoking ideas from the various members.