



Midori no Yakata Sefa Admission Information

TEL/FAX: 098-949-1899

Opening Hours:

November to February : 9:00AM - 5:30PM
Ticket Sales : 8:45AM - 4:45PM
Last Admission : 5:00PM

March to October : 9:00AM - 6:00PM
Ticket Sales : 8:45AM - 5:15PM
Last Admission : 5:30PM

For information on scheduled or unforeseen closures, kindly visit the official website.



Commemorative Stamp

Guidelines for Sacred Site Visitors

Visit with a respectful mindset

Do not forget that this sacred site is a place of worship.

Please bow once and greet

At the Ibi, first bow, then say your name and “I’ve come to visit”.

Do not disturb other people in worship

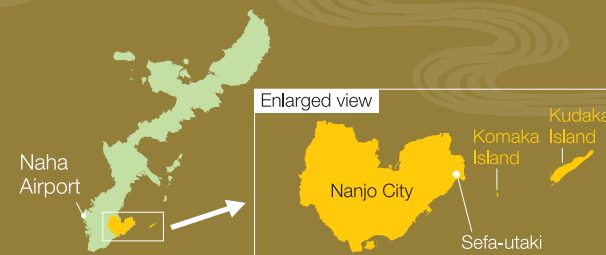
Do not talk to or take photos of people who are in the midst of worship.

Do not take any items from the sacred site with you

Do not take items such as stones, animals, and plants as souvenirs.

The incense burners are sacred

The square stones installed on this site of worship are incense burners. Incense is placed upon them to pray to the gods. Do not sit or place items on the incense burners.



Free parking areas are available in front of the Nanjo City Local Products Center or at Chinen Misaki Park.
Address: 539 Chinen-Kudeken, Nanjo City, Okinawa
* Tickets are available only at the Ticket Booth located beside the Local Products Center



DMO Nanjo Co., Ltd.
TEL: 098-948-4660



[2026 Revised Edition]

A World Heritage Site

Sefa-utaki



What is Sefa-utaki?

Utaki is the collective name for the sacred places widely distributed in the Nansei Islands (also known as the Ryukyu Islands). Sefa-utaki is the most sacred site in the Ryukyu Kingdom, and it appears in legends about the creation of the Ryukyu Islands. It also continues to be revered by many people as one of the locations for the ritual pilgrimage of the Ryukyu king and *kikoeokimi* (supreme priestess), a tradition known as *agariumai*.

There are six sanctuaries called *ibi* within Sefa-utaki. In the past, the rulers of the Ryukyu Kingdom visited each sanctuary to pray to the gods for national prosperity, abundant harvests, and safe voyages. During national rituals conducted in the now distant Ryukyu Dynasty era, significant efforts were devoted to transporting white sands from Kudaka Island, revered as the “Island of the Gods”, to be laid upon the sacred grounds of Sefa-utaki. Among these rituals, the oaraori held particular prominence, marking the inauguration of *kikoeokimi*.

The most sacred site
in the Ryukyu Kingdom,
featuring its founding legends
of the Ryukyu Islands

Nanjo City, Okinawa Prefecture

The Six Worship Areas of Sefa-utaki



2 Yuinchi

In the palace of the royal court, *yuinchi* means "kitchen". While actual cooking did not occur in this space, it served as a repository for a wealth of harvested goods collected from various regions, reflecting the thriving trade activities of the Ryukyu Kingdom during that era.



Midori no Yakata Sefa

Cannonball Pond

The Sangui altar, like the Ufugui and Yuinchi altars, is a designated sanctuary. For environmental conservation as well as the appropriate maintenance and management of these sanctuaries, entry into these areas is forbidden.



1 Ufugui

Upon entering the *ujouguchi* (main gate), the first place of worship visible on the left is the *Ufugui*, which translates to "hall" or "*ichibanza*", referring to a parlor-like room commonly found in certain Okinawan homes. Directly in front of this structure lies a stone-paved area designated for prayers, known as *una*.



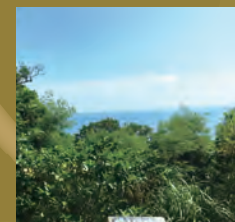
3 Amadayuru-ashikanubi Jug 4 Shikiyodayuru-amaganubi Jug

These two jugs have been placed here to gather the "holy water" that drips from the stalactites.



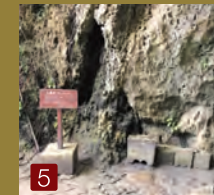
Ujoguchi Kudaka Island Yohaisho

Kudaka Island Yohaisho (Worship Area)



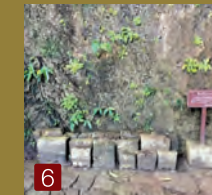
This is the entrance for the path leading to the *utaki*. The six incense burners placed on the right are representations of the places of worship within the sacred site.

Ujoguchi



5 Sangui

The triangular area enclosed is known as Sangui, while Chounohana is situated atop a rock to the right. Both locations serve as sites of worship.



6 Chounohana

Uroka

During the Ryukyu Kingdom era, people purified themselves here before entering Sefa-utaki.

* Visitors are advised to exercise caution in this area

Yonabaru Town



To Azama Port
(Ferry from Azama Port to Kudaka Island)



To Azama Sun-Sun Beach

Drainage ditch in front of Sangui confirmed by excavations



A variety of remains were discovered from excavations of the Sefa-utaki site, such as a drainage ditch running under the stone-paved approach to the sacred site and layers of white sand used to purify places of worship. Furthermore, the multi-layered remains of the site also suggest that this area was maintained for important rituals.

Sefa-utaki Excavated Items (National Important Cultural Properties)



Various items, mainly from the Middle Ages to early modern times, have been excavated from Sefa-utaki. Among them, gold magatama (comma-shaped ornaments), Chinese celadon porcelain, and ancient currency, in particular, drew much interest. Items excavated from Sangui, the most exalted area within this sacred *utaki*, serve as extremely valuable materials in the study of the Ryukyu religious faith of that period.

Glossary

Agariumai (Eastern Pilgrimage)

The pilgrimage to the sanctuaries of Chinen and Tamagusuku, where Amamikiyo, the creator deity of Ryukyu, is said to have first settled.

The locations of Ozato, Sashiki, Chinen, and Tamagusuku, as seen from Shuri Castle, were known as the Agariumajiri (Four Eastern Districts) or Agarikata (The East). As such, the pilgrimage to the places of worship in Chinen and Tamagusuku is referred to as the Agariumai (Eastern Pilgrimage).

Oaraori (Inauguration Ceremony)

The inauguration ceremony for the *kikoeokimi* supreme priestess. Following ceremonies in Shuri, the priestess would proceed through a number of important places before entering Sefa-utaki in the Chinen district, where she would conduct several rituals. It is said that the *kikoeokimi* supreme priestess would become an equal among the gods after receiving the divine spirit through a ritual known as *Ubinadi*, where the priestess would stroke her own forehead with holy water.

Kikoeokimi (Supreme Priestess)

Kikoeokimi means "the most revered supreme priestess" and is a title given to the highest-ranking priestess (*noro*) in the Ryukyu religious faith. The *kikoeokimi* was tasked with being the spiritual guardian of the kingdom and its highest authority, the king. Therefore, women of the royal family, such as one of the king's sisters, were mainly appointed to this position.

The *kikoeokimi* priestesses were in charge of the holy rituals for the Ryukyu Kingdom over a period of 400 years, from the first priestess (1470) to the final, fifteenth-generation priestess (1875).

Kudaka Island

Known as the "Island of the Gods", this island has been the site of numerous Shinto rituals since the Ryukyu Kingdom era. It is venerated as the landing place of Amamikiyo, the founder of the Ryukyu Islands, and is regarded as the origin of the five essential grains: rice, wheat, foxtail millet, proso millet and beans. Until the 17th century, successive Ryukyu kings made it a tradition to pilgrimage to Kudaka Island every two years.

The island has garnered prominence for its ethnological importance highlighted by the mystical rituals conducted here, particularly the Izaiho, a sacred ceremony that occurs once every 12 years during the Year of the Horse.

Nirai Bridge / Kanai Bridge

Chinen Misaki Park



P Local Products Center (Ticket Booth / Free Parking)

Exhibition / Screening Room (Free Admission)
Features a meticulously crafted video recreation of the interior of Sefa Utaki, complemented by exhibition panels that feature a blend of photographs and informative text. A display of gold magatamas, which are comma-shaped ornaments unearthed from Sangui, is another highlight

