

# Katsuren Castle Ruins

Recommended Places to Visit

Sunrise overlooked from the 1st enclosure

## Get to Know Okinawan Culture of Worship

Many gods live in this beautiful island of Okinawa: a god who protects the village, a god that resides in the kitchen, the mythical god who had created Okinawa, and the ancestors are gods who watch over Okinawans in daily life. They are all worshipped at places called Utaki, where priestesses offer religious services.

### 1 Tamanomiuji-utaki



This big stone protects Katsuren as a sacred shrine. Also, it is a place of worship dedicated to a god who protects the Aji (the regional lord). Some believe that a hole next to the stone once led to Ushinujigama.

### 2 Ushinujigama



Gama means cave. It was used as refuge during war and natural disasters.

### 3 Umichimun (God of Fire)



It is thought to have been a kitchen. The God of Fire dwells in the kitchen and protects the household. In Okinawa, some housewives still observe the custom of worshipping the God of Fire at their kitchens.

### 4 Tunumutu



Kaminchu (priestess) takes those stone seats during Umachi (harvest festivals) in February and May of the old calendar.

### 5 Mliitwugaa



According to rumors, if a couple visit the well, their bonds tighten. If they break up afterward, however, one of them will die.

### 6 Utamishigaa



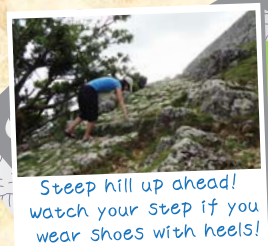
It is said that the water level tells of the harvest that year.  
• Low⇒Good  
• High⇒Bad



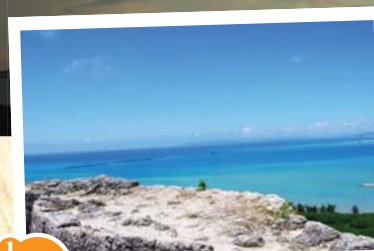
The oldest castle designated as a world Heritage Site in Okinawa



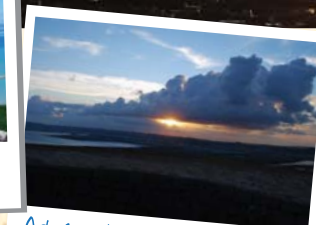
At Tunumutu  
Take a seat and feel the dignity of a Kaminchu (priestess)!



Steep hill up ahead! watch your step if you wear shoes with heels!



Beautiful ocean view from the castle



Admire both sunset and sunrise here!

The 1st Enclosure

The 2nd Enclosure

The 3rd Enclosure

Chimutakanu-utaki

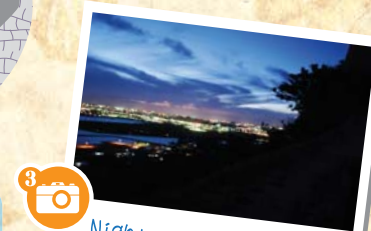
Rest Spot

Take a rest by the wall and enjoy gentle breezes from the castle



At the 2nd enclosure in the morning

The castle embodies a romantic atmosphere, illuminating different aspects of the daytime



Night-time scenic view

The 4th Enclosure

Haeburu-ujo Gate

Jouguchinukaa

Nishihara-ujo Gate

Nakamanuukaa

The East Enclosure

Kaa (Well)

- The path gets slippery when it rains. Please watch your step.
- Please do not climb on the walls.



Recommended Route

Photo Spots






(\*1)Aji: local lord, power of its region


## What did the first enclosure contain?

It is speculated that it was a repository for valuables.

What kind of building was built in the second enclosure?

 It is believed that a pillared building as grand as Shurijo Castle Seiden stood within, serving as a core of the castle and a public office of the region.

## How did Katsuren prosper?

 Large volumes of Chinese pottery and chinaware were discovered suggesting that Katsuren prospered as the center of overseas trade. Also the following items were discovered: Yuan, Sung and Ming ceramics, Southeast Asian Pottery, Kourai and Yamato tile, old coins from China and the Japanese mainland, ornaments, bronze and iron items and pieces of armor.

## The 1st Enclosure

## The 2nd Enclosure

### The 3rd Enclosure

Haebaru-ujo Gate

## The 4th Enclosure

Nishihara-ujo Gate

What was the third enclosure used for?

Ceremonies and rituals took place in this enclosure.

## The Last Lord of Katsuren: Amawari

Threatened by Amawari's power, King Sho Taikyū of the Ryūkyū Kingdom (\*2) sent his chief retainer and father-in-law, Gosamaru, to Nakagusuku Castle to arrange the marriage between Amawari and the King's own daughter Momoto Fumiagari, to keep Amawari in check.

However, Amawari defeated Gosamaru in 1458 (The Battle of Gosamaru and Amawari) and plotted to overthrow the king. His plot was discovered by Momoto Fumiagari and her attendant Kenyu Ufugusuku. They reported to the king, and the royal force led by Kenyu Ufugusuku defeated Amawari.

(\*2) Ryukyu: Okinawa was an independent kingdom called the Ryukyu Kingdom for 450 years from 1429 to 1879.

Although many history books illustrate Amawari as a traitor to the Ryukyu Royal Government, further research tells that Amawari was a good lord. Some report that The Battle of Gosamaru and Amawari was plotted by the Royal Government, in fear of their powers.

## Queen of Tragic Life: Momoto Fumiagari

Momoto Fumiagari's husband Amawari, was killed by her attendant Kenyu Ufugusuku. She then married Kenyu Ufugusuku, who himself was later killed, as a result of a Royal Government plot. A queen manipulated into marriages of political convenience, later grieved by the loss of two husbands. Momoto Fumiagari was a queen that suffered a life of tragedy, consequently leading her to spend the rest of her life in seclusion.

