

Cultural Assets around Katsuren Castle

Remains of Haebaru Furujiima Village

The once prosperous village of Haebaru Furujiima grew adjacent to the port that served Katsuren Castle. After a long period of economic decline, the original village was abandoned in 1726 and relocated inland, north of the castle. Many remains were discovered during excavations done in 1986, when a new housing development was planned for the site. These included stone walls, stone paths, pottery shards, and other items dating from the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries.

Makagaa Sacred Well

This sacred natural spring well was at the center of the village of Motojimabaru. It is reached by stairs that descend several meters below a large, natural rock face. Visitors to the castle would purify their hands and feet here and announce to the gods their intent to climb up to the castle. Although it is now surrounded by urban development, it is still used for worship.

Hanga gaa Sacred Spring

This sacred natural spring survives from the time when the village of Motojimabaru existed. According to legend, a woman named Manandaru, who was famous for her beauty, washed her hair at this spring. The length of her hair was one and a half times her height, so it was necessary to drape it over a long pole to wash it. Prayers are still offered here at the New Year by patrilineal descendants of families from nearby villages.

Akojigaa Sacred Spring

The road to Katsuren Castle once passed in front of this sacred spring, which emerges directly from the ground. It was used by people of low status.

Aji haka Gravesite

There are many burial customs unique to Okinawa, including turtle-shell-shaped tombs, the use of large ceramic urns for holding bones of the deceased, and the practice of laying out

bodies in the open. This set of four cliffside graves, laboriously carved into the high rock face, was reserved for prominent village members, including priestesses. They can now be reached from the road above by a narrow path and concrete stairs. In order, from the stairway approach they are:

1. Grave of *monkoban* (village headman)
2. Grave of *ujyouban* (gatekeeper)
3. Grave of *noro* (priestess) NunduchiKusai
4. Grave of Gibo Kusai

Agarigaa Well

Haeburu Village was relocated from the coast in 1726. At the time, regulations prohibited the digging of private wells without special permission, so shared wells were constructed at three prominent locations. The Agarigaa well serves the eastern part of the village, and the water was once drawn to anoint the faces of newborn infants. It is no longer used as an everyday water source.

Mannakagaa Well

The name Mannakagaa means “central well.” This well serves the central part of Haeburu Village. Its form and general features are similar to the wells known as Agarigaa and Irigaa, which are believed to have been built in 1726 when the village was moved inland from the coast. Mannakagaa is no longer used as an everyday water source.

Irigaa Well

The Irigaa well serves the western part of Haeburu Village. Its form and general features are similar to the wells known as Agarigaa and Mannakagaa, which are believed to have been built in 1726 when the village was moved inland from the coast. It is no longer used as an everyday water source.

Guardian Lion Stones of Haeburu Village

Shishi are protective talismans representing mythical lions, which guard against evil influences. When Haeburu Village was moved from south of Katsuren castle in 1726, four carved stone *shishi* were set out to mark the corners of the new village. Two of them survive, weathered witnesses to the passage of the centuries.