

Matsuda Shinjiro Memorial

A monument honoring Matsuda Shinjiro, a head of Kuchinoerabujima during the nineteenth century, stands by his grave on the former site of an elementary school. In 1857, when the Satsuma domain of Kyushu launched sugar production on the island using forced labor, Shinjiro and two companions sought to prevent the islanders from being subjected to involuntary work. However, the three were taken into custody as masterminds of a plot to sabotage production and were beaten with wooden sticks. Shinjiro, the only survivor of the three, sustained severe injuries but succeeded in bringing an end to forced labor on the island. He then spent the remainder of his life working for the community without remuneration.

Shinjiro is also credited with introducing a system of collecting taxes from skipjack fishing vessels putting into port on Kuchinoerabujima, and using the tax revenue to finance improvements on the island. He devoted his life to the development of the island, promoting tree planting among other activities. Shinjiro's achievements are engraved on the monument.