

Aharen *Hamauri* (Tokashiki)

Hamauri, an Okinawan word meaning “descent to the beach,” sometimes refers to the women’s festival held on the third day of the third month in the old lunar calendar. Okinawan women go down to the beach and walk into the sea to soak their hands and feet to purify themselves, praying for well-being and to cure themselves of any ailments. The festival has its origins in the legend of an Okinawan noblewoman who went into the sea to get rid of her baby after being impregnated by Akamata, a Ryukyuan odd-tooth snake who had taken human form.

DESIGNER: Build in this link to Akatama

[http://www.vill.tokashiki.okinawa.jp/gaiyou/gaiyo/minwa/アカマターと浜下り\(はまおり\)](http://www.vill.tokashiki.okinawa.jp/gaiyou/gaiyo/minwa/アカマターと浜下り(はまおり))

The Aharen *hamauri* is different from similar festivals elsewhere in Okinawa. Rather than entering the sea from Aharen beach, participants get into boats and cross over to Hanari, an uninhabited island a few hundred meters offshore. This practice has its origins in another legend: Chinbei, a *noro* priestess who was on her way back from Shuri Castle to Kume Island, took refuge from a storm on Hanari Island. When the villagers heard the news, they sailed across to make their distinguished visitor comfortable with gifts of food and drink.

DESIGNER: Build in this link to Hamauri

<http://www.vill.tokashiki.okinawa.jp/gaiyou/gaiyo/minwa/君南風と浜下り>

In the old days, only women participated in the festival and made the crossing to Hanari Island. Once they got there, they would chant prayers, eat sashimi, and drink sake furnished by their menfolk. With the passage of time, the *hamauri* has lost much of its religious significance. The old prayers have been forgotten, and men—even outsiders—take part. The event is more about family fun. Everyone travels across the bay on boats to enjoy a picnic of fish soup and squid soup served from big barrels by the local fishermen.