

## **Asa Sendoron: Sea Captain's House of the Ryukyu Kingdom**

### **The Stone Walls and *Hinpun* Are Monuments to Prosperity (Village Designated Cultural Property)**

Zamami Island was a transit point for trade between the Ryukyu Kingdom (1429–1879) and China. Some parts of this house that once belonged to a captain of a trading vessel still survive. The outer stone wall is made of large lumps of coral; it is unique to its time, as such a wall could never be built now, for environmental reasons. The short standalone wall at the entrance, known as a *hinpun*, was meant to deter both prying eyes and evil spirits. Its dimensions—2 meters high and 8 meters long—give an idea of how large the house must have been. These walls, which reflect the prosperity of the times in which it was built, have been designated an important cultural asset.

The Ryukyu Kingdom prospered through its trade with China. The village of Zamami was an important transit point for trade, and the men of the island, with their deep knowledge of the sea, were active as both captains and crew. Agonoura Bay, a deep and placid inlet right in front of Asa Village, was often used by ships waiting for the winds to turn.