

## **Izumi Horo Memorial**

This memorial statue overlooking the town of Isen pays tribute to Izumi Horo, who rose from humble beginnings to have a major impact on the history of Tokunoshima and the other Amami islands.

### ***Harsh Post-WWII Conditions***

The history of the Amami Islands is dominated by political struggles between the Ryukyu Kingdom (1429–1879) and Japanese feudal powers on the island of Kyushu. Although the islands officially became part of Japan at the beginning of the Meiji era (1868–1912), the end of World War II in 1945 found them once more at the mercy of outside forces, this time under the U.S. military. While the Occupation ended for most of Japan in 1952, the entire Ryukyu archipelago, including Okinawa and the Amami Islands, remained under U.S. control. The residents of Amami suffered from restrictions on the movement of people, goods, and money.

### ***Izumi Wins the Struggle***

Izumi Horo was born on March 18, 1905. After a successful career as a schoolteacher, a poet, and a publishing company executive, in 1950 he became active in the movement to return the Amami Islands to Japanese sovereignty. As chairman of the Great Japan Reversion Council and mayor of Naze, he led efforts to return the islands to Japan, filing appeals and organizing protests, petitions, and fasts—even meeting the U.S. ambassador to plead the islanders' case. Thanks to his remarkable campaign, the Amami Islands were returned to Japanese administration on December 25, 1953, though Okinawa was not returned until 1972. He is fondly remembered as the “father” of the Amami Islands' early return to Japan.