

Taketoyo Town

to Feel the Legend!

Walking Map to Historic Sites

Yumetaro

Look & Walk



Hello. My name is Yumetaro. I am the symbolic character of this town. I am also the descendant of Urashima Taro. Do you know that Urashima Taro was born and grew up here in Takeoyo? What? You did not know? Well, that is a little disappointing! Now, I will show you the historic sites of my ancestor Urashima Taro in this town. Then you will see the real Urashima Taro!

Old Stories of Taketoyo ● The Hometown of Urashima Taro

"Once upon a time, Urashima Taro was invited to the Ryugu Palace by a turtle. It was a really beautiful place, like a picture...."

Children these days might not know this story, but this story is very familiar to us elders.

In the past, children would play a lot as soon as they finished helping with household chores since there used to be no modern entertainment such as TV and no pestering to study by their parents.

After supper, they would ask their grandparents for good old stories before going to bed.

Children would listen to fairy tales, scary stories, the same stories again and again. They were very curious and often couldn't wait until the end and wanted to know right away and then demanded new stories.

When I close my eyes, this image still comes vividly to my mind, that old man and woman whispering stories to us under a dim light.

At that time, there was no generation gap within families like now.... Grandparents and their grandchildren were closer, and the parents cherished those family bonds.

I still believe that this Urashima Taro was born here in Higashiodaka and returned to "Fuki" village.

You may say "It's impossible because the story of Urashima Taro is said to be just a tale." But wait a moment!

I believe the story to be true. First, I want you to listen to me. Do you know that there is a place called "Urashima-yashiki"?

Isn't "Obugame" clear evidence of the existence of Urashima Taro since he left here riding on the back of a turtle? (*Obugame* means "On the back of a turtle" in Japanese.)

If you use the Chinese reading of *Obugame*, you can pronounce it "Fuki". So the name, an area of "Fuki" can mean "On the back of a turtle". I think this is the real meaning of "Fuki" village.

There is more evidence. To the east of Obugame, there is a river called "Urashima-gawa" and a place called "Uranoshima" and so on. I've heard from my grandfather that many green turtles would come to Uranoshima to lay eggs.

The local god of this area is enshrined in Chiryu Shrine. The shrine is well known in this area, and it was built in September

in 4 BC, during the reign of the Emperor Suinin. The shrine was there long before Urashima Taro went back to his hometown. I've heard from a priest that there is a "tamatebako" (a magic box) kept in the shrine. I remember that the roof of the shrine had some tiles those were shaped into turtles.

Do you know that there is a place called Shikainami on the southern shore in Fuki?

In the past, the ocean around here used to be so beautiful that for a long time after the World Wars many people would come to Fuki Beach. The scenery in Shikainami used to be very spectacular. Therefore, there used to be many cottages of rich people along the beach. Look at the sea from the shore in Shikainami, and you can see waves move strangely! So people would say an entrance to the Ryugu Palace was there.

According to the story from my grandfather, the beach is called "Crying Beach" because it is believed that Urashima Taro turned into an old man and cried in grief when he opened the "tamatebako" here.

There is an old mound called Okinazuka (an Old Man's Mound) and Urashima Kannon (the Goddess of Mercy of Urashima) enshrined about 100 meters west of the beach.

In the past, when Priest Kobo came here, he planted irises, pine trees and bamboo as a memorial to the hometown of Urashima Taro. Irises flowered all the year round, and the Emperor Taisho saw them flourish when he was the crown prince. They say that the pine trees were mottled, and the bamboo would shoot all seasons. However, they died out afterwards.

In Ichiba in Fuki there is a shrine called "Ryugu Shrine", and many people would visit the shrine to worship when Fuki beach was crowded with tourists.

I think this evidence is enough for anyone to believe that Taketoyo is the hometown of Urashima Taro.

[From "Urashima Taro no Furusato" 14th story of *Taketoyo no Mukashibanashi*]

The Legend of Urashima Taro

is one of the most famous folk tales in Japan;

"Once upon a time, a young fisherman called Urashima Taro rescued a turtle being persecuted by children on a beach. The turtle came back to Urashima Taro on the next day, and took him to the beautiful "Ryugu Palace" deep under the sea. In the palace, Princess Otohime welcomed and entertained him with a banquet and a dance performed by fish. Urashima Taro stayed there for many days. Before he left the Ryugu Palace Otohime gave him a magic box called "Tamatebako" and told him "Don't open this unless in an emergency". Urashima Taro went back to his hometown and realized that his family and friends in the village had gone. Actually, time in the Ryugu Palace moves a lot slower than on land and it was hundreds of years later that he left. He terribly despaired and opened the Tamatebako. White smoke came out from inside of it and Taro suddenly became a very old man. It was his true age."

Published by: Taketoyo Town, Section of Planning Policy

2 Aza-Nagaoyama, Taketoyo-town, Chita-gun, Aichi-prefecture, 〒470-2392 ☎0569-72-1111