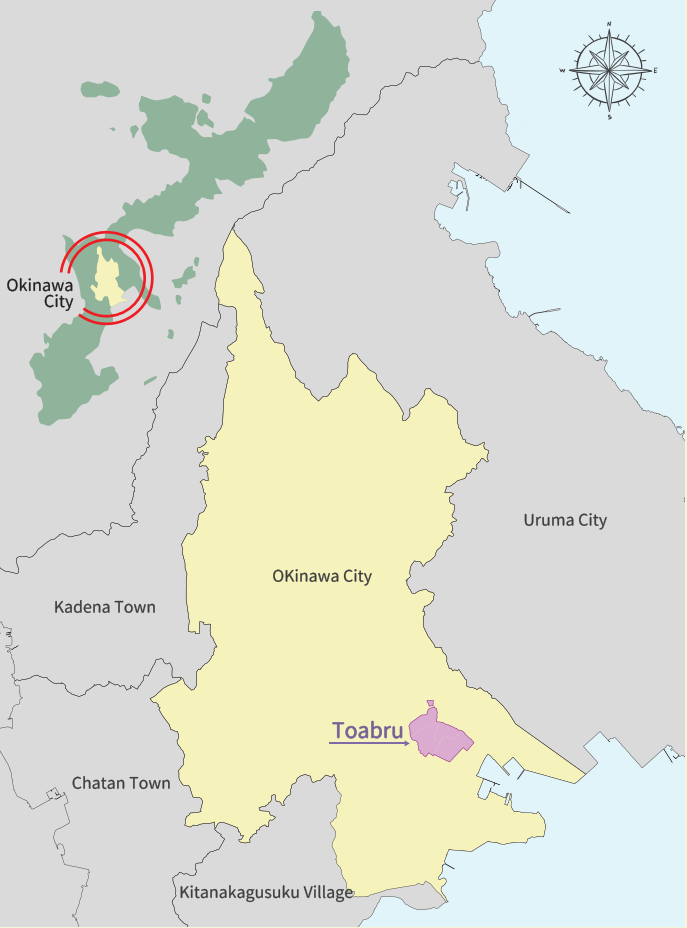


Location of Tobaru



Tobaru Community in 2010



Source: Geospatial Information Authority of Japan website

Okinawa City Map of Cultural Properties
Tobaru

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Okinawa City Culture Center
3rd floor, 2 -19-6 Uechi, Okinawa City 904-0031
TEL: 098-932-6882
FAX: 098-933-6218

Tobaru

Okinawa City Map
of Cultural Properties

About Tobaru Community

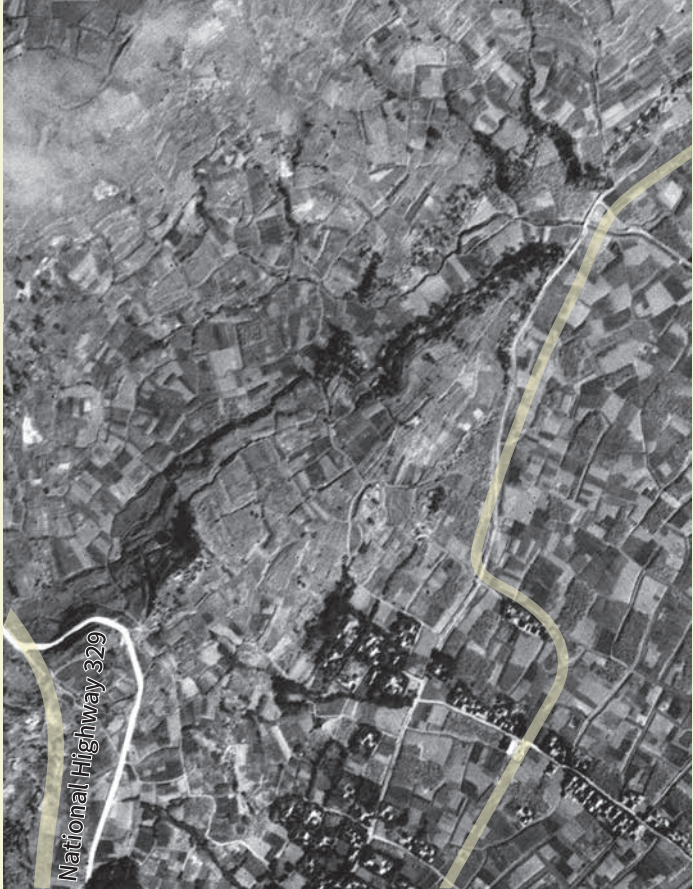
In the Okinawan language, Tobaru is pronounced *Tohbaru*. In the 1713 historical chronicle, *Ryukyukoku Yuraiki*, the “Tobarunodun” is recorded as a place of worship in Tobaru. The community originated at a place called Nobaru in Ozato (area between the present-day National Highway 329 and Prefectural Road 20). However, there was a landslide in the area, and the royal government of Ryukyu directed the community to relocate as it was too dangerous to remain there. It is told that the residents were about to be relocated to what is today Hentona in Kunigami Village, when the people of Ozato offered their assistance, and so the residents were relocated to the present location.

Before the Battle of Okinawa, Tobaru was an agricultural village surrounded by farms and fields.

After the Battle of Okinawa, the people of Tobaru and neighboring Ozato were forced to relocate due to the construction project of the US Forces Awase airfield. However, the project was discontinued and the people returned to Tobaru. Until about the early 1970s, the area still had remnants of the rural countryside, but today, development of housing land is advancing.

In 1974, Misato Village and Koza City merged, and as there was another Tobaru in Koza City (presently Minami-Tobaru), the community association changed its name to Higashi-Tobaru in the same year.

Tobaru Community in 1945



Aerial photograph taken by US military forces ON24146 054-1 (property of the Okinawa Prefectural Archives)



1 Uganju (Sacred site)

It is a Hokora (small shrine) where the Tobaru Village's god and the Hinukan (god of fire) are enshrined.

Even now, the community's rituals and ceremonies are held here. It is the most cherished place of the Tobaru District.



2 Ashibina

There is a sacred area of worship, or Uganju, at this site.

People gather here today to offer prayers for good harvest on Gungwachi-umachi on May 15 and for good health on Kikuzake on September 9, both according to the lunar calendar.

After offering prayers at the Uganju, the local people enjoy the gathering with food and drinks.



3 Kaminsuku (Muraga) Well

This well supported the daily lives of the locals, and it is also referred to as Muraga.

It was also used to draw water for childbirth, as well as for the Wakamizu (the first drawing of water in the New Year).

It is said that the name Kaminsuku came from how this well resembles the bottom of a ceramic pot (Kami).



4 Soriga Well

It is said that water was drawn from this well to cleanse the deceased in Tobaru, and for the traditional Senkotsu, or washing of the bones or remains. It is also said the cloth and clothing after childbirth were cleansed here.



5 Yukatchuga Well

This well was said to have been reserved for use by the upper, samurai class from Shuri. Presently, the Yukatchuga is located about one meter below the road, in the farm field.



Column

Ubinadi

Ubinadi.....what is it? It's a kind of spell or charm practiced in the islands of Okinawa. Water drawn from a well or other important water source in the community is poured into a container, then a person's third finger is dipped in the water. Using the same finger, the forehead is rubbed three times. This is believed to be a protective charm and also effective in praying for good health.

Perhaps you or someone you know has experienced it. During the New Year, grandmothers may do this, rubbing water on your forehead. That is called *Ubinadi*. This was done on occasions other than New Year's, too.

Case 1: When a baby is born!

When a baby was born, *Ubinadi* took place using water from the community's treasured water source such as wells. It is said that this gave strength and vitality to the newborn, and to cleanse and purify the

Case 2: At weddings!

Unlike weddings today, marriage ceremonies used to be held at home. *Ubinadi* ritual was conducted at the beginning of wedding ceremonies to symbolize the union between husband and wife.

You may be fortunate to see the two cases mentioned above. In our daily lives, when we come across something scary or when going past a spooky place, some people do the *Ubinadi* for good luck or to keep away bad spirits. If there's no water around, you can lick your finger instead. Give it a try!

Annual Events Held by the Higashi-Tobaru Neighborhood Association

The table below lists the events held by the Higashi-Tobaru Neighborhood Association.

Events marked with ★ are those events held since before the war.

January	Family Mochi Rice Cake Pounding
Late January	New Year's Celebration
★ May 15 on the Lunar Calendar	Gwangachi Umachi
Mid-June	Cooperative Cleaning
July	Community Picnic
August	Family Tug-of-War
Late August	Community Summer Night Festival
★ September 9 on the Lunar Calendar	Kikuzake
Mid to Late October	Respect for the Aged Event