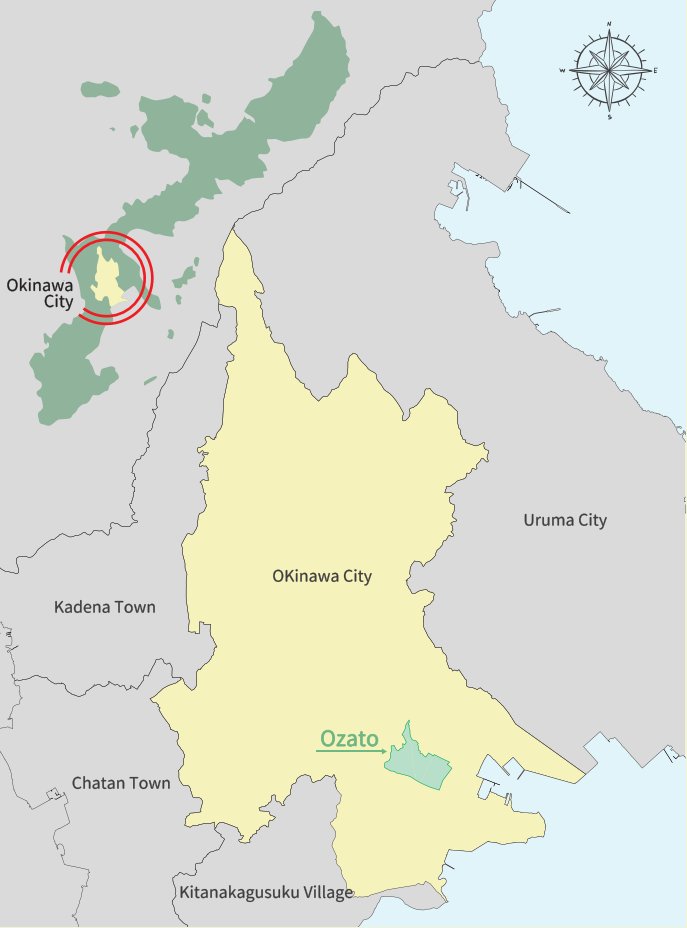


Location of Ozato



Ozato Community in 2010



Source: Geospatial Information Authority of Japan website

Okinawa City Map of Cultural Properties
Ozato

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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

Ozato

Okinawa City Map
of Cultural Properties

About Ozato Community

In the Okinawan dialect, Ozato is pronounced *Ufuzatu*. “Ozato Village” appears in the mid-17th century historical records, *Ryukyukoku Takakiwamecho*. There are local lores on the origin of the community, about how a daughter of an Aji (lord) of Ozato, Nanjo City came to join the community as a bride, and how the name of the community was taken from Ozato, Nanjo City.

It is said that in the past, the community of Ozato was located at Eyama, on the hillside northwest of the present location. However, it is said that the ground there was not firm and the residents suffered continuous landslides. It was also far from the farming grounds, so the residents relocated to the present location. Eyama is also the remains of the Gusuku Period (from the 12th century to around the 16th century).

The people of Ozato grew rice since long ago and there were many rice paddies in the community, but slowly, the rice crops were replaced by sugarcane.

After the war, the people of Ozato and neighboring Tobaru were forced to relocate to what is now Kozakibaru Maehara, Uruma City, due to the construction project of the US Forces Awase airfield. However, the project was discontinued and the people returned to Ozato. Some of the sacred sites and places of worship of the community were damaged or destroyed in the war or in the development after the war. However, the residents and mainly the community association worked to restore them, by finding and creating places of worship, water wells, and shrines. In Ozato, there are a number of traditions and customs related to rice farming such as Umachi, Abushibare, and tug-of-war, which have been passed down the generations and are still a part of the lives of the people here.

Ozato Community in 1945



Aerial photograph taken by US military forces ON24146 019-2 (property of the Okinawa Prefectural Archives)



1 Tunshina (Sacred site)

This is a sacred site to worship the settlement's god of fire. Even now, rituals and ceremonies of the village are held here at this site which is also referred to as Tunchina or Tunya.



2 Usachiga (Sacred site)

This water well is said to have been used by the first settlers of Ozato.

Before the war, the well was located within the National Route 329, but due to road construction, it was relocated to the present location.

It is still a place of worship for the rituals and ceremonies of the village.



3 Ega (Ufuga) Well

It is said to be a well older than the Nunmijiga. There are local lores of people from nearby settlements coming here to collect water during times of drought.

In the past, people collected Wakamizu (the first drawing of water in the New Year) here.



4 Nunmijiga (Drinking Water Well)/ Mikazukiga Well

This well was made when a big drought hit the area, and the Ega Well did not contain enough water for the local people. It is also known as Mikazukiga. Even today, Wakamizu (the first drawing of water in the New Year) is collected here, and this is a place of worship for the village rituals and ceremonies.



5 Takigusai (Sacred site)

Before the war, it was located on the top of Eyama where an incense burner was placed.

Prayers for good health were also conducted here twice a month for people moving overseas.



6 Kanjaga Well

This well is said to have been used by people who started blacksmithing (Kanjaya) here.



7 Jitu-Hinukan (Sacred site)

The Jitu-Hinukan (god of fire for the Jitu officials) and Kamiji (land of god) are enshrined here. Today, prayers are offered here on Shishi-morashi on July 17 on the lunar calendar.



8 Ashibina

This is where the Shishi-morashi is held on July 17 on the lunar calendar.

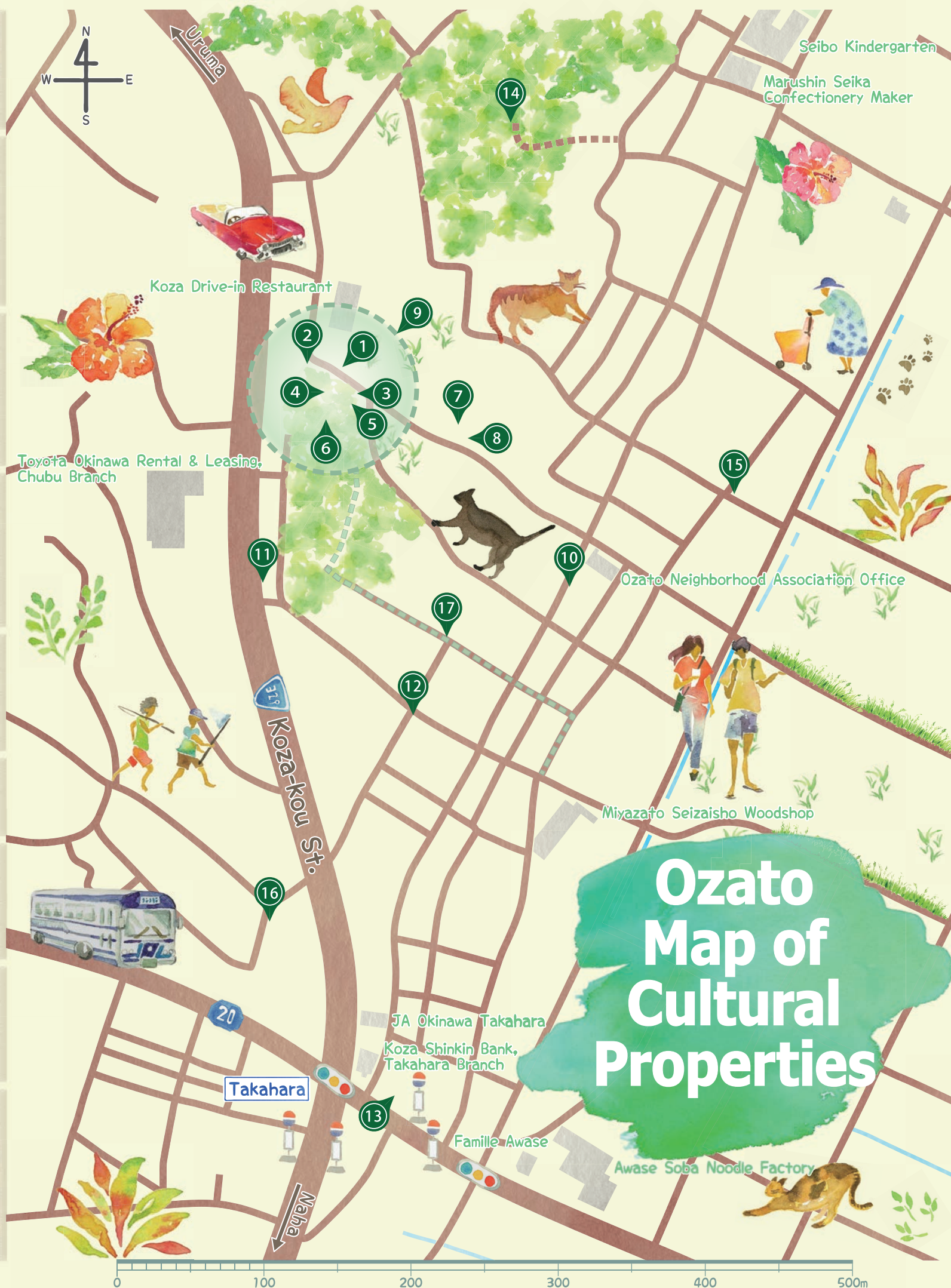
There is a Jitu-Hinukan (god of fire for the Jitu officials) enshrined at this site.



9 Eyama (Sacred site)

This is a sacred site of Ozato with six sites of worship. It is said that the old Ozato settlement was located in this vicinity. During the Abushibare (brushing away of insects) ceremonies held on April 15 of the lunar calendar, the whole hill is the object of worship.

It is also a historical site from the Gusuku period (around 12th to 16th centuries).



10 Soriga Well

People collected water here to purify the deceased in Ozato. It is said that the water from here was not used for any other purpose.



11 Nuruga Well

Local lores tell us this well was used by Noro priestesses. It is also said that a live-in employee (Irichiri) from Moromizato used this well, and later found success, and so the well is also known as Murunzatoga.



12 Kauriga Well

This water well was used to complete the cleansing of cloth and clothing after childbirth after the initial washing with seawater.



13 Ugangwa-mui (Sacred site)

This is a sacred site said to enshrine the god of Ryugu.

The Bito Jinjo Elementary School and the Amagushikumo were located near the Ugangwa-mui before the war.

It is also said that Uniufugushiku hid here with Momotofumiagari on the way to Shuri.

The area is also referred to as Ichibanchi by the locals.



14 Ubuga (Najikiga) Well of Ozato

The well was used to draw water when a child was born. It was also used for Najiki (naming of the child) after birth, so it was also called the Najikiga.



15 Higeshi of Agaribe (Sacred site)

The hollow area was used as a Kumui, or reservoir to keep water for Higeshi (to fight fire).

Even now, prayers are offered for Abushibare (brushing away of insects) on April 15 on the lunar calendar.



16 Agariga Well

This well is said to be where each family clan stops by to offer prayers on their (pilgrimage) route to Agariumai. The original well was buried after the war. It was dug up and restored to its present state. The Nibi (sandstone) at the front of the well is said to have been there since before the



17 Sacred Path of Iribe

This sacred path connects the settlement up to the sacred Eyama. There are two sacred paths in the settlement, and this is one of them.

The path stretches from Usuku-uganju to next to the Kanjaga.

