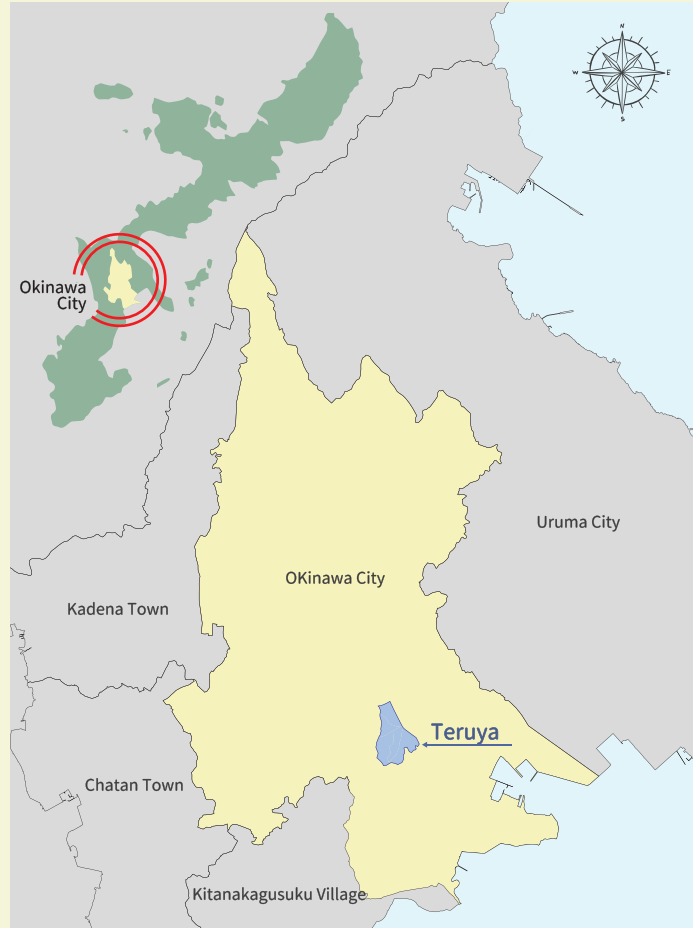
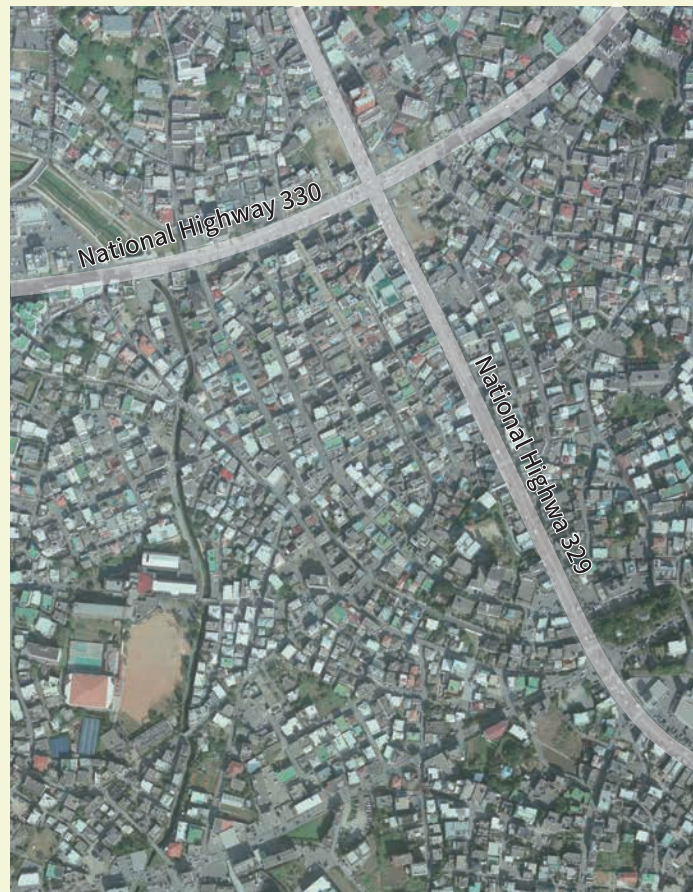


Location of Teruya



Teruya Community in 2010



Source: Geospatial Information Authority of Japan website

Okinawa City Map of Cultural Properties Teruya

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Teruya

Okinawa City Map of Cultural Properties



About Teruya Community

Teruya is located at the heart of Okinawa City adjacent to Koza Intersection, an important traffic point in the central region of Okinawa where highways 330 and 329 cross.

In the Okinawan language, Teruya is pronounced *Teehra*. The name, "Teruya Village," appears in the 1713 historical chronicle *Ryukyukoku Yuraiiki*. In the long past, the Teruya area was once part of Miyazato Village (from the Misato Magiri) located in the south side, but the Teruya community began to develop its own autonomy and eventually separated as its own village.

Before the Battle of Okinawa, Teruya was a small agricultural village surrounded by farms and fields.

After the war, the population of Teruya increased rapidly as a commuter town to support the military base community in Koza. In 1951, with the re-zoning around the Koza Intersection, the Koza Intersection Public Market was established, which became one of the leading commercial regions on Okinawa. There were also various food and beverage establishments catering to US military personnel. People throughout Okinawa Prefecture and from the Amami Islands gathered here and engaged in various types of businesses. However, around the time of Okinawa's reversion to Japan, there was a movement to break free from the economic dependence of the US military, and over the years, establishments catering to US Forces personnel began to decline in numbers. In its present day, Teruya has become a residential area having many private homes and apartment buildings.

Teruya Community in 1945



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



1 Agarinutaki (Sacred site)

This sacred site enshrines the gods of the Utaki, Nuru, and fire. They were enshrined here together upon the zoning work in the 1950s.

People still gather here today for prayers during the local rituals and ceremonies.



2 Agarinuka Well

Water was drawn from this well upon childbirth, and for the Wakamizu (the first drawing of water in the New Year).

Even now, prayers are offered for the Chinese New Year on January 1 on the lunar calendar.

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.

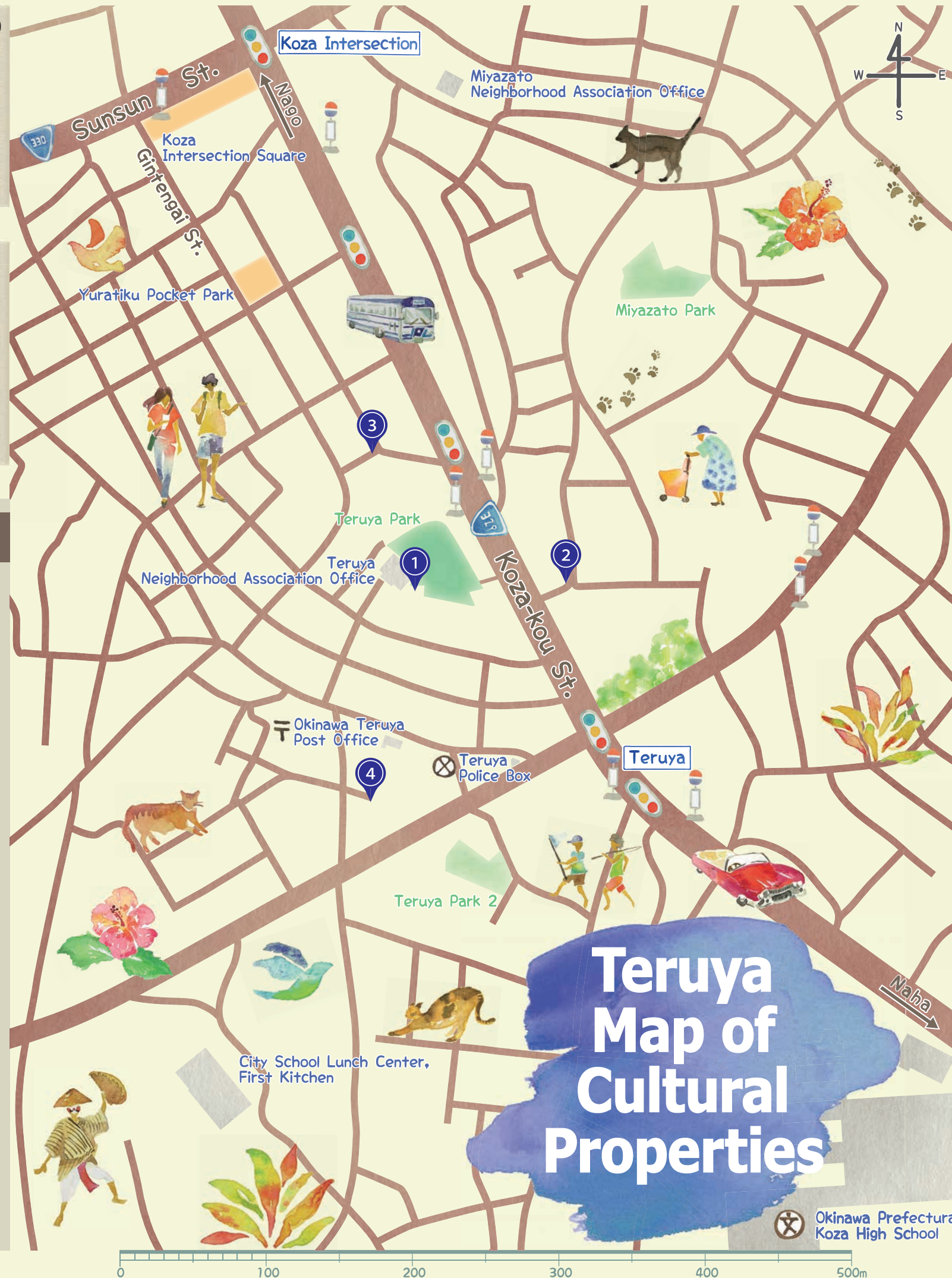
Case 1: When a baby is born!

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 baby upon birth.

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!



Column

Protect the Community from Tamagai (Fireball)!

In Teruya after the war, there was a community event held on the Yokabi, on August 11 of the lunar calendar, where people kept watch for *Tamagai* (fireballs) rising from residences.

The people of Teruya watched the community from atop the hill of Sutichayama (the stretch along the southern part of present-day Teruya Park 2). Those at the top of the hill would holler directions to those in the community, who held a rod with a bundle of burning incense and walked around the community. The group at the top of Sutichayama would point out the residence where *Tamagai* flared upward. It was said that *Tamagai* was a bad omen for the house where it was spotted, and when this happened, the people of that residence offered Ugwan prayers to drive away misfortune.

As a matter of fact, according to lores handed down from those who lived near the Sutichayama hill, there was a large *Tamagai* spotted after the war in the distant area of Nakagusuku. Witnesses said, one night, they saw a huge red ball, like the *Utitada* (setting sun) from the direction of Nakagusuku. A few days later, news spread about a fire that occurred at Tsuha Elementary School in Nakagusuku Village.

Well, whether you believe it or not...is up to you...

3 Kushinuka Well

This water well was used by the locals on their way to and back from their fields.

The well still remains along the Teruya Hondori street.



4 Menuka Well

This well was used as a washing area for farming and every day necessities.

Before the war, the water from this well was used to cleanse the deceased with wet cloth.

It is also known as Menukagwa.

