A Critical Study of the Comparison between Kami-Asagi and Tun
On the Basis of the Fieldwork on Okinawa Island

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Abstract
This work serves as the foundation of comprehensive studies of Kami-Asagi and Tun on Ryukyu Islands. On Okinawa Island, each village formed before modern times has at least one ritual area called Kami-Asagi or Tun. Under the present conditions, while Kami-Asagi and Tun have the same function in each community, there are striking contrasts between them. Earlier studies have not clarified sufficiently whether they are of the same origin or what the distinguishing point is between them. Though it is often said that we must understand Utaki and Kami-Asagi/Tun as the nucleus of a village in order to grasp the construction of the community on Okinawa Island, this issue has remained obscure. In this study, after visiting all the villages that have Kami-Asagi/Tun, we examined earlier studies and tried to show that Kami-Asagi and Tun have the same origin from an architectural viewpoint, and to prove that both of them need to be recognized as spatial matter that consists of a structure, such as a building or a small shrine, and an open space.

Keywords: Kami-Asagi; Tun; Okinawa; Amami; ritual area

1. Introduction
This paper is the foundation of our study in which we examine Kami-Asagi and Tun from the viewpoint of architectural design and urban/rural planning. Clarifying the nature of Utaki and Kami-Asagi/Tun is indispensable to obtain a clear understanding of the construction of villages in Okinawa. Although folklorists and historians have presented many results of studies concerning Utaki and Kami-Asagi/Tun, there is no denying that the results were based on studies of oral folklore and tradition or studies of certain areas on the island. In order to clarify the nature of Utaki and Kami-Asagi/Tun as a whole, it is necessary to study all these places across the island almost at the same time rather than selecting only a small number of sample places. In conducting this study, we visited all villages in the island during the period from 2003 to 2005. This paper is based on the results of the fieldwork.

Utaki is the most sacred place for religious services on Okinawa Island. Although it is a place for religious services, it has no particular artificial structures. Usually, Utaki is located halfway up a mountain or at its foot. Trees and plants, including kuba, pines, banyan figs, mani (Formosa palm), sanin (shell ginger), gehn (Japanese silver grass), and azaka (Japanese laurels), grow there, and it is believed that gods descend through those trees and plants. Utaki has an Ibi, a place where the gods that have descended are enshrined. The Ibi has no shrine or similar structures; instead, only an old tree or a stone is found there. An incense burner placed in front of the tree or stone serves as a simple reminder to visitors that the place is a sacred one. Utaki is regarded as Kusati (guardian) of a village, and enshrined there is Kusati-Gami (guardian deity). According to Yashu Nakamatsu (1968/1990), former professor of the University of the Ryukyus, many of the places worshipped as Utaki in the Okinawan villages were formerly the graveyards of ancestors who formed the villages, and those graveyards later became holy places called Utaki (p.84/p.92). According to the account of Shigeko Ohshiro (1983), a Kaminchu (shaman) living in Aza (a section of a city, town or village) Janagusuku of Ohgimi Village, which was related to us when we visited, the Okinawans lived in high places when they first built villages and later gradually moved to the lowlands and came to regard the places where their ancestors once lived as sacred. We heard the same story without exception from all the kaminchu we interviewed during the fieldwork, so we would like to present this as evidence to reinforce the opinion of Nakamatsu. On the other hand, there is the contrasting opinion that Utaki is the same as Kami-Asagi/Tun. Because only a few Utaki were found in this fieldwork and this paper is about Kami-Asagi/Tun, we only indicate here the existence of that opinion and do not go into it in detail.

Many of the Kami-Asagi and Tun are found in the villages on Okinawa Island that were formed prior
to modern times. They also exist on the islands and islets around Okinawa Island and the Amami Islands, and their distribution exactly overlaps the map of the Ryukyu Kingdom. Researchers have conducted many comparative studies of Kami-Asagi and Tun as places for religious services. On Okinawa Island, many of the Kami-Asagi are distributed in the northern area while most of the Tun are distributed in the central and southern areas (Fig.1.1). Due to this imbalance in the distribution of Kami-Asagi and Tun as well as the changes in the form of existing Kami-Asagi and Tun as clarified in our previous papers, opinions have been divided over whether Kami-Asagi and Tun, although named differently, have the same meaning, or whether they have two different meanings. Since differences in opinion about their relationship with Utaki contribute to conflicts over theories, it is necessary to consider this point first. Then, taking into consideration the present condition of Kami-Asagi and Tun as found in the fieldwork, we examined whether Kami-Asagi and Tun, although named differently, have the same meaning or two different meanings. In this study, based on the results of the fieldwork, we used the process described above to verify the opinions of researchers in

Fig.1. Distribution Map of Kami-Asagi and Tun (L), Cities, Towns and Villages on Okinawa Isle (R)
the past and clarified whether Kami-Asagi and Tun are of the same entity.

2. Relationship between Kami-Asagi and Tun from Nakamatsu's View

According to Ruykukoku Kyuki [The Old Records of the Ryukyu Kingdom], Kami-Asagi existed at 106 locations in the northern area of Okinawa Island, two in the central area, and nine in the southern area. In contrast, Tun existed at two locations in the northern area of the island, 187 in the central area, and 398 in the southern area. As these descriptions indicate, they were distributed in two distinctly different parts of the island. In other words, Kami-Asagi mostly existed in the northern parts of the islands, and Tun in the central and southern parts, as the principal places for religious services in the villages.

Nakamatsu conducted a field study of the relationship between Kami-Asagi and Tun and compiled his opinions in a book. Let us look at his opinions first.

According to Nakamatsu (1968/1990), Tun is simply a name denoting a place for religious services, and if there is an open space that is sufficiently large to conduct a religious service, people are not concerned about whether or not there is a small shrine or other structures (pp.138-154/pp.171-189). As examples of Tun with a small shrine or other structures, he cites Goeki-nu-Tun and Kina-nu-Tun in Aza Nakachi, Uchibaru-nu-Tun in Aza Nesabu, Gibo-nu-Tun and Uchibaru-nu-Tun in Aza Gibo, Zah-nu-Tun, Okumnu-Tun, and Kyanah-nu-Tun in Aza Kyan, and Oroku-nu-Tun in Oroku—all in Tomigusuku City. As examples of Tun with only an open space, he cites Enobi-nu-Tun and Kanikadan-nu-Tun in Gushikawa City and Chibana-nu-Tun in Okinawa City. As described above, Nakamatsu defines Tun as a place for calling gods and conducting religious services. In addition, he argues that Kami-Asagi and Tun have two different names but the same meaning. The following are the grounds for his arguments (1979: pp.32-33).

(1) Referring to the Tun located in Chinen-Gusuku, Ryukyukoku Yuraiki [The Records of the Origin of the Ryukyu Kingdom] states that "seats were arranged in the garden in front of the Tun." With respect to the Tun located in Nakagusuku, it also states that "terraced stone seats were arranged." For these reasons, Tun can be considered a place for calling gods and conducting religious services.

(2) Among the ten Kami-Asagi in the central and southern areas of Okinawa Island, which are mentioned in Ryukyukoku Yuraiki, Nakamatsu conducted a field study of five existing ones in Aza Namihira, Aragaki, Uezato, Azama, and Ohjima. During this fieldwork, he also added one Kami-Asagi in Aza Itosu, which is not mentioned in Ryukyukoku Yuraiki. As a result, he found that only the Kami-Asagi in Aza Azama had had a building since early on and that an open space in the woods served as Kami-Asagi in all other locations. Therefore, he concluded that similar to Tun, whether there is a building or not has nothing to do with the function of Kami-Asagi.

(3) It can be concluded that Tun occurred earlier than Kami-Asagi. In villages with two or more Tun and Kami-Asagi coexisting, the process that starts with a simple religious service in Tun and ends with a comprehensive one in Kami-Asagi can be observed. Most of the Tun remained where they were first founded even if the villages moved. It was due to the burden of the religious services held in such a large number of Tun after small villages were merged in the central and southern areas of Okinawa Island, that Kami-Asagi was created anew in the northern area of the island to streamline the religious system.

(4) Given the fact that the distribution of Tun and Kami-Asagi described in Ryukyukoku Yuraiki corresponds with that of Noro, it can be concluded that both Tun and Kami-Asagi were founded by the government of the Ryukyu Kingdom in Shuri after the occurrence of Noro.

3. Results of the Fieldwork

Each Kami-Asagi has a building except Aza Sosu of Kunigami Village. The tables below list the results of the fieldwork of Tunasti.

### Table 1. Tun: Open Space / Open Space with an Incense Burner

| City/Town/Vil. Aza | Tun Name       |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Itoman           | Kakazu        |
| Tomigusuku       | Naha          |
| Makabe           | Sosubu        |
| Nakagusuku       | Iju           |
| Yonabaru         | Ui-nu-Tun     |
| Yonabaru         | Ijina-Tun     |

### Table 2. Tun: with Small Shrine

| City/Town/Vil. Aza | Tun Name       |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Itoman            | Taketomi      |
| Kita              | Kita-nu-Tun   |
| Yozu              | Gero-nu-Tun   |
| Teruya            | Teruya-nu-Tun |
| Hukuchi           | Maka-nu-Tun   |
| Hukuchi           | Nakan-Tun     |
| Hukuchi           | Agari-Tun     |
| Nashiro           | Naka-shiro-nu-Tun |
| Ahacon           | Ahacon-nu-Tun |
| Makabe           | Makabe-nu-Tun |
| Kohagura          | Agari-Tun     |
| Kohagura          | Ir-Tun        |
| Komese           | Yumachi-nu-Tun |
| Maehira           | Uhu-Tun       |
| City/Town/Vil. | Aza | Tun name |
|---------------|-----|----------|
| Itoman        | Ishiki | Ishiki-nu-Tun |
| Urasoe        | Iso | Iso-nu-Tun |
| Ohzato        | Takahira | Uiso-nu-Tun |
| Wakunaguni    | Magukina | Magukina-Tun |
| Nakama        | Nakaa | Nakaa-nu-Tun |
| Katsuren      | Higa | Higa-nu-Tun |
| Hama          | Rasu | Rasu-nu-Tun |
| Kishaba       | Tune |
| Kita-Nagakusuku | Waniya | Uchiura-nu-Tun |
| Shimabuku     | Tune |
| Itosu         | Kamishiya | Kamishiya-nu-Tun |
| 6          | Ogiso | Kamishiya |
| 7          | Uken | Uken-nu-Tun |
| 8          | Kanikadan | Kanikadan-nu-Tun |
| Ohb         | Uhura-hidokoro-nu-Tun |
| 10          | Tomomoyo | Tomomoyo |
| 11          | Momokura-nu-Tun |
| 12          | Takara | Sakuma-nu-Tun |
| 13          | Tsuho | Kyuksamaden |
| 14          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 15          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 16          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 17          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 18          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 19          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 20          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 21          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 22          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 23          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 24          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 25          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 26          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 27          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 28          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 29          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 30          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 31          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 32          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 33          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 34          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 35          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 36          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 37          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 38          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 39          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 40          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 41          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 42          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 43          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 44          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 45          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 46          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 47          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 48          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 49          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 50          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 51          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 52          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 53          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 54          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 55          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 56          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 57          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 58          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 59          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 60          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 61          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 62          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 63          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 64          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 65          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 66          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 67          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 68          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 69          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 70          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 71          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 72          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 73          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 74          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 75          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 76          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 77          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 78          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 79          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 80          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 81          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 82          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 83          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |
| 84          | Tsuho | Tsuho-Tun |

**Table 3. Tun: with Building**
4. Discussion

In the following section, we examine the view of Nakamatsu while referring to the results of our fieldwork. Moreover, we also discuss Kozo Ike's view because he touched upon the same points at issue.

In relation to the Nakamatsu's view described in item (1) in section 1, Ike (1979) similarly argues that Tun is a place in which whether there is a building or not has nothing to do with the function of Tun (pp.34-35). As the basis for his argument, Ike cites his own supposition that since many of the Tun, which are found at locations between Utaki and the village, abut on the latter, Tun was created by transforming a place for religious services or other similar places in an old village into a sacred one as the village that was formed there developed ahead of Utaki.

Conducting the fieldwork of Tun, we would like to examine the opinions of scholars in the past based on the results of our fieldwork. The above tables indicate the tendency that there are only a few Tun that are simply an open space or a place where only an incense burner is placed. When comparing Kami-Asagi with Tun in the fieldwork, we found that there was a clear difference between the present condition of Kami-Asagi and that of Tun, but could not necessarily assert that Tun can clearly be understood using the notion of "place" alone.

Next, we looked at the results of the fieldwork by classifying Tun with some sort of structures into Tun with a small shrine and Tun with a structure which consists of modern Tun and Goshijo (place where two or more gods are enshrined).

What we would like to point out with respect to the Tun covered by the fieldwork, which have a small shrine or have become Utaki, is that a building once existed in most of them. Isn't it that a building initially existed in the space of Tun but that it was destroyed after the beliefs of worshippers underwent changes or some changes occurred due to factors other than the beliefs and a new shrine was later built at the site of the building or the site of the building remained an open space? In addition, during the fieldwork, we found that there are currently buildings in Enobi-nu-Tun and Kanikadan-nu-Tun in Gushikawa City as well as Chibana-nu-Tun in Okinawa City, which Nakamatsu cites as Tun without a building. Probably, there were no buildings in these Tun when Nakamatsu (1968/1990) surveyed them (p.140/p.174). What are the sentiments of the residents in the village who tried to construct a building suitable to the open space of Tun? In our opinion, the residents might have thought that it would be better for Tun to have a building, and this thought might have urged the residents to construct a building in the open space of Tun. Even during the fieldwork, we saw and heard examples of a building being reconstructed because the old building had disappeared though it once existed, and therefore, these examples are not surprising.
Given the results of the fieldwork, the view that Tun is simply a "place" is far from convincing.

As mentioned in item (2), Nakamatsu (1968/1990) is of the opinion that similar to Tun, whether there is a building or not has nothing to do with the function of Kami-Asagi (p.146/pp.179-180).

In this regard, Ike (1972) argues that Nakamatsu's opinion is not reasonable given the fact that there are actually matsurigoya (festival huts) called "Kami-Asagi" (pp.34-35). We cannot help but doubt Ike's reasoning. During the fieldwork, we saw a building exist in Tun many times. The results of our observations are summarized in the above tables. This may overlap with the discussion in item (1), but if one determines that Tun is an empty place and Kami-Asagi is not, only on the basis of whether there is a building or not, how can one interpret a building that currently exists in the space of Tun?

Moreover, there is a huseya type (a small flat structure of a thatched roof and stone or wood pillars) of traditional Kami-Asagi and Tun, and it has been confirmed that the existing huseya-type Kami-Asagi and the prewar huseya-type Tun in Aza Iso of Urasoe City as recorded by Yoshitaro Kamakura were built in accordance with the same design standards. Based on the foregoing, we could not help but decide that the view that Kami-Asagi is different from Tun because a building currently exists in the former is not reasonable.

Based on the Omoro (ancient song) that speaks of the construction of a building called "Kami-Asagi," Ike (1972) indicates that even if there is a place called "Kami-Asagi" that does not have a building, it is more natural to think that there was a building in the past (pp.34-35). As an example of this, he cites the fact that in Aza Hedo of Kunigami Village, a place that formerly had a building is called "Kami-Asagi." Based
on the fieldwork as well, we can cite Aza Sosu of Kunigami Village. Private houses on Okinawa Island have a detached building called "Kami-Asagi," and this is additional evidence that Kami-Asagi refers to a building. Therefore, in this respect, Ike's opinion is quite reasonable.

However, we do not think that the existence of a building alone characterizes Kami-Asagi and Tun. Kami-Asagi and Tun are almost always accompanied by an open space called Asagi-nah or other names, which makes up a certain stretch of space. In the religious services for a village as examined earlier, this open space is used to dedicate dances to gods and serve other purposes. In other words, a building called "Kami-Asagi" and an open space connected to it are also included in the image of Kami-Asagi and Tun as conjured up in the minds of residents in the village. If the residents of the village were aware of the clear distinction between building and place, they would not even call a place "Kami-Asagi" if it no longer has a building. For this reason, we surmise that what are evoked by the terms "Kami-Asagi" and "Tun" are a building and an open space that is connected to it. Therefore, it seems that when Nakamatsu views Kami-Asagi as a "place" like Tun, he in fact refers to the concepts of Kami-Asagi and Tun as described above. By contrast, it seems that Ike views Kami-Asagi as a specific building rather than as a concept.

As for item (3), Ike (1972) indicates that while most of the Tun are not relocated, Kami-Asagi tends to be relocated as the village where it is located moves because it is originally a temporary facility for conducting religious services, suggesting that Tun and Kami-Asagi are two different religious facilities (p.35). He also points out that the reason Kami-Asagi could remain a place for religious services for several consanguineous groups or the entire village even after the merger of smaller villages was that its building did not have divinity as a place of worship and that Kami-Asagi cannot be understood from the viewpoint of the rationalization of religious services in Tun.

The characteristics of Tun not moving and Kami-Asagi moving together with the village as pointed out by Ike were not clearly observed during the fieldwork. Certainly, most of the Kami-Asagi are located in the villages except gusuku-Kami-Asagi. By contrast, although some of the Tun are located in the villages, Tun is usually found close to a sacred place known as Utaki---for example, in the growth of thickets or in the woods---and even the tendency of some of them becoming Utaki was observed. It seems obvious that the present condition of Tun is quite different from that of Kami-Asagi, although we cannot affirm it.

The view that Kami-Asagi could become a place for religious services for the entire village because they lacked divinity is extremely important. We will examine this issue in detail in a separate paper. It is true that Kami-Asagi is a place for religious services, but it is not something that is regarded as sacred. We share this view of Ike's, and it is not conceivable that as Nakamatsu stated, Kami-Asagi was created for the purpose of streamlining a system of religious services. In a village with many Tun, however, the same religious services are repeated, and as Nakamatsu (1968/1990) pointed out, the residents of the village seem to feel that this is complicated (pp.152-154/ pp.186-189). In Aza Maehira of Itoman City, several Tun scattered in the community have been concentrated in a single place to conduct religious services at the same time. Although there is a concentration of Tun shrines in the place, no building called "Kami-Asagi" is found there, nor is the place called "Kami-Asagi." It is too hasty to draw a general conclusion using the example from only one village, but even with the example of Maehira, Kami-Asagi could not be understood from the viewpoint of the rationalization of religious services.

As Nakamatsu pointed out in item (4), assuming that Kami-Asagi and Tun appeared after the occurrence of Noro, it is unclear how religious services were conducted in the village before the occurrence of Noro. Nakamatsu's opinions may certainly apply to Tun and Kami-Asagi as they were institutionalized by the government of the Ryukyu Kingdom and other organizations. As long as one looks at the details of religious services laid down in Ryukyukoku Yuraiki and other ancient documents, it is difficult to think that there was a clear distinction between Kami-Asagi and Tun.

Recently, Tsutomu Iyori has been studying the various ritual areas of Ryukyu-Okinawa by folkloristic and historic methods. Iyori (2005) states that Kami-Asagi means the material character of a ritual area, that is, its building, and Tun means the space-time character. We are interested in his idea, because it could possibly explain why Kami-Asagi and Tun have different names while they have the same function. However, the findings of the fieldwork require deeper consideration. Iyori's idea that Tun is a broader concept than Kami-Asagi because there are cases of Kami-Asagi becoming Tun contradicts the fact that there are Kami-Asagi that used to be called Tun in Yomitan Village, not to mention the fact that 46% of Tun have a building. Though we think it is too early for him to make such a conclusion, it is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the space-time character of Kami-Asagi/Tun as our study deal with architectural design and urban/rural planning based in classification by form. His explanation is highly awaited.

5. Conclusions

According to the results of the fieldwork, it is difficult to find solid proof to support what Nakamatsu and Ike have advocated. From the results
of the fieldwork and the discussion, we conclude the following.

1) There are few Kami-Asagi/Tun that are simply an open space.
2) A Kami-Asagi/Tun that previously had a building is likely to have a new one again.
3) There are a few Tun that are an open space with an incense burner, while there is no such kind of Kami-Asagi.
4) Tun often have a small shrine, while Kami-Asagi never do.
5) Both Kami-Asagi and Tun need to be recognized as spatial matter that consists of a structure and an open space.

Today, there are considerable differences between Kami-Asagi and Tun in terms of the situation that surrounds them. Nevertheless, as we have already proved the identity of Kami-Asagi and Tun in our previous papers, from the viewpoint of their traditional design, they are exactly alike. That is, while their names are different, they are of the same origin, though they have changed to some extent. The future direction of this study will be to examine the vicissitude and the contemporary significance of Kami-Asagi and Tun.

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Notes

1 While there exists the opinion that Tun and Kami-Asagi have the same functions, the other opinion is that they do not. We will examine this point in latter chapters.

One of the prominent researchers who argue that Kami-Asagi and Tun, which are places for religious services, have different names but the same meaning is Yashu Nakamatsu. For details, see Kami no Mura: Okinawa no Sonraku [Gods and Villages: Rural Communities in Okinawa]. Okinawa: The University of the Ryukyus Okinawa Bunka Kenkyu-jo [Okinawa Culture Research Institute], 1968, pp.137-153.

Among the researchers who argue that Kami-Asagi and Tun are places for religious services that have two different natures is Kozo Ike. For details, see Saigi no Kukan [The Space of Festivals]. Tokyo: Sagami Shobo, 1979, pp.33-35.

Because we classified Kami-Asagi/Tun in accordance with Ryukyuokoku Yuraiki as Nakamatsu did, some Tun, which are called Kami-Asagi today, are listed in the Tun column.

4 Please refer to our previous work for the classification of the types of Kami-Asagi and Tun.

5 According to our fieldwork, a Kami-Asagi had been reconstructed in Aza Hedo.

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