





# 天然物 OR 人工物？

宮城県の宮古市沖合に沈んだ天然物か、戦時中の軍艦の残骸か。シンポジウムで議論。大分県立大が主催。26日、西宮市の同大で開かれた「宮古の沈没物調査報告会」で、宮古市沖合に沈んだ天然物か、戦時中の軍艦の残骸か。シンポジウムで議論。

## 琉大 考古学者参加しシンポ

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## 与那国の「海底遺跡」

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### 調査や保存 協力へ



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木村琉大教授の調査団

人工の遺跡か、自然地形かを調査団は検討している。調査団は、沖繩県沖繩市の海底遺跡調査から、人が「十字」を刻んだとされる板石の破片が見つかった。と木村琉大教授が九日、記者発表した。発見場所の状況などは、今後調査団の調査から明らかになる。調査団は、この破片の調査に、沖繩県立博物館の調査員も参加している。調査団は、この破片の調査に、沖繩県立博物館の調査員も参加している。



「十字」刻んだ石版発見

与那国の海底構造物で

与那国沖で、夜明けの海の中を調査団は「発見」した。この破片は、板石の破片で、長さ約二センチ、幅約一センチ、厚さ約二ミリ程度のものである。調査団は、この破片の調査に、沖繩県立博物館の調査員も参加している。



与那国沖沖縄海底遺跡調査から発見された、「十字」が刻まれた石版破片

調査団は、この破片の調査に、沖繩県立博物館の調査員も参加している。調査団は、この破片の調査に、沖繩県立博物館の調査員も参加している。

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「遺跡説裏付ける」

また、遺跡物に人工的な

# 「海底遺跡」から石板

## 表面に「X」「V」印

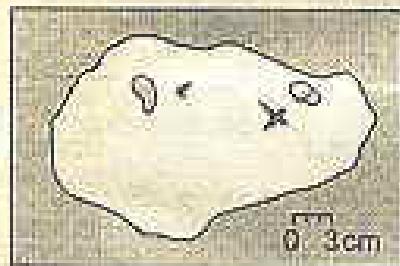
与那国近海

### 木村教授「人工物裏付け」

与那国島近海のいわゆる「海底遺跡ポイント」を調査している木村政昭琉球大理学部教授は九日、昨年十



「海底遺跡ポイント」から掘りあげた「X」印の石板



一月に遺跡ポイントで発見された石板について、表面に刻まれている「X」と「V」のような形の印が人工的に彫られた可能性が高いと発表した。木村教授は「これまで発見されていなかった遺物が初めて発見された」と述べ、遺跡ポイントが人工的なものであるという裏付けになるとみて、さらに遺跡ポイントとの関係を探っていくという。

石板は厚さ三センチ、長さ二十五センチ、幅十六センチ。遺跡ポイント自体と同じ種類のたい積岩の一種でできていて、昨年十一月、成大海底調査団に協力しているダイバーが発見。与那国島新川の奥の沖約三百メートル、水深二十メートルの遺跡ポイントの石積み面に置かれた通路状になっている地点で、崩れた巨石の周囲から出てきた。二つの穴が開いていることから、ダイバーが持ち帰った。最初は分からなかったが、洗

浄してみると「X」「V」のような形が刻まれていることが分かり、木村教授らが詳しく調べていた。

二つの印について木村教授が自内の考古学や生物学、地質学などに見てもらった結果、ほぼ人工的なものと認めたといい、穴については生物による可能性が高いという。

遺跡ポイントは付着していたと想定するのは年代測定から、五千年前から五百年前の間に形成されたと考えられている。木村教授は石板についてもこの間のものであるが、現在石板に付着している化石の年代測定を急いでいる。

### 人為的だが年代分からず

沖縄の考古学に詳しい高宮広衛沖縄大名誉教授

「X」印は刻みの深さが違い、加工の順序が分かり、明らかに人為的なものだが、年代や目的がよく分からず。同じような資料が増えれば年代や目的が分かるかもしれない。

与那国

# 魔よけの絵馬か

## 海底遺跡から石板

木村 瑠大  
教授が発表

琉球大学理学部の木村瑠大教授は九日、海底遺跡と

みられる沖縄県与那国島近

海底構造物は与那国島の南約三百メートルの海底に、長さ約百二十メートル、幅約四十メートルにわたって広がり、階段や通路のような地形が幾つもあ

る。木村教授は九七年四月、人為的に築かれたとする調査結果を発表した。

くの海底にある階段状構造物の周辺から、模様の入った石板が見つかったと発表した。このため、同教授は、海底構造物が人工的に造られた可能性が高くなったとして、今月末、東京大学海洋研究所で行われるシンポジウムで発表する。

与那国島沖の「海底遺跡」周辺で見つかった石板

石板は一九九八年十一月、同教授の調査団のメンバーが潜水中に発見した。縦約二十五センチ、横約十七センチ、厚さ約二センチの台形。表面がV字形に刻まれたり、丸くくの抜かれたような箇所がある。同教授は、X字の模様などもあるため、「人が彫った」と判断、魔よけの絵馬や構造物の地図などの可能性もあるとしている。少なくとも千五百年以上前に作られたらしい。

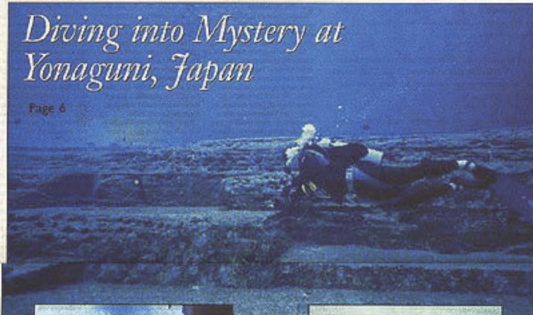


PACIFIC STARS AND STRIPES

## Pacific Travel

Your guide to travel and leisure November 11, 1999

### Diving into Mystery at Yonaguni, Japan

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第11期星条旗

Your Guide to Travel and Leisure



Light penetrating through 30 feet of clear water illuminates the handiwork of an ancient, unknown people who built these recently discovered "Monuments" near Yonaguni, Japan. A diver swims the site. Who built it? Why? How old is it? Researchers and recreational divers are now trying to answer those questions.

## Diving into mystery

The recently found underwater "Monuments" near Yonaguni, Japan, are so far unexplained and a chance for divers to swim into a historical mystery

Day three. Rain. Thunder. Lightning. Our spirits remain as dark as the sky. Morning progresses into more rain, more thunder, more lightning.

We are now aware that we may have to call back home to extend our trip, change plans, beg employers for more time off and even worse, our wives for more money. We have traveled to Yonaguni, Japan, an island 1,600 miles south of Tokyo, the lost island and most western point in this country.

It is closer to Taiwan than to its next Japanese neighbor island. We are here to dive on ruins of what is thought to be a sunken city, or Monuments, found eight years ago by local diver Kinechiro Aratake. Now in the darkness of our morning, five divers become even more resolute that we are going to dive these Monuments.

Mr. Aratake reported his findings to several noted geologists and through his personal initiative has created a wonderful diving environment for expert and novice divers to share in the excitement of this major underwater discovery.

The Monuments are accessible only by boat. They lay off a point of land that is about cliffs rising 50 yards above the water. Shore diving is out of the question.

Intrepid divers are slowly realizing the importance of these Monuments while recreational divers are attempting to piece together answers to the mystery of these underwater stone monuments. It is living history, making our dive trip to Yonaguni both educational, exciting and very challenging.

At 10 a.m. the wind shifts, and at noon waters are calming. The divers' frenzied because they are gladdened by the knowledge that they will lead us over the side of Aratake's boat the "Long Shot," and down on the Monuments. Transportation comes to move us from Aratake's Dive Shop, the Southwest.

Text and Photographs by John Chandler



Divers. The divers tell us that we are heading to the other side, the Monument side. After three days of waiting we are going to give it a shot. Spirit, gear, film gets loaded, batteries and O-rings double-checked as final dive preparations are made.

Following a 20-minute boat ride and now at the dive site, our dive master, whom we have grown to trust in these three days of diving, delivers a sobering pre-dive brief. He warns that the strength of standing currents here on Yonaguni, Aratake's Point preclude us from taking cameras. He says they are too strong for anything but streamline divers. He strongly recommends almost belts us — not to take cameras. My large dual camera rig is reduced to just one small hand-held wide angle dual flash rig. Gary Haglund, an experienced SCUBA instructor, gets for safety and leaves his rig on the boat and his wife, "C," leaves her video camera on the boat deck. Only Tony Dees and I go over the side with cameras, but since we are all SCUBA instructors, too, we carry serious concerns as well.

The divers' depth is into 30 feet of crystal-clear water and guides us to our final entry point. At a perfectly cut square tunnel, or gate entrance, we enter into the monument. The current is in our face but navigable. With excitement we move through the tunnel that opens into a fever area.

Here we are protected from

foot. The current maintains crystal clarity in the water and our view is stunning. Sunlight breaking through clouds above illuminates the accuracy of the right angles cut into the limestone. Is this a monument, or a quarry?

What was the purpose of their construction? Not for us to determine. What is apparent is the grandeur. The beauty of these man-made structures that defied a strong contradiction, with their stark angles, to nature's erosions of softer and less systematic forms.

Our guide leads on a ledge overlooking a deep ravine. Water men swiftly by. Doug launches, following the guide over the ledge and floats weightlessly across the 70-foot deep ravine. The erosion we are crossing may be as wide as 50 yards. The current strength here is strong, and those who did not bring cameras have no regret. Gliding across the ravine, numerous parrotfish, large blue-green surgeonfish, and schools of blue Anthias — their bright yellow tails are in our guides across the curved stone steps on the wall opposite our launch point. The handsets we made on these steps were the fighter planes being arrested on the deck of an aircraft carrier. Everyone searches for a hand hold to keep the look (our handsets). Once stopped, our momentum swings us around once again into the ravine with the force of nature. The visual perspective creates deep respect for the majestic course of this gorge of limestone

This is a clear view of the man-made stone that the trees under more than 10 feet of water and some more than 3 acres of Yonaguni. Above, divers move into the strong current as they explore deeper into the crevices of the monument area. The rake of the ascending bubbles reveals the strength of currents in these crevices.

currents by the high ocean walls on three sides. Directly before and above me is a perfectly cut square tunnel-like column of stone that only marks hands could have fashioned during some period in our collective past. There is some form of writing etched into the column. We again rally, and our guide points toward the sharp center of our left, writing on his slate in perfect English. "Be ready for strong current!"

We glide around the first corner. Generally buoyant, we all enjoy a gentle push from the water, sliding even with the right angles of perfectly cut square corners.

Here we get our first taste of the various forms of water flow pushing us swiftly and with conflicting strength across a terraced area at the top of five steps ascending up to a porch area from a depth of 40

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Two divers cruise across terraced limestone that was obviously cut into shapes that only human hands could have made.

carved perhaps centuries before the birth of Christ.

The gorge is filled with tropical fish flying by or cruising into the current across our fields of view. It is reminiscent of scenes from a Star Wars epic. Streams of bubbles move horizontally, not upward. The force of the current is not understated. The translucent deep blue is inspirational. This is magnificent scenery. What an experience.

We swim slowly into the protection provided by another set of ascending terraces of cut stone. Tropical fish also take refuge from the moving water. Photo opportunities here among these tropicals are amazing. The fish actually cooperate, facing the cameras and enabling the possibility of our memories lasting even longer on film.

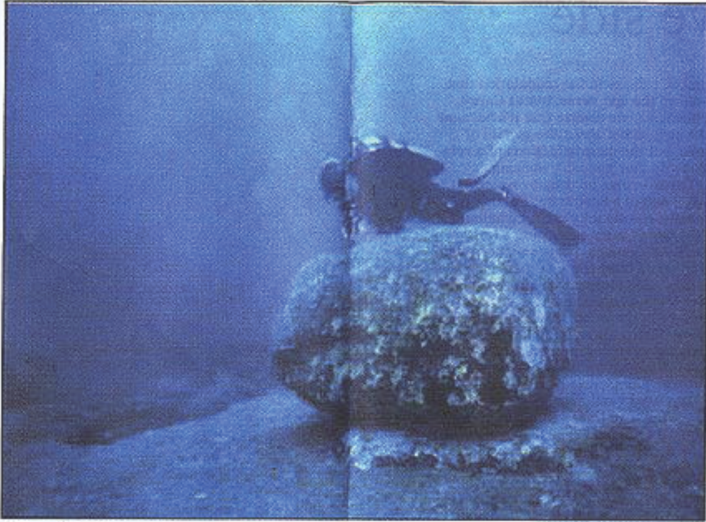
Our ascent is slow as the boat answers a signal from our dive guide. For the first long minute back on the "Long Shot" we remain quiet as we process 37 minutes of excitement. We are in awe for what we have experienced.

Then, the silence is broken and we all erupt in high fives, loud and garrulous descriptions coupled with our elation for achieving our goal of diving on the "Monuments of Yonaguni." It is a great feeling when a diver experiences a first ever dive. This is what we are seeking.

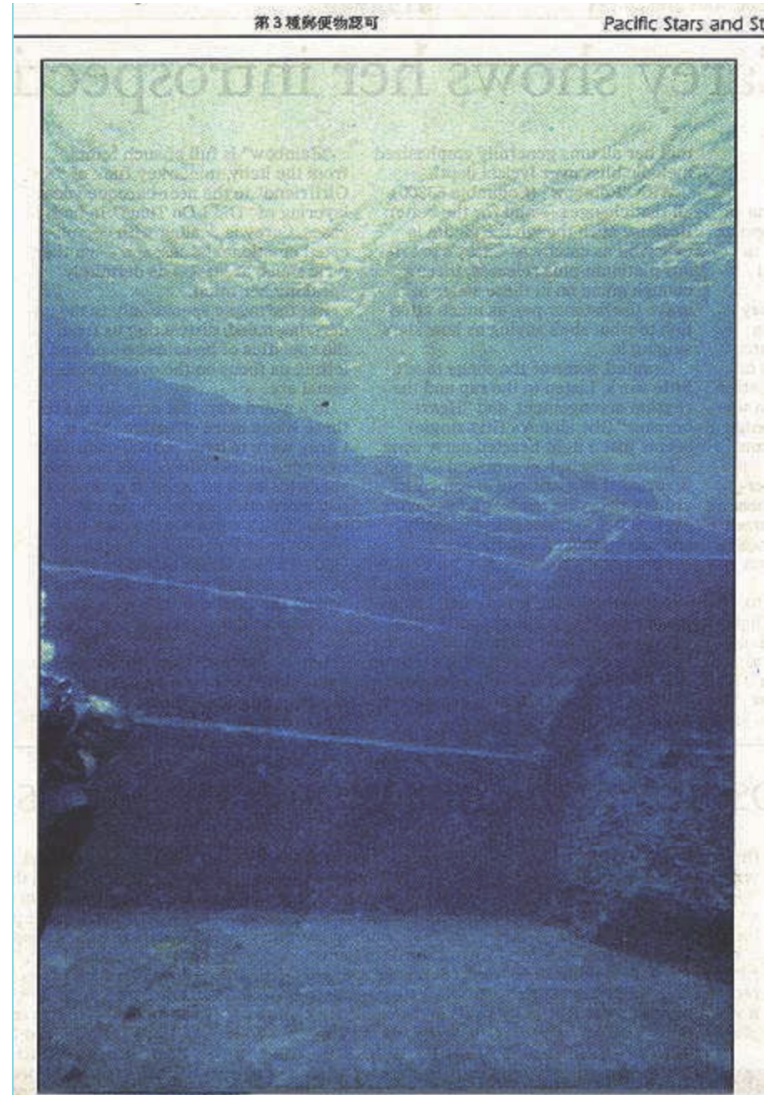
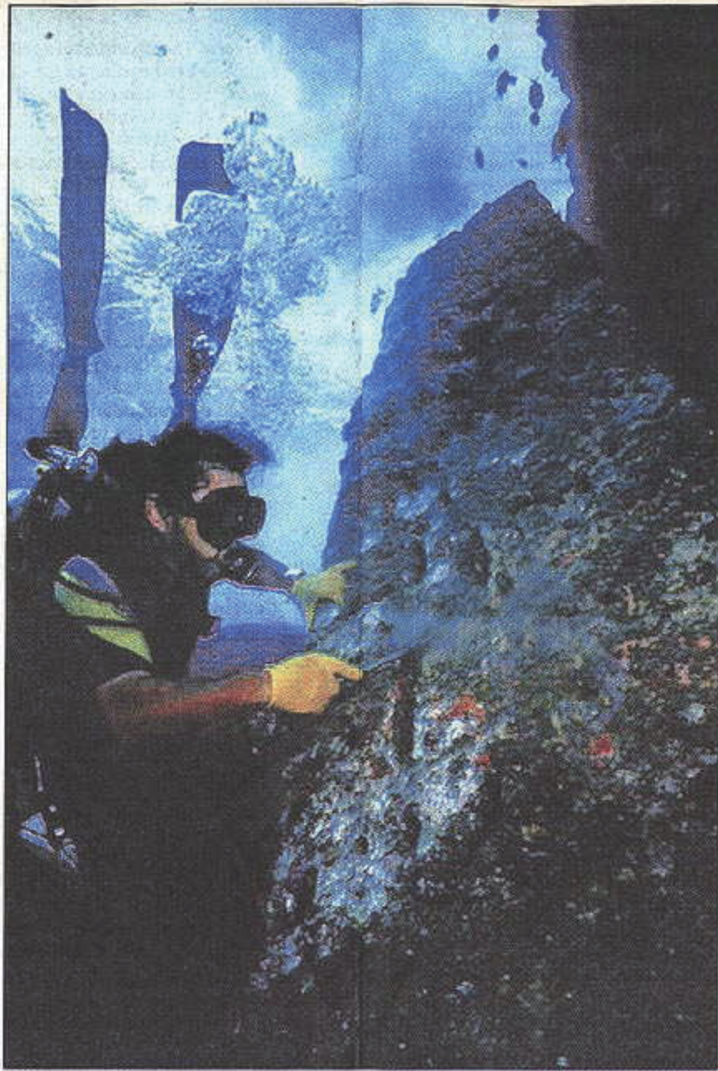
Mr. Aratake takes over the guide duties for our second dive. It becomes as impressive as the first. Sensory overload. The largest tidal movement of the year, which had fueled the energy of our first dive, slackens, allowing video equipment and full sets of camera gear to go over the side.

Our first dive was highlighted with the experiential wonder of it all. This second dive is energized by technical challenges to preserve our memories on film so we may share them with

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Above, diver Doug Bennett ponders how a rock with such round symmetry came to rest atop this perfectly flat table. This "round ball" sits under more than 70 feet of water. Below, dive guide and site discoverer Kihachiro Aratake scrapes away growth to reveal what may be an early form of written language on the side of a 30-foot limestone column.



others. Our second dive is slower, even more magnificent, than our first. We savor the architecture and soak in the grandeur of the Monument's size. Cameras flash constantly as "C" fires off the underwater lighting system on her video system. Pleasant work for everyone.

I watch Gary and Tony record their adventures frame by frame while Doug maintains the momentum of an underwater investigator, looking in and under every rock table and ledge. He glides to the end of our "Star Wars" ravine and flips upside down to examine what appears to be a rounded stone monument placed on a perfectly carved flat stone pedestal. "C" cruises in right behind him, recording his flight on video. Memories of our first dive are certainly being documented on this second dive. This is the kind of challenge every diver wants.

Our trip to the Monuments of Yona-

guni had its drama but no low spots. Our tour leader Doug Bennett, owner of "Reef Encounters" on Okinawa, knows how to arrange for success. Gary and "C"'s distinctively high level of diving expertise and calm approach to challenging situations was infectious to us all. Tony's electric enthusiasm for each moment kept the entire four days upbeat. What a great get-away and what a great way to live inside history.

If diving the Southern Islands of Okinawa and the Yonaguni Monuments interests you, call Doug Bennett at 011-81-098-968-4442. Doug can take of your every need.

If you would like to see more of our adventure, log on to my homepage at [www.geocities.com/pentagon/7852](http://www.geocities.com/pentagon/7852).

For even more information you can contact me at my e-mail address of "chandl32@marinemwr.or.jp"