

Email Newsletter from Mayor of Okayama (121) October 16, 2019 Issue

**【Hideie Ukita's cycad】**

Hello, I'm Masao Omori, Mayor of Okayama.

The other day, "Hachijojima Island Kyufukukai", a group in Hachijojima Island who honors Hideie UKITA, kindly gave me the division of cycad which was told that Hideie planted himself 400 years ago. I have decided that I will plant it with the members of Kyufukukai on the site of Kameyamajo Castle (Numa, Higashi-ku, Okayama) where Hideie was said to be born. On my way to the tree-planting ceremony, I contemplated the checkered life of Hideie.

Hideie's father, Naoie, became a feudal lord making a figure as a hero of the Sengoku era after obtaining the castle.

Hideie succeeded it and took a command as a chief in the Bunroku War under the Toyotomi administration. However, after the death of Hideyoshi, powerful retainers left the Ukita Family due to the internal squabbles within the family. After that, they were punished because they lost in the Battle of Sekigahara and were sheltered by the Shimazu Family. Then Hideie entered the priesthood and called himself "Kyufuku". It reminds us that he had never given up on taking a revenge on the Tokugawa Family.

There were 50,000 mountain castles like Kameyamajo Castle in the Sengoku era of Japan which means that there were 200 to 300 of them per person.

As you may know, mountain castle is not easy to live in but it prevents enemy from attacking. People who were inevitable to live in the mountain castle were always put themselves in danger making a precarious living.

After Hideie was exiled to Hachijojima Island, he changed his name from 休復 to 久福 (both pronounce as Kyufuku).

He tried to carry out his mission as a military commander but he didn't succeed. I guess he changed his name as 久福 because he touched good heart of the people of the island and spent a peaceful life there for the first time in a long time.

It was a day I thought about the change of Hideie's feelings through the cycad of the site of Kameyamajo Castle.