GUEST INFORMATION BOOK

Welcome to BUNAGAYA

An inn inside an old village school,
where the spirits of the forest still come to play.



BUNAGAYA



KIJOKA SHO SCHOOL · ŌGIMI VILLAGE · YANBARU, OKINAWA

WELCOME · HAISAI!

You have arrived in the land of the Bunagaya.

Welcome to Ōgimi, a small village in **Yanbaru** — the deep green forest of northern Okinawa. For more than a hundred years, the building you are staying in was the village elementary school. Children ran through these corridors, grandparents came to tell stories, and — people here will tell you — a forest spirit called the **Bunagaya** came to play too.

The school closed in 2016. Today it has woken up again as **Kijoka Sho School**: a café, a craft shop, a sauna, small studios — and this inn. We hope you'll slow down, listen to the forest, and maybe meet a Bunagaya of your own.

CHECK-IN 15:00 Late arrivals welcome — see p.9	FRONT DESK 8:00–18:00 Next to the inn entrance	BREAKFAST 8:00 Café Chronicle, 2F (if booked)
CHECK-OUT 10:00 Key into the return box	HELP / CONTACT 090-5732-8838 Mr. Yamagami (call or SMS)	WI-FI ID _____ PW _____

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Who is the Bunagaya?

Pronounced **boo-nah-GAH-yah** ぶながや

The Bunagaya is a **forest spirit** from the old stories of northern Okinawa. Across Okinawa a spirit like this is often called *Kijimuna*; here in Ōgimi it has always been the **Bunagaya** – and Ōgimi proudly calls itself **"the village of the Bunagaya."**

What does it look like?

In the stories, a Bunagaya is about the size of a small child, covered in **red hair**, light on its feet and very hard to see. It makes its home in **old trees** – the great banyan trees (*gajumaru*) and the deep forest of Yanbaru.

What does it do?

It fishes at night in rivers and along the shore, and old villagers say it loves to eat **fish eyes**. Mysterious little lights flickering on the hills at night? People say that's the Bunagaya, out and about. It is a famously bad loser at **sumo wrestling**, and it **hates octopus**.

Is it scary?

Not at all. The Bunagaya is **playful and mischievous**, never evil. Befriend it and it may bring you luck – a good catch, a happy home. Annoy it and it will play a harmless trick on you. To this day, when something odd happens in Ōgimi – a lost key, a door that creaks by itself – people smile and say: *"Must be the Bunagaya."*



Our Bunagaya, drawn by the people of Kijoka Sho School

Ghost? Yōkai? Neither.

If you know the Scottish *brownie*, the Scandinavian *tomte* or the Irish "little folk," you're close. In Okinawan belief, nature itself is alive – trees, rivers, stones and the sea all have spirits. The Bunagaya is simply the one you meet in the forest, when you slow down enough to notice.

The school that forgot, and the spirit that came back.

1 **A school full of life.** For 127 years, Kijoka Elementary School was the heart of the village. Children climbed the trees and chased lizards; grandparents came to teach and tell stories – many of them about the Bunagaya they had seen with their own eyes.

2 **Everyone left.** In 2016 the school closed and the children moved to a new school. The grass grew tall, the corridors fell silent, and little by little people forgot the Bunagaya.

3 **People came back.** Neighbours cut the grass, opened the windows and let the wind through again. A café opened, then a craft shop, a sauna, studios – and in July 2025, this inn.

4 **So did the Bunagaya.** One night, guests heard a curtain move with no wind, and something happened no one could explain. Everyone laughed: *"The Bunagaya is back!"* Its friends – the other spirits of the school – began to appear too.

Our Bunagaya, in one card

- **Who:** the spirit of Ōgimi who loves peace and nature
- **Personality:** whimsical – and secretly loves playing with people
- **Hobby:** plotting fun things to do at Kijoka Sho School
- **Special skill:** disguise (it may be closer than you think)
- **Weakness:** octopus
- **Favourite words:** *"Let's do sumo!"*

OUR CONCEPT

Can you see it? Or can't you?

We don't promise you'll see a spirit. We promise a place quiet and dark enough to wonder. The Bunagaya lives in the heart of anyone who slows down, listens to the forest, and remembers how to play.

Five ways to meet a Bunagaya tonight

Switch off
Step outside after dark and let your eyes get used to real darkness. Look up.

Listen
At dawn, the forest wakes before you: birds, wind, insects. Just listen.

Look closely
Spirits hide on signs, doors and walls around the school. How many can you find?

Blame it
Something odd happened? Do as the locals do – blame the Bunagaya.

Play
Say *"Haisai!"* to the people you meet. Spirits love a lively place.

MEET THE SPIRITS

Your room is named after a spirit.

About twenty spirits live at Kijoka Sho School – every shop and studio here has its own. Six of them lend their names to our rooms. Find yours below.



Bunagaya

boo-nah-GAH-yah · the leader

The spirit of Ōgimi and the heart of our story, always plotting something fun. Master of disguise – it may be closer than you think.

Weakness octopus **Says** "Let's do sumo!"



Sassy

spirit of the *sashiba* hawk · guardian of this inn

The grey-faced buzzard (*sashiba*) flies over Okinawa every autumn on its long migration. Sassy was once an ordinary migrating bird – until it met the Bunagaya and was reborn as a spirit with a **"fourth eye"** that helps you find the treasure inside yourself. The Bunagaya's oldest friend; it comes back every autumn.

Age 452 **Size** 40 cm **Says** "What do you see?"



Kinobori

spirit of the Okinawan tree lizard (*kinobori-tokage* = "tree-climbing lizard")

A chatty wandering singer in search of romance. Makes friends with everyone and scurries everywhere. Our company, Kinobori Tokage, is named after this little lizard – you may spot real ones on the trees outside.

Age 41 **Size** 15 cm **Afraid of** thunder – and Sassy **Says** "I'll sing!"

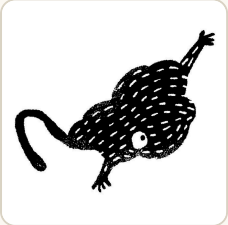


Nobiley

a visitor from Mars

Came all the way from space in search of **nobiletin**, a nutrient found in *shikuwasa* – the little green citrus Ōgimi is famous for. Clumsy, and speaks a language nobody understands.

Age 12 million **Size** 10 cm **Weakness** baking soda



Majimon

from *majimun*, the Okinawan word for goblins

Everyone assumes it's a monster – but it's actually far too serious, always worrying about life, and feels sad when called evil. Can't sleep at night, naps all day, and is secretly a very good photographer.

Age 300 **Size** about a goat **Says** "I have no money…"



Swogg

the babies of the *sakishima-suō* tree

Born from the Sakishima-suō, a tropical tree with giant wavy roots and rock-hard seeds. Tough, curious, a bit lazy, and very fashionable. Kijoka's favourite mascot – occasionally someone steals one.

Age 2 **Size** 5 cm **Afraid of** cars **Says** "Niriii!"

THE PLACE

Kijoka — a village of cloth, citrus and long lives.

Kijoka is one of the small settlements of Ōgimi Village, between the Yanbaru mountains and the East China Sea. It may look quiet, but it is known far beyond Okinawa.

Bashōfu – cloth from banana trees

Kijoka is the home of *bashōfu*, a light, breathable cloth woven from the fibres of the Japanese banana plant. Every step – growing, stripping, spinning, dyeing, weaving – is still done by hand. It is designated an Important Intangible Cultural Property of Japan.

A village of long lives

Ōgimi is famous worldwide for longevity – scientists and filmmakers have come to study why people here live so long. Vegetables from the garden, working with your hands, and strong ties with neighbours are part of the answer. Ask us about our "Blue Zone" village walk.

Shikuwasa

Ōgimi is one of Okinawa's main growers of *shikuwasa*, a small, sour green citrus. Try it as juice, in dressings, or squeezed over anything.

Yanbaru – a World Natural Heritage forest

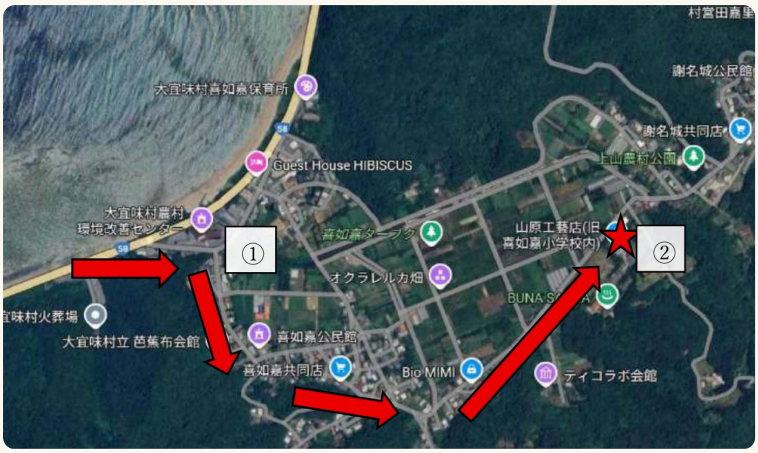
The forest around you is part of a UNESCO World Natural Heritage site (2021) and Yanbaru National Park. It shelters animals found nowhere else, such as the flightless **Okinawa rail** (*Yanbaru kuina*).

Kijoka Sho School today

The old school is now a small village of its own. Our family company, **Kinobori Tokage**, runs the inn, **Yamabaru Craft Shop** and **Café Chronicle**, and shares the building with independent makers – a wood-fired sauna, a second-hand bookshop and craft studios. Our founder moved to Ōgimi from Tokyo, and her son is a graduate of this very school. Bringing it back to life is, for us, a way of saying thank you.

"Sho" 翔 means "to soar." Kijoka Sho School is a school for everyone, of every age, who wants to fly a little.

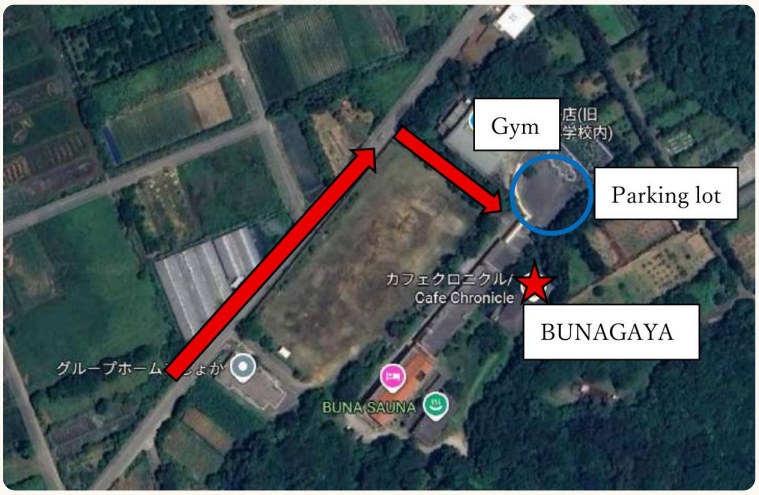
Finding Kijoka Sho School



From Route 58 (heading north from Nago)

Turn right at ①, towards the Kijoka Community Centre (follow the red arrows). Stay on the main road through the village and you will see Kijoka Sho School at ②.

Scan for Google Maps
Address: 2083 Kijoka, Ōgimi-son, Kunigami-gun, Okinawa 905-1303



Where to park

The closest car park to the inn is **in front of the gym**. Enter through the school gate on the gym side, park there, and walk to the inn (see next page). Parking is free.



The gym-side car park

It is **very dark at night** – there are no street lights in the countryside. Please drive slowly and use your phone light when walking.

Driving in Yanbaru: rare animals like the Okinawa rail cross the roads, especially at dusk and night. Please drive slowly.

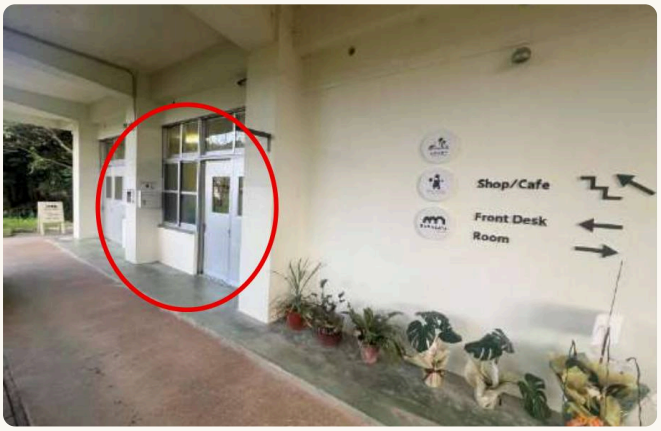
From the car park to the inn



1 From the car park, follow the covered walkway in the direction of the arrow to the circle.



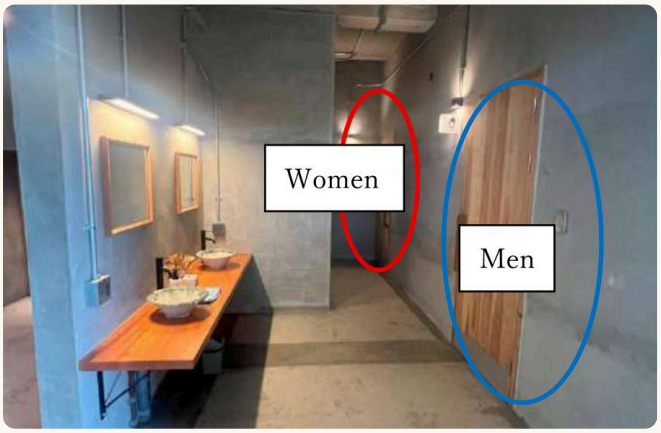
2 At the circle, keep going as the arrow shows. There are stairs – take care in the dark.



3 The red circle is the **front desk**. If you arrive between 8:00 and 18:00, please say hello to the staff inside.



4 The red circle is the **entrance to the inn**. Late arrivals, please come straight in here.



5 Sinks, toilets and showers are **shared** (women: left / men: right).



6 A **water dispenser** is in the common area – help yourself any time.

YOUR ROOM

Checking in late? Your door is open.

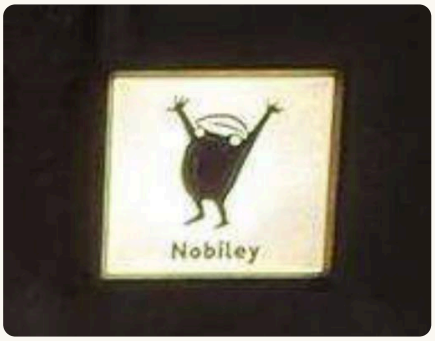
Your room is **already unlocked** – please go straight in. You'll find a **check-in sheet** inside; kindly fill it in (we are required by law to ask for it; overseas guests, please also show us your passport).



The rooms were built inside the school's old multi-purpose hall. Look for your spirit's sign above the door.



Kinobori



Nobiley



Majimon



Bunagaya



Swogg



Sassy

DURING YOUR STAY

Shared spaces, house rules & living with nature

Shared spaces

- **Showers, toilets & sinks** are shared. When it's busy, please keep showers to about **15 minutes** per person.
- **Water dispenser** in the common area – free.
- **Front desk** is open 8:00–18:00. Outside those hours, call or text **090-5732-8838**.

House rules

- **Quiet, please, after 22:00.** Sound travels in an old concrete school.
- **No smoking** inside the buildings.
- This is a shared campus: the café, shops and studios are other people's workplaces. Please enjoy them during opening hours.
- Please take care with the **stairs and walkways at night**.

Living with Yanbaru's nature

- **Geckos** on the walls are harmless – in Okinawa they are said to bring luck.
- **Insects** are drawn to light. Keep doors and windows closed at night when lights are on.
- **Habu snakes** live in Okinawa's forests. Stay on paved paths at night, don't walk into tall grass or bushes, and use a light.
- **Sun & heat:** drink water often, even on cloudy days.
- **Typhoons** (mainly Jul–Oct): please follow our staff's advice and stay indoors.

In an emergency

Ambulance / Fire: 119 · **Police: 110**

Nearest large hospital: Okinawa Prefectural Hokubu Hospital (Nago), about 35 min by car.
Then please call us: **090-5732-8838**

Our address for emergency services: 沖縄県国頭郡大宜味村喜如嘉2083 喜如嘉翔学校

FOOD

Breakfast & dinner

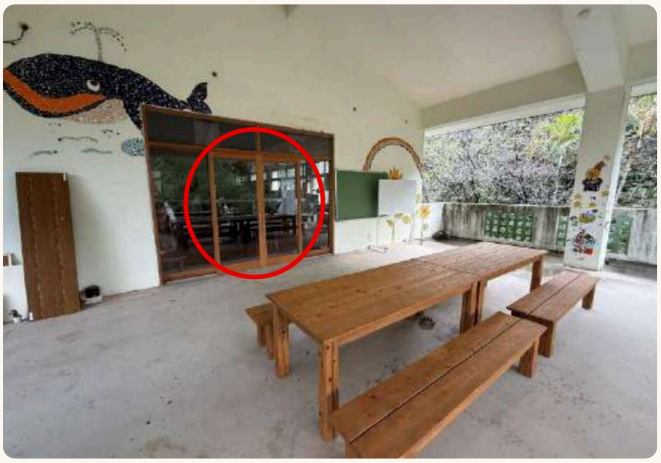
Breakfast · 8:00 For guests who booked breakfast. It's served at **Café Chronicle**, inside Yamabaru Craft Shop, one floor up.



1 Your **breakfast ticket** is in a small envelope on the desk in your room.



2 Leave the inn and take the **outdoor stairs** (red arrow) in front of the entrance.



3 On the 2nd-floor terrace, go in through the door in the red circle.



4 Hand your ticket to the staff in the kitchen. Sit anywhere you like – inside or out on the terrace.

Terrace BBQ dinner

A barbecue dinner on the terrace with local Yanbaru ingredients is available as an option. **Advance booking is required** – please ask us.

Dietary needs

Allergies, vegetarian or other requests? Please tell us **the day before** and we'll do our best.

EXPLORE

Things to do

Here at the school

- **Buna Sauna** – a wood-fired sauna on campus (paid, reservation).
- **Yamabaru Craft Shop** – crafts and goods from Yanbaru makers, including our spirit goods.
- **Craft workshops** – pottery, weaving with shell-ginger (*gettō*) leaves and more (reservation required).
- **Blue Zone village walk** – a 90-minute guided walk through the "village of long lives" (reservation).

Nearby by car (approx.)

Ta-taki Falls river trek (Ōgimi)	15 min
Hiji Falls trail (Kunigami)	25 min
Cape Hedo, Okinawa's northern tip	45 min
Nago city (shops, supermarkets)	40 min
Churaumi Aquarium / Junglia	1 hr
Naha Airport	2 hr

Tip: shops in Yanbaru close early – buy snacks and drinks before dark.

Upgrade your stay

Hammock experience

Relax – or even spend the night – in a handmade hammock by **Hakobune**, the hammock studio here at the school. Their spirit is **Mock**, an old tree spirit who discovered that being wrapped in a hammock lets you feel connected to the earth.

Grass weaving workshop

Weave with local plants, the way people in Yanbaru have for generations. A quiet, hands-on way to take a piece of the forest home with you.

By request. Please ask us about availability, times and prices, ideally before you arrive: 090-5732-8838.

A few local words

Haisai!	Hello! (Okinawan)
Nifē dēbiru	Thank you (Okinawan)
Mensōre	Welcome
Kachāshī	The happy hand-waving dance at every Okinawan party
Arigatō	Thank you (Japanese)
Oishii!	Delicious!
Sumimasen	Excuse me / sorry
Ichariba chōdē	"Once we meet, we are family" – an Okinawan saying

LEAVING

Check-out by 10:00

No special procedure is needed. Please check you haven't forgotten anything, and leave your **room key in the return box** by the front office.



1 The front office. The red circle is the key return box for when staff are away.



2 If the front office is closed, please drop your key in this box.

Payment

Only if you still have something to pay (e.g. meals or extras added locally): please pay at check-out at the front office.

Questions or trouble?

Call or text Mr. Yamagami

090-5732-8838

Before you go

- Lights and air-conditioning off, windows closed.
- Check the shower room and the desk for chargers, glasses and passports.

MATA NE – SEE YOU AGAIN

Until we meet again.



Thank you for staying at BUNAGAYA. We hope the forest, the quiet and the dark nights gave you something to take home.

Did you meet a Bunagaya? Did something strange happen in the night? We'd love to hear about it.

Share your stay

Instagram **@bunagaya_kijokasho** · **#bunagaya**
A short review on the site where you booked, or on Google Maps, helps a small village inn more than you can imagine.

Come back in autumn

Every autumn, thousands of *sashiba* hawks fly over Okinawa — and Sassy returns to visit the Bunagaya. Each season, the school is a little different.

Ichariba chōdē — once we meet, we are family.
Have a safe trip.

BUNAGAYA – inside Kijoka Sho School
2083 Kijoka, Ōgimi-son, Okinawa 905-1303

Tel 0980-43-0490 · Help 090-5732-8838
Operated by Kinobori Tokage LLC