

**ITOKAZU, MASAJI**, Professor, Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts, OKINAWA

### **Past and Future of Ryukyu Lacquer Art**

Panel: Past and Future of Okinawa Music and Art

In this presentation, referring to the case of Okinawa Peace Prayer Statue and Shuri Castle, the process of making Ryukyu lacquer art is introduced. Ryukyu lacquer art was an offering to the Chinese Emperor from Ryukyu Kingdom. Under the high temperatures and humidity in Okinawa, a decorative technique called *tsuikin*, that is, pasting a figure made by temper pigments with sticky lacquer on the surface of a lacquer, has been developed. This is used for Okinawa Peace Prayer Statue, which was constructed as a symbol of the strong desire of Okinawan people in 1978. In addition, we can say that Shuri Castle, the World Cultural Heritage in Naha, is the biggest Ryukyu lacquer art in the world.

Ryukyu lacquer art is not only a past asset but also a form of modern art and craft. Between 1930s and 1940s, it was used for a modern design article for practical use such as a container for face powder. After the World War II, Ministry of Commerce and Industry awarded a work made by Association of Lacquer Art and Craft a “Good Design Good”. The uniqueness of natural resources and circumstance of Okinawa provides us an idea for the future development of Ryukyu lacquer art.