

THE U.S. MILITARY OCCUPATION OF OKINAWA: POLITICIZING AND
CONTESTING OKINAWAN IDENTITY 1945-1955

VOLUME I

by

David John Obermiller

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in History
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Thesis Supervisor: Professor Stephen Vlastos

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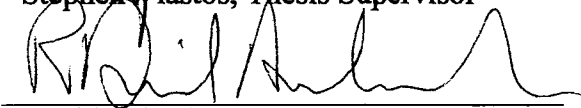
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for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy
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Thesis Committee:




Stephen Wlastos, Thesis Supervisor



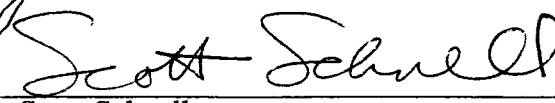
David Arkush



Colin Gordon



James Giblin



Scott Schnell

To my best friend and my wife, Angie.

“...the average Okinawan is a docile, rustic citizen who passively accepts the changes that have come to his way of life since [the] American occupation.”

US Military Government (RYCOM) Pamphlet, *Okinawa: 1946*

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Finally, any mistakes in the dissertation are mine alone.

ABSTRACT

On the eve of the Battle of Okinawa on April 1, 1945, there was little question of identity as Okinawans perceived themselves as Japanese, a product of seventy years of forced Japanese assimilation. Japan, however, treated Okinawans as second-class subjects, thus many Okinawans saw the battle as a means to prove their worthiness as Japanese. The battle, however, not only destroyed Okinawa physically, it also altered the trajectory of identity. This dissertation historicizes and problematizes Okinawan identity by positing the period from the Battle of Okinawa to the mid 1950s as a pivotal time when Okinawa as an “imagined community” experienced a profound identity crisis. First, the dissertation examines how the Battle of Okinawa and the American occupation challenged prewar notions of being “Japanese” among Okinawans and second, analyzes why identity became a central focus of Okinawan resistance to the occupation. In planning for the invasion of Okinawa, US civil affairs officers “discovered” that Okinawans were not Japanese. This discovery shaped future occupation policy as the US, in an attempt to create an identity gap between Okinawan and Japanese, attempted to invent a popular consciousness of a Ryukyuan nation-state by convincing Okinawans that they were Ryukyuan, not Japanese. Yet, the military nature of the occupation consistently undermined these nation-building efforts as the “military mind” clashed with Okinawan demands for autonomy and democratization. By 1949, the military occupation had degenerated to the point where desperate Okinawans rebelled against the unjust handling of the occupation. Okinawans, who originally perceived the US as liberators, now compared the US occupation to the dark days of Japanese militarism and consequently, called for reversion to in 1951. Because this movement threatened the security of US military bases in Okinawa, US authorities initiated a two-pronged strategy of democratizing political reforms and a reinvigorated campaign of soft culture diplomacy designed to nurture an Okinawan ethno nationalism to counter Japanese

nationalism. The result, I argue, produced a complex and often contradictory legacy of political, social, and cultural currents that together explain Okinawans' acute ambivalence towards "Japan" and the emergence of an Okinawan national identity.

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INTRODUCTION

Reversion: A Simple Case of Nationalism?

Reversion Day May 15, 1972 formally ended twenty-seven years of American military occupation and marked the return of Okinawa (Ryukyu Islands) to Japanese sovereignty. Since the early 1950s, the Okinawan reversion movement had worked tirelessly to achieve reunification with Japan. In the summer of 1951, an Okinawan group called the *Ryukyu Nippon Fukki Sokushni Kiseikai* 琉球日本復帰促進期成会 (Reversion to Japan Association) obtained 200,000 signatures on a petition drive, representing 76.2 percent of the eligible Okinawan voters.¹ A major force behind the petition drive, the Okinawa People's Party (*Jinmintō*), issued a "Declaration Concerning Reversion of the Ryukyu Islands to Japan" that echoed the popular sentiment among Okinawans:

There can be no doubt that the *Ryukyuan*s are Japanese, and it is very natural that *the same race be under the same political organization*.....separation of one from the other would mean a total nullification of the hard efforts of one century made by us Ryukyuan people, and that is too unbearable...The return of the islands is most naturally desirable.²

This petition explicitly demanded the reestablishment of Japanese suzerainty over the Ryukyus and implicitly, the termination of US military occupation. The petition, sent to the Japanese and American delegations at the San Francisco Peace Conference, was ignored by U.S. and Japanese delegates and failed to alter the Peace Treaty's provisions

¹ Arasaki Moriteru and Nakano Yoshio, *Okinawa Sengo Shi* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1976), 51. Iwanami Shinsho #981

² Okinawa People's Party, "Declaration Concerning Reversion of the Ryukyu Islands to Japan," March 21, 1951. Emphasis added. Freimuth Papers

that perpetuated unilateral and indefinite American military and political control over the Ryukyus.³

Most scholars have interpreted the reversion movement as an unequivocal expression of Okinawans' nationalist identification with Japan. A noted Okinawan historian, Higa Mikio, said "it was natural for the Okinawans to start a movement for reversion to Japan in 1951," because "it was a forgone conclusion for all Okinawans that their islands were an integral part of Japan and that they were Japanese nationals."⁴ Reversion in 1972, therefore, should have been a momentous and celebratory occasion for the people of the Ryukyu Islands.

A Less than Perfect Union

On the long awaited day, however, Government of the Ryukyu Islands' (GRI) Chief Executive, Yara Chôbyô shocked the Japanese and American delegates by refusing to attend the official signing ceremony in Tokyo.⁵ Yara's absence was particularly significant considering that he had consistently agitated for reversion since the 1950s, and during the 1960s had become the movement's most powerful figure. Yara, born in 1902, was representative of the Okinawan prewar generation who had been thoroughly

³ Often overlooked was the fact American control was both political and military, and more importantly, the entire period of occupation was under the exclusive purview of the Pentagon. Okinawa, therefore, was a Pentagon fiefdom and Okinawan perceptions that that this fiefdom was a neo-colonial apparatus was difficult to dismiss.

⁴ Higa Mikio, "The Okinawan Reversion Movement" in Chihiro Hosoya ed., *Okinawa Reversion*, (Pittsburgh: International Studies Association, 1977), 3.

⁵ Yara Chôbyô, *Gekidô Hachi Nen—Yara Chôbyô Kaisôroku*, (Okinawa: Okinawa Taimusu Sha, 1985), 176-201. Established in 1952 by the American occupation forces on Okinawa, GRI was the civilian government of the Ryukyus with limited autonomy under the supervision of USCAR (United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyus). USCAR in turn was under the direct control of the island's highest ranked Army general, usually the rank of a major-general, whose official title was referred to as the High Commissioner. The High Commissioner not only had exclusive control over Okinawan civilian affairs but he also commanded the combined American military forces (Air Force, Navy, Marine and Army) on Okinawa.

assimilated as Japanese subjects. A member of the prewar Okinawan elite, he had played a central role in getting everyday Okinawans to become Japanese, as did Ôta Chôfu, editor of the *Ryukyu Shinpô*, who exhorted Okinawans even to learn to sneeze like Japanese from other prefectures.⁶ The primary institution for socializing Okinawans as Japanese was the education system, so important that “by 1902 educational expenditures occupied just over half of the prefectural revenue.”⁷ Okinawan teachers, on the front lines in the assimilation effort, became the most nationalistic among Okinawan elites. Yara, a prewar teacher, saw himself and Okinawa as unequivocally part of Japan.⁸

Yara continued to teach after World War II ended but under the American occupation, he grew concerned that Okinawan youth, separated from Japan, would lose their Japanese identity. He organized the Okinawan Teachers Association (OTA) in 1947 and was its perennial leader. He pressured US authorities for adequate funding for education and resisted efforts to Americanize Okinawa’s education system, arguing that Okinawans were culturally and racially Japanese and should have the same education as mainland Japanese.⁹ When it became clear the US intended to maintain an indefinite occupation, Yara and the OTA became powerful actors in the reversion movement.

Yara ran on a reversion platform in the 1968 elections for GRI’s chief executive position. In an effort to head off more radical protests by the reversion movement, USCAR (United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyus) announced in early 1968

⁶ Alan Christy, “The Making of Imperial Subjects in Okinawa,” in Tani E. Barlow ed., *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 154-155.

⁷ Ibid., 148. Christy points out that the amount invested in Okinawan education was disproportionate to Japan’s other colonies, such as Taiwan, where “educational expenditures in 1902 were one six-thousandth of the revenue.”

⁸ Yara Chôbyô, *Okinawa Kyôiku Iinkai 16 Nen: Sokoku Fukki•Nippon Kokumin to Shite no Kyôiku o Mezashite* (Tokyo: Rôdô Junbô Sha, 1968), 15-22.

⁹ Ibid., 29.

that the position of chief executive of the GRI would no longer be appointed by USCAR's High Commissioner and instead would be popularly elected in November that year.¹⁰ The heavily favored OLDP (Okinawan Liberal Democratic Party) candidate who called for gradual reversion, Nishime Junji, lost by a 30,000 vote margin to Yara Chôbyô.¹¹ Despite considerable covert funding from the CIA and strong tacit support from USCAR and Japan's ruling LDP (Liberal Democratic Party), Nishime nevertheless lost because Yara advocated immediate and unconditional reversion. The *New York Times* observed that "Mr. Yara's election is a sign of the growing impatience of the islanders with the prolonged American military occupation. His victory can be expected to spur the demand for reunification with Japan, both in the Ryukyu[s] and on the Japanese main islands."¹² Viewed in this context, Yara's refusal to participate in the 1972 reversion ceremonies becomes even more puzzling.

On reversion day itself, May 15, 1972, 100,000 Okinawans held a *hantai fukki* (oppose reversion) demonstration.¹³ This demonstration both expressed anti-Japanese sentiments and protested against the reversion agreement. The demonstrators chanted slogans such as: no stationing of Japan's Self Defense Forces (SDF) on the island," "no

¹⁰ USCAR, fearing direct elections for the Chief Executive would be someone who favored reversion, had appointed Okinawans to the position who were "friendly" to the American presence. USCAR's power to appoint and remove the Chief Executive without the will of the Okinawan people, however, was roundly detested by Okinawans. Okinawans pointed out the hypocrisy of US actions saying that while the US was fighting communism in the name of democracy, was denying the people to choose their own Chief Executive. Hence, the reversion movement used this issue to embarrass USCAR and radicalize the movement.

¹¹ Nishime represents the class of Okinawan elite socialized during Japan's control of Okinawa. A graduate of the University of Tokyo, Nishime also served as Okinawa's representative in the lower house of the Diet in the prewar period. In the postwar period, Nishime became a ranking member of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

¹² *New York Times*, November 12, 1968, p. 46. Yara Chôbyô, *Gekidô Hachi Nen—Yara Chôbyô Kaisôroku* (Okinawa: Okinawa Taimusu Sha, 1985), 12-27.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 178-180.

to Japanese and American military leasing of Okinawan land,” and “down with Prime Minister Sato.” Sato, ironically had done more than any other Japanese politician to achieve Okinawa’s return to Japan.¹⁴

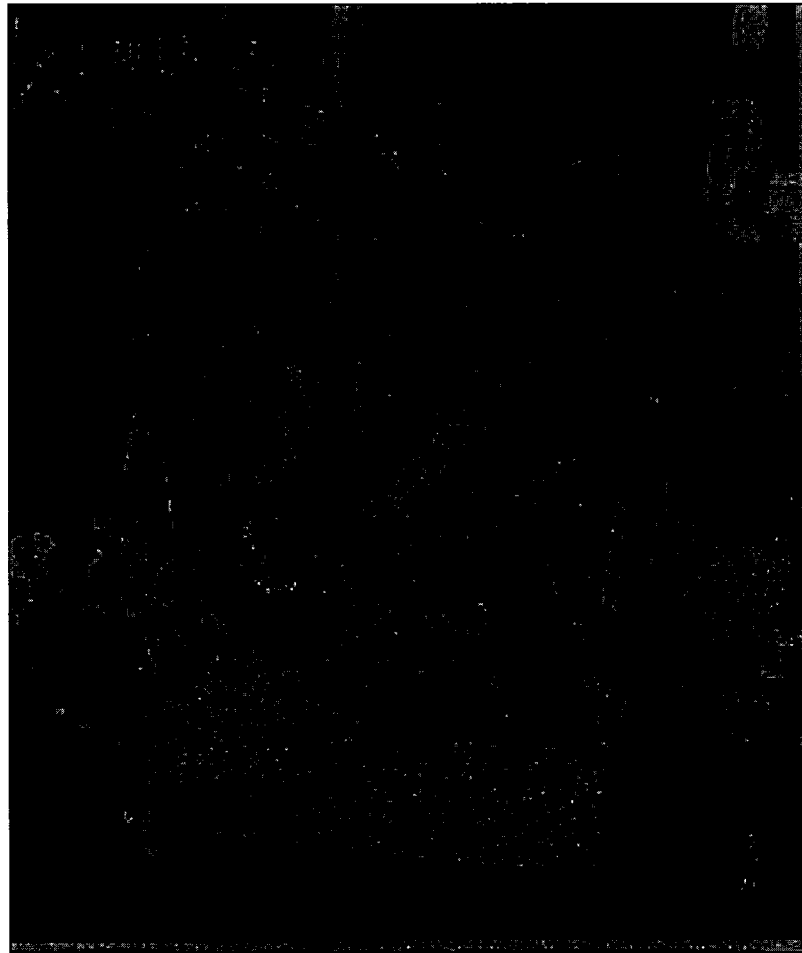


Figure 1 Anti Reversion Demonstration in Naha, Okinawa on October 15, 1971.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid., 68-77.

¹⁵ Yara Chôbyô, *Gekidô Hachi Nen—Yara Chôbyô Kaisôroku* (Okinawa: Okinawa Taimusu Sha, 1985), 177.

The most important demand, however, was unequivocal opposition to a second *Ryukyu Shobun*. Okinawan historians refer to the forced annexation of the Ryukyu Kingdom by Meiji Japan in 1872 as *shobun*, which has strong connotations of unreasonable or preemptory action. Hence Reversion Day, for Yara and the rest of the Okinawan demonstrators, seemed to be cruel reenactment of what had transpired a century earlier. An American intimately familiar with Okinawa and its history, George Kerr, visited the Ryukyus during late 1969. He too observed the irony that the pending reversion in 1972 coincided with the anniversary of the first *Ryukyu Shobun*. “We must recall the past to prepare for the difficult times ahead,” Kerr wrote, as the “poverty and distress of those years [first *Ryukyu Shobun*] has been summed up in the expression *shima-chabi*, ‘the loneliness of a neglected island people.’”¹⁶ Kerr also observed that more Okinawans, who had long been supporters of reversion, were now having second thoughts. “While in Naha,” Kerr wrote that “I heard some astonishingly unrealistic talk of ‘Okinawa for the Okinawans,’ ‘provisional Reversion’ and a trial period of reassociation with the other prefectures.” Kerr discounted these comments, believing “such talk is unrealistic and dangerous nonsense and can only make reversion more difficult.”¹⁷ Nevertheless, Kerr’s observations in 1969 indicate the growing ambivalence among Okinawans over reversion. One should not be too surprised, therefore, to find that on windswept Hedo-misaki, Okinawa’s northernmost point, discontented Okinawans erected a stark stone monument commemorating the people’s fight for reversion while conspicuously disavowing jubilation over reversion itself. As Norma Field has observed “this is an unusual monument, for it commemorates failure, not success.”¹⁸ On the day

¹⁶ George Kerr, “Notes on a Recent Trip through the Ryukyus, Nov.-Dec., 1969. George Kerr Papers, University of the Ryukyus Library.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Norma Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor: Japan at Century’s End* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 81.

of reversion, May 15, 1972, many Okinawans called it *Kutsujoku no Hi*, a “Day of Humiliation,” which paradoxically, was the same term Okinawans used to describe the day Japan abandoned Okinawa after the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty.

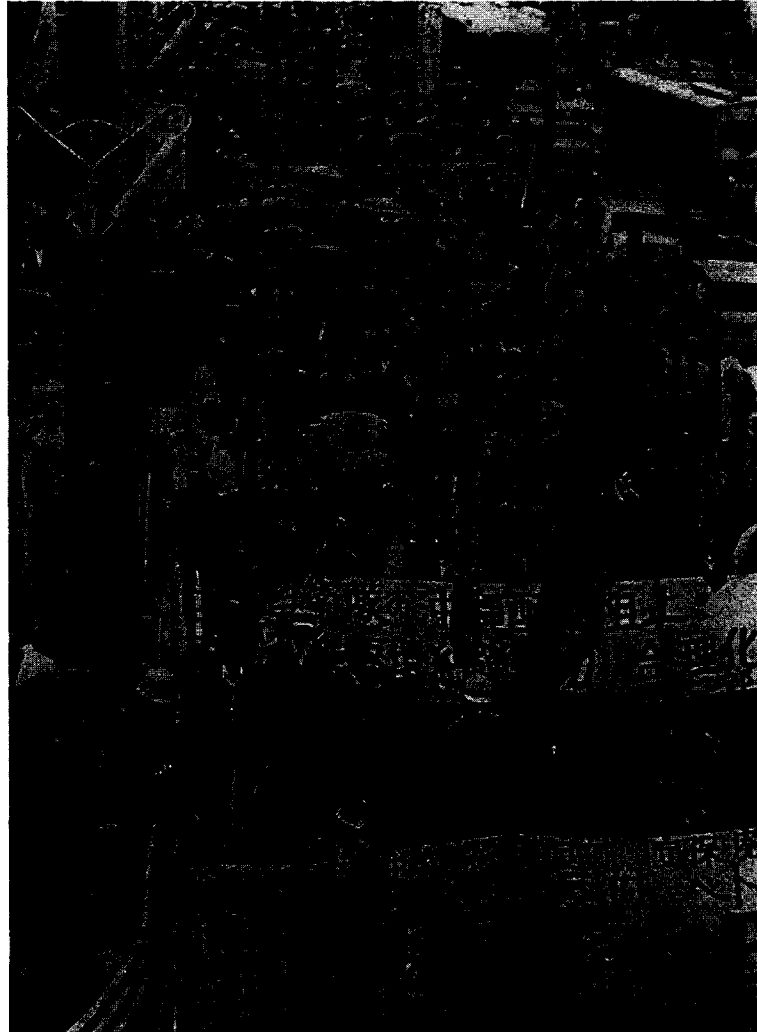


Figure 2 *Kutsujoku no Hi* march, May 15, 1972. The kanji for *Kutsujoku no Hi* (屈辱の日) can be clearly on the banner in the foreground.¹⁹

¹⁹ Okinawa Taimusu Sha, *Okinawa Sengo Shi 1945-1998* (Okinawa: Okinawa Taimusu Sha, 1998), 139.

If the reversion movement was a nationalistic movement then can one account for the anti-reversion and anti-Japanese rally on the day they had long sought? This conventional interpretation assumed Okinawans were dissatisfied with the terms of reversion not reversion itself and that the anti-Japanese rhetoric was dissatisfaction with the “discrimination against the Okinawans by the Japanese government.”²⁰ This view also states Okinawan discontentment emerged only in late 1969, after reversion negotiations had begun, because of fear that the negotiations would not satisfactorily address the presence of the U.S. military on the island.

The conventional historiography, however, does not account for the fact that Okinawan discontentment with Japan emerged much earlier than 1969. In 1965 Prime Minister Sato paid a historic visit to Okinawa, the first by a Japanese prime minister and Sato was the first prime minister to actively and vigorously promote Okinawa’s reversion. Thus one would assume his efforts would have been appreciated by Okinawans in general and especially by reversion activists. The reception Okinawans gave Sato, however, was strikingly reminiscent of what Eisenhower had received five years earlier as tens of thousands jeering Okinawans “greeted” Sato and forced him to take refuge on an American base. Moreover, this anti-Tokyo reception was hardly an aberration.²¹

²⁰ Mikia Higa, “The Okinawan Reversion Movement,” in Chihiro Hosoya ed., *Okinawa Reversion* (Pittsburgh: International Studies Association, 1977), 19.

²¹ “Sato File,” Freimuth Papers. President Eisenhower originally scheduled to visit Japan to celebrate the ratification of the renewal of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. The treaty, however, was very unpopular in Japan as many feared it would draw Japan into a nuclear war between the two superpowers. Massive student demonstrations, especially in Tokyo, forced Eisenhower to cancel his visit to Japan while he was en route to Tokyo. . Intent on salvaging the trip, but also to signal the President would not be cowed by Japanese demonstrators, decided at the last minute to visit Okinawa. Eisenhower and his staff assumed that since Okinawa was under US control and that the US had “liberated Okinawa,” he would have a friendly reception. While Eisenhower was greeted by friendly crowds, he also encountered wide spread and vocal demonstrations, forcing the President to curtail his visit and to take shelter on a US base.

At the Japan-U.S. Kyoto Conference in January of 1969, seven months before the Sato-Nixon announcement of agreement on reversion, the new leader of the OTA, Kiyon Shinei, surprised the assembled group when he delivered a vehement anti-Japanese attack, instead of the expected anti-American speech, in which he asserted that “for about seventy out of the hundred years of Japan’s modernization Okinawans were mercilessly discriminated against and merely tolerated at best, holding Japanese citizenship in name only.”²² That same year American educated Okinawan scholar Ôta Masahide published *Minikui Nihonjin* (*The Ugly Japanese*), a sensational work that detailed Japan’s oppressive prewar rule of Okinawa. Widely read on Okinawa, Ôta’s work increased Okinawan consciousness that reversion would once again expose Okinawa to second-class citizenship. Noting this anti-Japanese phenomenon, George Kerr wrote that “my friend Ôta Masahide has just sold 60,000 copies of this recent book, a smashing criticism of Japan’s attitude toward Okinawans and the Okinawa question.” Kerr indicated many Japanese “were angry, and many more deeply disturbed” by *Minikui Nihonjin*.²³

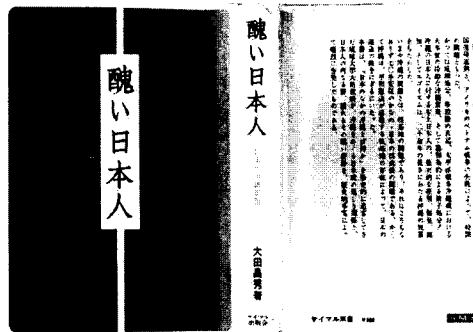


Figure 3 Book jacket cover to Ôta Masahide's *Minikui Nihonjin*.

²² Higa, “The Okinawan Reversion Movement,” 18.

²³ Letter from George Kerr to Dr. Shaw, January 2, 1970. GH Kerr Papers, Okinawa Prefecture Archives.

Okinawan resistance toward reversion and Japan went beyond rhetoric. On November 10, 1971, proponents for reversion launched a violent general strike throughout Okinawa, paralyzing the entire island, when leaked details of the reversion agreement seemed to ignore Okinawan demands.²⁴ In fact, it was becoming increasingly clear that Tokyo was collaborating with Washington to maintain the military status quo on Okinawa. This realization caused, figuratively and literally, an explosion in early 1972. During the night of February 18, 1972 disgruntled Okinawans “hurled Molotov cocktails” into a building that housed the Japanese Government’s office responsible for preparing “Okinawa’s return to Japan.” Handbills left at the site asserted “We will prevent by force the stationing on Okinawa of Self-Defense Force (SDF) troops.” The fact that the SDF under the postwar Peace Constitution was strictly a defensive force structure that bore little relation to Japan’s prewar military institutions, mattered little to Okinawans who had not forgotten the atrocities committed by the Japanese military during the Battle of Okinawa.²⁵

Resisting Japan: A Case of Okinawan Nationalism in the
Post Reversion Era?

Ambivalence to reunification actually increased after reversion. Three years after reversion, Japan’s Imperial household was anxious to heal the rift between Okinawa and Emperor Hirohito, who many Okinawans blamed for the Battle of Okinawa. The extent of this animosity was amplified with Yara’s refusal of Hirohito’s personal invitation to attend the reversion’s official signing ceremony in 1972, which the Emperor presided over. In an attempt to heal the wounds left over from the war and the recent reversion debacle, the Imperial Household sent Crown Prince Akihito to Okinawa on July 18, 1975.

²⁴ Yara Chôbyô, *Gekidô Hachi Nen*, 180-183.

²⁵ “Bombs Hurlled into Japan Gov’t Office,” *Japan Times*, February 19, 1972.

The Imperial Household sent Akihito since they feared a visit from Hirohito could enflame controversy. On Okinawa, Akihito and his wife paid homage at Okinawa's most famous memorial to the Battle of Okinawa, *Himeyuri no Tō*. During their visit to the shrine, both narrowly escaped death when two Okinawan demonstrators, who had been hiding in a nearby cave for several days, threw a Molotov Cocktail at the Prince and his entourage as they approached *Himeyuri no Tō*. Okinawan police also discovered a bomb planted on a bus located near Akihito's planned route through the capital city Naha. Both examples indicated that Okinawa's status as a "natural" part of Japan was still a contentious issue.²⁶ If Tokyo hoped the 1980s would produce better relations with Okinawa, they were sorely disappointed.



Figure 4 Okinawan protestors throw a Molotov cocktail that explodes in front of Prince Akihito and his wife as they approach *Himeyuri no Tō*. The flames from the Molotov Cocktail can be seen on the far right of the photo.²⁷

²⁶ Okinawa Taimusu Sha, *Okinawa Sengo Shi 1945-1998*, (Okinawa: Okinawa Taimusu Sha, 1998), 158.

²⁷ Ibid.

In 1981 and 1982 leading Okinawan intellectuals held several symposiums to discuss Okinawa independence, and one participant even drafted a Constitution for the Ryukyus and designed a national flag. Essays from the symposiums were collected and published under the title *Okinawa Jiritsu he no Chosen (The Challenges Facing Okinawan Independence)* whose appendix contained the draft constitution.²⁸ Subsequently, the Okinawa branch of Japan National Television (NHK), in cooperation with the daily newspaper *Ryukyu Shinpô*, sponsored an all day forum to mark the 15th anniversary of Okinawa's reversion to Japan. The forum, *Mankai Uchinâ (Whither Okinawa?)* pointedly adopted the Okinawa dialect in its title, while speakers questioned the wisdom of Okinawan assimilation into the Japanese polity. Moreover, the forum's keynote speech explored the cost and opportunities of Ryukyuan independence. The symposium was followed two days later by a "talk show to examine the strengths and weaknesses of Okinawa's national character."²⁹

After many years of being snubbed, in October 1987 Okinawa Prefecture finally hosted its first National Athletic Meet, a major sporting event which had been held in every other Japanese prefecture. Both Tokyo and Okinawan conservatives, the Okinawan Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), hoped that hosting this event would not only promote Okinawa's tourism industry, but also would show that Okinawa was integrally a part of Japan. Yet several spectacular acts of civil disobedience illustrated that Okinawa's inclusion to Japan was anything but unproblematic.

²⁸ Arasaki Moriteru, Kawamitsu Shinichi, Higa Ryôgen, Harada Seji eds., *Okinawa Jiritsu he no Chôsen*, (Tokyo: Shakai Shiso Sha, 1982), 237-249.

²⁹ Taira Koji, "Troubled National Identity: The Ryukyuan/Okinawans," in Michael Weiner ed., *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, (London: Routledge, 1997), 166.

Crown Prince Akihito was once again sent to Okinawa, to open the games because Emperor Hirohito was in poor health.³⁰ Yet the honor of hosting the athletic event and even the announcement of the Akihito's visit during the games failed to generate the expected surge in nationalistic sentiment among Okinawans. In fact, several months prior to the start of the athletic competition, an act of civil disobedience presaged which would develop later. At one high school's graduation where the *Hinomaru*, Japan's rising sun flag, was being displayed despite local protests, a girl from the high school grabbed the flag "and in sad triumph thrust the flag into a gutter filled with muddy rainwater outside the gymnasium." Subsequently, during the meet itself, forty Okinawan girls refused to sing *Kimigayo*, Japan's unofficial national anthem, at the opening of the tennis tournament. At another event, Okinawan spectators displayed signs criticizing the emperor for World War II. The most spectacular act of resistance was committed by Chibana Shôichi, proprietor of a small grocery store. Chibana, at the opening of the softball tournament in his town of Yomitan, pulled down the *Hinomaru* and burned it in front of thousands of shocked spectators. Yet, during the occupation Chibana, like Yara Chobyô, had actively campaigned in support of reversion.³¹

If anything, Okinawan resistance became more pronounced during the 1990s, to the point where Tokyo could no longer ignore the growing maturation of a combative ethno nationalism. In 1990, Okinawans elected Ôta Masahide, who had written the infamous *Minikui Nihonjin* in 1968, as governor of Okinawa Prefecture. His first term

³⁰ Many Okinawans had hoped that the Crown Prince would offer an apology for what Okinawans strongly felt was the emperor's needless decision to sacrifice Okinawa in World War II. Akihito's generic apology disappointed and angered Okinawans. Akihito expressed a "a profound sense of grief" for the events of World War II, but made no specific reference to the Battle of Okinawa nor did he state Japan bore any responsibility for the Battle of Okinawa. Arazaki Moriteru, President of Okinawa University, commented that Akihito's apology was as "dry as dust." The "profound sense of grief" stated by Akihito was the exact apology Emperor Hirohito gave when he visited the U.S. in 1975.

³¹ Ibid.

was largely uneventful and he was easily reelected to second term in 1994. The following year, however, an incident would occur that would both define his tenure as governor and marked a watershed in Okinawan history.

On September 4, 1995 three U.S. servicemen kidnapped, beat and raped a 12 year-old Okinawan girl. Ironically, this incident fell almost to the day on the nefarious anniversary of a US soldier's rape and murder of a six-year-old Okinawan girl (Yumiko-chan Incident) on September 3, 1955. Unfortunately, neither crime was unique, as US military personal had previously committed countless sexual assaults against Okinawan women. Although fifty years of similar crimes had numbed many Okinawans, this time, Okinawans vehemently responded. On October 21, Takazato Suzyo, leader of the Okinawa Women Act against Military Violence, along with Governor Ôta and other activists, organized one of the largest demonstrations in Okinawan history. While the protest predictably condemned the crime and protested the ongoing problems associated with the US military bases, the demonstration had a markedly anti-Japanese tone. Many demonstrators saw the Tokyo government as complicit and Okinawans as victims of an alien Tokyo-Washington axis of power.

The incident led to a surge in ethnic nationalism. A former leader of the reversion movement, Ôyama Chōjo, a long-time mayor of Koza/Okinawa City and critic of the U.S. bases, wrote a best selling book, *Okinawa Dokuritsu Sengen (A Declaration of Okinawan Independence)* in 1997.³² Many debates, symposiums, forums, and steering committees were organized throughout 1997-98 around the theme of Okinawan independence. One participant, Arakawa Akira, who had long called for independence and continued his crusade for independence after 1972, had penned several biting critiques of the Japanese nation-state, the emperor system and the reversion period. In

³² Ôyama Chōjo, *Okinawa Dokuritsu Sengen—Yamatowa Kaeru beki(Sokoku)dewanakkata* (Tokyo: Gendai Shorin, 1997), 161-168.

1996 he wrote the timely *Hankokka no Kyoku* (*Okinawa: Antithesis to the Evil Japanese Nation State*), urging resistance to Japan and arguing for Okinawa's independence.

During the various forums on Okinawan independence, Arakawa “said he almost cried seeing the large crowd passionately debating Okinawan independence, since his [voice] had a very lonely voice for many years.”³³



Figure 5 The book cover on the left is Arakawa Akira's *Hankokka no Kyouku* and on the book cover on the right is Ōyama Chōjo's *Okinawa Dokuritsu Sengen*. On the jacket of both books, the kanji for “independence” 独立 自立 are conspicuous.³⁴

³³ Interview with Arakawa Akira on March 20, 1999, Naha, Okinawa. The direct quote comes from Taira Koji, “Okinawa’s Choice: Independence or Subordination,” in Chalmers Johnson ed., *Okinawa: Cold War Island*, (Cardiff: The Japan Policy Research Institute, 1999), p. 184.

³⁴ Author’s photograph.

In the aftermath of the September 4th Incident, two prominent Okinawan politicians, in two highly visible national forums, raised the issue of Okinawan independence. On February 13, 1997 a lower-house representative from Okinawa and a member of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Uehara Kosuke, asked during a budget committee session “what sort of steps are necessary for Okinawa’s independence?” He was told that independence was impossible because the constitution does not allow it. Uehara retorted that he ““was seriously thinking of creating a Ryukyu Kingdom.”” *The Yomiuri Shinbun*, who reported Uehara’s statement, sourly commented

The media in Okinawa are dominated by two local newspapers. It has been said at the Diet that the minds of Okinawans are strongly influenced by the two anti-Japan, anti-U.S. newspapers. Nationally circulated newspapers go virtually unread by Okinawans. The circulation of *The Yomiuri Shinbun* is only several hundred there. Under such circumstances, there cannot be a sound democracy.³⁵

What the *Yomiuri* failed to recognize was that Uehara during the American occupation had joined the likes of Yara Chôbyô, Chibana Shoichi, and Ôyama Chôjo in calling for Okinawa’s immediate reversion to the fatherland.

What prompted Uehara to utter such a bold statement was a 1996 Supreme Court decision that rejected outright Ôta Masahide’s, Okinawa’s governor, legal challenge of central government authority. Ôta, elected in 1990 and again in 1994 on a platform to reduce the American military presence on Okinawa, precipitated a major domestic and foreign policy crisis for Tokyo by refusing to renew leases for the U.S. bases in Okinawa.

Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryûtaro successfully sued Ôta in court, whereupon Ôta appealed to the Supreme Court of Japan, which constituted the first time in history that prefectural governor had sued the national government. In his opening statement, Ôta pointed out that Okinawa was once an independent kingdom but was forcibly

³⁵ “Profit or politics behind call for Okinawa independence?,” *The Daily Yomiuri Internet English Edition*, May 14, 1997

annexed by Japan. He went on to contrast Okinawa's innate peaceful culture with Japan's traditional military culture (*heiwa kokka* vs. *gun kokka*). Arguing that Japan has forsaken the people of Okinawa, Ōta wondered "whether the nation-state [we belong to, that is, Japan] can really be called a sovereign state (*shuken kokka*)".³⁶ Predictably, the Supreme Court ruled against Ōta, without making any reference to any of his points. Nevertheless, Ōta had done the unthinkable in asserting Okinawan autonomy from the Japanese nation state.

Many of the issues and perspectives raised so far I have witnessed at a personal level. Being half Okinawan (my mother is Okinawan), and spending a portion of my childhood and adolescence in Okinawa, I have had the opportunity to observe this context firsthand. Although I understood that being Okinawan, or *Uchinaachu*, was not the same as being Japanese, it was not until my year of research in Okinawa (September 1998-August 1999) that I came to understand the depth of this identity. During that time, it was rare to find an Okinawan who would state he or she was Japanese. Instead, most would proudly state in their own language (*Uchinaa guchi*) that they were *Uchinanchu*. I also encountered many Okinawans who took great pains to explain the differences to me between *uchinanchu* from *yamatunchu* (mainlanders).

The most profound manifestation of Okinawan ethnic nationalism that I witnessed occurred during the 71st Annual Koshien High School Baseball Tournament on April 4, 1999. For the first time in history, a high school team (*Okinawa Shôgaku*) from Okinawa won Japan's most prestigious baseball tournament. This victory was more than a long coveted baseball championship; it represented a significant watershed in Okinawan history and identity. One Okinawan, who has spent nearly his entire life resisting the American military presence on Okinawa, told me this victory was more important to him

³⁶ "Ōta Masahide's Appeal in Front of the Supreme Court of Japan," trans., *The Ryukyuanist*, No. 35 (Winter 1996-97).

than if the American military bases were actually removed. The outpouring of euphoria was stunning, especially among the elderly, with tears in their eyes and shouting, “we finally beat them (the Japanese)!” One elderly woman, with tears running down her cheeks, told me that now she could die in peace knowing that Okinawa had finally beaten those mainlanders. Others shouted “never forget where you were on April 4, 1999”. For months after the victory, the letters-to-the-editor page of the two local newspapers (*Okinawa Times* and the *Ryukyu Shinpo*) contained numerous emotional letters about the game. “Remember the date April 4, 1999!” was a frequent line of these letters and surprisingly, many of the authors were elderly women. At a celebration party a few days after the victory, I was told that “even if Okinawa had lost in the final,” said one man, “I would still be satisfied because we beat PL Gakuin of Osaka in the semi-finals.” Noting the surprised look on my face, others in the room echoed his comment, explaining that the perennial high school power, PL Gakuin, comes from Kansai, the traditional cradle of *yamatun* (*yamato*) culture. Another woman added, “now that we have beaten them in their own yard, they can no longer treat us like dogs.”

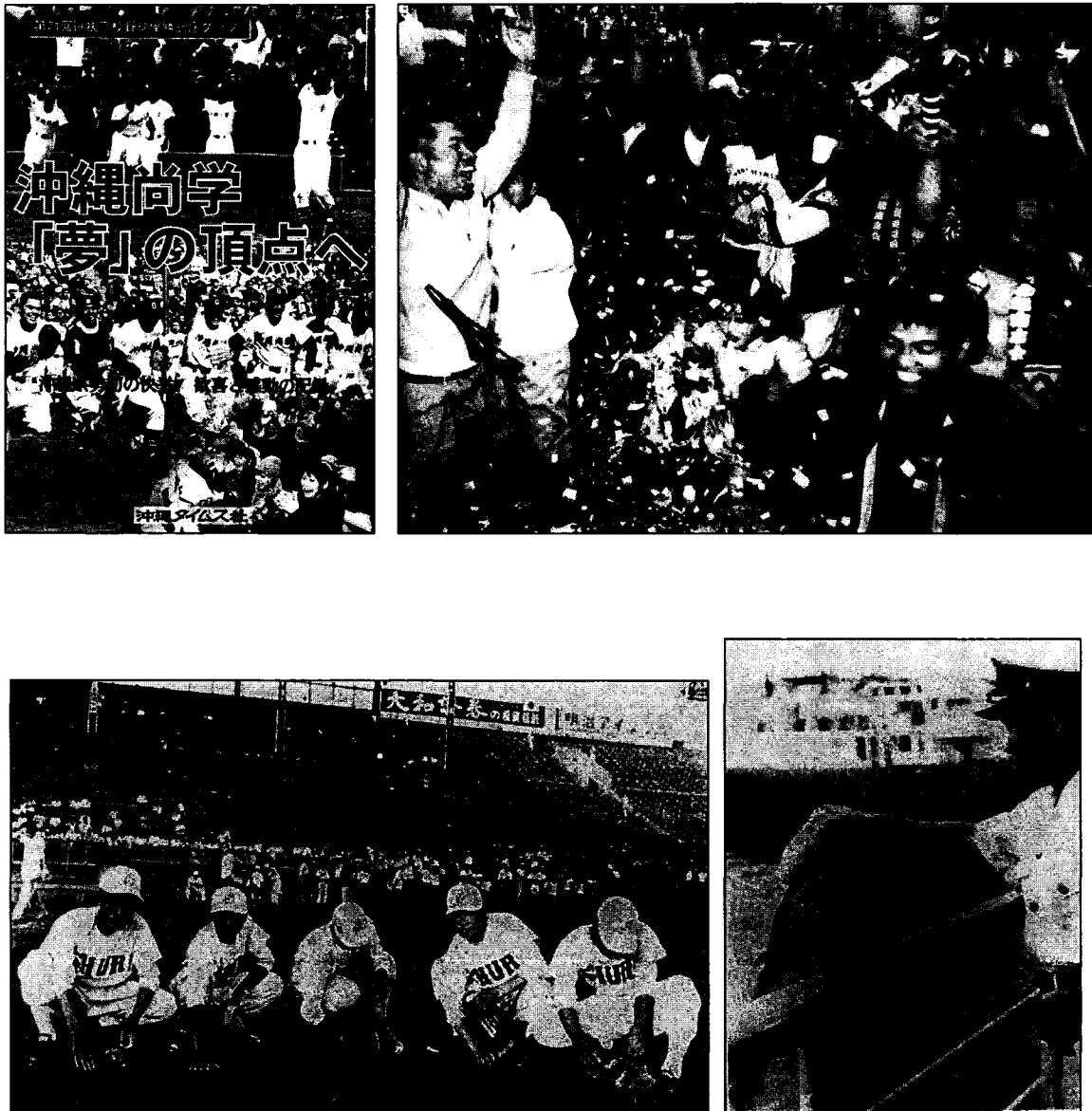


Figure 6 Contrasting pictures of “national” celebration. The top two photographs show the celebration after Okinawa Shô wins the national title in 1999. The bottom two photos show, on the left, a picture of the 1958 Shuri High School baseball team scooping “sacred” soil from Kôshien Stadium. On the bottom right, a Shuri High baseball player being forced to dump the dirt from Kôshien into Naha Harbor as USCAR deems the soil from Japan to be subversive.³⁷

³⁷ Okinawa Taimusu Sha, *Okinawa Shōgaku no “Yume” no Shōten he*, (Okinawa: Okinawa Taimusu Sha, 1999). Okinawa Taimusu Sha, *Okinawa Sengo Shi 1945-1998*, (Okinawa: Okinawa Taimusu Sha, 1998), 75.

The game's significance is revealed in the following incident. I had gone to the Prefecture Archives during the championship game, intending to get my research done early and return home to watch the game with my Okinawan cousins, all of whom were baseball fanatics and more importantly, Okinawan nationalists. Unfortunately, I became engrossed in some documents and lost track of time. I heard a "sumimasen" (excuse me...) and looked up. The entire archive staff, all of whom I knew very well, were standing in front of me, bowing deeply in unison. They asked, "do you intend to keep on researching?" Although in a research-induced daze, I could not help but to notice their anxiety and suddenly I realized what they were implying: Would I consider stopping my research so they could close the archives and watch the game? Sheepishly, I said "how stupid of me, of course." One of them said, "we thought you would agree, because with you being half Okinawan, we believed you would naturally desire to watch the game." Instead of driving home, I went across the street and joined them in a neighborhood restaurant where a jam-packed audience cheered *Okinawa Shôgaku* on to victory. The celebration that ensued is something I will never forget, as strangers clapped one another on the backs, and treated me like I was one of them. Many said, although you are only half, we know your *kokoro* (heart) is completely *Uchinanchu* (Okinawan), after all why would an American travel half way around the world to research Okinawan history, cheer on Okinawan baseball, eat Okinawan food and drink Okinawan beer (Orion) with such gusto. From that point on, every time I went to that restaurant, I never paid for another beer or meal, despite my vehement objections. ³⁸

³⁸ In contrast, in 1958 when Shuri High School became the first team from Okinawa to qualify for the Kôshien baseball tournament, after losing in the first round, team members scooped soil from the grounds of Kôshien stadium into small bags to take back with them to Okinawa. Their actions, widely reported by the press, struck a responsive and emotional chord throughout Japan and Okinawa, but greatly alarmed the American authorities. Upon their return to Okinawa, the team members were forced to dump the dirt from Kôshien into the ocean. American authorities, under the guise of the Plant Quarantine Act, feared the Japanese soil undermined their authority.

These emotionally powerful acts of Okinawan resistance against Japanese identity raise the larger question of the dominant image of Japan as a homogenous polity. This homogeneity has been utilized by both Japanese and non-Japanese to explain Japan's unique harmonious and consensual society, and until recently, Japan's phenomenal economic success. In 1986, Prime Minister Nakasone proclaimed to the world Japan's national ethos of homogeneity when he claimed Japan's economic and intellectual success was due to the fact Japan had no minorities. To make his point, Nakasone pointed out that America's problems derived from the considerable number of non-white minorities. Claiming he was misunderstood by the American press, Nakasone clarified his remarks by stating "that America had many remarkable scientific achievements to its credit 'despite the existence of so many troublesome minorities.'"³⁹ In addition, in 1980 Japan reported to the United Nations it had no minorities. Due to considerable protest from various minority groups in Japan and from Nakasone's controversial remarks in 1986, Japan changed its 1987 U.N. report to read, "although minorities do exist, there were no minority problems." Koji Taira, a noted Okinawan scholar, noted "basically it [Okinawan ethnicity] contradicts Japanese notions of political correctness based upon assumptions of 'racial' homogeneity and superiority."⁴⁰

At the same time, it is important to remember that Okinawan ethnic nationalism is a comparatively recent phenomenon. The assimilation project of the prewar period was a resounding success, and during the occupation, most Okinawans demanded reunification with Japan because they claimed they were culturally and racially Japanese. The

³⁹ George Hicks, *Japan's Hidden Apartheid: The Korean Minority and the Japanese*, Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1997, p. 3-4.

⁴⁰ Koji Taria, "Troubled National Identity: The Ryukyans/Okinawans" in Michael Weiner ed. *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, London: Routledge, 1997, p. 142.

complexity of Okinawan identity shows that “national” identities are historically contingent, which is the theoretical starting point of this dissertation.

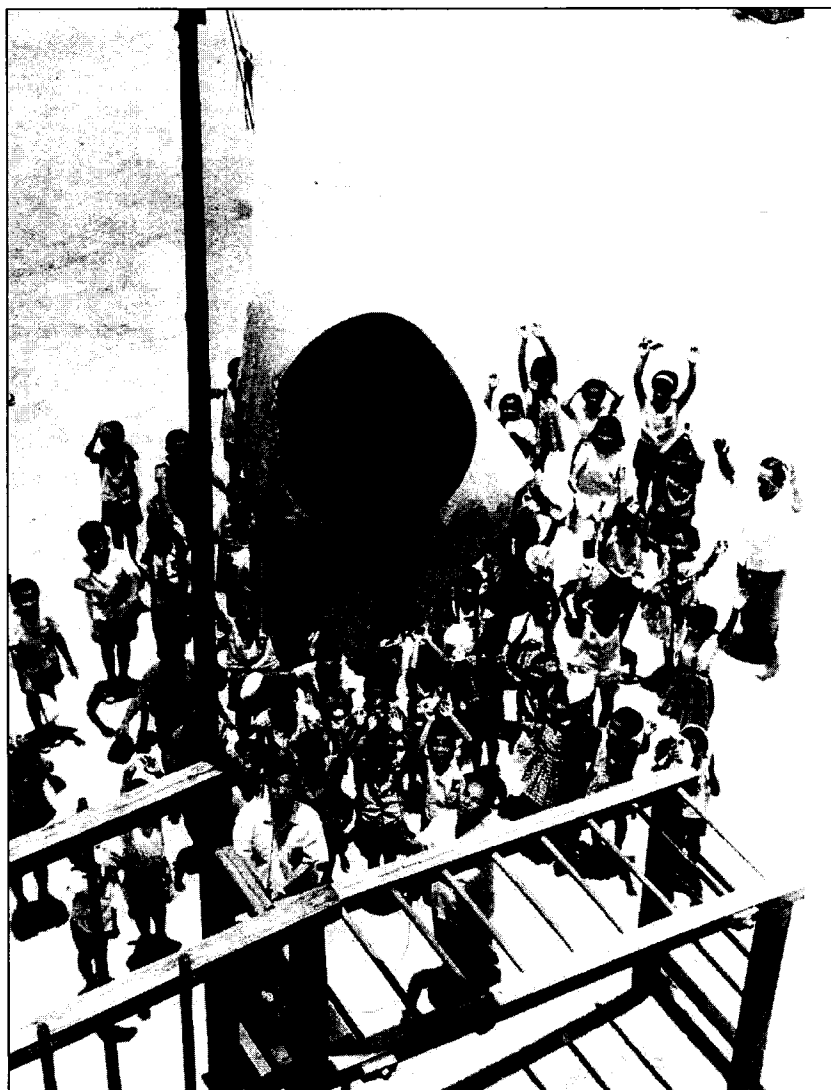


Figure 7 In 1960, Okinawan teachers raising the *Hinomaru* over a school playground and the kids shouting "Banzai." In 1987, Okinawans would be burning the *Hinomaru*.⁴¹

⁴¹ Okinawa Taimusu Sha, *Okinawa Sengo Shi 1945-1998*, (Okinawa: Okinawa Taimusu Sha, 1998), 89.

The Dissertation's Thesis, Purpose and Significance

This dissertation examines the eight years of the U.S. military occupation of Okinawa, which began in the spring of 1945 with the Battle of Okinawa and ended in 1972, when the U.S. formally restored sovereignty to the Tokyo government. Prior to the Meiji Restoration, Okinawa had been an independent kingdom with tributary relations with China and, after 1600, with the Japanese feudal domain of Satsuma, in southeastern Japan. In fact, commodore Matthew Perry “opened” the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1853 prior to sailing on to Edo Bay, where he forced officials of the Tokugawa shogunate to sign a treaty initiating diplomatic and, five years later, “free trade” with the United States. Perry’s incursion triggered the collapse of the Tokugawa Shogunate and a modernizing revolution, the Meiji Restoration, in 1868. Anxious to convey strength in the face of Western imperial dominance, the Meiji government forcibly annexed the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1878-79, making Okinawa the first victim of Japanese imperialism. Meiji Japan, in order to legitimize its control, renamed the Ryukyu Islands into Okinawa Prefecture, creating the image that these islands were a natural part of Japan.

Unfortunately, countless historians have reified this “naturalization” of the Ryukyus by viewing the Sino-Japanese War in 1894-95 as beginning of Japanese imperialism when Japan acquired Taiwan as its first colony. Until recently, American and Japanese historians largely ignored the colonization of the Ryukyu Kingdom.⁴² The Ryukyu Kingdom’s aristocratic class, with some popular support, resisted Japan’s

⁴² More recent works include Alan Christy’s “The Making of Imperial Subjects in Okinawa,” in *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*, Koji Taira, “Troubled National Identity: the Ryukyuans/Okinawans,” in *Japan’s Minorities* (1997). Okinawan historians have been writing on Japan’s colonialism for much longer: Ota Masahide, *Minikui Nihonjin* (1968 & 1996), Arakawa Akira, *Ryukyu Shobun Igo* (1981), Hiyane Teruo, *Kindai Okinawa no Seishin Shi* (1996). W. G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism 1894-1945* (1987), Michael Barnhart, *Japan and the World Since 1868* (1995), Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History* (1997), and even Akira Iriye, “Japan’s Drive to Great-Power Status,” in *The Emergence of Meiji Japan* (1995) have assumed the Ryukyus to be an integral part of Japan.

annexation for two decades, until China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War. This resistance, typical in a colonial context, forced Tokyo to spend a good portion of the Prefecture's budget on assimilation (*dōka*) programs, primarily through the education system. Okinawans gradually assimilated into loyal imperial subjects as they internalized a colonial identity that being modern meant to be Japanese, whereas being Ryukyuan carried the connotations of being backwards, static, primitive and childlike. On the eve of the Battle of Okinawa on April 1, 1945, there was no question of identity as Okinawans believed they were Japanese, and saw both the war and the battle as a means to prove that they were more Japanese than the Japanese themselves.

The battle not only destroyed Okinawa physically, it also altered the trajectory of identity. This dissertation historicizes and problematizes Okinawan identity by positing the period from the Battle of Okinawa to the mid 1950s as a pivotal time when Okinawa as an "imagined community" experienced a profound identity crisis. In general, the dissertation examines how the Battle of Okinawa and the American occupation challenged prewar notions of being "Japanese" among Okinawans. Germane to this examination is how in planning for the invasion of Okinawa US civil affairs officers "discovered" that Okinawans were not Japanese. This discovery shaped future occupation policy as the US, in an attempt to create an identity gap between Okinawan and Japanese, attempted to invent a popular consciousness of a Ryukyuan nation-state by convincing Okinawans that they were Ryukyuan, not Japanese. Yet, the military nature of the occupation consistently undermined these nation-building efforts as the "military mind" clashed with Okinawan demands for autonomy and democratization. By 1949, the military occupation had degenerated to the point where desperate Okinawans rebelled against the unjust handling of the occupation. Okinawans who had once perceived the US as liberators, now compared the US occupation to the dark days of prewar Japanese militarism and overwhelmingly supported "return to Japan." Because this movement threatened the security of US military bases in Okinawa, which were now the frontline

defense of American hegemony in the Pacific, US authorities initiated a two-pronged strategy of democratizing political reforms and a reinvigorated campaign of soft culture diplomacy designed to nurture an Okinawan ethno nationalism to counter Japanese nationalism. The result, I argue, was a complex and often contradictory legacy of political, social, and cultural currents that together explain the acute ambivalence towards “Japan” that Okinawans have continued to experience to this day.

Theoretical Context of the Dissertation

A contribution of this dissertation is the examination of the emergence of an ambivalent ethnic Okinawan identity and the centrality of the American occupation in fostering this ethnic identity. National identity, often seen as possessing prescriptive elements such as being organic, seamless, timeless and predetermined, has recently been “deconstructed.” In other words, national identity has been unmasked by highly influential works, such as Eric Hobsbawm’s and Terence Ranger’s *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), to reveal its artificial nature and largely modern origins whose construction has been a site of considerable contest and conflict. Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (1995) added to this perspective on national identity by pointing out that nationalism is highly ambiguous in nature and is disseminated by both official *and popular* discourse. John Breuilly convincingly argues in *Nationalism and the State* (1982) that nationalism poses as a double edge sword for the state. While the state attempts to impose and propagate official nationalism to both unify and suppress the people, nationalism is also a bottom-up phenomena. Breuilly shows how cultural and ethnic identity can become an ideological tool of resistance mobilized by popular elements *against the state*.

These works have provided a conceptual framework to analyze the construction, representation, and contestation of identities during the American occupation of Okinawa. In this context of the artificial and polysemic nature of national and ethnic

identity, the dissertation will show how American efforts to displace Okinawan's Japanese identity by creating a Ryukyuan national conscious failed, and in fact, forced Okinawans to embrace their "Japaneseness" even more as they demanded reversion to their fatherland. Although American efforts to create an identity gap failed in the short term, one could argue that the occupation long term effects carved out the space for Okinawans to affirm a separatist identity.

Methodological and Source Approach to the Dissertation

This dissertation primary draws on archival research. Research was conducted at two primary locations, the US National Archives II and at various locations in Okinawa. In 1998, the US National Archives II declassified documents related to the occupation of Okinawa and that summer I was one of the first historians to examine these documents. I spent the next year in Okinawa conducting archival research at three main archives: the Okinawa Prefecture Archives, the University of the Ryukyus Library archive, and Naha City archive. I also made several trips to interview Edward Freimuth, who served in occupation from 1947 to 1970, in the role of political liaison between military government authorities and Okinawan politicians. His role as liaison proved particularly valuable as he saw the personalities and emotions that written official documents rarely reveal. In many discussions, Freimuth shared his experiences and perspective of this "underside" in a way that no official documents could reveal. Mr. Freimuth also possessed his own private collection of unique occupation documents that I did not encounter in official archives. Another valuable private collection was the papers of James Watkins, who as a Navy civil affairs officer in Okinawa from 1945 to late 1946, kept a diary and saved many officials documents from the early period of the occupation. A group of Okinawan scholars subsequently published the Watkins collection in Okinawa which I was able to purchase.

The vast majority of primary sources culled from these archives can be classified as official government documents of US Army's Ryukyus Command (RYCOM), which would be later named United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyus (USCAR), State Department, Pentagon, Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), and Government of the Ryukyus (GRI). Although these documents largely told the "political" history of Okinawa, I concentrated on finding documents that would allow a "bottom-up" analysis, how policy-making produced the "law of unintended consequences," and shedding light on how Okinawans themselves experienced the occupation.

To augment these official archival sources, I spent considerable time combing through used bookstores in Okinawa looking for relevant primary and secondary sources not typically found in an archive. These bookstores provided numerous publications and first-hand accounts, from an Okinawan perspective, of life under American occupation. In particular, I was able to obtain journals, books, and officials histories of the various participants in the reversion movement as well as those who collaborated with the US.

It is quite rare that a historian has a personal connection to their particular topic of inquiry. Having a mother that is Okinawan, having many relatives in Okinawa (most who had significant experience with the occupation), and the fact I have spent many years living in Okinawa long before I became a historian, contributed to the research. Through my direct experiences of life in Okinawa, coupled with countless discussions with friends, family and acquaintances, I was able to "personalize", for better or worse, the dissertation. While my Okinawan heritage perhaps created some unintended or subconscious biases in my research and interpretations, I can also say that being half Okinawan/American offered me access to people, things, and perspectives not usually accorded to "outsiders." In the end, I believe my long-term personal connection to Okinawa, its culture and its people, made for a richer and more insightful dissertation.

Relevant Historiography to the Dissertation

The historiography, in English, can be approached in several different ways. Chronologically, the historiography falls into two time periods. During the occupation, as other colonial powers discovered, US authorities needed information on Okinawa to better control the people. The US commissioned dozens of American scholars, especially social scientists, to “map” Okinawa, to provide invaluable information to the US military. Some of these private military studies, once they were declassified, were later published as their authors made academic careers on Cold War research. Most of these works were published between 1955 and 1970, and the definitive is George Kerr’s *Okinawa: A History of an Island People* (1958).⁴³ Despite some flaws, Kerr’s book still remains the best work to get a general history of Okinawa prior to 1945. Two Japanese-authored books are Watanabe Akio’s *The Okinawa Problem: A Chapter in Japan-U.S. Relations* (1970) and Okinawan scholar Higa Mikio’s *Politics and Parties in Postwar Okinawa* (1963) These two sources present the occupation from a Japanese and Okinawan perspective. Both works, however, uncritically assume the natural identity of Okinawans as Japanese.

After Okinawa returned to Japanese control in 1972, historical publications on Okinawa were almost non-existent. Around 1990, interest in Okinawa began to emerge. Arnold Fisch’s *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands 1945-1950* (1988) is an official history of the occupation from an American perspective which does not explore how Okinawans experienced the occupation. Nevertheless, it is an important source for the early years of the occupation. *In the Realm of the Dying Emperor* (1991), by Norma Field, was the first study in English to represent an Okinawan perspective to the war,

⁴³ Others from this period include William Lebra’s *Okinawan Religion: Belief, Ritual, and Social Structure* (1966), Richard Pearson’s *Archaeology of the Ryukyu Islands* (1969), and M.D. Morris, *Okinawa: A Tiger by the Tail* (1968), Shannon McCune’s *The Ryukyu Islands* (1975).

occupation, and the issue of identity. Yet outside of these two works, Okinawa as an object of inquiry remained, literally and figuratively, on the periphery of Japanese studies.

The 1995 rape of a twelve-year old Okinawan girl and the subsequent Okinawan uproar, however drew scholarly attention to Okinawa. Since 1995, many wide-ranging books and articles have been published. In fact, in the past ten years, publications on Okinawa related topics probably equaled what has been published in the previous fifty or even one hundred years. Some of these works have been important to this dissertation, although none explores the same problems. Three recent works have emerged that depict a general overview of the occupation, Kiyoshi Nakachi's *Ryukyu-U.S.-Japan Relations, 1945-1972* (1989), Nicholas Sarantakes' *Keystone: The American Occupation of Okinawa and U.S. Japanese Relations* (2000), and Kensei Yoshida, *Democracy Betrayed: Okinawa Under U.S. Occupation* (2002), which is the best of the three. These three works, plus Robert Eldridge's *The Origins of the Bilateral Okinawa Problem* (2001), tend to look at the occupation from a foreign relations perspective, with less attention paid to the Okinawan perspective.

Historical works that examine the occupation from an Okinawan perspective can be found in several notable works. Norma Fields' *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor* (1991); Koji Taira, "Troubled National Identity: the Ryukyans/Okinawans," in *Japan's Minorities* (1997); Ruth Ann Keyso's *Voices From Garrison Island* (2002), Matthew Allen's *Identity and Resistance in Okinawa* (2002); and two edited works by Chalmers Johnson, *Okinawa: Cold War Island* (1999), and Laura Hein and Mark Selden, *Islands of Discontent* (2003) offer varied and insightful examinations of postwar Okinawan history. For the prewar period, Alan Christy's article "The Making of Imperial Subjects in Okinawa," in *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia* (1997), Gregory Smits' *Visions of Ryukyu* (1999) provide critical perspectives on the formation of Okinawan identity under Japanese control. Recent examinations of Okinawan literature offers

perspectives on Okinawan identity such as Ôshiro Tatshuhiro/Higashi Mineo's *Okinawa: Two Postwar Novellas* (1989); Michel Molasky's *American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory* (2001); and *Southern Exposure: Modern Japanese Literature from Okinawa* (2000), edited by Michael Molasky and Steve Rabson.

Secondary works in Japanese by Okinawan scholars have provided the richest and most numerous accounts of the occupation, though ironically, few have problematized identity. Some notable works by Okinawan historians include Miyasato Seigen's *Amerika no Okinawa Seisaku* (1986), Miyagi Etsujirô's *Okinawa Senryo: Mirai-e Mukete* (1993), Ôta Masahide *Minikui Nihonjin* (1968), Gabe Maasaki's *Nichiebei KanKei no Naka no Okinawa* (1996), Arakawa Akira's *Okinawa: Tôgô to Hangyaku* (2000), Arasaki Moriteru's *Okinawa Sengo Shi* (1986), and Hiyane Teruo's *Kindai Okinawa no Seishin Shi* (1996) are all essential works on the occupation.

Chapter Descriptions

Chapter One explains how the Battle of Okinawa resulted not from strategic military necessity, but from political considerations. This strategic reorientation propelled military planners in a new direction. For the prior two years, military and civil affairs officers had been planning for an invasion of Taiwan as the final stepping-stone prior before the actual invasion of the Japanese home islands. For many years, military histories of the Pacific War have assumed that the Battle of Okinawa was the logical strategic outcome of the island-hopping campaign, and thus, never questioned the decision-making process. More recently, historians such as Michael Schaller and Ron Spector have reexamined the strategy in the Pacific and have noted how politics affected military strategy. Specifically, both Schaller and Spector have argued that President Roosevelt, out of political considerations, decided to appease General MacArthur by canceling the Taiwan campaign in favor of MacArthur's pet project, an invasion of the Philippines. This point, however, is of only tangential concern to both historians and the

evidence they present is rather thin. My chapter augments their findings by using Joint Chiefs of Staff planning documents and the papers of President Herbert Hoover.

Chapter Two, using two largely ignored primary sources, examines how this sudden change in strategy affected the research and planning being conducted by the military's civil affairs officers. Specifically, it shows that the civil affairs team was caught off guard and only had a few months to compile handbooks on Okinawa. In the end, only two official reports on Okinawa were published in preparation for the invasion. The first by the OSS was based on an ethnographical study of Okinawan immigrants living in Hawa'ii. The second by the Navy's civil affairs team, used Japanese language secondary sources. While the two publications differed in terms of sources, methodology, and tone, both concluded that Okinawa was not an integral part of Japan, thus Okinawans were not completely Japanese. More importantly, the civil affairs team came to believe that Okinawans were an oppressed minority group and therefore, the Okinawa campaign was one of liberation, rather than invasion. Some officers imagined a Ryukyuan nation waiting to be resurrected and that the US would champion this cause. Liberating an oppressed minority group and encouraging Ryukyuan self-determination converged seamlessly with the overall American ethos that World War II was being fought to make the world safe for democracy.

Chapter Three examines how for Okinawans the Battle of Okinawa reopened the question of identity and how the Navy's civil affairs officers encouraged Ryukyuan nation-building. Many other works have documented the extent to which Okinawa was devastated by the battle and the military dimensions of the battle. My chapter examines how the battle specifically affected Okinawans and especially how Japanese military atrocities, coupled with American benevolence, led many Okinawans to question their Japanese identity. James T. Watkins, who was a Lt. Commander in the Navy's civil affairs team, played a critical role in Ryukyuan nation building. Only a few historians have used the Watkins' papers and none has used his papers to document how he and his

civil affairs cohorts attempted to mold Okinawa into a nation-state. This progressive agenda also affected Okinawans as they too began to imagine the possibilities of greater self-autonomy, not as Japanese, but as Okinawans.

Chapter Four depicts the end of this idealistic project when the US Army replaced the US Navy and assumed command of the occupation in mid 1946. From 1947 to 1949, Okinawa became the backwater of the Pacific arena, and the Army's conduct of the occupation reflected this new reality. Contrary to most historians, I argue that from 1946 to 1949, American intentions toward the Ryukyus were ambivalent. While top officials such as General MacArthur rhetorically professed the strategic value of Okinawa to the US, I argue that in reality both SCAP (MacArthur's Command in Tokyo) and Washington, were largely indifferent to the future status of the Ryukyus. Equally important, I show that deep policy differences existed between the military and the State Department with consequences for the people of Okinawa.

Chapter Five depicts how Okinawans reacted to this period of apathy and neglect. Okinawans, who initially viewed the US as benevolent liberators, came to view the US in a negative light. By 1948-49, Okinawans overtly resisted the occupation as mass rallies erupted throughout the island, defying the dominant stereotype among occupation officials that Okinawans, who as "Orientals," were naturally passive and submissive. These movements provided a critical foundation for subsequent popular resistance that would bedevil occupation authorities for the next two decades. This chapter, which draws on both primary and secondary sources in English and Japanese, revises previously understated accounts of Okinawan resistance to US authority. While most accounts depict the reversion movement in the early 1950s as the first tangible resistance to the occupation, I argue that the mass rallies in 1948-49 more accurately demark the origins of Okinawan defiance.

Chapter Six situates the occupation in a broader geopolitical context of the heating up of the Cold War in Asia, which suddenly made the US acutely aware of

Okinawa's strategic value in 1949. The communist victory in China and the Soviet Union's successful test of the atomic bomb in 1949, followed by the outbreak of the Korean War in mid 1950, remade Okinawa as the American Gibraltar of the Pacific. This rapid geopolitical change coincided with Washington's growing awareness of the problems in Okinawa brought on by the era of "apathy and neglect." Specifically, I argue that the new awareness of Okinawa's strategic value forced military officials to change occupation policy in a radical direction as they begin to emphasize the need to create an identity gap between the Ryukyus from Japan.

Using primary documents only recently declassified in 1998, Chapter Seven focuses on occupation efforts to repair the past three years of neglect. Cognizant of the 1948-49 island-wide mass rallies, US officials commit themselves to greater democratization as way to channel discontentment in a more positive direction. To demonstrate this commitment, USCAR initiated ambitious democratic reforms in late 1949 and 1950 with the ultimate goal of holding Island-wide general elections in the fall of 1950. USCAR's efforts paid off as the general elections produced a nearly 90% turn out of voters. By implementing political reform, USCAR hoped to convince Okinawans that the islands would be better off under a country that had been practicing democracy for nearly two hundred years rather than returning to a country only a few years removed from militarism. But USCAR soon discovered that democratization was a double-edged sword when the people rejected USCAR's pro-American candidate and instead elected someone with deep ties to prewar Japan. Following election as governor, Taira Tetsuo, who had run as an independent, announced the formation of a new political party that campaigned to restore Japanese sovereignty over the Ryukyu Islands. The proponents for reversion quickly mobilized a highly successful mass campaign demanding reversion.

Chapter Eight shows how the occupation's democratic reforms threatened to undermine American plans to continue the occupation indefinitely. The calls for reversion coincided with negotiations to end the US occupation of Japan proper. In the

face of popular demands to return Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty, USCAR intervened in the political process to secure a government friendly to the US presence by eliminating the directly elected governor and replacing it with a USCAR appointed Chief Executive. Although this maneuver gave USCAR more political control, it created more impetus for reversion.

To combat the reversion movement, USCAR once again decided to convince the Okinawans that they were not Japanese and that Okinawa would be better off under US than Japanese control. Chapter 9 examines USCAR's campaign of Ryukyuanization and Americanization, which can be seen as the conduct of "soft" diplomacy to win the "hearts and minds" of the people. This chapter uses primary documents from recently declassified USCAR documents to reveal, for the first time, American efforts to foster Okinawan ethno nationalism, and the creative ways Okinawans resisted American efforts to co-opt the reversion movement.

The Epilogue will show the consequences of the failure of Americanization and Ryukyuanization in the 1950s and how the reversion movement intensified during the 1960s, partly as result of the Vietnam War but also in response to increasing demands from Japan for Okinawa's return. Yet ironically, when Nixon and Sato announce in 1969 that Okinawa will be returned to Japan sometime in the early 1970s, many Okinawans begin to have doubts about the wisdom of reversion, bringing the dissertation full circle as Yara Chobyu, long term advocate for reversion, refuses to attend the official ceremony for reversion and massive anti-reversion demonstrations are held throughout Okinawa.

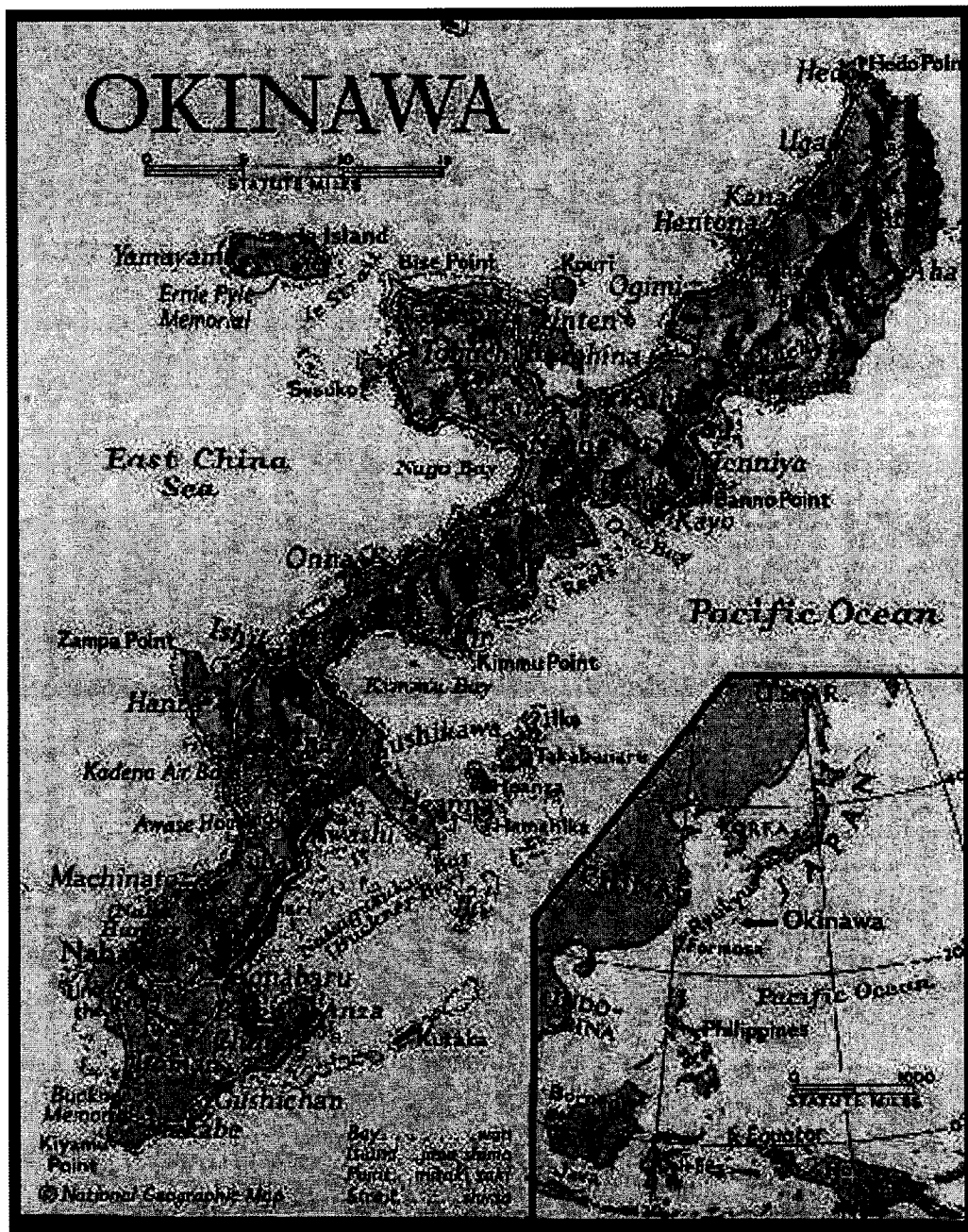


Figure 8 Map of the main island of Okinawa situated in the Ryukyu Archipelago.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ *National Geographic*, CVII-2, February, 1955, 268.

CHAPTER ONE THE POLITICIZATION OF THE ISLAND-HOPPING STRATAGY

Introduction

This chapter examines the political and military context of the decision to invade the Ryukyus. There are several significant dimensions of the decision that have been overlooked. First, contrary to the dominant assumption, the invasion of Okinawa was not the inevitable and natural outcome of the U.S. island-hopping strategy. Second, the decision for Okinawa's invasion resulted from political considerations rather than military strategies. Third, due to this political impetus, the decision for the Okinawa campaign, designated as Operation Iceberg, was made quite late in the planning process. Although several historians have recently noted this sudden change in Pacific strategy, this chapter, by utilizing unexamined documents and reexamining other sources, represents the first nuanced and comprehensive account on how Operation Iceberg evolved.

The Battle of Okinawa: The Politics of Strategic Planning

Much has been written, especially from the standpoint of military history, on the Battle of Okinawa, that has emphasized the kamikaze attacks and the fierce resistance offered by Japanese military forces which resulted in high American casualties. Most of these accounts of this devastating battle often depicted as the "Typhoon of Steel"⁴⁵ also assume that the invasion was the logical and inevitable conclusion of the island-hopping campaign was the invasion of Okinawa. In fact, the decision for the Okinawa campaign came as a shock to U.S. military strategists because in September of 1944 the Joints

⁴⁵ Some notable examples of accounts on the Battle of Okinawa: James H. Belote's and William M. Belote's *Typhoon of Steel*, Gerald Astor's *Operation Iceberg*, Benis M. Frank's *Okinawa*, George Feifer's *Tennozán*, and Robert Leckie's *Okinawa*.

Chief of Staff (JCS) unexpectedly scrapped, due to political pressures, the long-term and primary goal for a Taiwan invasion.

The decision to invade the Ryukyus was the end result of a convoluted and contentious political context. Unlike the European theater, which had a unified Allied command headed by General Dwight Eisenhower, the JCS had split the Pacific theater into two distinct commands and this bifurcation of command resulted from political rather than military considerations. President Roosevelt and General MacArthur did not see eye-to-eye, nor was the General very popular among the military establishment in Washington. Rather than bring MacArthur back to Washington where he had the potential of embarrassing the administration's policy over the failure to protect the Philippines and to prevent the popular icon having a greater say in military policy (not to mention it was known that MacArthur had presidential ambitions as Republican candidate), a decision was made to give MacArthur a command of his own theater of action, thus keeping him out of Washington. This decision infuriated the Navy, especially Admiral King, who felt that the war in the Pacific, being fought primarily on water, should be an exclusive command of the Navy. Admiral King also felt that MacArthur's campaign through the New Guinea axis would sap precious naval resources from Admiral Nimitz's drive through the central Pacific.⁴⁶

Admiral Chester Nimitz commanded the central thrust through Japan's Mandated Islands (CINPAC) and General Douglas MacArthur directed the attack through southwestern New Guinea axis (SWPA). This unwieldy command structure created intense, and often-bitter, competition over allocation of scarce resources and long-term strategic planning in the Pacific theater.⁴⁷ MacArthur, in particular, insisted that his axis

For more information on the politics of the Pacific campaign see *Michael Schaller, Douglas MacArthur: The Far Eastern General* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁴⁷ The split in Pacific command was also exacerbated by the joint understanding of Roosevelt and Churchill to pursue a "Europe-First" strategy.

of attack represented the best means to defeat Japan. MacArthur not only lobbied for his plan within the U.S. military command, but also through his political connections in Washington and in the court of public opinion using friendly conservative media outlets.⁴⁸

From the invasion of Guadalcanal in August of 1942 to early 1943, U.S. Pacific strategy was largely confined to MacArthur's SWPA Theater by default, which greatly pleased the General as the SWPA operations placed him one-step closer to his objective.⁴⁹ This objective seemed more personal than strategic, as he was more vested in retaking the Philippines than in achieving Japan's defeat in the shortest possible time. MacArthur, with a clear intent to mold opinion in Washington, conveyed this message through the assistant to Secretary of War Henry Stimson, stating "I have but one ambition; to return to the Philippines, to save the Philippine people...from their present agony; to restore the prestige of the United States. That is all that is moving me."⁵⁰

By mid 1943, however, MacArthur's Philippines campaign was in limbo as a consensus had emerged within the JCS that operations in the central Pacific had greater strategic value. The JCS believed a key factor in defeating Japan would be the use of American strategic bombers. These bombers, in the context of "total warfare," would bomb Japan's industrial, resource and political centers. The best means to accomplish this was by acquiring island bases in the Central Pacific, especially the Marianas.

⁴⁸A nuanced and overlooked analysis of the strategic planning is Grace Person Hayes, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II: The War Against Japan*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982). Two other sources are worth mentioning: Ronald H. Spector, *The Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1985) and John Costello, *The Pacific War 1941-1945*, (New York: Quill, 1982).

⁴⁹ U.S. military strategy was clearly defensive in the first part of the war. With few carriers, the U.S. lacked much offensive capability. Instead, U.S. strategy concentrated on keeping Japan from taking Australia or cutting the lines of supply/communication to Australia.

⁵⁰ Michael Schaller, *Douglas MacArthur: The Far Eastern General*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 77.

Planning documents from the JCS and CCS from mid 1943 reflect the change in strategy. Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) planning document, CCS 301, for the first time assigned priority on the Central Pacific by attacking Japanese bases in the Marshall and Gilbert Islands. As the same time, CCS 301 *deemphasized* SWPA operations by rebuffing MacArthur's plan for a direct invasion of Japan's primary base in the region, Rabaul in New Guinea. Instead, CCS 301 called for the "neutralization" of Rabaul by an air offensive that at a minimum, delayed any further advance to the Philippines.⁵¹ This abrupt shift in strategy stemmed from a May JCS plan entitled "Strategic Plan for the Defeat of Japan." The plan's centerpiece called for obtaining bases close enough to Japan to launch offensive air operations and the quickest way to obtain these bases was through the Central Pacific.⁵²

MacArthur resisted this shift in strategy and directly appealed to General Marshall in late summer, 1943. In a letter, he wrote "From a broad strategic viewpoint I am convinced that the best course of offensive action in the Pacific is a movement from Australia through New Guinea to Mindanao..." because such an advance would have support from "land based aircraft." In arguing his case, MacArthur warned that "a movement through the Mandated Islands will be a series of amphibious attacks with the support of carrier based aircraft against objectives defended by Naval units and ground troops supported by land based aviation." MacArthur reminded Marshall of the "hazards" of such an operation by pointing out what had happened to Japanese forces at

⁵¹ CCS-301, "Specific Operations in the Pacific and Far East in 1943-44," 9 August 43.

⁵² CCS 220, Memo by JCS, "Strategic Plan for the Defeat of Japan," 14 May 43. A conclusion found in nearly U.S. planning document was "Heavy and sustained air bombardment of Japan proper should cripple the Japanese war industry and destroy her ability to continue her main war effort. It might cause the surrender we demand but we cannot rely on this. In any case, air bombardment of this nature is probably an essential prelude to bring about the defeat of Japan."

Midway.⁵³ Not persuaded by MacArthur's plea, the JCS, in late July, made it clear where their priorities resided by ordering that if conflict rose between the two commands, "due weight should be given to the fact that operations in the Central PACIFIC promise more rapid advance."⁵⁴ In this rapid advance, the JCS envisioned a timeline where Palau (Caroline Islands) would be taken by the end of 1944 and shortly thereafter, the Philippines. Under this scenario, the JCS had Nimitz in command of the Philippines operation while MacArthur would be positioned far south in the New Guinea and Hollandia region.⁵⁵ Equally significant, the JCS did not include the Marianas, Taiwan, or the Ryukyus in this timeline.

A month later, in late August, the Central Pacific plan had gone through some significant revisions. First, the JCS clarified and strengthened the commitment to a Central Pacific strategy by stating, "In the East, our main effort should be through the Mandated Islands." At the same time, "[u]ntil we are ready to launch this main effort, we should maintain increasing pressure on the Japanese by means of offensive operations in the Solomons-New Guinea area and in the Aleutians." However, in case MacArthur hoped to take advantage of this situation, the JCS unequivocally stated that "[w]hen we turn to our main effort these latter operations should become subsidiary, and only be undertaken insofar as they are necessary for the success of our main effort."⁵⁶ Secondly, due to Admiral King's lobbying, the Central Pacific strategy, as spelled out in JCS 446, stated "it may be found desirable or necessary to seize Guam and the Japanese MARIANAS, possibly the BONINS, in conjunction...with the attack on the PALAUS."

⁵³ As quoted in Grace Person Hayes, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II: The War Against Japan*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982), 422-21.

⁵⁴ JCS 446, "Specific Operations in the Pacific and Far East in 1943-44," 6 August 43.

⁵⁵ CCS 381, "Palau Islands," 43 July 15.

⁵⁶ CCS-313, Appreciation and Plan for the Defeat of Japan," 18 August 1946, 16.

“The MARIANA-BONIN attack” the JCS believed, “would have profound effects on the Japanese because of its serious threat to the homeland.”⁵⁷ Third, and for the first time, JCS plans called for the seizing of Taiwan in order “to bring about the sustained air offensive against Japan.” Fourth, the JCS “endeavored to make the plan sufficiently flexible to permit considerable acceleration at any stage,” when the opportunity presented itself. In fact, this emphasis on flexibility and opportunity had led the JCS to consider bypassing “offensive operations against the South Philippines.” The final recommendation called for the seizure “one of the Ryukyus” if Formosa or Luzon was unattainable.⁵⁸ This was the first time the Ryukyus were mentioned in any JCS planning documents.

As indicated above, by the end of August, 1943, the JCS favored Nimitz’s CINPAC strategy which made Taiwan, rather than the Philippines, the end point of the island-hopping campaign. In October, due to political pressures emanating from the British, the Chinese, and MacArthur, Central Planning Staff (CPS) issued a report entitled “The Defeat of Japan Within Twelve Months After the Defeat of Germany.” This report laid out four possible courses of action. Course W called for the invasion of Hokkaido in the summer of 1945. Course X aimed for the “capture of Formosa from the Pacific in the spring of 1945. Course Y advocated taking Singapore in order to attack Taiwan from “both the Pacific and South China Sea in the winter of 1945-46.” Last, Course Z called for a major diversion in Southeast Asia (Operation First Culverin) to pave the way for an invasion of Taiwan sometime in the winter of 1945-46. In three out of the four scenarios, the CPS report identified Taiwan as the primary target. In the end, the report recommended that Course X be adopted because the capture of Formosa in

⁵⁷ JCS 446, “Specific Operations in the Pacific and Far East in 1943-44,” 6 August 43.

⁵⁸ From Combined Staff Planners to Combined Chiefs of Staff, “Appreciation and Plan for the Defeat of Japan (C.P.S. 33),” 8 August 43.

spring of 1945 was more likely than the Hokkaido operation. If Formosa was unattainable, contingency plans called for operations against the Philippines, with the next best option the Ryukyus, though the report noted “*information on these islands is extremely limited and unreliable.*”⁵⁹ Interestingly, of all possible Pacific locations picked for invasion, the Ryukyus was singled out as the only place where American strategists lacked rudimentary knowledge, a fact that will become pertinent later in the next chapter.

By December of 1943, an invasion of Taiwan seemed inevitable. In the strongest language to date, CCS 417 stated:

When conflicts in timing and allocation of means exist, due weight should be accorded to the fact that operations in the Central Pacific promise as this time a more rapid advance toward Japan and her vital lines of communication; the earlier acquisition of strategic air bases closer to the Japanese homeland; and, of greatest importance, are more likely to precipitate a decisive engagement with the Japanese fleet...(and to) launch a major assault in the Formosa-Luzon-China Area in the spring of 1945....⁶⁰

General Sutherland, MacArthur’s most trusted advisor, argued MacArthur’s case before the JCS while CCS 417 was being deliberated. Predictably, Sutherland asserted the Central Advance was “a slow process of frontal attrition which does not in itself produce any vital strategic results.” Instead, Sutherland argued the JCS should support MacArthur’s plan to invade Mindanao in February 1945 (Operation Reno III) as the best strategic option. Sutherland, however, failed to dissuade the JCS, including any of the Army generals such as Marshall, from approving CCS 417.⁶¹

⁵⁹ CPS-86/2, “Defeat of Japan within Twelve Months after the Defeat of Japan,” 25 October 1943.

⁶⁰ CCS 417, “Overall Plan for the Defeat of Japan,” 2 December 43.

⁶¹ Hayes, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II*, 505-506. Mindanao is the large island south of the primary island of Luzon.

Despite the rebuffing of Sutherland's plea in December, MacArthur continued to plead his case, especially to his conservative political allies in Washington and in the press. The political pressure forced the JCS to ask both Nimitz and the General to submit their respective recommendations on what objective should be taken next. After studying both commander's recommendations, JCS 713/1 reiterated CCS 417 in stating "...until vital area are reached, strongly held and defended positions should be by-passed, neutralized, and blockaded. By maximum employment of our air and naval forces we can isolate enemy strongholds not essential to our advance (Central)..." Once again, the JCS made it clear that the "first major objective is Formosa. The intermediate objective of our advance should be Marianas-Palau." JCS 713/1, however, went further than previous JCS documents. Not only did it question the viability of MacArthur's Mindanao operation, it questioned whether "the conduct of operations against Luzon *might require an unacceptable diversion of our forces to the detriment of the attack on Formosa.*" Cognizant that MacArthur would not take the cancellation of Luzon lightly, the JCS defended its position by stating:

The position of Formosa is such that were it to fall into our hands we would at once possess all of the advantages of lodgments both on Luzon and the China coast. The raw materials from the south and the war materials from the north pass by or through Formosa. It is an operation which, no matter what our previous course, must eventually be accomplished.⁶²

The following map from JCS 713/1 further illustrates the priority of the Central Advance and the invasion of Taiwan over the Philippines campaign.

⁶² JCS 713/1, "Future Operations in the Pacific," 10 April 1944.

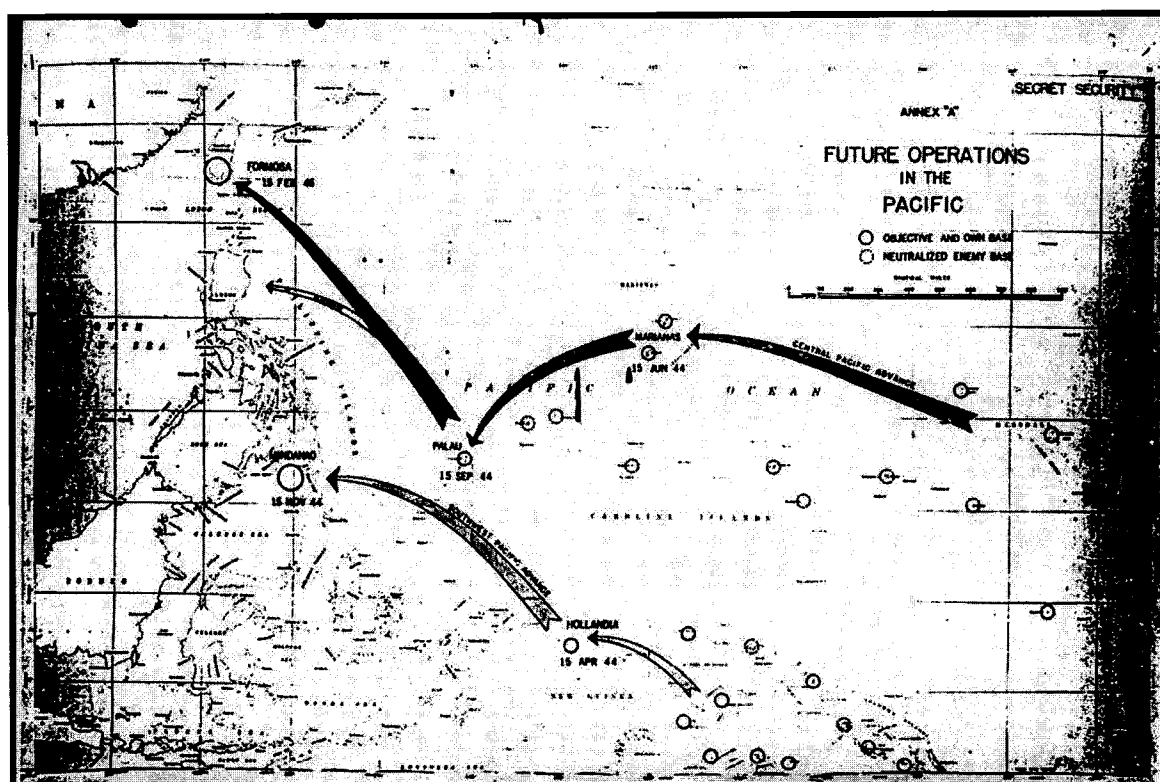


Figure 9 This JCS strategic map clearly shows the primary target to be Taiwan, tentatively scheduled for February 15, 1945.⁶³

By the summer of 1944, a consensus had emerged that Japan not only lacked the ability to conduct offensive operations in the Pacific, there was optimism that Japan's defeat was much closer than anticipated. Consequently, with the successful Normandy invasion serving as an impetus, the Pacific command strategist took time to develop a comprehensive and long-term strategy for Japan's defeat. On June 30, 1944, JCS issued a detailed 113-page document, JCS-476, which considered options once the American position in Formosa had been consolidated. The report identified four main areas of advancement prior to the expected invasion of Honshu: Amoy (China coast), Korea,

⁶³ Ibid.

Kyushu, and Hokkaido. The report, after detailing the assets and liabilities of each area, concluded Kyushu represented the best choice as it was on the natural geographical axis from Taiwan.⁶⁴

At the same time, the report also examined secondary targets in the Ryukyus, the Kuriles, and Bonins. Out of the secondary list, the Ryukyus was recommended as it provided “advanced air bases essential to subsequent operations against Japan.” In addition, control of the Ryukyus would provide command of the East China Sea, effectively cutting off Japan from China and Korea. Yet, it was noted that preparation and execution for a Ryukyus campaign would be greatly hampered by the lack of information on the archipelago. The lack of pertinent information was especially disconcerting since the Ryukyus represented one of the home islands with a large and hostile civilian population.⁶⁵ Although not explicitly stated, the JCS-476 reflected the JCS’s acute reservations about an invasion of the Ryukyus.

Once again, JCS-476 revisited its earlier decision to bypass the Philippines. JCS-476 reaffirmed the earlier concerns that any resources devoted to an invasion of Luzon in the Philippines would “involve the major part of the forces allocated to the Southwest Pacific until well into the middle of 1945...” MacArthur’s staff, however, argued that the raw materials gained from a vigorous campaign in the Southwest axis would be invaluable to the final push to Japan. JCS-476 doubted this assertion, noting that “[s]tudies to date, as yet incomplete, indicate that, contrary to general belief, the returns in raw materials which we would gain from operations giving us control of certain portions of the East Indies would not be commensurate with the cost involved, nor would they become available to under the time limits of our concept of operations.” For the

⁶⁴ JCS-476, “Operations Against Japan Subsequent to Formosa, 30 June 1944.

⁶⁵ JCS-476, “Operations Against Japan Subsequent to Formosa, 30 June 1944.

JCS, the strategic decision to bypass the Philippines was sound, although the report's conclusion seemed to be mindful that MacArthur would continue to press his case for a more ambitious campaign. Perhaps heading off a future MacArthur rebuttal, the report concluded that "we should not conduct operations in the Southwest Pacific other than those discussed above except for minor diversionary efforts which contribute to our main advance." JCS 476 represented the final strategic blueprint and it was clear MacArthur was going to, at best, play a minor role in the defeat of Japan.⁶⁶

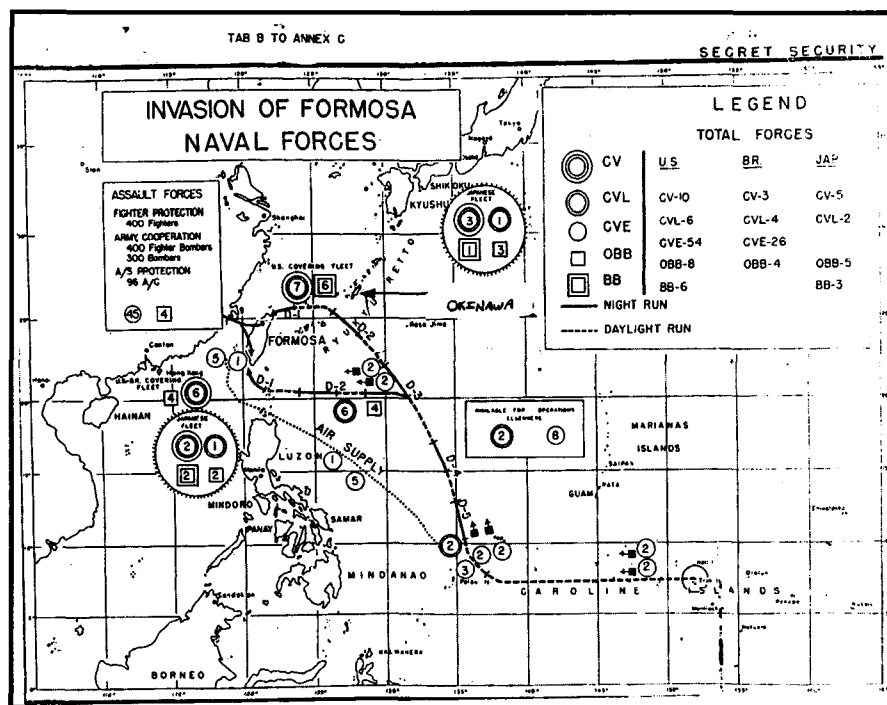


Figure 10 "JPS Operations Against Japan Subsequent to Formosa," June 30, 1944. The map clearly shows JCS intention of bypassing the Philippines on the way to Taiwan.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

MacArthur's End-Around

As illustrated above, the June 30, 1944 JCS-476 map clearly shows planning for an invasion of Taiwan, yet the invasion never materialized. But by September 9, the JCS had done an about-face as the JCS-713/19 unexpectedly authorized MacArthur to “seize and occupy Luzon, target date 20 December 1944.” Nimitz too received new orders as he was directed “to occupy one or more positions in the Nanpo Shoto (Iwo Jima), target date 20 January 1945. Occupy one or more positions in the Nansei Shoto (Ryukyu Islands), target date 1 March 1945.” The final order, “Directions regarding plan for possible operations against Formosa....will be issued later,” further revealed the stunning turn in strategy.⁶⁸ Why did the JCS reverse its own decision to invade Taiwan, a decision it had made nearly a year earlier. The reversal came not as the result of change in military strategy, but from a political storm emanating from Hawa’ii. Ironically, while the JCS was finalizing JCS-476 in Washington in late July, two diametrically opposed figures were concurrently meeting half-away around the world.

General Douglas MacArthur, during his retreat from the Philippines in early 1942, famously stated “I Shall Return.” Yet as seen above, this pledge was jeopardized by Nimitz’s unexpectedly rapid advance through the central Pacific and the JCS belief the quickest way to end the war was through a Central Advance strategy. This strategy would culminate with an invasion of Taiwan, which meant by “the spring of 1944, it appeared the Philippines might be bypassed or liberated only late in the war.”⁶⁹

MacArthur, however, believed there was a conspiracy among Washington’s military and political circles to deny him his return to the Philippines. The focal point of

⁶⁸ JCS-713/19, “Future Operations in the Pacific,” 9 September, 1944.

⁶⁹ Michael Schaller, *Douglas MacArthur: The Far Eastern General*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 77.

the forces arrayed against him, MacArthur believed, was President Roosevelt. After the war, MacArthur voiced his conspiracy theory in a meeting with former president Herbert Hoover. Hoover, who was assessing the postwar famine situation on behalf of President Truman, visited MacArthur at SCAP headquarters in early May 1946. In a diary kept specifically for the famine assessment, Hoover observed that MacArthur was especially bitter towards Roosevelt. MacArthur complained, Hoover wrote, “that Roosevelt had shown his vindictiveness in many ways, one being actions that had starved him of supplies in that MacArthur had received much less supplies per man compared to what was being sent to Europe.” Still whining, MacArthur charged that Roosevelt has smeared his name through the White House press corps. Hoover confirmed MacArthur’s allegation by stating “Roosevelt had called him his ‘McCelland’ and his ‘problem child.’”⁷⁰ Not surprisingly, MacArthur believed Roosevelt conspired to embarrass him by not allowing an invasion of the Philippines and hence, mocking the “I shall return” pledge.

As the discussion proceeded between the former President and the General, MacArthur also accused Roosevelt of interfering in Pacific strategy out of political concerns. According to Schaller, MacArthur “came to believe that only political leverage—exercised by supporters or by himself—could force these adversaries to clear his path back to the Philippines.”⁷¹ The General told Hoover that “if he [Roosevelt] wanted to show progress in the Pacific War before his election, it could only be done by island-hopping to the Philippines on the southern route.” MacArthur then “guaranteed to show great progress and even to land in the Philippines before November 1944” (in time for the election), if his plans were carried out. And this, MacArthur implied, had carried

⁷⁰ Hoover’s Food Survey Diary, Japan, May 4, 5,6, 1946. HP-PPS.

⁷¹ Schaller, *Douglas MacArthur*, 80.

far more weight with Roosevelt than his strategic arguments. It was because of these political considerations that the President probably had overridden the JCS and decided in favor of MacArthur's route through the Philippines.⁷² Yet, why would Roosevelt, who despised MacArthur, the general who had stated that the "the only reason I want to be President...it to beat that S.O.B. Roosevelt," come to a political understanding with MacArthur that radically altered an existing well conceived military strategy in the Pacific campaign?⁷³

MacArthur possessed considerable domestic political influence that affected both President Roosevelt and military decision-makers in Washington due to his iconic status as a military hero and his potential role as a Republican presidential candidate in 1944, which provided him with considerable political leverage. In fact, MacArthur had already scouted out the terrain in 1943 when he "dispatched General Charles Willoughby, his intelligence chief, to discuss his prospects with....prominent Republicans."⁷⁴ After hearing Willoughby's favorable report, MacArthur sent another aide, Jack Turcott, to lay the ground work for a run at the Republican nomination. Turcott met with Robert Cromie of the *Chicago Tribune*, and told Cromie of MacArthur's plans. Cromie, in turn, relayed the plans in a letter to Joseph Patterson of the *New York News*. In his letter to Patterson, Cromie reported that according to Turcott, MacArthur's objective was to win the war, but he would consider a draft nominee since "as President, he could further his ideas about how to win the war." The General, Turcott continued, "dislikes many New Deal policies, which he thinks are dangerous to the nation's liberties," and he had ideas on how to conduct a campaign if nominated. He would so do from the front, including "a

⁷² Hoover's Food Survey Diary, Japan, May 4, 5,6, 1945. HP-PPS.

⁷³ Schaller, *Douglas MacArthur*, 79.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

couple of ‘fireside chats’ from the front,” and if elected, would “remain in uniform, tour battle theaters, and direct the war personally.” In addition, Turcott noted that MacArthur had been angered by the “[New York] News’ editorial suggestion that anyone whose platform included MacArthur as secretary of war could beat Roosevelt.” He was upset because the secretary of war had little power, at least under FDR, and “that if the MacArthur name could win for someone else, why not for MacArthur.” Turcott conveyed to Cromie that the General was willing to leave the door open for some other position if someone else was elected, in particular, being “Deputy Commander-in-Chief,” which would permit him “to outrank both the secretary of war and the chief of staff, and thus direct the war without interference.” Finally, MacArthur was angry at the New York News’ editorial “in which were listed various arguments which might be mustered against his candidacy: the Bonus Army handling, some aspects of Bataan, etc. Apparently, he thought it a bit unnecessary to remind possible enemies of ammunition that might be overlooked.”⁷⁵

MacArthur’s campaign received reinforcement from from key Republican and and conservative business figures, such as Senator Arthur Vandenberg, Representative Clare Boothe Luce, Chairman of Sears, Roebuck and Co. Robert E. Wood and former president Herbert Hoover (who would later play a greater role in MacArthur’s 1948 presidential campaign). In addition, major conservative newspaper publishers, such as Frank Gannet, Roy Howard, and Robert McCormick (*Chicago Tribune*), publicly supported a MacArthur candidacy while other conservative newspaper publishers, Joseph Patterson (*New York Daily News*), Cissie Patterson (*Washington Times*), and the Hearst chains had called for Roosevelt to place MacArthur “in charge of *all* American military

⁷⁵ Robert A. Cromie to Joseph Paterson, undated letter but probably December 1943 or very early January 1944, HP-PPI.

operations.”⁷⁶ The collaboration of powerful conservative publishing moguls with notable Republican politicians could be seen when L. W. McCormick, writing as Chairman to Nominate General MacArthur for President, sent a letter to Herbert Hoover asking him for support. In the letter, McCormick asserted:

Our survey shows, and the past election bears us out, that a Republican can be elected in 1944. After sifting our information, we are convinced that our nominees should be General Douglas MacArthur for President and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge for Vice President. With this combination, we are confident that their election is certain....⁷⁷

This collaboration continued a month later when Joseph Patterson met with Hoover to discuss MacArthur’s presidential plans. Hoover told Patterson of rumors that Roosevelt was going to choose General Marshall as vice-president and elevate Marshall to the post of deputy commander-in-chief. Hoover told Patterson that two could play at that game and that MacArthur could be the Republican vice-president and the deputy commander-in-chief. In order to avoid public criticism, Hoover voiced the opinion that if MacArthur did run, he could do it from the Pacific and would not have to “take an active part in the campaign.” In relaying the information back to Jack Turcott, Patterson wrote, “Please acknowledge this letter and keep it confidential from everybody except MacArthur.”⁷⁸

MacArthur, likely irritated by Hoover’s suggestion that he should be considered only for the number two spot on the ticket, sent one of his closest confidants, General Richard K. Sutherland to meet with Hoover in March, 1944. In a memorandum on the meeting, Hoover wrote that Sutherland discussed MacArthur’s fight with the Navy over

⁷⁶ Schaller, *Douglas MacArthur*, 78-79.

⁷⁷ L. W. McCormick to Hoover, December 10, 1943. HP-PPI. Even McCormick’s letterhead had the name of the two nominees emblazoned across the top. L.W. McCormick was a relative to the *Chicago Tribune*’s publisher, Robert McCormick.

⁷⁸ Joseph Patterson to Jack Turcott, January 5, 1944, HP-PPI.

Pacific strategy. Hoover, however, observed that the primary reason for Sutherland's visit was to discuss "the political prospects of General MacArthur." Hoover told Sutherland that Thomas Dewey had the nomination wrapped up and that MacArthur never had a chance as presidential candidate because Republican leaders feared "bad public reaction of taking the General out of the field and the fear of military government." Yet Hoover, playing the role of kingmaker, still left open the door for MacArthur to be vice-president and, following the election, to be given the title of "Vice-Commander in Chief and thus control of the entire war." Sutherland, according to Hoover, felt that MacArthur would welcome such a role and ended the conversation by making another pitch for MacArthur's southern route as the quickest way to a Japanese surrender."⁷⁹

Several weeks later, Hoover dined with Governor Dewey. As expected, their discussion revolved around the upcoming presidential election. Hoover, who despised Roosevelt, stated that if Dewey were elected, there would be a need to create a "special bureau...to expose as least one case per day of the corruption of the present regime..." Hoover eventually got to the topic at hand, namely MacArthur as Dewey's running mate. Dewey, however, rejected the idea, telling Hoover that General Patrick Hurley (who ironically was with MacArthur at the Bonus March Incident) wanted the nomination. Although it appeared MacArthur's chances of gaining either the presidential or vice presidential nomination were minimal, at least from Hoover's and Dewey's perspective, the rest of MacArthur's conservative constituency conspired to take advantage of the pending split at the Republican convention between Wendell Willkie and Thomas Dewey. For a variety of reasons, MacArthur's campaign imploded and managed to win only one vote at the June Republican convention. Although the campaign embarrassed

⁷⁹ Memorandum written by Herbert Hoover on the meeting with General Richard Sutherland, March 10, 1944, HP-PPI.

MacArthur, Michael Schaller argues, “*that the general’s political venture probably helped his campaign to return to the Philippines.*” Despite the fact U.S. strategists believed such a campaign was not needed, “and might even delay—Japan’s defeat, MacArthur found an unexpected ally” in Roosevelt, who “came to support MacArthur’s plan....”⁸⁰

Why? In public, Roosevelt never revealed any concerns about MacArthur’s 1944 political aspirations. Yet, the President did have plenty of concerns over the 1944 race and was not anxious to have a popular war-time general actively campaigning for the Republicans. Roosevelt and the Democrats felt acutely vulnerable in the upcoming presidential election as forty-seven House and ten Senate seats had been lost to the Republicans in the 1942 congressional elections. Roosevelt’s health was not good and there were concerns over his ability to campaign actively, let alone finish an unprecedented fourth term. Another pressing issue centered on war strategy, or more specifically, how the two wars would end with a minimum of military casualties (and economic cost) now that an Allied victory seemed to be inevitable. Roosevelt seemed anxious to avoid any unnecessary controversies over military strategy during the presidential campaign. Despite his failed presidential candidacy, MacArthur “warned that others would attack Roosevelt for not allowing MacArthur to fulfill his pledge to return.”⁸¹ MacArthur’s conservative publishing allies made sure the General’s threats were well publicized.

In the midst of the debate over military strategy in the Pacific, Roosevelt in July received an unprecedented Democrat nomination for fourth presidential term. Shortly thereafter, in an unusual and uncharacteristic move, Roosevelt requested a meeting with

⁸⁰ Schaller, *Douglas MacArthur*, 84. (Emphasis added).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

his two top commanders in the Pacific.⁸² The meeting in Hawa'i, July 26-28, 1944, as Schaller noted, was a classic *Rashomon* story. In typical Roosevelt fashion, he personally conducted the meeting, which meant there were no official notes taken, resulting in varied accounts to what actually transpired.⁸³ Even more striking, FDR conducted this meeting to discuss strategy in the Pacific “unaccompanied by any of the Joint Chiefs except [Admiral] Leahy.”⁸⁴ Historian Ronald Spector wrote that “there were those who believed his dramatic visit to Hawaii...was simply a political stunt.”⁸⁵

During this meeting, which was the only time MacArthur and Roosevelt met during the war, MacArthur both threatened Roosevelt and appealed to his political instincts.⁸⁶ Both men disliked each other but were also political animals. Roosevelt, who would be running for an unprecedented fourth term in a few months, presumably did not want criticism from a popular general over war strategy, especially if it involved MacArthur who had tremendous support among many Republican and conservative newspapers circles.⁸⁷ Historian James MacGregor Burns noted that during the 1944 presidential campaign, Republicans charged the FDR administration with “military

⁸² Roosevelt almost never met with theater commanders as he was prone to follow the chain-of-command and have his Joints Chief of Staff (Admiral King for the Navy and General Marshall for the Army) give orders to theater commanders.

⁸³ Roosevelt was famous for conducting one-to-one diplomacy, which became a major liability to Truman when he became president after FDR's death. Apparently, FDR had “understandings” with Churchill and Stalin done at the Yalta Conference, but no one in State due exactly what these understandings were. See James MacGregor Burns, *The Crosswinds of Freedom*, (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1989), 203-209.

⁸⁴ Ronald Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 417-419.

⁸⁵ Ibid. Other biographies on MacArthur have argued the meeting was about political *horse trading*. William Manchester, *American Caesar*, Courtney Whitney, *MacArthur: His Rendezvous with Destiny*, and James, *Years of MacArthur* are some notable examples.

⁸⁶ In fact, it was one of the few times the two icons had met in person, mostly due to their mutual dislike of one another.

⁸⁷ Burns, *The Crosswinds of Freedom*, 203.

incompetence,” and FDR, according to Burns, responded, “by pointing to the glorious victories of Eisenhower, MacArthur and Nimitz.”⁸⁸ It was already a foregone conclusion that Washington’s military planners had committed to a Taiwan campaign because the path through the Philippines was the “‘slow way’ to Tokyo.” Yet, Roosevelt, seemingly without consultation with his general staff in Washington, abruptly decided during this meeting in Hawa’ii that MacArthur would liberate the Philippines.⁸⁹

Many historians, such as Michael Schaller, have argued that the two had “made a secret deal whereby the general would be permitted to retake the Philippines in return for a pledge to stop attacking the administration and *provide ‘good news’ on the eve of the 1944 election.*”⁹⁰ Schaller quotes MacArthur stating if Roosevelt refused the Philippines campaign, the American people “‘would never reelect him if he approved a plan ‘which leaves 18 million Christian American citizens to wither on the Philippines under the conqueror’s heel.’” Roosevelt responded, according to MacArthur, with a smile and said “‘Douglas, you have nothing to worry about.’” With a sense of smugness, MacArthur observed that he had persuaded Roosevelt to reject the navy’s Taiwan plan in only ten minutes because “‘FDR had little interest’” in the ‘superior strategic argument,’ but evinced tremendous ‘interest in the political possibilities for himself.’”⁹¹

⁸⁸ Ibid, 205.

⁸⁹ Schaller, *Douglas MacArthur*, 85. Historians who have examined FDR’s presidency, are in consensus that FDR liked to act alone and often without much consultation with advisors or cabinet members. This tendency had major implications in FDR’s Yalta negotiations as he made many unilateral decision and agreements with Stalin without consultation or even informing those in Washington what had been agreed to at Yalta.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 87. (Emphasis added). Schaller builds his case on existing historiography such as James D. Clayton’s three volumes of *Years of MacArthur* and William Manchester’s *American Caesar*. Schaller, however, also examines archival documents to make a compelling case. Schaller uses both pro-MacArthur and pro-Roosevelt sources to show that some understanding had been made. Schaller looks at the Eichelberger Papers (MacArthur aid), Harold Ickes papers (aid to Roosevelt), and the President’s correspondence with MacArthur.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Historian Ronald Spector has made a similar interpretation, writing that at the meeting, MacArthur “held forth in vivid and dramatic style to the president on the moral and strategic reasons for proceeding with the conquest of Luzon.”⁹² William Manchester, who wrote a positive biography on MacArthur, noted the President was clearly affected by the General’s presentation. FDR, according to Manchester, ordered an aspirin after listening to MacArthur for three hours, and then FDR went on to say “In fact, give me another aspirin to take in the morning. In all my life nobody has ever talked to me the way MacArthur did.”⁹³ In the end, the General’s three hour presentation must have had its desired effect because Schaller quotes Roosevelt to declare on July 29, ““We are going to get the Philippines back,”” and ““without question General MacArthur will take part in it. Whether he goes direct or not, I can’t say.””⁹⁴

These statements by MacArthur, coupled with an analysis of the JCS strategic planning documents, one can see how a seemingly immutable strategic plan, was fundamentally altered by politics in mid 1944. In addition, many military historians believe that the invasion of the Philippines (and the corollary campaign in the Palau Islands) to be unnecessary and the poor tactics used in both places resulted in exceedingly high casualties.

Conclusion

After an intensive and exhaustive process, the JCS on June 30, 1944 finalized a 113 page document, JCS-476, that detailed their long-term strategic plan to defeat Japan. When the details of JCS-476 percolated down to MacArthur, he wasted little time in an attempt to reverse this strategic plan. Adroitly using his political and media contacts,

⁹² Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*, 418.

⁹³ William Manchester, *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur*, (Boston: Little Brown, 1978), 369.

⁹⁴ Schaller, *Douglas MacArthur*, 86.

MacArthur wrangled a hastily arranged meeting with Roosevelt a few weeks later. MacArthur's urgency can be seen by the fact his travel to Hawa'ii represented the first time the general had left his SWPA command. MacArthur, who had used his considerable political skills to escape serious reprimand over his involvement in the 1932 Bonus March debacle, now applied his political skills in Hawa'ii. He successfully maneuvered Roosevelt, who possessed his own but complementary agenda, to support MacArthur's Philippines campaign. When the President left Hawa'ii on July 26, it took only two weeks for the JCS to revise a strategy that had seemed concretely in place. The carefully thought out plans for Taiwan were suddenly scrapped, much to the Navy's chagrin. To add insult to injury, the JCS now ordered the Navy to support MacArthur's Philippine campaign.

With the Taiwan invasion off the table, CINPAC was unexpectedly ordered to invade the Bonin Islands in early 1945 to be quickly followed by an invasion of the Ryukyus. Civil Affairs teams based in Hawa'ii, which had been busy the past year accumulating information on Taiwan, were now ordered in August to prepare for the invasion of Okinawa, the first assault on a Japanese home island. As the next chapter will show, this sudden departure in strategy, coupled with a startling lack of information on the Ryukyus, would impede Civil Affairs' planning and affect how they would come to perceive the Ryukyuan people.

CHAPTER TWO IMAGINING “RYUKYU”: RESURRECTING
“RYUKYU”

In a Vacuum: The Navy’s Civil Affairs Planning for
Operation Iceberg

With the development of JCS-713/19 on September 9, 1944, the JCS unexpectedly cancelled the long-anticipated invasion of Taiwan and ordered Admiral Nimitz to prepare to take Iwo Jima in January and the Ryukyus in March of 1945. Since Iwo Jima and the Ryukyus fell under Nimitz’s command, the Navy civil affairs team (NCAT) suddenly became responsible for producing Civil Affair manuals for these targets. The formation of NCAT stemmed from the realization early in the war that there would be a future need for military personnel specifically trained in civil affairs in territories occupied by the U.S. army. In August of 1942, the U.S. Navy established such a school at Columbia University where commissioned officers, who mostly possessed advanced academic degrees, received specialized training in the establishment and administration of military government. In addition, the officers conducted area studies of the Pacific and East Asia region, with particular emphasis on Taiwan.⁹⁵ Upon graduation, many of these Civil Affairs officers were sent to Hawa’ii to begin planning future civil affairs operations.

During their schooling at Columbia, civil affairs specialists had been told that their primary research would be focused on Taiwan.⁹⁶ Consequently, upon arrival in Hawa’ii later in 1943, they immediately began the work to compile information on

⁹⁵ Area studies included political, economic, anthropological, sociological, and historical dimensions of a particular area. Although language studies was part of the curriculum, the dearth of native Japanese language speakers (due to Executive Order 9066) meant these officers had little exposure to Japanese.

⁹⁶ During World War II, Taiwan was more commonly referred to as Formosa. However, in keeping with current nomenclature, Taiwan will be used in lieu of Formosa.

Taiwan as they, like the JCS, believed the Taiwan operation was an absolute given.⁹⁷ In preparation for a 1945 spring invasion of Taiwan, between June and November 1944 the NCAT published *eleven* Civil Affairs Handbooks that detailed nearly every conceivable facet of Taiwan.⁹⁸ In addition, due to the primacy of the Central Pacific strategy, NCAT was responsible for gathering information on central Pacific islands such as the Mandated Islands and the Bonins, which led to the publication of ten Civil Affairs Handbooks (nine on the Mandated Islands and one on the Bonins-Iwo Jima). NCAT had even printed a *Handbook* for the Kuriles in November of 1943.⁹⁹ Yet, while civil affair handbooks had been published for every major island group in the Pacific, including the Kuriles, when NCAT received word in September 1944 of Operation Iceberg, they had nothing to show. As historian Arnold Fisch, Jr. has observed, the NCAT benefited “little from the area studies portion of the Navy’s school at Columbia...because during the time the school was in operation Taiwan—rather than Okinawa—was the perceived objective.” Therefore, Fisch argues, “it was Taiwan’s geography, institutions, and more that were

⁹⁷ This civil affairs team comprised of “200 army officials, 200 navy officials, 1,400 navy men, 100 army men, and 800 medical corpsman.” Kiyoshi Nakachi, *Ryukyu-U.S.-Japan Relations 1945-1972*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Hiyas Press, Inc., 1989), p. 25-26. Also see Arnold G. Fisch, Jr., *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands 1945-1950*, (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1988), p. 12-29.

⁹⁸ 1) *Civil Affairs Handbook, Taiwan (Formosa)* June 15, 1944; 2) *Civil Affairs Handbook, Taiwan (Formosa)-Economic Supplement* June 1, 1944; 3) *Civil Affairs Handbook, Japanese Administrative Organization in Taiwan (Formosa)* August 10, 1944; 4) *Civil Affairs Handbook, Taiwan (Formosa)* September 1, 1944; 5) *Civil Affairs Handbook, Taiwan (Formosa), Takako Province*, September 15, 1944; 6) *Civil Affairs Handbook, Taiwan (Formosa), Karenko and Taito Provinces*, October 1 1944; 7) *Civil Affairs Handbook, Taiwan (Formosa), Shinchiku Province*, October 15, 1944; 8) *Civil Affairs Handbook, Taiwan (Formosa), Taichu Province*, October 15, 1944; 9) *Civil Affairs Handbook, Taiwan (Formosa), Taihoku Province*, October 15, 1944; 10) *Civil Affairs Handbook, Taiwan (Formosa), Tainan Province*, October 15, 1944; 11) *Civil Affairs Guide, The Fishing Industry in Taiwan (Formosa)*, November 1, 1944

⁹⁹ The Kuriles, located north of Hokkiado and to the south of the Sakhalin Island, was not considered a central Pacific operation. U.S. strategist, however, had entertained the possibility of an invasion of Hokkaido that would have been preceded by taking the Kuriles.

scrutinized” with the unfortunate consequence that “relatively little attention was given to the Mandated Islands and virtually none to the Ryukyus.”¹⁰⁰

Since the JCS never designated the Ryukyus as a priority target, there was no compelling reason for the NCAT team to research, let alone publish, a handbook for the Ryukyus. Yet, even if they had been motivated to research these islands, they would have encountered a paucity of sources, a fact acknowledged by American strategists in late 1943 when their report stated “*information on these islands (Ryukyus) is extremely limited and unreliable.*”¹⁰¹ The lack of information posed a sufficient problem for the JCS, which had concluded that the islands were a low military priority and thus, they would consider an invasion only “if subsequent information indicates the feasibility of this operation.”¹⁰² Yet when the JCS decided on September 9, 1944 on the Ryukyu campaign, the situation had not improved. In stark contrast to the previous Central Pacific operations, the JCS decision for Operation Iceberg was made in an information vacuum. J.D. Morris, who served as Civil Affairs officer in Okinawa, wrote that an invasion of Okinawa “might just as well have been assaulting the planet Mars.”¹⁰³ The consequence of making this decision on such little information, according to Morris, can be seen in the JCS expectation that Okinawa could be secured in thirty days (L+30), but in reality the “fighting ended at L+82!”¹⁰⁴ Considering the situation NCAT found themselves in, one should not be surprised that a NCAT officer emphatically stated “from August of 1944 until August of 1946 I was a participant in the planning for and operation

¹⁰⁰ Arnold G. Fisch, Jr., *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands 1945—1950*, (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History United States Army, 1988), 13.

¹⁰¹ CPS-86/2, “Defeat of Japan within Twelve Months after the Defeat of Japan,” 25 October 1943. Emphasis in italics.

¹⁰² CPS-86/2, “Defeat of Japan within Twelve Months after the Defeat of Japan,” 25 October 1943.

¹⁰³ M. D. Morris, *Okinawa: A Tiger by the Tail*, (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1968), 26.

¹⁰⁴ Morris, *Okinawa*, 26.

of the military government of the Ryukyu Islands” and that “the whole experience was one of the most absorbing I have ever had.”¹⁰⁵

Adding to NCAT’s dilemma was the fact that they only had a few months to produce civil affairs manuals for Operation Iceberg. What information they did have on the Ryukyus came from two recent sources. The first, a book published in early 1944, entitled *The Pacific World*, was compiled and edited by “thirty men from eminent institutions of higher education and was doubtless the best information at hand.” Yet the authors were not able to fill even one full page on the Ryukyu archipelago—and not all of this was correct.¹⁰⁶ The second, and more substantial source, was a report published by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and published in the summer of 1944 entitled *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands: A Japanese Minority Group*, which by default became the starting point of the Navy’s Civil Affairs team learning curve on the Ryukyus.

The Genesis of America’s Imagined Ryukyu Nation

Since the spring of 1944, the OSS, independent of the Civil Affairs team, had been conducting ethnographical field research on the large immigrant Okinawan community in Hawa’ii.¹⁰⁷ Based on this research, the OSS published its first work, *The Okinawans: A Japanese Minority Group*, on March 16, followed shortly thereafter by

¹⁰⁵ John T. Caldwell, “Military Government Planning, Xth Army, Aug. 1944-Feb. 1945-First Tentative Draft.” February, 1945 in *Papers of James T. Watkins IV: Historical Records of Postwar Okinawa –the Beginnings of U.S. Occupancy Vol. 20*, (Ginowan City, Okinawa: Ryokurindo Shoten, publication date unknown), p. 134. Hereafter referred to as the *Watkins Collection*.

¹⁰⁶ Morris, *Okinawa*, 26.

¹⁰⁷ The OSS had the broad mandate of intelligence gathering in preparation for the future occupation of Japan. Since the Ryukyu Islands were identified as part of the home islands, the OSS included the Ryukyus into their analysis.

The Okinawans: Their Distinguishing Characteristics on March 27.¹⁰⁸ Two months later, these two initial efforts by the OSS culminated in a 147 page final product entitled *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands: A Japanese Minority Group* (this source never uses the Japanese spelling of “Ryukyu” but the Chinese spelling/reading of “Loo Choo”).¹⁰⁹

For NCAT, the OSS’s ethnographic findings on the Okinawan community of Hawaii must have come as a major surprise. In *War Without Mercy*, John Dower showed how American propaganda, uncritically accepted Japanese self-representation, depicted Japan as a monolithic enemy, “100 million hearts beating as one.” NCAT, however, soon discovered an important qualification to this stereotype of the enemy.

Spatially, the Japanese home islands included Okinawa Prefecture, and therefore, constituted enemy territory. Yet the OSS ethnographical study concluded that at best the people of Okinawa were seen by mainland Japanese as rustic cousins, and at worst as no better than the peoples of the colonial regions Japan controlled. “It is claimed that, at one time,” the OSS report stated, “the Japanese authorities would not allow the natives of the islands [Okinawa] to visit Korea as they did not wish the Koreans to know that there was *any question of disunity between the Japanese and the Okinawas.*”¹¹⁰

Given that the OSS research portrayed the people of Okinawa as not racially Japanese, we should consider the evidence they used to make this claim. Drawing on the

¹⁰⁸ *The Okinawans: a Japanese Minority Group* (summary statement), Okinawan Studies, No. 1 (Office of Strategic Services, Research and Analysis Branch, Honolulu Office, March 16, 1944). *The Okinawans: Their Distinguishing Characteristics*, Okinawan Studies, No. 2 (Office of Strategic Services, Research and Analysis Branch, Honolulu Office, March 27, 1944).

¹⁰⁹ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands: A Japanese Minority Group*, Okinawan Studies, No. 3 (Office of Strategic Services, Research and Analysis Branch, Honolulu, Hawaii, June 1, 1944). This document, along with several other interesting primary documents can be found in 沖縄県立図書館史料編集室 ed., 沖縄県史資料編2 *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands, etc.*, (南風原中絶 有限会社サン印刷, 1996)。

¹¹⁰ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 108. Emphasis added.

existing English-language literature, the first section of *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands* examined Ryukyuan history and foreign relations. Out of the seventeen pages covering this history, fourteen were devoted to Ryukyuan relations with China. It noted the long tributary relationship of the Ryukyu Kingdom with the various Chinese dynasties, the paramount influence of Chinese political authority in the “succession of the Loo Choo kings,” and the many generations of Ryukyu aristocratic youth who had obtained their education in China.¹¹¹ The Chinese cultural influence, however, is particularly interesting because it shows the depth of the American perception that Okinawa’s “cultural inheritance” as well as its assumed identity, “can be traced back to China,” rather than Japan.¹¹² The “long-continued and close association with China,” the report continued, led Okinawa to view the Chinese as a “‘father’ and the very general feeling that China never really was a foreign country.” In fact, the report asserted, that despite the long and close relationship between the Korean and Chinese civilizations, “the Koreans are no nearer the Chinese than are the Okinawans.”¹¹³

While stressing the “natural” affinity the Ryukyus had for China, the report simultaneously found the exact opposite relationship with Japan. Historically, Japan had only a marginal influence upon the Ryukyus. Even when the Ryukyu Kingdom was subjugated by Satsuma in the early 17th century, the Ryukyuans still orientated its identity toward China, as evidenced by the fact “‘the King (of the Okinawas) builds all his palaces and his doors toward the west for China is to the west of Loochoo (Ryukyu) and in this way he shows his obedience and fidelity.’”¹¹⁴ Although Satsuma reigned over the

¹¹¹ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 75-82.

¹¹² *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 80.

¹¹³ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 80.

¹¹⁴ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 69-70.

Ryukyus for the next two-hundred and fifty years, the islands were never assimilated into Japan's cultural orbit. In fact, the report noted that "the Loo Chooans were in fact carriers of and teachers of Chinese culture *to the more primitive Japanese.*"¹¹⁵ Even when Meiji Japan forcibly brought the islands under Japan's control, which "theoretically should have ended all the claims of China to any role in the islands," the report found that "both the king (King Sho Tai) and the people (of the Ryukyu Kingdom) resisted in every way in their power the idea of a single sovereignty (Meiji Japan's)."¹¹⁶

This section concluded that "this Chinese background undoubtedly has played a considerable part in accenting the Japanese feeling of the 'foreignness' of the Okinawas."¹¹⁷ Consequently, despite the status of the Ryukyus as a prefecture since the 1870s, "it was not until 1920 that Okinawa became in every respect like the other prefectures in Japan....with this, her entity *as a nation* comes to an end."¹¹⁸ Given that the OSS team relied almost exclusively upon English-language and Chinese accounts, one should not be surprised at the reports emphasis on the Ryukyuan-Chinese relationship while casting doubt on the legitimacy of Okinawa an integral part of Japan.¹¹⁹ It is unclear, however, how the OSS found and used their sources. Did they, once they believed the Ryukyus were not a natural part of Japan, selectively choose material to reinforce that perception? Or, was their Chinese-Ryukyuan emphasis based on the sources they had, as is suggested by their assertion that "no similar source material is available covering the Japanese relations with the islands."¹²⁰ Regardless of the

¹¹⁵ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 80. (Emphasis added).

¹¹⁶ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 61.

¹¹⁷ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 82.

¹¹⁸ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 68. (Emphasis added).

¹¹⁹ One of the primary sources they used extensively was Charles Leavenworth's 1905 work, *The Loochoo Islands*.

OSS's problematic historical methodology, their perceptions of Ryukyuan history created its own reality.¹²¹

“The Okinawas in Hawaii,” the second section of *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, reinforced this view by asserting that the immigrant Okinawan group on Hawa’ii were distinct from the Japanese immigrants. Using information derived from first-hand ethnographic studies/surveys of the Hawa’iiian-Okinawan immigrants, this section stressed the alienation of the Okinawans from the Japanese immigrant in Hawa’ii.

The ethnographers found that language differences created a de facto segregated environment. Surprised at the linguistic differences, the report noted the language spoken by the Okinawan immigrants was unintelligible to Japanese (Japanese has five vowels-a, i, u, e, o where as Ryukyuan has only three vowels a, i, u coupled with different pronunciation of Chinese characters).¹²² Reinforcing the historical perspective in the first section, the ethnographers related the language differences to the fact that the first wave of Okinawan immigrants were not well versed in Japanese since they had left Okinawa before Japan’s assimilation/language program had taken root.¹²³ The study even noted that despite “the fact that most of them now speak standard Japanese,” the fact that Okinawans had their own language to communicate in “has undoubtedly been a persistent factor and certainly a primary reason for Okinawas keeping to themselves.”¹²⁴

¹²⁰ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 22-23.

¹²¹ The report stated it could

¹²² *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 93. In addition, the Ryukyuan language is not a monolithic language as there are multiple dialects, often mutually unintelligible.

¹²³ The language difference posed a fundamental problem to Japan’s assertion that Okinawa was a natural and integral part of Japan’s *kokutai*. To combat this problem, much of Japan’s administrative budget for Okinawa prefecture was earmarked for education in order to socialize the people of Okinawa into loyal imperial subjects.

¹²⁴ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 99.

Okinawan surnames added to their social distance from the Japanese as their pronunciation of Chinese characters differed from common Japanese pronunciations.¹²⁵ The name differences allowed G-2 to calculate the number of Okinawans serving as volunteers at the “military intelligence service language school” in Camp Savage, Minnesota. Out of the 600 Japanese from Hawaii at Camp Savage, “94, or 15.6% appear to be Okinawas as determined by their names.”¹²⁶ Interestingly, the report noted that proportionately there were a greater number of language volunteers who were Okinawan than Japanese and that, intellectually, the Loo Chooans hold their own with the other group.” The researchers also found that some Okinawans, upon arrival in Hawa’ii, changed the readings of their surname “as a means of partial disguise of [their] Okinawan origins.” For example, an Okinawan name such as “Minoru Tamaei changed to Midori (a more Japanese name) Tamaye and Toshiko Kanagusuku to Toshiko Kaneshiro. Usha Higa becomes Usha Ige. Both last names are Okinawan but the latter, Ige, is very much less recognizable as such than Higa which is unmistakable.”¹²⁷

Occupation status in Hawa’ii also distinguished Okinawans from Japanese. Although most immigrants from Okinawa, like those from Japan, came to work in the sugar and pineapple plantations, over time, Okinawans came to dominate the small café businesses as “eighty to ninety percent.....are owned and run by Okinawas.”¹²⁸ The

¹²⁵ surnames such as Higa, Shimabukuro, Hiyane, Tobaru, Takara, Inamine, etc., would have instantly denoted their Okinawan origins.

¹²⁶ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 92. Although the report made no mention of their findings at Camp Savage, the realization that the Okinawan volunteers could speak in two languages became a critical factor during the Battle of Okinawa. G-2 specifically recruited Okinawan-Americans to not only help communicate with the Ryukyuan people, but used them in a strategic manner. Noting that Japanese could not understand the Okinawan language, G-2 used Okinawan-American soldiers to talk to the people in the Okinawan language, encouraging them to surrender and to provide any intelligence on Japanese military positions.

¹²⁷ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 98.

¹²⁸ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 91.

ethnographic study noted that this “aggressive spirit of the people [Okinawans] which resulted in their financial improvement began about 1932 and was accompanied , in many instances, by a self-centered attitude toward all who were not of their *ken* (prefecture).” Thus, in some instances of economic success, Okinawans distanced themselves from the Japanese. In turn, “Japanese criticism increased proportion *to the Okinawan feeling of independence.*”¹²⁹

Yet it was more frequent that Okinawans encountered disdain because they did jobs that Japanese considered too dirty or spiritually impure such as hog farming and butchery. The study noted that “in the internment camp at Poston on the Colorado River it was very difficult to find anyone who was willing to run the piggery or to butcher. There were no volunteers as every Japanese was afraid, if he offered himself for this kind of job, he would be taken for an Okinawa or Eta.”¹³⁰ One Okinawan informant noted that their minority status meant “that the ratio of the mass was always to my disadvantage and I was in the environment in which the people took pride in ridiculing individuals whom they consider inferior.”¹³¹ Another informant, a student, stated that people from Okinawa “differs in status from the other Japanese and until recently did not use the Japanese language.” The student further asserted that ‘there is an inward prejudice towards them shared by those from other prefectures. They do not enjoy full sympathy of the Japanese proper and there is little or no intermarriage.’¹³²

This section of the report concluded by noting the various ways this oppressed minority group dealt with the discriminatory climate. One response was to “congregate

¹²⁹ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 91. (Emphasis added)

¹³⁰ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 91.

¹³¹ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 90.

¹³² *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 100.

as a minority group.....a protective mechanism to meet the discrimination which they find expressed against them in so many ways by the Japanese proper.”¹³³ For example, the Okinawan immigrants were more likely to convert to Christianity because it served as “another means of getting away from the oriental background of those of their own nationality.”¹³⁴ In large groups, they maintained economic and social cohesion as they formed their own clubs/shops such as a “butcher shop, fish-market, vegetable stands, grocery stores, doctors, and Community Hall.”¹³⁵ In the end, “there seems little doubt but what the general cliquishness, some types of which have been pointed out, *has been a strong factor in keeping alive the schism between the Okinawas and the other Japanese.*”¹³⁶

Given the findings in the first two sections, not surprisingly the third section was entitled “Cleavages.” The subtitles included “Japanese Antipathy for Okinawans,” “Okinawan Antipathy for Japanese,” “Okinawas not Acceptable Socially,” and “Cause of Prejudice in Japan,” which clearly speak to how the report viewed the Okinawan immigrant experience as one replete with discrimination.

The entries in the third showed the degree of antipathy each possessed for the other stating that the “intolerance of the Japanese and the Okinawas toward each is

¹³³ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 91.

¹³⁴ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 100.

¹³⁵ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 100.

¹³⁶ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 101. (Emphasis added) The report even found that the Hawa’ii-Okinawan community had its own political organizations, though they were far from unified. Formal organizations such as “Hawaii Okinawa Doshi-kai (Okinawa Comrade Organization)” and “Hawaii Okinawa Kenjin Kai (Okinawa Association of Okinawas in Hawaii)” were formed in the early 1920s as mutual-support associations. Okinawans had organized two political organizations in Hawa’ii. One of these organizations was communist and even “published a paper, *Shin Jidai* (New Era).” The other political group was “more conservative” and also published a paper called *Yoyen Jiho* (*Ocean Garden News*).

reciprocal” and that there is mutual agreement for the “desire of separateness.”¹³⁷ The study went on to document Japanese antipathy towards Okinawans. It stated whether it was Japan, Hawaii, or in Latin America, the Japanese aversion to Okinawans was the same because they “regard the Okinawas as dirty, impolite and uncultured and make no attempt to disguise this feeling.”¹³⁸ Seemingly, this attitude was prevalent regardless of social status. For example, in Hawa’ii, when a teacher at a plantation school asked students to signify if they were Japanese, the Japanese students protested when the Okinawans students also replied in the affirmative. The depth of Japanese prejudice went as far to lump Okinawans in same category as the untouchable class (prewar term is *eta* and the postwar term is *burakumin*). The same epithets, such as *chorinbo* in Kyushu or *yotsu* in Osaka, were used for both Okinawans and the untouchables.¹³⁹

Okinawans harbored similar feelings for the Japanese even if their feelings “seldom find any overt expression.” One reason for their dislike of the Japanese, the report asserted, stems from the historical allegiance to China, which had to “give way, as the result of conquest, to a dubious and equivocal relationship to Japan and one which was never unanimously accepted by the southern islanders.”¹⁴⁰ Okinawan resistance to Japanese suzerainty ran deep enough where it was reported that Okinawans would allow a *habu*, a venomous pit viper found throughout the islands, “to bite their fingers or they would cut off their trigger finger rather than serve in the army of their overlords.” In the Philippines, which also possessed a large group of Okinawan immigrants, the researchers

¹³⁷ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 101.

¹³⁸ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 104.

¹³⁹ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 104-105. “Yotsu,” which means four, “refers to the four legs of an animal.” The study did not explain what is meant by “chorinbo.” Other slurs include “not a man,” “four fingers,” and “one less.”

¹⁴⁰ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 106.

interviewed a knowledgeable source who affirmed the dislike of the Japanese, and added “the Okinawas are not very loyal to them (Japanese)” and thus, the Japanese could not trust the “Okinawans too much if the latter thought they could gain an advantage by playing up to the Americans.” One informant, a Christian missionary on Hawa’ii, told the Civil Affairs team that ““Okinawans do not hesitate to oppose the Japanese....they have a strong feeling of antagonism and hatred of anything Japanese.””¹⁴¹ An unnamed source in South America reinforced the assessment of the missionary that “beyond a doubt that every one harbors a deep though latent hatred for the Japanese.”

The study continued by examining several contradictory dimensions of Okinawans’ psychological condition. On the supposed “inferiority complex,” the study interviewed a plantation owner who made the observation that ““the Okinawas have never felt inferior to the Japanese, rather the Japanese felt the Okinawas were inferior to them.”” Despite the plantation owner’s claim that Okinawans did not possess an inferiority complex, the study found consistent evidence among Okinawans themselves of a “constant effort made toward denying or belittling any difference in culture between themselves and their northern neighbors.”¹⁴² A Japanese pastor in Hawa’ii, with a congregation dominated by Okinawans, reported that he never heard the word “Okinawa” mentioned.¹⁴³ Hence, the study noted that Okinawans, when around Japanese people, tended to be self-conscious and submissive. Conversely, the study found a superiority complex among Okinawans, especially those whose origins came from former aristocratic or elite status. This complex was rooted in Okinawa’s past history when the Ryukyu Kingdom existed as an independent entity that possessed its own king for over 700 years.

¹⁴¹ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 108.

¹⁴² *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 108.

¹⁴³ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 116.

The study succinctly noted that “*Okinawa is thus the only prefecture of Japan which has had loyalty to a king other than to the ‘descendant of the Sun Goddess’.*”¹⁴⁴ Further pride in their heritage was reflected when two Okinawan boys, working “in one government office since the war....were reprimanded for speaking Japanese to each other. They replied, ‘That isn’t Japanese, it’s Okinawan.’”¹⁴⁵

The section, “Cleavages,” concluded by asserting an unbridgeable “social distance” between the Okinawans and the Japanese. Whether this “social distance” was as great as the study indicated was irrelevant because the American planners perceived this “social distance” to be real. The summary began by quoting Henry Schwartz’s 1908 book, *In Togo’s Country: Some Studies in Satsuma and other little known Part of Japan*. “With all the improvements Japan has introduced, Loo Choo is *not yet Japan*, and the differences in the customs and habits of the two peoples is quite as marked as the geological and geographical differences of the two countries.” The OSS report, noting that little had changed from the time of Schwartz’s account, concluded that “the Okinawas are not Japanese *either* in their own island or in their new homelands....” Given the fact that regardless of the locale, Okinawans have consistently encountered Japanese prejudice, “the idea of separateness on the part of these southern islanders is increasing.”¹⁴⁶

Inevitably, the report raised the possibility that the people of Okinawa would desire independence, and hence would view American troops as liberators. For example, they found an Okinawan plantation worker who had “hoped that Okinawa would be returned to the Okinawas ‘so we can set up our own government.’” An Okinawan pastor

¹⁴⁴ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 111. (Emphasis added).

¹⁴⁵ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 111. (Emphasis added).

¹⁴⁶ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 117. (Emphasis added).

reinforced the worker's sentiment in stating that "he wanted to assist in every way possible the Allied conquest of the Loo Choo Islands, adding that for years the Japanese had oppressed the people of the land of his birth and he looked forward to the time when Okinawa would be free from Japanese rule." Another Okinawan, who had extensive experience with the Okinawa diaspora, reported "the Okinawas were treated poorly by them and that the wage scale and conditions of the southern islands were sub-standard so far as Japan proper is concerned." ¹⁴⁷

For the researchers, the pronounced cleavage between Okinawans and Japanese was quite clear. The dominant view that "Jap is a Jap" became displaced by a more nuanced view as the researchers realized that "we can speak of Okinawas as being not only a physical minority but a linguistic and ethnic one."¹⁴⁸ Among Americans, however, this notion of a heterogeneous Japan represented a minority view. "Unfortunately," the researchers noted, "there has been little or no examination of the subject.....outside of a very few statements in scientific publications there has been no discussion in print of the cleavage or, if you will, the '*social distance*' between the Japanese and the Okinawas and the implication of this split."¹⁴⁹

The Origin of Imagining Ryukyuan Independence

Accordingly, the OSS report posed a fundamental question: "Could this rift between the Okinawas and the Japanese be made use of in the present conflict?" In answering this question, the authors evaluated the potential of the various social strata in Okinawan society. First, no support would come from those Okinawans who had gone to

¹⁴⁷ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 120 and 122.

¹⁴⁸ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 103. It was also claimed one could distinguish the two groups based on the manner of walking. Japanese walk with their toes pointed in whereas Okinawans walk with toes pointed outward.

¹⁴⁹ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 102. (Emphasis added)

Japan for their education as they were indoctrinated in the “glorious banner of the Rising Sun of Japan.” The second class considered, the former Ryukyuan aristocratic class referred to as the *shi* class, although small in number, took great pride in not being Japanese, and their “association with China....is the important factor in their thinking.” For the farmers, their immense poverty and lack of education meant “they were completely ignorant of the history of the islands and had little knowledge even of Japan,” and, therefore, would be of little immediate use. The greatest potential existed in the urban Okinawan population (Naha and Shuri) because they had the greatest experience with the prejudicial behavior of the Japanese and thus harbored “enmity and hatred toward the Japanese....” Repeated taunts by Japanese that Okinawans were not Japanese should have made it easy “to convince the Loo Chooans” they were “not Japanese’ and thus not responsible for them [the Japanese] and what they did at Pearl Harbor.” The authors, having answered their rhetorical question, concluded that based on all of the evidence, “among many of the people,” there is “a residue of disloyalty and dislike if not enmity toward their Naichi masters and ‘superiors.’”¹⁵⁰

The study offered several practical as well as outlandish proposals to exploit this identity gap. First, psychological operations could be used as a “softening process” where the Okinawans would be reminded of their being “down-trodden” by the Japanese. More importantly, there was real potential in “playing on the theme of the identity of their group in contrast to the Japanese as a whole....” Encouraging the Okinawans to rise up “might be fertilized by encouragement and suggestion until it yielded perhaps no break but an acquiescence with the design of an enemy attempting to enter their colony of their country.” The report made it clear that the use of psychological warfare in the

¹⁵⁰ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 122 It is also worth point out that instead of using the term “Okinawas” or “Okinawan”, the term “Loo Chooan” was used. In addition, they also used the term “Naichi” instead of “Japanese” The significance of these changes in nomenclature will be discussed later in the chapter.

upcoming Okinawa campaign had potential. For instance, each group possessed its “own physical type, its own history, its own dynasties, mores and attitudes.” Secondly, the Americans wanted to pursue the recruitment of Okinawans as operatives and agents for the U.S., in part because they perceived that the loyalty of Okinawans to their adopted country, the U.S., was higher than that of the Japanese. Moreover, Okinawan laborers could be used in a variety of ways because Okinawans have demonstrated already in Hawa’ii to be “alert mentally and physically, and are considered excellent labors...they are energetic and ambitious in their endeavors to get ahead financially and socially, and seem willing to devote themselves to new undertakings.” For the elite class, appealing to their Ryukyuan heritage would allow a latent identity to emerge and thus, make them useful in “military administration and in post-war stabilization” of Okinawa. Without a doubt, the Okinawans were natural allies who could be used “as our agent in the prosecution of the war.”¹⁵¹

The third proposal, which was the most audacious of the three, centered on promoting a transnational “Okinawan Movement.” Although the sources and information used to inform *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands* came from the ethnographic fieldwork on the Okinawan community in Hawa’ii, another important source was an OSS (Research and Analysis Branch #791) report on the numerous Okinawan enclaves in Latin America. This report floated the idea of an “Okinawan Movement” to undermine Japanese communities in Latin America. Japanese emigration to South America was extensive and a large proportion emanated from Okinawa, especially Peru where sixty percent were Okinawan. Okinawans in South America, like elsewhere, experienced extreme disdain from their fellow Japanese immigrants. As a result, the OSS report believed that although “the land of Loo Choo is probably too small

¹⁵¹ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 122-123.

and its people too few to make a 'Free Loo Choo' movement feasible....with the proper encouragement, the Okinawans could be persuaded to free themselves from Japanese control in Latin America." The report believed the best chance for such a movement would be in Peru. It suggested the following procedure, with particular emphasis on enhancing Okinawan identity (quoted in full):¹⁵²

1. A publicity campaign could remind the Okinawans of the past glories of their race, of *Loo Choo's traditional role as the bearer of Chinese civilization to heathen Japan*, and of the abuses its peoples have suffered at the hands of the Japanese. Similarly, the Peruvian people could be educated to this difference between Japanese and Okinawas.

2. If all Japanese citizens would be registered, indicating their place or origin, Okinawans would be known to the Peruvian Government. There is no information as to the local place of origin in Peru immigration records.

3. As the Okinawans became conscious of their individuality, slight legal advantages might be accorded to them and the people encouraged to recognize their special status.

4. Finally, an Okinawan movement could be organized and assisted.

This procedure could not only induce Okinawans to rebel, it could also lead other oppressed Asians to rise up in sympathy and overthrow Japanese rule.

Finally, the image of Okinawa as distinct political entity also led the authors of the OSS report, in an appendix, to ponder the future status of the Okinawan Islands. Noting that the study had paid considerable attention to the long relationship between

¹⁵² *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands, Appendix I* "A South American 'Okinawan Movement,'" 124-125.

China and the Ryukyu Kingdom, the Americans saw some justification in China's territorial claim for the islands. Yet, they also quoted *S.R. Chow's 1942 article*, "The Pacific after the War," that argued "at least the natives of the island should be given an opportunity to exercise the right of self-determination."¹⁵³ In terms of what role the U.S. should play in determining the future of the islands, they ambiguously stated that the United States should follow the "precedent taken by the State Department starting with Perry's treaty of 1854 and the diplomatic exchanges which reached a climax in General Grant's visit in 1879." Last, the researchers somewhat cryptically argued that exploiting the social distance between Japan and the Ryukyus would be good policy for the U.S. to pursue. It stated that Okinawan "abilities along certain lines might also be utilized so that these people could play an important role and one quite different from that of the Japanese proper in any plans for reconstruction."¹⁵⁴ Although the report failed to specify what role Okinawans could play, the wording nevertheless suggested future American policy could exploit the identity gap between Okinawa and Japan.

Civil Affairs Team Approach to the Handbook

Given that such little information existed on the Ryukyus, the OSS findings in *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands* certainly left an indelible impression upon NCAT. While the OSS report made a compelling argument that the Okinawans were not Japanese, and hence, should not be seen as the enemy, NCAT viewed aspects of the report critically. Although invaluable as a source of information, the OSS report represented only one view. In addition, it would seem likely that NCAT would have noticed OSS's sources were problematic. Given their task of creating a Civil Affairs

¹⁵³ *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands*, 127. Chow's article, however, makes no explicit mention of the Ryukyus. Instead, he discusses in general any territories that had fallen under Japanese control and whether China had any legitimate claim of sovereignty to Japanese possessions.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Handbook, they were not likely to base the handbook on an insightful and detailed, but still, single source. The team, after spending an exhaustive year researching and publishing handbooks for Taiwan and the Mandated Islands, had enough experience to realize there were still untapped sources of detailed information on the Ryukyus.

Although NCAT faced a steep learning curve on the Ryukyus, they managed to publish a Civil Affairs Handbook for the Ryukyus in only ten weeks.¹⁵⁵ At the core of NCAT were three noted professors of anthropology from Yale University, George Murdock, Clellan S. Ford and John W. M. Whiting, who brought with them some “knowledge” about Okinawa, and two professors of political science, John Caldwell and James T. Watkins. Not unexpectedly, this team failed to have a consensus view or policy toward Okinawa as Caldwell and Watkin conflicted with Murdock and his team.

George Murdock, the lead Yale anthropologist, was famous for creating the Cross-Cultural Survey or Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) at Yale in the 1930s. His colleagues on the HRAF project, Ford and Whiting, also joined Murdock in Hawa’ii to formulate the military government’s plans for Okinawa. A massive and ambitious project, Murdock had used the HRAF system in the late 1930s “to assemble, translate, and classify maximum information on selected peoples and cultures.” Hence, when the U.S. entered the war in 1941, U.S. military intelligence tapped Murdock’s team to apply the HRAF system toward the Japanese Mandated Islands.¹⁵⁶ In theory Murdock’s anthropological lineage (Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner) placed him at odds with the anthropological school (national-character studies or scientific humanism) of Franz Boaz and his famous protégé, Ruth Benedict.

¹⁵⁵ The decision to invade the Ryukyus did not become official until the first week of September and the Handbook was published in mid November. However, it was clear as early as the second week of August that the Taiwan operation had been scrapped and Iwo Jima and Okinawa as the new targets. Regardless, the ability to produce a Handbook when little information existed is quite remarkable.

¹⁵⁶ Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 14.

Yet, Murdock's HRAF system and the national-character studies school, perhaps best represented by Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* (1934) and *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (1946), had much in common. First, both professed to be "scientific humanism," thus rational, systematic, and objective. Second, neither school held that the study and categorizing of the Other required actual field work nor was it necessary to possess language or cultural skills of the particular group(s) being objectified. Third, as John W. Dower has stated with regards to Benedict's national-character work, "scientific humanism" was "shaped by the war circumstances in which they developed, with the subject peoples being studies from a distance and the research itself being explicitly designed for use in psychological warfare."¹⁵⁷

Murdock, and the rest of the civil affairs team's, image of Okinawa was informed by problematic scientific assumptions and methodology. Murdock's ethnography, moreover, was far from neutral or objective. Subtly yet profoundly expressed was the assumption of an inferior Other and superior Self.¹⁵⁸ This sense of innate racial and cultural superiority among the civil affairs team affected their research and conclusions as *Handbook's* paternalistic and patronizing tone illustrated.

The Civil Affairs Handbook: The Ryukyu (Loochoo)
Islands: the Next Evolution in Imagining Ryukyu

In an ideal environment, the civil affairs team acknowledged that ideally they would have produced "several types of civil affairs publications for the guidance and assistance of naval personnel in carrying out their responsibilities in occupied areas."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 119.

¹⁵⁸ This internalization was especially pronounced in Murdock, and less so in Caldwell and Watkins, as the next chapter will show.

¹⁵⁹ *Civil Affairs Handbook: Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands*. The information on the types of civil affairs publications was listed on the third page of the *Handbook*, however, that particular page was not numbered.

Typically, civil affairs publications included “Studies”, which focused on theories and practices of military government, and “Manuals” that established the “basic principles, procedures, and methods of dealing with civil affairs” for military personnel. All “Manuals” designed for a particular region were patterned after the *Army-Navy Manual of Military Government and Civil Affairs*. “Guides”, a third genre, dealt with the “what if” scenarios that might emerge in the operations of civil affairs. Such “Guides,” however, were not to be considered official policy. The last category was “Handbooks” that contained the “factual studies of general information pertaining to civil affairs in specific areas.”¹⁶⁰ In reality, NCAT only had time to produce one civil affairs publication for the entire archipelago: a handbook.

Despite the time restriction, NCAT compiled a highly detailed 334 paged *Civil Affairs Handbook: Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands OPNAV 13-31*, published in mid-November. The *Handbook* largely reflected the conclusions reached in the earlier OSS report, *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands: A Japanese Minority Group*, namely, that the Ryukyu Islands and its people were not innately part of Japan. The *Handbook*, however, differed from the OSS report in how it came to this conclusion. While the OSS report identified the Ryukyuan as an oppressed minority group in need of American benevolence and liberation, the *Handbook* conveyed an image of the Ryukyuan as an inferior people that required structured and disciplined American guidance, akin to the imperialistic notion of the “white man’s burden.” Thus, both the OSS report and the *Handbook* created an imagined Ryukyuan community, but the former work offered a positive depiction whereas the *Handbook* viewed the Ryukyuan in a condescending manner, if not actually contemptuous at times.

¹⁶⁰ *Civil Affairs Handbook: Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands*. The information on the types of civil affairs publications was listed on the third page of the *Handbook*, however, that particular page was not numbered.

The difference largely derived from the sources that informed each research project. The OSS report primarily used material from Chinese-written sources (English translations) and ethnographic studies of Okinawan communities in Hawa'ii and in Latin America. The research that informed the OSS report involved considerable ethnographic fieldwork among overseas Okinawans and accorded greater agency to the Okinawans. The *Handbook's* sources, however, were mostly Japanese as "more than 95 per cent of the information" derived from recent Japanese publications. Moreover, whereas the OSS report relied on English based sources, NCAT noted in the *Handbook's* "Preface" that "the Japanese sources have proved *unexpectedly rich and satisfactory*," while the European language sources "have proved of little assistance, being for the most part either out of date or unreliable."¹⁶¹

The historical maxim that sources impose their own form of logic, therefore, can be readily seen in the *Handbook's* heavy reliance on Japanese source material. One conspicuous difference between the OSS report and the *Handbook's* use of sources can be seen in the depiction of Ryukyuan history. Unlike the OSS report, the *Handbook* devoted only two pages to history, whereas the OSS report largely concentrated on the Ryukyu Kingdom and the historical relations with China, topics which warranted only two small paragraphs in the *Handbook*. The majority of the historical section of the *Handbook* discussed Japanese sovereignty over the Ryukyus in a matter-of-fact manner and made no mention of either Ryukyuan independence or estrangement between the Ryukyus and Japan. During the Meiji era, the *Handbook* reported, Japan moved to "incorporate the Ryukyu Islands as an integral part of their own state."¹⁶² In fact, the

¹⁶¹ Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, *Civil Affairs Handbook: Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands OPNAV 13-31*, (Washington D. C.: Navy Department, November 15, 1944). (Emphasis added) Oddly, the OSS report, which was one of the few research reports available in English, was not listed in the *Handbook's* bibliography.

¹⁶² *Civil Affairs Handbook Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands*, 39-41.

Handbook, reflecting the bias of the Japanese sources, stated “tranquility and prosperity reigned in the Ryukyu Islands throughout most of this period.”

The “unexpectedly” useful Japanese sources (194 were cited in the *Handbook*’s bibliography) can be divided into three categories. Official Japanese government publications, such as the Ministry of Communications’ “Annual Report of the Direction General of Postal Money Orders and Saving Banks for the Fiscal Year 1932-33,” constituted one area of information, and accounted for approximately 70 bibliographical citations, or about one-third of the sources consulted. A second category of sources can be classified as scientific-technical reports from mostly academic journals that focused on a variety of topics such as the fishery industry, medical conditions, and geography. Examples included Ôhama Nobutaka’s 1940-41 article *Okinawaken Ishigakijima ni okeru kôchishô ni tsuite*, Tatekawa Takuitsu’s 1932 article *Okinawa ni okeru kaimen yôshoku ni tsuite*, and Kinoshita Kameki *Ryukyu to chigaku jakkan*.¹⁶³ A third category can be grouped as sociological and anthropological perspectives on Okinawa and/or the Ryukyu Islands. These ethnographical accounts, approximately 60 citations, mostly came from academic/scientific journals written by mainland Japanese academics during the 1920s and 30s. Examples from this third category included: Torii Ryuso’s 1904 article *Okinawajin no hifu no iro ni tsuite*, Uchida Sue *Ryukyujin no jistujô seikatsu* (1905), Matsuta Shogi’s *Ryukyujin no taishitsu* (1938), and Miyajima K.’s comparison of Ryukyuan with the Ainu in *Ryukyujin no irezumi to Ainu no irezumi* (1893).¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Respectively translated as: *Regarding the Hookworm Parasite on Ishigaki Island in Okinawa Prefecture, Regarding the Cultivation of Sponges in Okinawa, and Some Geographical Observations of the Ryukyu Islands*.

¹⁶⁴ Translated respectively: *On the Skin Color of the People of Okinawa, Actual Conditions of Everyday Life of the People of the Ryukyus, Physical Characteristics of the Ryukyuan People, The Tattoo’s of the Ryukyuan and Ainu People*.

Compared to the OSS's ethnographic methodology, Murdock's team preferred sources from scientific journals or official institutions. The OSS report, as we have seen, evidenced a partisan perspective and was prone to wishful speculation. The *Handbook's* sources, however, upon closer scrutiny, were equally problematic as the encyclopedic recording of detailed factual information conveyed its own bias.

This encyclopedia approach can be seen in the many topics listed in the "Table of Contents". In the section titled "Fauna," the *Handbook* matter-of-factly states "Except for domesticated horses, dogs, pigs, and cattle, the only large animals are the deer and the wild pig; rats and mice are common; reptiles include five species of deadly venomous snakes; mosquitoes, lice, mites, and other insects abound; among the many species of fish are some dangerous to man." Furthermore, out of the six pages devoted to this subject of "Fauna," four pages listed every single species of marine life in the Ryukyus.¹⁶⁵ The heavily "factual" approach may have impressed readers that all of the *Handbook's* information was "objective." However, when the *Handbook* broached more sociological topics, the reader encountered broad, unsupported generalizations. For example, one finds in the section on "Family Training" the assertion that "though pampered when very young, children are soon taught to conform to rigid convention" and that Okinawan boys learn "to suppress any outward manifestation of emotion, and to accept all situations with stoical composure."¹⁶⁶

Second, the *Handbook* portrayed the Ryukyus culturally, socially, and racially as semi-civilized, inferior and a step below of mainland Japan. In the section "Attitudes and Values," the Okinawan people were seen as "mild-mannered, courteous, and subservient to authority, the islands do not value orderliness and cleanliness to the same extent as the

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., VI.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 155.

Japanese.” Although the *Handbook* pointed out that the characterization of Okinawan personality traits primarily came from Japanese sources, the *Handbook* nevertheless reified the Japanese view by stating “it is clear that the islanders have always appeared mild-mannered and courteous to outsiders and unquestionably they are generally subservient to authority.”¹⁶⁷ Other examples of “primitive” Okinawan habits were the assertions that many of the people, especially the lower-classes, go barefoot and that “nudity and excretion do not ordinarily occasion embarrassment,” and that most believed illnesses to be caused by supernatural forces.¹⁶⁸ As in most colonial images of “natives,” the Okinawans, especially men, were depicted as lazy. Specifically, “the men in the archipelago are extremely indolent and averse to practically all kinds of labor except agriculture and fishing.” Okinawan women, on the other hand, were “extraordinarily diligent and accustomed to performing the major portion of the work.” The *Handbook* seemingly noted a contradiction in that the “lazy” Okinawan men were heavily recruited by Japanese industries to work in mainland Japan or in other colonial regions controlled by Japan. The *Handbook*, however, explained there was no contradiction as “lazy” Okinawan men, were “capable of sustained and industrious effort when stimulated by adequate supervision.”¹⁶⁹

The *Handbook* attributed the inferiority of the Okinawan Ryukyuan people to racial inferiority. The *Handbook* made it clear that the Japanese did not regard the Okinawans as “their racial equals” and that the Okinawans were at best viewed as “poor cousins from the country, with peculiar rustic ways of their own.” Although acknowledging that the Okinawan people shared some racial similarities with the

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 68.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., VI, VII.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 255. Emphasis added.

Japanese, it also claimed that elements of Ainu racial characteristics were prominent among the Okinawan people. Since the Ainu were considered by the Japanese to be the “primitive” Other, the *Handbook* implied that in the racial hierarchy Okinawan existed somewhere between the Ainu and the Japanese.

In the *Handbook*, spoken language also marked Okinawan backwardness. The *Handbook* noted that standard Japanese had been taught in the Ryukyus for fifty years; however, “many of the inhabitants....still speak the *aboriginal language* which is commonly called Luchuan.” Moreover, any civilization that the Okinawan people acquired came from other “superior” races as the “Chinese,” who “have made some contribution to the population of the Ryukyus, and the higher business, professional, and administrative positions,” the *Handbook* noted, were “filled in large measure by *true Japanese*.”¹⁷⁰ The *Handbook* consistently conveyed a racist view, albeit subtle, that the Okinawans were innately inferior and only through the intervention of Japan had any progress been made in the islands.

The theme of backwardness permeated the sections on the economy and infrastructure, which juxtaposed the “primitive” practices of traditional Okinawan industries and modern Japanese techniques. The discussion of the processing of sugar cane is a good example. The *Handbook* noted that sugar cane was processed by local mills and there were “10,000 such primitive mills” in the Ryukyus. The *Handbook* noted the existence of a few modern sugar refineries, which were the result of Japanese investment and initiative.¹⁷¹ In describing timber resources, the *Handbook* strongly implied that the Okinawans were incapable of managing their own resources, claiming that timber resources “were ruthlessly exploited in the early years of the nineteenth

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 43. Emphasis added.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 240-241.

century” and only through the “determined effort to conserve the forests” by the Japanese government has the problem been corrected.¹⁷² The *Handbook* failed to mention that at the time, the Ryukyus were a virtual colony of Satsuma domain.

In describing fishing practices, the *Handbook* contrasted the use of “primitive dugout canoes” with the modern Japanese innovations that came as a result of government subsidies and oversight.¹⁷³ Similarly, the *Handbook* emphasized that Okinawans used “little complex machinery,” citing a 1939 agrarian census which reported the absence of “tractors, rotary pumps, or reaping, threshing, or milling machines” in the entire prefecture. In contrast, the *Handbook* noted, Kagoshima Prefecture had “ten times as much agricultural machinery,” which the *Handbook* implied was to be expected since Kagoshima was part of Japan’s mainland and thus, “naturally” modern.¹⁷⁴

The *Handbook* emphasized a “natural” corollary of Okinawan backwardness was the poverty and low productivity of the islands. The *Handbook* made it clear that the Ryukyus were not only poor, but stood “lowest among the areas of Japan” in terms of per capita output.¹⁷⁵ Low productivity, the *Handbook* noted, explained why the Ryukyus had a high unfavorable balance of trade with Japan and why, between 1920 and 1940, 225,000 Ryukyuan immigrants migrated to Japan to find factory work.¹⁷⁶

The dearth of modern economic activity meant most Ryukyuan engaged in agriculture. The *Handbook* reported that even though the majority were independent

¹⁷² Ibid., 239.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 137.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 213.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 137.

¹⁷⁶ The Kansai area, especially Osaka, was where many from the Ryukyus resided.

cultivators, Ryukyuan farmers were incredibly poor as the average gross annual income for farmers in the Ryukyus was only ¥356.54.¹⁷⁷ Out of this annual income, ¥81.73 went to pay taxes, miscellaneous fees, and agricultural production costs which meant that the “remaining ¥274.81 per family, ¥159.76 went for food, leaving a total of ¥115.05 a year, or ¥9.58 a month, per family for clothing, shelter, fuel, education, medicine, savings, and all other purposes.”¹⁷⁸ Fortunately, Okinawan poverty was mitigated by the semi-tropical climate that made it “practicable for the poor to live in very cheaply constructed dwellings -- a mere hut constructed of bamboo mats and straw with a thatched roof,”¹⁷⁹ thus reinforcing the theme of a subsistent, agrarian, and unsophisticated population.

The *Handbook's* analysis of the island's labor force emphasized that skilled waged workers accounted for only 15 percent of the “gainfully employed engage in manufacturing occupations.” Moreover, less than one percent worked in a manufacturing enterprise that employed more than five people. The rest, the *Handbook* described, worked in “simple cottage industries,” while there were fewer skilled (7,853) than unskilled workers (18,411). The *Handbook* concluded that the “labor supply in the Ryukyu Islands is much more limited in respect to size, skill, and wage experience than

¹⁷⁷ In 1939, only 10 percent were tenant farmers while 65 percent owned their land. Tenancy in Japan, however, averaged close to 46 percent. The only cash crop in the Ryukyus was sugar cane. When Taiwan (Formosa) became part of Japan's colonial empire, the sugar cane industry was heavily promoted and subsidized by Japan, all at the expense of the Ryukyuan agrarian economy. Thus, even though the Ryukyus were in theory a natural part of Japan, when it came to resources and other economic development enhancements, the lion share went to Taiwan. In the 1920s, sugar prices plummeted which devastated the Ryukyuan economy since sugar cane was the only means to pay for needed imports, especially for food stocks. The chronic agrarian depression became acute in the 1920s that not only made worse an unfavorable balance of trade, but helped to create the Ryukyu Diaspora as hundreds of thousands were forced to immigrate throughout the Pacific basin in order to avoid the massive famine that afflicted the islands.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 137. Emphasis added.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

the actual size of the population would suggest,” thus casting doubt on the ability of Ryukyuan to engage in “modern work”.¹⁸⁰

The *Handbook* reified its encyclopedic-like depiction of “primitive” Ryukyus by ending the *Handbook* with fifty-two photographs. These pictures portrayed Okinawan culture as static and deeply rooted in antiquated practices. The first two-dozen photographs showed Ryukyuan pastoral life complete with grass thatched roof homes, primitive dug-out canoes, and farmers tilling the soil with stone-age tools. Another two-dozen were devoted to the non-agrarian sector, showing simplistic cottage industries, quaint urban markets, and an architecture style seemingly untouched by modern design. The pictures seemed to suggest that despite Japanese efforts to modernize the Ryukyus, the people either resisted modernity or failed to appreciate the benefits of Japanese benevolence.

Ramifications of the Two Sources

Despite the differences discussed above in the OSS report, *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands* and the Civil Affairs team’s publication, *Civil Affairs Handbook: Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands*, the two studies shared a similar perspective in that both represented the Okinawan people as a distinct minority within the Japanese polity. The difference resided in how each work explained this minority status. *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands* asserted that the minority status stemmed from Japanese oppression of the Ryukyuan people, who possess a rich and distinctive identity and heritage. The *Civil Affairs Handbook: Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands* attributed Okinawan minority status to a hopelessly primitive Ryukyuan civilization. In other words, despite Japan’s best efforts to modernize and uplift these people, the Okinawans were their own worst enemy as they stubbornly held to their traditional practices and ways of life.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 252.

Both reports, one should note, contained strong elements of paternalism. The OSS report, glorifying a proud independent Okinawan identity and culture, raised the intoxicating idea that the U.S. could resurrect a formerly independent polity. In this context, the American invasion was actually a mission of liberation and the civil affairs team had the opportunity to engage in a positive nation-building exercise. From the perspective of the OSS report, the Okinawan people would celebrate the fact that Americans would respect, support, and nurture Okinawan identity. Using different sources meant the *Handbook* emphasized the Ryukyus was culturally, socially, politically, and economically backwards compared to Japan. Although the *Handbook* did not depict the Ryukyus as suffering from Japanese oppression, it did convey that the Ryukyus needed civilizing. The *Handbook*, therefore, implied that American occupation of the Ryukyus would require sufficient American civilizing intervention. In fact, the *Handbook* may have instilled the perception that the US would succeed where the Japanese had failed, modernizing and uplifting the Okinawans by liberating the Okinawans from themselves. Both of these perspectives would later manifest themselves in occupation behavior and policy toward Okinawa.

Instead of the more commonly used signifier “Okinawa”, both texts used the more archaic term Loo Choo/Ryukyu.¹⁸¹ While some may have seen “Okinawa” and “Ryukyu” as a matter of semantics, the use of Loo Choo/Ryukyu in both titles was a deliberate choice. The OSS report’s use of “Loo Choo” was consistent with the report’s analytical emphasis on the kingdom’s history of political independence and its long connection with Chinese civilization.¹⁸² For the OSS researchers, the term Okinawa

¹⁸¹ “Loo Choo” was the Chinese pronunciation of the characters 琉球. Similarly, these same characters are pronounced in Japanese as “Ryukyu”. Either way, both terms represent the islands before they became incorporated into Meiji Japan, i.e. modern.

¹⁸² During the mid to late 19th century when the political status of the Ryukyu Kingdom was in flux, the nomenclature used in English used one of the “L” variations mentioned above, which meant the English translation from these Chinese characters was privileged over the English translation of the Japanese

signified Japan's annexation of the islands during the Meiji era and rejected "Okinawa" as a name imposed upon them by Japan. By deliberately using "Loo Choo," the OSS report signified "Okinawa" had no real legitimacy, whereas "Loo Choo" represented a time when the people of Loo Choo were independent. Since the inhabitants were not Japanese, then the "Loo Chooans" offered the opportunity of a potential ally. In this way, the OSS report's title, like its contents, reaffirmed the idea of the U.S. occupation as liberation.

In the *Handbook*, NCAT deliberately avoided using "Okinawa" in the title, and as in the OSS report, this omission stemmed from the *Handbook's* overarching theme. By using the more archaic signifier "Ryukyu", which signified a political identity, the *Handbook* reinforced the image of the islands as frozen in time. The civil affairs researchers, by using Japanese anthropological sources uncritically, internalized Japanese views of the islands' inhabitants as primitive. Hence, for both the Japanese and NCAT, the land mass called "Okinawa" was officially Japanese territory, but racially and culturally it was not. Hence, the *Handbook's* use of "Ryukyu" represented a deliberate construction of a "social or identity distance" between modern Japan and an "anachronistic" Ryukyu.¹⁸³

pronunciation of the same characters (Ryukyu). Yet once Japan solidified its claim over these islands, especially with the defeat of China in the 1894-95 Sino-Japanese War, "Loo Choo" and its various derivatives no longer appeared and instead the Japanese version of "Ryukyu" became the common translation into English. In other words, the notation of "Loo Choo" was for all practical purposes, a dead word since the late 19th century, yet the OSS report resurrected this word from the lexicon dustbin. Hence, the use of an anachronistic nomenclature of "Loo Choo" instead of the more modern rendition of "Ryukyu" in the title of *Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands* reveals the extent the report imagined a close Chinese-Okinawan connection and simultaneously, reinforce the converse image--the reduction of the identity distance between Japan-Okinawa.

¹⁸³ Paradoxically this "anachronistic" depiction of the Ryukyus conveyed both a derogatory and a complimentary perspective. In the former context, "Ryukyu," meant something that was archaic, backwards, and thus, inferior. For the majority of Japanese, contempt was the primary attitude toward Okinawa. At the same time, for a small minority of prewar Japanese ethnographers such as Yanagita Kunio, the "Ryukyus" was an idealistic "imagined" community of antiquity. For many intellectuals in prewar Japan, the country, radically transformed by the pursuit of modernity, had lost touch with its ancient past. For Yanagita, although Okinawa was geographically a part of "modern" Japan, the "Ryukyus," on the

Conclusion

Neither the OSS report of the *Handbook* explicitly called for Ryukyuan sovereignty. At the same time, both publications raised a salient point. Both showed that Japan did not view Okinawans as “authentic” Japanese, raising the question whether the Ryukyus, from a geographical perspective, was an integral part of Japan. This point was germane because when the JCS gave orders in September 1944 that the Ryukyus would be invaded, the JCS assumed this operation constituted the first attack on the Japanese “home” islands. The OSS report and the *Handbook*, however, generated a new perspective that the attack on Okinawa might be one of liberation rather than one of subjugation.

Although American propaganda consistently stressed Japan as monolithic and homogeneous entity, the possibility that the Ryukyus were not a natural extension of Japan manifested itself in a public way with the publication of an eye-raising article in *The Far Eastern Survey*. This journal, read by scholars and others with a vested interest in East Asian affairs, published an article in April, 1945 entitled “Sovereignty of the Liuchiu Islands.” While the title itself was significant in questioning Japanese sovereignty and that Japan represented a monolithic enemy, the date of publication and the article’s author should not be overlooked. The *Far Eastern Survey* published the article the same month as the invasion of Okinawa as a means to focus maximum attention and reinforce potential U.S. policy objectives. Moreover, the author of the “Sovereignty of the Liuchiu Islands,” was not an ordinary citizen floating some

other hand, was perceived as culturally unspoiled by modernity. The Ryukyus, both as a name and a place represented an ancient repository of tradition, customs, and culture where ethnographical researchers, such as Yanagita, could study to understand and recover what had been lost in modern Japan. For Yanagita and other Japanese intellectuals, they saw an “archaic” Ryukyu in a positive way but at the same time, their image still reflected a Japanese conceit not to mention it did not question the fundamental binary relationship of modernity (Japan) and antiquity (Ryukyus). Overall, both perspectives reflected the dynamics of the power relationship as the Japanese perspective always had the ability to label and define the Other.

implausible conjecture. It was written by Lt. George H. Kerr, who had participated in NCAT and development of the Civil Affairs handbooks for the Mandated Islands, Taiwan, and the Ryukyu Islands (and the future author of *Okinawa: The History of an Island People*). Kerr essentially reiterated, though in a more general manner, that Americans should not view the Ryukyus as Japanese territory.

By showing that the Ryukyus has been colonized by Japan, Kerr could echo Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" principle of self-determination, by advocating American commitment for Ryukyuan independence. Kerr noted that since Perry's arrival in the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1853, the U.S. had "treated the Liuchius as an independent kingdom; perhaps we may do so again." Kerr then questioned the legitimacy of both China's and Japan's claims over the Ryukyus. Kerr ended by pointing out that historically, the U.S. was the only country that viewed the Ryukyus as an independent entity. "It may be time to re-examine Perry's suggestions for an internationalized port or the establishment of an independent nation whose status is guaranteed and whose ports (and airfields) can be used for commerce by all nations." Although Kerr carefully avoided stating who would "guarantee" the Ryukyus status as either an independent or internationalized entity, the inference was clear, the U.S. would be the Ryukyus' champion.¹⁸⁴

Although Kerr's article only reflected the author's point of view and not "the attitude or opinions of the United States Navy," this claim seems dubious. Lt. Kerr, as an integral member of NCAT's research team in Hawa'ii, had access to confidential knowledge regarding American postwar plans for the Pacific. It seems unlikely the U.S. Navy would allow Kerr to publish an article that ran counter to official thinking. In addition, given that that the U.S. government carefully controlled and even censored the

¹⁸⁴ Lt. George H. Kerr, "Sovereignty of the Liuchiu Islands," in *Far Eastern Survey*, April 25, 1945, 96-100.

“free” press during the war, it is quite possible that U.S. government officials authorized publication. If we consider that there would be resistance from both China and Japan, we can speculate that Kerr’s recommendations represented a trial balloon.¹⁸⁵

Taken together, the OSS report, the *Handbook*, and Kerr’s article problematized the term “Okinawa” as a political signifier. Both the OSS report and the *Handbook* anticipated how American officials would view the Ryukyus. Ôta Masahide, a recent two-term governor of Okinawa Prefecture and long-time University of the Ryukyus professor, has been one of the few historians to recognize the significance of the OSS report and the *Handbook*. Ôta has asserted that they were “an important source for information on the perceptions on which U.S. military policy toward Okinawa was based.” Moreover, Ôta noted, “many of those who participated in military government activities say that it [the *Handbook* and the OSS report] was very helpful and widely used in the actual administration of the island.”¹⁸⁶ Therefore, as early as 1944, the U.S. officials had reopened the question of Okinawan identity and Kerr’s article would become the consistent mantra in American occupation policy.

¹⁸⁵ Not to mention his military title is included in his name on the article.

¹⁸⁶ Ôta Masahide, “The U.S. Occupation of Okinawa and Postwar Reforms in Japan Proper,” in Robert Ward and Sakamoto Yoshikazu eds., *Democratizing Japan: The Allied Occupation*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), 286.

CHAPTER THREE WAR AND IDENTITY TRAUMA: IMAGINING A
NEW RYUKYUAN NATION

Okinawan and American Ambivalence: Enemy or
Liberators?

The OSS report and the Handbook represented different sides of the same coin. While the OSS report offered a positive affirmation of Okinawans as an oppressed minority who, presumably, would warmly welcome their American liberators, the *Handbook* conveyed a negative image in attributing the island's backwardness to peoples' seeming resistance to Japanese modernity. Despite these differences, the OSS report and the *Handbook* converged on the theoretical point that the Ryukyus were not racially, culturally, or socially Japanese. The OSS report in particular conveyed that Okinawans, as an oppressed minority, would welcome the US as liberators. The U.S. Army's view of the likely Okinawan reaction to invasion, and subsequent occupation, was more skeptical.

In a pamphlet distributed to U.S. soldiers prior to the invasion, the very title, *Nansei Shoto Ryukyu Islands—Loochoo Islands: A Pocket Guide*, reflected the ambiguous status of Okinawans in American eyes. Indicative of this ambiguity, the title employed Japanese terminology (Nansei Shoto Ryukyu Islands) whereas the subtitle used the anachronistic Chinese term (Loochoo). The pamphlet noted the ambivalence because “under Japanese rule, it's kind of tough to be an Okinawa, because as true Sons of Heaven they don't seem to make the grade.” Not surprisingly, Japan only used Okinawans “as manual laborers....and when they are drafted they usually go into labor battalions.” Since Okinawans were “labor material,” few become officers and the Japanese “officials sent by Tokyo to run the islands have kept themselves aloof from the islanders;” therefore, Okinawans “resent the high and mighty ways of the Japanese.....” The pamphlet, however, noted “by and large, they are still loyal to Japan” hence,

American soldiers are to treat the Okinawans as “enemy nationals” since the “islands are part of Japan’s prewar empire.”¹⁸⁷

During the invasion of Okinawa, various sources attest to the continued American uncertainty regarding the civilian population’s loyalties. A U.S. Army report filed two weeks into the battle noted that “one of the major riddles confronting the Okinawan invasion forces was the attitude of the Okinawan civilian....Some expected him to receive the American [as] deliverers from what was believed to be Japanese oppression” while others believed that the Okinawan civilians, because of “Japanese anti-American propaganda,” would be “troublesome and uncooperative.” Another intelligent report, filed at about the same time, concluded that, “it is agreed that the civilian population is humble, docile, cooperative, unambitious and amenable.”¹⁸⁸ In addition, General Buckner, commander of the American invasion force, told a reporter that the battle “has been made very easy by the docile and obedient attitude of the population.”¹⁸⁹ While these comments appear to have been based on first-hand observations, they echoed views in pre-invasion publications.

The “humble, docile, cooperative....and amenable” civilian population cited in the report seemed to confirm the assumptions of those Americans who believed the Okinawans were waiting delivery from “Japanese oppression,” as well as those who viewed them as hopelessly backward and in need of uplift. The behavior the Americans observed probably reflected the psychology of Okinawans who managed to survive the “typhoon of steel”. In fact, the notion of an Okinawan population awaiting liberation did not represent the reality on the island prior to the battle. Although conscious that they

¹⁸⁷ *Nansei Shoto Ryukyu Islands—Loochoo Islands: A Pocket Guide*, (U.S. War Department-Special Publications Branch, Information-Education Section, CPBC, Exact Date Unknown), 5-6.

¹⁸⁸ Watkins Collection, Vol. 30, 187.

¹⁸⁹ Watkins Collection, Vol. 30, 186.

were not accepted by mainlanders as equals (as indicated correctly in NCAT's research), most Okinawans tried to be loyal Japanese subjects, a function of both the Japanese government's successful assimilation program (*dōka shugi*) coupled with Japanese military coercion.

Even prior to the outbreak of hostilities on the Asian mainland in the 1930s, Okinawans, especially the elite, actively promoted assimilation because it was, as historian Alan Christy has noted, in "large part a desire to gain some distance from an Okinawan identity that was discursively linked to the colonies, laborers, and effeminacy."¹⁹⁰ In the first phase of Japan's occupation of the former Ryukyu Kingdom, 1872-1895, half of the former Ryukyuan aristocratic class resisted Japan's claim to suzerainty. Although this resistance might be seen as some form or proto-Ryukyuan nationalism, elite resistance reflected the loss of their aristocratic status and privileges. In addition, these elites resented the severance of ties to Qing China as many of them saw themselves as linked to Sino-centric East Asia where the Ryukyu Kingdom historically had profited from trade with China.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Alan Christy, "The Making of Imperial Subjects in Okinawa," in *positions*, 1:3, Winter 1993, 622.

¹⁹¹ For Ryukyu resistance to Meiji Japan, see: George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People Revised Edition with an Afterword by Mitsugu Sakihara*, (Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 2000), 365-378.



Figure 11 In the upper left-hand corner is a photo of the 19th and last king of the Ryukyus, King Shō Tai (尚泰王). The photo on the right shows Ryukyuan aristocratic elite who opposed Japanese annexation and fled to Qing China where they trained for the “war predicted between China and Japan.”¹⁹²

Meiji Japan’s decisive victory over the Qing dynasty in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), made it apparent to the remaining Shuri elite that assimilation was both inevitable, and desirable. Established in 1893, the island’s first newspaper, the *Ryūkyū Shinpō*, strongly advocated “eliminating the provincial ‘insular mentality; and promoting national assimilation.” The editorial argued that the former era of dual subordination to the Qing and Tokugawa dynasties had led to “identity confusion” which was a “serious obstacle to national assimilation.” Thus, it was imperative that Okinawa, as the newest Japanese prefecture, to “be assimilated completely, everything visible and invisible, good and bad....in the same manner as with the people of Japan’s other prefectures.”¹⁹³ The call for complete and total assimilation led Ôta Chōfu, editor of the *Ryūkyū Shinpō*, to

¹⁹² Okinawa ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 24-25.

¹⁹³ As quoted in Ôta Masahide, *Essays on Okinawa Problems*, (Gushikawa, Okinawa: Yui Shuppan Co., 2000), 160-161. .

infamously urge Okinawans that “we must even sneeze like the Japanese on the mainland.”¹⁹⁴ According to historian George Kerr, “by the end of World War I, the major obstacles of assimilation had been overcome.” Although Kerr acknowledged that “strong attachment to local scenes and local customs remained,” for the Okinawan youth, when it came to modern economics and politics, they clearly “thought in terms of identification with nationwide Japanese interests.”¹⁹⁵

The militarization of the 1930s offered Okinawans new opportunities to prove their loyalty, much as minorities in the U.S. fought in World War II to prove they were the equals of white Americans and deserving of equal legal status.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, ultra-nationalistic education and Japanese victories in the 1930s intensified nationalistic and patriotic feelings on the island. The willingness of many Okinawans to participate in Japanese militarism runs contrary to the image that many Okinawans currently believe. A notable example can be seen in former governor Ôta Masahide, who had claimed that historically, Okinawans have always been a uniquely peaceful culture (*heiwa bunka*).¹⁹⁷ The historical record belies the claim that they were not active participants, as well as victims, in Japan’s militarism.

¹⁹⁴ Okinawan historian, Hiyane Teruo, in *Kindai Okinawa no Seishin Shi*, argues that Ota Chofu’s comment was taken out of context. In fact, Hiyane argues that Okinawan historians have been too critical of Ôta Chôfu, assimilation attitude. Hiyane believes Ôta Chôfu actually was more of an Okinawan nationalist, but to get there, they had to reach social and cultural parity with mainland Japanese. Hiyane Teruo, in *Kindai Okinawa no Seishin Shi*, (Tokyo: Shakai Hyôron Sha, 1996), 119-148.

¹⁹⁵ George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People Revised Edition with an Afterword by Mitsugu Sakihara*, (Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 2000), 448.

¹⁹⁶ See Ronald Takaki, *Double Victory, A Multicultural History of the US in World War II*.

¹⁹⁷ See the “Introduction” that discusses Ota’s testimony in front of Japan’s Supreme Court in 1997.

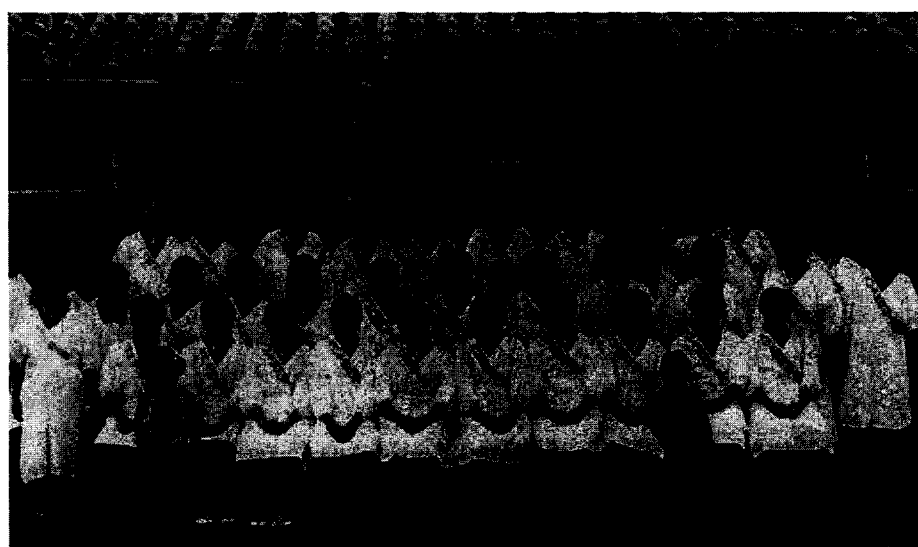


Figure 12 The top photo, officials acknowledge elderly Okinawan women efforts to collect scrap metal for the war effort. The bottom photo, Okinawan Women's Patriotic Association.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁸ Ôta Masahide, *Shashinshu: Okinawa Sen*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1990), 106, 108.

Many Okinawans, especially those in the urban areas and the youth, celebrated Japan's military successes. Jô Nobuko, an Okinawan teenager enrolled at the elite *Himeyuri* Girls High School in 1941, noted how the "auditorium was in an uproar, in restrained exuberance," when the principal announced Japan's successful attack on Pearl Harbor.¹⁹⁹ With each announcement of Japan's successful campaigns in Southeast Asia, lantern parades were held with each student holding a "paper lantern decorated with a fiery red circle, the symbol of Imperial Japan." Such patriotic demonstrations were not limited to the impressionable *Himeyuri* students, because "thousands upon thousands of marchers, consisting of members representing the Ladies National Defense League, the Patriotic Women's Club, the Youth Organization as well as elementary and high school children, formed the procession which made its way to the Naminoue Shrine."²⁰⁰ Other Okinawan women made white sashes with a thousand red stitches as good luck charms for soldiers while others raised money for the war effort, sent aid packages to soldiers, and collected scrap metal for ammunition.²⁰¹ Another woman, Ôshiro Junko, noted the enthusiasm as "everyone believed without any doubt that Imperial Japan would win the war" thus, "everyone quite willingly cooperated with the military." Echoing the sentiments of her contemporaries, Ôshiro Junko, a young mother at the time of the battle, stated that "we all believed that in so doing, each person's contribution of labor was somehow bound up with loyalty to one's country."²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Jo Nobuko Martin, *A Princess Lily of the Ryukyus*, (Tokyo: Shin Nippon Kyoiku Tosho Co., Ltd., 1984), 19.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.* What is particularly interesting is the degree that Okinawan women actively supported the war effort because one of the main constituents of contemporary Okinawa's discourse or ideology of a unique Okinawan peaceful culture (*heiwa bunkashugi*) are Okinawan women.

²⁰² Ôshiro Junko, Carolyn Bowen Francis and Jane Mitsuko Oshiro trans., *A Mother's Story of the Battle of Okinawa*, (Okinawa: Okinawa Christian Heiwa Center, 1995), 1. Originally published in Japanese as *Ikusayuni ichitei*, (Okinawa: Nishihara Printing Company, 1989).

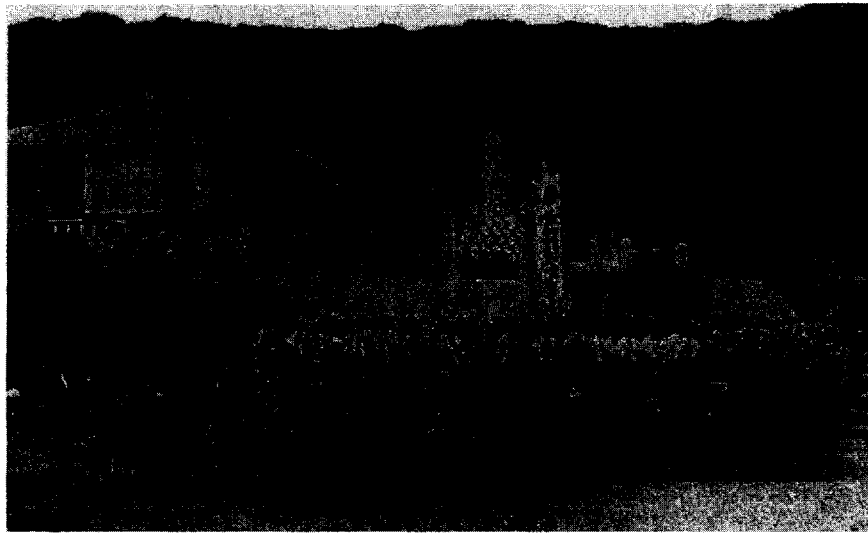


Figure 13 Top photo, Okinawans show reverence in front of *Chûkonhi*, a shrine dedicated to those who have fallen in battle. *Chûkonhi* were built throughout Japan to inculcate loyalty and sacrifice to the state. Below, Okinawans celebrate Japan's military successes²⁰³

²⁰³ Ôta Masahide, *Shashinshu: Okinawa Sen*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1990), 106.

Even when the tide turned against Japan in late 1942, Okinawans did not waver in their patriotic zeal as “local women’s association and the girls in the community....assembled early every morning in the community public square with their bamboo spears to conduct their military drills and fire drills.”²⁰⁴ The women especially prepared for American paratroopers as “we always concentrated our energies on practicing spear thrusts, which we accompanied with loud shouts of ‘One! Two! Three!’” The women spent the majority of the time on work details, especially digging defensive fortifications. Torn between patriotism and coercion, any Okinawan “who refused to report for work duty was labeled unpatriotic and a traitor to the country.”²⁰⁵ Okinawan young men also reacted to the patriotic environment with fervor. Okinawan high school student Asato Nirô wrote that “the students competed who could be the most patriotic and among the boys, we eagerly volunteered for military drills and training.”²⁰⁶

In 1943, when it became increasingly clear war was coming closer to Okinawa, the lantern parades to Namimou Shrine gave way to more pragmatic discussions focused on how the civilians could defend the island against the advancing American forces. Uncertain of what to do, Jô Nobuko and others turned to their Neighborhood Association chairman for answers. When he responded that the civilians were expected to fight along side the soldiers, the students poignantly pointed out that they were not soldiers. “‘You must fight with your souls,’ he replied, because ‘what we cannot do physically we can achieve by Japanese spirit.’” The students replied that they had plenty of Japanese spirit, “but it would be better if we had something to fight with.” But the shortage of guns and

²⁰⁴ Ôshiro Junko, Carolyn Bowen Francis and Jane Mitsuko Ôshiro trans., *A Mother's Story of the Battle of Okinawa*, (Okinawa: Okinawa Christian Heiwa Center, 1995), 1.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁰⁶ Asato Nirô, “Seinen Gakkô to Gunji Kyôren,” in Ôta Masahide, *Shashinshu: Okinawa Sen*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1990), 109-110.

ammunition meant civilians would not be armed, causing great consternation as they cried “We have no guns. We have donated everything made of copper, iron, or steel. We have even donated sewing needles.”²⁰⁷

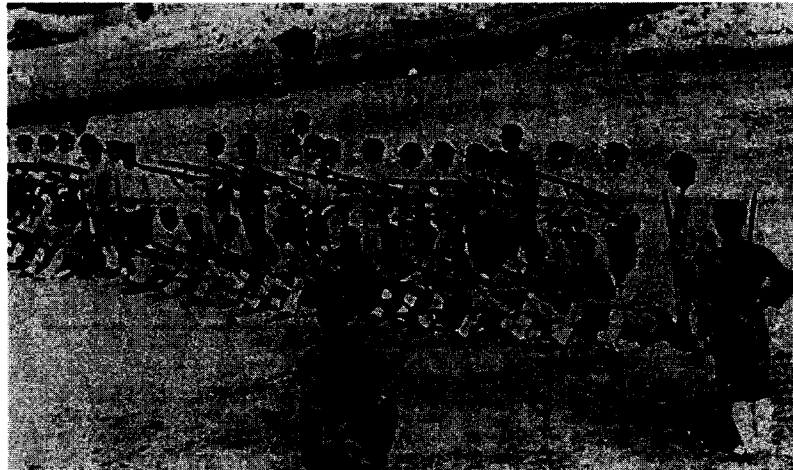


Figure 14 Okinawan youth prepare for battle. In the upper photo, high school Okinawan girls practice their grenade tossing while in the photo below, Okinawan high school students drill practice with their rifles.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ Jo Nobuko Martin, *A Princess Lily of the Ryukyus*, (Tokyo: Shin Nippon Kyoiku Tosho Co., Ltd., 1984), 24.

The lack of guns did not dampen student's patriotic zeal as bamboo spears became the weapon of choice. Not surprisingly, Jô Nobuko noted, "the art of spearing was added to our school curricula," with straw dummy heads of Churchill or Roosevelt fashioned for target practice. To insure the civilian defenders were fit for battle, a physical fitness program was made compulsory for all, "especially the elderly." Jô Nobuko noted, however, that "nobody complained" because "it was for our beloved country."²⁰⁹ As more male Okinawans were "conscripted" into labor battalions, families went to Shinto shrines located in each village at 4:30 A. M. three times a month (the first, eighth, and the fifteenth) to pray for safety and victory. "In this way," Ôshiro writes, "the old and young tried to do their best to ensure Japan's victory."²¹⁰ Moreover, Ôshiro said Okinawans "never even thought about the possibility of defeat." Such conviction led Ôshiro's brother, Minoru to give his live savings, seven yen, to Japan's war effort. Minoru received a certificate from Prime Minister Tôjô Hideki for his efforts.²¹¹ Japan's militarists sold the pending battle to Okinawans as an opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty and many Okinawans, especially young people, responded favorably by attempting to prove that they were even more Japanese than the mainlander Japanese. Consequently, when one governor, a mainlander appointed by Tokyo, declared for "every vestige of Okinawa's provincial uniqueness must be wiped out," few Okinawans demurred.²¹²

²⁰⁸ Ôta Masahide, *Shashinshu: Okinawa Sen*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1990), 105-108.

²⁰⁹ Martin, *A Princess Lily of the Ryukyus*, 23-25.

²¹⁰ Ôshiro, *A Mother's Story*, 3. The three days for prayer were the "first, the eighth and the fifteenth of each month, the eighth being the anniversary of Pearl Harbor."

²¹¹ Ôshiro, *A Mother's Story*, 6-7.

²¹² Ota, *Essays on Okinawa Problems*, 161.

Given this context, when the Battle of Okinawa began most Okinawans possessed an acute consciousness of being Japanese, and thus were intent on defending the Japanese homeland with fervor. Yet overall, American forces did not encounter a “fanatical” and hostile civilian population, with women wielding bamboo spears making suicidal “banzai” charges. Although a minority of younger Okinawans enthusiastically fought along with the Japanese soldiers, including the former governor of Okinawa, Ôta Masahide, most Okinawans whom the Americans encountered were “humble, docile, cooperative, unambitious and amenable.”²¹³ Why?

Japanese Atrocities and the Opening of Okinawa's

Identity as Japanese

One reasonable explanation was the trauma of the battle, which rendered the civilian population weary, hungry, wounded and shell shocked, incapable of “patriotic” resistance. Yet a more critical factor, I suggest, was the Japanese military's betrayal of the Okinawans' patriotic aspirations to be loyal Japanese subjects. The U.S. intelligence report cited above attributed the surprising passive nature of the captured Okinawans in part to “their receiving ‘no kindness, no favors, and uniformly brutal treatment’ at the hands of the Japanese.”²¹⁴

Their exuberant displays of patriotism, Okinawans soon discovered, did not overcome the Japanese prejudice inherent in the de facto colonial relationship between the Ryukyus and Japan. In preparation for the pending battle, instead of treating the Okinawans as loyal Japanese subjects, the military viewed them with utter contempt and suspicion. Hosokawa Morisada, a Japanese soldier who fought in the Battle of Okinawa and later became a POW, kept a diary of his experiences in Okinawa. In a December 16,

²¹³ Watkins Collection, Vol. 30, 187.

²¹⁴ Watkins Collection, Vol. 30, 187.

1944 entry, Hosokawa Morisada observed how the local population initially welcomed the Japanese soldiers, but gradually the relationship deteriorated. During an air raid prior to the invasion, Japanese troops occupied air raid shelters dug by civilians, leaving the Okinawans no where to go. To add insult to injury, the Okinawans witnessed that the Japanese military was completely incapable of defending Okinawa, as became painfully obvious when only one Japanese fighter took off during the air raid. Military officials forced the residents of Naha to leave and “evacuated forty miles away” receiving no food or any other assistance. Moreover, according to Hosokawa, “troops were totally undisciplined and had confiscated a few houses still standing, *behaving as if Okinawa were their occupied land.*” The soldiers took foodstuffs, used “civilians’ possessions as they liked, and rap[ed] women.” Urasaki Jun, an Okinawan who served in the Japanese military, noted the hubris of the Japanese military. He wrote that “there were some officers who embodied the arrogance...as if they were warlords” and all but “declared they would put Okinawa under military government, as if much abused prefecture were occupied territory in China or Southeast Asia.” He concluded, “life in Okinawa was just like living under martial law.”²¹⁵

Asato Nirô, one of many Okinawan high school students who willingly served alongside Japanese soldiers, also experienced how Japanese civilian administrators treated Okinawans with contempt. While serving in the military, Asato saw the how Japanese prefecture officials ignored the military’s abuses toward Okinawan civilians.²¹⁶ Like Asato, Ôta Masahide was an Okinawan high school student during the war who demonstrated his patriotism by joining the elite *Tekketsu Kinno Tai* (Blood and Iron Corps). Ôta and Asato were emblematic of Okinawan youth who believed in the

²¹⁵ Ota, *Essays on Okinawa Problems*, 31-35.

²¹⁶ Asato Nirô, “Seinen Gakkô to Gunji Kyôren,” in Ôta Masahide, *Shashinshu: Okinawa Sen*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1990), 109-110

divineness of Japan's imperial mission. Ôta's intense loyalty turned into anti-Japanese feelings as he repeatedly saw how the Japanese military committed atrocities against his people. After the war, Ôta entered academia and much of his academic career concentrated on documenting Japanese atrocities with particular focus on how Japan sacrificed Okinawa. In his research Ôta discovered how top prefecture officials, all from Japan, deserted their posts leaving Okinawans to fend for themselves. After the bombing of Okinawa's capital, Naha, Ôta found that the governor's entourage had fled Naha and stayed in cave shelters in the middle of Okinawa (Futenma), nearly twenty miles from the capital. These actions belied the patriotic rhetoric emanating from the *Okinawa Shinpo*, in various editorials, noted that the battle for Okinawa was rapidly approaching and victory would "depend on whether the military and the civil governments and the people are able to unite." Ôta, however, found the governor had responded by going to Tokyo and then obtaining reassignment as governor of Kagawa Prefecture, later claimed "I would rather meet my death on the mainland," which forced Tokyo to appoint a new governor. According to Ôta, the wife of the newly appointed governor, upon hearing his new posting "reportedly blurted out 'we have done nothing wrong to deserve being sent to Okinawa!'" For Okinawans such as Ôta and Asato, such "commitment" by Japanese officials, who rhetorically urged Okinawans to defend the motherland as they deserted their posts, was a bitter pill for patriotic Okinawans to swallow.²¹⁷

During the actual battle, the Japanese military's attitude and treatment of the people they were supposedly defending almost defies description. In a confidential G-2 U.S. counterintelligence report, Iko Hayashi, who was chairman of the Okinawa Board of Education, is quoted as saying, "Jap troops had no sympathy for the Okinawans." "They

²¹⁷ Ota, *Essays on Okinawa Problems*, 31-37. The last governor of prewar Okinawa, Nakano Yoshio, was the head of the Internal Affairs Department of Osaka Prefecture. His 1961 memoirs can be found in 最後の沖縄県知事 (*The Last Governor of Okinawa*).

overran, scattered, and abused them, even taking young women for their purposes” consequently the Okinawans feel a “growing anger towards the Japanese...and the hatred grows daily.”²¹⁸ In one village in the northern part of Okinawa, after the villagers had surrendered to the American forces, Japanese troops waging a guerrilla campaign in the hills came down and beheaded the males and the “females and children were huddled into a group and grenades thrown among them.”²¹⁹ Higa Tomiko witnessed an Okinawan mother and her crying baby “being pushed out of the cave by four or five soldiers” as she begged for shelter. The mother stood in front of the cave pleading with the soldiers when she was gunned down. The baby continued to cry when Higa “saw a black shadow come out of the cave along the ground to where she lay, pull off the baby from her back and hurry behind a rock.” Soon there was nothing but silence.²²⁰ One Okinawan man killed his two daughters because the Japanese soldiers said the Americans would “rape, mutilate, and kill the girls.” Before the father could take his own life, American forces captured him. To his tremendous surprise, the Americans provided “kind and considerate treatment,” the exact opposite of what he was told. “One day he stole an American hand grenade, and tossed it into the Japanese prisoner-of-war compound,” avenging his daughters by “killing several inmates.”²²¹

During the course of battle, the Japanese military believed the Okinawans were potential spies.²²² Military officials believed anyone speaking the Okinawan language

²¹⁸ Watkins Collection, Vol. 30, 175. Hayashi Iko may have simply told the Americans what he thought they wanted to hear, yet when his testimony is weighed against the volumes of similar testimonials provides credence to the G-2 report.

²¹⁹ Watkins Collection, Vol. 30, 190.

²²⁰ Tomiko Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, (New York: Kodansha International, 1995), 92-93. Originally published as 白旗の少女, 1991.

²²¹ Watkins Collection, Vol. 30, 158.

²²² 石原昌家, “沖縄戦の諸君とその背景” in 新琉球史-近代現代編, (那覇市: 琉球新報社, 1997), 270-272.

was a treasonous act that was brutally punished: tongues were cut out and a thousand innocent civilians executed some as young as two and three.²²³ Japanese soldiers executed over a thousand Okinawans, accused as being spies and often without a trial. One young Okinawan woman recalled a tragic incident due to the profound language differences between the people and the soldiers:

....I asked them (younger brother and sister) why mother died. What they told me was that a Japanese soldier came and asked Mother how many people were in there, but as my mother couldn't speak Japanese well, she answered, "Hui, hui"? Of course, what she meant to say was "Yes? What is it"? but the soldier instantly cut her head off. The head landed in my sister-in-law Yuki's lap. Everybody panicked. My younger sister got away, carrying our younger brother...the soldiers caught up with her...she was stabbed three times in the abdomen and her intestines came out here and there. My brother'd been stabbed deep and cut wide in the stomach, and all his tangled intestines came out. He died soon.²²⁴

In the period leading up to the battle, the Japanese military drafted Okinawans as *corvée* labor and many had food, possessions, and homes confiscated at gunpoint. The Japanese military also forced thousands of Okinawan and Korean women to become what is euphemistically called "comfort women", in reality, sex slaves.²²⁵

²²³ Ota, *Essays on Okinawa Problems*, 57-64.

²²⁴ Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor*, p. 64-65. In the postwar period, Japanese bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education (Monbusho) deleted any references of soldiers killing Okinawan civilians from textbooks. Collective suicides, however, are not only mentioned but are glorified. Field writes that "collective suicide, unlike civilian killings, enhances the narrative of courageous Japanese-even if they happen to be Okinawan-united in the spirit of honorable sacrifice." p. 62 She adds, "the homage proposed bygovernment officials[is] the sort of history produced by a racist colonialism in which lagging natives are disciplined in the name of civilization." p. 63

²²⁵ The issue of the sex slaves is only recently getting attention. In Okinawa, the topic is equally controversial, especially because a fair number were Okinawan women. The actual number of sex slaves is unknown, but conservatively several thousand. Most were from Korea, others where prostitutes (the issue here is that many of the prostitutes were sold into the business as young girls from poor peasant families) from Naha, while other Okinawan women were taken from local villages.

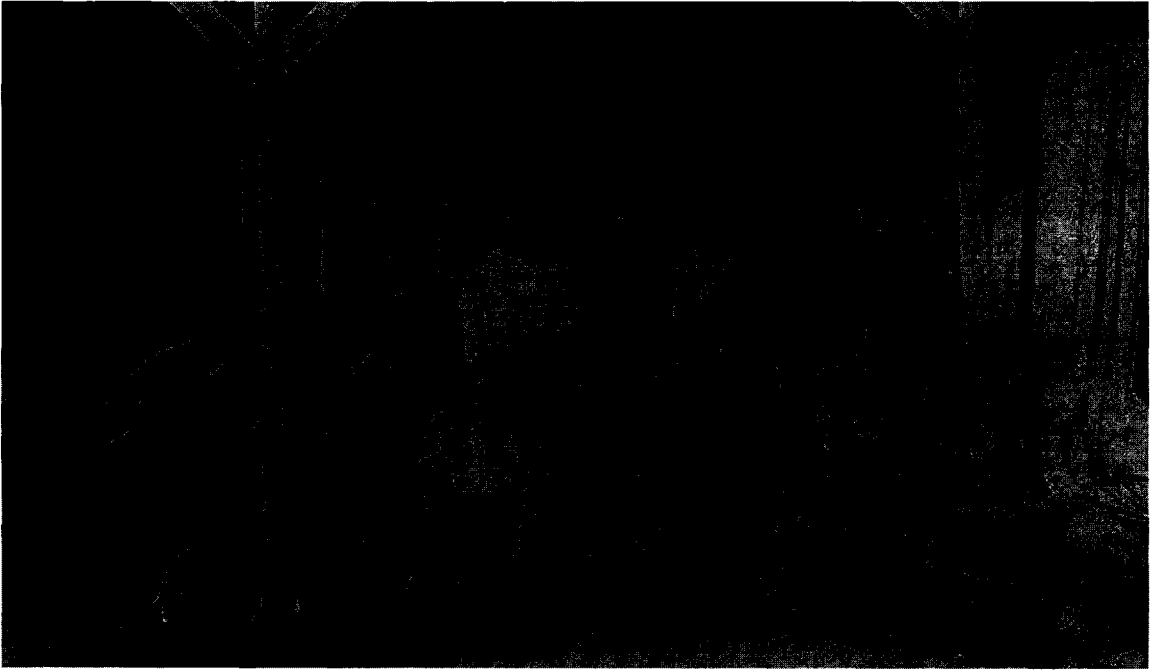


Figure 15 Korean "comfort women" liberated by US soldiers.²²⁶

Many young Okinawan men and women were conscripted (2,360 total, over half died) into youth patriotic groups which left the very young and the very old responsible for agriculture. Ôta Masahide remembered that:

we'd received "education to make us the Emperor's People." We thought we were just the same as the Japanese...I myself had seen Okinawan mothers thrown out of caves and food snatched away from them countless times. "Why is such a thing happening?"²²⁷

Another Okinawan, Chibana Shoichi also witnessed such carage in his village of Yomintan. Chibana explained how thousands of Okinawans committed suicide, often

²²⁶ *Okinawa Sengo Shashin Shi—Amerika Yuu no 10 Nen*, (Okinawa: Gekkan Okinawa Sha, 1979), 62-63. Okinawa ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 63. An estimated 3,000-6,000 Korean sex slaves were brought to Okinawa. Most died in the subsequent battle. Some survivors chose repatriation to Korea, but the rest stayed in Okinawa as the shame of being a sex slave prevented their return to Korean society.

²²⁷ Ôta Masahide, "Straggler" in Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook eds. *Japan at War: An Oral History*, New York: The New Press, 1992, p. 371-72.

referred to heroically in Japanese as *gyokusai* (death without surrender) to prove their loyalty to the emperor.²²⁸



Figure 16 The legacy of Okinawan loyalty toward Japan.²²⁹

²²⁸ Chibana Shoichi. *Yakisuterareta Hinomaru*, (Tokyo: Shinsen Sha, 1988), 34-43.

²²⁹ *Nippon Saigo no Tatakai*, (Okinawa: Gekkan Okinawa Sha, 1977), front cover of the book.

Japan's willingness to sacrifice Okinawa to buy time for defensive preparations on the mainland in the delusional hope of still attaining the elusive "decisive victory" led one American officer who witnessed the battle to comment that "their suffering transcended even that of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, or fire-bombed Tokyo....Caught between two armies, they were the victims of both. But the worst of their experience was their ruthless sacrifice by their Japanese leaders."²³⁰ Ôta argues that Tokyo's militarist did not "regard Okinawa as part of the 'imperial land' (*kodo*), but as a part of 'foreign territory' (*gaichi*)."²³¹ Many of the Japanese officers and soldiers sent to Okinawa certainly saw it as *gaichi* because they "regarded Okinawa as a small island remote from the capital *with only loose cultural connections to the mainland*" and especially officers "were quite discontented with their assignment."²³² The sacrifice made by the people of Okinawa was indeed exorbitant. Between a quarter and a third of the civilian population died in the immediate battle and more perished in the aftermath of starvation and disease.

Such experiences forced many Okinawans to distinguish between the rhetoric and the reality of their Japanese identity. Ôta, after his participation in "Blood and Iron Student Corps," later wrote, "For the first time I began to be awakened to differences in our cultures. *I began to see that I was an Okinawan.*"²³³ Writing in 1968 in the middle of the reversion movement, Nakasone Genwa, an Okinawan who was active in the prewar leftist movement while living on the mainland, believed that the Emperor's

²³⁰ Hiromichi Yahara, *The Battle for Okinawa*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995, p. xxiv.

²³¹ Ôta, *Essays on Okinawa Problems*, 46. Ôta describes how the Japanese Army Minister issues a report shortly after the invasion of Okinawa had begun where he called for all officers to fight to the death in defending the Imperial land. The Minister said "the imperial land is where the emperor reigns and all our gods and spirits reside." Okinawa, however, was not defined as "Imperial land."

²³² *Ibid.*, 49-50. (Emphasis added).

²³³ *Japan at War: An Oral History*, 371-72.

surrender declaration would finally separate Okinawa from Japan, and reminded his readers that “few people today would understand how most people felt in those days. There was a strong anti-Japanese feeling among many people.” The reason for this hatred was because “they had been discriminated against for many decades; they were forced out of caves into the rain of bombardment during the battle; they were branded as spies and some of some were even shot by Japanese soldiers.”²³⁴ Clearly, Okinawan experiences during the battle led many to question their identity as Japanese.



Figure 17 Okinawan POWs. The photo on the left shows two Okinawan students of the Blood and Iron Corps (*Tekketsu Kinno Tai*) providing information to an American soldier. On the right, Okinawan POWs of different ages 75, 16, and 15 respectively²³⁵

²³⁴ “Okinawan Testimony (9): Japan’s Surrender and Okinawa,” *Weekly Okinawa Times*, August 24, 1968.

²³⁵ *Nippon Saigo no Tatakai*, (Okinawa: Gekkan Okinawa Sha, 1977), 144-145.

Propaganda and its Effect on Okinawan Identity

Japanese and American propaganda also contributed to the reopening of identity. Japanese propaganda, paradoxically, produced an effect contrary to its purpose. Japanese propaganda had convinced Okinawans the only honorable act was to commit suicide rather than be captured. This emphasis on honorable suicide, *gyokusai*, was further enhanced by propaganda that told Okinawans US soldiers would commit terrible atrocities against civilians. For Kinjō Shigeaki, the fears about Americans behavior instilled by Japanese propaganda led many in his village to commit group suicide (*gyokusai*) in order to avoid capture. The Japanese military coerced many Okinawans into *gyokusai*, yet Kinjō saw how Japanese soldiers surrendered to American forces instead of committing suicide. For Kinjō this juxtaposition led him to believe that “for Okinawans, August 15, 1945, meant liberation from the Battle of Okinawa” because “*the Japanese more than the Americans became the object of our fears.*”²³⁶

Kinjō’s experience, however, was not an aberration. An infamous case was the group suicide of the *Himeyuri* girls. The female counterpart to the *Iron and Blood Corps* was the *Himeyuri* high school girls who formed the Himeyuri Nurse Student Corps. Once again, Japanese propaganda led many of the *Himeyuri* Girls Student Corps to commit *gyokusai* fearing that American soldiers would rape them. Those who survived, however, found out the truth of Japanese propaganda. One survivor, Miyagi Kikuko recounted how “[Americans] took care of Okinawans really well...but we only learned that later...From the time we’d been children, we’d only been educated to hate them...So what we had been taught robbed us of life. I can never forgive what education did to us! Had we known the truth, all of us would have survived.”²³⁷ Japanese soldiers

²³⁶ Kinjo Shigeaki, “Now the call it ‘Group Suicide’” in Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook eds. *Japan at War: An Oral History*, New York: The New Press, 1992, p. 366. (Emphasis added)

²³⁷ Miyagi Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps’” in Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook eds. *Japan at War: An Oral History*, New York: The New Press, 1992, p. 360.

told the residents of Shimobaru village that “they were to be sent to San Francisco and sold for dog food,” yet instead, the U.S. soldiers provided food, shelter, medicine and clothing.²³⁸

The atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers, coupled with the lies of Japanese propaganda and the benevolent American behavior, convinced even the most assimilated Okinawans to question their Japanese identity. One such Okinawan was Hayashi Iko, who during the prewar period was part of the small yet influential prewar Okinawan intellectual class that had long advocated assimilation with Japan. Hayashi, shocked by Japanese propaganda lies, said that “after the war, Okinawa should sever all connections with Japan...Okinawa should be independent although militarily and politically under the control of the United States.”²³⁹ Hayashi’s new perspective on identity reflected how a new reality where many Okinawans, in their bitterness about their prewar loyalty to Japan, were willing to explore a new identities.

During the battle, American propaganda reminded Okinawans of their unique heritage and the seventy-year history of Japanese oppression and discrimination. The U.S. Army’s secret “Psychological Warfare Plan” stated that Okinawans “will be continuously reminded of the repeated discrimination against them by the Japanese.”²⁴⁰ G-2 hoped that “as with the soldiers, ideas must begin to take root among the slow-witted natives’ will prior to D-day.”²⁴¹ The purpose of one propaganda leaflet was to “turn local inhabitants against Japanese soldiers.” It asked Okinawan civilians a series of

²³⁸ Watkins Collection, Vol.30, 187.

²³⁹ Ibid., 176.

²⁴⁰ “Psychological Warfare Plan,” Headquarters Tenth Army, Office of the A.C. of S., G -2, November 18, 1944. Reprinted in 沖縄県史 資料編2 *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands, etc.*, (沖縄南風: 沖縄県教育委員会、1996)、173-175.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

questions such as “What obligations do you have to the Japanese?” and “Is this your war? Or is really the war of Japanese leaders who have dominated you for many decades?”²⁴² Another leaflet aimed to induce Okinawans to cooperate by reassuring them that “we want to spare you all unnecessary hardships, for our fight is only with the *Naichijin* (homeland Japanese) not with the people of your island, who didn’t want this war.”²⁴³ Another leaflet, which drew directly on the OSS report tried to undermine civilian participation in the defense of the island by reminding Okinawans of discriminatory treatment by the Japanese, who were often referred to on Okinawa as *Naichi*:

What have you received from the Naichijin to warrant these sacrifices? Ane not you of equal ability with Japanese, yet given employment at menial tasks? *Do not the Naichijin consider themselves superior to you?* As proof of the that, do not the Naichijin scorn intermarriage with your women? Do not Naichijin teachers in schools show preference to Naichijin children? Are not the chief political administrative posts held by the Naichijin?.....Is not clear, then, that the Japanese are needlessly killing your men and *destroying your homeland*? This is not your war, but you are being used as a cat’s paw by the Naichijin. You are sacrificing for them and getting nothing in return!²⁴⁴

Although we cannot know how effective these leaflets were in undermining Okinawan’s identification with Japan, in the context of Japanese brutality and the horrors of war, it is not unreasonable to assume that American propaganda prompted questioning of the relationship to Japan.²⁴⁵

²⁴² 沖縄県史 資料編2 *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands, etc.*, 216 and 258. Ironically, during the Vietnam War, North Vietnam used similar questions to great effect in getting American black soldiers to ask, “whose war am I fighting?”

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 219 and 261.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 220,221, 262.

²⁴⁵ See the two propaganda pamphlets at the end of the chapter. One interesting term used in these propaganda examples is *Naichijin* (instead of using “Japanese”) because it is a derogatory word used by Okinawans (and those living in Hokkaido) to describe the Japanese. *Naichijin* would be akin to the Hawa’iian word “haole.”

Other leaflets informed the Okinawans that there were “considerable food supplies in possession of the Japanese Army,” and urged civilians to “apply vigorously to the Japanese Army for food and water.”²⁴⁶ The actual leaflet used for this purpose was a double-sided leaflet; one side was directed toward Japanese soldiers and the other side towards civilians with the overall intent “to produce cleavage.” The message to the Japanese troops compared the war in Okinawa to “the Nomanhan Incident in which 18,000 outstanding Japanese soldiers were needlessly sent to their deaths without the permission of the Emperor by military leaders selfishly seeking personal military glory.” On the flip side, the leaflet urged Okinawans to “apply to the Japanese Army for food and water. Do not accept a refusal” because they are well supplied.²⁴⁷

American planners utilized Japanese-American *Nisei* (second generation) soldiers to orally transmit propaganda from large speakers mounted on tanks, ships and front line speakers.²⁴⁸ *Nisei* of Okinawan descent, however, were especially effective since they spoke in the Okinawan language. The plan also called for “spreading the word among native populations...[through] radio broadcasts by OWI from SAIPAN.”²⁴⁹ The radio broadcasts, directed by the civil affairs team, sought to exploit the potential cleavage between Okinawans and the Japanese soldiers.

²⁴⁶ “Psychological Warfare Plan,” Headquarters Tenth Army, 173-175.

²⁴⁷ 沖縄県史資料編2 *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands, etc.*, 214 and 256.

²⁴⁸ Joseph D. Harrington, *Yankee Samurai: The Secret Role of Nisei in America's Pacific Victory*, (Detroit: Pettigrew Enterprises, INC., 1979), 203-204. “Psychological Warfare on Okinawa.” In 沖縄県史資料編2 *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands, etc.*, 151-156.

²⁴⁹ “Psychological Warfare Plan,” 173-175.

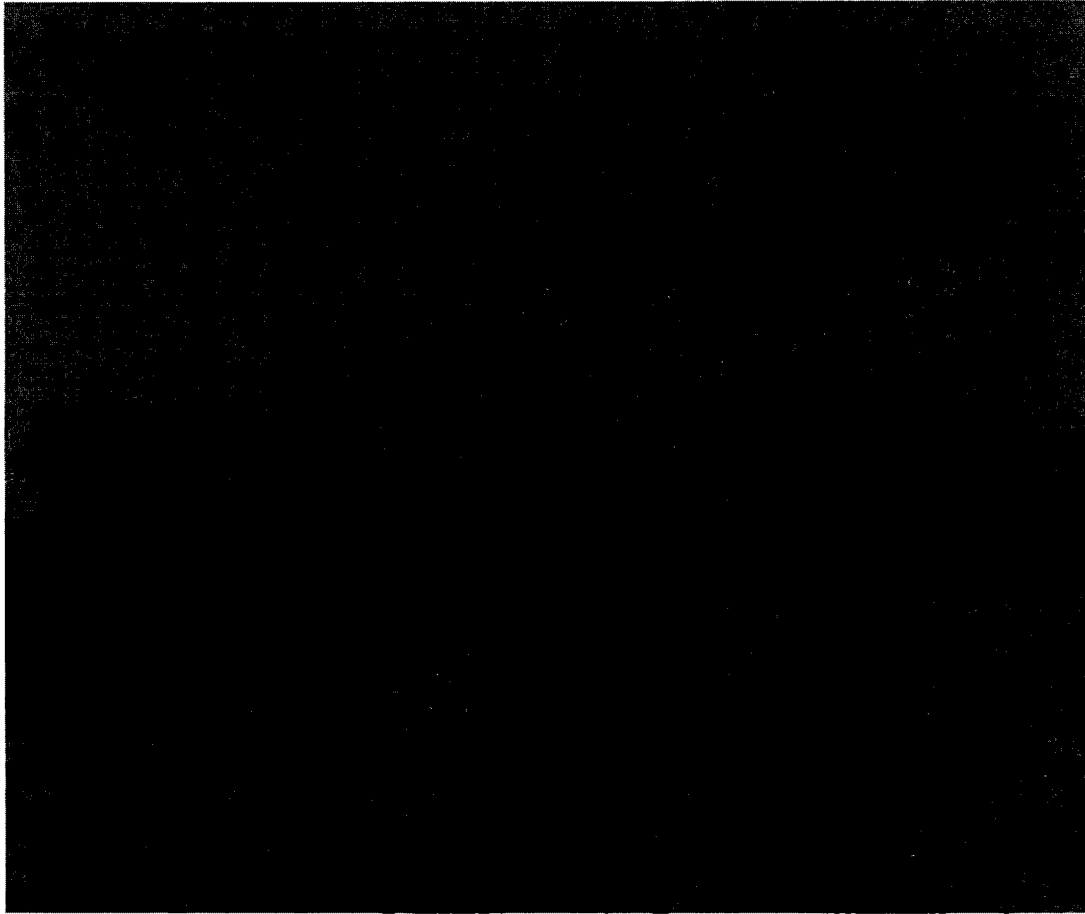


Figure 18 Speaking through a loudspeaker, Okinawan Nisei urging Okinawan civilians to surrender.²⁵⁰

The army had previously employed Okinawan Nisei soldiers in this capacity during the 1944 invasion of Saipan, since tens of thousands of Japanese civilians on Saipan were from Okinawa. Many of the Japanese-American Nisei, like their Japanese military counterparts, could not communicate effectively with Okinawans, especially the elderly who spoke little standard Japanese. One such Nisei, Warren Sakuma, asked an elderly Okinawan man where he was from in Japanese (*doko kara kimashitaka*), but there

²⁵⁰ Okinawa ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 66.

was no answer. When Sakuma used an Okinawan phrase he'd been taught only a few days before, 'Makara chaga?', the old man's face "lit up in recognition and he answered 'Koja son (I am from the Koja area),' " which illustrates how Okinawan-American Nisei provided a tactical advantage in driving a wedge between the Japanese military and the Okinawan civilians.²⁵¹ Japanese soldiers, who attempted to hide among civilians by wearing civilian clothing, were easily found by Okinawan-American Nisei due to the language differences. Moreover, Japanese soldiers, who did not understand the Okinawan language, could not effectively challenge American propaganda. Whether intended or not, this American tactic fueled the Japanese military's suspicions that many Okinawans were spies, which precipitated more atrocities.

Whether in response to the brutality of Japanese soldiers or U.S. propaganda, the Battle of Okinawa provided cause for Okinawans to question their identity as Japanese and rethink what it meant to be Okinawan. Thus, when the American occupation of Okinawa began, the Navy's civil affairs team had fertile ground to begin promoting a modern Ryukyuan consciousness.

From Imagining to Inventing the Ryukyu Nation 1945-

1947

The effort to promote a new sense of identity began even as the battle continued with the publication by the Navy's civil affairs team (NCAT) of a weekly newspaper, the *Ryukyu Shūhō* (琉球時報).²⁵² NCAT, believing the people of Okinawa were yearning to

²⁵¹ *Yankee Samurai*, 239.

²⁵² The newspaper's title was significant in that instead of using the common term "Okinawa" in the title, the civil affairs team used the anachronistic term "Ryukyu," as they did in other publications such as the *Civil Affairs Handbook: Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands* and in the OSS report *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo (Ryukyu Islands)*. The titles of these reports suggest that the Civil Affairs team and G-2 were conscious that the term Okinawa was the name imposed by Japan during the Meiji era and signified Japan's political control over the islands and its policy of cultural assimilation.

be free of the Japanese yoke, hoped the use of Ryukyu would crystallize the people's desire for independence. Yet, Japan's prewar assimilation program (*dōka shugi*) had not only instilled a strong sense of Japanese identity, it also gave Ryukyu and Ryukyuan (*Ryukyujin*) negative connotations of being backward, primitive, and rustic. To be modern was to be Japanese, and thus the way to insult someone in prewar Okinawa was to call them a *Ryukyujin*. In fact, for most commoners, the Ryukyu Kingdom conjured up images of the Ryukyu court aristocracy's ruthlessly exploitation of peasants. Thus, one can only imagine the thoughts and reactions of many Okinawans upon reading an American military newspaper entitled *Ryukyu Shūhō*.²⁵³

In the first five years of the American occupation of Okinawa, efforts to promote a Ryukyuan identity do not appear to represent official occupation policy. The term "Ryukyu" was not applied in a consistent or systematic manner; in fact, most of the Americans tended to use "Okinawa" interchangeably with "Ryukyus,"²⁵⁴ perhaps because it was easier to pronounce. Nevertheless, from the initial planning stages for the invasion, at least some American military government personnel were committed to creating a modern Ryukyu imagined community, a process that I will call Ryukyuanization.

One official deeply committed to the project of Ryukyuanization was Lt. Commander Willard Hanna. Hanna headed the Military Government's (MG) Educational and Cultural Affairs Department in 1945 and almost immediately began the

²⁵³ The American did not seem to be aware of the fact that the term "Ryukyu" was not an indigenous term, but instead the Chinese name for the islands. The indigenous word for the archipelago was *Uchinaa*, the people of *Uchinaa* were called *Uchinaachu*, and the language was *Uchinaaguchi*. Yet these terms never appear in any of the American documents in the twenty-seven year occupation of Okinawa. Nor were they used by the people of *Uchinaa* themselves during the twenty-seven years of occupation. Unlike today when *Uchinaa* and *Uchinaachu* are politicized markers of a distinct culture, and in some cases the desire for independence, these terms were merely dialect.

²⁵⁴ For American soldiers, the easier pronunciation of Okinawa made it more preferred than using the term Ryukyu or Ryukyuan.

work of preservation of Ryukyu Kingdom artifacts. It was striking how much energy, time, and resources were given to Hanna's pet project in midst of an island destroyed by war. The vast majority of the civilian population lived in squalid camps because the battle destroyed ninety-five percent of the island's infrastructure. Food, medicine, clothing, jobs, etc., were in critical supply. It is not surprising that Okinawans who felt "getting food was more important than collecting cultural assets" found the priorities of MG skewed.²⁵⁵ This reality, however, did not deter Hanna from collecting and preserving Ryukyuan cultural assets because he believed the people needed more than the basic necessities to survive.²⁵⁶ Hanna also realized that Americans needed to be convinced as well that Ryukyuan preservation was worthwhile commitment of resources.

Hanna's proactive approach aimed to preserve the island's rich heritage as a past worth venerating. Hanna rightly feared that the current squalor Okinawans found themselves in would somehow convey an impression among Americans that Okinawan society was semi-civilized. Unless he could convince Americans that the Ryukyuan past was worth preserving, his more ambitious, and long-term plan to get Okinawans to venerate their own heritage, would be moot. In other words, before Okinawans could imagine the Ryukyus, Hanna had to get other Americans to imagine it first. To create a positive impression of the Ryukyus among the average soldier, Hanna directed his department to produce a series of pamphlets entitled "Geography of the Ryukyus," "The Battle of Okinawa," "People of the Ryukyus," "Government of the Ryukyus," "Places of Interest on Okinawa," "Okinawan Tombs and Burial Customs," and "History of

²⁵⁵ Internet Muesuem All Over the World: Willard A. Hanna and the Bell in the Philippine <http://www.okinawakai.org/past&present/shuri%20gate/Shuri%20no%20Mon.htm> Accessed on November 12, 2005.

²⁵⁶ Hanna never made a critical distinction in the nomenclature in naming the islands as he only used the term "Okinawa" to describe both Japan's seventy year control of the islands and the era of the Ryukyu Kingdom. For someone who was keen in preserving the Ryukyuan past, it is ironic he did not use the term he was trying to preserve.

Okinawa.” The material for these pamphlets was “extracted from the U.S. Navy Civil Affairs Handbook.” The US Army, when it took over control from the Navy in mid 1946, used these same pamphlets to conduct “Troop Information Programs.”²⁵⁷

At the same time, as soon as August of 1945 Hanna initiated the construction of a new museum and cultural center, called Higaonna, in Ishikawa City, which was also MG’s headquarters.²⁵⁸ Hanna built a museum and hired some Okinawans to house the artifacts rescued from the rubble of Shuri Castle, the former capital of the Ryukyu Kingdom. Hanna hired Ômine Kaoru to be the museum’s first director, as Hanna believed the entire enterprise needed to be run by Okinawans, not Americans. Ômine, who later gained greater recognition when he became president of Daito Sugar Company, Hanna, and a handful of Okinawans wasted little time in scouring the island for surviving artifacts. “Before the shells had stopped going off, we had got busy collecting prize specimens of Okinawan pottery, lacquer, textiles and of the other arts and crafts” and even managed to recover “rare items from the prewar Shuri Castle museum” amidst the “rubble and corpse-littered caves of Shuri Castle hill.” Hanna even managed to cajole MG into allowing Ômine and his assistants to drive military trucks as they traveled “to all parts of the island to collect whatever was salvageable and portable in the way of arts and crafts.” The museum’s prized possession, however, were “four tremendous bells bronze bells of ancient but uncertain provenance, probably cast in Korea, perhaps by Korean artisans in Okinawa.” The recovery of the bells, Hanna noted, eerily resembled a Pulitzer winning 1944 novel by John Hersey called *Bells for Adano*. In this novel, Hersey tells the story of a well-intended civil affairs officer in occupied Italy who strives to preserve the town’s rich heritage, only to be undermined by his arrogant commanding general.

²⁵⁷ RYCOM, Colonel P. S. Lowe, “Troop Information Memorandum No. 15-18,” February 10, 1947. Papers of James T. Watkins, Vol. 2, 2-122, 2-132, 2-140, 2-152. Watkins Collection.

²⁵⁸ Higaonna Museum also went by Okinawa *Chinretsukan*,

Hanna ordered copies of *Bells for Adano* and had it distributed among MG officers, hoping to spark a renaissance spirit among MG officials.²⁵⁹



Figure 19 On the left Hanna posing in front of an ancient bell that he saved from American GIs who were preparing to send it back to the US. On the right, two Okinawan girls clean.²⁶⁰

With a growing museum collection, Hanna saw an opportunity to demonstrate to both Americans and Okinawans the richness of Ryukyuan civilization by holding an exhibit. Hanna wrote and published a small, but highly detailed pamphlet entitled “Okinawan Exhibit” to commemorate the opening of the museum. The exhibit, in theory, demonstrated MG’s appreciation of the “tastes of the Okinawan people in home architecture, home furnishings, landscape gardening, clothing and textiles, pottery, and other matters concerned with daily living and artistic expression.” Hanna hoped the “exhibit may help to indicate why both emigrant and resident *Okinawans looked with*

²⁵⁹ Willard Hanna, “Okinawa: Ten Years Later,” December 23, 1955. Papers of James T. Watkins, Vol. 46, 46—170-185. Watkins Collection

²⁶⁰ Okinawa ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 103. The infamous bell that is rung during Annapolis graduation ceremonies is a bell that Commodore Perry took from the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1853. Although Perry claimed it was a gift from the Ryukyuan King, it was taken by the Commodore. Okinawan officials have tried, in vain, to get the prized bell returned.

pride and affection upon the isle of their birth, and also why the rehabilitation of the by no means unsophisticated people of Okinawa under Military Government auspices is no mean undertaking.” Hanna, sensitive to the negative image of Okinawa, asserted, “despite reports to the contrary, the island was not economically or socially depressed.”²⁶¹ Hanna believed the exhibit was a major success as both Americans and Okinawans came away impressed by the exhibit. Hanna’s goal of impressing American soldiers was met as “many thousands of GI’s who marveled at the undreamed--of evidence of Okinawan civilization and culture.” More importantly, the exhibit had an indelible effect on Okinawans. “[M]any more thousands of Okinawans,” wrote Hanna, “were comforted to be reminded that Okinawans had not always worn khaki, nor eaten off tin mess gear, nor lived in pine-and-straw beds.” Hanna, however, was not content to house these prized artifacts in a “tin-roofed” building in Ishikawa, plus Ômine’s group had collected so many artifacts that the current building could not display everything.



Figure 20 The Okinawan staff of Higaonna Museum pose for the museum's first exhibit. The sign in front states "Okinawan Exhibit."²⁶²

²⁶¹ Willard Hanna, "Okinawa Exhibit Pamphlet," Watkins Collection, Vol 29, 139. (Emphasis added)

²⁶² Okinawa ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 103.

Out of necessity, Hanna constructed the museum in Ishikawa, as it was one of the few cities to survive the battle relatively intact. Yet Hanna believed the city of Ishikawa, located in the center of Okinawa, was an inadequate location to house Okinawa's treasures as it was too far removed from the traditional centers of Okinawan history and culture. Hanna made a commitment to build a new museum that would truly honor Okinawan history, and he made every effort to choose a location that the people would associate with the Ryukyu past. The most legitimate or "authentic" Ryukyu locale was Shuri, which had been reduced to a pile of rubble.²⁶³ For Hanna, building a new museum out of Shuri's rubble was highly symbolic as the Phoenix metaphor could be used to signify the rebirth of Okinawan history out of Shuri's former walls. At the same time, Hanna wanted a structure that was not ostentatious or smacked of aristocratic airs, as he wanted everyday Okinawans to rediscover their heritage in a structure that spoke to the masses.

Hanna attempted to overcome this problem by housing the collection in a "nearly exact restoration of the home of a well-to-do farmer ... typical of the finer homes of Okinawan in construction and design."²⁶⁴ If Hanna expected gratitude from the Okinawans, he had to be sorely disappointed when the Okinawan Advisory Council condemned the project as an insult to the many people mired in extreme poverty.²⁶⁵ Undeterred, Hanna's project pressed forward and by using "unconventional military channels," built in Shuri a "corrugated tin roofed, temporary structure" in March 1946. Equally important, Hanna argued that MG should not run the museum and instead should

²⁶³ The concern over Ryukyu artifacts stands in stark contrast to the current U.S. indifference to the looting of Iraq's rich culture.

²⁶⁴ Willard Hanna, "Okinawa Exhibit Pamphlet," Watkins Collection, Vol 29, 139.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.* This council consisted of fifteen men who advised the military government to the recovery of Okinawa.

be run by the Okinawans themselves. In December 1947, MG finally relinquished control and the Okinawa Civil Administration was given full control of Shuri museum.

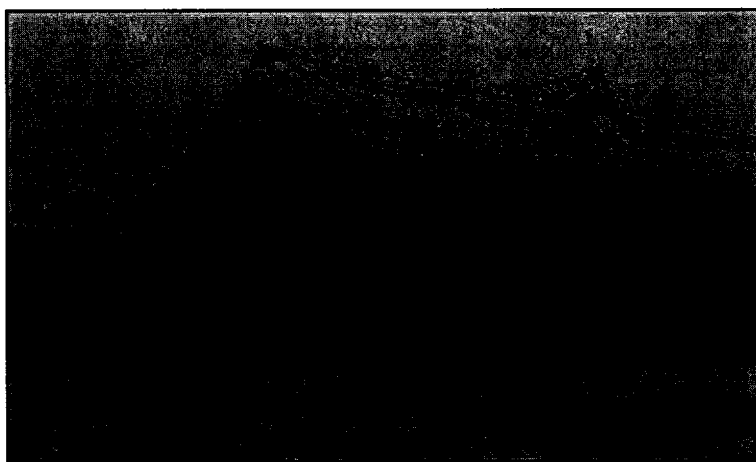


Figure 21 Hanna's temporary museum in Shuri was eventually replaced by this museum, also located in Shuri, in 1953. It is designed in Ryukyuan style.²⁶⁶

Hanna promoted Ryukyuan identity and culture in a variety of other ways. During the prewar era, Japan attempted to impose State Shinto and discouraged or suppressed the indigenous animistic practices prevalent on Okinawa. The American Military Government, conversely, promoted freedom of religion, which allowed indigenous spiritual practices to reemerge. Official Okinawan holidays were now established, including a quasi “Independence Day” holiday on April 24 discussed below. The Military Government began to publish, in Japanese, a new weekly newspaper to publicize its agenda, the *Uruma Shinpô*. An elegant yet obscure indigenous name for Ryukyu, *uruma* connoted the former aristocratic class of Shuri and men of letters, *bunjin*, during the era of the Ryukyu Kingdom and, in particular, a renowned member of the

²⁶⁶ Okinawa ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 103.

Shuri nobility, Shikina Seimei (1615-1715).²⁶⁷ The only newspaper published locally, the *Uruma Shinpô*, had a “captured” audience, making it an effective organ for the Military Government. It is unlikely, however, that the newspaper’s name had the intended effect of evoking nostalgia for a lost Ryukyu heritage. The majority of the people likely had no clear idea of what exactly *uruma* meant or the energy to contemplate its significance.²⁶⁸ In fact, this effort may even have backfired to the extent that *uruma* reminded people of a time when the peasants experienced a harsh and exploitative rule under the former Shuri elite. When, in the early 1950s, the Military Government handed publication responsibility to the local staff, they dropped the title and renamed the new paper the *Ryukyu Shinpô*.²⁶⁹

Understanding that art and artists play an important role in cultural transmission, Hanna cultivated close relationships with Okinawan artists. Local artists and their works were promoted in special exhibitions. The dean of Okinawan artists, Yamada Shinzan, received special attention because MG, most notably Hanna, viewed “drawing of life in Okinawa’s prewar period as a way of teaching the American occupation forces here something about Okinawa prior to the war.”²⁷⁰ His daughter, Yamada Tatsuko, observed that “they wanted to know everything about the island from its customs and

²⁶⁷ *Okinawa Encyclopedia* 沖縄大百科事典上巻、(沖縄県那覇市: 沖縄タイムス社, 1983), 332. 仲宗根原和 沖縄から琉球へ: 米国政変乱期の政治事件史、(那覇市: 月刊沖縄社, 1973), 108-109. Shikina, statesman and literati, penned *omoidegusa* (思出草) around 1700.

²⁶⁸ I have asked many Okinawans of various ages if they knew what *uruma* meant and found few who understood its connotation.

²⁶⁹ *Okinawa Encyclopedia* 沖縄大百科事典下巻、(沖縄県那覇市: 沖縄タイムス社, 1983), 887. Despite possessing the same title, the postwar *Ryukyu Shinpo* should not be confused with the prewar *Ryukyu Shinpo* in terms of continuity. The histories of these two papers are quite distinct.

²⁷⁰ Ruth Ann Keyso, *Women of Okinawa: Nine Voices from a Garrison Island*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 59. “Okinawan Artists,” *Watkin Papers*, Vol. 29, 168-169. Yamada would later be commissioned by a quasi USCAR organization to provide illustrations in a book celebrating the 100th anniversary of Commodore Perry’s arrival in the Ryukyu Kingdom. This anniversary was heavily promoted by the American occupation to show the long term friendship between the two peoples.

traditions, to its food and architecture.”²⁷¹ Yamada had achieved renown in the prewar era as an aspiring sculptor. At the age of 18, he entered a nationwide sculpting contest “in which one artist from each of Japan’s forty-seven prefectures was solicited to create a piece of art.” The judges agreed that his entry was the best and subsequently Emperor Hirohito and his wife purchased it. But, the judges also decided that “first prize could not go to an Okinawan,” and awarded the top prize to a “Japanese”.²⁷² Yamada, therefore, was the perfect artist to represent a renaissance in Okinawan arts.

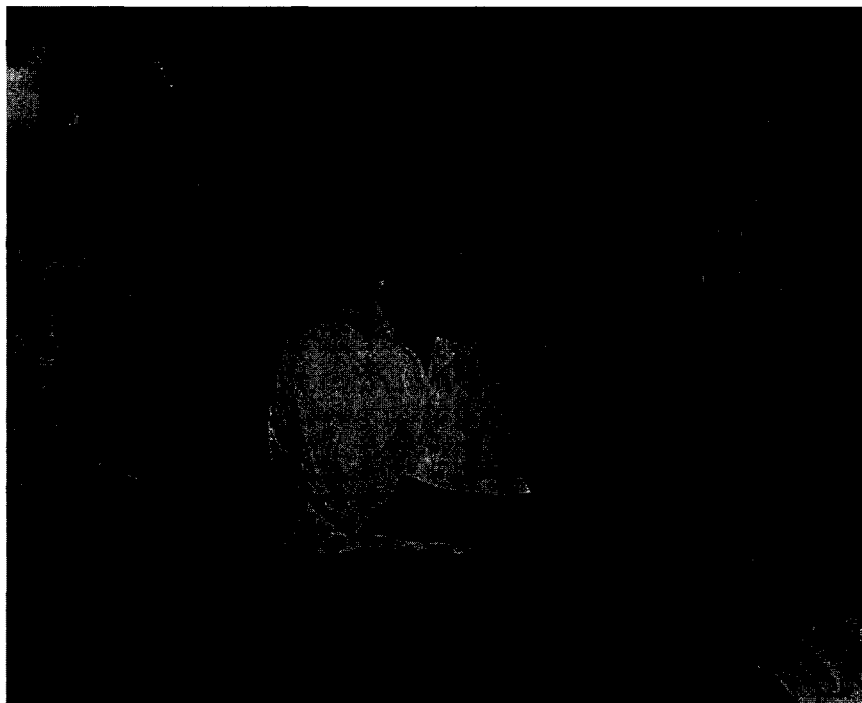


Figure 22 Yamada Shinzan showing his art work.²⁷³

²⁷¹ Keyso, *Women of Okinawa*, 59. He went to Tokyo to study sculpting and apprenticed with a Japanese sculptor named Yamada. Eventually, he was adopted into the sculptor’s family and changed his Okinawan surname Tokashiki to Yamada

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 65.

²⁷³ Okinawa ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 102.

Hanna arranged to build small retreat for Yamada in 1945, close to where a recently constituted Ryukyuan performing arts troupe was practicing. Believing Yamada could greatly contribute to revitalizing the Ryukyuan past, Hanna ordered that an area be cleared of coral rock, a costly and inappropriate use of resources considering most Okinawans still lived in tents supplied by the U.S. military, in order to build a house fitting of Yamada's cultural significance. Next they "reinstalled floors and sliding panels," and "had even gone to the unheard-of extremes of attaching a ceiling, albeit of Navy sheeting rather than fine-grained cryptomeria." Furthermore, Hanna also ordered the construction of an art village, near the newly created museum in Ishikawa. This village could house up to eight artist and their families.²⁷⁴ Although Hanna's effort was driven by a sincere commitment to the resurrection of Okinawan art, it was a risky, if not extreme, effort. Hanna risked his career because it was illegal to use U.S. personnel and supplies to build private houses, especially when most Okinawans still lived in tents and struggled to obtain the necessities of life.

²⁷⁴ Willard Hanna, "Okinawa: Ten Years Later," December 23, 1955. Watkins Collection, Vol. 46, 174.

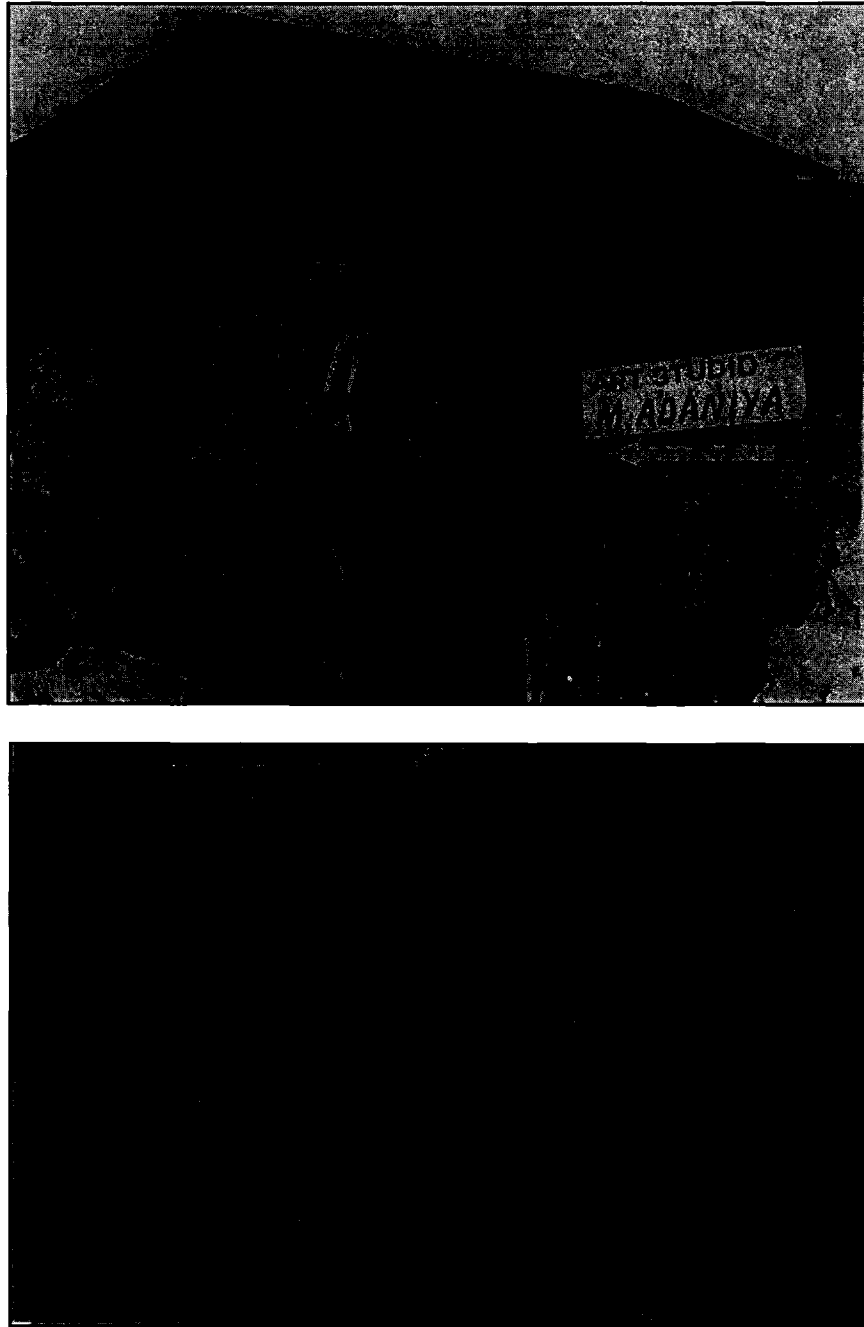


Figure 23 In the top photo, Hanna's art village in Ishikawa. Bottom photo, Okinawan artists painting for the *Uruma Shinpo*.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁵ Okinawa ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 106. Kabira Chôshin, *Shûsengo no Okinawa Bunka Kyôsei Shi*, (Okinawa: Gekkan Okinawa Sha, 1997), 71.

Hanna, however, did not stop there. He provided paper, paints, and brushes, most of which he had purchased on a quick trip to Kyoto. Hanna also got Yamada fitted by a Navy ophthalmologist with a pair of steel-rimmed GI glasses. Food was a precious commodity on the island, yet Hanna made sure Yamada did not go without and “once a week a gigantic military truck rolled up to [his] house to deliver...boxes filled with ice cream, canned goods, cookies and milk,” at a time when most people had to wait in long lines for their rations.²⁷⁶ Hanna’s efforts eventually got Yamada back “into production” and he made drawings depicting the Ryukyuan past. Evidently, Hanna made sure the *Daily Okinawan*, an English-language newspaper aimed at U.S. soldiers, ran his sketches “about once a week.”²⁷⁷ Hanna’s efforts eventually provided a sufficient foundation for Okinawan artists to hold their own first Okinawa Art Exhibition (*Okiten*) in 1949 and they acknowledged the art and the exhibition would not have been possible without Hanna’s patronage in 1945-46. Thanks to Hanna’s patronage Okinawan artists were “ushered back into the newly-restored monetary economy as distinctly upper-class citizens,” undoubtedly fondly remembering their American benefactors.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 59.

²⁷⁷ Keyso, *Women of Okinawa*, 59. Willard Hanna, “Okinawa: Ten Years Later,” December 23, 1955. Watkins Collection, Vol. 46, 174.

²⁷⁸ Willard Hanna, “Okinawa: Ten Years Later,” December 23, 1955. Watkins Collection, Vol. 46, 174.



Figure 24 Okinawan artists hold their first exhibit, *Okiten*, in 1949.²⁷⁹

Due to Hanna's liberal patronage, not just Yamada but "all people involved in the arts were treated well."²⁸⁰ When Hanna constructed the first museum in Ishikawa, he also built nearby an outdoor cultural performing center. At this center, a small troupe of Okinawan performing artists performed traditional music and plays for displaced Okinawans living in temporary camps. The success of this program led Hanna to create one of the most popular and effective programs of Ryukyuanization. Hanna sent this troupe of the "leading Okinawan actors and actresses" to perform traditional plays, songs, and operas throughout the island.²⁸¹ Eventually, orders were given to build an outdoor "stage in every city, town, and village." Historian Ôta Masahide has argued these

²⁷⁹ Okinawa ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 106.

²⁸⁰ Keyso, *Women of Okinawa*, 60.

²⁸¹ Entertainment Circuit, Memorandum Number 55, U.S. Naval Military Government, November 7, 1945. Watkin Papers, Vol. 29, 148.

performances eased the people's everyday deprivation and eventually, "as people's lives calmed, the movement to preserve cultural assets and other arts became stronger."²⁸²

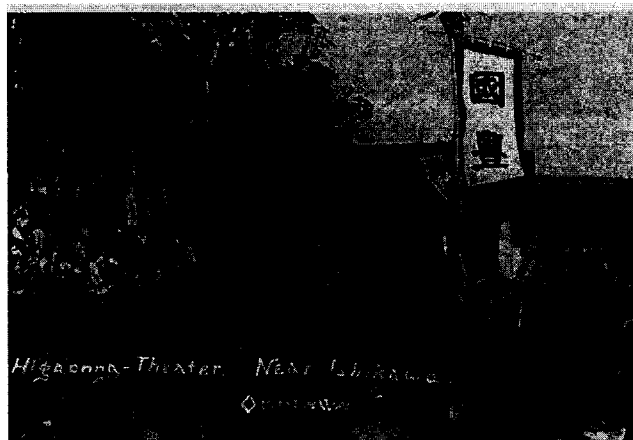


Figure 25 Hanna's first outdoor theater, Higaonna, in Ishikawa.²⁸³

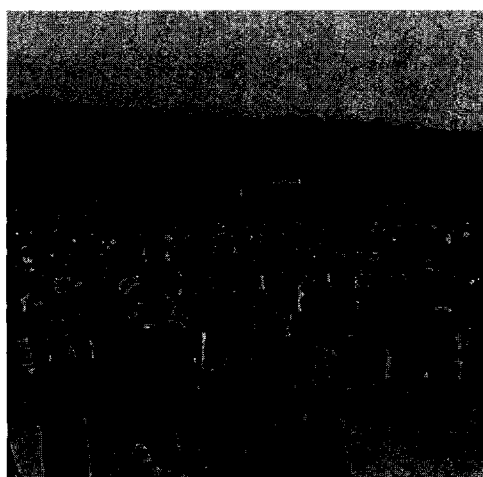


Figure 26 Thousands watch traditional Okinawan dance held on a open air theater called a *rotengekijô*.²⁸⁴

²⁸² Okinawa ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 102.

²⁸³ Ibid.

After extensive rehearsals at the military government's headquarters in Ishikawa, the "troupe had taken to the road for as rugged a schedule of appearances as could be encompassed in open six-by-six trucks, roaring over rough coral highway through wind, rain and dust."²⁸⁵ Lacking formal instruments, the resourceful troupe made their own *sanshin* (three stringed instrument) "from cans and then sewed costumes from parachutes and traveled around from neighborhood to neighborhood performing."²⁸⁶ Throughout Okinawa, "each village, town and city had a *rotengekijō* (open-air theater) where the actors performed" and crowds numbering tens of thousands was usual.²⁸⁷ After the shock of the war and especially the treatment Okinawans suffered at the hands of the Japanese military, the performances were not only a welcome break from the arduous task of rebuilding, but served to resurrect a Ryukyuan past that had nearly been effaced by seventy years of Japanese assimilation.

²⁸⁴ *Sengo Okinawa Shashin zero kara no Gendai*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1979), 59.

²⁸⁵ Hanna, "Okinawa: Ten Years Later," Watkins Collection, Vol. 46, 173.

²⁸⁶ Keyso, *Women of Okinawa*, 60

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

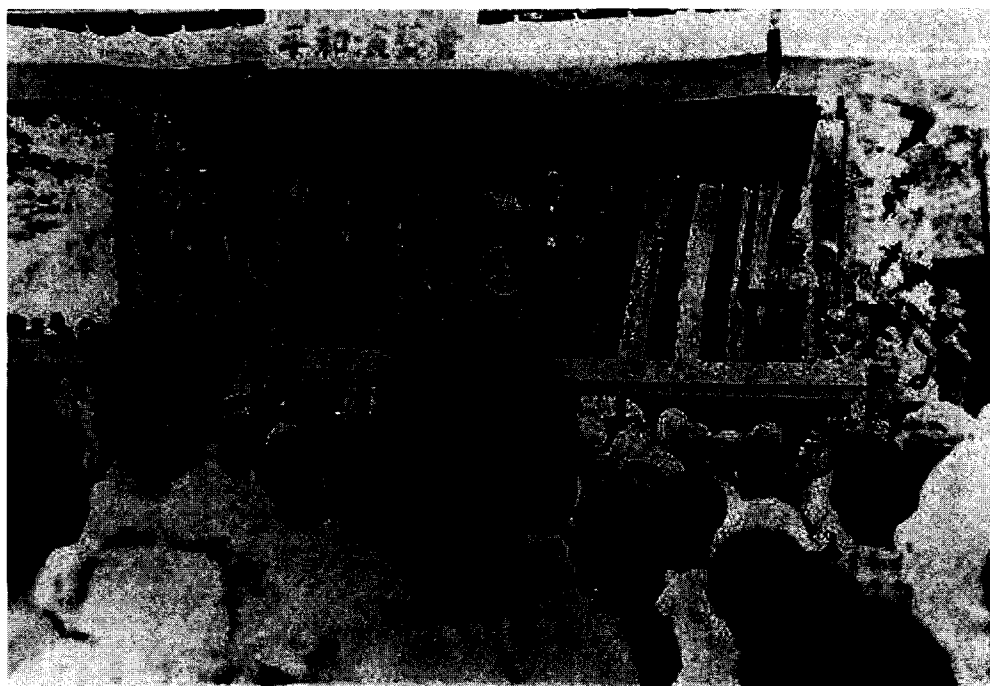


Figure 27 Performing traditional Ryukyuan performing art. The sign at the top of the stage reads *Heiwa Engei Kai* (The Association for Harmonious Performance Arts).²⁸⁸

These performances, complete with traditional costumes, textiles, music, and songs, served as a powerful reminder that before they were Japanese, Ryukyuan had their own unique culture. For example, a play, entitled “Old Man’s Dance,” was a “poetic eulogy to the ancient Kingdom” of Ryukyu “while the gold-robed, white-bearded dancer performed the stately steps which had been admired by Chinese and Japanese emissaries to the royal court at Shuri....”²⁸⁹ *Ryūbū*, a traditional Ryukyuan dance, was also popular with the masses. It originated as a special performance for visiting dignitaries from Ming China in the fifteenth century, but over time had evolved “into an

²⁸⁸ *Sengo Okinawa Shashin zero kara no Gendai*, (Okinawa: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1979), 59.

²⁸⁹ Hanna, “Okinawa: Ten Years Later,” Watkins Collection, Vol. 46, 173.

art form popular among commoners.”²⁹⁰ These performances were extremely popular as the audiences were “large and patient” as the “programs last[ed] up to six hours.”²⁹¹ Ruth Ann Keyso assessment of *Ryūbū*, holds that in the “immediate postwar years,” the Ryukyuan performing arts helped them to “regain their lost sense of self.” Overall, the “preservation of this performing art, many islanders claim, is the key to conserving Okinawa’s heritage.”²⁹²

Yamada Tatsuko, the daughter of the famous artist Yamada Shinzan, is one such example of the transmission of Okinawan heritage to a new generation. Today, many consider Tatsuko to be one of the best performers in Ryukyuan dance and goes worldwide to teach and perform *Ryūbū*. Tatsuko’s father encouraged her to learn *Ryūbū* because he “thought classical Okinawan dance would help me in the future.” Tatsuko, who grew up in the artist’s compound in Ishikawa, saw the performances at nearby Higaonna Theater, which helped to instill her desire to learn *Ryūbū*.²⁹³

Another facet of the Ryukyuanization program was the teaching of Ryukyuan history. Navy Lt. James Watkins, a key member of the civil affairs team, urged Hanna to establish an Okinawa historical society.²⁹⁴ Both Watkins and Hanna knew that Tokyo had forbid the teaching of Okinawan history during Japan’s prewar rule, which meant most Okinawans had no consciousness of their own heritage. To rectify this situation, Hanna again used his position as head of the Educational and Cultural Affairs Section to

²⁹⁰ Keyso, *Women of Okinawa*, 57.

²⁹¹ 青山洋二、米国記者が見た沖縄平和20年、(沖縄市: 新城印刷、1985), 78-79.

²⁹² Keyso, *Women of Okinawa*, 57. ”

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ James Watkins, “The Past Year in Review, April 13, 1946. Hiyane Teruo ed. et. al., *Papers of James T. Watkins IV: Historical Records of Postwar Okinawa and the Beginning of U.S. Occupancy*, Vol. 89, (Ginowan, Okinawa: Ryokurindo Shoten, date unknown), 167-169.

publish a history textbook that would allow schoolchildren to learn about the richness of Okinawa history. This textbook, for example, included the tales of Sokan Noguni, who had introduced sweet potatoes from China to Okinawa 300 years before that had saved tens of thousands of Okinawans from famine over the years. The textbook also highlighted Okinawan maritime traditions, emphasizing the encounters between Portuguese and Okinawan seamen in the Indian Ocean during the sixteenth century.²⁹⁵ Hanna even wrote one of the first monographs in English on Okinawa history entitled “Okinawa: The Land and People,”²⁹⁶ which situates the islands’ history in its own context, not as a subset of either Japanese or Chinese history. The book sought to educate American occupation officials who may have viewed the Okinawans as primitive, docile and simple people. Hanna wanted to dispel such notions that negatively affected occupation policy. He reassured his readers that “Americans have acquired no primitive Pacific Island where the people can live in grass huts, eat coconuts...” Instead, he concluded, “America must deal with a land and a people who could produce a King Sho-Shin, could entertain emissaries from Imperial China in the manner.....and impress Perry....with their civilized accomplishments....” He also warned not to underestimate people who could “survive the worst disasters of the twentieth century warfare and emerge decent, and sane and energetic in reconstruction.”²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ Kensei Yoshida, *Democracy Betrayed: Okinawa Under U.S. Occupation*, (Bellingham, Washington: Center for East Asian Studies Western Washington University, 2001), 33.

²⁹⁶ Willard Hanna, “Okinawa: The Land and People,” Watkins Collection, Vol. 31, 31.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.



Figure 28 Hanna's publication of several textbooks between 1945 and 1947. The textbook in the upper-left hand corner reads *Okinawa Rekishi (The History of Okinawa)*. The image is of an Okinawan “Shisa” which symbolizes Okinawa’s connection to China, rather than Japan.²⁹⁸

Several significant points emerge in Hanna’s rendering of Okinawa’s history. First, he adds an important corrective to the information contained in the *Civil Affairs Handbook*, especially in challenging the condescending attitudes toward the so-called “primitive” people of Okinawa. Second, his book served as the model for George Kerr’s 1950s popular history of history textbook used during the American occupation. Consequently, ten of thousands of Okinawans students during the occupation studied their own rich history, which the Japanese prewar system completely ignored. Historical

²⁹⁸*Okinawa Sengo Shi 1945-1998*, (Okinawa: Okinawa Taimusu Sha, 1998), 26.

consciousness, Hanna understood, was central to all identities and familiarity with their past, was essential to nurturing a Ryukyuan imagined community. Hanna's work brought to life a temporal space and discursive consciousness prior to Japanese annexation and more importantly, reinterpreted the period of Japanese assimilation as a betrayal to an Okinawan identity.

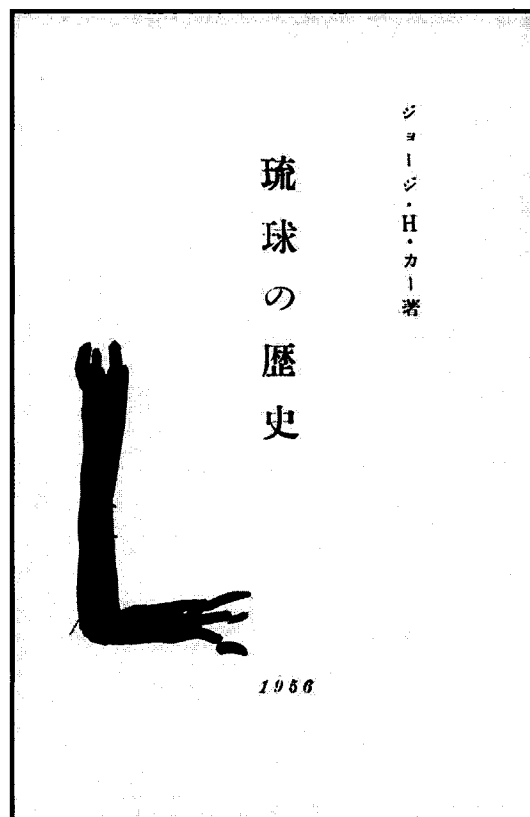


Figure 29 George Kerr's book *Ryukyu no Rekishi* 琉球の歴史 (*History of the Ryukyus*), published in 1956. The script on the right is Kerr's name written in Katakana.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁹ Author's photograph.

Another effort to restore a sense of Ryukyuan political identity came from Hanna's colleague, Navy Lt. James Watkins. With the military government and the Okinawan Advisory Council were based in Ishikawa, far from the traditional centers of political power, Watkins was attentive to a "consideration for dignity—and a befitting setting—so important in oriental eyes."³⁰⁰ Watkins, after meeting with the Okinawan Advisory Council, wrote in his diary that "I am convinced that if possible we should secure Shuri, the ancient (pre-Naha) capital, for the Okinawans" because in reference to the existing location in Ishikawa, "without either Naha or Shuri, one can as easily find a center for national life as one might for American in Arkansas."³⁰¹ Watkins eventually raised the issue of establishing a new capital. Nakasone Genwa, a member of the Advisory Council, agreed with Watkins that the Council had to "consider the subject from the perspective of Okinawa's future benefit, though not all on the Council agreed with the idea" because of the reality that Shuri had been leveled in the fighting.³⁰² Nevertheless, Watkins told the Okinawan Advisory Council that "military government officers would continue to bend their efforts *towards the rebirth of Okinawa*."³⁰³ Since establishing a new capital in Shuri was premature, Watkins, following Hanna's lead, told the Okinawan Advisory Council of his intention to "use the museum...as a means of propaganda to show them that Okinawa had once been something more than an island of broken-down farm houses and pig-sties." Watkins, continuing his lecture, noted the importance of using other significant historical and cultural sites, such as *Nakagusuku*

³⁰⁰ Memorandum to DCMG on Government Physical Set-up, Civilians Affairs Dept, Jan. 9, 1946, Watkins Collection, Vol. 36, 56.

³⁰¹ Watkins War Diary, "Government-Capital," December 31, 1945, Watkins Collection, Vol 36, 56.

³⁰² 仲宗根麻和、沖縄から琉球へ：米軍政混乱期の政治事件史、(那覇市：月刊沖縄社 1973), 192-194.

³⁰³ Watkins War Diary, "Caldwell-Watkins Policies," February 16, 1946. Hiyane Teruo ed. et. al., *Papers of James T. Watkins IV: Historical Records of Postwar Okinawa and the Beginning of U.S. Occupancy*, Vol. 36, (Ginowan, Okinawa: Ryokurindo Shoten, date unknown), 66.

Castle, for the same purpose.³⁰⁴ Overall, the museum project and the attempt to relocate the political capital to Shuri strongly suggests that the military government intended to nurture a distinct ethnic consciousness from the onset.

The Attempt to Create Ryukyuan Political Autonomy

Hanna's campaign to nurture a reconstituted Ryukyuan identity was not matched by American political reforms. Unlike Hanna's efforts to promote a distinct historical, cultural, and ethnic identity, which were accepted by officials within the Military Government, proposals for democratic political reforms encountered stiff resistance. Navy Commander John Caldwell and Lt. Commander James T. Watkins represented the progressive faction that believed the people should be granted a measure of self government. They argued that as long as the Military Government was in control, it replicated the prewar Japanese system in denying the local population political representation. If the Americans were going to live up to their self-image as democratic liberators, introducing self-government was the logical step. Yet Caldwell and Watkins failed to win support early in the occupation. Ironically, it was the massive demobilization of American troops and the influx of repatriated Okinawan emigrants that provided a window of opportunity for the progressive faction to experiment with Ryukyuan self-government.

Rapid demobilization had an overall detrimental effect upon the occupation of Okinawa because it hobbled the military government's efforts at reconstruction.

³⁰⁴ Watkins War Diary, "Art Treasures," December 31, 1945. Hiyane Teruo ed. et. al., *Papers of James T. Watkins IV: Historical Records of Postwar Okinawa and the Beginning of U.S. Occupancy*, Vol. 89, (Ginowan, Okinawa: Ryokurindo Shoten, date unknown), 92-93.

Table 1 Decrease in Military Government (Navy) Personnel first half of 1946.³⁰⁵

Date	Number of Military Government Officers	Number of Military Governemnt Enlisted Personnel
1 January	147 Officers	1081 Enlisted Men
1 March	114 Officers	834 Enlisted Men
1 July	44 Officers	177 Enlisted Men

The reduction from a total of 1228 military government personnel to only 221 military government personnel on July 1 represented an astounding *eighty-two percent drop* in only six months at the very time that a civilian population of 300,000 lacked adequate infrastructure, food, and housing. The acuteness of the situation was reflected in the fact that “villages of 1800 were caring for 30,000.”³⁰⁶ To make matters worse, nearly two hundred thousand Okinawans were being repatriated from Japan and Japan’s former colonies, even though the island was in no condition to support the existing population. The order came from General MacArthur who “wanted to get rid of that surplus population (142,000 [Okinawans] in 70,000,000 [Japanese])”.³⁰⁷ Despite the vehement protests by Caldwell and the Navy, MacArthur’s orders prevailed. The vast majority of the Okinawans living in Japan were deported to Okinawa between 1946 and 1947, nearly doubling the island’s population in one year.

Despite these seemingly impossible conditions, Caldwell and others, who had been eating, breathing and living “Ryukyu” since mid 1944, continued to rehabilitate the

³⁰⁵ Report of Military Government Activities for Period From 1 April 1945 to 1 July 1946, Headquarters U.S. Naval Military Government Ryukyu Islands, July 1, 1945, Watkins Collection, Vol. 14, 183.

³⁰⁶ John Caldwell, First Tentative Draft of the “Military Government Planning, Xth Army, August 1944-Feb. 1945, Date of Draft Publication Unknown, Watkins Collection, Vol. 21, 149.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

Ryukyu past and create a consciousness among the people of a Ryukyu identity.³⁰⁸ Although at times the Navy's one year occupation was patronizing, paternalistic, and even contemptuous of the people, it was, compared with the Japanese seventy year rule, generous to a degree that proved enlightening to the people. The most progressive and energetic members of the Navy's military government team, James Watkins, Hanna Willard, and John Caldwell, were committed to empowering the Okinawans, even if it meant fighting their superiors tooth-and-nail to provide space for the people to exercise their own agency. Caldwell, in particular, battled his superiors who had internalized the prejudice contained in the Japanese source materials that Lt. Comdr. George Murdock used to produce the *Civil Affairs Handbook*. Caldwell's superiors, such as Brig. General William Crist and Col. Charles Murray, "tended to over emphasize the backwardness of the people, they arrived at an oversimplified concept of the economic and social system, they regarded the island and its inhabitants as pitifully impoverished."³⁰⁹ Consequently, military government "both consciously and subconsciously...worked on the assumption that the Okinawa" was culturally backward in addition to being economically "depressed and this island home exhibited the worst features of a vastly overpopulated and under-endowed South Sea island."³¹⁰

Caldwell, however, argued the people "possess sufficient indigenous leadership to manage their own affairs in much larger degree than is allowed them at present."

Caldwell's plan for allowing Okinawans customary forms of self-government faced opposition by another member of the Military Government's brain trust, former Yale

³⁰⁸ For more information on the organizational flowchart/explanation of military government see: 宮城悦二郎 "初期軍政(1945-1946) ワトキンスコレクションより," 琉球大学去文学部紀要 地域社会科学系 第 1995 年 3 月, 71-96.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 96.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

anthropologist George Murdock. Murdock held non-western cultures in low regard and hence, assuming the “White Man’s Burden,” wanted to create “little America” in the Ryukyus since he believed the Okinawans incapable of governing themselves and needing American tutelage. Caldwell stated that such condescending proposals “never cease to puzzle me” as “one would think that a distinguished anthropologist would be the last to attempt a wholesale importation of alien institutions into a foreign culture.”³¹¹ Murdock and others who viewed Okinawans as children, incapable of taking care of themselves, Caldwell protested, obstructed “the political and economic reconstruction of the people.” Caldwell, who had enough points to be demobilized in January of 1946, decided to extend his service for six months because he now had the opportunity to implement his self-governing plan now that his main rival, Murdock, had already been rotated home. In fact, the rapid rate of the demobilization of Military Government personnel initially favored Caldwell’s plan because the limited numbers of ranking U.S. officers necessitated assistance in governance from the Okinawans. Caldwell’s colleague, Lt. Comdr. James Watkins also extended his stay because “*as I see it, the salvation of the Okinawans depends upon themselves. Therein lies my hope. But we must give them the needed organs of government if they are able to help themselves.*”³¹² With the vast majority of American soldiers anxious to return home, the idealistic commitment of Caldwell and Watkins to extend their stay in order to “get social controls back into the hands of the Okinawans” was a small but critical step, albeit limited, in the self-empowerment of the Ryukyus.

Caldwell and Watkins moved quickly to implement their plan, appointing an Okinawan to be head of the education department as well as the civilian police force.

³¹¹ Ibid., 143.

³¹² Watkins War Diary, March 31, 1946 (emphasis in original), Watkins Collection.

These two areas were especially critical because in the prewar period, Tokyo placed education and the police under national control. Next, the prewar local districts were reformed, which served as the basis for the new Okinawan Central Administration (or Civilian Government). The new government consisted of “administrative departments, a court system, town and village administrations, and an advisory body”.³¹³ One note of historical significance is that the people had directly elected the majority of the advisory body -- council and mayor positions -- on September 20, 1945. Men, and now women, over the age of 25, were enfranchised. Supposedly, the idea for the enfranchisement of women came from the Okinawan Advisory Committee, not so much out of a progressive impulse but due to the reality that as a result of the battle a “high proportion of the families consisted only of women and children.”³¹⁴ Even in the immediate aftermath of the terrible battle, the turnout for the first-ever universal suffrage election in either the Ryukyus or mainland Japan was high. In one district, Sedake, eighty-eight percent of the eligible voters (11,345 out of 12,876) voted.³¹⁵

The military government then requested the advisory body to nominate three people to become *Chiji* or Governor. Their first choice, Shikiya Koshin, was approved by the military government to become the first native Okinawan to head an Okinawan governing authority on April 24, 1946. Reflecting the overall sentiment of self-empowerment among the people, Shikiya stated in his inaugural speech that “with thankfulness for the kind intentions of Military Government, we Okinawans are filled

³¹³ Yoshida, *Democracy Betrayed*, 33.

³¹⁴ James Watkins, “Rehabilitation: Political (I)” Unpublished account of early occupation history of the Ryukyus, Watkins Collection, Vol. 37, 70.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

with hope that, in striving *to build a better Okinawa than before, we will achieve the golden age for Okinawa with our hands.*”³¹⁶

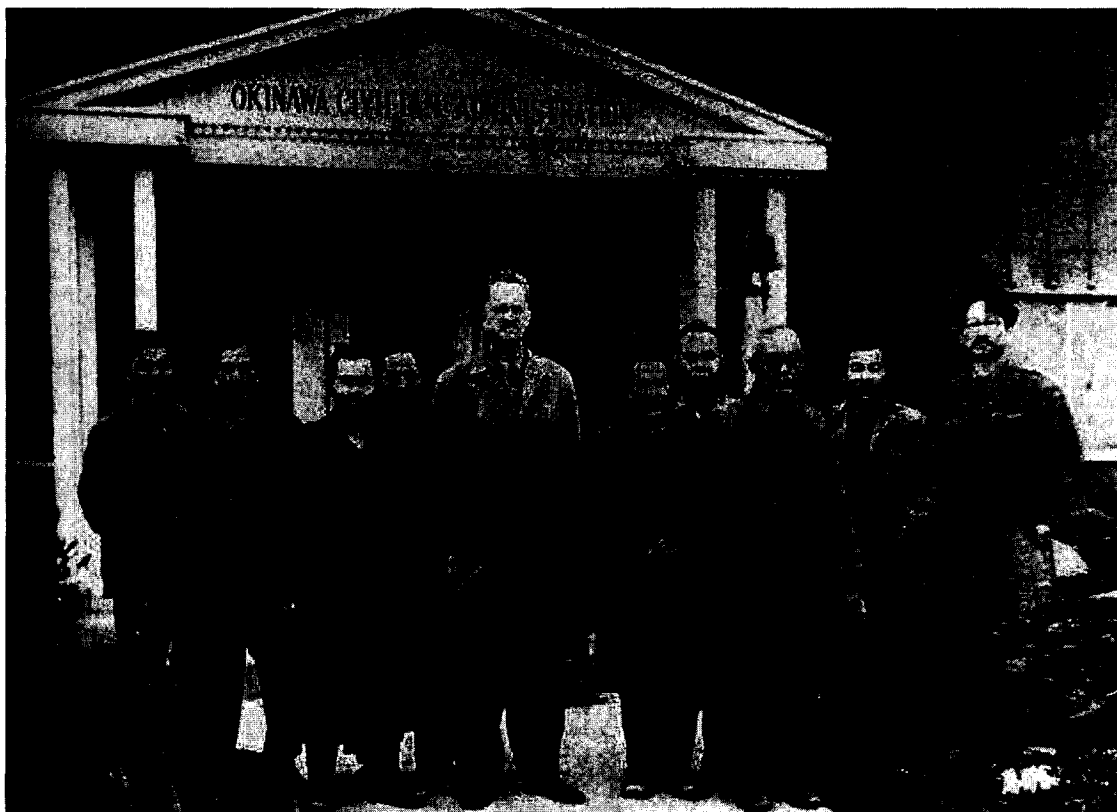


Figure 30 The Okinawa Civilian Administration and its building, located in Ishikawa.³¹⁷

The formations of a new government offered a unique opportunity to not only create legitimacy for a modern Ryukyuan government but, moreover, to generate wider popular identification with the restoration of Ryukyu consciousness. Watkins felt the

³¹⁶ Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, *Keystone: The American Occupation of Okinawa and U.S.-Japanese Relations*, (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2000), 34. (Emphasis added)

³¹⁷ *Okinawa Sengo Shi 1945-1998*, (Okinawa: Okinawa Taimsu Sha, 1998), 25.

inaugural ceremony, “ideally should have been the occasion for the greatest possible ceremony,” because in part “Okinawans love ceremonial and relate the importance of an occasion to the accompanying formalities.” In addition, Watkins suggested that it “would have been wise for Military Government to signalize the epochal step then taken by surrounding the occasion with as much pomp as possible.”³¹⁸ Insufficient time and opposition from the Deputy Commander of the Military Government, Colonel C. T. Murray, however, prevented the staging of an elaborate ceremony, which “came as a great disappointment to the staff members most closely associated with the rehabilitation of the island.”³¹⁹ Nevertheless, Watkins made sure that some formal investiture took place, and despite the absence of popular participation in the ceremony itself, he took some comfort that at least “the people of Ishikawa joined in a public celebration in honor of the new governor.” Moreover, the military government declared the day of the investiture, April 24, 1946, a national holiday. Finally, Watkins made sure the inauguration received “full publicity in the *Uruma Shinpô*, the population’s one paper and Military Government’s official organ.”³²⁰ These concerted efforts by the Military Government illustrate their intention to produce among the people the same consciousness echoed in Shikiya’s inaugural statement that the new government represented a new “golden age for Okinawa.”³²¹

Coupled with the trauma experienced in the Battle of Okinawa, the progressive plans of Caldwell and likeminded Navy officers, and the desire of Shikiya to create a

³¹⁸ James Watkins, “Rehabilitation: Political (II)” Unpublished account of early occupation history of the Ryukyus, Watkins Collection, Vol. 37, 168. Watkins called for the ceremony to be staged before an “audience of Military Government personnel, distinguished guests from other occupation units, representatives of the press, and Okinawan officials....”

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 169.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 173.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 175.

“golden age for Okinawan with our hands,” seemed to have promoted consciousness of a distinct identity. A letter addressed to MG stated that “the USA and her Army will do much for the co-operation and friendship of the *Ryukyuan*s.”³²² Although a single letter is by no means definitive evidence, the author’s use of “*Ryukyuan*s” instead of “*Okinawans*,” suggests that the premodern image of Ryukyuan had taken on a new, positive meaning.

The Formation of Political Parties: A Step Closer to Okinawan Autonomy

A second round of political reforms in 1947 allowed the people to form political associations. The continued selection of council members by the military government had prompted charges of favoritism and “rubber-stamping” of military government directives. In May 1947, an organization called the *Okinawa Kensetsu Konwa-kai* (Discussion-Study Group to Reconstruct Okinawa) was created to encourage the formation of political parties to express the people’s wishes. Nakamoto Kazuhiko, a noted Ryukyuan scholar and researcher, wrote that “both leftists and progressives, whose activities had been restricted under prewar Japanese administration, responded immediately.”³²³ Sensitive to these charges and realizing that the people possessed high expectations for political reform and by the rhetoric of Ryukyuanization and democratization, the military government began planning for the eventual direct election of mayors and assembly positions.

In anticipation of the upcoming elections, the military government ended the ban on the formation on political parties on October 15, 1947. This directive, however,

³²² Clellan S. Ford, “Occupation Experiences on Okinawa,” *Annals of the American Academy* Jan. 1950, 182.

³²³ Nakamoto Kazuhiko, “Democracy and Security in Conflict: America’s Mission in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945-1958,” (University of Maryland College Park, MA Thesis, 1997), 24.

revealed the limits of how much democracy the military government would tolerate. The directive stated that no political party would be able to

“Utter any speech or circulate any printed or written matter for political purposes which is hostile or detrimental to or which criticizes the policies of any of the Allied Nations towards the Ryukyans or the policies of Military Government towards the Ryukyu or Ryukyans or criticizes those acts of any local civilian administration which it performs at the direction of Military Government.”³²⁴

The majority of the fledging political parties, however, did not seem to acknowledge the political significance between “Ryukyu” and “Okinawa” because most used “Okinawa” to name their organizations: the *Okinawa Minshu Dômei* (Okinawa Democratic Union), the *Okinawa Jinmin-tô* (Okinawa People’s Party), and the *Okinawa Shakai-tô* (Okinawa Socialist Party). The only deviation was the short-lived *Ryukyu Shakai-tô* (Ryukyu Socialist Party) which eventually merged with the *Okinawa Shakai-tô*.³²⁵

The persistent efforts of the Military Government to reify “Ryukyu” identity seemed to have had some effect as the prewar desire to be Japanese was conspicuously absent in these party’s platforms *as none called for the reunification with Japan*. Instead, calls for an independent republic, direct annexation by the U.S. or American trusteeship under U.N. provisions were made by the parties, which could be seen as a positive referendum on the occupation.³²⁶ The *Okinawa Jinmin-tô*, in its party platform, called

³²⁴ “United States Military Government Special Proclamation No. 23: Political Parties,” October 15, 1947, in *Laws and Regulations During the U.S. Administration of Okinawa 1942-1972 Book I*, Naha: Ikemiya Shokai & Co., 1983. It is significant to point out that while the limits on free speech seem to be the prominent feature of this statement; more important is the conspicuous use of “Ryukyu” in place of “Okinawa.”

³²⁵ It seems likely that “Okinawa” and “Ryukyus” among Okinawans was one and the same thing. Okinawa had been the dominant name for both the island and the prefecture for seventy-years, while “Ryukyu” had largely fallen out of favor.

³²⁶ Mikio Higa, “The Okinawan Reversion Movement,” in Chihiro Hosoya ed., *Okinawa Reversion*, (Pittsburgh, International Studies Association, 1977), 2.

for the continuation of democracy “in political, economic, social, and cultural fields,” in order to create an “autonomous Okinawa.”³²⁷ Although this party would later evolve as the most anti-American party, in its early years it appreciated American democratic reforms and echoing this spirit, called for the “liberating the Ryukyu race.”³²⁸ These platforms, however, did not necessarily reflect overall popular sentiment since most of the population was preoccupied with rebuilding their lives and thus were not politically engaged. Nevertheless, Higa Mikio, an Okinawan scholar, noted that “until early 1951, there were also no individuals or groups that carried on open activities for reversion in Okinawa.”³²⁹

The leaders of the newly formed parties, such as Nakasone Genwa, Kaneshi Sahichi, and Ôgimi Chôtoku, were members of the prewar Okinawan elite. The elites represented the most assimilated “Japanese subjects” of Okinawa’s prewar society. Their collective failure to call for reversion suggests that during the first few years of the occupation there was a profound reconsideration of Okinawa’s relationship to Japan. For example, Ôgimi Chôtoku, founder of *Okinawa Shakai-tô*, called for U.S. annexation arguing this “would save Okinawa from repeating the past tragic experience of Japanese exploitation and poverty.”³³⁰ Echoing this sentiment, the *Okinawa Jinmin-tô*’s platform noted the marked distinction between their former “protectors” from their former “enemy” in that “we Okinawans, who were extremely mistreated under the aggressive war waged by the Japanese militarist,” exist now because of the American “humanistic good will and material assistance.”³³¹

³²⁷ “Report of Organization of the Okinawa People’s Party,” July 27, 1947.” Freimuth Papers.

³²⁸ Ôta, *Essays on Okinawa Problems*, 192.

³²⁹ Higa, “The Okinawan Reversion Movement,” 2.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

³³¹ “Report of Organization of the Okinawa People’s Party,” July 27, 1947.” Freimuth Papers.

After the creation of the political parties and publication of a new electoral law, direct elections were held in February 1948. The people responded vigorously as 88% of the eligible men and 81% of the eligible women voted.³³² In addition, political history was made when four women were elected to the local assemblies, marking the first time any women had held political office in the Ryukyus. The high turnout rate among the people seemed to indicate that they, like the political parties, enthusiastically embraced the new democratic opportunities under the American occupation, opportunities that stood in stark contrast to life in the prewar era. The political parties' rejection of reunification and the very high turnout of voters suggest that both the progressive goals and the fostering of a distinct Okinawan identity by the Navy's Military Government resonated favorably among the people.

Elites, who had been the most assimilated segment of the pre-war period, came to admire the Americans' appreciation of the Ryukyus distinct culture and history. When they heard that three of the most enlightened American Civil Affairs officers, Lt. Coms. James Watkins, John Caldwell and William Lawrence, were being decommissioned and sent home, Shikiya Koshin, Matayoshi Kowa, and Higa Shuhei sent a letter acknowledging their efforts.³³³ These three Americans, they noted, "have studied the whole history of Okinawa for so long a time in such desolate, dreary, inconvenient island where you have had nothing available to comfort yourselves and tried very hard, night and day, to complete your intended programs to save us Okinawas." And in an implicit jab at the heavy handedness of the Japanese occupation, the letter also noted that for the first time in their history, a civilian government, under American auspices, had been formed where all of the "officials are all Okinawans." To memorialize the three

³³² Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, p. 102-120.

³³³ Shikiya was the first Governor of Okinawa gunto, Matayoshi was the lt. gov., and Higa was the chief of the translation bureau.

Americans' contributions, Higa and the others stated they will "present all of you the 'Modern History of Okinawa' in which your names will be engraved and the detail of your excellent work accurately recorded."³³⁴ The appreciation expressed appears to be genuine, and the fact that Matayoshi signed it is itself significant. In the early days of the Advisory Council, of which Matayoshi was a key member, Watkins asked the Council what they "thought about the claim that some young men of Okinawa want to study democracy?" Matayoshi replied that such men "are abnormal."³³⁵ Yet now, it seemed that Matayoshi had a dramatic change-of-heart in what Watkins and others were trying to achieve for Okinawa.

It also seems that many were now cognizant of the possibility of a new Okinawa nation under American auspices. In a visit to Okinawa in 1947, Willard Sebald, chairman of the Allied Council for Japan, asked Shikiya if there "was any hope for her future." In an affirmative response, Shikiya stated "I believe the U.S. armed forces showed better understanding for Okinawa than anybody else in the recent war...I'm convinced that the U.S. will help Okinawa become every bit as great as America."³³⁶

The Ryukyuan Nation Supported from Afar

Support for an independent Okinawa also came from unexpected sources. The Japanese Communist Party (JCP), newly reconstituted under American occupation political reforms, sent congratulations to Okinawa on their new independence.³³⁷ The

³³⁴ Letter from Shikiya Koshin, Matayoshi Kawa, and Higa Shuhei to Lt. Commanders James T. Watkins, John T. Caldwell, William H. Lawrence, June 28, 1946. Hiyane Teruo ed. et. al., *Papers of James T. Watkins IV: Historical Records of Postwar Okinawa and the Beginning of U.S. Occupancy*, Vol. 86, (Ginowan, Okinawa: Ryokurindo Shoten, date unknown), 108-109. The book Higa was referring to was the textbook Hanna ordered written in 1946.

³³⁵ 仲宗根源和、沖縄から琉球へ：米軍統治期の政治事件史。（那覇市：月刊沖縄社、1973）、169。

³³⁶ Ôta, *Essays on Okinawa Problems*, 192-193.

³³⁷ One of the prominent leaders of the JCP was an Okinawan, Tokuda Kyuichi, who served as Secretary-General of the JCP in 1947.

JCP equated Japan's assimilation policy with Japanese imperialism, which surprisingly included the Ryukyu Islands. The JCP sent the following message to a meeting of the Okinawan Federation, a Japanese mainland organization of expatriated Okinawans,

Having suffered for centuries under Japanese dominance and having been subjected to exploitation and oppression under the rule of Japanese imperialism since the Meiji period, you must be overwhelmed with joy now that you have gained the independence and freedom for which you have craved so long, in this period of global democratic revolution.³³⁸

Why did the Okinawan Federation (沖縄人連盟) enthusiastically embrace the JCP's message? In the prewar era, these mainland residents, like all Okinawans, shared a common history of discrimination at the hands of the *naichijin* ("authentic" Japanese), and living on the *naichijin*'s "home turf" meant their discrimination was particularly acute.³³⁹ Yet, similar to the experience of other marginalized ethnic groups, 'difference' produced "the desire of the Okinawan people to narrow the existing psychological gap with the rest of the Japanese..."³⁴⁰ In other words, "it was not a matter of course to be Japanese" because "unlike the ordinary Japanese, the Okinawans had to *become* Japanese." Not surprisingly, in the context of intense wartime nationalism, elite "Okinawans," anxious to show their patriotism, formed the Patriotic Okinawan Association (報国沖縄協会). Some of the prominent Okinawans leading this organization included Baron Ie Chosuke (former member of the House of Peers) and retired Rear Admiral Kanna Kenwa, who were also leading members of the *Taisei-yokusankai*, a nation-wide group of totalitarian patriotic organizations established by the Konoe

³³⁸ Quoted in Ôta, *Essays on Okinawa Problems*, 185.

³³⁹ At the same time, Okinawan intellectuals undoubtedly experienced less discrimination than Okinawan laborers (mostly residing in Osaka) as these intellectual could assimilate with fewer impediments.

³⁴⁰ Akio Watanabe, *The Okinawa Problem: A chapter in Japan-U.S. relations*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1970), 9. Italics in the original.

Cabinet.”³⁴¹ In the new democratic environment of the occupation, the Patriotic Okinawan Association renamed itself as the Okinawan Council (沖縄協会).

In the occupation era these mainland Okinawans “celebrated a thrilling sense of liberation and freedom” and challenged not only their “Japaneseness” but also the mainland Okinawan elite by forming the Okinawa Federation on November 11, 1945 with the notable Okinawan scholar Iha Fuyu as the president.³⁴² One of the first acts of the newly constituted organization was the expulsion of mainland Okinawans who had collaborated with the Japanese militarists. The Federation also “demanded their [collaborators] ouster from the Okinawa Council.”³⁴³

More importantly, the Okinawan Federation promoted independence. Federation member and president of the Kyushu chapter, Miyasato Eiki, asserted that “the time has come [for Okinawa] to be liberated from over 300 years of political, economic, and social oppression.” Furthermore, Miyasato warned that “if Okinawa fails to stand up now, it will never have another chance,” a darkly prescient observation. Miyasato not only sent his message to the Okinawan Advisory Council (the indigenous political entity under U.S. Military Government at that time), but wrote it in the Ryukyuan language, “which Japanese authorities had repressed before the war.”³⁴⁴ The Federation’s newsletter, *Free Okinawa*, reflected and reinforced Miyasato’s sentiments. Echoing the recent plebiscite in Outer Mongolia for independence, *Free Okinawa* believed that the Americans would hold a similar plebiscite for an independent Okinawa. The newsletter reminded readers, who once desired to be good and loyal Japanese subjects, of the tremendous sacrifices the

³⁴¹ “Okinawan Testimony (7): Okinawan Federation,” *Weekly Okinawa Times*, August 10, 1968.

³⁴² Other prominent board members were Hiyagon Antei, Ohama Nobumoto, Higa Shuncho, and Nagaoka Tomotaro.

³⁴³ “Okinawan Testimony (7): Okinawan Federation,” *Weekly Okinawa Times*, August 10, 1968.

³⁴⁴ Ôta, *Essays on Okinawa Problems*, 189.

people of Okinawa had made in the seventy years of Japanese occupation and militarization, and predicted no popular sentiment for an irredentist movement “unless Japan became completely democratic.” A columnist writing in the third issue, *Free Okinawa*, lauded the American occupation efforts in allowing native Okinawans to run their own affairs, was in sharp contrast to Japanese rule where Okinawa was viewed as a “semi-colony.” The newsletter reminded readers that while Okinawans had vainly attempted to be loyal subjects, Japanese would call them “Ryukyuan” not only to “differentiate them from Japanese” but to highlight the impossibility of true assimilation. Thus, in the seventy years of Japanese rule, the people of Okinawa were in a no-win situation: it was demanded that they become and act as loyal subjects, but were never accepted as such. This cruel predicament, however, was no longer an issue because “now that all obstacles have been removed [Japanese rule], the long-awaited dawn is at last with us.”³⁴⁵

Support for independence also came from across the Pacific. An organization based in Washington D.C., Friends of Okinawa, was established in 1947 by former American officers had served in the occupation of the Ryukyus. The organization’s location in Washington D.C. was not happenstance as the organization was aware that Okinawa’s future would be decided there. Garland Evans Hopkins, president of *Friends of Okinawa* and former military government officer in Okinawa, published a fourteen page booklet in 1947, entitled *The Story of Okinawa* that presumably was distributed among pertinent Washington political elite and among former military personnel who had served in Okinawa. The pamphlet’s inside cover proclaimed the *Friends of Okinawa* to be

an organization whose purpose is to provide a means for any who desire to aid in the restoration and rehabilitation of a formerly

³⁴⁵ Ôta, *Essays on Okinawa Problems*, 187-188.

independent people, who were the first victims of the Japanese programs of expansion and, unavoidably, the worst sufferers from American force of arms, to the end that their unique culture and contribution shall not perish from the face of the earth.³⁴⁶

Hopkin's statement echoed the essence of the 1944 OSS report, which should not have been surprising since he was one of the original civil affairs researchers based in Hawa'ii in 1944. Hopkins, like many of his colleagues such as Hanna, Watkins, and Caldwell, had hoped the occupation would confer independence on a people that he believed desired it. To emphasize his pro-independence statement, Hopkins placed this symbol at the bottom of the page.

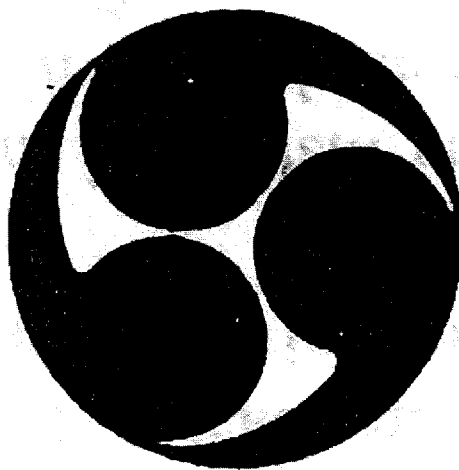


Figure 31 Supposed royal crest of the Shô royal family.

This symbol was the family crest of the Shô Tai Dynasty and the last royal family to rule over an independent Ryukyu Kingdom. The crest, now being used by the Friends of Okinawa, unequivocally evoked Ryukyu independence.

³⁴⁶ Watkins Collection, Vol. 26, 129-139.

The text of the booklet narrated Ryukyu history, stressing that the islands should be perceived culturally, racially, or historically distinct from Japan. Okinawa's "total history," was in fact "the story of a small nation struggling to maintain her national sovereignty and identity, sometimes against the Chinese, sometimes against the Japanese." What had staved off these two powerful civilizations was a "devoted and patriotic vigilance on the part of her rulers and statesmen." Deploying the rhetorical strategy of the U.S. as a champion for the downtrodden, the booklet noted that even the heroic Ryukyuan leaders were no match for modern Japanese militarism; it was "only American arms" that liberated Okinawa from Japanese control. The booklet concluded that the previous seventy-years of direct Japanese control should not be equated with Okinawan acquiescence. Despite intensive Japanese propaganda efforts to subsume Okinawa with the Japanese structure, Japan never succeeded in extinguishing the Okinawans' spirit as evidenced by "an underground nationalistic movement came into existence and continued up until the American invasion." As proof, the booklet cited the actions of a prefectural librarian, Shimabuku, who was removed from office in 1940 "for publicly denouncing the intensified attempts at Japanization which came with the war." Linking Okinawan struggles for self-determination with that of American's own fight for democracy, the booklet stated that the American soldiers "were greatly surprised to find themselves looked upon by many Okinawans as liberators rather than conquerors." Echoing the sentiments of the Okinawan Federation, the final sentence of the booklet expressed support that the future of Okinawa be decided by an "internationally conducted plebiscite."³⁴⁷

³⁴⁷ *The Story of Okinawa*, (Washington D.C.: Friends of Okinawa, 1947).

Conclusion

World War II represented a significant historical rupture in the history and identity of the inhabitants of the Ryukyus. Although recently historians of the U.S. occupation of Japan have emphasized continuity rather than rupture in tracing the trajectory of Japan's development in the 20th century, it seems evident that the occupation of Okinawa was a significant point of historical demarcation. Before 1945, few Okinawans doubted they were Japanese. Despite cultural differences, Okinawan had been incorporated into the prewar Japanese polity. The American Civil Affairs team, however, imagined the Okinawan people as a distinct and oppressed ethnic group that was waiting for American liberation. The brutal and atrocious behavior of Japanese soldiers during the Battle of Okinawa, coupled with the unexpected good behavior of the U.S. military, embittered Okinawans and raised questions as to their identity as Japanese. The progressive and enlightened Navy Civil Affairs team, believing in a latent Ryukyu consciousness, wasted little time in promoting consciousness of a Ryukyu imagined community. Many Ryukyans responded positively and were in accord with Miyasato's conviction that "the time has come [for Okinawa] to be liberated from over 300 years of political, economic, and social oppression."

CHAPTER FOUR FROM BENEVOLENCE TO DESPOTIC
HYPOCRISY, 1946-49

After mid 1946, the occupation of the Ryukyus suffered from neglect, indifference, and incompetence at all levels of the U.S. military bureaucracy as Washington assigned higher priority to other commands in Europe and the Pacific. The Ryukyus received little material support to repair the war-devastated island, incompetent or indifferent military officers, and the worst performing units or units with history of discipline problems. Compounding the problem, the island's population tripled in less than a year when SCAP ordered the repatriation of 200,000 Ryukyuans from Japan and Japan's former colonial empire. Lasting until 1949, this "dark age" was replete with lawlessness, injustice, uncertainty, fear and crushing poverty. This situation stood in stark contrast to the initial period of benevolent and progressive occupation when the Navy's civil affairs officers such as Hanna, Caldwell, and Watkins promoted Okinawan political autonomy and pride in the Okinawan heritage. Consequently, this reverse course in the American occupation of the Ryukyus, forced the Okinawan people, who initially viewed the Americans as their liberators, to resent and eventually resist the occupation authorities.

From Hope to Despair in the Midst of a Ryukyuan

Kyodatsu

During the U.S. Navy's governance of the Ryukyus (from mid 1945 to mid 1946), no one could say life was difficult for the Ryukyuans; it was wretched. John Dower described the terrible conditions of occupied Japan, termed *kyodatsu* (虚脱), in his book *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (1999),³⁴⁸ The conditions in the

³⁴⁸ *Kyodatsu* was a term used to describe Japan's immediate postwar condition of complete exhaustion and despair. *Kyodatsu* literally translates as "prostration." Dower describes this condition in Chapter

Ryukyus, particularly the main island of Okinawa, however, were worse. While the B-29 incendiary bombing campaign destroyed much of Japan's urban centers, much of the country and infrastructure escaped lasting damage. On the main island of Okinawa, however, the fighting occurred in the area where 95% of the population resided and which was the prefecture's economic, cultural, and political center. One-third of the civilian population died and the devastation of the island's infrastructure was unparalleled.

Dr. Paul E. Steiner, who participated in the Battle of Okinawa as a Navy medical doctor, witnessed overwhelming destruction to the people and the island. When he returned to civilian practice in the Department of Pathology, University of Chicago, he wanted to publish his medical observations of the Ryukyuan people. Yet in order to get the Navy Department's permission for publication, he felt "it was necessary to withhold a lot of information" because the "*extent of the devastation is unimaginable and dare not be published.*" Steiner wrote that "hardly a tree was left standing" and argued that the estimates of "95% of the homes were damaged or destroyed" to be too conservative.³⁴⁹ The totality that the "typhoon of steel" wrought on Okinawa's urban centers led one World War I veteran, General Stilwell, to note bluntly in his diary: "SHURI—a mess. Much like Verdun."³⁵⁰

Three "Kyodatsu: Exhaustion and Despair," of *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 87-120.

³⁴⁹ Letter from Dr. Paul Steiner to Professor Leonard Schwartz, December 11, 1947. *Papers of James T. Watkins IV: Historical Records of Postwar Okinawa and the Beginning of U.S. Occupancy*, Vol. 5, (Ginowan, Okinawa: Ryokurindo Shoten, date unknown), 71. Emphasis added.

³⁵⁰ Sarantakes, *Keystone*, 24.

The battle ravaged the populated southern half of the island, which was also the principal agricultural region. The damage to this sector and the degree of deprivation can be seen by the following graph on the catastrophic loss of farm animals:³⁵¹

Table 2 Loss of domesticated animals on Okinawa following the Battle of Okinawa.

Domesticated Animals	1939	1945	Reduction in Farm Animals due to the Battle (by Percentage)
Horses	46, 824	1,400	97.00%
Cattle	30, 349	600	98.00%
Hogs	133, 978	1,000	99.25%
Goats	118,048	2,000	98.30%
Chickens	243,644	1,800	99.26%
Ducks	23,342	25	99.89%

In the prewar era, the mainstay of the prefecture's economy was agriculture, yet it was not self-sufficient in foodstuffs. Thus, the devastation of the rural-based economy rendered the majority of the population utterly dependent upon the occupation authorities for food, housing, clothing, and medical needs.

By the end of 1946, the overall material situation remained dire. To put the conditions of the Okinawa population in perspective, we can consider the situation of American officers and their families stationed in the Ryukyus, who received the "best" of whatever was available. One American officer sent to the Ryukyus in late 1946 was informed by his commander that the conditions for "family quarters will be bare Quonset huts with makeshift plywood or canvas partitions....there is running water in a few of the

³⁵¹ Lt. Commander Caldwell's Indoctrination Remarks to 9th MP on the subject of "Functions of Public Safety," Date unknown though sometime mid 1945. *Papers of James T. Watkins IV: Historical Records of Postwar Okinawa and the Beginning of U.S. Occupancy*, Vol. 17, (Ginowan, Okinawa: Ryokurindo Shoten, date unknown), 2.

huts for primitive washing facilities. All baths are the community type, screened and outdoors. Toilets are open latrines.” To erase any doubt, he was told that the situation will be “rougher than anything you have encountered before. You’ll be back in the frontier days of 1870, less Indians.”³⁵² Even by 1948, conditions had not noticeably improved. A stunned Richard Lamb, a Foreign Affairs Service Officer, saw that “the southern half of the island still presented a scene of almost total destruction and desolation, as though the fighting had stopped only a few months before.” The Ryukyus two main cities, Shuri and Naha, “had simply ceased to exist.” With the exception of the U.S. military installations and some primitive grass-thatched huts, Lamb did not see a “single permanent building in either town, or indeed anywhere on the southern part of the island” where ninety-percent of the fighting had occurred.³⁵³ Given these conditions, it was rather remarkable the Navy’s civil affairs officials in the Ryukyus were able to achieve as much as they did during their tenure from April 1945 to July 1946. Although lacking sufficient resources to substantially relieve the population’s impoverished conditions, the Navy’s civil affairs progressive policies, such as encouraging Ryukyuan political autonomy and nurturing Ryukyuan cultural heritage, at least seemed to offer hope for a better future.

The Ryukyus Gulag: “The Botany Bay for Bad
Bureaucrats and Colonels”

The concern for empowering the people of the Ryukyus, however, receded when on July 1, 1946, the U.S. Navy relinquished control of the Ryukyus to General MacArthur’s Far Eastern Command (FEC), which included command over Japan, Korea,

³⁵² Williams S. Triplet, *In the Philippines and Okinawa: A Memoir, 1945-1948*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 186.

³⁵³ “Observations of Foreign Service Officer Richard H. Lamb on Conditions of Okinawa,” January 31, 1951. RG 59, CDF 1950-54, box 4260, Folder 1.

the Philippines and now the Ryukyus.³⁵⁴ Under MacArthur, the Ryukyus occupied the bottom rung of the FEC's command hierarchy. In fact, the addition of the Ryukyus to his command was a major burden to the General. First, MacArthur already encountered difficulties to obtain sufficient resources for the occupation of Japan because American strategic concerns in Europe received first priority. Second, unlike Japan, the Ryukyus possessed almost no indigenous bureaucracy to assist in the occupation, which only added to the burdens of the U.S. command. MacArthur and SCAP, therefore, had every incentive to practice salutary neglect toward the Ryukyus.

With demobilization of the original Navy civil affairs team also went their knowledge, experience, passion and progressive reforms. While the Army's command known by the acronym RYCOM (Ryukyus Command) included some committed and talented officers, notably Edward Freimuth and Paul Skuse, most were not trained adequately in civil affairs, had little practical experience, knew little to nothing about the people under their charge, and appear to have cared little for the people. Brigadier General William Crist, Deputy Commander for RYCOM, stated, "we have no intention of playing Santa Claus for the residents of the occupied territory," which epitomized the attitude among the Army's civil affairs officers. Navy Lt. Commander James Caldwell, after meeting his Army replacements before being sent stateside, expressed reservations toward his Army replacements. Caldwell wrote that he was "afraid that they will be a sorry crew. Whatever the Army did in other theaters, in this one they put into Military Government the officers they could most readily dispense with."³⁵⁵ Although

³⁵⁴ When planning for the invasion of the Ryukyus in 1944, the U.S. Navy initially believed the main island of Okinawa would become an important naval base after the war. The powerful typhoons that frequently swept the island, Okinawa's poor deep-sea anchorage, coupled with the availability of better harbors in mainland Japan (Yokosuka and Sasebo) made it clear to top Navy officials by 1946 that their continued administration of Okinawa was not in their best interest.

³⁵⁵ Sarantakes, *Keystone*, p. 35.

Caldwell's negative assessment may have been influenced by the bitter rivalry between the two military branches, his view nonetheless presaged how the occupation would be conducted under the auspices of the Army.

Coinciding with the Army's takeover was the forced repatriation of overseas Okinawans that exacerbated the impoverished conditions of the people. During the prewar era, Okinawa Prefecture was the poorest region in Japan; consequently, 200,000 to 300,000 had emigrated all over the Pacific basin region looking for a better life.³⁵⁶ After Japan's defeat, tens of thousands emigrants were forcibly repatriated from Japan's former colonies, 23,500 from Micronesia alone. The biggest blow, however, came from the return of an even larger number of Okinawans who had settled in Japan, mostly in the Kansai region. From the beginning of the occupation, MacArthur, who did not view the Okinawans as Japanese subjects, had wanted to repatriate the 139,500 Okinawans living in Japan because "they represented a significant social and economic burden." At that time, the Navy was in charge of the occupation and rejected MacArthur's demands on the grounds that there "was insufficient food and shelter".³⁵⁷ However, with the Army now in control, MacArthur wasted little time and "hastily summoned a repatriation conference" at his headquarters where he mandated a repatriation schedule that was "to begin on 5 August at the rate of 4,000 per week until 26 September, and at 8,000 per week thereafter until the program was completed." By the end of 1947, SCAP forcibly sent 173,483 Okinawans from Japan back to the main island of Okinawa. The magnitude

³⁵⁶ The vast majority of the Okinawan Diaspora either went to Japan or one of Japan's colonies. Over a hundred thousand emigrated to the main islands, while tens of thousands could be found in Korea, Taiwan, Manchuria, the Philippines and the Mandated islands respectively. In fact, in the Philippines and Mandated Islands, Okinawans constituted the lion share of the overall Japanese emigrants. In addition, tens of thousands emigrated to Hawa'ii as well to various countries Latin America. The Okinawan population in both Hawa'ii and Latin American roughly equaled the numbers of Japanese from the mainland (Naichijin). Either in terms of per capita or aggregate numbers, more Okinawans emigrated abroad than any other prefecture in Japan.

³⁵⁷ Watkins Diary, May 23, 1946. Watkins Collection Vol. 12.

of this burden cannot be understated. The new arrivals “brought very little with them in terms of material goods,” overwhelmed the already strained resources of RYCOM.³⁵⁸ This dire situation would have been difficult for the experienced Navy civil affairs team, but for an unmotivated and inexperienced Army civil affairs team, this development was a harsh inauguration.³⁵⁹

Occupied Okinawa under the U.S. Army evolved into what historian Ôta Masahide has called a “Botany Bay for bad bureaucrats and colonels” as MacArthur’s Far East Command (FEC) made it a habit to send “incompetents and undesirables....to the Philippine-Ryukyus Command (PHILRYCOM), *whose dregs were sent on to the Ryukyu Command.*”³⁶⁰ Although one might dismiss Ôta’s scathing comments as hyperbolic, Richard Lamb, a State Department official, after visiting the Ryukyus in early 1951, wrote that the Ryukyus were MacArthur’s “Siberian gulag” where “misfits and incompetents were apt to be transferred from Japan as punishment for their shortcomings.”³⁶¹ For Lamb, this disturbing situation became more pronounced by the contrast offered by his encounter with one competent RYCOM official, Edward Freimuth. Freimuth, who originally came to the Ryukyus as an Army captain and had remained in RYCOM as a civilian administrator after being demobilized. As head of RYCOM’s Government and Legal Section, Freimuth frequently interacted with his

³⁵⁸ My mother (Tobaru Shizuko), who was then seven, and her family was part of this repatriated group and they arrived in the Ryukyus with only two suitcases in late 1946. They had no ancestral home to return to (located in Minamiuehara, Nakagusuku-son-南上原中城村-located nearby the present day location of the University of the Ryukyus) as it had been completely destroyed during the battle (most of my mother’s relatives who had remained in Okinawa perished during the battle for Okinawa). Like most of the Okinawans civilians, they spent some time living in camp towns, which consisted of Army surplus tents.

³⁵⁹ Arnold G. Fisch, Jr., *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands 1945-1950*, (Washington D. C.: Center of Military History United States Army, 1988, 93-95.

³⁶⁰ Ôta, *Essays on Okinawa Problems*, 205. Emphasis Added.

³⁶¹ “Observations of Foreign Service Officer Richard H. Lamb on Conditions of Okinawa,” January 31, 1951. RG 59, CDF 1950-54, box 4260, Folder 1.

Ryukyuan civilian counterparts. Lamb observed that Freimuth, was unique in that he was “acutely conscious of the shortcomings of the military mind and a military-type organization.” Moreover, Lamb noted, Freimuth possessed a “profound empathy for suffering in general, and for Okinawans in particular.” Lamb, however, recognized that enlightened individuals such as Freimuth, could not overcome the inertia of a dysfunctional RYCOM, which like occupied Korea, had a “caliber of both Army and civilian personnel” which was “considerably lower than in Japan.”³⁶²

Ryukyu's Oxy•mo•ron n.: military justice

Given the conditions explained above, one should not be surprised that crimes by U.S. personnel became a major problem. A reporter from *Time*, Frank Gibney, reported that in a six month period in 1949, American military personnel were convicted of 16 robberies, 33 assaults, 18 rapes, and 29 murders, all of which were committed against the civilian population.³⁶³ To Gibney these figures, combined with what he had seen during his stay on Okinawa, constituted evidence of profound problems with the occupation. The number of homicide convictions strongly suggest serious underreporting of less violent crime, either because civilians feared reprisals or because many soldiers were

³⁶² Ibid. A stronger indictment of the occupation's problems, which corroborates Lamp's testimony, comes from Bill Steele who served in RYCOM. Steele asserted that “many of us came to the Ryukyus to help in the recovery,” yet their efforts were stymied in the “fight with inept military officials who had only their own priorities to solve. When one wanted to contact the military leadership, they were found in their clubs, be they their dinner clubs, their golf clubs or their yacht clubs; these people were living high on the hog and to hell with the Ryukyuan. Email from Bill Steele to "Okinawa Politics" <okinawa_politics@globeclubs.com>, "Masahide Ota" <opri@cosmos.ne.jp>, "REDCARD MOVEMENT" redcard2usbase@hotmail.com on the subject of [okinawa_politics] Red Card Movement, Sun, 14 Jan 2001

³⁶³ Frank Gibney, “Okinawa: Forgotten Island,” *Time* 54 (28 Nov 49), 24. Gibney's figures have been repeated in numerous other publications.

either acquitted or reassigned off the island. One case in particular, the Awase Shooting Incident, is highly suggestive in this regard.³⁶⁴

On July 27, 1949, in a period of two hours, four American soldiers shot and killed two Ryukyuan civilians and seriously wounded four others. Farmers Kyan Jiro and Higa Kana, ages 68 and 53 respectively, were both shot in the head *from behind*, while digging for sweet potatoes in their fields near the Awase military base, which was located close to RYCOM headquarters. Higa Kana suffered a fatal shot which “entered from the rear part of the head and left the body from the left side of the head.” Soon after, Higa Ushi, age 45, and her younger sister’s daughter, Higa Yona, age 4, were cultivating their fields nearby when they were shot and seriously wounded. Nakasone Tokusaburo and Nakasone Tsuru, ages 71 and 45, respectively, were also shot and seriously wounded while cutting firewood from trees felled by a recent typhoon.³⁶⁵ All of the victims were shot in general vicinity of Awase military base.

An investigation of the shooting by Paul Skuse, an American civilian employed by RYCOM and Director of Public Safety, reported that the “innocent victims, while cultivating the land or gathering firewood, at a place which has been authorized for farming and which is not even an off-limit area,” were within 1000 meters of one another when fired upon by military personnel.³⁶⁶ The four American soldiers charged, Sgt. Edward L. Barton, Pvt. Jos F. Simpson, Rct Donald R. Schmitz, and Rct Richard H. Reiss, all from the 29th Infantry Regiment, claimed that they had been given orders to

³⁶⁴ Okinawan historians have written numerous works documenting the number of crimes committed by US military personnel. While these crimes may not be out of proportion to other occupied areas, the perception among Okinawans crimes committed by G.I.s were a serious problem. Right or wrong, this perception, among Okinawans, created its own reality.

³⁶⁵ From Headquarters-Koza Police Station to Commissioner, Okinawan Police Department, August 17, 1949. The “Skuse File-Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the private papers of Edward Freimuth.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

“scare away Okinawans from carrying away tin and lumber.” But Lt. Baldwin, commander of the 29th Infantry Regiment’s Military Police from Awase, stated that “Sgt. Barton had taken the patrol to the ridge without proper authority.”³⁶⁷ Rct. Reiss stated that when they were on the ridge overlooking the Awase region, they saw some Okinawans and fired several rounds “to scare them,” but they did not investigate to see if anyone had been hit. Afterward, Reiss, along with Simpson, rejoined Barton and Simpson and whereupon seeing “a woman and child in a field” below their position, started firing at them from about 600 meters away. In an appalling admission to Public Safety Director, Paul Skuse, “Reiss stated that when Barton hit the prone position and started firing at the old woman and child, Schmitz tried to dissuade Barton, and when Barton would not stop firing Reiss said, ‘Well, you are not going to get all of them’ and at this time the other three (3) began firing at the old woman and child.”³⁶⁸ They returned to the guard house without even determining whether the woman and child had been hit, even though Schmitz reported that “he saw a woman and a man fall during the firing.” Barton, when questioned by from military authorities, admitted being the first one to fire at the woman, but stated he only fired one shot at the woman. Barton then stated the other three rounds fired were aimed at a “spider, at a spot on a tree, and one at some pigeons.”³⁶⁹

In what appeared to be an open-and-shut case, the investigation and legal proceedings proceeded slowly. Ten weeks later, an October 12 inter-office memorandum for the Office of the Military Governor of the Ryukyu Islands noted that the “Criminal Investigation Report from the 515th CID Detachment” stated that the charged men had

³⁶⁷ Awase Shooting, CID Report #177-49, August 29, 1949. “Skuse File-Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the private papers of Edward Freimuth.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

“admitted to investigating officers that they had committed felonious assault by opening fire on several natives...*apparently without provocation or justification.*” Yet despite their admission and the preponderant evidence to their culpability, a General Court Martial convened for the shooting of Higa Kama acquitted the four soldiers of “all charges and specifications.” Following the acquittal, the Judge Advocate dropped all charges, stating “it is not believed that an attempt to further prosecute the said soldiers would accomplish any favorable results.”³⁷⁰

Outraged by the travesty in justice, Paul Skuse brought the matter to the attention of Col. Jesse P. Green, who was the Deputy Commander for Military Government. To his surprise, Green did not know any of the details of the “incident” when Skuse presented the case on August 4. Green, who was equally outraged, accompanied Skuse to discuss the matter with Major General Eagle. Before meeting with the General, they met Lt. Col. Moore to inquire about the status of the investigation. Moore informed Skuse and Green that there was no investigation because “he had received orders from Col. Jenkins to drop it a staff conference attended by all officers of the General Staff and Special Staff held on Friday 29 July (two days after the shootings occurred and one day after they were reported.)”³⁷¹ General Eagles, upon hearing of the situation from Skuse, ordered a full investigation. Yet despite ample evidence and the confessions, the Military Court still rendered an acquittal. Skuse, confronting one officer who had served in the Court Martial, was told that the “Court could not decide who fired the fatal bullet that killed the woman Kama Higa.”³⁷² With this acquittal, occupation officials decided not

³⁷⁰ Inter-Office Memorandum, Office of the Military Governor of the Ryukyu Islands Chinen, Okinawa, October 12, 1949. “Skuse File-Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” Edward Freimuth Collection. Emphasis in original.

³⁷¹ Paul Skuse, “Memo for the Record,” Subject: Shooting of Natives in Vicinity of Awase Dependent Housing Area on 27 July 1949, date unknown for the writing of the memo. “Skuse File-Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the private papers of Edward Freimuth. Emphasis added.

³⁷² Ibid.

to prosecute the other shootings “because the same evidence would be used in” subsequent trials and presumably, acquittals had been predetermined.³⁷³

Poverty as a Crime

In contrast to apparently lenient treatment of U.S. servicemen charged with crimes, Skuse noted the bitter irony of how petty criminal acts done by Okinawans, such as the stealing of food or clothing, were dealt with harshly. Skuse noted the uneven application of justice evident in RYCOM’s proclamation that “Any person [Okinawan] who: steals, embezzles, sells, purchases, receives in pawn, receives as a gift, wrongfully has in his possession, removes, destroys, or damages any military equipment or war material” was an offense “which may be punished by death.”³⁷⁴ Moreover, RYCOM consistently violated fundamental civil liberties of the Okinawans as American soldiers conducted raids on Ryukyuan property and searches of the people without probable cause or without any of the common legal protections accorded to Americans. This acute abuse of police powers by the occupation personnel led a bitter Skuse to compare U.S. actions during the occupation with those of the “OPGU, N.K.V.D., KEMPEI-TAI and other feared police organizations of fascist and communistic states.”³⁷⁵

373 The prevalence of crimes committed by U.S. military personnel is a topic well covered by Ryukyuan sources. Two of the better sources are: 比嘉朝進、戦後50年犯罪史、(那覇市: 風土記社、1995) and 天願盛夫、沖縄占領米軍犯罪事件帳、(具志川市: くしかわ文具店、2000)。 Also see: 福地曠昭、沖縄における米軍の犯罪、(東京: 同時代社、1995)。 For crimes committed in South Korea by American military forces, see 徐勝(Suh Sung), 広瀬貴子訳者、駐韓米軍犯罪白書、(東京: 青木書店、1999)。

374 “United States Navy Military Government Proclamation No. 2: War Crimes” in *Laws and Regulations During the U.S. Administration of Okinawa 1942-1972 Book I*, Naha: Ikemiya Shokai & Co., 198, p. 43-44.

375 Headquarters, Public Safety Department, Military Government, Ryukyus Command, APO 331-7, 23 May 1947. From Paul Skuse, Director of Public Safety to Deputy Commander for Military Government, Subject: “Search Conducted on Village of Oroku, 22 May 1947,” “Skuse File: Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the Freimuth Papers.

On February 16, 1999 I was reading a book by Ôta Masahide while eating a lunch of Okinawa’s famous *Okinawa Soba*. Being a foreigner in a local establishment that does not get many “outsiders,” especially



Figure 32 MP's search an Okinawan boy for "contraband."

those reading a book in Japanese by Ôta, got the attention of a gentleman sitting next to me. He eventually asked me what I was doing reading about Okinawa? I told him I was researching the American occupation of Okinawa with particular emphasis on how the occupation affected the people of Okinawa. From that point on, Higa and I had a three hour discussion as he shared his experiences in working with the U.S. military. Many Ryukyans who worked on U.S. bases or lived in close approximately to the bases during the late 1940s and 50s, have similar accounts of how U.S. forces behaved in tyrannical manner. One individual, Higa Takeshi, shared with me his experiences when he worked for the U.S. military after the war. Higa, who worked thirty years as a construction worker and supply driver for the U.S. military, reported that paranoid U.S. officials presumed Ryukyans, if given the opportunity, "would attempt to steal from the wealthy Americans." Consequently, civilians who worked on the U.S. military bases or were employed privately as servants/maids by American personnel (mostly officers), were physically searched leaving the bases because, "the Americans thought we were stealing from them."

As a young girl, my mother, Tobaru Shizuko, experienced the deep poverty of most Okinawans and especially the tens of thousands of Okinawan families repatriated from Japan in 1946-47 who arrived with only what they could carry. The family's poverty, forced her, as the oldest daughter to quit elementary school and take the job of picking up the laundry of American personnel on base, cleaning the clothes off base, and then eventually returning to base with the clean clothes. Every time she entered and left base, MP's would search her body and the clothes bag for stolen items. Adding insult to injury, she was forced to stay and watch American soldiers count the returned clean clothes to make sure nothing was missing, even though many of the soldiers were repeat customers. She has never forgotten the humiliation of that experience nor how the "Americans, who lived in wealthy conditions (from her perspective), would be so concerned about a missing pair of socks, especially since they had plenty of other socks."

RYCOM's flagrant disregard of Okinawans basic civil liberties was partly a function of poverty and common attitudes toward the impoverished. For Okinawans, the battle destroyed all of their possessions, forcing them to rely on American surplus and charity for necessities. Paul Skuse observed, "it can truly be said that nearly all the earthly possessions of the Okinawan people are either goods originally manufactured for the United States Armed Forces or goods of American manufacture."³⁷⁶ Likewise, Col. William Triplet stated, "the outstanding impression I had of Okinawa was wreckage, deterioration, and poverty.....here we have converted the entire populationinto objects of charity depending on American charity."³⁷⁷ The perception that Okinawans were permanent wards of the US meant that many soldiers Okinawans were lazy, stupid, and thus, if given the opportunity, would steal from Americans rather than work. Triplet's observation of the Okinawans seemed to echo the thoughts of many in RYCOM when he stated, "it was common knowledge that Okinawans were too stupid to handle anything more complicated than a mattock."³⁷⁸

Okinawans, however, were not lazy or stupid even though they were on the American "dole." For example, Isa Junko, while working as a maid for one American military family, received clothes from them because she did not have any. "They saw me sewing things for myself in the house. We were able to get old military clothing, so I used to cut that apart and make blouses."³⁷⁹ For Isa Junko and other impoverished

³⁷⁶ Headquarters, Public Safety Department, Military Government, Ryukyus Command, APO 331-7, 23 May 1947. From Paul Skuse, Director of Public Safety to Deputy Commander for Military Government, Subject: "Search Conducted on Village of Oroku, 22 May 1947," "Skuse File: Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa," in the Freimuth Papers.

³⁷⁷ Williams S. Triplet, *In the Philippines and Okinawa: A Memoir, 1945-1948*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001),182-183.

³⁷⁸ Triplet, *In the Philippines and Okinawa*, 204.

³⁷⁹ Keyso, *Women of Okinawa*, 13.

Okinawans, driven by both poverty and a desire to demonstrate they did not need American direct aid to survive, Okinawans reused and often reinvented American surplus and/or junk into practical objects needed to survive. RYCOM officials, however, rarely saw this industriousness as they saw Okinawans within the context of the bases. Instead, RYCOM only saw impoverished Okinawans and psychologically, often assumed the worse in Okinawan actions and behavior. Given this mindset, RYCOM assumed automatic guilt when reports indicated Okinawans were in possession of US material or if a soldier accused an Okinawan of stealing. Consequently, military officials, often without justification and in violation of fundamental civil liberties, ostentatiously entered villages and conducted searches of every residence/person presumably for contraband.

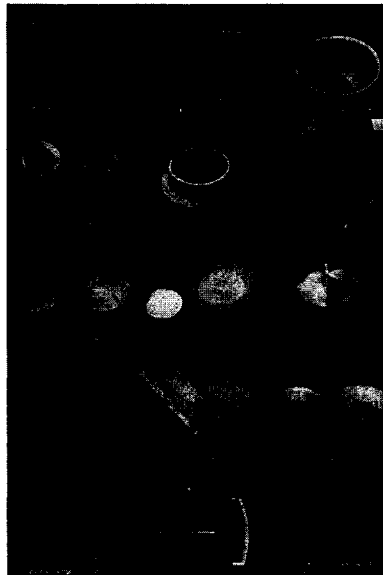


Figure 33 Examples of Okinawan industriousness and creativity in taking discarded US surplus and making needed household goods.³⁸⁰

³⁸⁰ *Okinawa Sengo Shashin Shi: Amerika yû no 10 Nen*, (Okinawa: Gekkan Okinawa Sha, 1979), 3..

One such raid was launched “because of a reported ‘robbery’” from a military laundry. Fifty American MPs entered a village and searched 250 civilian homes in Oroku-son without warning or due process. “All of the items seized were in the aggregate so small that they would not fill the rear part of the jeep.” The confiscated items included: 10 woolen coats, 10 woolen trousers, 24 Khaki shirts, 22 khaki trousers, 8 bed sheets, 1 mattress cover, 4 woolen shirt, 1 towel, 7 blue shirts, 1 box of soap powder, 12 caps, 2 satchels, 1 ammunition bag, 8 blue trousers, 16 jumpers, 1 overcoat, 3 sacks, 2 quilt-covers, 1 pair of shoes, 1 drawers, 1 pants, 1 mosquito net, 2 bottles of perfume, 4 raincoats, and 8 brushes.³⁸¹ The MP’s arrested no one and none of the reported stolen material was found.³⁸²

Other raids, conducted under the guise of looking for contraband were no more than opportunities to seize war souvenirs. At Yamada village on November 7, 1946, thirty MPs searched every house in the village for five hours without any announcement. Without discerning whether U.S. Government Property, such as blankets and mosquito netting, were obtained legally, the MPs seized all such materials. It even was alleged that some “blankets were taken off sick people confided to bed with malaria.” The seizure of

³⁸¹ From Kuniyoshi Shinyu, Chief of Police, Itoman, to Commissioner Okinawan Police Department, Subject: Domiciliary Search at Oroku-son by MP’s—report of, April 11, 1947. “Skuse File: Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the Freimuth Papers.

³⁸² Unfortunately, the American “justice” the residents of Oroku encountered in 1947 foreshadowed a greater injustice that would occur several years later. In 1953, part of the village’s land was forcibly “condemned” by occupation authorities in order to build a highway. The condemned land, which was used to grow cabbages, was going to be bulldozed. The construction crew, however, harvested the cabbages before the bulldozing began. But 250 villagers, angry at the years of American heavy-handedness, threw the cabbages “back under the bulldozers, stoned the operators, and stopped the work by squatting on the ground before the machines.” Not surprisingly, American military officials responded with two companies of troops, (rather than military police) armed with bayoneted rifles, to clear the peaceful squatters. The military command justified the large number of troops on the grounds that a “display of strength,” was required “to preclude disorder” because “the psychological effect desired could not have been achieved if the small force of military police available had been utilized.” Informal Memorandum from Henry Wohl, CAMG to Robert McClurkin, Acting Director of Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, Dept. of State on the Subject of “5 December 1953 Land Incident in Okinawa,” May 20, 1964. 894C.112/10-853 RG59, CDF 1950-54, box 5689, Folder 7. Located in the Okinawa Prefecture Archives under file: U90006089B

material included cans of milk and other canned foods, which the people relied on for basic food subsistence, and had received from ration cards. The MPs were also accused of taking Japanese military uniforms, “which were the property of former soldiers recently repatriated from Japan,” and civilian police uniforms.³⁸³

Such heavy handed police actions were the norm. Paul Skuse, as Director of Public Safety, continuously had to fend off arbitrary requests for raids and searches for basic commodities such as missing blankets and food rations. One U.S. soldier even demanded “permission to enter the village of Ishikawa (32,000) in his spare time to conduct a house to house search for a wristwatch he had lost.”³⁸⁴ I.H. Rubenstein, as Acting Director of the Legal Department, wrote a memorandum criticizing these tactics and actions. He noted there was no effort made to determine ownership of the property seized and chastised the military personnel, stating “the mere fact that an Okinawan has in his possession some property which once belonged to the United States Armed Forces is not proof of criminal offense.” Rubenstein also pointed out that because most of the G.I. material was either given to the Ryukyans or were acquired “while rummaging through trash dumps,” conducting wonton indiscriminate searches for alleged contraband was pointless. From Rubenstein’s perspective, the occupation contradicted itself. He noted that the occupation endeavored “to provide the civilian population with an understanding and appreciation of American principles, liberties and way of life,” and that “one of the main grounds for the American Revolution was the bitter objection which the colonists had to the arbitrary search and seizures of their homes by the British

³⁸³ From Paul Skuse, Public Safety Director, to Provost Marshall for Military Government on the subject of “Yamada Village, Illegal Entry and Search of-,” November 7, 1946. Skuse File: “Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the Freimuth Papers.

³⁸⁴ Address by Paul H. Skuse, Director of Public Safety, Military Government, at Air and Ground Forces Intelligence Officers Conference, January 15, 1947. “Skuse File: Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the Freimuth Papers.

officials.” Rubenstein warned “that the mass indiscriminate, reckless raid conducted by the Provost Marshall on these civilian villages is in direct and flagrant violation of these American principles.”³⁸⁵ Skuse, in a speech for a conference of military intelligence officers, sternly condemned the occupation’s behavior and actions. He reminded them that “we have just finished fighting a terrible war. I read somewhere that we were fighting for the Four Freedoms.” Then probably pausing for effect, Skuse squarely hit them with “One of these was FREEDOM FROM FEAR. FREEDOM from FEAR of having the N.K.V.D., the Gestapo, the Kempei-tai, or any other police organization, invading the sanctity of the home any hour of the night or day.”³⁸⁶

Rubenstein’s and Skuse’s reminders of what America supposedly represented touched several nerves among their higher-ups. Col. William Craig, Deputy Commander for Military Government, agreed with Rubenstein that such actions not only discredited the United States, but also “outrages and incenses the Okinawans and prejudices the mission of the occupation forces.” Craig recommended to his superiors that such actions be prevented in the future. Col. W. S. Triplet, however, was incensed by Rubenstein’s rebuke and Craig’s suggestions for the termination of such searches and seizures by the military police. In a lengthy memo to the commanding general, Triplet argued that not only were these raids necessary but justified on the grounds that the Ryukyus were occupied territory of a “former enemy of the United States and it is believed as such that Nationals or peoples of that country are not free from the right of search by the occupying forces of the American Army.” What annoyed Triplet the most were the accusations that

³⁸⁵ Headquarters Ryukyus Command Military Government APO 331, 22 May 1947. From I. H. Rubenstein, Acting Director of Legal Department to Deputy Commander for Military Government on the Subject of “Search Conducted on Village of Oroku.” “Skuse File: Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the Freimuth Papers.

³⁸⁶ Address by Paul H. Skuse, Director of Public Safety, Military Government, at Air and Ground Forces Intelligence Officers Conference, January 15, 1947. “Skuse File: Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the Freimuth Papers. Capitalization as depicted in the original source material.

Triplet was “an offender against the rights of the Okinawans, and the Chief of a powerful police organization similar to the former ‘Gestapo.’” Triplet argued that their actions were necessary and hence “should justify a continuation of the present procedure and method of operation.”³⁸⁷ Triplet’s response also reflected his racist attitude toward Asians. Upon his arrival in the Ryukyus, he inquired about “native thieves and heard that ‘the Okies are pretty honest,’ and ‘we’ve never had any trouble with thieves so far.’” “Sounds impossible in the Orient,” replied Triplet, “but I’ll admit I’m prejudiced.”³⁸⁸

Revealing the prevalent attitude among the occupation’s command, Lt. Col. Thomas C. Murray, Inspector General, and Major Edward Brown, acting Assistant Staff Judge Advocate, agreed with Triplet stating that the Ryukyuan “are not entitled to, nor should they receive the rights and privileges offered to the American people under their Constitution *until such time as they have proven themselves worthy of thus rights.*”³⁸⁹ Murray and Brown replied that Military Police have better things to do than respond to “such unwarranted criticism” and “superfluous remarks.” Moreover, Murray and Brown censored both Skuse and Rubenstein by exclaiming that “future ‘quibbling’ of this type will not be tolerated,” which ironically reinforced Skuse’s assertions that U.S. Military Police actions were tyrannical and intolerant in nature.³⁹⁰ Skuse, defying Murray’s and Brown’s commands, issued orders to his Okinawan civilian police forces “to immediately desist from the practice of conducting wholesale and indiscriminate searches and seizures

³⁸⁷ Inter-Staff Routing Slip, Headquarters Military Government, Ryukyus APO 331, June 19, 1947. “Skuse File: Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the Freimuth Papers.

³⁸⁸ Triplet, *In the Philippines and Okinawa*, 181-182.

³⁸⁹ Inter-Staff Routing Slip, Headquarters Military Government, Ryukyus APO 331, June 19, 1947. “Skuse File: Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the Freimuth Papers. *Emphasis Added*

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

either by themselves or in conjunction with the military police.”³⁹¹ Despite his efforts to ground the occupation on the principles of fundamental civil liberties, Skuse was essentially ordered by Brigadier General F. L. Hayden, commander of U.S. forces in the Ryukyus, to stop acting in a democratic manner. Hayden decided for once and all that “*the Ryukyuan people do not have the rights of freedom from search and seizure which have been won by the English and American people and that until such freedom is accorded them by law they will be held subject to search and seizure.....at any time such*” actions are “directed or authorized by this Command.”³⁹²

This battle between Skuse and Hayden encapsulates the long-term struggle within the occupation between those who wanted to empower and democratize the Ryukyus and those who saw the Ryukyus as conquered territory. This latter group also viewed the people as too primitive (a view reinforced by the dismal state of poverty) to be “given” consideration for self-rule and fundamental civil rights. While some Ryukyuan may have been impressed by American efforts to democratize the islands and encourage an Ryukyuan imagined community, the earlier image of Americans as just liberators was now being displaced by the image of Americans as despotic conquerors. Fundamentally, the lack of justice and the flouting of civil liberties undoubtedly raised questions among the people whether the lofty promises of democracy and self-determination (and later the U.S. slogan of making the Ryukyus an “Asian showcase of democracy”) would actually be conferred upon a lesser, “Oriental” population. Yet many of the American personnel on the island were either ignorant of the Ryukyuan concerns or were angered by the lack

³⁹¹ From P.H. Skuse, Director of Public Safety Department, to the Commissioner Okinawan Police Department on the subject of “Indiscriminate Search and Seizure,” May 23, 1947. “Skuse File: Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the Freimuth Papers.

³⁹² From Brigadier General F.L. Hayden to Deputy Commander for Military Government on the subject of “Search and Seizure by Military Police,” June 25, 1947. “Skuse File: Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the Freimuth Papers. Emphasis added.

of “appreciation” for American benevolence because after all, “the Okinawans were not the enemy—they were friends whom we have liberated from forty years of Japanese slavery.”³⁹³ Initially, while many Ryukyuan scholars shared this view of liberation, the epidemic of Americans committing violent crimes against Ryukyuan, coupled with violations of basic civil liberties, led some to question whether they were better off under U.S. occupation. Consequently, Ryukyuan scholar, Ôta Masahide, argues that “the attitude toward the United States shifted from favorable to unfavorable, in reaction to the military government’s leadership as well as the behavior of the occupation troops.”³⁹⁴

At first glance, the battle between RYCOM and Paul Skuse over the “behavior of occupation troops” suggests RYCOM refused to acknowledge the extent of the problem. In a letter written many years later, Skuse indicated that RYCOM was acutely aware it had a problem. Skuse noted that he personally had “destroyed several thousands of copies of every crime and offence committed by the U.S. occupation troops because I did not want them falling into unfriendly hands.” Skuse said that the Ryukyuan police sent him copies of every crime report involving Americans, which his translation staff rendered into English. Copies were then sent to the “Deputy Commander for Military Government (later the Civil Administrator), to G-2, the Provost Marshall, the C.O. of the Military Police Company, etc.” but Skuse believed RYCOM “did not send them to higher headquarters of the Archives as they reflected adversely on the Command.”³⁹⁵ Skuse, clearly showing divided loyalties, was particularly upset that he destroyed the records pertaining to the long-standing practice of the “wholesale and indiscriminate raids on

³⁹³ Triplet, *In the Philippines and Okinawa*, 225.

³⁹⁴ Ôta, *Essays on Okinawa Problems*, 210-211.

³⁹⁵ Emphasis added. RYKOM is “Ryukyu Command” which is essentially the same as USCAR- United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands.

native villages.” These raids, Skuse noted, would “not put the Army in a very good light,” and therefore, he doubted that these records would end up in any archives.³⁹⁶

Rape, Prostitution, and “Honeys”: Gender during the Dark

Ages

Two crimes that were markedly underreported, yet of acute concern to the Ryukyuan people, were the related issues of sexual assaults and prostitution. In a six-year period (1945-50), nearly 110 sexual assaults were reported.³⁹⁷ Many of these cases involved more than one woman, and even more telling, many of the assaults were committed by more than one individual. The situation was dire enough for one American to write in his newspaper column, “Pop’s Popovers,” that “effen, after we been here two years we reached the point where Okinawan women folks hides whenever they see Americans comin’ along, then it don’t strike me they is liable to be over receptive to any other angles of American cultures which we try to teach ‘em.”³⁹⁸ One study in particular revealed the extent of the problem. According to Tengan Morio’s findings, 332 occupation personnel were involved in the 110 sexual assault cases. One such case occurred in Shuri on March 14, 1947, when a thirty-six year old woman was raped by six

³⁹⁶ Letter from Paul Skuse to James T. Watkins, April 7, 1982. Hiyane Teruo ed. et. al., *Papers of James T. Watkins IV: Historical Records of Postwar Okinawa and the Beginning of U.S. Occupancy*, Vol. 93, (Ginowan, Okinawa: Ryokurindo Shoten, date unknown), 13-15. Yet Skuse’s concern for the need in revealing the truth behind “the behavior of occupation troops” belies the fact that he destroyed these potentially revealing documents. Who was he referring to when he said he feared these documents might “fall into unfriendly hands”? Skuse’s nervousness derived from inquiries made by the Japanese government during the 1980s. Skuse knew that Tokyo was anxious to “obtain information about the American occupation of the Ryukyu Island during the period from 1945-1952.” In fact, the Japanese government had gone as far as to commission “a number of persons to research” various archives in the U.S. relating to the occupation of the Ryukyus. The fact that Skuse personally had “several thousand copies of crime reports” coupled with Tengan Morio’s research indicates that crime in the early years of the occupation was not only a major problem, but a problem occupation authorities attempted to minimize or conceal.

³⁹⁷天願盛夫編、沖縄占領米軍犯罪事件帳、(具志川: ぐしかわ文具店、1999)、95-151.

³⁹⁸ “Pop’s Popovers,” *The Daily Okinawan*, 10 April 1947, vol. 2, no. 3, p. 1.

American soldiers.³⁹⁹ Yet as stunning as these figures are, another way to view the magnitude of the problem can be understood by hearing the perspective of Okinawan women themselves.

“The Americans are coming! The Americans are coming!” screamed Karimata Nobuko and others “when we heard the clang of the village bell.” Each village had a central bell that was used to convey various messages. One ring meant a village meeting was going to be convened. A continuous ringing, however, signified a problem, usually “that an American soldier was in the neighborhood.” These villagers certainly did not view the soldiers as benevolent liberators because “sometimes the soldiers entered residential areas to rape women.” Furthermore, Karimata, stated that “there were so many cases of rape in those early postwar years that whenever we spotted an American on our streets, we thought for sure he was a rapist.” Usually the soldiers ran when the bell rang, but others were more persistent and would hide until the commotion subsided. The problem was acute from the “end of the war in 1945 until around 1950 or so.”⁴⁰⁰ Miyagi Hiramami echoed similar experiences to Karimata. She recalled how relieved they were American soldiers first arrived in their village saving them from the atrocious behavior of the Japanese military. Yet this liberation became a reoccurring nightmare, as they “were shocked when the Americans, who had come to save them from the Japanese soldiers, also began to carry off our island women to deserted areas to rape them.”⁴⁰¹

Even the presence of daylight and Okinawan civilian police (CP) failed to deter sexual assaults. Some soldiers felt brazen enough to enter villages in broad daylight. At ten in the morning, several armed soldiers entered the village of Funakoshi and abducted

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 109-110.

⁴⁰⁰ Keyso, *Women of Okinawa*, 86.

⁴⁰¹ Carolyn Bowen Francis, “Women and Military Violence,” In Chalmers Johnson ed., *Okinawa: Cold War Island* (Japan Policy Research Institute, 1999), 200-201.

a girl. Notified of the abduction, seven CPs went to the scene to rescue the girl. They saw the soldiers pulling the girl into a grove and upon approach, came under rifle fire by the soldiers. In the ensuing struggle, one of the CPs, Sakihara Koki, was shot and killed. Eventually, with further reinforcements from MPs, the soldiers were arrested and the girl rescued. Despite the arrests, this account reflects a brazen atmosphere where soldiers apparently felt they could get away with such acts in broad daylight and did not fear the CPs.⁴⁰²

Even hospitals offered little sanctuary from the predatory advances of some soldiers. Oshiro Junko, who barely survived the Battle of Okinawa, visited one tent hospital frequently because her son, Minoru, suffered from an infected leg caused by shrapnel. Oshiro noted that the medical staff were extremely generous and saved many Okinawans from certain death. These same medical corpsmen, when off-duty, were also forced to don special armbands labeled “SP” (Special Police) and stood guard because of the incidence of rapes within the hospital. The SP guards “carried rifles and patrolled day and night.” Oshiro said nights were especially tense “because time after time American soldiers” snuck into the hospital and “committed acts of violence against nurses and patients.”⁴⁰³ On another night, “a drunk American soldier invaded the hospital,” and raped a young female patient “in front of her father and all the other patients.” Even though the young girl was raped right in front of her father’s eyes, “he had no way of defending her.” Eventually a SP came and stopped the attack. The disgraced father, who had brought his sick daughter into the hospital, angrily said “let’s go back to the

⁴⁰² Funakoshi Police Report No. 23, From the Chief of Funakoshi Police Station to the Chief of Chinen Police Headquarters on the subject of “Death of a Policeman in Line of Duty—Report of,” November 29, 1945. Skuse File: “Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the Freimuth Papers.

⁴⁰³ Oshiro Junko, Carolyn Bowen Francis and Jane Mitsuko Oshiro trans., *A Mother’s Story of the Battle of Okinawa*, (Okinawa: Okinawa Christian Heiwa Center, 1995), 91. Originally published in Japanese as *いくさゆにいちてい* in 1989. Even the SPs, in the act of protecting nurses and patients, were sometimes attacked by assailants.

detention camp and choose to die rather than have your illness cured by such animals as these Americans!” Crying, he then left the hospital “carrying his daughter, who was in a state of shock, on his back.”⁴⁰⁴

RYCOM found the problem so prevalent that they ordered American women to carry a sidearm for self-protection. The necessity for self-protection was not because of the need to “protect our women from the poor docile natives-but to protect from our own troops.”⁴⁰⁵ American women on the island were acutely aware of the dangers because “nurses and civilian women were quartered in guarded compounds, and had to be escorted by armed males on their evenings out.” Even officers’ dependents were not immune to the dangers as their “wives and daughters lived in special communities and were put under the same regulations.”⁴⁰⁶ One officer’s wife, looking for landscaping to

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 93. Rapes did not affect only women. On September 27, 1949, Uehara Keiwa, Police Superintendent of the Maebaru Police Station, forward a sexual assault report to the Provost Marshall of the Ryukyus Command (RYCOM). The report detailed the rape of a 62 year old Okinawan man by an American soldier who was on guard duty. At 7:00 pm, September 11, Higashionna Matsu was returning home when he decided to take a shortcut through the Ishikawa dump. He asked the guard on duty if he could pass on the south side of the barbed wire entanglement of the dump. The guard refused so Higashionna turned around and began walking back toward Kawasaki village. He had only gone a 100 yards when the guard “overtook him,” and forced Higashionna back to the guard shack. For more than a couple of hours, inside the guard shack, the guard forced Higashionna to perform various acts of oral sex, and then attempted to sodomize him. Afterwards, the guard told him to leave the shack, but Higashionna refused when he “heard the guard loading the chamber of his carbine and realized the possibilities that the guard might shoot him as he walked along the path,” and presumably, the guard could easily dispose of the body in the dump. Fearing for his life, Higashionna stubbornly refused to move by sitting down in the middle of the shack. The guard responded by taking the muzzle of the carbine and jabbing it into the forehead of Higashionna, inflicting injury. Still unwilling to move, the guard next “picked up a floor board and struck him twice on his left cheeks with it.” Then, grabbing the cane Higashionna was using, the guard “struck him on the forward-left part of the head inflicting a laceration.” When the shift truck arrived at 2300 hours, the victim was placed on the truck and spent the night in detention. The next morning, Higashionna was told he had been detained because he was throwing rocks and waving his cane at some vehicle. He then told the investigators that in reality he had been beaten by the guard because he had asked permission to take a short-cut. He did not, however, mention the rape because he “feared retaliation by the said guard.” The full story did not come out until an Okinawan police officer, Nagado Akira, while investigating the story, found out the whole extent of the assault and reported the complete incident to U.S. authorities.

⁴⁰⁵ “Memo for the Record” by Paul Skuse, no date indicated. “Skuse File-Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the private papers of Edward Freimuth.

⁴⁰⁶ Morris, *Okinawa: A Tiger by the Tail*, 60.

place around their home, would set out looking for flowers and trees in “blue jeans, with her .32 Colt automatic holstered as a precaution.”⁴⁰⁷ The side-arm was strictly enforced as “Military Police would stop us on the road and require us to display our pistols and we goat a ticket if we didn’t have a gun.” What seemed to be more of a reflection of America’s western frontier, when “we arrived at the Club or other destination we checked our guns and hats.”⁴⁰⁸

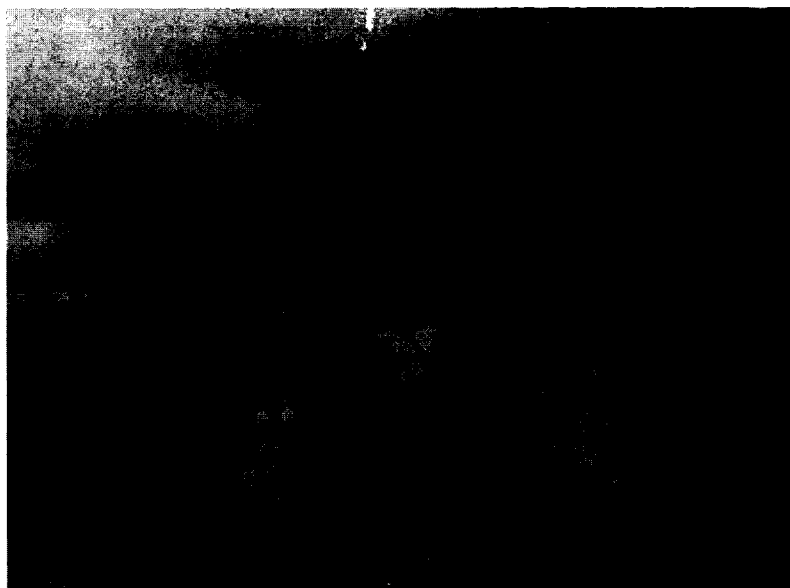


Figure 34 An American officer teaching his wife and daughter how to shoot their sidearm.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷ Triplet, *In the Philippines and Okinawa*, 216.

⁴⁰⁸ “Memo for the Record” by Paul Skuse, no date indicated. “Skuse File-Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the private papers of Edward Freimuth

⁴⁰⁹ Photo courtesy of Skip Hagen.

These accounts, however, represent just a fraction of the sexual crimes committed because even more than other categories of violent crimes, sexual assaults were vastly underreported. One reason stems from the stigma women have historically encountered: the burden of chastity has been primarily borne by women, hence rape has been often perceived as a woman's fault (the woman's behavior was in question rather than that of the perpetrator). Women, not surprisingly, were reluctant to come forward since "justice" was rarely achieved. Adding to this stigma was the particular Confucian notion that women had the sole responsibility for protecting their chastity, hence reporting such crimes would bring shame upon the entire family.⁴¹⁰

A related issue to the epidemic of sexual violence was prostitution. Prostitution existed in regions where large military forces existed, an unpleasant fact throughout the entire occupation period of the Ryukyus. Okinawan critics of the U.S. occupation who

⁴¹⁰ Regardless of the reason, the majority of sexual assaults accounts were simply not reported. In my years living in the Ryukyus, I heard frequent yet hushed stories that alluded to this problem. One such example remained a secret for over fifty years and ironically, only came to the public's attention on the eve of President Clinton's historic visit to Okinawa (for the G-8 Summit held in Nago, Okinawa in the summer of 2000). In the summer of 1945, while the Battle of Okinawa was winding down, three American military personnel disappeared in the northern part of Okinawa and were declared missing in action. After fifty-three years, the case, all but forgotten, unexpectedly reappeared. Local police, acting on a tip, discovered the bones of three marines in a cave near Nago. The mystery soon unraveled as some elderly Okinawans told how the three soldiers were ambushed and killed because they had "repeatedly come to the village to rape the village women." This case "refocused attention on what historians say is one of the most widely ignored crimes of the war, the widespread rape of Okinawan women by American servicemen" during the Battle of Okinawa. While there were 110 *reported* sexual assaults from 1945 to 1950, there have been estimates that as "*many as 10,000 Okinawan women may have been raped*" in only several months, from April 1 to August of 1945. This latter figure means "that most Okinawans over age 65 either know or have heard of a woman who was raped in the aftermath of the war." Yet, according to the officials from the Marine Corp, "they knew of no rapes by American servicemen in Okinawa at the end of the war," and certainly their records "do not list war crimes committed by marines in Okinawa," implying that if there were any rapes committed, it was the fault of other U.S. military branches or that rapes in general were aberrations

⁴¹⁰ Hence by using "official records" one would doubt the alleged number or 10,000 sexual assaults. Calvin Sims, "3 Dead Marines and a Secret Wartime Okinawa," *New York Times on the Web-International Section*, June 1, 2000, <http://www.nytimes.com/library/world/global/060100japan-us.html>, (emphasis added). It should be stated that there is no direct proof that these three American soldiers committed any crimes or that the villagers actually killed the three soldiers. Yet the circumstantial evidence strongly supports the story, and if seen in the broader context of the crimes in the occupation, the evidence fits the pattern of a dehumanized occupation. Also see: "Mystery over U.S. Soldier's Deaths Unsolved 55 Years on Okinawa," *The Daily Yomiuri On-Line*, April 27, 2000. <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/news/0427so07.htm>

argued that the exploitation of local women was a unique phenomenon of the occupation period ignore the continuity of sexual exploitation from the prewar era.⁴¹¹ Prostitution during the early years of the occupation, however, differed from the prewar practice in ways that made it more of a public issue for the people. Before the war, the primary red-light district was in Naha's Naminoue ward, but with the destruction of Naha, "thousands of prostitutes fled from Naha and other urban areas where they had been congregated, to the outlying districts" where they established more localized "services." These services were also directly linked to black market activities because the prostitutes would "dispense their favors to military personnel receiving in return, cigarettes, candy, and other post exchanges items which they and their sponsors are able to sell in the black-market for very high prices."⁴¹² Hence for many villages, instead of the "floating world of the *jurigwa*", a traditionalized and highly localized sex industry, they now had to confront this phenomenon of prostitution directly. It was one thing for local men to take trips to Naminoue to find entertainment -- after all such activities were open secrets -- but quite another to see this activity in their own villages. Thus, for many wives, having *jurigwa* in their backyards threatened not only their social space in the villages and but also the understood "harmony" of marital and familial relations.

Another concern over prostitution was the vast increase in numbers of prostitutes as the "water trade" was no longer confined to Naminoue nor limited to the more

⁴¹¹ Prostitution, however, was not merely a phenomenon of the occupation as it was a deeply entrenched institution in prewar Okinawa, as it was on the Japanese island. Centered on Naminoue (also known as Tsuji-machi), the infamous red-light district in the capital city of Naha that ironically was also a famous religious site, was reported to have housed between 8000 and 13,000 prostitutes. F. R. Pitts, W. P. Lebra, and W. P. Suttles, *Post-war Okinawa*, (Washington D.C.: Pacific Science Board National Research Council, 1955), 69-70. Although there are difference in how to translate "geisha," it seems that for the terms *juri* and *jurigwa*, the most apt term is "mistress." For more on Naminoue see 青山洋二 (編者) と下地春義 (翻訳), 米軍記者が見た沖縄平和20年, (沖縄市: 新城印刷, 1985), 21.

⁴¹² From the Headquarters Military Government, Ryukyus, Public Safety Department To the Deputy Commander for Military Government on the subject of "Prostitution," Feb. 17, 1947. "Skuse File-Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa," in the private papers of Edward Freimuth.

“professional” class of *jurigwa*. Under conditions of tremendous poverty in the aftermath of the battle, the *jurigwa* who survived were joined by thousands of ordinary Ryukyuan women, who became prostitutes mostly out of sheer need. Impoverished women who had little choice but to become prostitutes were victimized many times over. Already oppressed by the war and poverty these women also sacrificed their bodies to American soldiers in order to sustain their families. Takazato Susuyo, a prominent activist for women’s issues on Okinawa, noted that “many families, in fact the whole island, managed to overcome the economic straits, directly or indirectly, by the earnings of prostitutes.” One American characterized these women as volunteers who were “willing, for a consideration, to entertain the soldiers’ wants.”⁴¹³ But this view ignored the fact that the economic situation in the Ryukyus was much worse than the conditions in Japan and thus Ryukyuan women were not necessarily “willing” participants. Takazato pointed out that “since WWII had destroyed the entire social structure and the means of production of Okinawa and since most of the fertile farmland was taken for bases, the everyday life of the people became a struggle for survival.” Takazato, therefore, noted how “some women, especially, war widows, naturally became prostitutes for American soldiers.”⁴¹⁴

The industry also relocated to areas close to American military bases to provide “services” to the many military customers. This presence of prostitutes and brothels in villages bordering U.S. bases, also bred resentment amongst many Okinawan men. In the occupation era, the Okinawan men’s patriarchal authority was displaced by the presence

⁴¹³ Morris, *Okinawa: A Tiger by the Tail*, 60. Emphasis added.

⁴¹⁴ *Heiwa Voice*, (Okinawa: Okinawa Christian Heiwa Center, 1990s), 54-57. Publication date is not listed but it seem highly probable that it was published sometime in the early 1990s. American soldiers, however, were not the only ones responsible for oppressing these women. Local crime gangs soon emerged and created a system that made it nearly impossible for these women to leave this life. These gangs would advance loans that were “designed to keep these women in the ‘Flesh Trade’ for long periods of time by keeping them indebted for many years and sometimes for life.”

of the American soldiers.⁴¹⁵ Okinawan men could not compete with the rich American soldiers, especially when it came to women. Therefore, their economic impotency was further magnified along sexual grounds when soldiers would brazenly come into their local villages to visit local brothels. “The sex trade thus represents not merely the intrusion of the economic into the erotic, but patriarchy itself, if patriarchy is understood as the promotion and perpetuation of men’s interests through their control over women.”⁴¹⁶

This loss of masculinity led some Okinawan men to argue prostitution was a function of low morality. One Okinawan, in a meeting in Washington D.C. with the Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, raised various concerns they had about the poor economic conditions in the Ryukyus.⁴¹⁷ Their anxiety, however, was not simply over the lack of progress in economic recovery, but the correlation between this lack of progress and social morality. Professor Onaga Tashio said there was a ubiquitous problem “that the moral conditions in the Ryukyus were extremely low.” In particular, Onaga pointed out “that since the occupation a large percentage of girls and women had become prostitutes.” Even though Onaga specifically “blamed American soldiers for most of these conditions,” he was implying that the American occupation’s

⁴¹⁵ As colonial subjects, it was true that Okinawan men patriarchal authority was diminished by mainland Japanese. Yet in local regions, where the Japanese presence was mostly absent, Okinawan men still possessed patriarchal authority. Karimata Nobuko wrote that when “she was growing up, I always felt like men were treated specially in this society...at that time I could not understand why everyone was so eager for her to have a baby boy.” Karimate always wondered why women could not “inherit their parents’ property and the *ihai* just like boys?” *Ihai* are the ancestral tablets and are maintained by the eldest son, thus reinforcing the patriarchal system. See Karimate’s critique of Okinawan society in Keyso, *Women of Okinawa*, 91.

⁴¹⁶ Michael S. Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory*, (London: Routledge, 1999), 56.

⁴¹⁷ The three Ryukyuan were Shikiya Koshin, current president of the University of the Ryukyus and former governor of the Ryukyus, Professor Onaga Tashio, business manager at the University of the Ryukyus, and Jesse Shima, a Ryukyuan who was President of the Japanese Association of Washington.

failure to provide for basic economic relief created an environment that subjugated Ryukyuan women to the needs of American men.⁴¹⁸ One could also read Onaga's concern as a function of a loss of masculinity as many men could not economically provide for their families, forcing their women into prostitution. This attitude was effectively conveyed in *Child of Okinawa*, which will be discussed in greater detail shortly. Two fishermen, apparently upset that a local woman was leaving to marry a Ryukyuan immigrant in Brazil, were discussing the situation:

Well, she's probably better off. At least she didn't end up like her sister, shackled up with some GI.

Yeah, wearing those tacky dresses.

And all that make-up.⁴¹⁹

Another prominent Okinawan politician, who agreed with Onaga that the prostitution was a problem, offered a more pragmatic solution.

Governor Shikiya Koshin wanted to resolve the problem in a more traditional and pragmatic manner. The best way to protect Okinawan women, he believed, was to establish "recreations centers." These centers, such as "dance-halls, restaurants or tea-booths," could possess a "certain number of licensed girls" to serve the needs of American soldiers. To deal with the rampant problem of venereal diseases, these girls would undergo regular venereal examinations.⁴²⁰ Although on paper prostitution was still considered to be illegal, American authorities essentially agreed with Shikiya's

⁴¹⁸ "Conditions in the Ryukyus, April 6, 1951." Memorandum of Conversation, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State. RG 59, CDF 1950-54, box 4260, F 1 (794C.00/3-1850). Okinawa Prefecture Archives Folder #: U90006077B.

⁴¹⁹ Higashi, *沖縄の少年* (*Child of Okinawa*), 100.

⁴²⁰ Memorandum No. 187, Office of the Chiji, Okinawan Civilian Administration, to the Deputy Commander for Military Government on the subject of "Report on Forcible Entries into Civilian Settlements Made by Filipino Service Men and Recommendation on Countermeasures thereof," June 3, 1947. "Skuse File-Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa," in the private papers of Edward Freimuth.

perspective. They chose to have prophylactic devices “openly displayed in all post exchanges and...prophylactic stations be set up in every military camp or installations,” even though in theory, such a policy ran “contrary to War Department policy.”⁴²¹

An Okinawan novel depicted prostitution’s corrosive effects on Okinawan society and the corresponding anxiety it produced in a compelling manner in Higashi Mineo’s *Child of Okinawa*.⁴²² In *Child of Okinawa*, Higashi’s protagonist, a young adolescent boy named Tsuneyoshi, lived with his parents, who happen to run a brothel out of their home for American soldiers. His father, who moved to Koza to start the business, got advice from Yananouchi-san, a noted brothel operator, to “choose girls with queen-bee figures, big tits and slim waists.” If you get several of them then “you’re in business,” especially if “you can find one like our Suzy with white skin and a nice round ass, you’ll really rake it in.” One day after returning home from school, he saw his parents talking about the family business. His dad, with a mouth-full of food, was telling Tsuneyoshi’s mother, “see, you make loans to the girls who bring in lots of money. That way they have to keep working for you to pay off their debts. Of course, nobody lends money to the girls who can’t sell, so they just drift around from bar to bar.” Tsuneyoshi, already appalled at his father’s “matter-of-factly” discussion “about women who are lured into debt and then held like slaves,” could not understand how his father could just “sit there and gossip about their misery while chewing his food with such pleasure.”⁴²³

⁴²¹ From the Headquarters Military Government, Ryukyus, Public Safety Department To the Deputy Commander for Military Government on the subject of “Prostitution,” Feb. 17, 1947. “Skuse File-Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the private papers of Edward Freimuth

⁴²² *Child of Okinawa* won Japan’s most prestigious literary award the Akutagawa Prize for fiction in 1972, which ironically, was the same year the Ryukyus reverted back to Japan’s control.

⁴²³ Higashi Mineo, *沖繩の少年* (*Child of Okinawa*), translated by Steve Rabson in *Okinawa: Two Postwar Novellas*, (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Area Studies, University of California-Berkeley, 1989), 85-86. Also see Michael S. Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory*, (London: Routledge, 1999), in particular 52-63.

Tsuneyoshi, disturbed about his parent's callous attitude, finally confronted his mother when she demanded that he give up his room for fifteen minutes because of "business" necessities. Tsuneyoshi forcibly replied to his mother, "No! You ought to quit selling women." She replied that doing so would force the family "to go back to living from day to day," and moreover, "things would be *ten* times as bad as they are now, and there'd be no money for anyone to go to school."⁴²⁴ Higashi's poignant account of prostitution, therefore, illustrated how these women were doubly oppressed: sexually they were exploited by the American military, and economically, by their own people.

An American fact-finding mission to investigate the problem of prostitution saw other factors behind the increase of prostitution. This report noted that war in general, with its disruption of "family and religious ties", can result in a "letdown of moral standards." The report noted the great imbalance in the gender ratio on the island. Yet the report chauvinistically concluded that it was almost preordained these women would want to serve American men because the native women looked at their American liberators "with respect and awe." Moreover, these women were "naturally swooned" by the charismatic and romantic American soldiers because the "occupying forces displayed toward the native women a kindness and attention that is foreign to the Okinawan male."⁴²⁵ In addition, local men, unable to provide economically created a default state where some women looked to the "rich" American soldier for economic security.

The primary problem, however, was not the soldiers but the prostitutes themselves as they defined a prostitute as one "who permits her body to be used

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 103.

⁴²⁵ From the Headquarters Military Government, Ryukyus, Public Safety Department To the Deputy Commander for Military Government on the subject of "Prostitution," Feb. 17, 1947. "Skuse File-Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa," in the private papers of Edward Freimuth.

indiscriminately for hire, for sexual intercourse, or immoral purpose.”⁴²⁶ Consequently occupation authorities initiated a plan of “apprehension, trial and punishment of prostitutes” only, which meant that soldiers who made the solicitations and paid for the prostitutes would not be charged.⁴²⁷ Thus the solution, from their perspective was simple, arrest prostitutes. This solution was not new. From July 1, 1946 to January 31, 1947, Okinawan CPs had arrested 81 for sex offenses.⁴²⁸ This new approach quickly filled prisons beyond capacity, revealing the magnitude of the problem. A memo sent in May ordered the American officer in charge of the prison system to “parole all prostitutes, now in confinement, upon completion of one-half of their prison sentence” in order to relieve “the existing congestion” in the prison system.⁴²⁹

Working Okinawan women as maids on military bases were perceived as “immoral” by many local men. While there were no social stigmas if local men were employed as military base workers, women encountered a double standard. There was a general perception that “American employers have sexual access to these women, particularly the maids.” It was said that one could tell who was a maid on base by the “loud and flashy” clothes they wore; consequently, some men felt these maids “were no better than ‘honeys.’” The American taint on these women was so strong that it was claimed that “many young men will not marry women who have been maids in military

⁴²⁶ From the Headquarters Military Government, Ryukyus, Public Safety Department To the Deputy Commander for Military Government on the subject of “Prostitution,” Feb. 17, 1947. “Skuse File-Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the private papers of Edward Freimuth. Underlined words as in the original document.

⁴²⁷ Internal Memorandum from Col. Daughtry to Ryukyus Command, Military Government, on the subject of “Prostitution,” Feb. 10, 1947. “Skuse File-Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the private papers of Edward Freimuth.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ From P.H. Skuse, Director of Public Safety to Lt. Col. C.W. Emrick, Prison Officer, May 1, 1947 on the subject of “Parole of Prostitutes.” “Skuse File-Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” in the private papers of Edward Freimuth.

installations.” Such strong attitudes among the local men led one American anthropologist to conclude that “most of the discrimination is directly attributable to the sexual jealousy of the Okinawa male toward the women who work and often live in close daily contact with Americans.”⁴³⁰

Okinawan women in particular criticized other women for “cozying” up to American soldiers. Women who flirted with Americans were derogatorily called “honeys.” In fact the word “honeys” was one of the first American words to enter in the postwar vocabulary (after “give me”). Okinawans quickly picked up that soldiers would call “favored” women “honey” or use phrases like “honey, could you rub my back” or “honey, could you pour me some whiskey,” etc. Jo Nobuko Martin, who was a member of the war-time elite *Himeyuri* girls, believed that these “honeys” had lower moral standards because they had little education. Martin said “we *Himeyuri* girls...felt greatly superior to those uneducated people.” But Martin and the other surviving *Himeyuri* girls became angry and dismayed that these honeys had “special status in camp—at out expense!” These honeys, Martin recalled, received “gifts of chocolate, soaps, and face creams.” To add insult to injury, these honeys were given more authority, which allowed these “shameless hussies to order the rest of us around.” The honeys also received new colorful clothes, which generated tremendous jealousy and bitter resentment as the rest of the women were stuck in clothes that were “coarse and drab” and “torn at the seams and worn in the seats.”⁴³¹

Ôshiro Junko also witnessed such honeys, though she was more sympathetic realizing that these “young women, in the loneliness of being separated from parents and siblings by death, or maybe in despair or desperation, became good friends with

⁴³⁰ W. P. Lebra, “Military Employment,” in F. R. Pitts, W. P. Lebra and W. P. Suttles, *Post-War Okinawa*, (Washington D.C.: Pacific Science Board-National Research Council, 1955), 207.

⁴³¹ Martin, *Princess Lily of the Ryukyus*, 378-379.

American soldiers and received various goods from them.” Being a honey meant “they were always dressed gorgeously,” yet beautiful clothes were but a façade for the sheer desperation of life. Ôshiro empathized with these honeys, but at the same time, she feared these impoverished conditions would allow women to be easily corrupted. Ôshiro, therefore, impressed upon her daughter and friends that “we lost the war but don’t lose your spirit.” Ôshiro said despite the anxiety she felt that her daughter might be tempted by the glamour of being a honey, her daughter and friends “were all obedient and good girls, so I had no cause for worry.” Nevertheless, Oshiro and other Okinawans clearly saw how this overall state of dependency was not only disconcerting but dehumanizing. For many Okinawans, the traditional Okinawan saying, *munu kwisidu waga ufusu*, which translates into “the person who feeds me is my master,” certainly reflected the gravity of the situation.⁴³²

White Man’s Burden during the Dark Age

During Japan’s seventy-year rule, Okinawans experienced a clear racial hierarchy within “homogeneous” Japan, and they understood they occupied a bottom rung in this hierarchy. Japanese disrespect became further magnified during the first year of the occupation when many of the Navy’s civil affairs personnel treated Okinawans with respect and dignity. Okinawans felt even more honored by the Navy’s efforts to preserve their unique culture and heritage.

At the same time, this “respect” derived from an American sense of civilized superiority. The Americans viewed the Okinawans as a disenfranchised ethnic minority that the Americans had liberated. Okinawans seemed to reflect the dominant stereotype frequently voiced by U.S. officials of being “law abiding, gentle and extremely

⁴³² Oshiro Junko, Carolyn Bowen Francis and Jane Mitsuko Oshiro trans., *A Mother’s Story of the Battle of Okinawa*, (Okinawa: Okinawa Christian Heiwa Center, 1995), 91. Originally published in Japanese as いくさゆにいちてい in 1989.

cooperative.” In addition, since the Americans perceived themselves as liberators, they believed that the Okinawans were well “disposed toward us—better, probably, than any other people in the Far Eastern area.”⁴³³ Therefore, the occupation of the Ryukyus, at least initially reflected a paternalistic, but benevolent tone as reflected in Chapter Three. General Josef Sheetz, who became the commander of RYCOM in 1949, stated “it is the moral responsibility of a Christian nation, which is America, to teach democracy to the backward Okinawan people.”⁴³⁴ In the popular 1954 movie, *The Teahouse of the August Moon*, this self-aggrandizing tone was parodied to great effect. Col. Purdy, a caricature of the American “knows best” attitude, frustrated over the seemingly inability of the Okinawan people to appreciate or understand the American presence shouted “they’re gonna learn democracy if I have to shoot every one of them.” Viewing the Okinawan people as incapable of running their own affairs, at best, made them noble savages, thus legitimizing, from an American perspective, the notion of “white man’s burden.”

A 1946 souvenir pamphlet, published by RYCOM’S Public Relations Office, reified this image of Self and Other for average military personnel. This pamphlet, which RYCOM distributed to all military units on the island, reiterated what the 1944 *Handbook* had already made gospel among RYCOM officials. The images from the pamphlet illustrate clearly the American stereotype of Okinawans. The first photo that appears in the pamphlet depicts a feeble elderly man, with eyes closed while resting with a cane. The caption under the picture stated, “All Asia contributed its peoples to the flow which created Okinawa...simple...shy...content.” The second photo shows a young girl smiling and the photo conveys the smile comes from the privilege of being among

⁴³³ From Mr. Cargo to Mr. Craiq, Office Memorandum, Subject: Disposition of Okinawa, April 5, 1948. Miyazato Seigun Collection

⁴³⁴ Miyazato Seigen, *Problematic Points of Reversion of Okinawa*, (Tokyo: Nanpo Doho Engokai, 1965).

Americans. “The bland charm of the Oriental children...especially when they have the rice paddies to pose for American-san.”⁴³⁵

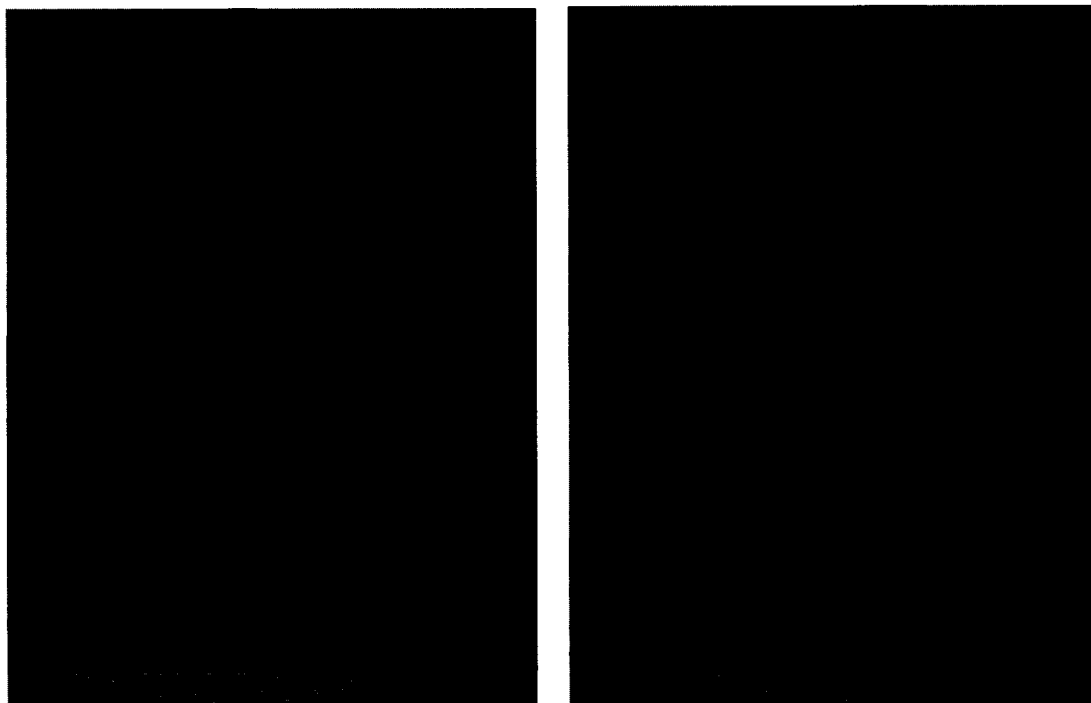


Figure 35 “One Year: The Ryukyus in War and Peace.”

Conversely, the American need to “rescue” the Okinawan from themselves had a darker manifestation. Internalizing Japanese views of the Ryukyus as backwards meant that many Americans perceived the Okinawan at best as semi-civilized and at worst as sub-human. In the *Civil Affairs Handbook for the Ryukyu Islands*, which largely derived most of its information from prewar-Japanese ethnographical surveys, noted in the section “Attitudes and Values” that the Ryukyuan people are “mild-mannered, courteous, and

⁴³⁵ Public Relations Office- Okinawa: Okinawa Base Command, *One Year: The Ryukyus in War and Peace 1 April 1945-1 April 1946*, (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, Ltd., 1946).

subservient to authority, the islanders do not value orderliness and cleanliness to the same extent as the Japanese.”⁴³⁶ Of course American notions of an inferior and uncivilized Other was nothing new in American history. But if the Americans perceived the Japanese to be beneath them, and the Japanese saw the Ryukyus as inferior, then the Ryukyans were the worst of the worst in this racial hierarchy. This darker manifestation, unfortunately, was the prevalent attitude among RYCOM.

Many in RYCOM, who perceived Okinawans as sub-human, called them “stupid gooks.” For some Americans, proof of a sub-human Other came from how “many of the Okinawan women went bare-breasted and those who wore a shirt usually wore it open with little regard for Western modesty.”⁴³⁷ Latrine habits, especially the urination in public by both men and women, was seen as further proof of the uncouth mannerism of the America’s “wards.” Americans were also shocked to find that the homes did not have indoor toilets. Instead, a *benjo*, or outside latrine, was used. Often the *benjo* was built above a hog pen where the fecal material would be eaten by pigs waiting eagerly below. Other homes used discarded American oil drums for their toilets. One American anthropologist described the situation:

The visitor looks into the toilet. It is an oil drum with a platform over it and a wood and canvas shelter over that. The cover is off. The drum is nearly full and its surface is in constant motion, a seething mass of maggots. One of the men with the carts that cause you to cross to the other side of the road will come in a few days to dump it.....⁴³⁸

These men, pulling their “honey wagons,” were a common sight. Not too surprisingly, the scuttlebutt among the Americans was to avoid eating any of the

⁴³⁶ *Civil Affairs Handbook Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands*, VII.

⁴³⁷ John C. Shively, *The Last Lieutenant- The Epic Battle for Iwo Jima: a Foxhole Perspective*, (privately published by the author, 2002), 152.

⁴³⁸ *Post-war Okinawa*, 151-153.

indigenous food since it was fertilized by this night soil. Many locals have told me stories of how they were anxious to treat American guests to a traditional dinner only to be insulted when the Americans would rudely decline their hospitality by pulling out a can of Spam to eat for themselves as they did not trust the local cuisine.

Okinawans were not oblivious to the occupation's racialized environment. Written in the mid-1950's, Arakawa Akira's poem *The Colored Race*, captures the essence of a people who have been racially denigrated. This poem, consisting of five sub-poems, noted the racial hierarchy in the first poem, "Our Skin":

The white race
 brought to this island of ours
 Honest John.
 They stride about the island
 As if they were our masters,
 The white race.

They call us "Yellow."
 They call us "Yellow."⁴³⁹

Arakawa, in the second poem entitled "The Yellow Race (Part I)," wrote their racial difference translated into an American attitude of contempt:

In your eyes,
 We are weakly, sickly
 "Yellow Bastards."

In your eyes,

⁴³⁹ As quoted and formatted in Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory*, 96.

To you
 Who are as white as Louis XVI,
 As white as Hitler and Mussolini
 We are weak.⁴⁴⁰

Arakawa, at the end of this poem, defiantly and proudly replied that “we don’t mind being the Yellow Race.” Yet at the same time, this racial resistance does imply a sense of ambiguity or discomfort of being “yellow,” because it tacitly acknowledges the power of the Americans to define and label a racial hierarchy. Arakawa’s perspective on the occupation’s racial construct “suggests that oppressed peoples perpetuate their own subjugation by internalizing the subjugator’s discourse, and the poem attempts to usurp authority from the white occupiers by redefining the language of race.”⁴⁴¹ Nevertheless, it does seem clear that Okinawans were quite cognizant of the racial discourse that shaped the relationship between the occupied and the occupier. More importantly, the period of “apathy and neglect” derived from a calculus of a racist context and rudely awoke Okinawans to the reality that Americans were no better than the Japanese.

Conclusion

Not all Americans who served in the Ryukyus saw the people as simple, passive and primitive; unfortunately, they were a minority. One “minority” perspective was that of Navy Commander John Caldwell, who believed from the very beginning the Okinawans were civilized and more than capable of self-rule. In an unpublished memoir, Caldwell reflected on the problem of first impressions. Caldwell noted that almost all American knowledge of the Ryukyus came from Japanese sources. These sources,

⁴⁴⁰ As quoted and formatted in Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory*, 97.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

Caldwell recalled, had a “patronizing attitude toward the Ryukyus, regarding the people as inferiors and the islands as in practically all respects retarded.” Unfortunately, this perspective was inevitably reflected in the American analysis of the Ryukyus, which “gave an exaggerated impression of the primitive and undesirable characteristics of the islands.” The imprinting of this stereotype dominated American views and attitudes toward the Ryukyus, clearly seen in the souvenir pamphlet. Consequently, “[b]oth consciously and sub-consciously, the [American] planners worked on the assumption that the Okinawan was forlorn and depressed and his island home exhibited the worst features of a vastly overpopulated and under-endowed South Sea island.”⁴⁴²

The impoverished conditions of the islands became insufferable in the wake of the occupation’s deteriorating command as arrogance, hypocrisy, contempt, and incompetence increasingly characterized the occupation under the Army’s direction. Although the mentality of the Navy’s civil affairs team incorporated elements of the racist notion of “white man’s burden,” NCAT promoted a respectful image of a Okinawan culture/history and the need to preserve and promote a Okinawan identity. Conversely, the military government under the Army’s direction, with a few notable exceptions, perceived the Okinawans, at best, as hopelessly backward. Thus the Army’s military government made little effort to celebrate Okinawan culture, saw no need to respect fundamental civil liberties, and did little to address the Okinawan concerns about crime, racist attitudes and policies, or the moral degradation, primarily manifested in the form of prostitution, of their society.

⁴⁴² Caldwell, John. First Tentative Draft “Military Government Planning, Xth Army, August 1944-Feb. 1945,” February, 1945, Watkins Collection, Vol. 20, (Ginowan, Okinawa: Ryokurindo Shoten, publication date unknown), 95.

Okinawans, therefore, became cognizant of the gap between the rhetoric and the reality of the American claim to be their liberators and champions. Even though Okinawans felt little love for the 70 years of Japanese rule and many were still dealing with the scars of the atrocities committed by the Japanese military during the course of the battle, disillusionment soon turned to anger and resistance. This resistance represented a fundamental challenge to the American stereotype of the Okinawans as “mild-mannered, courteous, and subservient to authority.”

THE U.S. MILITARY OCCUPATION OF OKINAWA: POLITICIZING AND
CONTESTING OKINAWAN IDENTITY 1945-1955

VOLUME II

by

David John Obermiller

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CHAPTER FIVE THE CRUCIBLE OF OKINAWAN RESISTANCE:
THE 1948-49 MASS STRUGGLE

The friction created by the U.S. occupying army during the period of incompetent, neglectful and unjust rule that followed the transfer of jurisdiction from the U.S. Navy to RYCOM, generated popular resistance in the form of both political and labor protests. Most historians identify the reversion petition movement of 1950 as the beginning of Okinawan resistance to the U.S. occupation, and attribute popular support for reversion to the “natural” desire of Okinawans to be reunited with the motherland. I argue, however, that the protest movements that preceded the reversion movement reveal the core impulse that propelled the reversion movement: popular resistance to foreign occupation and Okinawa’s neo-colonial status.

While resistance to the occupation was broad based, two men played key roles in mobilizing opposition: Nakasone Genwa and Senaga Kamejirô. Not intimidated by RYCOM, both men skillfully used American rhetoric of democracy to point out the contradictions in occupation policies. Ironically, however, both men prior to 1948 had expressed extreme gratitude toward the American occupiers and the efforts made to democratize the Ryukyus, as both men had believed that the U.S. occupation would lead to Okinawa independence. Throughout the 1950s, Senaga was deemed public enemy number one as he singlehandedly embarrassed, ridiculed, and defied the vast power of the U.S. military rule, thereby belying the American stereotype of the people “as simple...shy...content.”

Nakasone’s and Senaga’s political activism was informed by their prewar experiences. Graduates from high school, both men by default were members of the small Okinawan intelligentsia class because so few in the Ryukyus had the opportunity to continue their education beyond elementary school. And like many of the prewar Okinawan educated youth, they fled the poverty of the Ryukyus in search of better

opportunities in Japan.⁴⁴³ During this time, a common saying among Okinawans was “the rich emigrate abroad, the students go to Tokyo, and the poor go to Osaka.”⁴⁴⁴ Consequently, while many of the impoverished and undereducated Okinawans went to Osaka’s Taishō Ward, home of the largest contingent of the Okinawan diaspora in Japan, educated Okinawans like Nakasone and Senaga were attracted to Tokyo’s flourishing cosmopolitan scene during the Taishō era.⁴⁴⁵ Most Okinawan intellectuals living in Tokyo were eager to assimilate into mainstream Japanese society. Politically conservative, they saw themselves as Japanese rather than Okinawan and most never returned to Okinawa to live. Notable examples of such men include Baron Ie Chosuke (member of the House of Peers), Rear Admiral Kanna Kenwa, and Professor Higaonna Kanjun. In the 1930s, Baron Ie and Rear Admiral Kanna (now retired and a former member of the House of Representatives) helped to form the *Taisei Yokusankai*, which was a “nation-wide group of totalitarian patriotic organizations established by the Konoe Cabinet.”⁴⁴⁶ Okinawan scholars such as Higaonna wrote histories that legitimized Japanese assertions that Okinawa was an integral part of Japan by arguing that both racially and culturally Okinawans have always been Japanese.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴³ My mother’s family became part of the Okinawan diaspora when my grandfather moved to Osaka looking for factory work. My mother and her siblings, with the exception of the youngest, were all born in Osaka. From the early 1930s to the late 1940s, her parents worked in low paying textile jobs.

⁴⁴⁴ Steve Rabson, “Memories of Okinawa: Life and Times in the Greater Osaka Diaspora,” in Larua Hein and Mark Selden, eds., *Islands of Discontent: Okinawan Responses to Japanese and American Power*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003. Rabson notes that while the Okinawan community in Osaka had the reputation of being the working class, he notes many could be found in professional jobs.

⁴⁴⁵ This ward was located on Osaka’s harbor. Originally named Minato Ward, the Ward was subdivided in 1932, and the section where the Okinawan community resided was renamed Taishō Ward.

⁴⁴⁶ Okinawan Testimony (7), “Okinawan Federation,” *Weekly Okinawa Times*, August 10, 1968.

⁴⁴⁷ Higaonna Kanjun, *Okinawa shōgai shi*, (Tokyo, 1951).

Nakasone and Senaga, however, deviated from the “Japanized” Okinawan elite in several notable ways. First, both became involved in Marxist studies during their stay in Japan. Nakasone, disturbed over the Japanese discrimination and exploitation of Okinawans, sought some organization or doctrine to which he could turn, and subsequently became interested in Communism. Nakasone went to Tokyo and enrolled in Russian language in the Foreign Language Institute so that he could read Communist literature in the original. In the course of his studies, Nakasone met other notable Marxist such as Tokuda Kyûichi (who was also from Okinawa) and Nosaka Sanzô, and eventually joined the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and subsequently became one of the directors of the Central Communist Committee of the JCP.⁴⁴⁸ In 1923, Japanese authorities rounded-up many Communist and Socialist members, including Nakasone, and placed them in prison where he remained until 1927.⁴⁴⁹ The prison experience shocked Nakasone, who left the JCP after his release from prison in 1927.⁴⁵⁰ Shortly thereafter, discouraged by life in Japan, Nakasone returned to Okinawa where he kept a low political profile throughout the 1930s. No longer able to engage in the exciting Marxist discussions he had experienced in the early 1920s, Nakasone devoted himself to codifying and promoting Okinawan karate. He published several works on Okinawan karate, most notably *Karatedô Taikan* and *Kobô Kempô* in 1938. One of the most striking aspects of Nakasone’s involvement in Okinawan karate was his intense desire to save the Okinawan karate way from being subsumed by mainland Japan karate

448 “An ex-Communist Expresses His Views on “Communism in the Ryukyus,” Memorandum of Conversation between Nakasone Genwa and American Consul General (Naha), John M. Steeves, January 5, 1957. CDF 1955-59, Box 3977, File 5, RG 59. Also see: Okinawa Encyclopedia“*沖縄大百科事典下巻*”(那覇市: 沖縄タイムス社, 1983) 17-18.

449 *Okinawa Encyclopedia*“*沖縄大百科事典下巻*”(那覇市: 沖縄タイムス社, 1983) 17.

450 Nakasone Genwa, *Okinawa kara Ryukyu he*, (Naha: Gekkan Okinawasha, 1973), 162-164. Some scholars, such as Higa Mikio, have argued Nakasone became a vehement anti-communist and a conservative.

organizations. Evidently, Nakasone must have convinced the authorities that he had disavowed Marxism as he was elected to the Okinawa Prefecture Assembly in 1942.⁴⁵¹

Unlike Nakasone, Senaga was born into poverty. When he was three years old, the family's impoverished condition drove his father to emigrate to Hawa'ii in search of better economic opportunities. The remittances he sent home enabled Senaga to receive secondary education in Okinawa. At age seventeen, Senaga resolved to join his father in Hawa'ii, but was prevented from emigrating when in 1924, the U.S. Congress banned further immigration of Japanese to the U.S., and the U.S. territory of Hawa'ii. Deciding to stay in mainland Japan, Senaga found refuge within the Okinawan Diaspora in Tokyo, where a man from his village, Kiyon Yasumasa, introduced him to Marxism.⁴⁵² For someone who had experienced tremendous poverty and hardship in Okinawa, and heard from his father about racial prejudice in Hawa'ii, Marxism offered both an explanation and solution to injustice and exploitation.⁴⁵³

After his studies in Tokyo, Senaga moved to Kyushu in 1927 to further his education but was expelled because of his communist affiliations and activities.⁴⁵⁴ Undaunted by his expulsion, Senaga moved to Tokyo in 1931 where he joined the outlawed National Labor Union Liaison Council (*Zen Nihon Rôdô Kumiai Hyogikai*), a front organization of the JCP. Senaga gained invaluable experience as an organizer and orator as he secretly spoke to laborers about the need for solidarity. Senaga, however,

⁴⁵¹ *Okinawa Encyclopedia* “*沖縄大百科事典下巻*” (那覇市: 沖縄タイムス社, 1983) 17. Nakasone also played a pivotal role in codifying and promoting Okinawan karate.

⁴⁵² It is quite striking the number of Okinawans living in Japan became either active members of the JCP or what one might refer to as intellectual Marxists. Tokuda Kyûichi was the most prominent Okinawan involved in the JCP. Senaga Kamejirô, unfortunately, is not well known outside of Okinawa but he is clearly one of the most important and successful members of the JCP.

⁴⁵³ Senaga Kamejirô, *Senaga Kamejirô Kaisôroku*, (Tokyo: Shin Nihon Shuppansha, 1991), 27-45.

⁴⁵⁴ “Obituary/Kamejiro Senaga,” *Ryukyu Shinpo Weekly Internet News*, October 15, 2001. http://ryukyushinpo.co.jp/english/enews/e001015.html#enews_04.

went a step further than most labor organizers. Highly sensitive to how mainland Japanese had long discriminated against and looked down upon Okinawans, Senaga pointedly stressed the rights of Korean workers. While working as a labor organizer in 1932, Senaga was arrested and imprisoned for three years for violating the notorious Public Security Law.⁴⁵⁵ After his release, Senaga, like Nakasone, found refuge in Okinawa where he found employment as a reporter for the *Okinawa Asahi Shinbun* and *Okinawa Mainichi Shinbun*.⁴⁵⁶ Drafted in 1938, Senaga worked as a military reporter in China until 1944, when he returned to Okinawa. During his tenure as a reporter, Senaga had to hide his commitment to Marxism, but unlike Nakasone, he never disavowed Marxism.⁴⁵⁷

Nakasone's and Senaga's experiences in prewar Japan provided them with a theory of economic exploitation and an understanding of grass roots organizing and mass action. Moreover, each had experienced being second-class citizens during their time in Japan and saw, upon their return to Okinawa in the 1930s, how the Japanese elite treated Okinawa like a colony. They also witnessed how these same elites abandoned Okinawa in 1945 and the multiple atrocities Japanese military forces committed against the people. Consequently, like many other Okinawans, Nakasone and Senaga initially viewed the Americans as liberators and champions of an autonomous Okinawa.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁵ "Obituary/Kamejiro Senaga," *Ryukyu Shinpo Weekly Internet News*, October 15, 2001. http://ryukyushinpo.co.jp/english/enews/e001015.html#enews_04.

⁴⁵⁶ "Obituary/Kamejiro Senaga," *Ryukyu Shinpo Weekly Internet News*, October 15, 2001. http://ryukyushinpo.co.jp/english/enews/e001015.html#enews_04. Oddly, the extensive *Okinawan Encyclopedia* does not have an entry for Senaga. It is also unknown if Senaga and Nakasone interacted with one another while both were studying in Japan. In Okinawa, however, the two did converse as the intellectual world in Okinawa was quite small and everyone knew everybody.

⁴⁵⁷ 瀬長亀次郎『瀬長亀次郎回想録』(東京:新日本出版社、1991)、38-51.

⁴⁵⁸ Japanese leftists also welcomed the Americans as liberators but as in Okinawa, the occupation grew increasingly statist and perceived any liberalism as communist inspired. In both Okinawa and Japan, occupation officials cracked down on leftists and by the end of the occupation, many of the purged prewar militarists were "restored" to power.

Challenging the Limits of Okinawan Political Participation

The typhoon of steel that ravaged Okinawa also destroyed all elements of Japanese political, bureaucratic and economic dominion on the islands. U.S. Civil Affairs teams filled this vacuum by appointing prominent or educated Ryukyuan to political and bureaucratic post. By default, both Nakasone and in particular Senaga, became major political players in the nascent postwar Ryukyuan political arena.

In August 1945 Military Government (MG) created the first postwar political institution on Okinawa, the Okinawan Advisory Council (OCA).⁴⁵⁹ MG wanted a political institution to facilitate communication between MG and the people. After scouring the island for surviving Okinawan elite, MG brought 124 representatives to Ishikawa to choose fifteen representatives to serve on the Advisory Council. In this initial gathering, the OCA debated over the process and actual number that would serve. Nakasone made his presence felt immediately. Nakasone, along with a handful of delegates, urged for a more inclusive body. He urged expansion of the Assembly from fifteen to thirty seats in order to be more representative.⁴⁶⁰

Nakasone also advocated that if the Assembly expanded to thirty seats, every effort should be made to find “younger candidates,” especially those who “have cooperated with the [U.S.] Military Government and [have] achieved results.”⁴⁶¹ Apparently, Nakasone feared that the Advisory Council would choose prewar elites that were tainted by their association with militarism and supra Japanese nationalism.

⁴⁵⁹ The nomenclature is not consistent in the scholarship as this group has either been called the Assembly Council or the Advisory Council.

⁴⁶⁰ “Report of Proceedings of Provisional Okinawan Advisory Assembly Held on 20 August 1945,” notes taken by Seiken Toyama, Secretary of the Okinawan Advisory Assembly. Watkins Collection, Vol. 17, 89-99.

⁴⁶¹ “Report of Proceedings of Provisional Okinawan Advisory Assembly Held on 20 August 1945,” notes taken by Seiken Toyama, Secretary of the Okinawan Advisory Assembly. Watkins Collection, Vol. 17, 89-99.

Nakasone had good reason to worry about such members. The most popular candidate, Shikiya Koshin, had already been identified by G-2 as “director, for an undetermined length of time, of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (*Taisei Yokusankai*)” on Okinawa.⁴⁶² Lt. Watkins, in his diary, confirmed Nakosone’s perceptions writing that sources have indicated “the Council is reactionary: non-representative of the Okinawans, pro-Japanese, and desirous of returning to the pre-war status of things.” Nakasone, therefore, argued that appointment to the Advisory Council should be based upon merit, implying that some of the assembled 124 representatives were not meritorious. Overall Nakasone stressed the need that the “popular will be given expression” in the Advisory Council.⁴⁶³

The 124 delegates, however, rejected Nakasone’s recommendations and voted on the Military Government’s initial proposal of fifteen candidates. Some historians, such as Kiyoshi Nakachi, have claimed MG appointed the fifteen to serve on the Advisory Council. Careful scrutiny of the official minutes of the August 20 assembly clearly shows the 124 representatives voted for the fifteen members. Shikiya Koshien garnered the most votes with 116 and was named chair of the Advisory Council. Despite his stornd stance, or perhaps in spite of, Nakasone fared well as he finished fourth with 101 votes.⁴⁶⁴

Following the election, a representative of Military Government, Lt. Commander Murdock, took questions from the fifteen members. Murdock indicated that MG would

⁴⁶² From, Headquarters, 964th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment, APO #331, 26 August 1945, to A. C. of S., G-2 ASCOM I. Watkins Collection, Vol. 33, 48. Two others that were eventually elected to the Advisory Council, Chibana Takanao and Itokazu Shoho were also pegged by G-2 as having strong associations with Japanese militarism.

⁴⁶³ “Report of Proceedings of Provisional Okinawan Advisory Assembly Held on 20 August 1945,” notes taken by Seiken Toyama, Secretary of the Okinawan Advisory Assembly. Watkins Collection, Vol. 17, 89-99.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

consider any proposal of the Advisory Council to establish “an organ to represent the people.” In a veiled criticism of the Assembly’s elitist attitude, Nakasone argued for election to ensure that “this assembly be continued as an organ to reflect the popular will.” Tôyama Seiken, who was taking minutes of the proceeding, wrote that Nakasone “strongly contended for the necessity of an open election, stating that the reason for the defeat of Japan in the present was war was the suppression of the popular will.”⁴⁶⁵ From the onset, Nakasone showed his commitment to a populist agenda had not waned over time. Moreover, Nakasone remained consistent throughout his long tenure on the Advisory Council in criticizing any proposals he felt hurt the people’s interest and continued to push for greater Ryukyuan political autonomy. Not surprisingly, Nakasone earned the ire of Military Government officials. One RYCOM official noted in his diary that “at one time or another there would be a Council member who had to be reined in...at perennial was Nakasone *whose lurid past included left-wing alliances.*” The same official wrote Nakasone boldly stated his criticisms, especially of fellow Assembly members as “his first eruption was in connection with an allegedly unauthorized publication [critical of the Advisory Council].”⁴⁶⁶ Clearly, Nakasone’s prewar communist experiences served him well in his postwar career as a “rabble-rouser.”

In April 1946, the Okinawa Civil Administration (OCA), a more formal bureaucratic apparatus, with Shikiya Koshin appointed as governor (Chiji), replaced the Okinawan Advisory Council. Nakasone, however, contested Shikiya’s appointment. Prior to the dissolution of the Advisory Council, the members debated whether the people should directly elect the governor. Knowing that Military Government wanted to appoint the Governor, the majority on Advisory Council demurred. Nakasone dissented and

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶ James T. Watkins’ War Diary, December 7, 1945 and January 8, 1945. Watkins Collection, Vol. 36, 93.

argued direct election of the Governor was a necessary step to attain democracy.⁴⁶⁷

Once again, the majority overruled Nakasone, but Nakasone's advocacy for democracy demonstrated he was far ahead of his counterparts in advocating for greater Okinawan autonomy.

The Okinawa Civil Assembly consisted of twenty-five members. Nakasone, who had been elected to the prewar prefectural assembly, automatically received one of the Assembly's seats.⁴⁶⁸ At the same time, Nakasone held a bureaucratic appointment in Kishiya's Okinawa Civilian Administration as head of the powerful Health and Welfare Department. Nakasone used his position to ask American officials for more relief beyond the basic subsistent levels. Nakasone's dual positions, with one foot in the Assembly and the other in the OCA, provided him an advantageous spot for future "rabble-rousing."

While Nakasone agitated for greater democracy, Senaga served as deputy mayor in a small town in northern Okinawa. One of his official duties was to return refugees to the southern half of the island. Senaga carried his duties out well enough to be noticed by Military Government, who subsequently appointed Senaga as deputy mayor of a city in the southern half of Okinawa. According to one historian, Senaga collaborated with MG, especially in ferreting out those who had actively collaborated with elements of Japanese militarism.⁴⁶⁹ During his time as a Deputy Mayor, Senaga witnessed behavior among U.S. troops that made him question whether the Americans were really their liberators. Yet the overall goodwill and benevolence of the American military, in juxtaposition to the atrocities of the Japanese military, provided Senaga enough faith to believe in American goodwill. Senaga, like his leftist counterparts in Japan, initially believed that

⁴⁶⁷ Kayo Yasuharu, *Okinawa Minseifu*, (Tokyo: Kume Shobo, 1986), 155-162.

⁴⁶⁸ Nakano and Arasaki, *Okinawa Sengo Shi*, 19.

⁴⁶⁹ Kazuhiko Nakamoto, "Democracy and Security in Conflict: America's Mission in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945-1958," M.A. Thesis, Department of History, University of Maryland, 1997, 51.

the U.S. would purge all prewar militarism and induce a democratic revolution.⁴⁷⁰

Military Government officials gave Senaga high marks for his efficient and competent work as deputy mayor, which would later pave the way for Senaga to join Nakasone in the newly created Okinawa Civil Assembly in 1946.

Meanwhile, Senaga joined Nakasone on the Civil Assembly when Military government officials appointed him to fill a vacant spot.⁴⁷¹ Senaga, like Nakasone, had a dual appointment. While Senaga served on the assembly, MG appointed Senaga as editor of MG's paper. In the summer of 1946, MG, noting that none of the prewar newspapers organizations had survived the battle, created a Japanese-language newspaper called the *Uruma Shimpô*.⁴⁷² MG officials appointed Senaga editor, in part because of his prewar experience as a reporter, but also because Senaga had impressed them with his administrative work and the fact he had not associated with prewar militarists. Historians have correctly noted that the *Uruma Shimpô* tended to be the mouthpiece of MG.⁴⁷³ Nevertheless, at this time Senaga did not see the American occupation in a negative light as he still believed the best means to achieve a peoples' democracy was under the Americans. Thus, when the *Uruma Shimpô* talked about American efforts to foster democracy and support Okinawan culture/history, it was expressing Senaga's own views. In Senaga's dual role as Assembly member and newspaper editor, he, like Nakasone,

⁴⁷⁰ Senaga, *Senaga Kamejirô Kaisôroku*, 58-59.

⁴⁷¹ James Watkins, "Rehabilitation: Political (II)," unpublished report on Ryukyuan political development during the Navy's tenure, Watkins Collectin, Vol, 37, 172-181.

⁴⁷² Teruya Yoshihiko and Yamazato Katsunori eds., *Sengo Okinawa to Amerika-Postwar Okinawa and America: Fifty Years of Cross-Cultural Contact*, (Naha: Okinawa Taimusu Sha, 1995.), 293-296. *Uruma* used during the Ryukyuan ancient word in the Ryukyu language (Uchinaaguchi), was most often used by the Shuri aristocratic court, thus, was not part of the common vernacular.

⁴⁷³ Ôta Masahide and Tsujimura Akira, *Okinawa no Genron: Shinbun to hôsô*, (Tokyo, 1966), 24-28.

used his editor position to advocate his politics, which at this time, still coincided with the U.S. objectives.⁴⁷⁴

With Senaga and Nakasone both in the Assembly, and sharing a common political philosophy, the two became allies and friends. The only difference between them at this time was their respective long-term political goals. While both desired greater democracy, Nakasone advocated an independent Okinawan nation-state. Still a committed Marxist, Senaga was foremost a populist and quite wary of nationalism, as he saw first-hand in prewar Japan how elites, in their parochial and chauvinistic mindset, had produced a fascist state. In the summer of 1946, their differences were not readily apparent, but by 1950, in a new environment, they became bitter enemies.

In 1947, MG allowed the formation of political parties in order to facilitate popular elections for the Okinawa Assembly the following year. The formation of Okinawan political parties was a monumental moment as prewar politics had been thoroughly dominated by mainland Japanese. Leading Okinawa political figures formed the *Okinawa Kensetsu Konwa-kai* (沖縄建設懇話会 The Okinawan Reconstruction Group) which promised democratic ideals and the formation of political parties. Not surprisingly, Nakasone and Senaga were the primary organizers of the *Okinawa Kensetsu Konwa-kai* and its agenda of greater democratic participation. With the support from *Okinawa Kensetsu Konwa-kai*, three parties quickly formed in mid 1947. Nakasone created the *Okinawa Minshu Dômei* (沖縄民主同盟 Okinawa Democratic League-ODL)⁴⁷⁵ and Senaga, along with other leftists, formed the *Okinawa Jinmin-tô* (沖縄人民党 Okinawa People's Party-OPP). A third, and weaker party, the *Okinawa Shakai-tô* (沖縄社会党 Okinawa Socialist Party-OSP) was founded by Ôgimi Chôtoku. Cognizant of the

⁴⁷⁴ Senaga, *Senaga Kamejirô Kaisôroku*, 58-59.

⁴⁷⁵ Nakasone used the terms "Ryukyu" and "Okinawa" interchangeably. Later, he became more committed to the term Ryukyu as he realized Okinawa was a name imposed upon them by Japan.

auspicious moment, the political parties passed resolutions that expressed their appreciation for the advancement of democratization. Senaga's *Okinawa Jinmin-tô* best captured the political sentiment:

We Okinawans, who were extremely mistreated under the aggressive war aged by the Japanese militarist, have managed to live since the landing of the American troops, thanks to their humanistic good will and material assistance.

We want to express, in the name of all Okinawans and from the bottom of our heart, our gratitude toward General MacArthur's Headquarters and the Ryukyus Military Government, and we hope that democracy will be established as soon as possible by the kind of support of the American troops.⁴⁷⁶

Comparing Japan's prewar mistreatment of Okinawa with the American occupation was a common thread in all of the party's resolutions. Conspicuously absent in all of the party's platforms was any nationalist identification with Japan. Significantly, not a single party called for reversion to Japan. Instead, the fledging political parties made democracy, and especially Okinawan self-rule, the most salient features of their respective platforms. How they defined "self-rule," however, remained ambiguous, both in English and in Japanese. Did self-rule simply mean the fundamental right to govern their own affairs, or did self-rule imply outright political independence from Japan? *Jiritsu* (自立), the Japanese term used by the parties, broadly connoted autonomous rule. At the same time, however, *jiritsu* could be interpreted as independence from Japan as reflected in a key plank in the OPP platform:

Our party resolves to represent the interests of all the working people, such as laborers, farmers, fisherman, salaried man and small tradesman and manufacturers, and fight all the feudalistic conservatism and reaction in accordance with the spirit of the Potsdam declaration, and to establish democracy in political, economic, social, and cultural fields, and thus to restore *an autonomous Okinawa*.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁶ *Okinawa Jinmin-tô's* "Resolution of Gratitude," July 20, 1947 comes from the Military Government's "Report of Organization of the Okinawa People's Party," July 27, 1947. Freimuth Papers.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

Considering that the OPP had sharply criticized prewar Japan's rule over Okinawa, coupled with its call for complete democratization in all facets of society and for all people of Okinawa, one could assume that the OPP's call for a restoration of "an autonomous Okinawa" implied independence. Nakasone's ODL, unequivocally called for the creation of an independent Ryukyu Republic.⁴⁷⁸ At this juncture, the majority of Okinawans at least imagined the possibility of an autonomous Ryukyus and any ideas for reversion to Japan remained absent in the political discourse. Even during the crisis that emerged in 1948-49, the people, including Nakasone and Senaga, did not pick up the mantle for reversion.⁴⁷⁹

At the same time, American rhetorical promises of democracy far exceeded the actual practice. Under RYCOM's tenure, this discrepancy became increasingly transparent to more Okinawans, especially to individuals like Nakasone and Senaga. Latent political frustrations converged with growing discontentment with other facets of the occupation, as described in Chapter Four. By mid 1948, Okinawans felt a sense of abandonment, made more acute by the lofty expectations established by the Navy's administration. RYCOM's reluctance to grant greater political autonomy exacerbated the

⁴⁷⁸ The impetus for independence, rather than the more ambiguous term *jiritsu*, being expressed in the Ryukyus in 1947, may have been inspired, ironically, from mainland Japan. Held on February 24, 1946, the Japanese Communist Party's Fifth Convention issued a message that not only welcomed a separate administration for the Ryukyus but supported Okinawa's right to liberty and independence.⁴⁷⁸ Not coincidentally, Tokuda Kyoichi, one of the leaders of the JCP, was also from Okinawa, and knew both Nakasone and Senaga. In addition, and not by coincidence, the *Okinawajin Renmei Zenkoku Taikai* met the same day as the JCP meeting. An Okinawan organization of leftist leaning intellectuals residing in Japan, most of which resided in the Kantô region, the *Okinawajin Renmei Zenkoku Taikai* had come together to discuss the future status of Okinawa. Some of Okinawa's best known intellectuals participated in the *Okinawajin Renmei Zenkoku Taikai* such as Matsumoto Saneki, Iha Fuyû, Higa Shunchô, Ôhama Nobumoto, and Hiyane Antei. They, like the JCP, unequivocally supported Okinawan independence.

⁴⁷⁹ There was only one notable Ryukyuan who advocated for reversion between 1945 and 1950. Nakayoshi Ryôko, mayor of Shuri, had petitioned American authorities as early as August, 1945 for reversion. After receiving no support among Ryukyuan, he left Okinawa permanently to live in Japan. While in Japan, he created an organization, *Okinawa Shoto Nihon Fukki Kisei Kai*, that urged for Okinawa's return to the fatherland. Not surprisingly, Nakayoshi viewed the *Okinawajin Renmei Zenkoku Taikai* with disdain.

situation as the people had few legitimate institutions to channel their frustrations in a positive manner. In Okinawa's hot and humid summer of 1948, RYCOM's heavy-handed actions toward labor, coupled with a marked increase in food rations forced Okinawans to resist the occupation in an overt manner.

Labor Strife and Growing Discontentment with the
Occupation in 1948

The 1948 uprising must be seen in the context of the era of "apathy and neglect"⁴⁸⁰ and severe inflation, which became a serious problem in 1947-48. Inflation, coupled with *kigachinkin* (poverty wages), created new economic burdens.⁴⁸¹ Discontented with the poor economy, workers' latent frustration finally exploded, precipitated by the heavy-handed actions of occupation officials. Due to the rapid demobilization of U.S. forces on Okinawa, RYCOM faced a growing labor shortage at the Navy's primary harbor in Naha, which became acute in 1948 as Naha harbor became a key logistical node in supplying Chiang Kai Shek's Guomindang (GMD) forces. As the civil war in China was reaching a critical stage, the urgency to supply GMD forces increased, which led RYCOM to "request" the Okinawa Mayor's Association to provide dock laborers for Naha harbor.⁴⁸² Despite *the scarcity of wage-labor opportunities* and the overall impoverished conditions, a high percentage of the workers recruited either

⁴⁸⁰ Okinawan scholars often refer to this period as *wasurerareta shima* (the "forgotten island"). See the chapter *Wasurerareta Shima* in Miyagi Etsujirô, *Senryôsha no me*, (Haebaru, Okinawa: Naha Shuppansha, 1982), 49-86 & Miyazato Seigen's chapter *Wasurerareta Shima* in *Amrika no Okinawaseisaku*, (Naha: Niraisha, 1986), 56-59.

⁴⁸¹ Maehara Hotsumi, *Sengo Okinawa no Rôdôundô*, Shinnippon Shuppansha, 1970, 12.

⁴⁸² RYCOM created the Okinawa Mayor's Association as a means to transmit RYCOM decrees to the people. Although the mayors were popularly elected, RYCOM had the right to remove any mayor who failed to cooperate in a sufficient manner. RYCOM also used incentives, such as offering jobs to a "friendly" village if a mayor cooperated with RYCOM. Hence, mayor's often found themselves in a no-win situation.

failed to show up for work or quit after a few days of work.⁴⁸³ Workers protested the low wages and dangerous working conditions, and bitterly complained that the wages earned in one month could only purchase one carton of cigarettes.⁴⁸⁴

Table 3 Hourly Wage Rates (Minimum and Maximum) for Okinawan Employees of U.S. Forces from 1946 to 1970.⁴⁸⁵

Date	Rates		Index	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
22 March 1946—19 August 1946	\$0.04	\$0.15	100.0	100.0
3 May 1949—11 April 1950	0.04	0.40	100.0	226.7
3 March 1954—15 March 1956	0.08	0.20	200.0	133.3
10 July 1957—27 April 1961	0.12	0.91	300.0	606.7
1 July 1965—30 June 1966	0.20	1.545	500.0	960.7
1 July 1970	0.535	2.665	1,337.5	1,776.7

To add insult to injury, many Ryukyuan workers either received only partial payment of their wages or sometimes received no wages at all. Often Ryukyuan laborers, instead of directly working for the U.S. military, were hired by contractors and sub-contractors, who often failed to pay the wages due to them. The workers had no course of appeal as it was their word against the contractor's word, and military officials routinely sided with the contractors.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸³ Maehara Hotsumi, *Sengo Okinawa no Rôdôundô*, Shinnippon Shuppansha, 1970, 12-13.

⁴⁸⁴ 瀬長亀次郎, “瀬長亀次郎回想録” (東京: 新日本出版社, 1991)、68-71, Maehara Hotsumi, *Sengo Okinawa no Rôdôundô*, Shinnippon Shuppansha, 1970, 13, Nakano Yoshio and Arasaki Moriteru, *Okinawasengoshi*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 4th. Ed, 1985, 20.

⁴⁸⁵ Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands Report for Period I July 1969 to 30 June 1970 VOL VXII, 214. The conversion rates were: Sep 45 (¥15 to \$1.00); March 47 (¥50 to \$1.00); April 50 (¥120 to \$1.00); Sept. 58 the Yen was abolished and the Ryukyuan economy became dollar based.

⁴⁸⁶ This pay discrimination was provided to me by Maxine Randall who gave me page four of an internal RYCOM document classified as “confidential.” There is no date on the document, though best guess would be the early 1950s.

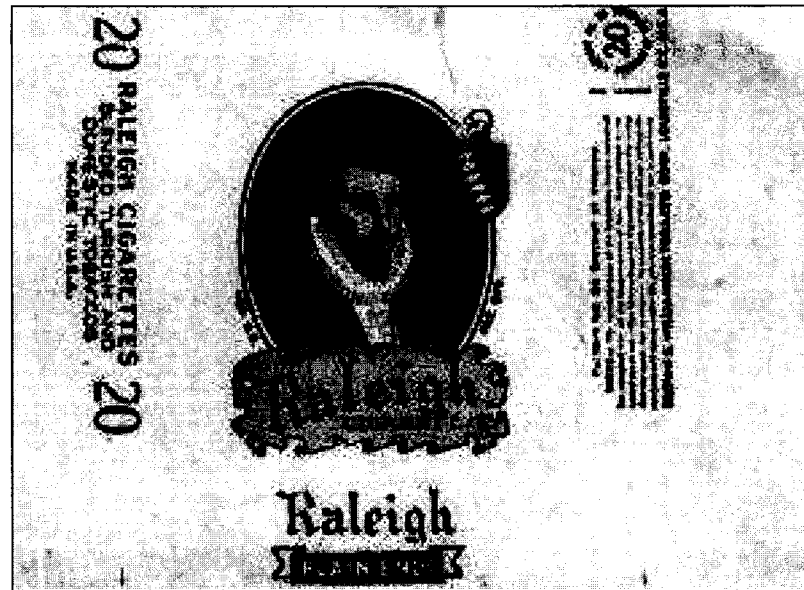


Figure 36 Workers' wages could not even purchase one carton of Raleigh Cigarettes, which were the primary cigarettes distributed by the U.S. On the black market, which was prolific on the island, a carton of Raleighs cost a teacher a half a month salary. Wages for Okinawan politicians were hardly any better. According to Yoshida Kensei, "five cartons matched the salary of the governor of Okinawa."⁴⁸⁷

The hierarchy of wages based on race compounded the frustration over low wages. One such laborer noted that he had no problem that Americans were at the top of the pay scale. His problem was that mainland Japanese received wages, at the minimum level, five times higher than he did. Okinawan laborers, however, directed their anger toward Filipinos for several reasons. Filipinos, like the Japanese, received higher wages than Okinawans, compounded by RYCOM's consistent pattern of favoring Filipinos in disputes with Ryukyuan.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁷ *Okinawa Sengo Shashinshi: Amerikayuu—no 10 nen*, (Naha: Gekkan Okinawasha, 1979), 2. Yoshida, Kensei, *Democracy Betrayed: Okinawa Under U.S. Occupation*, (Bellingham: Center for East Asian Studies Western Washington University, 2001), 30.

⁴⁸⁸ This pay discrimination was provided to me by Maxine Randall who gave me page four of an internal RYCOM document classified as "confidential." There is no date on the document, though best guess would be the early 1950s.

Table 4 Racial Pay Hierarchy for Base Workers on US Military Installations on Okinawa, 1948.

<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
American	\$1.20 (¥144.00)	\$6.52 (¥ 762.40)
Filipino	\$0.52 (¥62.40)	\$3.77 (¥ 452.40)
Japanese	\$0.83 (¥99.60)	\$1.03 (¥ 123.60)
Okinawan	\$0.10 (¥11.00)	\$0.36 (¥ 40.00)

Okinawan laborers, numbering around thousand, also resented their supervisors, who were Filipino.⁴⁸⁹ Although not stated publicly, many Okinawans felt that they were simply superior to Filipinos, a manifestation of the prewar racial hierarchy imprinted by Japanese colonialism. The immediate factor, however, was the strict supervision of workers by Filipino supervisors. The workers perceived the Filipino supervisors as harsh, petty, and cruel, especially evident by the strict limits imposed on workers' water breaks, which was a serious problem in the hot and humid climate of the Ryukyus.⁴⁹⁰

Okinawan laborers believed the low wages and racial wage discrepancies reflected symptoms of a larger problem, the lack of respect. One worker, a former teacher, recalled, "we Okinawans were placed at the bottom, yet we did the hardest work." Other workers hated the overall working climate because the Americans "had us work like slaves." No matter how hard they worked, "the Americans always complained about our work."⁴⁹¹ Kozy Amemiya, who researched Okinawan immigration to Bolivia

⁴⁸⁹ Part of their resentment also derived from the friction resulting from the stationing of Filipino Scout units who disproportionately committed crimes against Okinawans.

⁴⁹⁰ Miyagi Etsujirô, *Senryôsha no me*, (Haeburu, Okinawa: Naha Shuppansha, 1982), 69-70.

⁴⁹¹ Kozy Amemiya, "The Bolivian Connection: U.S. Bases and Okinawan Emigration," in Chalmers Johnson ed., *Okinawa: Cold War Island*, (Cardiff: Japan Policy Research Institute, 1999), 58.

in the 1950s, found through interviews that many who worked as laborers on the American bases (*gun sagyo*) “developed a strong sense of humiliation and resentment as a result of their experience.”⁴⁹² These negative experiences gradually percolated throughout Okinawan society and added to the growing sense of disillusionment with the American occupation. One educator, Shimabukuro Matsugoro, noted the adverse affect upon students from this climate of dehumanization. The climate had produced a mentality of disempowerment to the point where students asked “why bother to graduate from high school if the only job you can get is working on a *labor gang* for the American Air Force?”⁴⁹³ Given this context, workers, with no recourse available, began the first strike in postwar Ryukyu history in the summer of 1948.⁴⁹⁴

The increasing likelihood of a communist victory in China, coupled with growing labor unrest, created a “red scare” among RYCOM officials. RYCOM perceived indigenous labor organizing as synonymous with communism, to the point where RYCOM mandated all May Day activities illegal. As the Naha harbor strife gained momentum, the extent of RYCOM’s paranoia became evident on May Day, 1948. Colonel Patton initially raised the alarm when he reported, “all the natives have disappeared. Nobody in sight in the villages and you won’t see anyone in the fields. The few Okinawans you do see are on the road, all going toward Naha.” Patton believed the people were “going to hold a big communist demonstration with riots and maybe outright

⁴⁹² Amemiya, “The Bolivian Connection: U.S. Bases and Okinawan Emigration,” 58.

⁴⁹³ Untitled and undated file out of the George H. Kerr Papers, Okinawa Prefecture Archives. This 18 page typed document is Kerr’s highly critical evaluation of the American occupation of the Ryukyus. The late 1950s would be the best guess when Kerr wrote this scathing report. Who it was intended for is unclear, but Kerr was never shy about giving his impression, including the U.S. Army High Commissioner of the Ryukyu Islands.

⁴⁹⁴ Labor strife did occur in prewar Okinawa, but they were few and far between. Labor strikes were even more uncommon because the number of wage paying jobs in Okinawa was extremely low. In addition, most of the manufacturing was owned by mainland Japanese who did not tolerate Okinawan labor resistance.

rebellion.” Patton’s immediate superior, Colonel Triplett, did not want to overreact, but he began to think about the possibility of Patton’s assessment. “A large number of the labor force reporting yesterday, in effect, that they planned to be sick today...all movement toward Naha...”, which was where the harbor strike was being conducted. In addition, Triplett feared that among the workers were a “number of ex-POW’s indoctrinated and recently released by the Russians; and it was the sacred day celebrated by the proponents of world revolution.” Triplett, to be safe, mobilized troops for riot control duty. Just as the troops were leaving for Naha, one of Triplett’s Okinawan informants appeared. The informant, a farmer, showed up in “holiday-clean shapeless cotton trousers, bottomless sashed-in jacket, thonged sandals, and a conical straw hat,” and as he entered Triplett’s office, he “slapped his sandals together, and saluted.” Patton asked the Okinawan informant if he had any information about the intent of the May Day crowd and whether they possessed any weapons; the Okinawan farmer replied, “Sir, it’s the Okinawan championship baseball game [in Naha]. Final playoff between Naha and Yonabaru starts at 1300. Odds are running five to two on Naha, sir.”⁴⁹⁵ This humorous anecdote, however, belies the tension that was building in Okinawa.

The poor and dangerous conditions at Naha’s military harbor, coupled with RYCOM’s imperious attitude toward workers, reflected the core attitude RYCOM had toward the Okinawan people. This overall atmosphere allowed two newly formed political parties, Nakasone’s ODL and Senaga’s OPP, an opportunity to exploit the situation. They held “teach-in sessions” to educate both workers and the people that the American officials were not living up to earlier promises of greater democracy and self-rule. Forty-thousand disgruntled workers and supporters eagerly participated in these

⁴⁹⁵ William S. Triplett, edited with an introduction by Robert H. Ferrell, *In the Philippines and Okinawa: A Memoir, 1945-1948*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1941), 272-274.

sessions and signed petitions circulated by ODL and OPP that called for the direct election of the governor and greater political autonomy.⁴⁹⁶

RYCOM could have quickly and quietly ended the labor strife by improving conditions and increasing the wages, yet RYCOM acted in a manner that fueled peoples' sense of injustice, thereby increasing awareness of the overall problems of military occupation. RYCOM responded by closing all of the island's ration stores, which effectively cut off the supply of daily necessities. As stated in the previous chapter, the nearly complete devastation of the islands' economy had made the people completely dependent upon the U.S. military for basic necessities, prompting Ryukyans to call RYCOM'S decision "reckless" (*beigun no bôkyo*) and a "death sentence".⁴⁹⁷ RYCOM'S decision forced the workers to return to work after a few days, although the workers did save some face with a token increase in wages and the reopening of the ration centers. Nevertheless, what began as a labor action had exploded into the island wide food ration struggle (*shokuryô tôsô*), one that led to the formation of a popular front united against RYCOM'S neo-colonialism.⁴⁹⁸

Senaga's Voicing of the Popular Front through the Nascent

Okinawan Media

In order to understand the island wide resistance in 1948, and especially the emergence of a popular front in 1949, one needs to examine the role of the Okinawan mass media. Largely ignored by historians, Okinawans mass media significantly

⁴⁹⁶ Okinawaken Kyôiku Iinkaihen, *Kôkôsei no Tameno Okinawa no Rekishi*, (Naha: Ôsato Insatsu Yûgensha, 4th edition, 1998), 121-122.

⁴⁹⁷ Maehara, *Sengo Okinawa no Rôdôundô*, 12. *Beigun no bôkyo* (米軍の暴挙) translates into the "U.S. Military's Violent Decion".

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., 13. *Shokuryô tôsô* (食糧闘争).

expanded in 1948-49, mostly through the efforts of Senaga. More importantly, this expansion of mass media played a critical role in the formation of island wide resistance.

Just two months before the August 1948 Naha harbor labor strife, two Okinawan newspapers joined the *Uruma Shimpô* in circulation. Both Japanese language newspapers, the *Okinawa Mainichi Shinbun* and the *Okinawa Times*, came into existence because of Senaga's direct support.⁴⁹⁹ Initiatives to create newspapers were stymied by the lack of capital and facilities. Senaga, however, gained permission for both papers to use the *Uruma Shimpô* printing facilities. Ironically, Senaga was able to pull this off by winning the respect of RYCOM's commander at that time, General Hayden. Although Hayden was vehemently anti-communist, he apparently was impressed by Senaga's commitment to the nascent Ryukyuan mass media, evident by the following two photos:

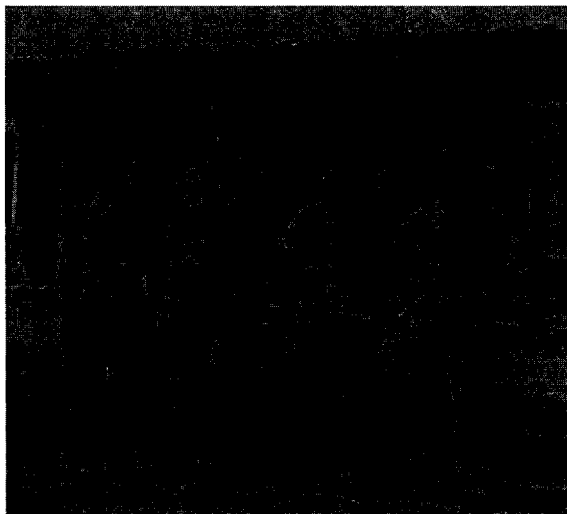


Figure 37 Senaga Kamjirô (far left) meeting with General Hayden in the creation of the *Okinawa Mainichi Shinbun*, Summer 1948.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁹ Kabira, *Shūsengo no Okinawa Bunka Kyôsei Shi*, 176-178.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

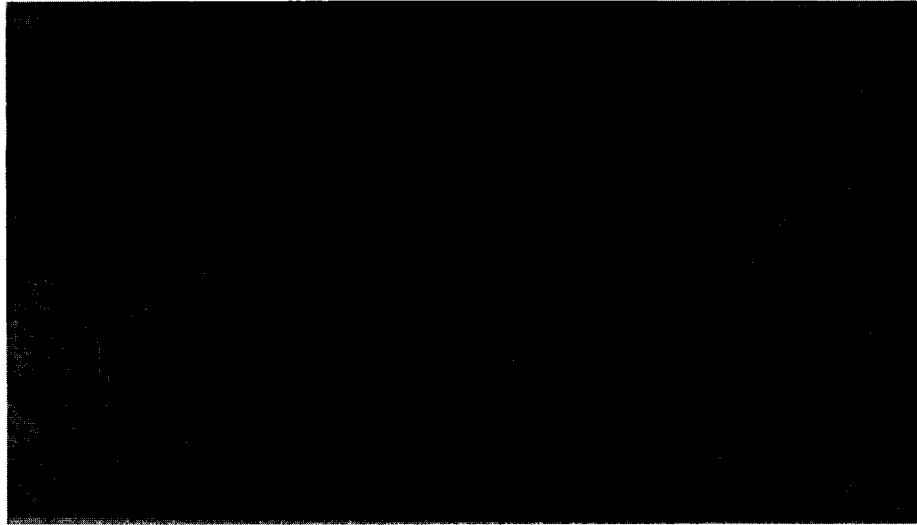


Figure 38 Senaga Kamejirô (second row, second from the right) and the *Okinawa Mainichi Shinbun* staff celebrate their start with General Hayden (standing, fourth from the right-with blonde assistant in tow).⁵⁰¹

While it is unclear whether the General knew about Senaga's past, Hayden's goodwill towards Senaga was critical for the two papers.⁵⁰² Fellow Okinawans also admired Senaga's commitment, tireless work and enthusiasm. Kabira Chôshin wrote that Senaga allowed the competing newspapers to share the same typewriters used by the *Uruma Shimpô*. Despite Senaga's important position in *Uruma Shimpô* and position on the Assembly, Kabira was struck by Senaga's humility writing he "acted just like an ordinary guy."⁵⁰³ General Hayden likely would have agreed with Kabira's assessment of Senaga, but in a few short months, Hayden would soon experience the law of unintended consequences.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 188, 191.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 186-188.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

Senaga, however, was no ordinary journalist as his support for the formation of these two papers did not stem from altruism. Senaga understood the significance of mass communication in shaping public opinion. Senaga, however, was not content to simply mold public perceptions. Senaga knew that crafting public consciousness was one thing, but getting the public to act on their consciousness was more elusive. Senaga believed that for mass struggle to occur, mass communication had to serve as the critical conduit between the intellectual and the masses. The timing of Senaga's strategic recognition of this fact and subsequent implementation was fortuitous as the Naha Harbor strike erupted only two months after publication of the two papers.⁵⁰⁴

Senaga maneuvered the *Uruma Shimpô* into spearheading coverage of the 1948-49 crisis. Yet Senaga was not content to just report the mass rallies, but used the *Uruma Shimpô* as a platform to criticize the OCA and MG and, simultaneously, encouraged the people to participate in mass struggle meetings. If the *Uruma Shimpô* had been the mouthpiece of MG, by 1948 Senaga had effectively made it into Okinawa's leading populist newspaper and the popular front's primary rhetorical weapon. Although Senaga did not have direct editorial influence over the *Okinawa Mainichi Shinbun* and the *Okinawa Times*, the two papers nevertheless followed the lead of the *Uruma Shimpô* during the 1948-49 crisis. Senaga enlisted others to write critical pieces, and Senaga did not have to go far, as his comrade-in-arms, Nakasone, was given ample space in one of the papers to pen his critiques. Nakasone, like Senaga, had extensive writing experience in the prewar era as he authored several notable works on Okinawan karate. This experience, coupled with his critical eye, made him an effective critic during the 1948-49 resistance movements.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰⁴ Senaga, Kamejiro. *Okinawa karano Hokoku*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1959),

⁵⁰⁵ Nakasone, Genwa. *Okinawa kara Ryukyu he*, (Naha: Gekkan Okinawasha, 1973),

Senaga's influence in mass media, however, did not end with the three papers. During the busy summer of 1948, while Senaga was busy in getting the two newspapers off the ground and participating in the Assembly, he somehow found the time to implement an even more ambitious mass media project. Likely realizing the limits of newspapers to provide more-in depth analysis and essays, not to mention the problem of MG censorship, Senaga saw the need for a more substantial production, one that could provide greater in-depth essays, analysis, and breadth. The first edition of Senaga's creation, *Jinmin Bunka*, came out the same time as the *Okinawa Mainichi Shinbun* and the *Okinawa Times*. And like these two papers, the presses used to publish the *Uruma Shimpô* were also used to print *Jinmin Bunka*. Senaga's title choice clearly reflected the populist intent of *Jinmin Bunka*, but apparently MG approved its publication. It could be speculated that since at that time, Senaga, in favor with MG, saw no problem with it, especially since it represented the island's first postwar journal.

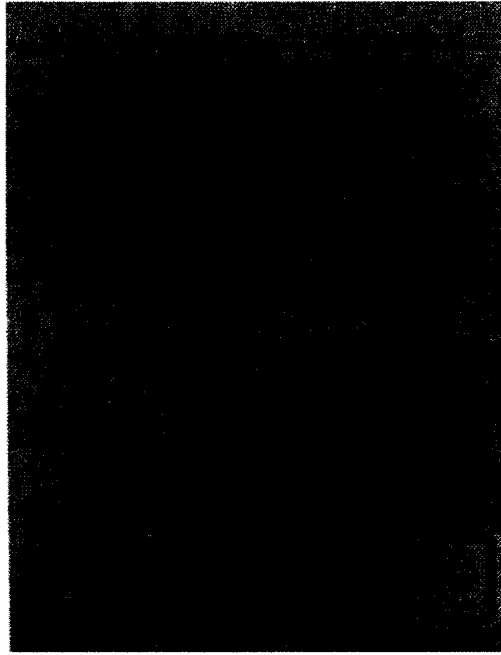


Figure 39 Senaga's *Jinmin Bunka* (the *Popular Culture*) became his vehicle to criticize RYCOM, increase popular political consciousness, and to advance his populist agenda.⁵⁰⁶

Jinmin Bunka, therefore, joined the three newspapers in the 1948-49 mass struggles, which did not go unnoticed by occupation authorities.⁵⁰⁷ In addition, Senaga likely chuckled over the irony that the three papers and *Jinmin Bunka* were all created with support from MG. The irony was probably not lost on Senaga as the *Uruma Shimpô*, founded and funded by MG, was now being used effectively to stoke public indignation. Their continued criticisms clearly angered occupation authorities and the criticisms clearly violated Ordinance 23, which prohibited criticism of U.S. military authorities. RYCOM, however, did not enforce Ordinance 23. RYCOM likely perceived

⁵⁰⁶ Author's photograph.

⁵⁰⁷ Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Gunto," September 1950. Freimuth Files.

that either punishment or arrest of Senaga and Nakasone would not only create martyrs of the two, but such heavy-handed actions would only validate the echoes emanating from the island-wide demonstrations that American occupation was no longer synonymous with democracy and liberty.⁵⁰⁸

Okinawan Resistance and the Popular Front of 1949

In early 1949, only a few months after the 1948 *shokuryô tôsô*, RYCOM announced, through the Okinawa Civilian Administration (OCA), across the board increases in ration prices.⁵⁰⁹ According to one local resident, prices of many basic commodities soared to astronomical levels as rice, flour, sugar and beans surged.⁵¹⁰ The American Vice-Council stationed in Naha, Douglas Overton, confirmed the situation reporting increases from “three hundred to seven hundred percent.” To add insult to injury, Overton also noted that the ration price increase was implemented “without permitting sufficient time for a proposed new government wage increase of one hundred to two hundred percent to take effect.”⁵¹¹ Many were already subsisting on a 1400-calorie diet, and this rapid increase in prices pushed many to the brink of starvation hell.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ The Okinawan Civilian Administration was appointed by the Military Government (MG) and it acted as the administrative arm of the Military Government. Its authority derived solely from MG and thus, the people could not hold it accountable. At the head of the Okinawan Civilian Administration was the Chiji, or governor. The Chiji was appointed by RYCOM. Shikiya Koshin was appointed Chiji and held that post until 1950 when the position was popularly elected. There was an elected body, called the Okinawa Assembly, but it had no legislative power and merely provided advice to the Chiji. Although unclear, RYCOM’s decision to raise prices may be a reflection of the Dodge Line, which was implemented in Japan to control inflation. Inflation was also a problem in the Ryukyus.

⁵¹⁰ 瀬長亀次郎, “瀬長亀次郎回想録”(東京: 新日本出版社, 1991)、68-71.

⁵¹¹ Memorandum from Douglas Overton (American Vice Consul) to U. Alexis Johnson (American Consul General) on the subject “Conditions On Okinawa”, June 8, 1949. Enclosure to Dispatch No. 115 dated June 14, 1949, from the American Consulate, Yokohama, entitled “Report on Okinawa.”

⁵¹² Nakano Yoshio and Arasaki Moriteru, *Okinawasengoshi*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 4th. Ed, 1985, 18.

As in 1948, Nakasone and Senaga, as respective heads of their political parties, helped to lead the island-wide protest against the ration price increases. Yet, this time they created a formal alliance called the *kyôdô bochô*, a popular front, to resist what they perceived was RYCOM's fascist and militarist behavior.⁵¹³ In addition, Senaga and Nakasone convinced Ogimi Chotoku, the leader of the other major party, the Okinawa Socialist Party, to join their popular front.⁵¹⁴ Senaga, through his power in the media, brought disgruntled workers and the public into the popular front producing a critical mass of resistance as the movement conducted numerous island-wide struggle campaigns. At these demonstrations, tens of thousands signed petitions demanding the OCA resist RYCOM's ration decree. The political parties and the Okinawan Assembly, especially Nakasone and Senaga, increased their criticism of the OCA, accusing it of being RYCOM's lackey. When RYCOM refused to budge, with the support of the popular front, Nakasone and Senaga urged the members of the Okinawan Assembly to call for the entire resignation of the OCA. As Assembly members, Nakasone and Senaga used their political status to accuse the governor, Shikiya Koshin, of being complicit in the suffering of the people.⁵¹⁵ In effect, their criticism of the OCA and of Governor Shikiya was an implicit criticism of RYCOM as RYCOM had appointed both the OCA and Shikiya.

In their role as a mere advisory organ to the Governor, a U.S. appointed official, the Okinawan Assembly, the only democratically elected body, lacked the power to draft legislation. When the OCA and Governor Shikiya refused to resign or take responsibility

⁵¹³ *Kyôdô bochô* (共同歩調). Nakano and Arasaki, *Okinawasengoshi*, 26.

⁵¹⁴ At this time, the Okinawa Socialist Party (OSP) was a very weak party. The OSP was more conservative, and thus, reflected the right half of the Japan Socialist Party (which was divided into two half

⁵¹⁵ Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Gunto," September 1950. Freimuth Files.

for the *shokuryô tôsô*, Nakasone and Senaga argued in the chambers of the Okinawan Assembly that true democracy did not exist in Okinawa. Nakasone and Senaga then instigated a rebellion among the Assembly members as they cajoled, pressured, and appealed to their democratic proclivities to resign en masse. The twenty-three member Assembly, convinced that since they could not represent the people's interests, resigned en masse did on March 2, 1949. This mass resignation surprised and shocked RYCOM, which had underestimated the people's anger and Nakasone/Senaga's powers of persuasion.⁵¹⁶

Edward Freimuth, who was RYCOM's primary liaison with the Okinawa Assembly and the OCA, wrote that "[t]he Assembly criticized the fact that the Okinawa Civilian Administration [and by default, RYCOM] did not permit it to consider such timely problems as a recent sharp increase in prices of food supplied by Military Government." In essence, the decision to resign collectively sent a strong message of no confidence to both RYCOM and OCA. Major General William Eagles, Commander of RYCOM, refused to accept the collective resignations because "Military Government does not look with favor on mass resignations by organized groups." Eagles, however, indicated he would accept individual resignations, but none were forthcoming.⁵¹⁷ He also reminded the Assembly that their actions violated Special Order 23, Article 3, that stated that "no criticism, hostility or disturbance of military policy, or speeches or printed matter criticizing the military government and civilian government."⁵¹⁸ His threat,

⁵¹⁶ Edward Freimuth, Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Gunto," September 1950. Freimuth Files

⁵¹⁷ Edward Freimuth, Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Gunto," September 1950. Freimuth Files.

⁵¹⁸ Kiyoshi Nakachi. *Ryukyu-U.S.-Japan Relations 1945-72: The Reversion Movement Political, Economic and Strategical Issues*, (Quezon City, Philippines, Hiyas Press, Inc., 1989), 35.

however, not only failed to deter the Assembly from pressing their resignation, but actually served to steel the Assembly's resolve.

On March 8, Governor Shikiya implored the Assembly to reconvene, but with encouragement from Nakasone and Senaga, they ignored his request. Eagles, frustrated and outraged over the Assembly's obstinate behavior, sent a strongly worded letter to the Assembly on March 11. Using both a carrot and stick approach, Eagles warned that the behavior of the Assembly has led "me to the conclusion that it was done willfully and as the result of a conspiracy." Eagles then appealed to their sense of duty in reminding them that the Assembly possessed "both an obligation and an opportunity to serve and improve the conditions of the people of Okinawa and this privilege must not be taken nor treated lightly." Sounding a more ominous tone, the General concluded that he would not hesitate to "use drastic measures" in order to have a functional government. Eagles, however, softened his rhetoric toward the end of the letter by urging them to use "good judgment and patriotism to cast aside petty differences and get the job done."⁵¹⁹

The Assembly, however, remained recalcitrant because they were emboldened by the growing intensity and number of mass demonstrations. In his report to SCAP, Vice Consul Overton noted the growing unrest. "Public unrest is manifesting itself in the form of mass meetings being held in villages and towns throughout the island, frequently attended by as many as five thousand people." But even more disturbing, was the sharp contrast "with conditions a year ago when the leading Socialist on the island was able to attract only three persons (himself and two policemen assigned to take notes on his speech) to his first publicly advertised mass meeting."⁵²⁰ At these mass meetings,

⁵¹⁹ Edward Freimuth, Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Gunto," September 1950. Freimuth Files

⁵²⁰ Overton does not name the "Socialist" but a good guess would be Senaga Kamejiro. Memorandum from Douglas Overton (American Vice Consul) to U. Alexis Johnson (American Consul General) on the subject "Conditions On Okinawa", June 8, 1949. Enclosure to Dispatch No. 115 dated June 14, 1949, from the American Consulate, Yokohama, entitled "Report on Okinawa."

Assembly members not only criticized the “policies of the Okinawan Civilian Administration,” but “on several occasions the Military Government itself has been openly criticized.” To make matters worse, RYCOM help to martyr the leaders when it decided to arrest them publicly at the mass meetings. The leaders were then placed on trial “on charges of committing acts prejudicial to the Occupation.”⁵²¹

With overwhelming public support, Assembly members demanded greater self-rule: a strong central civilian government in which the governor would be chosen by a popularly elected legislature with the power to enact policy without RYCOM interference. Facing the increasing demands for democracy and fearing even greater unrest, RYCOM sought a way to end the impasse. The first step was to rescind part of the price increases on rations. Second, Eagles suggested that the Assembly submit “recommendations for changes in its operating procedure.” Eagles read and commented on each of the Assembly’s list of proposed changes. General Eagles, understanding that someone had to be sacrificed in order to mollify the Assembly, forced the Governor to apologize. Governor Shikiya apologized for acting and without consulting the Assembly. Although the status quo did not change to any appreciative degree, sufficient concessions were made to allow the Assembly to declare partial victory, and they reconvened on March 26.⁵²² While greater self-rule was still elusive, it was clear to many Okinawans that the island-wide resistance in 1948-49 demonstrated that military authorities could no longer act with impunity.

RYCOM and Overton reached the same conclusion. Overton observed that American prestige had suffered because RYCOM “was forced to back down.” To make matters worse, “the people have found champions who, whether they are leftists or not,

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² Ibid.

will exploit their victory by finding further causes for complaint in the future.” Overton concluded that RYCOM had “lost the initiative and had been placed on the defensive;” and in order to regain the confidence of the people, it would be necessary to take “positive steps”. For Overton, the problem was obvious. RYCOM, Overton noted, has utterly failed “to provide an effective government acting in the interests of the people, and which at the same time constitutes an undue burden on an already overstrained economy.”⁵²³

Within RYCOM, military officials also believed they had lost the initiative, but they differed from Overton on the reasons. The differences in appraisals can be seen in the debate within RYCOM over a new ordinance. In mid 1949, RYCOM was floating a draft of a new building law. The proposed law, according to Freimuth, would “virtually prohibit all new native construction anywhere in the central and southern parts of the island,” which posed a fundamental problem as “seventy-five percent of the total population normally reside in this area.” Freimuth, however, was not optimistic that the Civilian Police (CP) would have the heart to enforce such a law as it would be “very unpopular amongst the Okinawans.” Freimuth, understanding the autocratic nature of military command, warned that if the law were passed, “strict enforcement will probably bring with it a strong reaction from the Okinawans marked with petitions, mass meetings, etc.” Mindful of the recent protests in March, Freimuth argued the law would allow “radical elements to spearhead [a new] movement and proclaim themselves as ‘champions of the peoples rights’ as they have in other recent matters.” Remembering the debacle over the decision to raise the prices of rations, and the subsequent decision to rescind the price increases, Freimuth warned that a similar problem would result if the law passed. If the land law was modified “at a later date for any reason whatsoever, the

⁵²³ Ibid.

radical elements will claim credit for having forced the revision or modifications and will get many new recruits to follow their banner and leadership.” Freimuth urged RYCOM to modify the law by limiting new construction in “certain specified areas,” but if the law was not modified, Freimuth would not support the law, and did so by signing his name in opposition.⁵²⁴

RYCOM, disregarding Freimuth’s warnings, implemented the new land ordinance measure, and as Freimuth had predicted, galvanized the popular front into action. Senaga and Nakasone strategically decided to conduct a public meeting on May 1, 1949. Recalling RYCOM’s reaction to the May Day “baseball” activity in 1948, the two apparently calculated that a popular front meeting on May Day would elicit a strong RYCOM reaction. Senaga coordinated the May Day events with the *Jinmin Bunka* and the *Uruma Shimpô* to insure maximum public awareness.⁵²⁵

At the May Day demonstration, the popular front increased public participation by allowing the masses to adopt goals for the movement. The rally adopted three slogans aimed at obtaining greater democracy and more economic relief. First, they called for the public elections of the governor and gunto assembly. Second, due to the incurred economic hardship, they demanded a complete rollback of the 1948 income taxes. Finally, they urged for an increase in the ration of “supplementary military goods.” The popular front succeeded in rallying the people, as noted by a MG report. It stated “the economic situation on Okinawa was particularly distressing at this time, giving the front leaders excellent material for their speeches.”⁵²⁶ RYCOM, however, failed to take the

⁵²⁴ Edward Freimuth, Civil Affairs Officer, to Director of Public Safety, Military Government, on the subject of “Draft of Building Law,” June 3, 1949. Paul Skuse File, “Police and Criminal Activities on Okinawa,” Freimuth Collection.

⁵²⁵ Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, “Popular Elections in Okinawa Gunto,” September 1950. Freimuth Files

⁵²⁶ Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, “Popular Elections in Okinawa Gunto,” September 1950. Freimuth Files.

bait and did nothing but observe the May Day proceedings.⁵²⁷ After the inaugural May Day event, the popular front conducted three additional mass meetings in May, all of which “severely criticized the Okinawa Civilian Administration” for serving the interest of RYCOM instead of the people.⁵²⁸

May Day, as Senaga and Nakasone predicted, agitated General Eagles. To diffuse the situation, Overton and Freimuth attempted to convince the General to adopt a more positive and proactive approach in dealing with the protests. Instead, General Eagles and RYCOM reacted by enacting several draconian measures in an attempt to reassert military authority. On June 28, 1949, RYCOM imposed new and more draconian ordinances, without Assembly oversight or approval. These ordinances restricted public criticism and political organizing. First, any spoken or written criticism of RYCOM would be considered a criminal act. Second, RYCOM curtailed freedom of travel (to Japan) by stipulating that any travel request had to be approved by RYCOM. Third, RYCOM enacted a curfew in an attempt to curtail mass meetings or other political activities. Last, flying or using the *Hinomaru* in any fashion was deemed an illegal activity.⁵²⁹

The new ordinances, which greatly restricted criticism or mass meetings from taking place, paved the way for RYCOM to impose the land ordinance that Freimuth had tried to stop. The new ordinance modified existing laws passed earlier in the occupation; however, two items differed from previous ones. First, while the land law had been on the books since 1945, it was haphazardly enforced. General Eagles, in a punitive attempt to remind the people who possessed authority on the island, now ordered strict

⁵²⁷ Discussion with Edward Friemuth, June 1998.

⁵²⁸ Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, “Popular Elections in Okinawa Gunto,” September 1950. Freimuth Files.

⁵²⁹ Gabe Masaaki, *Nichibei Kankei no naka no Okinawa*, (Tokyo: Gabushigaisha Shinano, 1996), 94-96.

compliance with the land law. Second, Eagles especially paid attention to the enforcement of the “one mile limit,” which prohibited any native structure within one mile of any dependent housing or military billet of 100 or more soldiers.” Eagles’ apparent motivation for the one-mile limit was for health and sanitation reasons. Eagles believed that one mile “was estimated to be just outside the flying range of a mosquito.” This rationale, as Arnold Fisch noted, was incredibly stupid. Fisch correctly pointed out that “the fact that a mosquito need not fly to travel between native huts and American billets, since the larvae, borne in the run-offs of sudden rains, could easily penetrate within a one-mile radius, did not seem to be a consideration in drafting the restrictive directives.”⁵³⁰ It goes without saying that on a small and overcrowded island where the vast majority farmed, the one-mile limit was devastating to the people’s livelihood.

Not surprisingly, the people began to protest, but the new restrictive ordinances passed in June made mass protests more problematic. In addition, Eagles ordered the Assembly to dissolve to prevent the people rallying around the “rabble rousers.” To further neutralize the Assembly, when Eagles reconstituted the Assembly he excluded thirteen members who had been critical of the RYCOM and involved in organizing mass demonstrations, thus Nakasone, Senaga, and Ogimi found themselves purged from the Assembly.⁵³¹ To neutralize Nakasone’s and Senaga’s appeal, Eagles mollified public discontentment by rescinding the prices on rations.

The new restrictions curtailed the popular movement. The movement suffered another blow when Ogimi Chotoku and his Socialist Party withdrew citing the movement was “moving too far to the left for them.” Shortly thereafter, the popular front stopped conducting mass meetings as public indignation ebbed as ration prices returned to

⁵³⁰ Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 169-170.

⁵³¹ Nakachi. *Ryukyu-U.S.-Japan Relations*, 36-37.

normal. Nakasone and Senaga remained defiant as G-2 noted the two “continued to work closely together.”⁵³² The two, however, received a small measure of vindication when Washington officials sacked General Eagles shortly thereafter. The popular movement played a pivotal role in his ouster as the movement’s resistance forced Washington to acknowledge something was wrong with the occupation. Washington replaced Eagles with General Sheetz, who had a clear mandate conduct a more enlightened and just occupation, a tenure that Okinawans refer to as “Sheetz’s just rule.” More importantly, General Sheetz’s mandate legitimized the litany of complaints that Nakasone and Senaga had issued during the 1948-49 island-wide uprisings. But, Sheetz “just rule” came too little and too late as Okinawans, embittered and disillusioned by the American occupation, began to agitate what had a year earlier had been an unthinkable and unpopular proposition, reversion to Japan.

CONCLUSION

The spirited and protracted Okinawan resistance in 1948-49 came as a major shock to U.S. authorities. RYCOM found it especially difficult to accept the fact that some Okinawans responsible for the 1948-49 resistance (RYCOM used the term “rabble-rousers”) were the same individuals RYCOM had hand-picked, and groomed for positions in the civilian government. The popular movement magnified RYCOM’s shock because RYCOM officials stereotypically perceived Okinawans as “law abiding, gentle and extremely cooperative.” The popular movement’s defiance and resistance disturbed RYCOM in another fashion. Since many RYCOM officials believed the US had liberated Okinawa from Japan, RYCOM took it as an article of faith that Okinawans were well “disposed toward us—better, probably, than any other people in the Far Eastern

⁵³² Ibid.

area.”⁵³³ Consequently, RYCOM officials were undoubtedly frustrated, bewildered, and angered by what transpired in 1948-49. The resistance of the people, from the American perspective, seemed like ingratitude; after all, Americans had not only liberated the islands, but were trying to “uplift” a weaker people. General Eagle’s heavy-handed and autocratic response to the Okinawan protests stemmed from a sense of moral superiority. When the “mild-mannered, courteous, and subservient to authority” Okinawans continued to “out of character,” Eagles responded by even greater “parental” sternness as he was determined to put Okinawans in their proper place.

Under Eagles, RYCOM’s tactics of intimidation, suppression, and coercion only served to increase Okinawan intractability to American authority. When RYCOM stifled political autonomy, Okinawans, led by Nakasone and Senaga, found creative ways to challenge occupation authority through a popular front and mass media. The pointed criticism, ingenious use of American democratic rhetoric, and their long experience in defying prewar Japanese authority, made Nakasone and Senaga worthy adversaries; forcing Washington to reexamine the stereotype of Okinawans as “mild-mannered, courteous, and subservient to authority”⁵³⁴

⁵³³ From Mr. Cargo to Mr. Craiq, Office Memorandum, Subject: Disposition of Okinawa, April 5, 1948. Miyazato Seigun Collection

⁵³⁴ 瀬長亀次郎, “瀬長亀次郎回想録”(東京: 新日本出版社, 1991)、38-51. Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, *Civil Affairs Handbook Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands OPNAV 13-31*, (Washington D.C.: Navy Department, 1944), VII.

CHAPTER SIX FROM RHETORIC TO REALITY: THE RYUKYUS AS
THE MILITARY KEYSTONE OF EAST ASIA

The Rhetoric of Intent: The Ryukyus an Essential Element
of US Security

The low priority assigned to the civil administration of the Ryukyus from 1946 to 1949 runs contrary to Washington's proclamations of Okinawa's significance at the end of the war. Soon after Japan's surrender in early September 1945, Secretary of War James Forrestal sent a memo to President Truman. The memo asserted that the retention of the Ryukyus and other regions in the Pacific "was a matter of life or death....and one that has continually been studied by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS)." The memo also urged study of the "question as to what type of government" should be established in these strategic areas to insure effective "military security and administration of the bases." Truman concurred and forwarded a directive to study the issue further, in particular, the type of control the U.S. would exercise over the Ryukyus and other areas deemed of primary strategic significance.⁵³⁵ Later that month, the JCS reaffirmed Forrestal's earlier memorandum. The JCS recommended "all Japanese Mandated Islands and Central Pacific Islands [be] detached from Japan, including the Bonins and Ryukyus, [which] will be brought under exclusive United States strategic control."⁵³⁶ Thus, it would appear that Washington sought exclusive control because the Ryukyus were essential to U.S. security in the postwar period.

⁵³⁵ As quoted in Robert D. Eldridge, *The Origins of the Bilateral Okinawa Problem: Okinawa in Postwar U.S.-Japan Relations, 1945-1952*, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2001), 27. Eldridge notes in a citation that this quote originally appeared in a work by Okinawan scholar Miyazato Seigen.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, 30. The Bonin Island chain contains the island Iwo Jima. In Japanese, the Bonin Islands are called the Osagawara Islands.

General MacArthur, weighing in from SCAP headquarters in Tokyo, concurred with Forrestal that American control was necessary because the islands were “absolutely essential to the defense of our Western Pacific frontier.” Okinawa, argued MacArthur, had more than “adequate space to provide for the operation of a powerful and effective Air Force, which could assure the destruction of enemy forces or harbor facilities along the Asiatic coast from Vladivostok to Singapore.”⁵³⁷ MacArthur warned “failure to secure it [the Ryukyus] for control by the United States might prove militarily disastrous.”⁵³⁸

MacArthur advanced other justifications for keeping the islands. The Ryukyus had been an economic liability for Japan in the prewar era, and returning the islands would hamper Japan’s postwar economic recovery. Second, the “Ryukyuan [we]re not Japanese,” and thus, Japan had no ethnic/cultural claim to the islands. MacArthur seemed to suggest that the Ryukyuan, “not being indigenous to Japan ethnologically,” had no desire to return to Japanese rule. Lastly, he stated that the Japanese people did not “expect to be permitted to retain” the Ryukyus.⁵³⁹ MacArthur’s arguments echoed the 1944 OSS report and the *Civil Affairs Handbook’s* central premise that Okinawans were ethnically distinct from Japan, suggesting that the upper echelons of the US military

⁵³⁷ “Conversation Between General of the Army MacArthur, Under Secretary of the Army Draper, and Mr. George F. Kennan, March 21, 1948,” *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), 1948, Vol. VI, 709.

⁵³⁸ Eldridge, *The Origins of the Bilateral Okinawa Problem*, 150.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*, As quoted by Eldridge. MacArthur did not explain why he believed the Japanese did not expect to keep the Ryukyus, though since MacArthur believed the Ryukyus were not an innate part of Japan (racially or culturally) there was little desire among Japanese to retain the resource poor islands. Not surprisingly, MacArthur’s rationalizations were undoubtedly informed by the earlier 1944 Civil Affairs’ research (*The Okinawans of the Loo Choo Islands: A Japanese Minority Group* and *Civil Affairs Handbook of the Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands*) in mid 1944, research that had argued that the Ryukyus were ethnographically distinct from “homogeneous” Japan.

accepted this view as fact.⁵⁴⁰ MacArthur surely realized that the U.S. military's view of Okinawa as a distinct people and society was not widely shared either in Japan or internationally. Hence, in order to avoid charges of U.S. territorial aggrandizement if the Ryukyus came under permanent American control, it was useful to assert that the Ryukyus were not naturally part of Japan. These comments from Washington and MacArthur indicate that in 1945 the U.S. *initially* envisioned long term separation of the Ryukyus from Japan.⁵⁴¹

Okinawan Reality: American Indifference

By the end of 1945, SCAP and Washington's attention toward the Ryukyus dwindled in direct proportion to the decline of Okinawa's strategic location. In the aftermath of the Pacific War, with Japan's total defeat, China in civil turmoil and both the U.S. and the Soviets primarily focused on Europe, the United States appeared secure in East Asia. Hence, America's hegemonic position in Japan provided little incentive to create a strong presence in the Ryukyus as long as the occupation of Japan continued.⁵⁴²

The low priority assigned to the Ryukyus significantly affected the allocation of resources to Okinawa. While MacArthur asserted the strategic necessity of keeping the Ryukyus, he simultaneously viewed the Ryukyus as an economic liability, as it had been to Japan in the prewar era. For MacArthur, it was bad enough that the lion's share of American aid went to Europe; worse still was sharing resources with an area of lesser

⁵⁴⁰ Historian Watanabe Akio has noted that this continuity in American attitudes toward the Ryukyus was no accident. Since the Battle of Okinawa, writes Watanabe, the U.S. military has "treated the Okinawans as being people of a different stock and culture from the Japanese, who had economically and politically exploited them...." and moreover, "...this line of thinking had unmistakable effects upon the American policy towards Okinawa after the war." Akio Watanabe,

⁵⁴¹ *The Okinawa Problem: A Chapter in Japan-U.S. Relations*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1970), 20.

⁵⁴² Although outside of the parameters of this dissertation, MacArthur's 1948 presidential ambitions had a detrimental affect on the occupation of Okinawa.

immediate consequence. Japan's speedy recovery was his sole preoccupation, and he responded by removing the Ryukyus from SCAP's purview in 1946, when "clear differentiation [of military command/responsibility] was made between Japan proper and the Ryukyu Islands with the dividing line set at latitude 30° N."⁵⁴³ The Ryukyus were placed under the Philippines-Ryukyus command (PHILRYCOM), which was accorded little respect and attention in Washington. This demarcation also relieved SCAP of direct responsibility for the Ryukyus. Although MacArthur required regular updates on civil affairs, SCAP, according to one historian's assessment, "practiced a policy of 'salutary neglect' toward military government in the Ryukyus...and at no time did Tokyo [SCAP Headquarters] ever attempt to assume control of day-to-day civil affair activities in the Ryukyu Islands."⁵⁴⁴

The Department of the Army compounded the problem by charging "cost on labor and materials used for the benefit of an occupied area [the Ryukyus] 'against the indigenous economy [Japan]'". While MacArthur successfully lobbied to separate the Ryukyus from his command area, Department of the Army Undersecretary, William Draper, imposed an economic policy based on the opposite premise. In 1948, Draper stated that "the Ryukyu Islands, *as a prefecture of Japan*, remain a legal and financial responsibility of the Japanese Government, and hence [the Department] has assumed...that appropriated funds could not be used to pay for indigenous Japanese materials and labor utilized for the benefit of the Ryukyu Islands."⁵⁴⁵ Draper, therefore,

⁵⁴³ Watanabe, *The Okinawa Problem*, 20. Although MacArthur was the overall Commander-in-Chief of FEC (Far Eastern Command), the specific command of the Ryukyus fell under the purview of the combined Philippines-Ryukyu command.

⁵⁴⁴ Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 77.

⁵⁴⁵ Yoshida, *Democracy Betrayed*, 36. Draper, however, likely understood the reality that the Ryukyus were no longer under Japanese control and that even if Japan had control, the war devastated economy could not have financially cared for the Ryukyus.

effectively signaled to RYCOM strict limits to funds for recovery, which meant that the already impoverished Ryukyuan people would have to fend for themselves. Nor was Draper's attitude exceptional, Secretary of War Porter Patterson and Army Chief-of-Staff Dwight Eisenhower both voiced similar concerns. In no uncertain terms, Eisenhower stated "...the U.S. would be put to [a great cost], economically, socially, by an assumption of permanent administration over the affairs of some three quarters of a million Orientals whose economy has, at best, been of deficit."⁵⁴⁶

With little support from the Pentagon, a budget-conscious Congress took aim at the Ryukyus. When Congress cut rehabilitation funds for East Asia in 1948, funding for the Ryukyus bore a disproportionate share. Funds for Japan and Korea were cut to one third of the requested appropriation but the Ryukyus was cut to 15 percent of what had been requested for the fiscal year of 1949.⁵⁴⁷ Out of the overall \$74,000,000 allocated to Northeast Asia, Japan and Korea received \$51,400,000 and \$20,200,000 respectively whereas the Ryukyus were given a paltry \$2.4 million.⁵⁴⁸ Equally significant was the decision by Congress that the \$2.4 million designated for the Ryukyus could not be used for military construction whereas Congress appropriated military construction funds for "the Philippines, Guam, and the Marianas."⁵⁴⁹ One State Department official, Robert Fearey, noted the contradiction by pointing out that "in view of the more deplorable conditions in the Ryukyus than in Japan, and our near decision to remain there indefinitely with all the responsibilities that will entail, it would seem that the Ryukyus'

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 24. As quoted by Yoshida.

⁵⁴⁷ State Department Office Memorandum written by Robert Fearey, July 27, 1949. Only the initials JMA are provided in the recipient of Fearey's memorandum. It is assumed JMA refers to John Allison who was John Foster Dulles' assistant; seen in Miyazato collection.

⁵⁴⁸ Department of the Army Staff Message Center Outgoing Classified Message to Civil Affairs Division, Lt. Col. Buehler, July 14, 1948; seen in Miyazato collection.

⁵⁴⁹ Watanabe, *The Okinawa Problem*, 174 (footnote 22).

appropriation should at least not be cut more than the other areas.”⁵⁵⁰ Despite Fearey’s protests the appropriations for fiscal year 1949 similarly demonstrated no commitment, even at the level of military facilities, of transforming Okinawa into an American military keystone of the Pacific.

The American neglect meant fewer military-related jobs for Okinawans. In Feary’s words, “this lessening of administrative interest in the Ryukyus from above was paralleled by a decrease in support for military construction activity on the islands.”⁵⁵¹ SCAP relocated military engineering units elsewhere, leaving the engineering district with “just 6 officers, 20 enlisted men, and 197 civilians.”⁵⁵² The dearth of employment extended to civilian positions as allocations for Okinawan salaries amounted to a mere \$6,836 from 1947 to 1949.⁵⁵³

The State Department inadvertently contributed to the policy of benign neglect of the Ryukyus. From the onset of post-surrender planning in 1943 and continuing through to mid 1948, the State Department consistently opposed the separation of the Ryukyus from Japan, even in the form of a U.N. trusteeship. Their opposition mainly reflected the concern that the U.S. control of the Ryukyus “would be contrary to its [the U.S.] policy of opposing territorial expansion whether for itself or for other countries” and would undoubtedly “provoke serious international repercussions and would be politically objectionable.” Turning MacArthur’s rationale for keeping the Ryukyus on its head, State argued not only would the Ryukyus “require a considerable financial outlay by the United States”; such a task would require “governing three-quarters of a million people

⁵⁵⁰ State Department Office Memorandum written by Robert Fearey, July 27, 1949. See note 12.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁵⁵² Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 78.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*

of totally alien culture and outlook.” Moreover, the State Department contradicted MacArthur’s views of Okinawan identity by stating the “Ryukyu chain h[as] been closely associated for many centuries with Japan and their population is *culturally and racially Japanese*.”⁵⁵⁴ The State Department’s opposition had the effect of freezing overall American policy toward the Ryukyus; and the Truman administration, with more pressing international issues, saw no urgency to settle the dispute between the JCS and State.⁵⁵⁵ The lack of urgency was also reflected in both the State Department and the JCS, as both ranked the Ryukyus near the bottom of America’s strategic priorities at this time. Not until events in China raised new Cold War concerns did the two reconcile their policy differences.

This lack of American political and financial commitment to the Okinawan occupation created a vicious circle for the Okinawan people. The meager funding meant scarce military jobs and few opportunities for the people to earn a living at a time when few wage paying jobs existed. Having little means of providing for their own welfare, the living conditions not only mocked the initial promises and optimistic vision offered by American officials in 1945-46, it led many to question whether the Americans were any better than the Japanese. Ironically, it was the surprising intervention of Japan coupled with the changing geopolitical climate in 1949, which altered Okinawa’s status.

The Ryukyus as “Disposable Sovereignty”

After the war, Tokyo, like Washington, formulated a policy on the Ryukyus. In November of 1945, Foreign Minister Yoshida Shigeru, who would later become Prime Minister, formed the “Peace Treaty Problems Executive Committee” to study “problems

⁵⁵⁴ Eldridge, *The Origins of the Bilateral Okinawa Problem*, 97. Emphasis added.

⁵⁵⁵ Sarantakes, *Keystone*, 26-28.

likely to arise in the peace treaty.”⁵⁵⁶ The committee’s research paper, which mirrored the U.S. State Department assessment, noted the Ryukyus were an integral part of Japan, even though the report noted that the islands could “hardly sustain [a] self-sufficient economy.” Specifically, the report pointed out that “the Ryukyu group was governed in the same manner as any other prefecture....The people of Okinawa Prefecture had their representatives in both Houses; laws enacted by the Diet were ipso facto applicable in Okinawa; in the sphere of judicature, there was no difference from other prefectures.” The report also argued that the Ryukyans were culturally Japanese in that the “Ryukyuan language may be considered a dialect of Japanese with the same grammatical structure and much of its vocabulary derived from Japanese...” and that “Buddhism and Shintoism are ingrained in the daily life of the people in Okinawa Prefecture.”⁵⁵⁷ Later in 1947, Ashida Hitoshi, who had replaced Yoshida as Foreign Minister, affirmed Japan’s intentions toward the Ryukyus by stating that “Okinawa is not very important to the Japanese economy, but speaking from sentimental reasons, the nation desires the return of the islands.”⁵⁵⁸

Japan’s attachment to Okinawa was more than sentimental. The Foreign Ministry sought to restore Japan’s prestige following the complete loss of Japan’s prewar colonies. The Ryukyus, although of little economic value, had symbolic value and their loss would only add to Japan’s sense of impotence. Strategically, the Ryukyus provided a buffer between the home islands and a resurgent postwar China that had repossessed Taiwan and nurtured deep grievance over Japan’s half century of aggression. Moreover, the Foreign Ministry, like their counterpart, the State Department, agreed on Japanese

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., 116.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., 122. As quoted by Eldridge.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid., 125. Also see Watanabe, *The Okinawa Problem*, 23.

retention of the Ryukyus and the perception of the Ryukyus as a natural part of Japan. Both entities assumed that the U.S. military occupation of the Ryukyus would end at the same time as the occupation of Japan, and neither contemplated nor desired American trusteeship. At the same time, the Foreign Ministry was not opposed to an American military presence in the Ryukyus as long as “Japan would keep sovereignty and administrative rights over the islands.”⁵⁵⁹

Opposition within Japan to the Foreign Ministry’s position came from an unlikely source, the Emperor himself.⁵⁶⁰ Emperor Hirohito conveyed his wishes to SCAP through his advisor and liaison with the Americans, Terasaki Hidenari. In September of 1947, Terasaki requested a meeting with William Sebald, who was the American political advisor to SCAP, to discuss the Emperor’s views on the Ryukyus. Terasaki told Sebald that the “Emperor hope[d] that the United States w[ould] continue the military occupation of Okinawa and other islands of the Ryukyus. In the Emperor’s opinion, such [an] occupation would benefit the United States and also provide protection for Japan.” The Japanese people would support such a move because, according to the Emperor, the people feared “not only the menace of Russia, but after the occupation ended, the growth of rightist and leftist groups which might give rise to an ‘incident’ which Russia could use as a basis for interfering internally in Japan.” Terasaki further told Sebald that the Emperor wanted the U.S. to continue the military occupation of Okinawa for “25 to 50 years or more.” In order to preempt or minimize internal and external criticism of a prolonged military occupation, Terasaki stated that Emperor Hirohito suggested that the occupation could be disguised “upon *the fiction* of a long-term lease....with sovereignty retained in Japan.” Terasaki conveyed the urgency of the Emperor’s request by asking

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., 144.

⁵⁶⁰ The role of the Emperor supports John Dower’s argument in *Embracing Defeat* that fear of a “red revolution” was a significant factor in Hirohito’s decision to surrender.

Sebald to inform “MacArthur that day.”⁵⁶¹ Although there had been some speculation Terasaki acted on his own initiative, the Grand Chamberlain Irie Sukemasa’s diary published in 1989, according to Nakamura Masanori, corroborates the theory that the plan for a prolonged and exclusive American control over the Ryukyus came from Emperor Hirohito.⁵⁶²

The Emperor’s Okinawan initiative was significant for several reasons. First, the 1947 “Peace” Constitution created a symbolic monarchy in which the Emperor no longer possessed formal political powers. Thus, the Emperor’s initiative in relation to Okinawa constituted a political intervention that violated both the spirit and the intent of the Peace constitution.⁵⁶³ Second, Emperor Hirohito, anxious that the occupation end quickly, may have seen his offer as a quid pro quo, which would provided each side what it wanted.

Moreover, Emperor Hirohito’s proposal offered additional benefits for Japan. First, a strong U.S. presence in the Ryukyus would protect Japan’s southern flank at no direct cost to itself. Second, a large American military presence only a few hundred miles away would allow for a reduction of U.S. military forces on Japanese soil, thereby reducing the social and political cost of having a large and long term American military presence on the home islands. Third, while Hirohito may not have desired the permanent

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., 146-147. Emphasis added. Also see 大田 昌秀、昭和の沖縄 (那覇: 那覇出版社, 1990) 314-336.

⁵⁶² Nakamura Masanori, *The Japanese Monarchy: Ambassador Joseph Grew and the Making of the ‘Symbol Emperor System,’ 1931-1991*, (New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1992), 120-121.

⁵⁶³ 大田 昌秀、昭和の沖縄 (那覇: 那覇出版社, 1990), 314-336. Ota roundly criticizes the Emperor for selling out the Ryukyus for the greater interest of Japan. Ota also points out that despite postwar Japan’s democratic era, marked by a supposedly symbolic emperor, the role of the emperor in deciding the fate of Okinawa’s postwar experience makes a mockery of Japan’s postwar democratic state. The Okinawan newspapers not only decried the emperor’s actions but stated in the headlines “The Emperor Sold Out Okinawa.” See the *Ryukyu shinpō* 琉球新報 and the *Okinawa Times* 沖縄タイムス, January 12, 1989 editions. Many Okinawans were outraged by the news and served to reaffirm what many already knew, that Japan has no problems sacrificing the Ryukyus if it is in Japan’s best interest.

relinquishment of Japanese sovereignty over the Ryukyus, it appeared he was more than willing to do so if necessary to bring quick restoration of sovereignty to Japan proper. Emperor Hirohito, who had been informed by Terasaki of the U.S. military's "strong preference" for exclusive American control via trusteeship, very likely left this possibility open.⁵⁶⁴

The timing of the Emperor's Okinawan initiative provided invaluable support for MacArthur's and the JCS's arguments for retaining the Ryukyus. Two days after meeting with Terasaki, Sebald transmitted the Emperor's message to the State Department with an attached commentary: "It will be noted that the Emperor of Japan hopes that the United States will continue the military occupation of Okinawa and other islands of the Ryukyus, a hope which undoubtedly is largely based upon self-interest."⁵⁶⁵ The Emperor's self-interest notwithstanding, the timing of his message undermined the State Department's opposition to the JCS plan for indefinite military occupation. The State Department's position was weakened further by rapid geopolitical change in 1949 as the Cold War dramatically elevated the importance of the Ryukyus.

George Kennan's assessment of the Cold War forced the State Department to reconsider policy toward the Ryukyus. In 1947, while stationed in Moscow, Kennan altered US strategic thinking positing containment of the Soviet Union as the top priority. Kennan's next post involved him with State Department planning for postwar Japan in 1947, which ironically, coincided with Hirohito's Okinawan initiative. Kennan

⁵⁶⁴ Eldridge, *The Origins of the Bilateral Okinawa Problem*, 149. Although no one envisioned Japan as an economic superpower in the postwar era, the emperor's Okinawa initiative was a significant factor for Japan's remarkable economic recovery because as many have pointed out, Japan could devote all of its resources on economic recovery with the U.S. guaranteeing Japan's security. And the majority of this security was largely a function of the preponderant American military presence in Okinawa. Hence this reality has also embittered many in Okinawa as they have shared little in Japan's economic success while bearing the cost of this success.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

rationalized US control by arguing “Okinawa and other islands of the Central and Southern Ryukyus chain are not ‘minor’ islands,” and thus, the Ryukyus “were no longer to be considered a part of Japan.”⁵⁶⁶ Kennan’s actions broke the impasse between the State and Defense Departments and affirmed US-Japanese understanding that the Ryukyus would be under permanent and exclusive American control. More importantly, both sides assumed Japan would surrender sovereignty (including residual) over the Ryukyus.

Truman, who was vehemently anti-Communist, endorsed Kennan’s containment policy and concurred with the Emperor’s concern over the Soviet threat in East Asia. Hirohito’s blessing for a prolonged American occupation of the Ryukyus reassured Truman and led to a fundamental change in US policy toward the Ryukyus. When Truman approved NSC 13/2 in the fall of 1948. Among other items, NSC 13/2 called for retaining the Ryukyus and urged the Army to “promptly formulate and carry out a program on a long-term basis for the economic and social well-being [of the Ryukyuan people].”⁵⁶⁷ NSC 13/2, for the first time, represented a consensus in Washington on long term plans for the Ryukyus. NCS 13/2, however, failed to produce immediate policy changes that improved the livelihood of the people because the US commitment to the Ryukyus remained largely rhetorical throughout 1948 and most of 1949.

⁵⁶⁶ PPS/28, “Recommendation with Respect to U.S. Policy toward Japan,” in “Report of the Director of the Policy Planning Staff,” written by George Kennan, March 25, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, Vol. 6, 692. In the Potsdam Declaration of July 1945, it stated that Japan would only retain the four primary islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku, and adjacent minor islands. “Minor,” however, was never specified and the debate centered whether the Ryukyus were minor islands that belonged to Japan. The State Department’s policy till 1948 saw the Ryukyus as a part of Japan whereas the U.S. military did not.

⁵⁶⁷ NSC 13/2 Acting Secretary of State to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, “Recommendations with respect to U.S. Policy toward Japan,” October 26, 1948. *FRUS*, 1949, Vol. 6, 877-78.

The Cold War Maelstrom of 1949

In 1948, the heating up of the Cold War created common ground for the State and Defense Departments, the JCS, the NCS, President Truman and the Japanese government as all saw the need for a prolonged U.S. military presence in the Ryukyus. Yet as Chapters Four and Five indicated, this common ground failed to produce any substantive changes in the civil administration of the islands. A combination of events in 1949, however, changed this reality.

In Europe, the blockade of Berlin and the subsequent Berlin airlift, coupled with growing economic and political instability throughout Europe in 1948-49, led to the formation of NATO in 1949. The creation of NATO, the Truman Doctrine, and the Marshall Plan show the level of insecurity the U.S. felt toward the Soviet Union, despite the fact the U.S., unscathed by WWII, had the world's most powerful economy and an atomic monopoly.

In Asia, the emergence of the Cold War in Europe, the growing military and political power of the CCP, and the rise of Asian anti-colonial nationalism in Southeast Asia with links to Moscow, threatened British, Dutch, and French colonial possessions, possessions the U.S. saw as vital link to contain the spread of communism. Some of the nationalist movements were communist led, as in Indochina, but the U.S. failed to appreciate the nationalist, as opposed to international, element in Asian anti-colonial movements and associated these movements with communism.

Above all, the Chinese civil war threatened US hegemony and postwar security in East Asia. By 1947 many informed observers were in agreement that Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) would likely emerge victorious. By 1948 a CCP victory seemed a foregone conclusion, which, coupled with the emergence of the Cold War in Europe, prompted American and Japanese officials to ponder how a communist victory in the world's most populated country altered geopolitics in East Asia.

In February of 1948 the Emperor's advisor, Terasaki met with his American counterpart, William Sebald. In what Sebald referred to as "The Second Tenno Message," Terasaki conveyed the Emperor's concern that a communist victory in China would upset the geopolitical situation in East Asia. Referring to Japan's quagmire experience in China during the 1930s, Terasaki warned Sebald that "China may be likened to a swamp into which unlimited resources may be poured without any visible result...even the United States is not wealthy enough to bring about concrete improvement in China."⁵⁶⁸ Faced with the reality of a communist controlled continent, Terasaki stressed the importance of an American bulwark concentrated on "South Korea, Japan, Ryukyus, the Philippines, and if possible, Formosa" to combat the further spread of communism. Afterwards, Sebald wrote "I have reason to believe that the above views are representative not only of Mr. Terasaki's personal opinions, but result from his discussions with various influential members of the Imperial Household, including the Emperor."⁵⁶⁹ The Emperor's message reinforced American strategic thinking that the Ryukyus would function as the primary lynchpin of containment and that Japan would not contest American's continued occupation.

The one year period beginning in early 1949 with the complete collapse of the Guomindang forces and their retreat to Taiwan, marked a watershed for the occupation of the Ryukyus. In August, the Soviets shocked the world with its successful test of the atomic bomb, thus ending America's atomic monopoly. In October, Mao Zedong and the CCP entered the Forbidden City in Beijing unopposed and announced the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC). In Japan, continuing privation and labor strife led to a surge in public support for leftist parties in the 1949 Diet elections. Occupation

⁵⁶⁸ Terasaki's sage advice was obviously not heeded in Vietnam or more recently, Iraq.

⁵⁶⁹ Eldridge, *The Origins of the Bilateral Okinawa Problem*, 150-151.

officials retaliated with the “red purge” which banned 20,000 labor officials, educators, journalists, etc from the public life, but did not deal with fundamental sources of social discontentment. In Vietnam, in 1950 both the Soviets and the PRC recognized Ho Chi Minh’s revolutionary regime in the continuing war against French colonial rule. In response, the U.S. which had covertly supplied logistical military and financial support from 1945, initiated the open bankrolling of the French war, eventually assuming 80% of the costs. Finally, this rapid escalation of the Cold War in Asia suddenly became hot when North Korea invaded the south in June of 1950.⁵⁷⁰

1949: The Okinawan Occupation in a Crucible

For the U.S. these events were nothing short of a calamity and focused immediate attention on American military bases in the Ryukyus. In 1949, Washington initiated a series of inspections that exposed the extent of damage caused by RYCOM’s three years of incompetent administration. Douglas Overton, a Vice Consul for the State Department in Japan made two visits to Okinawa in May of 1949, after which he wrote an eight page memorandum detailing the state of affairs in the Ryukyus. Overton, a rare American official who had been to the Ryukyus many times since an initial visit in December of 1946, was in a better position than most to assess what was happening on the ground after four years of U.S. military occupation and administration. While noting some areas of progress, in the section entitled “Present Attitudes of the Okinawan People” he pointedly remarked that “for all the progress noted above, *there has been an appalling change in the attitude of the Okinawan people toward the Occupation Forces over the past year.*” Previously, the people had shown “goodwill and a desire to co-operate” with the Americans. This positive attitude, however, has dissipated and “one cannot escape the change—it is obvious in the stares of the people and even in the attitude of the children.”

⁵⁷⁰ 宮城悦二郎 占領者の眼(那覇: 那覇出版社、1982)、91.

In only four years, the initial goodwill generated by a progressive and benevolent occupation had dissipated to the “present time [when] at least eighty percent of the Okinawan people resent[ed] the presence of the American Occupation Forces in the Island.”⁵⁷¹

In contrast to the still dominant image of a placid, congenial and appreciative population, Overton found ample evidence of public unrest “manifesting itself in the form of mass meetings in villages and towns throughout the island.” Noting that some of these meetings attracted “as many as five thousand people”, Overton observed the ominous contrast to “conditions a year ago when the leading Socialist on the island was able to attract only three persons (himself and two policemen assigned to take notes...) to his first publicly-advertised mass meeting.” Not only did the people complain of the poor economic conditions, they roundly criticized the overall conduct of the occupation even though such criticism was illegal. Overton found that the Okinawans had good reason to be indignant; the arrogance of military administration could be seen in “the uprooting and moving a village of six thousand persons on a few days’ notice because some tactical unit desire[d] to set up a new rifle range.” Instead of addressing the people’s concerns, Occupation officials, Overton pointed out, responded by arresting the speakers and held them “for trial on charges of committing acts prejudicial to the Occupation,” which indirectly legitimized the Ryukyuan complaints.⁵⁷²

Overton provided a candid and penetrating analysis as to why the occupation had failed. Occupation officials had inherited an impoverished and devastated archipelago,

⁵⁷¹ From Douglas W. Overton to U. Alexis Johnson, “Enclosure to Dispatch No. 115 dated June 14, 1949, from the American Consulate, Yokohama, entitled ‘Report on Okinawa,’” June 8, 1949. These photocopies of these primary documents come from the papers of Ryukyuan historian Miyazato Seigun, located in the Ryukyu University Library Archives entitled: 宮里政玄 資料, Foreign Relations of the U.S. Vol. 6. It is not stated where Miyazato found these documents. I am assuming these documents are State Department records.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

but insisted that it would be “an oversimplification” to single out economic causes. Poverty had been a constant in Ryukyuan history, yet “until recently, the population has always remained docile and co-operative with their Japanese and American rulers.” The fundamental problem, argued Overton, was under RYCOM’s administration, as military affairs took priority over civil administration. In a discussion with General Eagles, the overall commander of the occupation, Overton heard Eagles, in going through a long list of problems, “mentioned only one matter which concerned the Okinawan civil population.”⁵⁷³

A lack of competent personnel also contributed to the occupation’s mismanagement. Overton noted that key administrators in various departments were removed for a variety of reasons: alcoholism, “sheer incompetence,” immorality, and malfeasance. With only a few exceptions, a complete turnover of occupation administrators had occurred in the past two years, “yet the organization is still packed with a number of officials who are mediocre both in ability and in character.” Among the hundreds of occupation officials Overton met, not one American could speak or write in Japanese. As a first step, Overton caustically recommended screening out “applicants who are potential alcoholics or psychopaths.” In a more serious vein, he commented that the American officials demonstrated a blatant disregard for the people’s basic civil rights. Overton believed this basic disregard originated in racist attitudes as military personnel referred the “native population as ‘gooks’, and treat[ed] Japanese and Okinawans as though they were an uncivilized tribe.” This attitude has kept the people in a “constant state of terror” as occupation officials willy-nilly conducted searches of homes, day or night, and without reason or warning. Overton concluded that unless the U.S. took

⁵⁷³ Ibid. Overton’s criticism of the occupation further reinforces the argument made in the previous chapter.

immediate “positive steps to recover the initiative, and adopt effective counter-measures, it is doubtful whether the confidence of the Okinawan people can be regained.”⁵⁷⁴

Overton’s scathing indictment of the occupation surprised many in Washington and surprise turned into dismay because the effort to turn the Ryukyus into a Cold War bulwark depended, at a minimum, on the local population’s tacit support. Overton’s report, however, was not the first to reveal the extent of the problem. William Sebald, acting in his capacity as Political Advisor assigned to SCAP, had inspected the Ryukyus in 1948. He reported occupation officials were “shortsighted and paternalistic” and that the half a million Ryukyans were “caught in a net of abject poverty, hopelessness and inability to aid themselves by their own efforts or limited indigenous resources.” The lasting impression of his visit was a “helpless population merely attempting to keep itself alive at a bare subsistence level.” Occupation officials, however, blamed the poor conditions on Washington, especially the State Department, for failing “to furnish clear-cut directives concerning American objectives in Okinawan and the Ryukyu Islands.” These officials rationalized their inaction on the grounds that it seemed “superfluous to undertake democratization program of any kind” if the islands were going to revert to Japanese control.⁵⁷⁵ Sebald’s report, unlike Overton’s 1949 report, did not gain the attention in Washington as it came prior to the sudden turn of events that by suddenly elevated the strategic importance of the Ryukyus. Before 1948, there were only two official inspections. In 1948, there were four. The first half of 1949 brought half-a-dozen official visits and nine more visits from June 1949 to January 1950.⁵⁷⁶ Fifteen

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ As quoted in Eldridge, *The Origins of the Bilateral Okinawa Problem*, 196-197. The failure of Sebald’s report to raise concerns in Washington or in SCAP led American officials in the Ryukyus to believe that there was little expected of them since they had limited support and direction from above.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., 230-231. For a detailed listing of these visits, see Table 6-2 in Eldridge, *The Origins of the Bilateral Okinawa Problem*, 231.

visits in thirteen months suggested a sense of crisis, as did the rank of the visitors and their intent.

Relatively low-level officials based in Japan, such as Sebald and Overton, had conducted earlier visits to the Ryukyus. The dire situation Overton described in May of 1949, however, moved the State Department the next month to send Douglas Oliver from Washington. As a Harvard trained anthropologist who specialized on the Pacific Islands, Oliver, an advisor to the Office of Far Eastern Affairs, had impressive credentials to evaluate social conditions in the Ryukyus.⁵⁷⁷ The U.S. government, in order to “map” the ethnography of the Pacific Islands, had recruited Oliver and other anthropologists with specialized knowledge of Japan and the Pacific region. Oliver’s blistering critique enjoyed wide circulation in Washington due to his position in the Office of Far Eastern Affairs and his long record of distinguished work on the Pacific Islands during World War II.

Oliver’s report amplified on Overton’s litany of criticisms of US military administration but also challenged the recently formed consensus on the relationship between the Ryukyus and Japan. Whereas Overton recommended the U.S. move quickly to implement policies to improve the economic and social welfare of the islands, Oliver asserted retaining Japanese sovereignty would best serve Okinawans. This assessment stemmed from Oliver’s belief that “the Ryukyuan are thoroughly Japanese....and an effective job of civil administration will be very difficult at best, *and without a friendly and loyal population extra-ordinary policy measures will be necessary to guard against espionage and sabotage.*”⁵⁷⁸ Moreover, Oliver concluded that whatever goodwill the Americans had earned no longer existed. As a trained anthropologist, he was surely

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 232.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 232. As quoted by Eldridge. Emphasis added.

cognizant of the significant differences culturally, socially, and historically between the Ryukyus and Japan; yet he warned that “*the establishment of a separate Ryukyuan culture [would be] based upon erroneous historical and ethnographical assumptions and is out of the question.*” Mindful of the strategic situation and the security needs at the time of his inspection, Oliver warned that safeguarding U.S. strategic security interests in the Ryukyus would “require great administrative skill applied in the form of wise, just and sympathetic rule.”⁵⁷⁹

Oliver’s report was recognized immediately as having “far-reaching implications” for American policy toward the Ryukyus, especially its status at the time of the final disposition.⁵⁸⁰ The social crisis in the Ryukyus was exacerbated in July when Typhoon Gloria slammed into the main island of Okinawa with 175 mph winds, the strongest typhoon in recent memory, and one of five typhoons to hit the islands in the past year. Gloria caused 80 million dollars in total damage, making an already desperate situation much worse.⁵⁸¹ Consequently, the Army, alarmed by Oliver’s report and its recommendations, sent Assistant Secretary of the Army, Tracey Voorhees, on a surprise inspection. Voorhees, before leaving Washington in early September, received a thorough briefing from Oliver. Yet this briefing could not adequately prepare Voorhees for what he encountered. In addition, for the first time, mainstream American press organizations such as *Life*, *Time*, and the *New York Times* gave extensive coverage of the conditions.⁵⁸² One *Life* reporter, who had joined Voorhees, reported that the largest city and the capital of Okinawa, Naha, did not have running water and that open-air trenches carried the untreated sewage into the ocean. Overall, Okinawa was “an ugly, cluttered

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.* As quoted by Eldridge.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸¹ Morris, *Okinawa*, 81-82. Gloria today would be considered a Category Five hurricane.

⁵⁸² *Life*, December 19, 1949, 19. *Time*, November 28, 1949, 24.

graveyard of rotting material,” and the prevalence of low morale among the American troops was evident by their “depressed and sullen” demeanor.⁵⁸³

According to *Life*, Voorhees, and the rest of the Army brass, no longer could deny the ugly reality and were “ready to accept the Department of State’s assessment: something was desperately wrong with the administration of the island bastion and something had to be done to revitalize its defenses and its social and economic base.”⁵⁸⁴ Three years of neglect changed overnight due to Voorhees’ intervention. He lobbied Congress for an immediate and steep increase in funding for the Ryukyus to \$73 million. Congress responded with uncharacteristic alacrity, partly as a reaction to the establishment of Mao Zedong’s People’s Republic of China on October 1, with a “fifty-million appropriation after only a month of consideration.”⁵⁸⁵ Shortly thereafter, Congress also approved \$25 million in Government and Relief In Occupied Areas (GARIOA) funds, and in January 1950 another \$37.8 million in GARIOA funds.⁵⁸⁶

Following his September visit, Voorhees sent five major missions to further assess the occupation’s needs. A few weeks after Voorhees’ departure, Raymond E. Vickery, an agrarian economist, and his team found the economy, especially the agrarian sector, to be in a “particularly deplorable state.” The Vickery report, which later became the blueprint for a program to rejuvenate the Ryukyuan agrarian economy, described the capricious manner of the occupation authority’s land use policies. The Ryukyus had not been self-sufficient in food since before the 17th century, because of inadequate arable

⁵⁸³ *Life*, December 19, 1949, 19.

⁵⁸⁴ Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyus*, 158.

⁵⁸⁵ Sarantakes, *Keystone*, 46.

⁵⁸⁶ Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyus*, 164.

and fertile land for the population.⁵⁸⁷ U.S. military polices exasperated the problem by taking one fifth of the arable land for use by the military. Vickery warned of major friction unless the military developed a more rationale and equitable land-use policy.

Conclusion

Voorhees understood that setting proper policy goals was only part of the solution. The more fundamental concern was RYCOM's current command structure that had proven itself derelict in its duties. The current commander, Major General William Eagles, failed to impress Voorhees or any of the other visiting teams. While Washington had belatedly realized this fact, those who had worked under Eagles had known since his arrival in 1948 that Eagles' tenure would not go well. Colonel William Triplett, chief of staff for Eagles' predecessor, Brigadier General F. L. Hayden, soon lost hope that Eagles would improve the occupation after meeting the General at Kadena airfield.⁵⁸⁸ Triplett discovered "Eagles hadn't wanted to come to RYCOM [Ryukyus Command] and was disgusted with the idea of such a minor command under such pioneering conditions." Eagles' disgust of the Okinawan people was even greater. When Okinawans heard they were getting a new commander, they closed the schools to give Eagles a friendly reception. Triplett recalled the "road between Kadena [airfield] and RYCOM was lined

⁵⁸⁷ Although the scarcity of food has been a common theme in Ryukyuan history, prior to Satsuma's invasion in the early 17th century, the Ryukyus had been able to maintain a level of subsistence, thanks in part to the introduction of the sweet potato from China (which had gotten it from the Americas). Satsuma, however, forever altered land usage in the Ryukyus as they imposed a cash crop, sugar cane, to be grown throughout the archipelago. Satsuma then sold the sugar from the cane in the markets of Osaka, reaping huge profits as they enjoyed a monopoly of sugar production during the Tokugawa era. Ironically, it was these sugar profits that later enabled Satsuma to overthrow the Tokugawa shogunate and create the Meiji era, the beginning of Japan's modern era, which in turn, reinvaded the Ryukyus and thus making the Ryukyus the first victim of Japan's imperial empire.

⁵⁸⁸ Another early indication that neither Washington nor SCAP cared by the occupation of the Ryukyus can be seen in the ranking of General F.L. Hayden. For an island with supposed high strategic value and with 500,000 civilians to administer, it seems surprising that only a rank of a Brigadier General was assigned to the Ryukyus. After Hayden, however, Major General became the minimum rank for Army Generals commanding the Ryukyus.

with the schoolchildren equipped with hand-made and colored cloth and paper American flags.” The children had been standing since eight o’clock in the morning out in the cold rain to give a warm welcome for their new general. As Eagles’ motorcade drove past, the children yelled “Gorbress Merika.” Amazed at the children’s spirit and perseverance, Triplett astutely observed: “If one out of four of my relatives and friend were killed by the indiscriminate shelling, shooting, and bombing of Japanese invaders, I certainly wouldn’t stand out in the weather *for five hours* to yell “Three cheers for Hirohito.” But instead of showing appreciation, Eagles remarked, “filthy natives.”⁵⁸⁹

Voorhees ordered Army Chief of Staff, General Lawton Collins, to the Ryukyus in October 1949, who promptly sacked the incompetent and racist General Eagles and brought in Major General Josef Sheetz. Sheetz was the first commander the Pentagon had not assigned by default and was given a clear mandate to improve and provide for the social and economic well-being of the Ryukyuan people.⁵⁹⁰ Sheetz, experienced at running military government having been the chief military government officer in Korea, hand selected some five dozen experienced military government officials from SCAP. He made it clear that RYCOM would no longer be a dumping ground for incompetents and miscreants. He told his officers to become “a kind of junior SCAP for Okinawa.”⁵⁹¹ He announced to the press “the United States had more than a strategic interest in the islands. It carries with it the moral responsibility of a Christian people to others.”⁵⁹² Sheetz’s competent command, coupled with money for construction and GARIOA funding, allowed him to improve the occupation to the point that even the jaded

⁵⁸⁹ Triplett, *In the Philippines and Okinawa*, 277-278. Emphasis added.

⁵⁹⁰ No stranger to Okinawa, Sheetz had fought during the Battle of Okinawa as an artillery commander. Sarantakes, *Keystone*, 46.

⁵⁹¹ Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyus*, 159.

⁵⁹² Yoshida, *Democracy Betrayed*, 41.

Okinawan people noticed. Okinawans quickly dubbed Sheetz's tenure as "Sheetz's Just Rule."⁵⁹³

Sheetz's administration offered the State Department an opportunity to emphasize civilian affairs. Guided by Oliver's report on the military administration's deficiencies, the State Department's Far Eastern Affairs Office (FEAO) drafted a new directive that recommended, in order to facilitate a prolonged U.S. military presence, the U.S. military government be renamed the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR) and "military governor" be replaced with "governor."⁵⁹⁴

The State Department's directive reminded American strategic planners that a prolonged military presence would require a degree of tacit approval from the Okinawan people. To gain this, State called for more democratization, Okinawan self-rule, and comprehensive social and economic rehabilitation of the islands. In addition, the directive advocated indirect administration through an elected Ryukyuan government and a Ryukyuan government bureaucracy, similar to SCAP's administration of Japan. As SCAP had done in Japan, the directive called for political, economic, social, and legal changes that would modernize and democratize the Ryukyus.⁵⁹⁵

The most radical component of the directive addressed the arbitrary and arrogant exercise of military authority that was prevalent from 1945-50. First, Ryukyuan civilian police, in the absence of military police, were empowered to "arrest and detain members of the U.S. forces and nationals of the Allied and associated powers."⁵⁹⁶ Second, to reduce friction over land usage, the directive urged, "the occupancy and use of such land

⁵⁹³ 宮城悦二郎、*占領者の眼* (那覇: 那覇出版社、1982)、94. "善政" (ぜんせい) is literally translated into "good or just government." シーツ善政

⁵⁹⁴ Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 159-60.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

by the U.S. forces will be kept to the *absolute minimum consistent* with the accomplishment of U.S. military objectives.”⁵⁹⁷ Last, the directive urged a more proactive educational campaign, reminding American personnel of the goal to create a “mutual feeling of friendship and respect.....between the natives and U.S. personnel.”⁵⁹⁸ Overall, State Department officials hoped to turn the Ryukyus into America’s showcase of democracy in Asia.

⁵⁹⁷ Yoshida, *Democracy Betrayed*, 43. Emphasis added.

⁵⁹⁸ Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 160-61.

CHAPTER SEVEN SHEETZ'S "JUST RULE": TOO LITTLE AND
TOO LATE

Sheetz's "Just Rule": Political Reforms

Sheetz had explicit orders to stabilize the Okinawan situation by implementing extensive economic, political, and social rehabilitation. Sheetz, armed with a clear mandate, immediately began to implement reforms. Identifying the factors behind the 1948-49 unrest, Sheetz understood that a key component in winning at least tacit Okinawan support was greater democratization. Wasting little time, Sheetz issued Directive No. 20 which established a new "Provisional Government Assembly" to serve until elections were held the following year.⁵⁹⁹ The governor was given the power to establish ten assembly districts and to choose one assemblyman from each district and three assemblymen at large "to assist the Chiji [governor] at his discretion in an advisory capacity."⁶⁰⁰

While Sheetz's directive represented the first major initiative toward self-rule since the Navy's tenure, U.S. Army Counter Intelligence impeded implementation of the directive by several months. Shocked by the island-wide struggle campaigns of the past year and the effectiveness of leaders such as Senaga and Nakasone in organizing these campaigns, Counter Intelligence investigated for subversives in the list submitted by the Governor.⁶⁰¹ These officials wanted to insure that agitators such as Nakasone Genwa and Senaga Kamejirô, "who instantiated the resignation [of the original Okinawa Civilian Assembly] and whose agitation alone kept the dispute [the 1948-49 uprisings] alive" did

⁵⁹⁹ U.S. Military Government, Ryukyu Islands (RYCOM), Directive No. 20, October 1, 1949.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ James N. Tull, "The Ryukyu Islands, Japan's Oldest Colony—America's Newest; An Analysis of Policy and Propaganda," (MA Thesis, The University of Chicago, 1953), 36-37.

not make it onto the new Provisional Government Assembly.⁶⁰² It was not clear whether this purging of “subversives” was following the lead taken by SCAP’s “red purge” in Japan, but the purge backhandedly acknowledged Nakasone’s and Senaga’s success in leading the 1948-49 popular resistance.

The concerns of Counter Intelligence mirrored some of the more reactionary opinions within RYCOM. While Sheetz intended the Provisional Government Assembly to represent American’s commitment to greater Okinawan self-rule, Military Government Ordinance No. 1, issued in early January 1950 undermined this initiative. Apparently questioning the fledging Provisional Government Assembly’s loyalty to US authority, this new ordinance called for the creation of an eleven member Interim Ryukyus Advisory Council to be appointed by the Military Government. While the Assembly acted as an advisory body to the governor, the Council served at the will of Military Government. The Interim Council considered matters referred to it by the Military Governor which affected the Provisional Government, “including the granting of limited self-government to the people thereof; and...advise the Military Governor with regard to such matters.” In other words, it seemed that RYCOM wanted a parallel indigenous institution that they could control as a de facto check on the activities of the governor and Provisional Government Assembly. James Tull, who served in the Military Government during this time, was quite critical, noting that “as it was, these two quasi-legislative bodies came into being...simultaneously, thereby compounding and confounding the already arduous task of explaining such new activities to the people.”⁶⁰³

⁶⁰² Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, “Popular Elections in Okinawa Gunto,” September 1950. Freimuth Files

⁶⁰³ Tull, “The Ryukyu Islands, Japan’s Oldest Colony—America’s Newest; An Analysis of Policy and Propaganda,” 37.

Nakasone and Senaga, already perturbed that the Provincial Assembly was not directly elected, were even more alarmed by the creation of the Interim Ryukyus Advisory Council. While Sheetz had publicly affirmed US commitment to greater self-rule, the steps taken so far failed to meet either Nakasone's or Senaga's expectations for significant political autonomy. Consequently, the two resurrected the popular front, *kyôdô bochô*, in February 1950. Conducting three meetings that month, the popular front pointed out the contradictions in RYCOM's policies and advocated direct election of the assembly and governor. Senaga effectively buttressed the popular front rallies with articles and editorials in the *Jinmin Bunka* and the *Uruma Shimpô*. For the most part, the other two papers, the *Okinawa Taimusu* and the *Okinawa Mainichi Shinbun*, followed the *Uruma Shimpô*'s lead and joined the growing chorus in demanding direct elections. Despite this chorus of dissent, MG failed to publicly commit to general elections. Nakasone, intent to see whether "Sheetz's just rule" was mere rhetoric, challenged the General to meet with the popular front leadership on May 10 to "discuss Okinawan problems."⁶⁰⁴

Mindful of what had transpired in 1948-49 and eager to forestall new protests, on June 30 MG issued Special Proclamation Number 37.⁶⁰⁵ The Special Proclamation, which promised direct elections in the coming fall, acknowledged Okinawan expectations for greater political autonomy. The people would go to the polls in September to elect members to the general assembly and then would return in October to elect the governor. The ordinance was quite sweeping in its democratization. It called for the election of

⁶⁰⁴ Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Guntô," September 1950. Freimuth Files

⁶⁰⁵ Miyagi, *Senryôsha no me*, 91-93. Miyazato Seigen, *Amerika no Okinawa Seisaku*, (Naha: Nirai Sha, 1986), 85-94. One could also assume the outbreak of the Korean War on June 22 affected the timing of the Proclamation, as countless B-29 missions left Okinawan airbases to stem the North Korean advance on the Pusan perimeter.

mayors and local assemblymen every four years and election of assemblymen and governor at the regional *guntô* level every four years. The MG proposed federal system where the Ryukyu Islands would be divided into four *guntô* groups: the northern island group centered on Amami Islands, the central island group with the primary island of Okinawa, and the two southern island *guntô* groups, Miyako and Yaeyama.⁶⁰⁶ Each *guntô* would have its own independent assembly and governor; hence four regional elections would be held simultaneously throughout the archipelago.⁶⁰⁷ For most Okinawans, the opportunity to elect their own representative and governor, even at the *guntô* level, was a welcomed change. For RYCOM, the Special Proclamation appeared to quell popular agitation for greater democracy, and thus, brought a measure of acquiescence to the American presence. Moreover, and as a completely unintended consequence, the announcement of general elections had a decisive effect upon the solidarity of the popular front.

⁶⁰⁶ *Guntô* (群島) translates into island group or archipelago.

⁶⁰⁷ Moriteru and Arasaki, *Okinawa Sengo Shi*, 41-46. Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Guntô," September 1950. Freimuth Files.

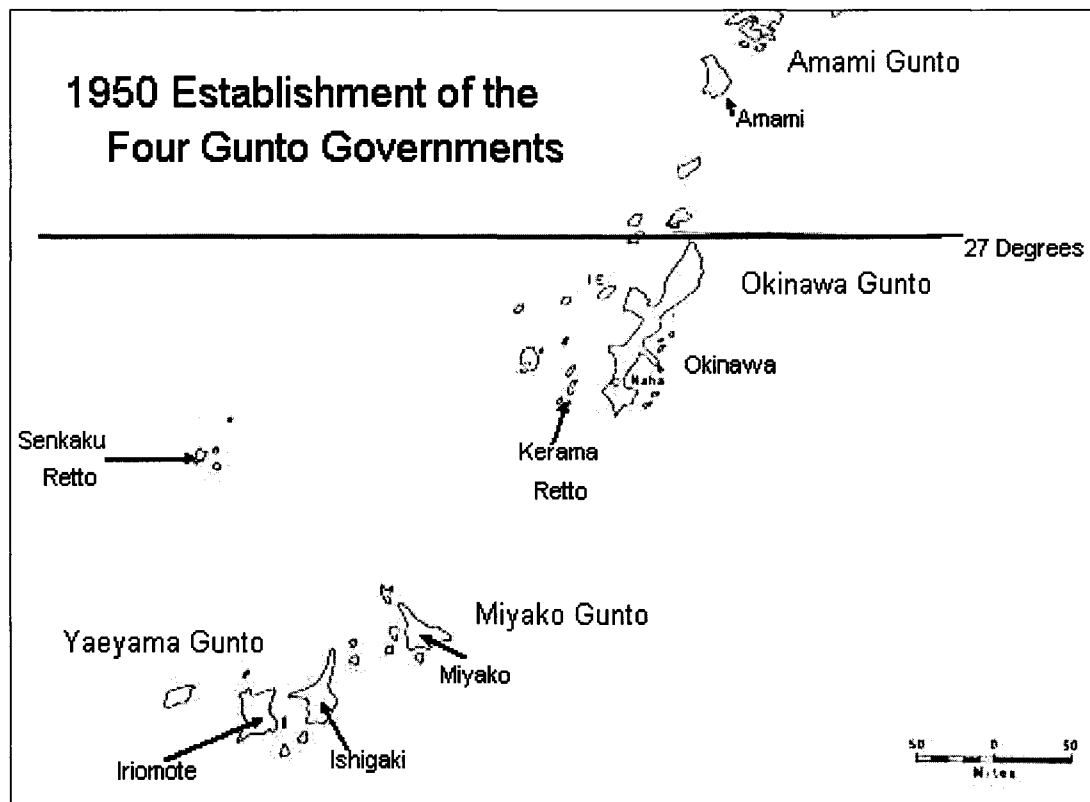


Figure 40 The four gunto governments in 1950.

Sheetz's Attempt to Regain Ryukyuan Favor through
Propaganda

Cognizant that political reform itself was not sufficient to undo the damage incurred during the three year era of “apathy and neglect,” Sheetz embarked on an ambitious propaganda program to “win the hearts and minds” of the Okinawan people. Sheetz, unlike his predecessor Eagles, took his new assignment seriously and he had already had extensive civil affairs experience in running military government in Korea.⁶⁰⁸ Little had been written on Okinawa since the flurry of research activity in

⁶⁰⁸ When he wrote his 1953 analysis of American policies toward Okinawa, Tull wrote that “since so little is known about the Ryukyus, inclusion of considerable background information is deemed critical” because not having such information would make it impossible for a “critical appraisal of American policies and

1944, and it is likely that Sheetz read the two 1944 military publications, the OSS report *The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands* and the Navy's *Civil Affairs Handbook: Ryukyu Islands*. We can also assume that Sheetz would have read the various MG reports written over the past four years, which concluded that the Army's tenure had been an unmitigated disaster, and that he was aware of Navy's civil affairs team accomplishments, especially in the efforts to instill greater political autonomy and the nurturing of a nascent Ryukyuan identity. US Army Colonel James Tull, who arrived in Okinawa several months prior to Sheetz, was also influenced by the OSS report.⁶⁰⁹ Tull later commented that the OSS report "emphasized the enduring nature of the cultural attachments to China" and that under Japanese rule, "Satsuma labored sedulously to eliminate the Chinese cultural influence....and the people were urged to imitate things Japanese."⁶¹⁰ We can infer from these comments a tendency among sympathetic MG officers to see themselves as liberators and champions of a democratic Ryukyuan nation.

Sheetz soon discovered that he had no direct means of communicating with the people. The *Uruma Shimpô*, which ironically had been an early initiative of MG, was firmly under Senaga's control and had become a most effective platform for criticizing occupation policies. In addition, Senaga published the *Jinmin Bunka*, which was the island's first postwar journal. Senaga purposely wrote the *Jinmin Bunka* in Japanese vernacular terms and addressed topics of popular concern in order to reach the largest

how they have been implemented." If Tull encountered such little information in 1953, the situation for Sheetz in 1949 likely was far worse.

⁶⁰⁹ Tull, who left RYCOM shortly after Sheetz's departure in mid 1950, entered graduate school at the University of Chicago in 1951. While pursuing his MA in sociology, Tull wrote his MA thesis based upon his personal experience in Okinawa. Thus, due to his direct experience, I am treating his MA thesis as a primary document. His MA thesis remains the single most important primary document during this pivotal time.

⁶¹⁰ Tull, "The Ryukyu Islands, Japan's Oldest Colony—America's Newest; An Analysis of Policy and Propaganda," 17.

possible audience. More importantly, *Jinmin Bunka*, unlike newspapers, could go into greater depth on issues or bring attention to issues the newspapers had ignored. The *Jinmin Bunka* had some influence over the other two local newspapers as the only local in depth journalism available on the island. Senaga's power in the media, therefore, allowed the popular front to dominate the print media and influence public opinion.

The fact that RYCOM had lost all control of the mass media by 1949 contrasts sharply with SCAP's thorough and effective censorship of the Japanese mass media. Tull reports that starting with the Army's assumption of civil administration of Okinawa in mid 1946 and continuing throughout 1947, MG officials responsible for monitoring local news contained not a single mention of media activities during the period from April 1947 to December 1948.⁶¹¹ The protests in the summer of 1948, and Senaga's effective use of the *Uruma Shimpô*, forced MG to monitor the local media more closely but efforts were hampered by the lack of reliable translators. In November, 1948, RYCOM replaced the Department of Public Information with the Department of Civil Information and Education (CI&E). There was little initial impact, however. According to Tull, the "Information" segment, i.e. propaganda division, was subordinated to the education section, which was staffed by officers whose professional training and frame of reference was adult education.⁶¹² Tull attempted to rectify this situation by suggesting to General Eagle that he hold press conferences, especially when there was a new directive or a significant change in policy. Tull noted how Eagles had "recoiled" at the suggestion.⁶¹³ Tull, however, found Sheetz more receptive, which led to structural changes, including an increased budget. Tull noted that Sheetz's tenure "accomplished more in nine

⁶¹¹ Ibid., 53. Of course, this failure should not come as surprise as it reflected the ethos of apathy and neglect prevalent among occupation officials.

⁶¹² Ibid., 54.

⁶¹³ Ibid., 59.

months...than had been done in the preceding four years.” Ultimately, Sheetz succeeded, Tull concluded, because “he created and maintained in the minds of the Ryukyuan the conviction that he was vitally interested in their welfare, respectful of their institutions, aware of their beliefs and aspirations, and that he genuinely liked them.”⁶¹⁴

Previously, there had been no liaison between MG and the local press, but CI&E quickly corrected this deficiency. In addition, among CI&E officials, there was a clear consensus that new policies “should be communicated to the ‘native government’ with instructions that they ‘tell the people about it’” so that the people perceive policy changes stemming from their own government rather than being imposed upon them by the US military. Tull also urged CI&E to develop better relations with the local media, “at least to a point where some newspapers stopped deliberately printing items calculated to embarrass the American administration.”⁶¹⁵ Edward Freimuth went further and advocated planting stories as “unofficial donations to be sure that they [local press] carry what we want.”⁶¹⁶ Last, CI&E also paid for twenty-six advertisements placed in several local papers.⁶¹⁷

Such efforts, however, could not completely counter Senaga’s influence over the mass media, which forced CI&E to reenter newspaper publishing. Shikiya Koshien and members of the former Okinawan Civilian Administration (OCA), smarting from the *Uruma Shimpô*’s criticisms throughout the latter half of 1948, had launched their own

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., 81-82.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid., 59-60.

⁶¹⁶ Letter from Edward Freimuth to Jim Tull, February 22, 1953. Freimuth Papers. Tull gave Freimuth a copy of his MA Thesis, and Freimuth’s papers include all the correspondence he has with Tull in regards to the thesis. In late 2005 news reports revealed that the Pentagon fed favorable press to Iraqi papers and to insure they were printed, the Pentagon paid the newspapers to publish these “favorable” accounts.

⁶¹⁷ Tull, “The Ryukyu Islands, Japan’s Oldest Colony,” 100.

paper, the *Ryukyu Kôhô* in December 1948 with a monthly circulation of seven thousand. The following March, with the OCA replaced by the Provisional Assembly, CI&E took over the *Ryukyu Kôhô*'s publication and immediately increased distribution to fourteen thousand. With general elections scheduled for September, the *Ryukyu Kôhô* went from standard mimeographed broadsheet to a full-fledged tabloid spread, consisting of eight pages and numerous half-tone illustrations.⁶¹⁸ Distributed free, the paper enjoyed a weekly circulation of 120,000 thousand making it the largest circulated paper in the islands.⁶¹⁹ According to Tull, the *Ryukyu Kôhô* spoke glowingly about American democracy and society and also devoted considerable space to MG plans and programs as well as articles on the United Nations.⁶²⁰

As the September general elections drew nearer, the *Ryukyu Kôhô* began to stress such themes as self-government, elections, and the corresponding responsibilities that came with self-government. It sponsored an essay contest with a choice of the following topics: "What Democracy Means to Me; How I can Help My Country; My Idea of Good Government."⁶²¹ According to MG reports, public participation in the contest was considerable as 1,253 essays were submitted, thus, making "it difficult to choose the winning essays."⁶²² The *Ryukyu Kôhô* subsequently printed all of the winning essays. To further underscore the historical significance of the pending general elections and simultaneously legitimize the American presence, CI&E officials, perhaps taking a page

⁶¹⁸ Tull, "The Ryukyu Islands, Japan's Oldest Colony," 60.

⁶¹⁹ Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Guntô," September 1950. Freimuth Files

⁶²⁰ Tull, "The Ryukyu Islands, Japan's Oldest Colony," 60.

⁶²¹ *Ryukyu Koho*, July and August editions, 1950. CI&E Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Guntô," September 1950. Freimuth Files.

⁶²² *Ibid.*

from the 1944 OSS report and the *Handbook*, juxtaposed the democratic elections to Japan's prewar totalitarian rule. Articles pointed out that in the seventy years of Japanese rule, Tokyo both appointed the governor and filled the position with a mainlander who usually treated Okinawans as colonial subjects. In contrast, American authorities pointed out that this time the Okinawan people, regardless of gender or other qualifications, were electing a fellow Okinawan to be their governor in a direct election only five years after the end of the war. Several of the winning essays contrasted the elections to the prewar period when Japan never even considered allowing the Okinawans to elect their own governor.⁶²³

CI&E's efforts, however, did not end with the reinvention of the *Ryukyu Kôhō*. They printed numerous posters that were placed in prominent locations throughout the islands. One theme reflected in the poster campaign was "A Bridge to Democracy." The caption stated "that the bridge from a Ryukyus under militarism to a democratic Ryukyus must be supported by pillars labeled freedom of thought, respect for human rights, etc." In the month of May alone, CI&E printed and posted nine thousand posters.⁶²⁴ By September, CI&E had developed fifteen different themes for the poster campaign, and 37,500 posters were printed and distributed, and over 200,000 leaflets were airdropped.⁶²⁵

The CI&E insured that the leaflets reached every inhabitant and paid particular attention to areas that were either remote or relatively isolated. The leaflets "emphasized the responsibility of the people to choose their representatives in order to insure the kind

⁶²³ Ibid.

⁶²⁴ Tull, "The Ryukyu Islands, Japan's Oldest Colony," 61.

⁶²⁵ Ibid., 107. In Okinawa Gunto, eight air drops distributed 99,000 leaflets. In Miyako Gunto, three air drops distributed 27,000 leaflets. Yaeyama Gunto and Amami Gunto each had three drops, for a total of 76,500 leaflets. In total, 202,500 leaflets were dropped throughout the archipelago.

of government they want.” Examples of slogans include “an honest vote – an honest government” and “The public official is a servant of the people.” In addition, special leaflets were distributed to “urge women to turn out.”⁶²⁶ To garner greater attention, at considerable expense, CI&E also printed on both sides and in color.

Entitled “Vote Properly Without Fail” the front of the leaflet shows pieces of paper, representing ballots, falling into a voting box. The three ballots all have the same kanji, *sei* (正) meaning justice, righteousness, proper behavior, etc, in other words, the importance of voting with integrity and electing responsible candidates. The text on the backside of the leaflet emphasized that the people run a democracy and the people have a fundamental obligation to accept majority rule. If, however, people disagree with majority rule, then changes can be conducted in a democratic manner. Quoting a “great American,” Abraham Lincoln, the leaflet reminds the people that “government [is] of the people, by the people and for the people.” Finally, at the bottom, the leaflet gives the reader one final slogan to consider: “A correct vote leads to a correct government, therefore, vote without fail.”

⁶²⁶ CI&E Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, “Popular Elections in Okinawa Guntô,” September 1950. Freimuth Files

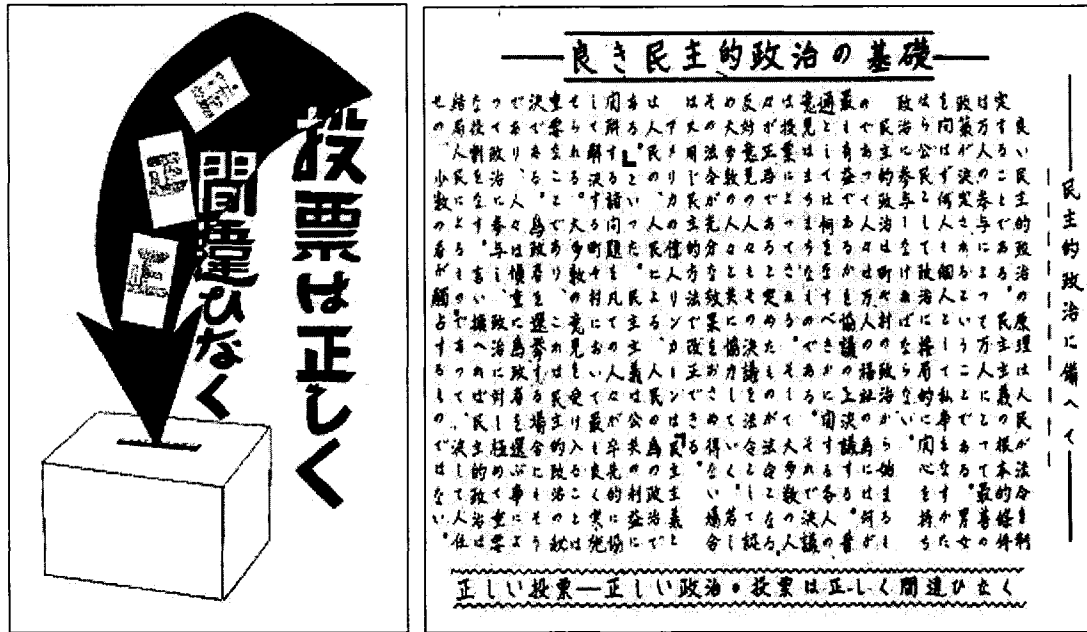


Figure 41 CI & E's 1950 Election Pamphlet "Vote Properly Without Fail." The image on the left is the front side of the pamphlet.

Despite the paternalistic tone of the leaflet, CI&E sincerely encouraged full Okinawan participation in the general election. They also understood the need to remain neutral in both the election process and the dissemination of "information." Favoring a candidate or overtly interfering would undoubtedly invited criticism. At the same time, CI&E officials worried that the people would vote into office strident critics such as Senaga and Nakasone. Treading a fine line, CI&E officials dropped leaflets encouraging voters to support moderate candidates. Although no direct evidence exists, CI&E likely had Senaga and Nakasone in mind in urging the people to vote for responsible candidates.

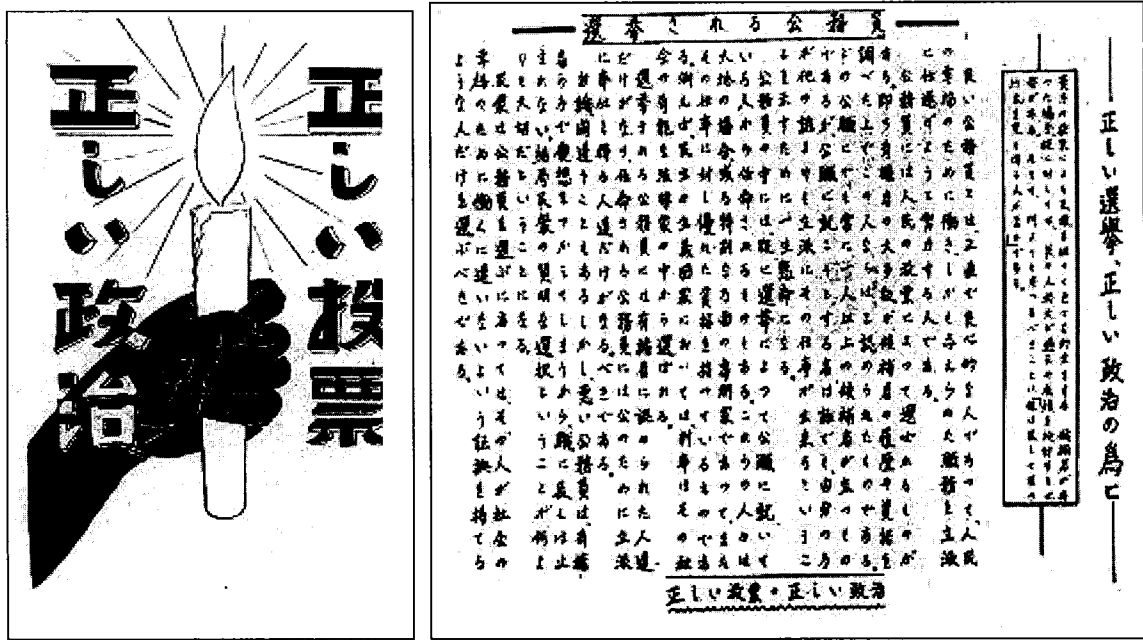


Figure 42 CI & E's 1950 Election Pamphlet "Proper Voting leads to Enlightened Government." The image on the left is the front side of the pamphlet.

The leaflet's front side, a dark hand holding a candle symbolizing the brightness of democracy, intones "Proper Voting leads to Enlightened Government." Text on the right side of the bill warns people to be wary of candidates' promises and encourages scrutiny of the character and record of all candidates. The main theme of the leaflet, however, was that although people elect most government officials, not all government officials are elected, some are appointed. Assuming that the elected governor would be supportive of the US presence, the leaflet anticipated criticism of administrative appointments. The leaflet acknowledged that mistakes can occur and remind the people of their right to vote out officials who make bad appointments, for "the people choose candidates with proven records and who are willing to work for the public good."⁶²⁷

⁶²⁷ Both leaflets were printed by the CI&E department, date unknown, though likely in mid 1950.

CI&E also made use of the education system to get their message out. On November 3, 1949, Special Proclamation No. 34 called for the establishment of a new campaign called “Ryukyuan—American Education Week.” To draw the public’s attention to the campaign, CI&E posted 4,000 posters throughout the islands. The education campaign, which ran from December 4-10, devoted each day of the week to a particular theme⁶²⁸ and composed a leaflet for each theme. In total, nearly 400,000 new leaflets were distributed. On the sixth day of the campaign, CI&E ordered schools to hold special ceremonies to celebrate the campaign. In addition, CI&E officials carried the campaign into home by reinstating a strategy first used by their predecessor, the Department of Public Information (DPI), which had distributed free wall calendars containing photographs demonstrating the positive attributes of the occupation.

CI&E, likewise, handed out special calendars to all students that linked the five democratic themes in the leaflets. Students were asked to take them home and have their parents display the “democratic-themed” calendar in a prominent location. The calendars proved quite popular as CI&E printed another half-million, (for a population of roughly 600,000) with additional agricultural information such as “planting seasons, phases of the moon, etc.” to be distributed through the agricultural associations.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁸ The five themes were Democracy in the Home, Democracy in the School, Foundations of Good Government, Rights of the Citizen in a Democracy, and Responsibilities of the Citizen in a Democracy.

⁶²⁹ Tull, “The Ryukyu Islands, Japan’s Oldest Colony,” 106.



Figure 43 CI&E Calendars showing education progress under American occupation.

The CI&E also employed sound trucks, mobile film trucks and radio to shape public opinion. Whereas CI&E had to compete with Senaga's influence in the printed medium, it had a monopoly in the audio and visual format. Sophisticated sound trucks, equipped with public address systems, recording and playback equipment, generators, motion picture projectors, screens, etc., conducted fifty-five field trips throughout the main island of Okinawa in preparation for the general election.



Figure 44 CI&E mobile AV unit setting up to show an American movie.

At each stop, the crews would hand out leaflets and distribute the *Ryukyu Kôhô* and the popular agricultural calendars, and post posters. In total, they distributed 35,000 posters, 70,000 copies of the *Ryukyu Kôhô*, and 80,000 leaflets/calendars. Over the PA system, the teams played public announcements, previously recorded speeches, and traditional Ryukyuan music. The most popular medium of propaganda, however, was the outdoor movies, shown on portable screens. The films, which were originally produced by SCAP and thus in Japanese, included world news and the following documentaries: 'The Day of the Election,' 'Man of Tomorrow,' 'Civil Servants,' 'Future Citizens' and 'Three Pillars of Government.' In 1950 alone, these audio-media trucks made fifty-five field trips and were often gone for four days at a time. They conducted forty film showings with an average of 1,207 in attendance, an impressive average of participants considering the trucks often went to the most rural and isolated parts of the island.⁶³⁰



Figure 45 In order to reach remote villages, CI&E's set-up portable stages in the middle of an Okinawan village, a precursor to the American drive-in.

⁶³⁰ Ibid., 108. An Okinawan family member remembered these movies fondly as they were often the only source of entertainment and connection to the outside world. He recalled walking for several kilometers just to watch the movies. He remembered the excited children running along the trucks and how the entire village would walk en masse to wherever the outdoor movie was being screened.



Figure 46 A CI&E mobile AV truck with film projector set up on the rear gate.

In cities where showing outdoor movies was impracticable, MG financially supported the building of movie theater complexes. In 1948, with great fanfare, the first movie theater was built and named after Ernie Pyle, a famous American journalist who had been killed during the invasion of Okinawa. Building additional theaters, however, proved challenging in part because of the high initial capital investment and in part because of the cost of acquiring movies from either Japan or the US. In addition, many Okinawans simply could not afford the luxury of going to a movie. US officials solved the problem by providing loans to the movie houses at favorable interest rates through the Bank of the Ryukyus, where the US authorities had a controlling interest. The low-interest loans led to a cinema boom and by the end of 1950, Naha proudly had four large indoor theaters. To keep ticket prices low, CI&E acquired Japanese and American feature films (subtitled in Japanese) and provided them to theater owners at a modest cost to ensure venues in cities to show the same documentary films brought to villages by the

mobile AV trucks. Likewise, the theaters became information conduits as CI&E distributed leaflets, the *Ryukyu Kôhô* and posters to theater patrons.⁶³¹



Figure 47 The theater on the left, Taihokan, was built during the theater building flurry of the early 1950s. On the right is the Ernie Pyle Theater, the first theater to be constructed in the postwar era (1948). Both theaters were built in Naha.

CI&E recognized radio was another important medium to control. The US military maintained an English-language radio station but there was no radio station to serve the civilian population. In mid 1948, the OCA's Department of Cultural Affairs, under the energetic leadership of Kabira Chôshin, worked to rectify this deficiency.⁶³²

⁶³¹ Kabira Chôshin, *Shûseno no Okinawa Bunka Kyôsei Shi*, 202-216. Tull, , "The Ryukyu Islands, Japan's Oldest Colony," 61.

⁶³² Miyagi Etsujirô, *Okinawa-Sengo Hôsô Shi*, (Naha: Hirugi Sha, 1994), 4. Occupation authorities established the first postwar radio station in may 1945. Its call letters, WXLH, complemented AFRS (Armed Forces Radio Services) and FEN (Far Eastern Network), but was unique in that it catered to the evolving military situation on the island and provided morale boosting songs, etc., to the soldiers on Okinawa. Although the primary audience was US military personnel, Nisei (both Japanese-American and

Kabira, who had gained experience in the prewar era when he worked in Japanese radio stations on Taiwan,⁶³³ and some other Okinawan technicians, used surplus or discarded US military equipment to build a 500-watt transmitter by the end of 1948.⁶³⁴ By mid 1949, the island's first postwar Japanese language station began broadcasting just before Typhoon Gloria struck, devastating the radio station operations. Sheetz quickly committed resources to restart the radio's operation, which enabled CI&E to take control and displace Kabira's organization. By early 1950, CI&E had initiated a "regular broadcasting schedule" and adopted AKAR as the station's call letters. One of AKAR's first programs, *Ryukyu no Koe* (Ryukyu voices) was broadcast in the language of the islands, *Uchinaaguchi*, instead of standard Japanese. CI&E also used AKAR to mold public opinion for the upcoming general elections. Beginning in early August, AKAR broadcasted a daily fifteen-minute show called "In Preparation for the Coming Election." AKAR created fifty special political advertisements, which were disturbed by mobile AV trucks. AKAR ran special interviews with notable people on the island, both military and civilian, to raise public awareness. To encourage the participation of women in the election, AKAR ran the "Weekly Women's Hour," which represented the first time a program was devoted to women's political activism.⁶³⁵

CI&E believed AKAR would be an effective tool to get out RYCOM's message and were less costly than the AV trucks which were expensive to maintain. However,

Okinawan-American soldiers) spoke in their native tongues in order to convince the surrender of soldiers and civilians. WXLH ended when the war concluded in August.

⁶³³ Kabira, *Shūsengo no Okinawa Bunka Kyōsei Shi*, 22-36. Kabira, however, did not share Senaga's passion for politics or leftist activism. At the same time, Kabira did appreciate Senaga's efforts to empower the masses. Kabira was appointed head of Cultural Affairs because he did have a deep passion in reviving Ryukyuan history and culture.

⁶³⁴ Etsujirō, *Okinawa-Sengo Hōsō Shi*, 13-23.

⁶³⁵ Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Guntō," September 1950. Freimuth Files

most Okinawans could not afford the luxury of a radio and many villages were still without electricity. Clarence Glacken, an American anthropologist gathering information for RYCOM in 1951, wrote “there are virtually no radio sets in any of the villages, except in the schools and sometimes in the village office.” Glacken cited conditions in the village of Hanashiro, which lacked electricity and had only one working radio. Not surprisingly, Glacken concluded that the radio “is not an important direct medium for obtaining news” and predicated that efforts to educate the masses by radio will be wasted.⁶³⁶

CI&E first tried to make available battery powered radios, which proved to be ineffective due to the cost of the batteries and low power. CI&E next implemented its own version of the Great Depression’s Rural Electrification Program and used Government Agency Relief in Occupied Areas (GARIO) funds to import radios, which they distributed for free. In many rural locations, one radio was provided, often to the mayor or village headman, and these radios were wired to loud speakers placed on poles in the village.⁶³⁷ Miyagi Etsujiro, in his history of Okinawan postwar radio, noted wryly that CI&E referred to this system as the “Master-slave” operation. By 1953, nearly every place in the Ryukyu Islands could be reached by radio.⁶³⁸ Much like the excitement television provided for many American families in the 1950s, many Okinawans remember the excitement when these radios were introduced. At 6:00 AM, the village radio speakers would blare out, rousing the villagers awake.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁶ Clarence Glacken, “Karimata—A Village in the Southern Ryukyus,” SIRI Report No. 3, (Washington D.C.: Pacific Science Board National Research Council, 1953), 331-332.

⁶³⁷ GARIOA was similar to the Marshall Plan, however, the funds were designated for use in occupied territories only.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*, 26-30.

⁶³⁹ Interview with Shizuko Obermiller, June 29, 2000. My mother had a love-hate relationship with this system as every morning the speaker’s blare indicated another day of hard work in the sugar cane fields. At the same time, AKAR’s programming was comforting in that it brought the world to her remote village.

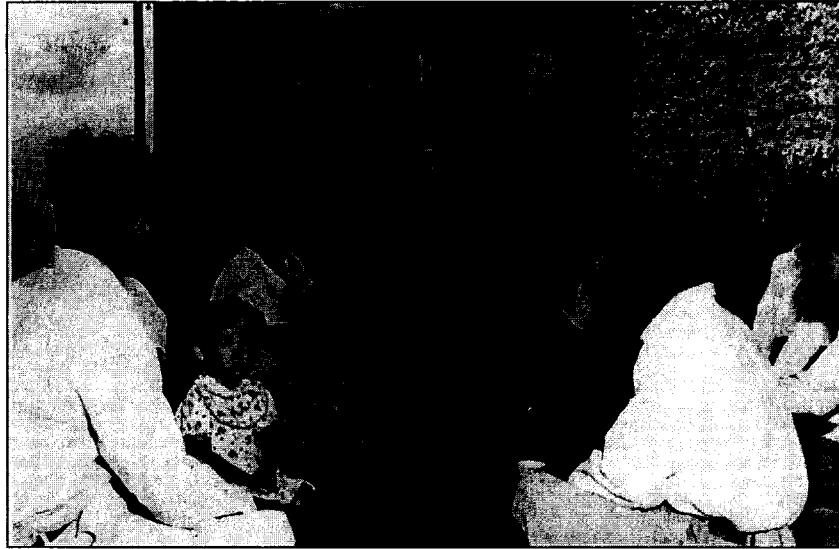


Figure 48 Residents of an Okinawan village listen to the radio provided by GARIO funds.

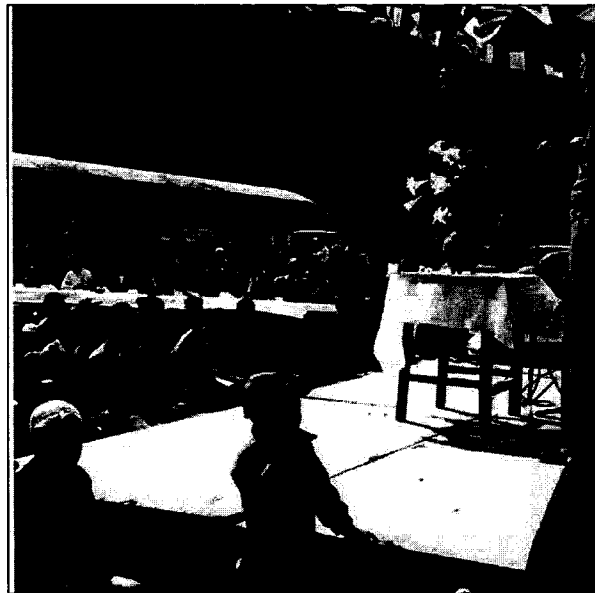


Figure 49 US officials hold a radio presentation ceremony at Sedake in Kushi Village.

She also recalled how the villagers enjoyed listening to traditional Ryukyuan music, though it sometimes caused problems as the Ryukyuan men would stop working in order to dance the Kariyushi, a famous Ryukyuan commoner dance!

To reach Okinawan elite, CI&E established a direct-mail program, sending them parcels containing Japanese magazines, copies of the *Ryukyu Kôhô*, leaflets and pamphlets. Since SCAP maintained strict censorship over the Japanese media, CI&E found appropriate reading material from Japan that complemented democratization. In the months leading up to the fall general elections, CI&E mailed over 4,500 of these information packets to select Ryukyans.⁶⁴⁰

1950 General Elections

Although the people and candidates only had sixty-nine days to prepare for the historic election for the guntô governors, 88.8% of the people turned out to vote. For American officials, the 88.8% turnout was deemed a tremendous success because historically the US has traditionally equated high turnout with a healthy and successful democracy. The CI&E's massive media and information campaign certainly played a factor in the high turnout, but we should not forget that since 1945, Okinawans had patiently waited for American promises of greater democracy to be actualized. James Tull concluded that the high turnout was not primarily the result of the program of political indoctrination, but "largely a reflection of a well disciplined social organization (Okinawan society)."⁶⁴¹ At this level, Sheetz's goal of regaining popular confidence seemed to have succeeded. The results, however, were not entirely what USCAR had anticipated.

To no one's surprise, Matsuoka Seiho became the first to submit his candidacy for governor. Matsuoka, who had lived in the US for eighteen years and had obtained an engineering degree from Marysville College, had gained political experience when he headed the OCA's Department of Engineering. Due to his fluency in English, Matsuoka

⁶⁴⁰ Tull, "The Ryukyu Islands, Japan's Oldest Colony," 109.

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 109-110.

often translated for MG officials and this gave him extra access to US officials, not to mention an additional sense of self-importance. Matsuoka was quick to remind other Okinawans that he knew the American mind and ways better than any other Okinawan. Because of his deep roots in the US and the fact he called for greater cooperation with US military authorities, he enjoyed the tacit support of the US. Moreover, Matsuoka felt he would be the perfect governor to “further American democracy in Okinawa.”⁶⁴² He harbored no doubts that greater democratization could come only under US tutelage as he felt the indigenous institutions were not sufficiently developed for full-fledged independence. Given time and US benevolence and tutelage, Matsuoka foresaw independence for the Ryukyus

In early summer, when Matsuoka began to hint loudly that he intended to run, most observers felt he was a shoo-in because of his eighteen years experience in the US. Another factor, and one Matsuoka stressed, was that he represented a new generation of reformers who had not been subjected to Japan’s prewar assimilation program. Matsuoka strongly implied that Okinawan politicians who had come of age in the prewar era of militarism were simply incapable of understanding democracy, and even less, how American style democracy functioned.⁶⁴³ When Matsuoka officially declared his intentions, his posters conveyed the message of a new direction.

⁶⁴² Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, “Popular Elections in Okinawa Guntô,” September 1950. Freimuth Files

⁶⁴³ Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, “Popular Elections in Okinawa Guntô,” September 1950. Freimuth Files

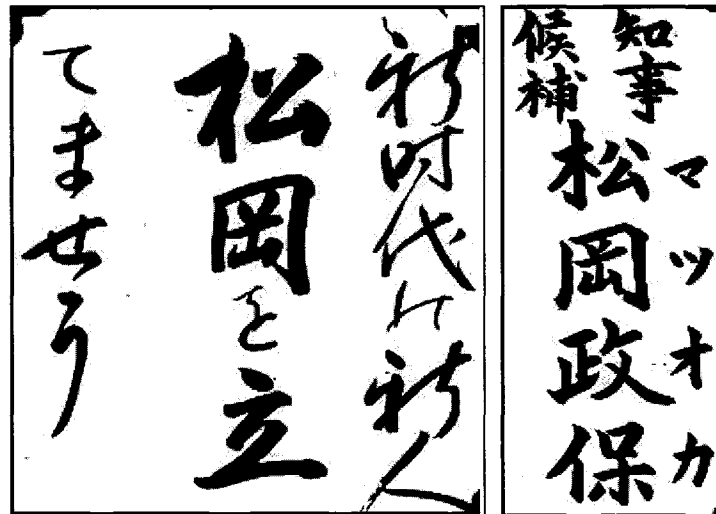


Figure 50 Two Matsuoka election campaign posters. The left image shows how he represents a fresh direction: “Matsuoka—A New Man Among New Men Whom We Support,” an implicit criticism of the “old guard.” The poster on the right announces Candidate for Governor: Matsuoka.”

Other elite Okinawans who had served with Matsuoka in the now defunct Okinawan Advisory Council, tried to persuade the former governor, Shikiya Koshien to run against Matsuoka because they did not like Matsuoka.⁶⁴⁴ They also opposed Matsuoka because they felt he was too cozy with the American officials and Matsuoka’s Americanized personality rubbed them the wrong way. Shikiya, however, bitter over Senaga’s and Nakasone’s criticisms during the 1948-49 protests, had no desire to run for political office. They then turned to Taira Tatsuo.

Taira fit the profile that Matsuoka had depicted as the “old guard,” the prewar elite that had embraced assimilation. This group mostly consisted of prewar educators, though some, like Taira, had held positions in the prewar prefectural bureaucracy. Consequently, they represented the most assimilated portion of prewar Okinawan society,

⁶⁴⁴ These were: Higa Shuei, Chief of the Secretariat, Toma Jugo, Director of Government and Legal, Tobaru Mota, former Chief of Water Transportation, Yamashiro Atsuo, Director of Social Affairs Department, and Taira Tatsuo, prewar head of the Agricultural Department.

identifying themselves as Japanese while tending, for the most part, to be socially and politically conservative. Prior to the Battle of Okinawa, they would have agreed with Ota Chofu's famous urging that "Okinawans need to sneeze in a manner so that they are no different from how the Japanese sneeze."⁶⁴⁵

In the prewar period, cultural assimilation had been a focal point of public school education, and teachers, such as Higa Shuei and Toma Jugo, who endorsed Taira had pushed assimilation upon their students. For example, during the late 1930s and early 1940s, Okinawan teachers introduced the nefarious social practice of *hōgen fuda* (dialect pendant). *Hōgen fuda* shamed Okinawans students caught speaking the traditional Okinawan dialect by forcing the offending party to wear the *fuda*, a special pendant, around their neck when they were caught speaking their local language. A student would have to wear the *fuda* until he caught another student speaking "Okinawan" instead of standard Japanese. Many Okinawans reported that this practice hastened the process of assimilation in the 1930s. In fact, one remembered that while most students spoke in their native tongue at home, at school there was tremendous social and peer pressure to be Japanese. Students, especially those from regions that were more rural and who still spoke primarily in the local language, were often chastised by the phrase, "don't be so Ryukyuan".

⁶⁴⁵ Many postwar Okinawans scholars have criticized many of the prewar intellectuals as too accommodating toward *dōka*, such as Ôta Chofu. Yet more recently, Hiyane Teruo, in *Gindai Okinawa no Seishin Shi*, argues Ôta has been misunderstood. Ôta, according to Hiyane, did encourage for assimilation, but more as a strategy to preserve what was uniquely Okinawan. In fact, Ôta believed, in the same vein as Yanagita Kunio, that Okinawa was the original depository of traditional Japanese culture. One of the interesting aspects of Ôta is that he remained in Okinawa, heading up the Ryukyu Shinpō, when his immense talents could have led to a successful career in Japan, but he was committed to raising the standards in Okinawa. For Hiyane, this distinguishes Ôta from other Okinawan intellectuals who left and never returned. Thus, Hiyane holds much respect for Okinawan intellectuals like Jahana Noboru, Iha Fuyu and Ôta who returned to their homeland in order to strengthen it so that it would not be completely subsumed by Japan.

Despite the contrasting background of the two candidates, their platforms were remarkably similar. Both platforms stressed economic recovery, a return to prewar patterns of emigration to relieve population pressures, improvement in the efficiency of government and education, and last, greater opportunities for women. Both candidates called for a unified Ryukyu government, arguing the guntô federalism was unnatural and against the people's expectations. With similar platforms, the people seemingly could elect either candidate. But it was well understood that Matsuoka enjoyed the tacit support of US officials, who presumably would give greater assistance to Matsuoka's economic plan. In addition, Matsuoka played up his American engineering background and experience as Director of Public Works, suggesting that this experience, coupled with his close association with US officials, would lead to quicker economic recovery than what Taira could achieve.⁶⁴⁶

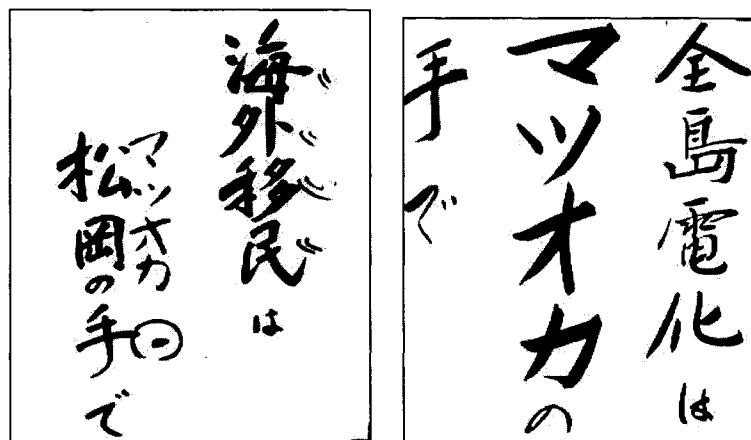


Figure 51 Campaign posters promising economic recovery. The poster on the left states "Matsuoka can solve the emigration problem." The right poster states "Matsuoka can bring about electrification for the entire Ryukyu Islands."

⁶⁴⁶ Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Guntô," September 1950. Freimuth Files

Neither candidate even hinted at reversion to Japan, while both proclaimed the inauguration of a new era. Matsuoka, in his inaugural speech, noted the historical moment was at hand: “the forthcoming gubernatorial election marks a crossroads for Okinawa” especially because the people remember the past where “a tyrannical government is fiercer than a tiger.” Matsuoka’s creed of “together with the people,” coupled with his economic plans, would produce a new Okinawa for the people.⁶⁴⁷

Taira, in his inaugural speech, also heralded the general elections as offering “the opportunity for Okinawans to demonstrate their self-governing abilities.” The elections, Taira continued, would “fulfill the people’s desire to establish a government, economy, education, and culture for an independent and democratic Okinawa.” At this stage of the campaign, neither candidate was campaigning for reversion. Taira, like Matsuoka, reiterated democratic adages that the “government belongs to the people” and the “will of the people constituted the core of parliamentary government.” Yet, Taira ominously warned that even a parliamentary government can behave in a dictatorial fashion. He cited how prewar Japan, with a parliamentary system, became despotic under the Emperor. Then, more obliquely, Taira alluded to the “possibility in Okinawa, under military government, that a despotic government could be conducted.” If elected, Taira vowed, he would carefully guard against this happening and reaffirmed his determination to actualize the “true principles of parliamentary government.” The target of Taira’s oblique reference seemed to have been Matsuoka who as governor, he implied, might subordinate a parliamentary system to the tyranny of military government.⁶⁴⁸

The gubernatorial race drew the attention of the popular front. Even though the platforms of the two candidates were nearly identical, Senaga and Nakasone bitterly

⁶⁴⁷ Matsuoka no Okinawa Chiji Kôho Sha, August 9, 1950.

⁶⁴⁸ Taria Tetsuo Chiji Rikkôho no Goaisatsu, August 1950.

disagreed which candidate the popular front should support. Nakasone and his party, the *Okinawa Minshu Domei*, announced their support of Matsuoka. Nakasone, who had long advocated Okinawan independence, believed Matsuoka was committed to this path. Nakasone, like Matsuoka, did not trust elites, such as Taira and Shikyia, who represented the assimilation ideology in the prewar era. Nakasone, as early as August 1945, when Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's surrender, believed "the declaration would separate Okinawa from Japan...and we hoped for it." Nakasone, however, seemed disturbed that the feeling of alienation from Japan was evaporating as people were forgetting "how most people felt in those days." The Okinawans, according to Nakasone, possessed a "strong anti-Japanese feelings" as they "had been discriminated against for many decades; they were forced out of caves into the rain of bombardment during the battle; they were branded as spies and some of them were even shot by Japanese soldiers."⁶⁴⁹ The *Okinawa Shakaitô*, led by Ôgimi Chôtoku, for similar reasons as Nakasone, also came out in support of Matsuoka. Ôgimi advocated United Nations' trusteeship under US direction. Although Nakasone's and Ôgimi's respective parties did not have large popular support, their pronouncements and endorsement of Matsuoka's candidacy made Okinawa's future status a pertinent political topic.⁶⁵⁰

Senaga, however, vehemently disagreed with Nakasone's support of Matsuoka. It appears that Senaga disliked Matsuoka on a personal level and was suspicious of his close ties with the Americans, especially since Senaga had grown quite disillusioned with the possibility of greater political autonomy under US occupation. At the same time, Senaga refused to endorse Taira. Whether intended or not, Senaga's subsequent actions aided Taira's candidacy.

⁶⁴⁹ Nakasone Genwa, "Japan's Surrender and Okinawa—Okinawan Testimony (9)," *Weekly Okinawa Times*, September 24, 1968.

⁶⁵⁰ Arasaki and Moriteru, *Okinawa Sengo Shi*, 41-48.

Senaga used the *Uruma Shimpô* and the *Jinmin Bunka* to criticize Matsuoka's campaign. In *Jinmin Bunka*, Senaga personally penned an article that accused Matsuoka, as OCA's Director of Public Services, of using economic rehabilitation funds for personal use. Matsuoka, according to Senaga, abused his position and his standing with the Americans to grant favors in order to gain unfair advantage for his campaign. According to US intelligence reports, the *Uruma Shimpô* printed articles which "claimed to be reader's comments" in an attempt "to ruin Matsuoka's in the eyes of the people."⁶⁵¹

Nakasone rose to Matsuoka's defense. With Nakasone as the primary speaker, his political party held numerous rallies in support of Matsuoka. Members from Senaga's *Jinmin Tô*, however, harassed the rallies and attempted to disrupt Nakasone's speeches. Nakasone responded by writing many articles, published in the *Okinawan Times* and *Okinawa Herald*, claiming that *Jinmin Tô* was a communist organization. Nakasone's charge was the first time anyone had made this accusation publicly. His accusation could not be lightly dismissed because Nakasone claimed he was once a prewar communist and knew how communist organizations acted. Nakasone also stated he had first-hand exposure to Senaga's political philosophy while they were allies in the popular front. Nakasone's claim had serious implications as occupation ordinances made any communist organization illegal. Since late 1948, RYCOM's G-2 had scrutinized suspected communist activity and weekly intelligence reports concentrated on the actions and whereabouts of Nakasone, Senaga and their popular front. But, no action was taken.

Senaga, did not refute Nakasone's charges, but used his two publications, the *Uruma Shimpô* and the *Jinmin Bunka*, to attack Matsuoka and Nakasone as the lackies of US military government, arguing that the people's rights and livelihood would be

⁶⁵¹ Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Guntô," September 1950. Freimuth Files

subordinated to US needs if Matsuoka were elected. USCAR's analysis of the election outcome held that Senaga's campaign had effectively tilted public opinion toward Taira.⁶⁵² On the defensive, Matsuoka published a lengthy rebuttal in the *Ryukyu Shinpô* disputing Senaga's accusations. Senaga quickly responded "accusing Matsuoka of receiving protection from Military Government." Proof, according to Senaga, was evident as US officials had prevented the Interim Ryukyus Advisory Council "from making public information on the use of rehabilitation funds." Senaga's claim of corruption, favoritism, and cronyism seemed quite plausible to many since it was an open secret that US authorities desired a Matsuoka victory. USCAR overreacted to Senaga's charges when it amended the existing ordinances to prohibit publication of any information "concerning future plans" for economic development projects. One American official correctly noted that this act essentially legitimized all of Senaga's accusations as "it appear[ed] that Military Government was taking sides in the election campaign."⁶⁵³

Just when it could not get more intense, the election campaign took an unexpected turn. Senaga's media campaign against Matsuoka appeared to have swung the momentum to Taira. Yet Senaga changed course again when he unexpectedly announced his run for governor, as candidate of the *Jimnin Tō*, on August 22. Although not common knowledge, Senaga and Taira were close friends. Both men shared a love and interest in the agrarian and rural issues, especially in resolving the crushing poverty Okinawan farmers endured. During the prewar era, Taira held several positions in the prefecture government, all relating to rural affairs. Taira, who headed the Ryukyuan Food and Agricultural Organization during the 1940s, and after the war took the same position in

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ Ibid.

the renamed Okinawa Agricultural Association. Taira's tireless efforts to improve farmer's livelihoods had earned Senaga's respect. Senaga, already bitter about Nakasone's defection, was disturbed by the fact that Taira's campaign was being orchestrated by what Senaga called the "Four Conservatives" (Higa Shuei, Chief of the Secretariate, Toma Jugo, Director of Government and Legal, Tobaru Mota, former Chief of Water Transportation, and Yamashiro Atsuo) of the OCA. Since the formation of the *Jinmintô*, Senaga had consistently called for a fight against "all feudalistic conservatism and reactionaries," hence his opposition to the "Four Conservatives" reflected continuity in his beliefs. At the same time, it was ironic that Senaga's dislike of the "Four Conservatives" echoed Matsuoka's criticisms.⁶⁵⁴ In the end, Senaga, who equally detested those associated with prewar militarism, could not bring himself to support his friend Taira. Senaga, as a principled man, likely felt he had to enter the race, even though he stood little chance given the elections were only a few weeks away.

Not surprisingly, the *Uruma Shimpô* immediately announced its support of Senaga. Senaga's platform, at a basic level, echoed the other two platform's emphasis on economic recovery in calling for higher wages for educators and greater democracy. Yet Senaga's platform of economic rehabilitation uniquely reflected his political philosophy. Senaga called for the formation and legalization of labor unions, increased wages for low ranked government officials, state support for farming and fishing mutual aid associations, and direct aid for small businesses. Senaga made it clear that there could be no political democracy unless fundamentally, the people enjoyed economic democracy.⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid. Arasaki and Moriteru, *Okinawa Sengo Shi*, 41-48.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid.

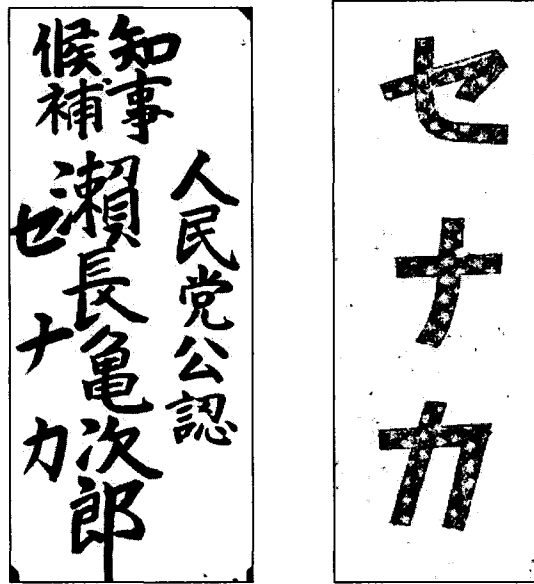


Figure 52 Two campaign posters for Senaga. On the left, "The People's Party Nominee for Governor--Senaga Kamejirô. " On the right, an austere poster of "Senaga" printed in *katakana*.

September 12 proved to be the campaign season's climax as the three candidates converged on Shuri for a joint forum. Sponsored by the Shuri Young Men's Association, the three candidates were allowed to express their views and their plans for attaining their goals. Then the Young Men's Association solicited questions from the 15,000-member audience and posed them to the candidates. The large audience reflected the deep interest generated in the election and constituted the largest political gathering in Okinawan history.

Just a few days later, on September 17, the people voted for their governor. Observers expected a close race, with Matsuoka given the slight edge, mostly because Senaga's late entry might take votes away from Taira. The electorate, who turned out in large numbers despite the fact this was the third election in September, gave Taira a large victory as he garnered 158,522 votes. Matsuoka came in a distant and disappointing

second with only 69,595 votes. Senaga, as expected, finished last, receiving only 14,081 votes.⁶⁵⁶



Figure 53 Even rain did not keep women from voting in large numbers at the Women's Association building.



Figure 54 An elderly man walking in front of Matsuoka campaign poster, seemingly pleased as he exits the polling station.

⁶⁵⁶ Arasaki and Moriteru, *Okinawa Sengo Shi*, 41-48. Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Guntô," September 1950. Freimuth Files. In addition to the election for the governor, separate elections were held for mayors and local assembly positions.

Taira's large margin of victory surprised many considering Matsuoka outspent Taira nearly two to one. The following figures show the disparity in campaign expenditures:⁶⁵⁷

Table 5 1950 Election campaign expenditures for Okinawa Guntô governor.

Candidate	Campaign Donations Received	Campaign Expenditures
Matsuoka Seihô	¥1,074,722	¥1,071,697
Taira Tatsuo	¥661,410	¥661,400
Senaga Kamejirô	¥99,842	¥57,880

Taira, however, compensated by campaigning harder than Matsuoka. Taira delivered ninety-one speeches, "covering all but five towns in Okinawa proper" in only six weeks. Matsuoka delivered nearly as many speeches, eighty-two, yet he concentrated his speeches in more urban centers, neglecting the rural electorate. Matsuoka only campaigned in thirty-nine towns, which translated into no campaigning in six major areas of Okinawa. Senaga, how started the race late and with limited funds, still managed to give thirty-nine speeches which covered twenty-eight districts in Okinawa proper.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁷ US officials had capped campaign expenditures at ¥1,394,490. Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Guntô," September 1950. Freimuth Files

⁶⁵⁸ Arasaki and Moriteru, *Okinawa Sengo Shi*, 41-48. Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Guntô," September 1950. Freimuth Files



Figure 55 A polling station at school in Naha, the capital city of Okinawa.



Figure 56 Okinawan voters wait for the posting of election returns in Naha

Other factors contributed to Taira's victory. Senaga's criticisms of Matsuoka likely swayed many voters away. Matsuoka's closeness to the Americans, which originally many thought would be an advantage, appears to have become a liability. As noted above, US officials' refusal to release documents relating to Senaga's charge that Matsuoka misappropriated funds hurt Matsuoka's credibility. Probably more importantly, as evident by the 1948-49 popular protests, the occupation was, predictably, generating considerable friction and Matsuoka's close association with the Americans buttressed Taira's claim that a Matsuoka victory would result in an autocratic government. Probably the most decisive factor, however, was Taira's deep rural connections. With the majority of the population still living in rural regions and employed in farming, Taira was a familiar figure with a long record of trying to improve the people's livelihood. Taira, as head of the Ryukyu Agricultural Association, had developed an extensive social network in the rural regions, one that became invaluable in getting out the vote. And despite Matsuoka's and Senaga's claims that Taira's candidacy was being run by the "Four Conservatives," apparently more people felt comfortable with paternalism than with Matsuoka's vision of American style democracy. Taira did not garner the endorsement of any political party, whereas Nakasone's *Okinawa Minshu Domei* and Ogimi's *Shakai To* had endorsed Matsuoka. Finally, Nakasone, Ogimi, and Matsuoka spoke in terms of eventual independence for Okinawa. Taira, however, was an independent who had extensive experience with Japan's prewar apparatus and a proven record, which appeared the safer choice.



Figure 57 Taira, Matsuoka, and Senaga voting (left to right) in the 1950 election for Okinawa Guntô Governor.

Shortly after the gubernatorial elections, the people once again turned out in high numbers, eighty-six percent in the Okinawa Guntô Assembly elections. As in the governor race, those candidates that had party affiliations generally lost, while independents were the major winners. The other critical factor, the size of the candidate's hometown, decided nearly every race. For example, Kakazu Yoshiko, the only woman elected to the Assembly, won her hometown of Kamimotobu, "but did poorly in other villages of the district, which had larger populations." Nevertheless, her victory in Kamimotobu allowed Kakazu to squeak out a victory. Another salient factor was social standing. "Nine of the assembly winners [were] former mayors, seven [were] former teachers, two were doctors, three were members of the Okinawa Prefectural [prewar] Assembly and of the Okinawa Advisory Assembly, and four were members of the Okinawa Provisional Assembly, established in 1949." Edward Freimuth, who carefully observed the elections, noted that "the candidates in all these elections came before the voters as individuals in their own rights, and ran on their past activities in a community, rather than as members of a political party or group."⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁹ Government and Legal Division-Okinawa Military Government Team, "Popular Elections in Okinawa Guntô," September 1950. Freimuth Files

Nakasone and his party, both of which had campaigned vigorously for Matsuoka, were devastated by Matsuoka's defeat. All five of Nakasone's party's candidates for Guntô Assembly lost, including Nakasone who was expected to win handily in his home town of Shuri. Senaga's *Jinmin Tô* hardly fared any better. The *Jinmin Tô* ran five candidates and all were defeated except for one notable victory. Nakazato Seikichi, who edited the *Jinmin Bunka* (Popular Culture) and authored many stinging criticisms of the OCA, Shikiya, and Matsuoka, ran for Guntô Assembly seat that represented Naha. MG officials, however, did not expect Nakazato to win based on his failed run for Naha mayor in 1949. In the mayor election, Nakazato only managed 1,385 votes, yet the same area "gave him 4,754 Guntô Assembly votes, an increase of 3,369 voters in the same area in less than year's time." Americans officials were especially surprised by Nakazato's victory "despite the closing of the Popular Culture (*Jinmin Bunka*) Magazine by Military Government only eleven days before the Assembly election." What MG officials failed to understand, was that the people may have elected Nakazato in part because MG had closed down a popular magazine, but also because censorship flew in the face of democratic practice. MG's heavy-handed actions toward the *Jinmin Bunka*, and the subsequent reaction of the people presaged the infamous mayoral elections of 1956.⁶⁶⁰

Thus, by the end of 1950, Sheetz's "just rule" and the democratic reforms appeared to have dampened down the island-wide discontentment prevalent throughout 1948-49. The high turn out for the general election helped to legitimize American rhetoric that the US was committed to democratizing Okinawa and at the same time could be interpreted as a vote of confidence in the occupation itself. On the other hand, the

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid. In the 1956 elections for Naha's mayor, Senaga Kamejiro was elected. USCAR tried several back-handed attempts to remove him from office, but failed. In fact, USCAR called for new elections that only increased the number of votes casted for Senaga and more importantly, gave him majority control of the Naha Assembly. USCAR finally removed Senaga from office unilaterally, which drew international criticism.

experiment in democracy produced unintended consequences as Okinawans overwhelmingly rejected the “American” candidate, Matsuoka. Although the US hoped for a Matsuoka victory, they could not have been too disappointed in Taira’s victory as his platform indicated support for Okinawan autonomy in some fashion. An even more positive outcome was Senaga’s distant third place, an indication that Senaga may not have as much popular support as initially feared. American officials also had another reason to celebrate. CI&E’s massive “information” campaign seemed to obtain the desired results. Senaga’s and Nakasone’s popular front was destroyed and both parties suffered severe setbacks in the elections. Last, the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 led to even more economic reconstruction projects and jobs for Okinawans. With economic activity on the upswing and successful implementation of island elections, Washington had reason to believe that its future in Okinawa was secure.

The Aftermath of the 1950 General Elections and the Trojan Horse

The American confidence that Taira, who had run as an independent, would work cooperatively with MG was soon shaken. At the end of October, Taira announced the formation of a new political party called the Okinawa Socialist Masses Party (OSMP-*Okinawa Shakai Taishûtô*). The vast majority in the Gunto Assembly, who ran as independents rushed to join the OSMP. The OSMP now controlled fifteen of the twenty Guntô legislators and a majority of government and municipal officials announced their affiliation with this party.⁶⁶¹ Hence, in a blink of an eye, “independent” Taira’s party possessed an absolute majority in the Gunto Assembly and control over both local governments and the Guntô bureaucracy. The OSMP also garnered an important

⁶⁶¹ Mikio Higa, *Politics and Parties in Postwar Okinawa*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1963), 29-30.

defection from Senaga's *Jinmintô* when one of its founders, Kaneshi Saichi, left to become the OSMP's secretary-general. The OSMP also wasted little time in establishing their political agenda as their platform made it unequivocally clear "the party will support the plan of returning the islands to Japan."⁶⁶²

The formation of the OSMP and its reversion platform caught US authorities off guard, though if they had analyzed Taira's campaign speeches carefully, they would have realized Taira's true position. Throughout the campaign, Taira criticized the *Shakaitô* support for trusteeship, the *Minshu Dômei*'s call for independence, and the *Jinmintô*'s call for the people's self-government. Throughout the campaign Taira never offered an explicit alternative although by deduction, one could "see" his position clearly.⁶⁶³ Even more disconcerting OSMP's control of both the executive and legislative branches, coupled with their reversion platform, legitimized reversion. Although no proof has been uncovered, OSMP's quick formation after Taira's landslide victory and the party's support for reversion strongly suggests that Taira, along with the "Four Conservatives" had essentially established a "Trojan Horse" campaign. Uncertain whether an open call for reversion would get him or other independents elected and of how US authorities would react to a reversion platform, they remained silent until after the outcome of the elections. Knowing the occupation authorities had spent considerable political capital in highlighting American support for greater Ryukyuan democracy, announcing reversion after the election would make it difficult for the US to challenge his right to govern.

The political landscape changed in other notable ways as well. Despite his massive defeat, Matsuoka, who had run as independent, responded quickly to the election's outcome. With U.S. tacit encouragement, on October 28, Matsuoka formed the

⁶⁶² Okinawa Shakai Taishû to Hensan Rinkai, *Okinawa Shakai Taishûtô Shi*, (Okinawa: *Okinawa Shakai Taishûtô*, 1981), 4-20.

⁶⁶³ Taira Tatsuo, *Taira Tatsuo Kaisôroku-Sengo Sekai Rimenshi*, (Okinawa: Nanpô Sha, 1963), 151-160.

Republic Party (*Kyôwatô*), which also absorbed the remnants of Nakasone's political party, the *Minshu Dômei*. To no one's surprise, the *Kyôwatô* platform opposed reversion and called for Okinawan independence under trusteeship. At the *Kyôwatô* inaugural rally, Matsuoka asserted "the Ryukyu Islands belong to the Ryukyuan people." And in a shot against Taira, the "Four Conservatives," and the OSMP, he pledged *Kyôwatô* would "battle the hubris and feudalistic mindset prevalent in the bureaucratic dictatorship" because this dictatorship "stood in the way of Ryukyuan democracy and independence."⁶⁶⁴

Senaga and the *Jinmintô* seemed uncertain over its future direction. The poor showing by Senaga and the *Jinmintô* was enough of a setback, but MG's closure of the *Jinmin Bunka* and the defection of Kaneshi Saichi to the OSMP hit the party hard. Internal dissent was evident in indecision over whether Senaga and the *Jinmintô* would support reversion or something closer to Matsuoka's position. The *Uruma Shinpô* editorials in late 1950 and early 1951, still under Senaga's control, cautioned the public to take a pragmatic view in deciding what was best for the islands. Furthermore, while the emotional appeal of reversion was understandable, the people had to assess if emotions or economic recovery were more important. If economic recovery was paramount, Okinawa would still need U.S. assistance as Japan was in no condition to aid in the island's recovery. Furthermore, the paper rhetorically asked why Japan would help Okinawa now when it had treated the islands no different than a colony. The editorials concluded that the political and economic future, even under U.S. military occupation, would progress further under American, rather than Japanese control. The editorials also criticized reversion in a backhanded manner by attacking how the OSMP ran the new Guntô government. The editorials warned that the Guntô government was in the hands of

⁶⁶⁴ Ryukyu Seifu Bunkyo Kyôiku, ed., *Rekishî Shiryô*, Vol. II, (Okinawa: Ryukyu Seifu, 1956), 214-215.

prewar bureaucrats who were conservative, reactionary, and self-serving.⁶⁶⁵ The *Uruma Shimpô* editorial attacks on the OSMP reflected some level of ambivalence among Senaga's camp as to what strategy to pursue.

Despite the profound philosophical differences among the political parties, they unanimously agreed on one agenda: the four Guntô governments needed to be combined into a unified central government. Throughout October and November, they argued that the American idea of four separate governments was an unnatural division and, moreover, made attainment of common goals more difficult. Already reeling from Taira's and his party's endorsement of reversion, the unity behind the call for political centralization, some historians have argued, forced the U.S. to alter the Guntô framework.⁶⁶⁶ SCAP responded quickly to the Okinawan calls for political consolidation in a new directive issued on December 5, 1950. One of these directives ordered "at the earliest practicable date provision will be made for the establishment of a central government" in Okinawa. This unexpected announcement pleased the political parties and fostered the impression the US was finally responsive to Okinawan demands.⁶⁶⁷

The argument that SCAP's December 5 directives resulted from Okinawan popular demands ignores that other factors that appeared to have motivated SCAP to issue the new directive. The Korean War pushed the U.S. to pursue a peace treaty with Japan. In September, while general elections were pending in Okinawa, President Truman ordered the State Department to begin the peace treaty process. Although the

⁶⁶⁵ A composite analysis of *Uruma Shimpô* editorials, December 1950-February 1951. Also, see Ikema Toshihide, ed., *Ryukyu Kizokuron*, (Naha, 1951).

⁶⁶⁶ Higa Mikio argues this point in Mikio Higa, *Politics and Parties in Postwar Okinawa*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1963), 30.

⁶⁶⁷ Fisch, *Military Government*, 119.

JCS disagreed with the early signing of a peace treaty, they made it clear that any treaty would require terms that would “secure to the United States exclusive strategic control of the Ryukyu Islands south of latitude 29° north....” By September 11, representatives from the State and Defense departments hammered out a memorandum consisting of seven principles that would guide the peace treaty. One of the seven principles reflected the JCS’s admonishments that “(Japan would) agree to U.N. trusteeship, with the U.S. as administrating authority, of the Ryukyu and Bonin Islands.”⁶⁶⁸ With the two departments in basic agreement, President Truman held a press conference on September 14. At the start of the press conference, Truman read a prepared statement in which he directed the “Department of State to initiate informal discussions” with the primary members of the Far Eastern Commission (FEC) in developing a peace treaty with Japan. Truman’s peace treaty announcement caught many by surprise, as reflected in the ensuing question and answer session. Many of the questions noted that the peace treaty with Japan was proceeding forward despite Soviet objections and the fact the U.S. had yet to indicate any time line for a peace treaty with Germany. Truman even admitted that “we have been right up to the signing of the Austrian peace treaty for the last three years, and haven’t signed it yet.” Equally significant, Truman made no mention of the seven principles or any hint of the plan to separate Okinawa from Japan.⁶⁶⁹

The timing of Truman’s September 14 announcement was driven by the crisis in Korea. Staving off defeat in Korea hinged on the success of MacArthur’s Inchon invasion launched the following day, September 15. The failure of MacArthur’s gambit likely meant the complete loss of Korea. Exclusive control of Okinawa was paramount and legal recognition by both Japan and the international community was highly

⁶⁶⁸ As quoted in Eldridge, *The Origins of the Bilateral Okinawa Problem*, 284-285.

⁶⁶⁹ President Truman’s News Conference, September 14, 1950. Truman Presidential Museum & Library. <http://trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/viewpapers.php?pid+879>. Accessed on September 11, 2005.

desirable. In addition, news of the invasion would quickly eclipse the previous day's announcement of an early peace treaty, allowing the State Department to float the seven principles among U.S. allies with little press attention. State Department officials were particularly anxious as they feared criticism of the separation of Okinawa from Japan as an instance of U.S. territorial aggrandizement. The State Department also worried that reaction in Japan could either jeopardize the treaty process or become a long-term irritant in U.S.-Japan relations.⁶⁷⁰

Truman's September 14 announcement came three days before the upcoming Okinawan governor election on September 17. In addition, the election became intertwined with the decision to pursue an early peace treaty with Japan. At one level, simply holding the first ever public election for governor allowed the U.S. to bolster its legitimacy in separating Okinawa from Japan as they could point to Okinawa as a "Showcase for Democracy" in Asia. Moreover, a Matsuoka victory, which Washington favored, would further preempt Japanese claims to sovereignty since Matsuoka's platform envisioned Okinawan independence. A Matsuoka victory would also minimize Soviet criticism as the U.S. could claim that the Okinawan plebiscite clearly indicated the people's wishes for some degree of political autonomy, a claim made more persuasive by the Soviet failure to conduct popular elections in the regions it controlled.⁶⁷¹

Given this context, one can better understand why Taira's formation of a new political party (OSMP) in October and the OSMP's platform for reversion radically altered the political landscape and led to great consternation among U.S. officials. Taira's and the OSMP call for reversion in October came at the absolute worst time as it would make it more difficult for the U.S. to separate Okinawa from Japan. With the

⁶⁷⁰ Robert Fearey to the Deputy Director of the Office of the Northeast Asian Affairs, State Department, November 14, 1950. FURS, 1950, Vol. 6, 1347.

⁶⁷¹ Miyazato Seigen, *Amerika no Okinawa Seisaku*, (Naha: Nirai Sha, 1986), 94-104.

executive and legislative branches under OSMP control, and the fact that the majority of the government bureaucracy joined the OSMP, the U.S. had lost control of a political situation they had initially believed would complement U.S. military administration. Hence, when the various political parties called for a centralized government, it offered an opportunity for the U.S. to change the political structure and climate to its favor.

State Department officials scrambled throughout the remaining months of 1950 to obtain a consensus or at least tacit approval of their draft for a peace treaty with Japan. By January, 1951, American officials had obtained the support of its key allies to announce, in private, the specifics of the treaty to the Japanese government. In essence, the seven principles initially conceived back in September, 1950, remained largely intact, including the separation of Okinawa and the Bonin islands from Japan. Moreover, in conveying the seven principles, the State Department made it clear to Prime Minister Yoshida that the separation of Okinawa and the Bonins was not negotiable. Nevertheless, Prime Minister Yoshida directed his aide to ask the U.S. to reconsider “transfer title to the Ryukyus and Bonins from Japan.” At the same time, Yoshida’s aide stated unequivocally “Japan is prepared to give the U.S. all required military rights there for as long as necessary....” The aide, though, warned that “the Japanese people will not understand why their peacefully acquired islands,” populated...by people as Japanese as any other, should be taken from them.” If the U.S. persisted in this demand, “such action would be a continual source of bitterness....”⁶⁷²

Japan’s opposition, however, failed to deter the U.S. from publicly announcing the next month that the proposed peace treaty would sever Okinawa from Japan. The announcement was not necessarily a surprise, but it still came as shock to the Okinawan political leaders and the people. For months, rumors had swirled as to the future

⁶⁷² Robert Fearey, Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, to John Dulles, Secretary of State, January 25, 1951. *FRUS*, 1951, Vol. 6, 810-11. Miyazato, *Amerika no Okinawa Seisaku*, 94-104

disposition of the islands. Most believed the U.S. would maintain a protracted and preponderant military presence on Okinawa given the “hotness” of the Cold War in Korea. At the same time many Okinawans assumed that continuation of a US military presence was not incompatible with the restoration of Japanese suzerainty. Taira and Senaga believed the pending treaty would not only maintain the US military on Okinawa, but would formally end Japan’s claims to sovereignty. Operating under this premise, Okinawans swiftly reacted.

Moving Beyond the Rhetoric of Reversion: The Origins of
the Reversion Movement

Okinawan political parties hastily convened a meeting on February 23, 1951 to discuss the American plan. Although some hoped for consensus on a joint statement, the differences among the parties in terms of the future status of Okinawa bitterly divided them. Both Taira’s OSMP and Senaga’s OPP called for immediate reversion, though each offered different rationales for reversion. Taira, and most in the OSMP, argued that reversion was only natural, since, after all, the Okinawans were Japanese. Senaga, however, offered a more nuanced perspective. First, while America claimed to be a democracy, Senaga pointed out the U.S. had resisted Asian nationalist movements, such as in Vietnam, where the US ignored Ho Chi Minh’s calls for Vietnamese independence and instead, supported French control of Indochina. Such hypocrisy, Senaga argued belied US democracy rhetoric. Second, Senaga believed that a military occupation was incompatible with greater Okinawan sovereignty or democracy. Although cognizant of how Okinawa Prefecture had fared under prewar Japanese rule, Senaga believed that Japan’s new “peace” constitution would offer the people greater democracy. Although the following OPP political platform was written in 1956, it nevertheless captures their sentiments in 1951 in their support for reversion. The platform called for the party to “create a people’s democratic united front for reversion....with labor, farmers and

fisherman at its core, and this core will become the vanguard in the struggle against U.S. military occupation, therefore, will join their comrades in the fatherland who are also struggling to build an autonomous, peaceful and democratic Japan.”⁶⁷³ Equally significant, especially from the perspective of contemporary Okinawa, neither the OSMP nor the OPP were motivated by an anti-war or pacifist sentiment. The Socialist Party and the Republican parties, in contrast, called for U.S. trusteeship and independence respectively.⁶⁷⁴

Taira, facing such divergent views among the political parties, forced the issue the following month. On March 18, the OSMP and the OPP jointly announced that the two parties had agreed to a resolution calling for Okinawa’s return to Japan. The next day, using the OSMP majority in the Okinawa Guntô legislature, Taira forced a vote on reversion. Despite spirited opposition from Matsuoka’s Republican Party, the reversion resolution passed easily, fifteen votes to three.⁶⁷⁵ The resolution, however, went beyond the call for reversion. Directly challenging American authority, the resolution demanded the right to display the Japanese flag, immediate implementation of Japanese law, and unimpeded travel between Okinawa and Japan.

Senaga, always conscious of the need for mass participation and mass struggle to legitimize political action, urged Taira to begin a grassroots campaign for reversion. Although many historians have credited Taira, Senaga played the key role in the reversion grass roots organization as he utilized his experience in organizing and leading mass movements made him the principal force.⁶⁷⁶ The organization, the Committee for

⁶⁷³ *Okinawa Nenkan* 1956, (Naha: Okinawa Times Sha, 1970), 320.

⁶⁷⁴ Moriteru and Arasaki, *Okinawa Sengo Shi*, 51.

⁶⁷⁵ Okinawa Guntô Seifu, *Okinawa Guntô Kôhô*, March, 1951.

⁶⁷⁶ The Central Committee of the OPP decided on April 15 to begin efforts to create a grassroots organization in support of reversion.

Okinawan Reversion, was an umbrella organization consisting of the OSMP, the OPP, the Okinawa Federal Women's Association, the Okinawa Federal Youth Association, and informally, the Okinawa Federation of Teachers.⁶⁷⁷ The members of the Committee for Okinawan Reversion, in many respects, comprised an ideologically diverse group. Derivatives from prewar patriotic organizations, both the Women's and Youth's Associations were motivated by Japanese nationalism, thus making them natural allies of the OSMP. In addition, the Okinawa Federation of Teachers quietly supported and directed students in the Youth Association. The OPP, disdainful of the nationalistic atavism of the OSMP, nevertheless participated because they saw little hope in advancing their leftist platform as long the U.S. military occupied the islands.

The Committee for Okinawa Reversion began the petition drive in May, 1951. Spearheaded by the Okinawa Youth Association, with the Okinawa Federation of Teachers working quietly in the background, the umbrella organization fanned out throughout the islands. By August 1951, they had obtained nearly 200,000 signatures, which represented roughly 72% of Okinawa Guntô's franchised voters. Thus, from Taira's victory in September, 1950, to the formation of the umbrella organization the following April, the reversion movement had gone from nothing to a mass movement in only six months. The subsequent petition drive only underscored both the nationalistic fervor of the movement, as well as deep discontentment with the continuing US military occupation.

Kaneshi Saichi, chair of the reversion organization, forwarded the assembled petitions (*fukki shomei undo*) and a written statement to the respective Japanese and

⁶⁷⁷ Okinawa Sokoku Fukki Kyôgikai eds., *Okinawaken Sokoku Fukki Undôshi*, (Okinawa: Jiji Shuppan, 1964), 19-27. Both the Women's and Youth's Associations were derivatives of prewar patriotic associations, hence, they were natural allies with Taira and other prewar conservatives in the OSMP.

American delegations at the San Francisco Peace Conference.⁶⁷⁸ The thinking of the leadership of the petition movement can be seen in the OSMP's Declaration for Reversion, which stated

There can be no doubt that the *Ryukyuan*s are Japanese, and it is very natural that the *same race* be under the same political organization....separation of one from the other would mean a total nullification of the hard efforts of one century [assimilation] made by us Ryukyuan people, and that is too unbearable....the return of the islands is most naturally desirable.⁶⁷⁹

Thus, the leaders of the reversion petition argued that Okinawans were racially and culturally Japanese. Okinawan historian, Higa Mikio, endorses this interpretation of the reversion movement: "it was natural for the Okinawans to start a movement for reversion to Japan in 1951, [because]...it was a foregone conclusion for all Okinawans that their islands were an integral part of Japan and that they were Japanese nationals."⁶⁸⁰ Furthermore, Higa argued that Okinawans wanted reversion not simply because Okinawans were Japanese citizens. The people, Higa maintained, have always perceived themselves as Japanese because "the Ryukyuan have centuries of political and economic ties with Japan" and therefore, "they are Japanese in culture and sentiment."⁶⁸¹

In the end, the Committee for Okinawa Reversion failed in its political objective as the San Francisco Peace Treaty, in Article III, provided the US indefinite control over

⁶⁷⁸ Report made to the American Military Government on Okinawa by KANESHI Saichi, Chairman of Reversion to Japan Association, August 25, 1951. Kaneshi was also Chief Secretary of the Okinawan Socialist Mass Party (OSMP). Freimuth Papers.

⁶⁷⁹ "Declaration Concerning Reversion of the Ryukyu Islands to Japan," Okinawan Social Mass Party, march 21, 1951 (emphasis mine). A careful read of this declaration, however, reveals some ambiguity on identity. On the one hand, it asserts unequivocally that the Ryukyuan people are innately Japanese. Yet at the same time, one of the emphatic justifications for reversion comes from the century struggle *to become Japanese*. Freimuth Papers.

⁶⁸⁰ Mikio Higa, "The Okinawan Reversion Movement," in Chihiro Hosoya ed., *Okinawan Reversion*, Pittsburgh: International Studies Association, 1977, p. 3.

⁶⁸¹ Mikio Higa, *Politics and Parties in Postwar Okinawa*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1963), "Preface".

Okinawa, without any oversight from either Japan or the UN. At the same time, this mass movement for reversion demonstrated, as in 1948-49, that the Okinawan people were prepared to challenge US authority.

The approval of the Peace Treaty by the Japanese government added a measure of legitimacy to the continuation of occupation of the Ryukyus and muted charges of territorial aggrandizement. In addition, now that USCAR understood that Washington had every intention to keep unilateral control over Okinawa, it could adopt a long-term and more rational approach to civil affairs. On the other hand, Taira and the OSMP's domination of the Okinawa guntô government, and the OSMP's unconditional support for reversion were disconcerting, especially because Taira had been democratically elected in a much touted democratic process. Even more troubling, the OSMP's political dominance was enhanced by its alliance with Senaga and his People Party. Senaga's effective grass roots organizing had made its presence felt during the campaign to collect signatures for the reversion petition. In a very short period of time, Senaga had galvanized various organizations into an umbrella organization that effectively mobilized popular support for the petition. While USCAR struggled to accept Taira's democratic election, watching Senaga successfully use the democratic tactics of grassroots campaigning and petitions infuriated USCAR. Thus, just when the US had finally secured legal recognition for their continued occupation of Okinawa, Taira's sudden turn and the reversion movement jeopardized USCAR's ability to maintain what it initially believed to be de facto control.

CHAPTER EIGHT DREAMING OF “RYUKYU”

Introduction

As seen in Chapter Seven, General Sheetz’s political reforms in 1950 had at least stemmed the era of “apathy and neglect” but failed to reconcile broad sectors of Okinawan society to the prospect of indefinite US occupation. In fact, ironically, the considerable effort RYCOM made to promote popular political participation in island-wide elections, appears to have given crucial momentum to the reversion petition movement. Consequently, occupation officials realized that a multi-faceted approach was needed to counter the appeal of the reversion movement, build support for U.S. anti-communist strategy, and convince the people that a prolonged military occupation was not at odds with the popular will. This approach often took the form of “soft-diplomacy,” meaning the conduct of diplomacy through cultural, social, and economic strategies in parallel processes of Americanization and Ryukyuanization.

Strategic Ambivalence and Residual Sovereignty

Taira Tetsuo’s successful mobilization of the Okinawa Gunto system to support the reversion movement forced the U.S. to reexamine how much democracy should be given to the Ryukyuan people. On April 1, 1950 RYCOM announced the formation of a Provisional Central Government headed by an appointed Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive. Okinawans’ suspicions deepened when the appointments were made without consulting Taira or any of the political parties. Even worse, the appointments came from the ranks of the Interim Ryukyu Advisory Council who RYCOM had hand-picked.⁶⁸² The Interim Ryukyu Advisory Council had served as an extra-legal body beholden to RYCOM, which made it a de facto check on elected officials. RYCOM

⁶⁸² RYCOM created the Interim Ryukyus Advisory Council on June 1950, which replaced the Okinawa Advisory Council.

attempted to quell the clamor raised by the OSMP and OPP by pointing out that the Provisional Government possessed neither executive nor legislative powers and that it merely advised RYCOM on issues that affected the four Guntô Governments.⁶⁸³

The reversion movement's petition drive and the pending San Francisco Peace Treaty Conference deflected attention from the controversy surrounding the creation of the Provisional Central Government. It seemed clear that the U.S. intended to maintain the occupation, but uncertainty remained in what form. Rumors flew on a daily basis as some said the U.S. was going to annex the islands, establish some form of trusteeship, or allow Japan to retain sovereignty while maintaining control of the military bases. Okinawans naturally believed, one way or the other, the signing of the Peace Treaty would settle the future status of the islands. Yet, the formal signing of the Peace Treaty on September 8, 1951 and the subsequent comments made by Prime Minister Yoshida and Secretary of State Dulles placed the status of the Ryukyus in complete limbo. On the one hand, the Peace Treaty's Article III stated:

Japan will concur in any proposal of the United States to the United Nations to place under its trusteeship system, with the United States as the sole administering authority, Nansei Shoto south of 29° (north latitude including the Ryukyu Islands and the Daito Islands), Nampo Shoto south of Sofu Can (including Bonin Islands, Rosario Islands and the Volcano Islands) and Parace Vela and Marcus Island. Pending the making of such a proposal and affirmative action thereon, the United States will have the right to exercise all and any powers of administration, legislation and jurisdiction over the territory and inhabitants of these islands, including their territorial waters.

Article III, therefore, was unequivocal in conveying that the U.S. had exclusive and unilateral control over the Ryukyus. At the same time, Article III conveyed ambiguity as the issue of sovereignty remained undetermined.⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁸³ Government of the Ryukyu Islands Office of Information, *Ryukyu Yôran 1957*, (Naha: Ryukyu Seifu, 1957), 137.

⁶⁸⁴ Peace Treaty with Japan, San Francisco Peace Conference, September 5-8, 1951.

Official statements made by both Japanese and American officials not only added to the confusion over the future status of the Ryukyus, they appeared to contradict the intent of Article III. On September 5, Dulles, attempting to explain the intentions behind Article III, declared “the United States felt that the best formula would be to permit Japan to retain residual sovereignty, while making it possible for these islands to be brought into the U.N. trusteeship system, with the United States as administrating authority.” On September 7, Prime Minister Yoshida reinforced Dulles concept of residual sovereignty in his acceptance speech for the Peace Treaty, a speech largely written by U.S. officials. Although Yoshida acknowledged the U.S. had the power to place the Ryukyus under U.N. trusteeship, he “welcome[ed] in the name of the Japanese nation the statements by the American and British delegation on the residual sovereignty over the islands....” Yoshida then expressed his hope that “the administration of these islands will be put back into Japanese hands in the not distant future with the reestablishment of world security—especially the s security of Asia.” In the end, the attribution of residual sovereignty served the purpose of deflecting international criticism that Article III was a form of territorial aggrandizement, while protecting Tokyo from domestic charges that it had given away sovereign territory.⁶⁸⁵

Residual sovereignty, however, created an unintended consequence. Both Tokyo and Washington were content with the apparent contradiction between Article III and residual Japanese sovereignty, for the formula served both countries’ interests. At the same time it produced much confusion among both the Okinawans and USCAR officials. Okinawans, who hoped one way or another that the Peace Treaty would bring closure to their status, were bewildered. Edward Freimuth, a USCAR civilian employee, was the

⁶⁸⁵ As quoted in Eldridge, *The Origins of the Bilateral Okinawa Problem*, 325-327. Eldridge’s work is unsurpassed in covering the diplomacy involved around Article III and the Peace Treaty. Miyazato, *Amerika no Okinawa Seisaku*, 94-104 is also an invaluable source, especially from a Ryukyuan perspective. Also see Gabe, *Nichibei no naka no Okinawa*, 94 and Nakano and Arasaki, *Okinawa Sengo Shi*, 55-57.

political liaison between USCAR and the Okinawa Guntô government. Numerous Okinawan politicians called Freimuth asking him to explain residual sovereignty. Freimuth, who was in the dark just as much as the Okinawan people, replied “I think residual sovereignty means something like being sort of pregnant.” When his interlocutor protested that one is either pregnant or not pregnant, Freimuth replied, “yep, there lies the problem.”⁶⁸⁶ Proponents of reversion, however, took heart. Even though the US exercised complete control, as provided by Article III, residual sovereignty implied reversion at some future date. USCAR’s internal analysis recognized the problem, stating “prior to the ratification of the Treaty of Peace and during the period of occupation, it has always been anticipated that the treaty would solve many of the difficulties existing in the Ryukyus and the method employed of operating from one crisis to the next could cease. Unfortunately this has not been the case, and instead the crises presently develop[s] more frequently and with greater intensity.”⁶⁸⁷

In November 1951, with immediate reversion off the table, the four Guntô governments met to discuss the formation of a centralized government and election of a legislature and governor for the new government. Based upon the precedent established with the September 1950 general elections, the four Guntô Governors, with Governor Taira as the lead spokesperson, called for the direct election of both the legislature and governor. USCAR seemingly acquiesced to these demands when it responded a week later that the current Guntô government system would be consolidated into a new central government sometime in early 1952. This announcement, however, offered no specifics as to the form or manner consolidation would take.

⁶⁸⁶ Phone discussion with Edward Freimuth, April, 1999.

⁶⁸⁷ USCAR Government Reports, Monthly and Political Reports, April-December 1953. Freimuth Papers, Folder “Special Political and Reversion Movements.”

USCAR, on December 18, offered more details when it called for a directly elected unicameral legislature that would represent the entire Ryukyu Islands. USCAR specified March 3, 1952 as the day voters would vote for thirty-one legislators to serve two year terms. USCAR also called for the creation of a new position, the Chief Executive, to replace the current four Guntô governors. At the same time, USCAR failed to specify the Chief Executive's power, its relationship to the legislative body, and most importantly, whether it would be an elected office. Most Okinawans assumed they would elect the Chief Executive based upon the precedent established for the direct election of the Guntô governors.

USCAR was less sanguine about direct elections for the Chief Executive. Taira's public and forceful support for reversion, coupled with the petition movement, undermined the legitimacy of Article III. Some military officials in USCAR and the Pentagon, according to Edward Freimuth, contemplated removing Taira as Governor. In the end, USCAR left Taira alone since his removal would draw unwanted international and Japanese attention to an already problematic situation. Following the signing of the Peace Treaty, however, USCAR possessed greater latitude to refashion the political structure according to its needs.⁶⁸⁸

In the restructuring plan, USCAR conceded election of a unicameral legislature but opposed direct elections for the governor. According to Freimuth, USCAR reasoned that the preponderant strength of the OSMP, coupled with the tacit support of Senga's OPP, would likely produce a "united effort around a single leader" for governor. Moreover, "not only could this group unite around an individual but there likewise exists the general popular cause of baiting the existing administration [USCAR] and in turn the United States *as well as waving the standard of nationalism under the guise of reversion*

⁶⁸⁸ Phone discussion with Edward Freimuth, April, 1999. Freimuth conveyed that USCAR was in the dark about the proposal for residual sovereignty.

to Japan.” USCAR also feared that another direct election would lead to a “recurrence on behalf of Ryukyuan governmental officials of ignoring and disregarding the advice and guidance which will be offered by Civil Administration [USCAR]...as Ryukyuan government functionaries viewed themselves as operating an autonomous government.” USCAR officials concluded that “with an elected executive, even under the most favorable circumstances of being pro-U.S., the question of self-government and local autonomy will continuously be raised.”⁶⁸⁹ USCAR, therefore, resolved that the popular election of the Chief Executive would be detrimental to their control of the political system. What remained was the timing of the announcement of this decision.

Strong popular support for Taira and the OSMP, coupled with the relative weakness of the pro-American Republican Party throughout the legislative campaign, clinched USCAR’s decision to keep the Chief Executive under their control. USCAR finally issued Proclamation No. 13 on February 29, 1952, which named the new centralized government the Government of the Ryukyu Islands (GRI) and proclaiming that the GRI would “exercise all powers of government” for the Ryukyus. For Okinawans, this auspicious start soon turned to disbelief, then outrage when USCAR made it clear that GRI’s powers were conditional as all GRI decisions and actions were “subject...to the proclamations, ordinances, and directives of USCAR.” Second, USCAR’s Deputy Governor, an active duty Army General and the highest ranked officer in the Ryukyus would appoint both the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive. While the Chief Executive was authorized to appoint the GRI’s officials, this power was also conditional as all appointments were subject to the Deputy Governor’s approval. GRI’s judicial power was limited as General MacArthur possessed sole authority in appointing judges to the highest court, the Court of Appeals. The Chief Executive had

⁶⁸⁹ USCAR, Government and Legal Department, “Memo for Record, Subject: Position of Chief Executive, GRI,” May 10, 1955.

the power of appointment to the lower courts, but once again, these appointments required the prior approval of the Deputy Governor. Even the enjoyment of fundamental liberties, such as “freedom of speech, assembly, petition and the press, and security from unreasonable search, seizure, and deprivation of life, liberty, and property without due process of law,” was made conditional “as far as is consistent with the public welfare.”⁶⁹⁰

As a de facto constitution, Proclamation No. 13 failed the test of democracy. First, it was written without any consultation or knowledge of the Okinawan people or their elected officials. Second, the Proclamation’s check-and-balances, which in the American Constitution were created to prevent the rise of tyrannical power, served in the structure of the GRI to limit Okinawan liberty and self-government. Third, the Proclamation reified the supreme authority of the Deputy Governor, whose power and status echoed the Emperor’s power in prewar Japan. The Deputy Governor could at any time, “veto, prohibit, or suspend the operation of any laws, ordinances, or regulations enacted by the Government of the Ryukyu Islands...” and had the power to “review, approve, remand, suspend, commute, remit, or otherwise modify or set aside any decision, judgment or sentence of any court.” The Deputy Governor could even “order the promulgation of any law, ordinance or regulation he may deem advisable; and to resume, in whole or in part, the exercise of full authority, in the Ryukyu Islands.”⁶⁹¹

USCAR added insult to injury when it announced at the same time as Proclamation No. 13, Civil Administration Ordinance No. 68, which unequivocally stated persons who were either born in the Ryukyus or had a name listed in a local family

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid. Edward Freimuth, as head of USCAR’s Government and Legal Division, strenuously fought against Proclamation No. 13 because it was not only anti-democratic, but he believed it would only serve to ignite the reversion movement even further.

registry would be designated as Ryukyuan, not Japanese.⁶⁹² Second, residual sovereignty notwithstanding, it identified Japan as a foreign country and thus, any Okinawan who wanted to travel to Japan needed a USCAR traveling document. In addition, the GRI only enjoyed jurisdiction within the islands as all foreign affairs were under the purview of USCAR. Interesting, the Ordinance did not specify the nature of the relationship between the Ryukyus and the U.S. Lastly, the Ordinance reaffirmed Proclamation No. 13's "guarantee" of basic civil liberties, and it even quoted the U.S. Constitution's "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness...." Yet, the Ordinance did not guarantee the freedom of speech or freedom of the press.⁶⁹³

The People Strike Back

USCAR's announcements electrified the people and more importantly, gave Senaga Kamejirô an opening to exploit the opportunity. Senaga embarked on a whirlwind tour of Okinawa denouncing the Americans as imperialist who intended to colonize the islands under a military dictatorship.⁶⁹⁴ US authorities, who carefully monitored all Senaga's activities, noted in their report that "Senaga, who is known locally for his anti-American attitude..." decried the veto power and administrative power maintained by the Deputy Governor over the Government of the Ryukyu Islands as being inconsistent with the ideas of democratic self-government."⁶⁹⁵ Much to the chagrin of USCAR, Senaga received the most votes of any candidate running for the GRI

⁶⁹² The ordinance deliberately used the word "Ryukyuan" instead of "Okinawan."

⁶⁹³ USCAR, Civil Administration Ordinance No. 68, "Provisions of the Government of the Ryukyu Islands," February 29, 1952.

⁶⁹⁴ Senaga, *Senaga Kamejirô Kaigoroku*, 79-81.

⁶⁹⁵ USCAR Government Reports, Monthly and Political Reports, April-December 1953. Freimuth Papers, Folder "Special Political and Reversion Movements."

legislature. Senaga's forceful critique of American colonial behavior also propelled four other People's Party candidates into the legislature. Taira's OSMP benefited from Senaga's mass campaign rallies as fourteen OSMP candidates were elected, which gave the two pro-reversion groups and majority control of the GRI legislature with nineteen out of thirty-one seats under their collection control.

Independent candidates captured the remaining seats while the Socialist Party, whose platform supported trusteeship, failed to capture a single seat.⁶⁹⁶ Another casualty of the election was the Republican Party, which supported Ryukyuan independence. USCAR believed the Republican Party would run better than its 1950 political predecessor but anger over Article III and Proclamation No. 13 made the Republican Party support for independence increasingly unpopular. In the face of surging popular support for reversion, the Republican Party decided to dissolve a few weeks before the March 3 election. USCAR, in its annual report, explained the Republican Party demise on "the unpopular platform it had been sponsoring—that of advocating Ryukyuan independence," but the same report failed to acknowledge the causal relationship between this demise and US policies.⁶⁹⁷

USCAR, failing to attain a pro-American legislature, reluctantly announced several weeks after the March 3 legislative elections that the new GRI government would take office on April 1, 1952, the seventh anniversary of the invasion of Okinawa. By choosing April 1, USCAR sent a subtle reminder that on that day, seven years ago, the US had liberated the Ryukyus from Japanese control and had subsequently supported

⁶⁹⁶ Nakano and Arasaki, *Okinawa Sengo Shi*, 56-57.

⁶⁹⁷ USCAR, *Civil Affairs Activities in the Ryukyu Islands*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 125.

greater Okinawan autonomy than prewar Japan had tolerated. The symbolic victory, however, was a pyrrhic one as Senaga prevented USCAR from using the inauguration ceremonies to showcase US commitment to democracy.

Senaga, to dramatize the resounding victory of pro-reversion parties, refused to take the oath of office during the inauguration. General Beightler, as Deputy Governor of USCAR, was at first befuddled then became outraged by Senaga's refusal but Senaga insisted that "under the Hague Convention, it was a violation of its tenets for people who remained under occupation to take an oath from the enemy." Beightler admonished Senaga by snapping, "ahhh, Mister Senaga!" but Senaga stood his ground. Beightler, wanting to avoid a public spectacle, quietly demurred and let the matter slide.⁶⁹⁸ To Edward Freimuth, who witnessed Senaga's defiant gesture, wrote the incident harbingered the future.⁶⁹⁹

⁶⁹⁸ Senaga, *Senaga Kamejirō Kaigoroku*, 79-81.

⁶⁹⁹ USCAR Government Reports, Monthly and Political Reports, April-December 1953. Freimuth Papers, Folder "Special Political and Reversion Movements." Difficulties to be later encountered in assistance and guidance to the Legislature of the new government were foreshadowed at the inauguration ceremonies of this newly elected group when the leading leftist member refused at one point to acknowledge an unofficial pledge taken by the rest of the body to perform their duties sincerely and fairly."



Figure 58 Inauguration Day for the GRI government. Senaga Kamejirô, one of the thirty-one legislatures, awaits General Beightler to give the oath of office.

USCAR struck back by appointing Higa Shûhei as Chief Executive without any consultation. At first, Higa's appointment seemed odd because Higa was one of the cofounders, along with Taira, of the OSMP. USCAR, however, knew something Taira and the OSMP did not; Higa was ready to bolt the party. Higa, who was one of the "four conservatives" that Senaga had chastised in 1950, originally supported the call for reversion but he also detested communism. Senaga's popularity and close alliance with Taira worried Higa that that the OSMP was being hijacked by Senaga's larger Marxist agenda. Higa was also pragmatic and pro-business and believed economic rehabilitation would occur fastest under American tutelage. Furthermore, Higa recognized that Japan's prewar contempt toward the Ryukyus was not likely to dissipate in the postwar era, which would perpetuate the islands' impoverished status.⁷⁰⁰ Initially, Higa kept his defection quiet when he assumed his new post and in his first announcement on April 1,

⁷⁰⁰ Discussion with Edward Freimuth in his home in Annadale, Virginia on June 12, 1997.

stated the legislative body would open on April 29, the day after the San Francisco Peace Treaty took affect. In the weeks leading up to April 28, many Okinawans still hoped, if naively, for a last minute reprieve. Instead, they heard that when Japan celebrated its independence no prominent government officials expressed regret at the outcome. Okinawan newspapers bitterly called April 28 *kutsujoku no hi*, a “day of humiliation” because Japan seemed indifferent to their situation. A few others, such as Arakawa Akira, called April 28 another example of *Ryukyu Shôbun* suggesting that once again, Japan had little difficulty sacrificing the Ryukyus for the greater interests of Japan.⁷⁰¹ Namely, a quid pro quo had led to Japan’s independence in return for Japan’s tacit approval of US control over the Ryukyus.

Despite the lingering feeling of “day of humiliation,” Taira and the OSMP wasted no time in exploiting their control of the GRI legislature to embarrass USCAR. In its inaugural session on April 29, Taira obtained a unanimous vote for a petition demanding immediate political reunification with Japan to be sent to the Japanese prime minister and the US president.⁷⁰² The April 29 unanimous resolution received further support on May 1 when Senaga managed to acquire permission from USCAR to hold a May Day Rally. Although there were many USCAR officials who wanted an outright ban on any May Day activities, General Beightler, mindful of Senaga’s refusal to take the oath of office, decided otherwise. Beightler feared denying Senaga’s May Day request would

⁷⁰¹ The original *Ryukyu Shôbun* refers to the 1872 forcible annexation of the Ryukyu Kingdom by Meiji Japan. This term is often used whenever Ryukyans perceive Japan sacrificing the islands for the greater interests of Japan. Some refer to the Battle of Okinawa and the reversion of the Ryukyus in 1972 as other examples of *Ryukyu Shôbun*.

⁷⁰² Okinawa Shakai Taishûtô Shi Hensan Iinkai, *Okinawa Shakai Taishûtô Shi*, (Okinawa: Okinawa Shakai Taishûtô, 1981), 33-36.

merely offer Senaga another opportunity to point out US hypocrisy in thwarting peaceful assembly, a first amendment right in the US constitution. At the May Day rally, Senaga called for the unity of farmers, workers, fishermen and the people to unite behind the reversion movement. Senaga also pointed out that if the US was calling Okinawa the showcase for democracy in Asia, then why did they deny the popular will from being expressed in electing the chief executive.⁷⁰³

A few days later three hundred OSMP party members unanimously reelected Taira OSMP chairman and endorsed immediate and unconditional reversion. The convention even purged two OSMP legislatures from the party for disagreeing with the party's reversion platform.⁷⁰⁴

That same month, the OSMP/OPP reversion alliance was joined by a new and powerful organization, the Okinawa Teacher's Association (OTA). The OTA, under the leadership of Yara Chôbyô, announced his unconditional support for reversion, arguing that student's education would be best served by being under Japan's control. In July, the OTA reached out to five other organizations to form a new umbrella organization in support of reversion called the Okinawa Association for Reversion (*Okinawa Shotô Sokoku Fukki Kiseikai*).⁷⁰⁵ Thus, despite efforts by USCAR to reorient the political system to their favor, the reversion movement remained a potent force.

⁷⁰³ *Okinawa Times*, May 1, 1952. Until this approval, US military officials had always denied Senaga's request for May Day activities. Interestingly, the *Ryukyu Shinpô* reported that both Federation of Women's Association and the Mawashi Young Men's Organization were not going to participate in the May Day activities, unusual in that these organizations had closely worked with the OPP in obtaining the petition signatures in 1951.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ryukyu Shinpô*, May 5, 1952.

⁷⁰⁵ In addition to the OTA, the other organizations involved were: the Youth Federation, Women's Federation, and the Mayor's Federation.

At the same time, the growing power of the reversion movement, and especially the increasing popularity of Senaga, alarmed the OSMP's more moderate wing. These moderates feared that immediate reversion would allow more powerful Japanese companies to swallow up the nascent, but increasingly vibrant indigenous economic sector. With tacit USCAR support, Chief Executive Higa Shûhei suddenly left the OSMP in August and formed a new political party called the Ryukyu Democratic Party (*Ryukyu Minshutô*-RDP). Higa convinced other OSMP and many independents to join the RDP, effectively weakening the OSMP. Higa and the RDP took a middle of the road approach in that they supported gradual reversion by "positive cooperation with American policies." Higa's moderate approach benefited from timely USCAR financial support for infrastructure projects in key legislative districts held by the RDP. With Higa as Chief Executive, USCAR used Higa as a proxy to block or thwart the legislative initiatives of OSMP and the OPP. USCAR noted Higa's favorable disposition in that the "Chief Executive accepts the desires of the Civil Administrator [USCAR] as his guide."⁷⁰⁶

USCAR's nurturing of Higa's new political party meant RDP dominated the Okinawan political arena for the next four years, which effectively blunted, at least temporarily, the political impetus for reversion on the main island of Okinawa.⁷⁰⁷ USCAR, which closely monitored all political activity, observed the "people's apathy [toward reversion]." Evidence for this apathy could be "seen by the attendance of a mass

⁷⁰⁶ USCAR Government Reports, Monthly and Political Reports, April-December 1953. Freimuth Papers, Folder "Special Political and Reversion Movements." Nakano and Arasaki, *Okinawa Sengo Shi*, 61-65.

⁷⁰⁷ Nakano and Arasaki, *Okinawa Sengo Shi*, 61-65.

meeting outside the Legislature on 14 November 1952 to once again promote the reversion resolution, which had been rejected by the Deputy Governor.” During this mass meeting, “not more than 150 persons were present and after speeches and songs had failed to bring additional supporters, the group merely submitted a petition for reversion to the Legislature and disbanded.”⁷⁰⁸ With seemingly little political support coming out of the Legislature for reversion, “the proponents of the reversion program, individuals of the Young Men’s Association, Teacher’s Association, and Mayor’s Association, met on 1 December to prepare a renewed *non-political campaign*.”⁷⁰⁹ However, the containment of the reversion movement on the main island of Okinawa came at a cost, as USCAR, forced to spent most of its energy on Okinawa, neglected political agitation elsewhere in the archipelago.⁷¹⁰

The Reversion Movement Gets Renewed Impetus

The Amami Islands, located directly north of Okinawa, became the next political challenge to US rule. Located equidistant between the main island of Okinawa and Kyushu, the Amami Islands fell under USCAR’s control because geographically, these islands were part of the Ryukyu archipelago. When Meiji Japan conquered the Ryukyu Kingdom in the 1870s, the Amami Islands were separated from Okinawa Prefecture and

⁷⁰⁸ USCAR, “Reversion Movement in the Ryukyus, 1951-1952,” Freimuth Papers, Folder “Special Political and Reversion Movements.”

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid. Emphasis added.

⁷¹⁰ In 1953, the confiscation of land took political precedence over reversion because land was an immediate issue while most Okinawans were resigned to the fact reversion was a long term effort. In addition, Japan’s failure to fight for Okinawa’s return made many wonder how the islands would actually fare, economically, under Japanese control as some feared Okinawa would return to the prewar status of Tokyo’s neglectful policies.

placed under the jurisdiction of Kagoshima Prefecture. As part of Kagoshima, Amami residents experienced an even more intense process of Japanese assimilation. Historian Robert Eldridge, in one of the few studies of the Amami Islands, argued that the process of Japanese assimilation led Amami islanders “to adopt discriminatory attitudes of mainland Japanese toward Okinawa” as they believed “the Okinawans were not Japanese, or at least not ‘as Japanese’ as they felt themselves to be.”⁷¹¹ Moreover, the Amami people had not experienced the horror and atrocities experienced by Okinawans during the Battle of Okinawa. Consequently, when Article III detached the Amamis from Kagoshima, their reaction was even more vehement than that of the rest of the Ryukyus. In 1951, Amami was the first island in the Ryukyus to begin the reversion petition movement and in approximately seven weeks, 139,348 signatures had been obtained, representing 99.8% of the population above fourteen.⁷¹² Mass rallies were held throughout the summer and unlike those held on Okinawa, the Amami rallies clearly had an anti-American theme as they shouted “Go Home, go home (*kaere, kaere!*)” even though the military government had outlawed anti-American demonstrations.⁷¹³

⁷¹¹ Robert Eldridge, *The Return of the Amami Islands: The Reversion Movement and U.S.—Japan Relations*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), xxv-xxvi.

⁷¹² “The Reversion Movement on Amami Oshima Final Report: A Report Based upon the Findings of a Public Opinion Survey September 1951,” SIRI, Pacific Science Board, National Research Council, CI & E Department, USCAR, March 1952, p. 1.

⁷¹³ *Ibid.*, 51. The Amami reversion leaders even held hunger strikes, which garnered much sympathy in Japan and caught the attention of US authorities. During the San Francisco Peace Conference, Dulles confronted Prime Minister Yoshida because he believed Yoshida’s government was stirring the pot in the Amamis to embarrass the US. Exasperated, Dulles told Yoshida that “it was shocking that there is a hunger strike when it has already been said that the islands would be considered as part of Japanese territory [residual sovereignty]. America is to administer the Nansei Islands [Ryukyus] because of their strategic necessity—they are not to become our territory.”

While Washington and USCAR believed the impetus for reversion had been contained in Okinawa by the end of 1952, especially with the Higa's Republican Party to serve as a counterweight to the OSMP/OPP alliance, the reversion movement's intensity in the Amami islands potentially could reignite the reversion movement throughout the Ryukyus. The Amami Islands possessed no strategic military value as far as the Pentagon was concerned, yet the political unrest there fundamentally threatened the Pentagon's strategic interest of Okinawa. Hence, USCAR, desperate to gauge the emotional depth for reversion, hired the National Research Council's Pacific Science Board to research the reversion movement in the Amami Islands. The report's opening paragraph stated clearly USCAR's deep anxiety over this movement in the Amamis:

In the summer of 1951 USCAR was confronted with the pressing problem of understanding and evaluating the popular movement for the reversion of the Ryukyus to Japan. This movement was gathering considerable momentum, particularly on Amami Oshima, and was beginning to assume serious proportions because of its intense emotional appeal. To reveal the actual attitudes of the native population toward reversion and the reasons given by the Ryukyuan to justify their views, a body of basic facts was badly needed, especially for Amami.⁷¹⁴

The SIRI report revealed an even more disturbing element for USCAR. The researchers found that considerable support for the Amami reversion movement came from the Japanese mainland. Not only did it receive considerable financial aid and coverage by Japanese media that underscored the interest generated in Japan, the mass meetings held in Amami were "addressed by both past and present representations of the

⁷¹⁴ "The Reversion Movement on Amami Oshima Final Report: A Report Based upon the Findings of a Public Opinion Survey September 1951," SIRI, Pacific Science Board, National Research Council, CI & E Department, USCAR, March 1952, p. 1.

Japanese Diet.”⁷¹⁵ Leaders of the Amami reversion movement (*Fukkyo*) also directly appealed their cause in Tokyo, where the Diet awarded these efforts by passing an unanimous resolution “entitled *Amami Oshima ni Kansuru Ketsugi* (Proposed Resolution Regarding Amami Oshima)” on December 25, 1952.⁷¹⁶

The Amami situation worsened throughout 1953 as it became a contentious political issue within Japan, one that threatened overall U.S.-Japan relations, the Security Treaty, and the American presence in the rest of the Ryukyus. State Department officials, alarmed by the attention given over the Amami Islands, began to press President Eisenhower, the NCS, and the JCS for a reassessment of policy in the Ryukyus. State recommended relinquishing control of the Amamis, and possibly the Bonins, but argued “Okinawa should be retained in its present status while the international tensions in the Far East continue.” Denying Amami reversion, it was feared, would only generate more political unrest in Japan and undermine Prime Minister Yoshida, a dependable ally in containing communism. By June 1953, Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson reluctantly acknowledged the Amami situation was undermining the overall strategic position in Okinawa and Eisenhower concurred stating he saw “no problems to turning the over the small Amami group.”⁷¹⁷ On December 25, 1953, the Amami Islands reverted to Japanese control in what was in many respects, a win-win situation for both countries. Prime Minister was able to claim victory for Japanese sovereignty and simultaneously, prevented political opponents from further exploiting the Amami Islands. In addition,

⁷¹⁵ Ibid.

⁷¹⁶ Eldridge, *The Return of the Amami Islands*, 62-63.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid., 102. As quoted by Eldridge.

Yoshida was once again able to deflect US pressure on Japan to rearm, which Yoshida adamantly opposed. Secretary of State Dulles had attempted to tie reversion of the Amami Islands in return for Japan's rearmament, but failed in this regard. Dulles, however, did arrange a quid pro quo when the Japanese government promised not to interfere in US administration of Okinawa and the rest of the Ryukyus.

Ambivalence Amidst the Reversion Movement on Okinawa

The simple fact that independence or trusteeship was at least part of the early political discourse on Okinawa indicated a certain level of ambivalence toward their prewar position as Japanese subjects. Politically, Taira's OSMP and its platform for immediate reversion had been eclipsed by Higa's Democratic Party by the end of 1952 by the Democratic party's advocacy of gradual reversion. Although reversion remained the primary political fulcrum in Ryukyuan politics, a pragmatic approach toward attaining it seemed to dominate the popular will. This pragmatism manifested itself throughout 1953 as most Okinawans placidly watched the Amami people successfully obtain reversion.

As indicated, most Okinawans at some level perceived themselves as Japanese, but this identification with Japan was an ambiguous one. Even reversion leaders such as Taira, who represented the prewar generation of assimilated Okinawan elites, could not forget the prewar paradox that the more they tried to assimilate, the more prejudice they encountered by mainland Japanese. The Battle of Okinawa raised more questions when their loyalty toward Japan was rewarded by Japanese politicians fleeing the island prior to the battle, countless atrocities committed by the Japanese military, and the perception that Okinawa had been a sacrificial pawn for Japan to extract more favorable surrender terms. To add insult to injury, many believed Japan once again sacrificed the Ryukyus

with the San Francisco Peace Treaty and Article III. In fact, when Japan regained its independence on April 28, 1953, many called it as a “day of shame.” The repeated sacrifice of the Ryukyus for the greater interests of Japan led one older Okinawan, Sakiyama Atsushi, to question the wisdom of reversion. Sakiyama observed Japan was “striving to become a democratic country by adopting the good points of Americans.” Yet, argued Sakiyama, would it not make more sense for the “Ryukyuan to adopt the valuable points directly from the Americans rather than to learn the principles of democracy indirectly from Japan?” Sakiyama warned that if the Ryukyus reverted to Japan, the people would find themselves right back to their prewar status as the “poorest 43rd prefecture of Japan.” If, however, the Ryukyus remain under US control, not only will the Ryukyuan learn democracy faster, the Ryukyuan standard of living will rise faster, evident by the “new GRI building, the new roads, and the new port facilities indicate that our standard of civilization is already rising.”⁷¹⁸

Younger Okinawans, who came of age amidst World War II, felt this ambivalence toward Japan more acutely. Come-of-age during a time of hyper nationalism, many Ryukyuan youth willingly sacrificed themselves for imperial Japan. Those who survived, like Ôta Masahide, became bitter toward Japan as they witnessed countless military atrocities committed against loyal Okinawans. Ôta’s generation also harbored some latent anger toward their assimilated elders because individuals such as Taira Tetsuo and Yara Chôbyô were complicit in socializing Okinawan youth into loyal Japanese subjects. As Ôta once told me, “at that time (the early 1950s) I didn’t really

⁷¹⁸ Sakiyama Atsushi, “My Viewpoints on the Status of the Ryukyus,” *Ryukyu Shinbun*, March 7, 1953.

think of myself as Ryukyuan or Okinawan, but I did know enough that I wasn't Japanese either."⁷¹⁹

Ôta's ambivalence toward Japan was also apparent in two other groups. One group was the first postwar generation. This generation, including those born in the late 1930s, who had grown up in an environment largely free of Japanese *dôka*. Although much of their schooling was patterned on Japanese education, one can safely assume that the American presence, culturally, social and economically, offered competing means of acculturation. Ikemiyagusuku Shui, in an open letter addressed to General Lewis, Deputy Governor of USCAR, reflected this sentiment. "It is now eight years since the United States Armed forces landed on Okinawa...and those babies who were created during this period of difficulties are to enter Primary School starting this year. Nobody will forget that those babies were raised with the support of the United States Government. This is hard to forget." Continuing, Ikemiyagusuku noted "those who experienced the hardships they met during the war and the joy of receiving the support of the United States after the war ended will *not forget this until they go to their graves.*"⁷²⁰ Many members in my mother's family found employment opportunities at the US bases and this experience

⁷¹⁹ I first met Ôta Masahide in Washington D.C. when he, as governor of Okinawa Prefecture, was lobbying U.S. politicians and Pentagon officials to reduce military bases in Okinawa. Ôta held a reception at the Hilton complete with Ryukyuan traditional entertainment and during that reception, I had the opportunity to meet him and discuss my ideas for a dissertation topic. When I informed him I was always confused why Ryukyuan wanted reversion after the way they were treated by Japan during World War II, he replied, "me too." Ôta then made me aware that the reversion movement was never a monolithic one, nor was it one simply based on nationalistic impulses. He encouraged me to investigate the movement deeper pointing out a fundamental contradiction: if the reversion movement was motivated by a nationalistic sentiment, why did many in the movement oppose reversion in 1972, including the father of the reversion movement, Yara Chobyô.

⁷²⁰ Ikemiyagusuku, Shui. Open Letter to General Lewis-Self Examination of the US Administration of the Ryukyus," *Okinawa Asahi Shinbun*, April 20, 21, 22, 1953.

brought them into “cultural contact” zones that influenced their identities. In addition, with the threat of prewar hyper nationalism removed, many families undoubtedly reverted or felt more comfortable being “Ryukyuan.”

This “Okinawanness” received impetus from the tens of thousands Okinawans repatriated abroad from either Japan or from Japan’s former colonies.⁷²¹ Many of these repatriates had left Okinawa before assimilation transformed the islanders into loyal Japanese subjects, evident by the fact that most barely spoke, if at all, standard Japanese. Their identification with Japan, therefore, remained weak. For those who returned from Japan, although they did experience the hyper nationalism of the 1930s, this experienced was offset by the discrimination they encountered in Japan. When rationing began, my uncle recalled that the Okinawan community in Osaka often received either fewer rations or rations that were spoiled, especially in the last two years of the war. Other Japanese would complain about Okinawans receiving rations at all, arguing Okinawans were not true Japanese, hence, should not be eligible for rations. At school, he remembered having numerous fights with Japanese students after they would call the Okinawan students “pig eaters.”⁷²² He said he got along much better with the Korean children, who lived in a nearby ghetto, as we [the Koreans and Okinawans] were in the same boat. Upon their return to Okinawa, the ambivalence toward Japan grew more acute because the devastation of their natal home, coupled with the stories of Japanese brutality, embittered

⁷²¹ It is often forgotten that between 1946 and 1949, Okinawa’s population tripled after the return of these repatriates. Their return effected the postwar era, though most scholars have overlooked this effect.

⁷²² Also see Ruth Ann Keyso, *Women of Okinawa*, (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2000), 21.

many.⁷²³ Although life under the American occupation was far from rosy, most Okinawans could at least cite a positive experience with the Americans, far more than what could be recalled with the Japanese.⁷²⁴ As a young woman, Inafuku Mitsuko worked as a maid for an American officer and his family. Inafuku remembered that “the people in the neighborhood thought I was lucky to be working for the Americans. And I felt lucky” because “I always came home with *omiyage* for my mother, and a little money from my job that I shared with her too.” Inafuku learned how to make lace from officer’s wife and while doing lace work together, they would “listen to country music together...I eventually learned to love that kind of music. Even today when I hear country music I feel nostalgic.”⁷²⁵

Nostalgic memories notwithstanding, many Okinawans experienced positive encounters with the Americans. My uncle, a chauffer US military personnel, received all sorts of food, clothing and other staples that his family desperately needed. One time, a GI gave him a block of cheddar cheese to share with his impoverished family, but my uncle, like most Okinawans, had no idea it was a food item. When he took it home, everyone thought it was a bar of soap and tried to take bathe with it. Chuckling, he stated during that time, “we believed Americans produced everything better than us, but we got some small satisfaction that at least we could produce soap that actually produced bubbles.” My mother recalled GI’s handing out tubes of toothpaste, though back then,

⁷²³ In the time I spend in Okinawa during my youth, I heard countless stories about the discrimination encountered in Japan.

⁷²⁴ My aunt, who made it clear working as a maid for the Americans was difficult, was nevertheless adamant that such work was preferable to working for the Japanese.

⁷²⁵ Ruth Ann Keyso, *Women of Okinawa*, (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2000), 22-32.

“no one knew what it was.” “I gave the tube to my mother who warned us not to eat it, but us kids snuck the tube outside and we [my three other sisters] proceeded to eat the entire tube, excited over the eating something so sweet!” Laughing, she remembered her mother’s scolding when kids all vomited after eating the toothpaste.” In midst of the tremendous poverty and the ongoing struggle to recover from the war, many Okinawans still remember American generosity. Given such experiences, Ikemiyagusuku Shui asserted that “many young and middle aged men and women, excepting for those who are educated in Japan, were generally pro-American until the end of 1946 because they hated Japanese militarism.” He also claimed that that time, respect for the US among the Okinawan people would have led a “majority of people of Okinawa [to] vote for the United States if a public opinion survey had been conducted back then.”⁷²⁶

Exploiting Ambivalence: Fostering Ethno Nationalism

Chapter Two showed how Navy’s civil affairs officers, in compiling and analyzing information on the Ryukyus, concluded that Okinawans were an oppressed minority group. The document they provided, the *Civil Affairs Handbook*, became the “bible” of the first generation of civil affairs administrators assigned to the Ryukyus. John Caldwell, James Watkins, John Hanna and other colleagues diligently promoted Okinawan ethnic nationalism largely because they sincerely believed they had liberated an oppressed people. Hence, in the spirit of “making the world safe for democracy,” Hanna and company saw resurrection as an imagined national community as a natural

⁷²⁶ Ikemiyagusuku, Shui. Open Letter to General Lewis-Self Examination of the US Administration of the Ryukyus,” *Okinawa Asahi Shinbun*, April 20, 21, 22, 1953.

corollary of this creed and on their own initiative, promoted the spirit of self-determination.⁷²⁷

The US Army, when it took over the occupation in mid 1946, squandered this respect over the next several years, as the Ryukyus became the “forgotten islands.” The crisis led to the appointment of General Sheetz whose mandate was to create an environment conducive to a prolonged military occupation. Sheetz, as we saw in Chapter 7, focused on political reforms, namely greater political participation. But Sheetz also revived the project initiated by the Navy civil affairs team to promote a distinct imagined community and ethnic pride. RYCOM’s official regular report on Ryukyuan state of affairs, the *Ryukyu Statistical Bulletin*, reflected the continuity of Ryukyuan nation-building from the Navy’s civil affairs team to General Sheetz. Although the “Ryukyuan people were a proud people, with their own history and culture, they were treated as social inferiors by the Japanese.” Moreover, the *Bulletin*, noted that Japan had sacrificed and discarded the Ryukyus during the war, yet the Ryukyuan people “preparing now, with the help and guidance of United States Military Government, to reach full stature with individual identity, culture and prestige which is truly their own.”⁷²⁸ Because the Meiji government consciously invented “Okinawa” in order to erase historical memory of the Ryukyu Kingdom, Sheetz understood the continued use of “Okinawa” would

⁷²⁷ Ikemiyagusuku Shui, reflecting the attitude of many Ryukyuan people, wrote the people “will not forget this until they go to their graves.” He went on to state up until the “end of the administration by the United States Navy...the Okinawan people respected and favorably viewed American soldiers. Ikemiyagusuku, Shui. Open Letter to General Lewis-Self Examination of the US Administration of the Ryukyus,” *Okinawa Asahi Shinbun*, April 20, 21, 22, 1953.

⁷²⁸ Headquarters, Military Government of the Ryukyu Islands, Programs and Statistics Section, *Ryukyu Statistical Bulletin*, No. 3, March, 1950.

reinforce Japan's claims to sovereignty and popular support for reversion. Under Sheetz, therefore, "Ryukyu" became the exclusive authorized nomenclature.

For example, when Sheetz reconstituted the Okinawa Advisory Council, he consciously renamed it to the Interim Ryukyus Advisory Council. Other reforms also reflected the change, as seen by the *Ryukyu Kôhō*, Ryukyu-American Education Week, and *Voice of the Ryukyus (Ryukyu no Koe)*. Even the political leaflets and posters disturbed throughout 1950 conspicuously avoided the term "Okinawa people" (*Okinawajin*) and instead used "*Ryukyujin*". In December 1950, MacArthur renamed US Army's administrative authority on Okinawa the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR) to emphasize America's "civil" commitment to the "Ryukyus."⁷²⁹ The emphasis on "Ryukyu" in the above examples, coupled with countless examples of "Ryukyu" contained in occupation internal documents showed at a rhetorical level, a commitment to create an alternate national identity.

Sheetz also understood the change in the official name, by itself, would not create a Ryukyuan identity as a "Ryukyuan central government can be measured in direct proportion to the degree to which the people develop national consciousness and national pride."⁷³⁰ Sheetz attempted to complement the semantic emphasis on "Ryukyu" and the developme of a national consciousness by creating a new national symbol and asked

⁷²⁹ JCS 1231/14, "Directive for United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands, 4 October 1950, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, 1950, Vol. 6, 1313-1319. USCAR also was a euphemism in that "Civil Administration" was an attempt to hide the reality the islands were still firmly under military command.

⁷³⁰ Personal Memo from James Tull to Colonel Schaeffer, Subject: "Central Government Structure," December 14, 1950. Taira Tetsuo's victory for Okinawa Gunto governor and subsequent call for reversion reinforced Tull's analysis of the problem. USCAR attempted to address Tull's criticism by abolishing the Gunto system and replacing it with a centralized government, the GRI, in 1952.

Governor Shikiya Koshin to find local artists to design a flag. Shikiya, probably in conjunction with the most ardent supporter of independence, Nakasone Genwa, commissioned the Shuri Fine Artist Association (*Shuri Bijutsuka Kyōkai*) to design a Ryukyuan flag. Whether or not Shikiya instructed the artists to design that reflected the American flag, the lineage of the Ryukyuan designed flag was quite apparent.

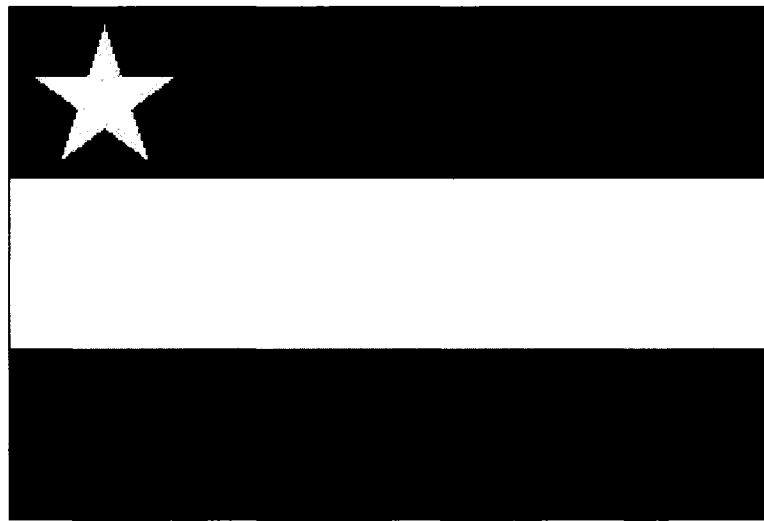


Figure 59 The blue, white, and red stripes represented: peace (*heiwa*), liberty (*jiyu*), and passion/enthusiasm (*nessei*) respectively. The white star represented the morning star (*myōjyō*) and it symbolized hope (*kibō*) for a dawning of a new era passionately built upon peace and liberty. The single star, reportedly, also had additional symbolism. The single star signified a unified Ryukyus while others have maintained it stood for American solidarity with the Ryukyuan nation.

With the support of Nakasone Genwa, an ardent advocate of Ryukyuan independence, Governor Shikiya presented the flag to a surprised audience of political elite on January 25, 1950. Supporters of independence applauded the flag, but the majority of the audience stood in disbelief, apparently at the audacity of creating a

Ryukyuan flag, especially patterned in colors and style reminiscent of the American flag. Fearing a backlash during a sensitive time of political reform, military government officials quietly pulled the flag on March 1, 1950. For many, the entire incident seemed surreal and hence, came to be referred to as the *Maboroshi no Ryukyu Kokki*, (the phantom illusion of the Ryukyuan national flag).⁷³¹

Nakasone Genwa, a lifelong proponent for Ryukyuan independence, even placed the “phantom flag” on his memoir’s jacket. Not only does the flag reflect the kind of consciousness Sheetz had hoped to instill, Nakasone’s title, *Okinawa kara Ryukyu he*, showed that at least a few individuals imagined the possibility of a Ryukyuan nation.⁷³²

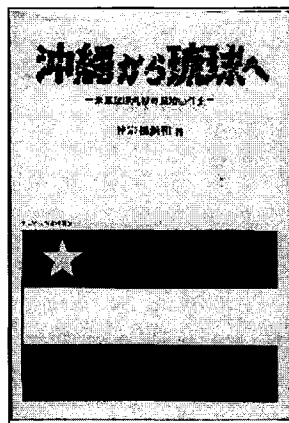


Figure 60 Jacket cover to Nakasone Genwa's book *Okinawa kara Ryukyu he*. The jacket poignantly captures Nakasone’s unfulfilled mission to create an independent nation.

⁷³¹ *Okinawa Sengo Shashin Shi: Amerika Yū—no 10 Nen*, (Naha: Gekkan Okinawashi, 1979), 2. *Okinawa Encyclopedia* “沖縄大百科事典上巻,” (那覇市：沖縄タイムス社、1983) 440. Also see Nakasone Genwa, *Okinawa kara Ryukyu he* and Phil Nelson, “Independent State of Okinawa,” http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/jp-47_50.html, accessed November 16, 2001.

⁷³² Nakasone Genwa, *Okinawa kara Ryukyu he*, (Tokyo: Naha: Gekkan Okinawasha, 1973).

General Sheetz, meanwhile, ordered the creation of a new shoulder patch insignia to be worn by all units stationed in the Ryukyus beginning on February 28, 1950. At a basic level, Sheetz wanted the shoulder patch to reflect American sensitivity toward “oriental” religious customs and chose the torii, the distinctive gateway to a Shinto shrine.



The Ryukyus Command, the U. S. Army organization in the Ryukyu Islands, was authorized its shoulder sleeve insignia on February 28, 1950. Super-imposed on a circle of black is a dark yellow torii. The circle of yellow around the patch symbolizes unity of purpose. The torii symbolizes a gateway of purification in Oriental religious customs. The color of the patch—black and dark yellow—is identical with the two colors that predominate in several versions of the Okinawan National Flag.

Figure 61 The two images come from the first page of a pamphlet entitled *Welcome to Okinawa: today's "Gibraltar of the Pacific."*⁷³³

Unfortunately, the road to hell is paved with good intentions as USCAR mistakenly believed the torii was a universal religious symbol for East Asia when in fact, it symbolized Shintoism. The Shinto torii was problematic for two reasons. First, state sponsored Shinto played a major role in Japan's militarism and it provided a rationale for Japan's militarists to create an empire throughout Asia. Second, Shinto was never indigenous to the Ryukyus. When Meiji Japan forcibly annexed the Ryukyu kingdom, it imposed State Shinto by sponsoring the building of various Shinto sites throughout the

⁷³³Army Admin Cen-FEC, *Welcome to Okinawa: today's "Gibraltar of the Pacific,"* (publication date unknown, but likely sometime in the early 1950s). 33-360 Army Admin Cen-FEC-10M

islands, perhaps best represented by Naminoue Shrine in Naha. For Ryukyans, Shinto not only constituted a foreign religion, it symbolized the prewar Japanese oppression and as a reminder of the relationship between the Emperor, the military, and the Battle of Okinawa. Like the Shuri artists who uncritically patterned the Ryukyuan national standard after the US flag, Sheetz erred by conflating Shinto with “oriental” religions. Nevertheless, Sheetz, like the Shuri artists, was sincere in his desire to convey American respect for the Ryukyus in the color scheme.

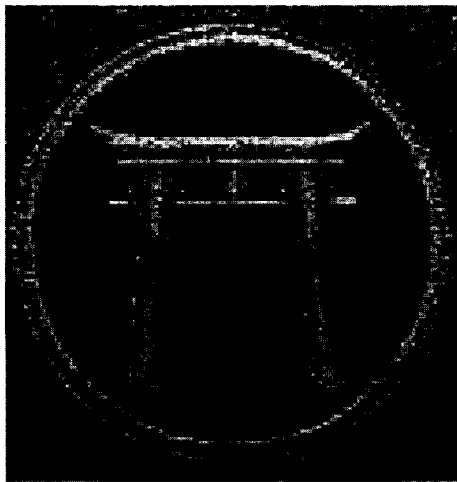


Figure 62 Color caption of Sheetz's shoulder patch design.

The yellow around the patch conveyed the unity of purpose, or more specifically, a singular Ryukyus united under American auspices. Sheetz's chose the color scheme deliberately as the “color of the patch—black and dark yellow—is identical with the two colors that predominate in several version of the Okinawan National flag.” The inspiration for the yellow and black scheme came from an analysis of official banners

flown during the Ryukyu kingdom. Ironically while Okinawan artists used the Stars and Stripes for their inspiration, American officials dug into the Ryukyuan past to create their Ryukyuan national symbol.⁷³⁴ Yet in the end, these symbolic attempts may have actually pushed proponents of reversion to use the Japanese flag as their banner of resistance.



Figure 63 On the former grounds of Shuri Castle, the capital of Ryukyu Kingdom, American officials conduct the University of the Ryukyus' opening day ceremony on February 12, 1951. The nearly destroyed tree on the right testifies the battle's devastation on Shuri castle.⁷³⁵

USCAR reinforced these symbolic efforts with more tangible actions, most notably in establishing the first university in Okinawa, the University of the Ryukyus. To great fanfare, on May 22, 1950 University of the Ryukyus opened its doors to twenty-eight faculty and nearly 600 students.⁷³⁶ American authorities stressed that “the first and

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

⁷³⁵ Okinawa Ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Naha: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 99.

⁷³⁶ *Ryukyu Daigaku Yonju Nen*, (Okinawa: Ryukyu Daigaku, 1990), 4.

only institution of its kind in the islands” resulted from American patronage.⁷³⁷ The university, it was hoped, would remind Okinawans that Japan had failed to build an institution of higher learning during its seventy years of rule and that this failure largely stemmed from Japan’s discriminatory neglect of the prefecture. The establishment of the first university in Okinawa allowed US authorities to claim “Ryukyans were a proud people, with their own history and culture, they were treated as social inferiors by the Japanese” and moreover, that Ryukyans were “preparing now, with the help and guidance of United States Military Government, to reach full stature with individual identity, culture and prestige which is truly their own.”⁷³⁸ While the new university allowed the US to contrast favorably their occupation with Japan’s prewar rule, it also played a pivotal role in the promotion of Ryukyuanization.

⁷³⁷ USCAR, *Okinawa: Keystone of the Pacific*. Publication date unknown, though most probable date would be the late 1950s. One US military officer, testifying in front of a Senate appropriations committee, asserted that American financial support would “be tangible evidence that the United States is interested in the cultural welfare of the Ryukyu Islands.” Senate Appropriations Committee, The Supplemental Appropriation Bill for 1955, 620.

⁷³⁸ Headquarters, Military Government of the Ryukyu Islands, Programs and Statistics Section, *Ryukyu Statistical Bulletin*, No. 3, March, 1950.



Figure 64 In the upper photo, USCAR official, to convey American "benevolence," assists in building the University of the Ryukyus. The bottom photo shows a gate, hastily constructed, for the University's main entrance.⁷³⁹

⁷³⁹ Okinawa Ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Naha: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 99. The individual in the photo on the left is Earl Diffenderfer, director of USCAR's Information and Education section. He also was a member of the University's Founding Board.

Military officials intended to use the University to train, and more importantly, socialize the next generation of intellectual elite since the long-term US occupation would benefit from an indigenous pool of talented elites. These elites could help legitimize the occupation as they could become the bureaucratic “face” that dealt directly with the people. It was important to socialize the next generation of elites along American lines, similar to what the British did in India when they created the “Babu” who were educated Indians to staff the colonial apparatus. Thus, “an important objective of Military government,” was to create “an institution to provide the specialized training so desperately needed in every field of endeavor.”⁷⁴⁰ Equally significant, USCAR understood the general education system was key in socializing future Okinawans who would identify more with the US than Japan. According to a USCAR memorandum, a major objective “in creating the University was to train teachers in school administration and teaching according to American patterns, looking toward making some more effective the Army’s efforts to change the character of the entire school system from the pre-war Japanese pattern to a democratic one.”⁷⁴¹ Pentagon officials decided the University of the Ryukyus would not be patterned after Japanese schools, but would become an American style land-grant institution. US authorities subsequently awarded Michigan State the contract to convert the University of the Ryukyus into a land-grant institution with a curriculum that emphasized, both academically and socially, American

⁷⁴⁰ USCAR, “Memorandum of Information Concerning a Cooperative Project with the University of the Ryukyus. Date unknown, but sometime in the early 1950s.” Watkins Papers, Vol. 6

⁷⁴¹ Ibid.

educational values.⁷⁴² Unfortunately for the US the University became contested terrain as it was used by students to stage anti-American protests throughout the occupation.

In addition to naming the school the University of the Ryukyus to promote ethnic pride, US officials located it the a historical site of the kingdom's capital in Shuri. When Japan forcibly annexed the Ryukyu Kingdom in the 1870s, it moved the political capital to Naha and renamed the islands as Okinawa Prefecture. Tokyo sent down a military company to force the King Shô Tai's abdication, and on March 30, 1879, "Sho Tai and his household passed from the castle grounds through the *Kokugaku-mon* (Gate of National Learning) into exile."⁷⁴³ Historian George Kerr argued that this exile represented a "symbolic break with the past" because "for the first time in five hundred years the palace [Shuri Castle] ceased to be the seat of authority and the symbol of nationhood." Tokyo's two decisions effectively rendered Shuri and the Ryukyus as anachronisms as it became a garrison for Japanese soldiers. The castle complex was reduced to rubble during the battle of Okinawa.⁷⁴⁴

⁷⁴² *Ryukyu Daigaku Yonju Nen*, (Okinawa: Ryukyu Daigaku, 1990), 5.

⁷⁴³ As quoted in George Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People Revised Edition with an afterword by Mitsugu Sakihara*. (Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 2000), 381-382.

⁷⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

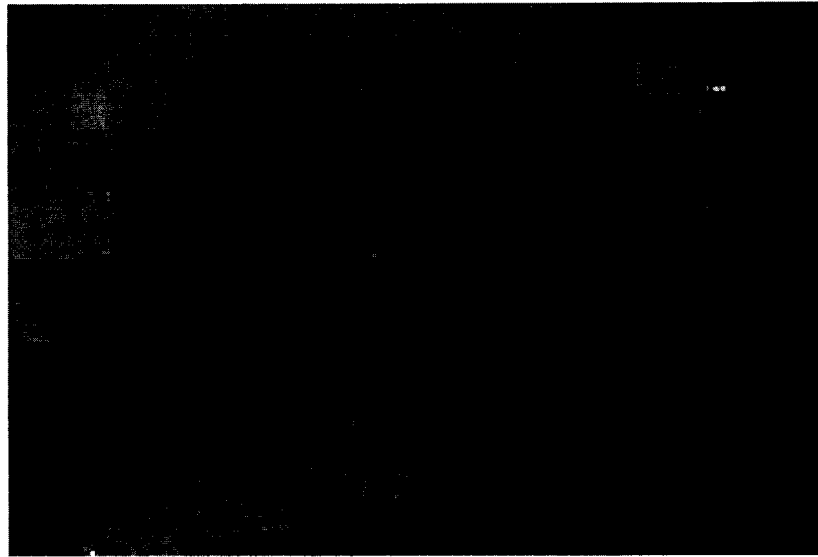


Figure 65 Destruction of Shuri and Shuri Castle. The top photo shows the dilapidated Shuri Castle prior the Battle of Okinawa. The bottom photo shows an aerial view of Shuri hill, rain-filled shell craters caused by the American “typhoon of steel.”⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴⁵ Okinawa Ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Naha: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 51. Masahide Ota, *Essay on Okinawa Problems*, (Okinawa: Yui Shuppan Sha, 2000), 54. General Sheetz, who oversaw the opening of the University of the Ryukyus, ironically commanded the 10th Army’s artillery.

The US decision to locate the university upon Shuri was made with great deliberation. Some officials worried the university's location would be perceived by the people as sacrilege, both in terms of what it represented historically and what had transpired during the battle. But Yamashiro Atsuo, a leading Okinawan educator who had worked with Hanna to create the Okinawa Education School, reassured American officials that Shuri was indeed the perfect location for the Ryukyus' first university.⁷⁴⁶ Yamashiro and Hanna both understood the university's location linked the present Ryukyus to the Ryukyuan past and simultaneously, conveyed American respect and support for the Ryukyuan heritage.⁷⁴⁷ General MacArthur's congratulatory message captured the essence of what US planners hoped to convey to the assembled Ryukyuan audience:

Establishment of the University of the Ryukyus is an event of outstanding importance in the cultural and intellectual history of these Islands. It is, moreover, particularly appropriate that the University, founded upon the ancient site of the throne of Ryukyuan kings, should be dedicated on the birthday of one who though personally humble was himself kingly among the great of the world—Abraham Lincoln. As in youth he made such purposeful use of his meager yet fine resources—chiefly the Bible, Shakespeare, and Euclid—so too the eventual greatness of this institution will depend not on the multiplicity but the quality of its resources and its wisdom in using them.⁷⁴⁸

⁷⁴⁶ According to William Hanna, it was Yamashiro who first suggested building a future university on the ruins of Shuri Castle. William Hanna, "Okinawa: Ten Years Later," December 23, 1945. (Bangkok: American Universities Field Staff, 1955). Watkins Collection, Vol. 46, 178.

⁷⁴⁷ Discussion with Edward Freimuth.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ryukyu Daigaku Yonju Nen*, (Okinawa: Ryukyu Daigaku, 1990), 7.



Figure 66 University of Ryukyus' campus, 1951.⁷⁴⁹

US officials, anxious to extract full propaganda value, commemorated the opening by issuing special postal stamps. These stamps, drawn by Okinawan artists, captured the historical link between the University of the Ryukyus with the Ryukyu Kingdom. As seen in the following stamp, the building in the foreground represented the university, but shadowed by a larger and omnipresent outline of Shuri Castle.⁷⁵⁰ The dragon pillar, on the left part of the stamp, was a stone marker that designated entrance into the king's throne. American officials managed to salvage one of the dragon pillars from the castle's ruins, which represented the only tangible artifact to survive the battle. Most Okinawans likely failed to recognize the dragon pillar as distinguishing feature of Shuri Castle.

⁷⁴⁹ Okinawa Ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Naha: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 5.

⁷⁵⁰ Author's photo.

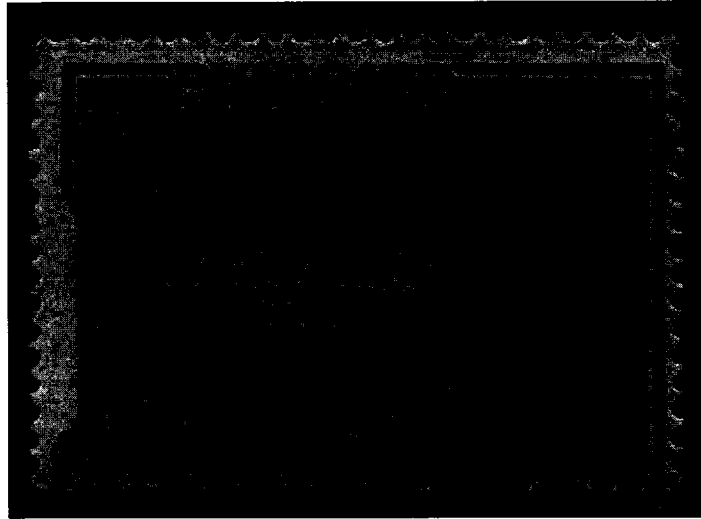


Figure 67 Special stamp issued to honor the opening of the university.

The post office also issued a special envelope “first day issue” that reinforced the stamp’s connection to the Ryukyuan past. The envelope’s specially commissioned art work, on the left, conveyed the auspicious moment of opening day and linked the university to what American officials hoped would come to represent Ryukyuan national symbols. Once again, the artist represented Shuri Castle in a silhouette and the signature dragon pillar. A new “national” symbol, however, was conspicuously added. This symbol, *Shureimon* (or *Shureino Mon*), was one of Shuri Castle’s main gates and more importantly, due to its unique architecture style, symbolized a golden age in Ryukyu history. Built in the early 16th century, Shurei no Mon remained intact until the Battle of Okinawa, when it was destroyed. While Okinawans revered the gate, US officials believed the gate, even more than Shuri Castle, had even greater utility in their goal of Ryukyuanization.

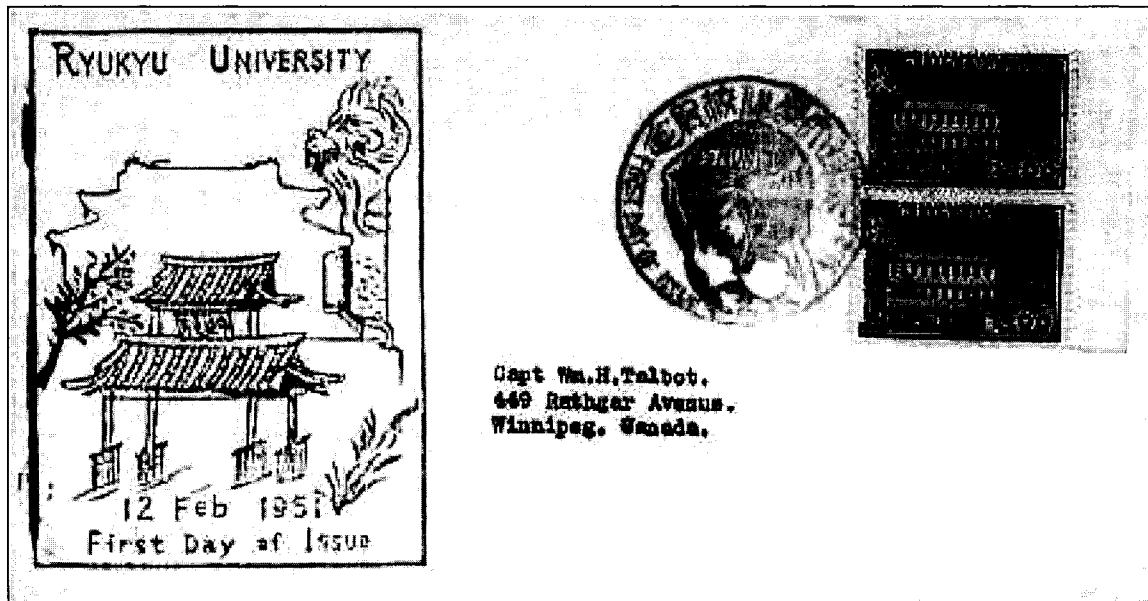


Figure 68 Special edition envelope issued for the opening of University of the Ryukyus with corresponding University of the Ryukyus' stamps.⁷⁵¹

In fact, US officials believed Shureimon was such a potent symbol to represent the Ryukyu-American relationship, that they commissioned Okinawan artisans to reconstruct a scaled model of Shureimon. Upon completion, the model was strategically displayed in the University of the Ryukyus “to show students what [had] once stood outside their classroom doors” and thanks to US support, students could be proud of their Ryukyuan heritage.⁷⁵² Later, in 1958, with US support, Okinawan officials rebuilt Shureimon in its original location, which allowed students to pass under this historic gate on their way to the university. Okinawan school children were sent to the newly

⁷⁵¹ Author's photograph.

⁷⁵² <http://www.okinawakai.org/past&present/shuri%20gate/Shuri%20no%20Mon.htm> Accessed on November 12, 2005.

reconstructed Shureimon and instructed in the symbolism of the Ryukyuan's unique history.



Figure 69 The top photo shows the University of the Ryukyus' scaled model of Shureimon in 1954. The bottom illustration shows the stamp issued for the rebuilt Shureimon in 1958.⁷⁵³

⁷⁵³ <http://www.okinawakai.org/past&present/shuri%20gate/Shuri%20no%20Mon.htm> Accessed on November 12, 2005.



Figure 70 Okinawan school children on a field trip to Shureimon in 1959.⁷⁵⁴

The continued ideological use of Shureimon, ironically, persisted after the Ryukyus were returned to Japanese control in 1972. To commemorate reversion, the Japanese government issued a special stamp in 1972. Like the Americans before them, Tokyo decided to use Shureimon to represent the auspicious moment, which was the first time any historical or cultural aspect of the Ryukyu Kingdom era had been used on a Japanese stamp. Tokyo, anxious to restore Okinawan loyalty, which the war and occupation had sorely tested, believed the stamp acknowledge Japan's respect for the Ryukyuan heritage. In the 1990s, when Japanese-Okinawan relations had dramatically

⁷⁵⁴ Okinawa Ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Naha: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 51.

soured over the continued presence of US bases, Japan once again used Shureimon in an attempt to mollify Okinawan discontentment. Tokyo's overture, however, was much more ambitious as they ordered production of a new currency, the 2000 Yen note. This note not only symbolized the new century, but politically, conspicuously placed Shureimon on the front of the ¥2000. Although initial American efforts to promote Shureimon as a national symbol failed, Japan ironically used Shureimon as a distinct symbol of Okinawan identity.

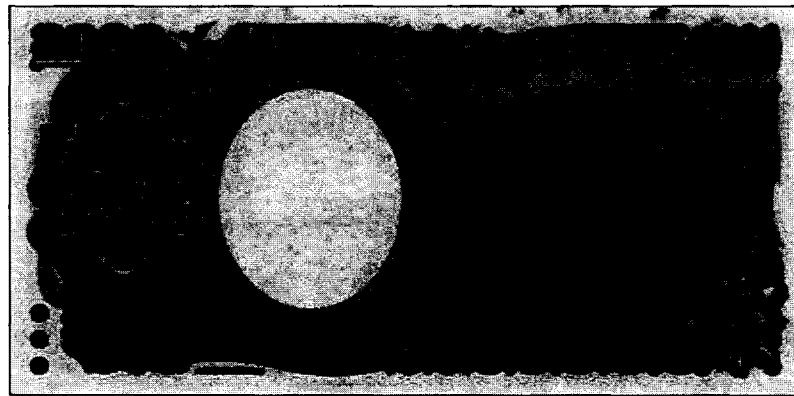
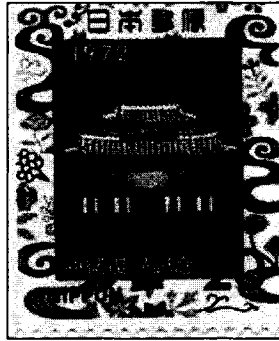


Figure 71 Left photo shows the special stamp issued by Japan to represent Okinawa's reversion. On the right, Shureimon graces the front of the brand new 2000 yen note.⁷⁵⁵

Redoubling Ryukyunization and Americanization

USCAR's initial Ryukyunization campaign did not produce immediate results. Throughout 1953, Okinawans and USCAR officials observed signs that discontentment with the occupation was again rising. US seizure of Okinawan land produced the most salient factor for this discontentment. During the Korean War, the US military aggressively seized Okinawan land in order to expand the military bases. The land

⁷⁵⁵ Author's photos.

seizures were often by force or through obscure legal maneuvering. Adding insult to injury, the US military compensated landowners at a miserly and insulting level, leaving many to a destitute existence. The Korean War also added thousands of jobs to the military service economy, which expanded economic opportunities but USCAR did not allow Okinawan workers to organize or bargain collectively resulting in degrading work conditions and low pay. Moreover, American Cold War rhetoric to make the world safe from communism rang hollow to many Okinawans and only deepened their outrage at the economic, legal, and social injustice incurred under military occupation. Although many Okinawans appreciated what General Sheetz did in 1949-50, his efforts to promote Ryukyuan-US relations, such as the building of the university, were constantly undermined by the “military mind” that mocked the US rhetoric of making Okinawa a showcase of democracy in Asia.

USCAR responded by refocusing and redoubling its efforts in promoting Americanization and Ryukyuanization. Ryukyuanization, as we have seen, attempted to displace Okinawans’ national identification with Japan by reinventing and resurrecting Ryukyuan identity. Hence flying the *Hinomaru*, the Japanese flag, became an issue at great contention. In June, 1952 the Okinawa Teachers Association (OTA) petitioned USCAR to fly the *Hinomaru*, asserting that since Japan enjoyed residual sovereignty, it was appropriate “to promote the education of children as Japanese nationals,” by flying the *Hinomaru* in schools and homes. USCAR responded that they exercised “powers of the sovereign” as provided by Article III, thus the “display of the Japanese flag... is not

considered appropriate.”⁷⁵⁶ Moreover, USCAR stated OTA’s activities violated a provision where “any person who violates the provisions...shall, upon conviction, be fined not more than ¥10,000 or imprisoned for not longer than six months, or both.”⁷⁵⁷

Agitation over the *Hinomaru*, however, remained unabated and became a political issue between Tokyo and Washington. With pressure coming from Washington, USCAR officials grudgingly allowed special conditions when Okinawans could fly the *Hinomaru*, such as the Emperor’s birthday on April 22, 1953, but prohibited flying it on government buildings.⁷⁵⁸ By allowing this concession, USCAR officials hoped to mollify the OTA before the Commodore Perry Centennial Celebrations slated to be held the following month. USCAR intended to use the centennial anniversary to accentuate U.S.-Ryukyuan relations and more importantly, to celebrate an era when the Ryukyus were independent. To highlight the US-Ryukyuan relationship, USCAR organized a parade. Major General David Ogdon, Deputy Governor of USCAR, and Higa Shuhei, Chief Executive of the GRI, rode together at the head of the parade. Thousands of Okinawan students marched behind the lead jeep, and originally, the students were supposed to carry miniature versions of the Stars and Stripes. At the last minute, however, someone provided miniature *Hinomaru* flags to the students. With tens of thousands spectators watching the procession, chagrined USCAR officials were forced to allow the students, with both

⁷⁵⁶ Lt. Col. Earl Hall, Chief of Administration, USCAR to Chief Executive, Government of the Ryukyu Islands, Subject: “Petition for Flag-raising,” June 12, 1952. RG 260 HCRI-LN, 1603-06, Box 29, Folder: Designs (Flag, others).

⁷⁵⁷ USCAR, Office of the Deputy Governor, Military Government Ordinance No. 1, “Display of Flags,” April 28, 1952. RG 260 HCRI-LN, 1603-06, Box 28, Folder: Designs (Flag, others).

⁷⁵⁸ USCAR, CI&E to Liaison Office, Subject: “Newspaper Clippings—Japanese Flag,” October 30, 1953. RG 260 HCRI-LN, 1603-06, Box 28, Folder: Designs (Flag, others).

flags, to march behind the Deputy Commander's jeep, a scene widely reported in the local press. The *Okinawa Asahi* noted "students of primary, junior, and senior high schools each with Rising Sun Flag in one hand and Stars and Stripes in the other followed." The *Ryukyu Shinpô* wrote "after the American and Ryukyuan leaders with the friendly smiles passed, the US Army band followed" with "the American and Ryukyuan Girl Scouts and Ryukyuan school children with Rising Sun flags and Stars and Stripes followed next."⁷⁵⁹ This act only emboldened OTA and other groups to continue arguing they had an unconditional right to fly the *Hinomaru* at any time and anywhere.

USCAR, for obvious reasons, feared the banned *Hinomaru* would become a powerful grievance to be exploited by the reversion movement. USCAR believed the power of the *Hinomaru* impetus stemmed simply from the fact that no symbolic alternative existed to express Okinawan national identity. Feeling the pressure over the *Hinomaru*, in 1954 USCAR once again resurrected the idea of creating a new Ryukyuan national standard, drawing upon the lessons of the failed attempt of 1950. In a memo to General Ogden, Colonel Walter Murray, USCAR's Deputy Civil Administrator, reported on long-term discussions with key "members of the GRI and the University" and recommended that "some paper flags containing the device of the old Sho kings to be used in decorating the various Ryukyuan-American cultural centers." Murray believed the people would accept this design because it derived from Ryukyuan history, implying that the flag effort to introduce a Ryukyuan national flag in 1950 failed because it was too "American" in design. Cautiously optimistic, Murray concluded that the new design

⁷⁵⁹ *Okinawa Asahi*, May 25, 1953. *Ryukyu Shinpô*, May 25, 1953.

might create more “Ryukyuan nationalistic feeling” while, more importantly, “wean them away somewhat from the Japanese.”⁷⁶⁰

USCAR designated Edward Freimuth, USCAR’s primary liaison with the GRI, to assess the flag’s feasibility because his liaison department understood the GRI and the Okinawan “pulse” better than anyone else within USCAR. A week after Murray’s initial proposal, Freimuth responded with an in-depth and thoughtful analysis. Freimuth immediately acknowledged that USCAR faced a problem in implementing Ryukyuanization because the Japanese flag “continues to be the emblem the people are inclined to respect,” and of course, rally around. Fundamentally, as long as the Ryukyus remain a part of Japan, Freimuth believed that by default the people would view the Japanese flag as the “most desired emblem.” To counter this situation, Freimuth believed a Ryukyuan national flag would “create a nationalistic spirit around which the people will automatically rally, and furthermore...give the Government [GRI] an emblem which it can display from its buildings, ships and installations thereby designating them as Ryukyuan.”⁷⁶¹

Freimuth, however, urged that the matter be handled with great care and sensitivity. Since the US acknowledged Japan had “residual sovereignty” over the islands, Freimuth believed designating the Ryukyuan flag as a “national” flag would be “inappropriate” and bound to cause a diplomatic row with Japan. If USCAR decided to introduce a new flag, he urged that it not be done via a “USCAR directive or ordinance,”

⁷⁶⁰ Colonel Walter Murray, Deputy Civil Administrator to Gen. David Ogde, Civil Administrator, Subject: “National Standard for GRI,” July 22, 1954. . RG 260 HCRI-LN, 1603-06, Box 29, Folder: Designs (Flag, others).

⁷⁶¹ Edward Freimuth, USCAR Liaison Officer, to

as a top-down approach would elicit “enmity against the proposal rather than developing a nationalistic feeling.” Freimuth, perhaps addressing the “military mind,” pointed out the obvious, namely that popular support for a “Ryukyu Banner must stem from the people.” Finally, Freimuth urged patience as Ryukyuan acceptance for the new flag would take time. In fact, he warned USCAR that acceptance may never occur because he “doubted that under the present conditions the desire for display of a Ryukyu banner will supplant the desire to display a national emblem as the Japanese flag.” At the same time, acceptance could “possibly be developed with the initial steps already having been taken by CI&E in its Information Centers [Ryukyuan-American Friendship Centers].”⁷⁶²

Various US military units stationed on Okinawa also used the *Tomoebata* to represent their unit’s insignia patch.

⁷⁶² Ibid. Freimuth also questioned the current design, called the *Tomoebata*, based on the Shô royal family’s house colors. Even though “discussions with people in the University at Shuri, the seat of the old kingdom,” have argued the people would accept it, Freimuth wondered if the rest of the people would even know the *Tomoebata* flag was based upon the Shô household, or even more fundamentally, “uncertain whether the same reaction would be received from other than Shuri people.”

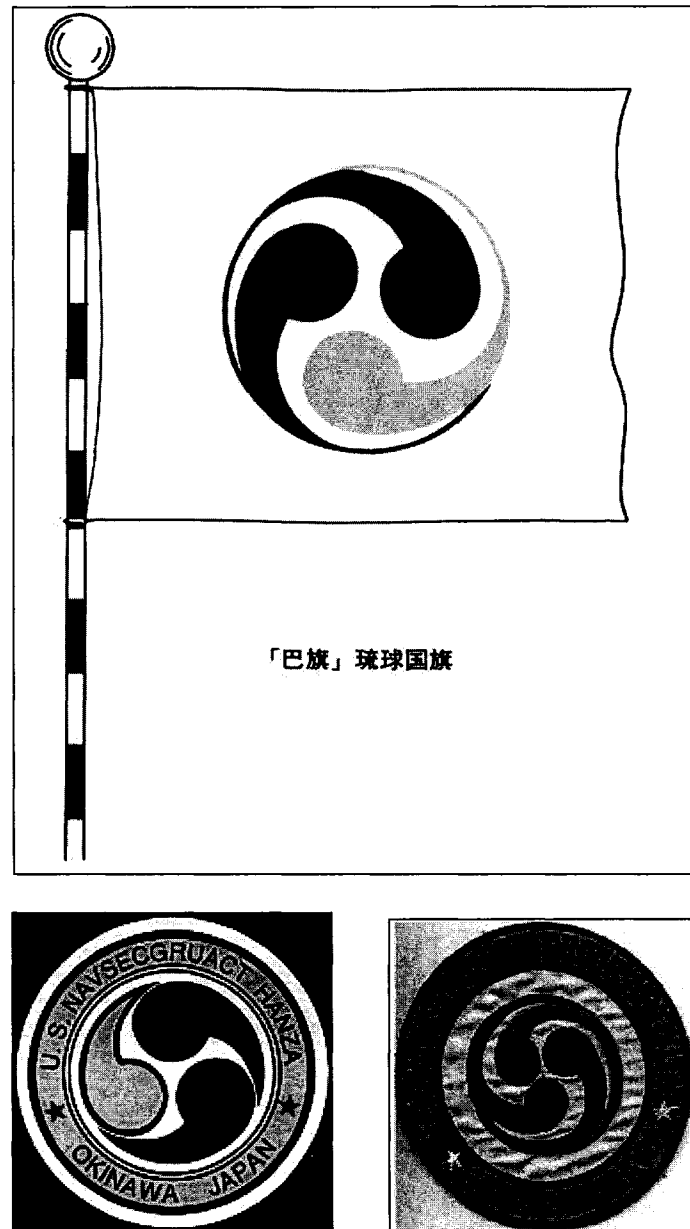


Figure 72 This Ryukyuan Flag, called the *Tomoebata*, was the design used in 1954 to foster Ryukyuan national consciousness. USCAR designed the flag based on the Shô's family crest and colors. The image below shows US military units using the *Tomoebata* to designate their units.⁷⁶³

⁷⁶³ Kanejiro Yuijin. *Ryukyu Kokki no Tomoebata*, (Okinawa: Ryukyu Bunko, 1984), no page number was published for the illustration.

Given the green light from Freimuth's department, USCAR's CI&E department, responsible for implementing Ryukyuanization and Americanization, attempted to use the *Tomoebata* to promote a sense of Okinawan identity. First, they decided to keep the Shô family crest and colors as the new national standard, and thus, "Americans in Okinawa became advocates for a separate Okinawan identity."⁷⁶⁴ CI&E displayed the banners at the Ryukyu-American Friendship Centers with the Stars and Stripes and the *Tomoebata* placed side-by-side. Freimuth, who witnessed this effort, wrote that "unofficial and informal this may have been, the military's printing resources reproduced the crest on paper flags and used them extensively for decorative purposes on strings along with the paper flags of other allied nations."⁷⁶⁵ By placing the Ryukyuan flag along with the Stars and Stripes and other national flags, CI&E officials hoped to confer legitimacy to the Ryukyuan nascent national symbol.

⁷⁶⁴ Edward Freimuth, "Flags for Okinawa," undated ten page report. Freimuth collection.

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid.



Figure 73 Attempt by CI&E officials to indoctrinate young Okinawans to their national flag, *Tomoebata*.⁷⁶⁶

According to Freimuth, however, this subtle attempt failed to garner much attention among Ryukyans as most had no idea what the flag was for or that the flag's design derived from the *Sho* royal family. Freimuth recalled that a CI&E official excitedly asked a young Okinawan man what he thought of the overhead streamers of flags. He looked up and stated "I know the American flag, but what is the one next to it?" The CI&E official responded, "why, that is your national flag!" to which Okinawan replied in a decidedly indifferent manner, "ahhh, is that so?" CI&E officials quickly realized that there the Okinawans had no "organic" identification with the *Tomoebata*.

⁷⁶⁶ Gordon Warner, *The Okinawan Reversion Story: War, Peace, Occupation, Reversion*, (Okinawa: Shoseido Co. Ltd., 1995), 118.

To promote acceptance of the flag, CI&E published little handouts informing Ryukyuan that this flag was their new national flag and more importantly, that the symbols and color of the flag represented the Shô royal family.⁷⁶⁷

USCAR, undaunted by its failure to raise Ryukyuan national consciousness through the *Tomoebata*, next attempted to promote traditional Okinawan music. One USCAR official, Adjunct William Brewer, wrote a letter to Lt. General Donald Booth, who was USCAR's High Commissioner, noting that a prominent Okinawan intellectual, Higaonna Kajun, had made positive remarks about Okinawan music during a recent visit to his native birthplace. Higaonna, who now lived in Japan and taught at Takushoku University in Tokyo, stated that "during my stay in (in Okinawa) I was impressed by the public enthusiasm toward the classic [Ryukyuan] music of Afuso and Nomura Schools, and I felt as if I were listening to the Okinawa March when listening to them." Higaonna's comments inspired Brewer to argue that Okinawan music offered a means to develop a Ryukyuan consciousness. Brewer noted that when Higaonna "listened to the classical music of Okinawa, it impressed him as expressing the spirit of Okinawa, as if Okinawa were on the march." Brewer urged that the 29th Army band investigate whether any Okinawan traditional music could be converted "for use as a march" or "to form a medley march." If successful, Brewer believed the 29th Army band could play the Okinawan march "when it toured Okinawa's schools and other institutions as a part of HICOM's people-to-people program." Other public opportunities included high school graduation or "precision drill demonstrations by the Security Guard." Brewer defended the program on the grounds that the people would appreciate the 29th Army band's

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid.

playing of traditional Okinawan music but more importantly, “would take it as indication that we are taking an interest in their culture.”⁷⁶⁸

Lt. General Donald Booth responded favorably to Brewer’s letter as he ordered a survey of music attitudes in the Okinawan schools. USCAR surveyed Okinawans schools and found that Okinawans placed great emphasis on a music curriculum, but the survey indicated that only 60% of the music teachers were qualified. The results of the survey, Booth believed, offered a public relations opportunity to promote Ryukyuanization through music. From the perspective of positive public relations, “the Pro-Japanese feeling within the school teacher element of Okinawa...the military mission is to gain the good will of the people where the military is based, fare in determining the best method of assisting the people of the Ryukyus Music Program has been taken.” USCAR officials, after assessing the debacle of the flag promotion, believed a US led music program, with careful consideration, “nothing but good will and respect for the military service and the American people could result from this line of endeavor.”⁷⁶⁹ In addition, such an outreach program promised tangential benefits as a music program would offer an appropriate context “to instruct the Ryukyuan on the tempos, styles, orchestrations, etc. that would make their bands and orchestras more fit for employment

⁷⁶⁸ Adjunt William Brewer, CO USAB & VAPAC, to Office of the HICOM, Subject: Okinawan March Music, December 29, 1957. US National Archives II, RG 260 HCRI-PA, CAD 1957-71, Box 107, Folder “29th Army Band-Education Program”.

⁷⁶⁹ Report: “Use of 29th Army Band, RE: Ryukyuan Education Program From-November 1957 Thru February 1960.

US National Archives II, RG 260 HCRI-PA, CAD 1957-71, Box 107, Folder “29th Army Band-Education Program.”

in U.S. clubs and messes.”⁷⁷⁰ Booth subsequently appointed CWO Harry Hollowell, Band Director of the 29th Army Band, to develop a music program that would improve relations.

Booth, however, had a more ambitious agenda as he wanted Hollowell to develop a national anthem for the Ryukyus. Hollowell, in a follow-up report, noted that General Booth “is vitally interested in presenting to the world at large, a march and a musical composition that can be forever identified with the Golden Age of Okinawa and its resurgence.” Booth subsequently directed Hollowell to conceive a meeting with a “fair cross section of the political, literary, musical and sociological life of the Ryukyus.” Hollowell, who met with this distinguished group of Okinawans, discussed which traditional songs to use and urged the group to consider a traditional song that would be acceptable to both Okinawans and Americans. Working together, the committee developed fourteen questions, designed to help compose an appropriate national anthem. For example, one question asked “which music has the same appeal to Okinawans that *Kimigayo* [Japan’s National Anthem] has to the Japanese?” Another asked, “Are there any outstanding things in Okinawa’s past that will always be remembered?” In the end, Hollowell concluded that a “march medley consisting of several of the more popular Okinawan songs,” provided the best path to create a Ryukyuan national anthem.”⁷⁷¹

⁷⁷⁰ Colonel Edward Chagren, Assistant Chief of Staff, to CO, 29th Army Band, June 12, 1958. US National Archives II, RG 260 HCRI-PA, CAD 1957-71, Box 107, Folder “29th Army Band-Education Program.”

⁷⁷¹ Item #4, Questionnaire by CO, 29th Army Band, of Meeting Called by Mr. Houston, USCAR PIO, January 21, 1959. US National Archives II, RG 260 HCRI-PA, CAD 1957-71, Box 107, Folder “29th Army Band-Education Program.”

USCAR did “imagine” what the inaugural performance of a Ryukyuan national anthem would entail. A USCAR document, entitled “Thanksgiving Day Half Time Ceremony,” provided in three pages, a detailed script of how 29th Army Band’s might present the Ryukyuan national anthem during a football half-time show. Although it cannot be confirmed whether this performance actually took place, the script demonstrated USCAR’s investment in creating a Ryukyuan national consciousness. “Ladies and Gentlemen,” the script begins, “For their share of the halftime festivities this afternoon, the 29th Army Band under the baton of CWO Harry H Hollowell takes the field playing the ‘Spirit of the First Division’ March.” The imagined narration continues by pointing out the band’s various formations and traditional US marching songs. Finally, the program advances to the point where the show will present the Ryukyuan national anthem.

As you have probably noticed, some Okinawan school children have formed in the end zone and now following the 29th Army Band back up the field. These children represent the Koza High School Band, directed by Mr. Kina, and the Futenma High School Band who are under the direction of Mr. Minei. When they reach the midfield stripe the Army Band will form a Torii, emblematic of Okinawa, and the Okinawan musicians will encircle the formation and provide the familiar hand-clapping rhythm that accompanies most of the native music here on the island...join in the with the bands in beating out the traditional fishing song ‘Tanchame Bushi.’

The announcer then goes on to explain the historical and cultural context of this hand-clapping, pointing out to the audience that the hand clapping “has become an integral part of most of the modern renditions of the old folk songs here on the island.” Continuing with the description of the performance, the announcer describes:

Coming out of the Torii, the combined bands will mass and salute each other with ‘How-do-you-do-everybody’ and the Okinawan march ‘Silver Queen’ under the direction of CWO Hollowell. To

complete the halftime activities, the bands combine again to leave the field playing the theme song of the United States Army.... 'The Army Goes Rolling Along.' Let's give Mr. Hollowell and His men a big hand as they leave for really enjoyable and thrilling half-time show....⁷⁷²

No evidence exists that the 29th Army Band ever played "Silver Queen" for Okinawan audiences. But evidence does show that the 29th Army performed at the Ryukyuan-American Friendship centers in Nago, Ishikawa and Naha. In addition to playing at the Centers, the memorandum also had Hollowell's band playing at five to seven additional venues in locations adjacent to each Centers. In total, from November 19 to January 15, the 29th Army Band played seventeen concerts throughout Okinawa, and at minimum, illustrated USCAR's attempt to promote US-Ryukyuan relations by playing traditional Okinawan music. Based on USCAR's track record to promote Ryukyuanization coupled with Hollowell's eagerness to produce a national anthem, one could reasonably assume that the "Silver Queen" was part of the performance. In repeated inquiries to various Okinawans who might have had some contact with this anthem effort, not one can recall ever hearing a national anthem played. Thus, it would seem reasonable to infer that USCAR officials came to perceive that there was little public interest, as in the case of the *Tomoebata*, for a national anthem. Nevertheless, this entire anthem saga unequivocally demonstrated USCAR's intent to promote Ryukyuan national identity whenever the opportunity presented itself.⁷⁷³

⁷⁷² "Thanksgiving Day Half Time Ceremony," author and date unknown. US National Archives II, RG 260 HCRI-PA, CAD 1957-71, Box 107, Folder "29th Army Band-Education Program."

⁷⁷³ Carl Bartz, Director of Office of Public Information USCAR, to Lt. Col. Hood, Coordinator USARYIS PIO, Subject: 29th Army Band Concert Schedule, November 14, 1957.

Postal stamps and envelopes mentioned previously provided another means USCAR used to promote public consciousness of Ryukyuan history and culture. In the immediate aftermath of the war, there was no effective postal service but as recovery progressed, the Navy's Military Government created a postal system and appointed Hirata Shiich the first postmaster. Hirata, with encouragement from civil affairs officers such as Hanna, Caldwell, and Watkins who were promoting Ryukyuan nation building, requested SCAP to "approve the printing of special stamps for the Ryukyu Islands." Hanna, who had already sponsored Okinawan artists (Chapter 3) introduced Hirata to Higa Shutaro, who developed three designs on the theme of Ryukyuan independence. MG officials forwarded these designs to SCAP in early 1946.

The first design was a depiction of the Ryukyuan kingdom royal crown, called *Tamanchapue*, which the Ming dynasty presented to the Ryukyu court as a symbol of the vassal-state relationship. Shurei gate (*Shureimon*) and the *Mitsudomoe*, the royal crest of the Ryukyuan kingdom were the other two stamp designs submitted. Higa, with approval from Hanna, deliberately choose three designs that reflected Ryukyuan statehood. SCAP, however, rejected all three proposals because these stamps "might possibly be taken as propaganda for the reestablishment of the Kingdom of the Ryukyus, favoring the Ryukyuan dynasty." SCAP officials did not necessarily oppose an independent Ryukyus, but believed the reestablishment of a monarchy "are contrary to the concepts of the establishment of a democratic system in the Ryukyus." SCAP, therefore, advised MG to design stamps "more appropriate to the concepts of democracy in the Ryukyus."⁷⁷⁴

⁷⁷⁴ Hirata Shiichi, translated by Nobu Vogel, *Handbook and Specialized Catalogue of the Postal Issues of the Ryukyu (Liu Ch'iu) Islands (Issued under United States Administration) Part VII*, (Berkely, The Ryukyu Philatelic Specialist Society, LTD., 1982), 35.

SCAP subsequently approved two new designs featuring a Ryukyuan trading ship, the *Tosen*, in the era when the Ryukyu Kingdom was a major trade center. The second stamp, bore an illustration of a Ryukyuan farmer depicted as “carri[ng] a hoe and labors for increased production for the rehabilitation to the Ryukyus.”⁷⁷⁵ Proud of their inaugural accomplishment, Hirata, along with Okinawa Governor Shikiya, presented a “Certificate of Appreciation to Assistant Military Governor Craiq, in recognition of the importance of the event in Ryukyuan postal history.” This auspicious start, however, grounded to a halt during the era of apathy and neglect.



Figure 74 The first stamps produced by Okinawans after the war. On the left is the "Tosen" stamp and on the right is the "Gallant Farmer" stamp. These two stamps were issued in July 1948.⁷⁷⁶

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid., 35-36.

⁷⁷⁶ Author's photos.

Sheetz's arrival in 1949 led to changes in the stamps. Sheetz, like SCAP, understood that "postage designs can be used for propaganda purposes" and used stamps to promote both the Ryukyuanization and Americanization programs. Throughout the occupation period, stamps designs were not innocuous, but reflected deliberate and conscious choices made within a political context. One design commemorated the restoration of Shureimon, the grand gate to Shuri castle in 1958. . General Booth, USCAR's High Commissioner (HICOM), presided over the celebration. Speaking in front of a large crowd, Booth said "even to my untrained eye, it is evident that the gate, though over 400 years old, is no mere imitation of Chinese nor Japanese construction, but is a distinctively Ryukyuan creation." Booth commended the effort to restore "one of your most important assets," because "cultural assets of a country make a people what they are today" and "offer a priceless spiritual nourishment." USCAR also wanted to remind the audience that the restoration was made possible only by direct American financial support, a task left to the chairman of the Cultural Assets Committee. Chairman Yamazato dutifully stated the "reconstruction of this gate was first launched by the Ryukyuan-American Friendship Committee with a donation." To commemorate the auspicious day, the GRI issued the following stamp and envelope.



Figure 75 Stamp and envelope commemoration of the rebuilding of *Shureimon*.

The popularity of the *Shureimon* stamp and envelope led USCAR to develop a special program called “Cultural Property Protection Week,” held on the first week of November. To publicize US financial support to preserve, restore, and highlight unique Ryukyuan historical sites. USCAR reinforced this campaign through a special series of stamps and envelopes which simultaneously fulfilled two objectives.



Figure 76 The rebuilding of the main gate to Enkaku Temple.⁷⁷⁷

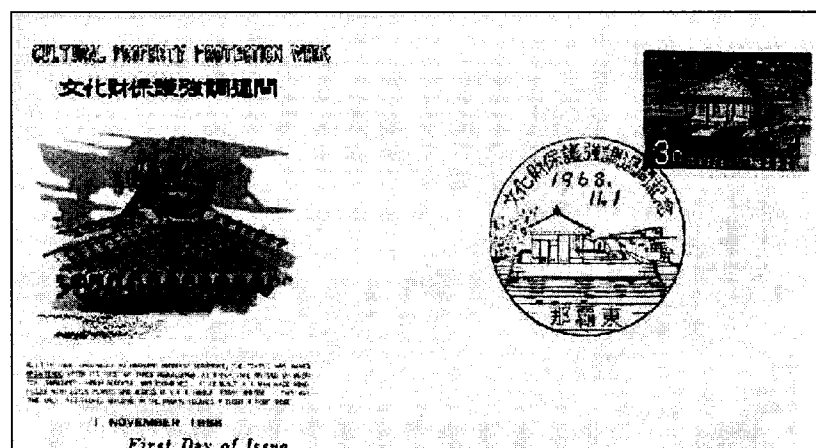


Figure 77 Bezaitendo Temple stamp and envelope.⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷⁷ The caption under the Enkaku drawing states: "The Sômôn of Enkaku Temple first built in 1494 was destroyed during WWII. It was the first and main gate of the temple opening onto the Hojo Pond which was spanned by the Hojo stone bridge recently reassembled in place. Two lesser gates in the stone wall flanked the Sômôn."

⁷⁷⁸ The caption under the drawing states: "Built in 1502, originally to enshrine Buddhist scripture, the temple was named Bezaitendo after its first of three rebuildings, at which time an idol of Bezaiten

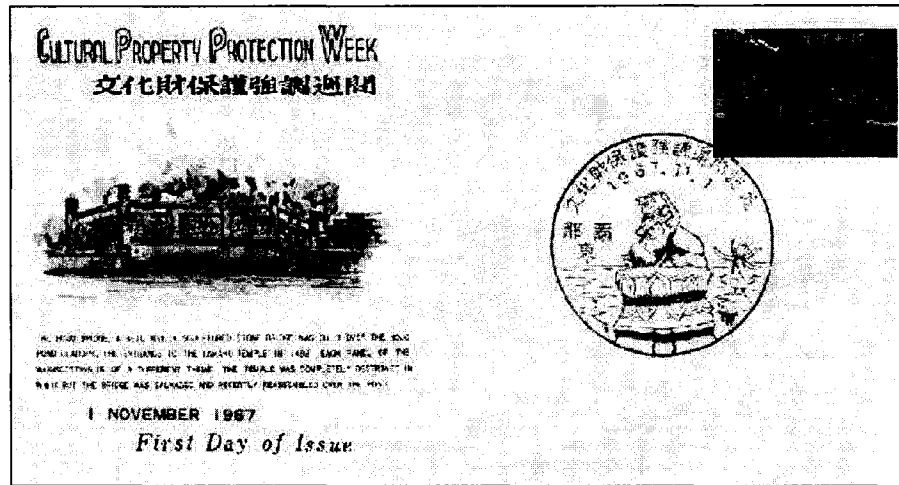


Figure 78 Cultural Property Protection Week: Hojo Bridge.⁷⁷⁹



Figure 79 Cultural Property Protection Week, the Nakamura House.⁷⁸⁰

(Saraswati-Hindu Goddess) was enshrined. It is built in a man made pond filled with lotus plants and access is via a unique stone bridge. This was the only tile-roofed building in the Ryukyu Islands without a roof ridge.”

⁷⁷⁹ The caption under the painting of the Hojo bridge reads: “The Hojo Bridge, a beautifully sculptured stone bridge over the Hojo Pond guarding the entrance to the Enkaku Temple in 1498. Each panel of the wainscoting is of a different theme. The temple was completely destroyed in WWII but the bridge was salvaged and recently reassembled over the pond.”

In 1956, USCAR also used stamps and envelopes to promote Ryukyuan traditional arts, culture and festivities. The “Ryukyuan Folk Dance Issue” was the first one dedicated stamp/envelope to Ryukyuan culture. The three stamps on the envelope reflect three styles of dance, dress, weaving, and fabric unique to the Ryukyus. The woman depicted in the drawing reflected what most consider to be the most famous Ryukyuan textile called *Bingata*. Even the red stamp in the middle of the envelope denoted a style of hat found only in the Ryukyus.

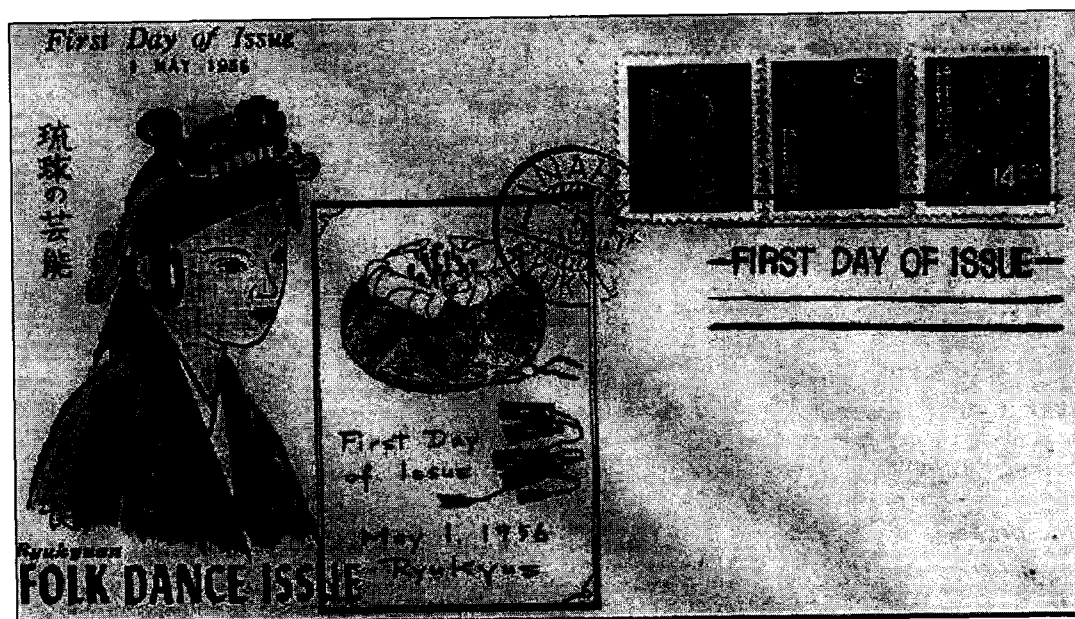


Figure 80 First day issue of the Ryukyuan Folk Dance Series.⁷⁸¹

⁷⁸⁰ The caption under the painting of the Nakamura House reads: “A typical rich farmer’s home of the feudal era, the over 200-year old Nakamura House is the last of its kind and still in the original family. The yard, enclosed by a 2½ M high stone wall and a row of fire resistant trees, contains the 5-room main house, a 2-room guest house, an animal barn and unique granary. (The upper half for grain, the lower half for tools.)

⁷⁸¹ Author’s photograph.

The *Folk Dance Issue* inspired a new series called the “Traditional Festivities Series” that highlighted traditional festivals found only in the Ryukyus. Other cultural practices unique to the Ryukyus were also promoted, such as Karate.

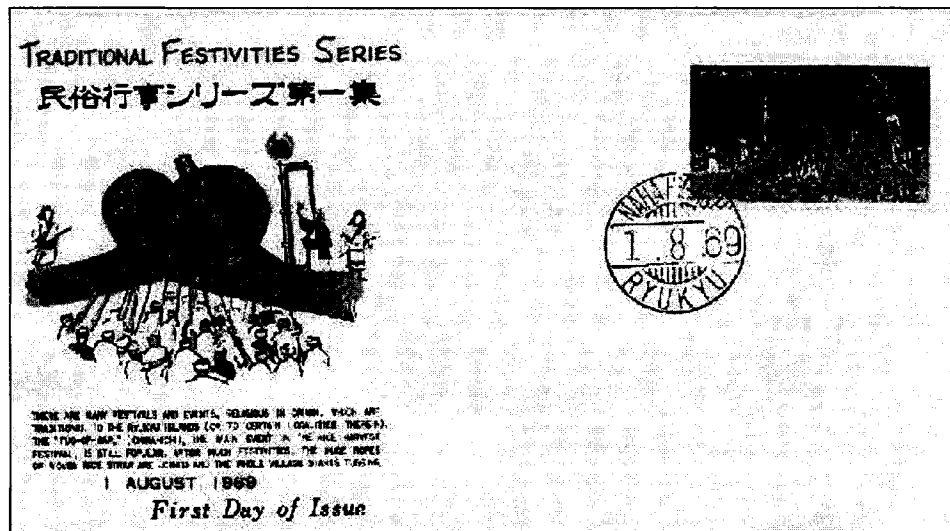


Figure 81 Traditional Okinawan Folk Series.

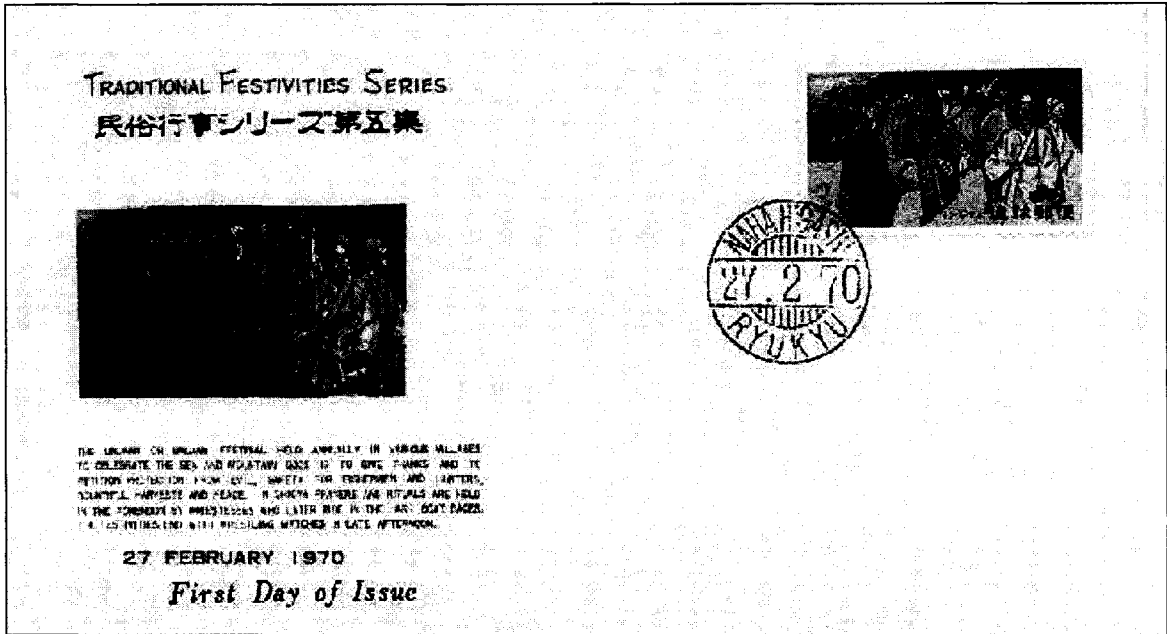


Figure 82 Traditional Okinawan Festival Series.

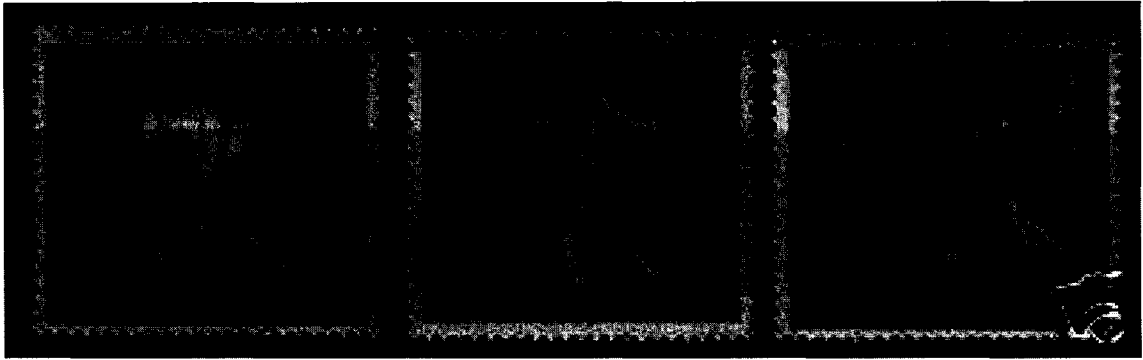


Figure 83 Okinawa Karate was another popular stamp series.

The “Great Man Series” was another notable effort of Ryukyuanization by showcasing great leaders and statesman from Ryukyuan history.



Figure 84 "Great Man Series." From left to right, Sai On, Giwan Choho, Nakachi Chijin, and Jahana Noboru.⁷⁸²

⁷⁸² “Ryukyuan Postage Stamps from the Period of US Military Rule, 1945-72.” <http://www.east-asian-history.net/ryukyu/graphics/01.htm>

USCAR, as mentioned previously with the restoration of *Shureimon* in 1958, belatedly realized US respect for Ryukyuan history and culture was an important means to convey respect toward a people that historically have enjoyed little respect from outsiders. George Kerr, a USCAR consultant, candidly pointed out to USCAR that “the biggest and most consistent failures has been the neglect of the rich Ryukyuan cultural heritage.” Exploiting the history and culture undoubtedly would have provided a “feeling of national consciousness,” but the failure to do so has led many to “dislike being addressed as Ryukyuan.”⁷⁸³ A former USCAR official, James Tull, echoed Kerr’s stating that pride in being Ryukyuan was “at a low ebb,” but he was sanguine that if the US promoted cultural preservation, “the reversion movement might be lessened.”⁷⁸⁴ Beginning in 1953, USCAR initiated a systematic approach to the rehabilitation of Okinawan cultural and historical sites with emphasis on reconstruction projects in Shuri because the former kingdom’s capital was the key to resurrecting Okinawans’ links to their past. . USCAR built Shuri Museum, Shuri High School, the reconstruction of *Sonohyan Utaki*, which was a shrine of the Fire God that the battle had destroyed, and stood symbolically “near the entrance of the University in Shuri,” and the crown jewel, *Shureimon*. Each project touched “on the religious life, the cultural life, and the education life of the past.” In the end, USCAR believed the “psychological value of a demonstration of American interest in them would far outweigh the necessary cost in

⁷⁸³ George Kerr, “Memorandum to Harold Coolidge, Executive Secretary Pacific Science Board,” June 28, 1952. Folder “Proposed ‘Tension’ Project (An Investigation of the beginning of the Reversionist Movement of the 1950s)” located in the University of the Ryukyus Library, Kerr Collection. Accessed on February 3, 2000.

⁷⁸⁴ Tull, Okinawa, US Newest Colony, 91-93.

dollars or yen.”⁷⁸⁵ USCAR officials took advantage of every project to conduct a photo-op that was widely distributed in Okinawan newspapers.



Figure 85 CAPTION: “HISTORIC WALL RESTORED. Brigadier General James M. Lewis, Civil Administrator, Ryukyus Command, places the first shovel of cement at the base of the historic Sojenji Stone Wall which was partially destroyed during the bombardment of Naha, Okinawa.”⁷⁸⁶

⁷⁸⁵ George Kerr, “Memorandum for the Civil Administrator, USCAR,” on the subject of “Cultural Rehabilitation: Three Recommended Reconstruction Projects.” October 3, 1952. Folder “SIRI & USCAR Correspondence” located in the University of the Ryukyus Library, Kerr Collection. Accessed on February 3, 2000.

⁷⁸⁶ USCAR photo and subsequent press release, April 14, 1953. Okinawa Prefecture Archives.

USCAR used its two radio stations, AKAR and KSAR, to broadcast items that depicted the US in a positive light, promoted US-Ryukyuan relations or showcased Ryukyuan culture. USCAR even mandated that whenever possible Okinawan broadcasters speak in the native language, *Uchinaaguchi*, instead of standard Japanese.⁷⁸⁷ With the signing of the Peace Treaty with Japan in 1952, USCAR noted that Japan's primary news organization, NHK, was no longer under SCAP control and censorship rules. "To protect the command [USCAR] against possible inimical broadcasts," USCAR decided "to record, translate, and censor all [NHK] news broadcasts." USCAR ordered the radio news to emphasize the danger of communism, US efforts to combat communism, and to highlight constructive efforts of the United States towards peace.⁷⁸⁸

USCAR also employed radio broadcasts to cultivate Ryukyuanization. USCAR commissioned a study to find out what the Okinawan public wanted. The survey revealed great interest in international and local news, which forced USCAR to find a means to make up for the loss of NHK news and programs. In response, USCAR sponsored and financed local quiz, drama, songs, orchestra, theater, and news programs to replace NHK programs. To facilitate the local production of these programs, USCAR sent "sound truck crews to farm and fishing villages to make recordings of regional achievements, music, and opinion." The survey also showed Okinawans "particularly

⁷⁸⁷ Miyagi Etsujirô, *Okinawa•Sengo Hôso Shi*, (Okinawa: Hirugi Sha, 1994), 349.

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 281.

enjoyed music of their own islands.” Consequently, USCAR committed to build a permanent record library of Ryukyuan folk tunes, not available commercially.⁷⁸⁹

USCAR increased programming on AKAR and KSAR to promote greater Okinawan identification with America to combat “depreciating attitude and inferiority reaction of Ryukyuan.” USCAR attempted to “combat” this attitude by developing a program called “Report from America.” This program “comprised of enthusiastic letters written by Ryukyuan GARIOA students in America” conveyed the wonders of American democratic society.⁷⁹⁰ The radio stations also used returning GARIOA students to broadcast special program, “Basic English Lessons,” that emphasized American lifestyle and democratic values. USCAR, in particular, used radio programs to exploit American-Ryukyuan accomplishments and cooperation through use of sound-truck recordings of major events, studio interviews, and spot and public address announcements. USCAR placed special emphasis on programs that showed the friendly acts by American troops and civilians who aid or entertain Ryukyuan. For example, USCAR wanted the programs to highlight donations to medical and welfare causes, contributions to the University, and Ryukyuan Shipwreck rescues by the U.S. Navy. In the end, USCAR used radio, like philatelic programs, to exploit every possible avenue that promoted an identity gap with Japan.⁷⁹¹

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid., 282.

⁷⁹⁰ GARIOA, Government Agency Relief in Occupied Areas, was a similar to the Marshall Plan, except it was designated for areas under US occupation.

⁷⁹¹ Ibid.

Magazines offered another powerful medium to influence public opinion. In 1959, the US Army PSYOPS (Psychological Operations Unit) unit based on Okinawa, published its own Japanese language magazine called *Shurei no Hikari* (*The Luminous Light of Shurei-mon*). Two years later, USCAR began publication of a Japanese language magazine entitled *Konnichi no Ryukyu* (*Ryukyus Today*). Although published by two different military entities, *Konnichi no Ryukyu* and *Shurei no Hikari* shared a common goal as both attempted to “deepen mutual understanding between Ryukyuan and Americans...” as the “development of the Ryukyu Islands is our mutual purpose.” Both magazines, distributed for free, were primarily aimed at educated and middle to upper strata of Okinawan society. Each magazine had a monthly circulation of 22,000 the majority and were distributed within the islands and to Okinawans living abroad in Japan, Hawaii, Latin America, and Ryukyuan students studying in the U.S.⁷⁹²

At a substantial cost, both magazines averaged forty pages, contained a colorful glossy front cover, substantial black and white pictures throughout, and in the middle of each magazine several pages of glossy color photos. *Konnichi no Ryukyu* informed readers that the “covers are original paintings by Ryukyuan, and illustrations and photographs are primarily by Ryukyuan.” In the first issue of *Shurei no Hikari*, the editorial stated the magazine “aspires to become a gate-way whereby Ryukyuan and Americans may come to understand more of our two ways of life, and exchange ideas for the mutual benefit of all.” As with the philatelic and radio efforts, *Konnichi no Ryukyu* and *Shurei no Hikari* stressed friendly US-Ryukyuan relations, American benevolence

⁷⁹² USCAR Public Affairs Department, April 1, 1967. RG 260, HCRI-PAD CAD- 1957-71, Box 119, Folder “6th Science Youth Day.” US National Archives II.

toward the Ryukyus, Okinawan travels and experiences in the US, and Ryukyuan cultural and history.⁷⁹³

The 1967, 114th issue of *Konnichi no Ryukyu* typified the content reflected in both magazines. The magazine's cover presented an original artwork by an Okinawan artist, Aiba Tatsuo, who painted a colorful *shishi* (cross between a lion and a dog placed on roofs to protect buildings from wayward spirits), an iconic symbol of Okinawan culture. The magazine devoted six pages to US Ambassador to Japan, U. Alexis speech delivered in Naha. Johnson's speech, "Okinawa-A Most Important part of Asia" emphasized Okinawa's strategic significance as "what happens in Okinawa affects the future of peace and freedom in the rest of Asia." Both magazines devoted considerable space to Okinawan history or US-Okinawan relations, and this issue was no different as a former Okinawan exchange student to the University of Missouri, Yoshida Kensei, wrote an article entitled "Century-Old Relationship Between Okinawa and United States: History of the Okinawa Club of North America." Yoshida emphasized that Okinawans formed immigrant organizations independent from similar Japanese-American organizations. In addition, the issue followed the established practice of devoting considerable space to USCAR's "benevolent" projects that improved Okinawa in some manner. For example, it highlighted, replete with photographs, USCAR's High Commissioner, Lt. General F. T. Unger, visit to Kumejima island. Unger visited the small island for four days to

⁷⁹³ "Editorial," *Shurei no Hikari*, January, 1959, 3.

commemorate the new harbor and airport, and the article emphasized USCAR's financial contribution to both projects, \$150,000 and \$133,800 respectively.⁷⁹⁴

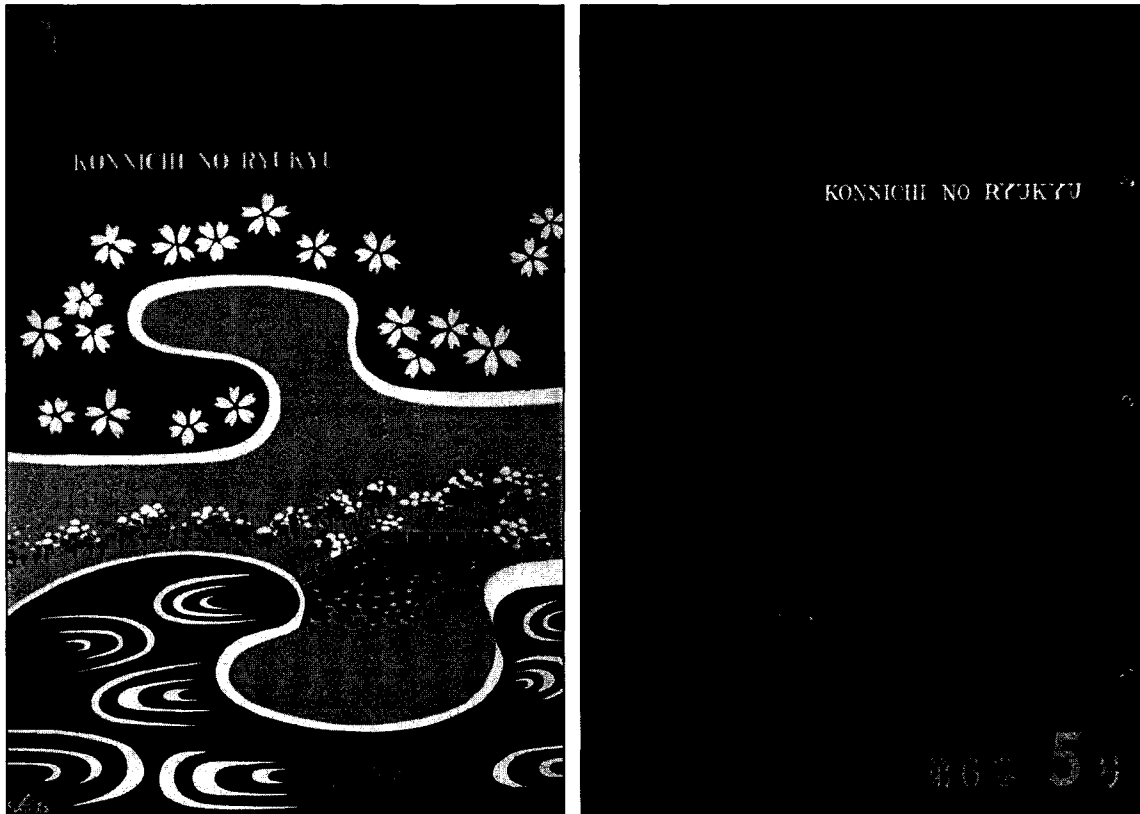


Figure 86 Magazine covers from *Konnichi no Ryukyu*. *Konnichi no Ryukyu* showcased original art with some Okinawan theme done by Okinawan artists. The left cover, in particular, shows the official seal of the Ryukyu Kingdom.

⁷⁹⁴ *Konnichi no Ryukyu*, Vol. 11, No. 4, Issue 114, April 1, 1967. In the late 1960s, USCAR conducted an extensive readership survey for the two magazines and results showed both were popular, especially the articles on Okinawan history called "Eminent Men," and "Legends of the Ryukyus."



Figure 87 Magazine covers from *Shurei no Hikari*. *Shurei no Hikari* covers tended to show photographs of modern Okinawa with emphasis on American efforts to improve Okinawa's infrastructure.⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁹⁵ Author's photographs.

USCAR'S Ryukyuan-American Cultural Centers, however, remained the most conspicuous and effective means to promote Ryukyuanization. USCAR constructed three centers in Okinawa's primary cities of Naha, Nago, Ishikawa and on the islands of Yaeyama and Miyako. These centers became one of the primary means to promote Okinawan ethno nationalism. The Centers continuously held performances of Ryukyuan folk songs and dances, exhibitions of Ryukyuan art, pottery, and handicrafts, lectures on Ryukyuan history and philosophy, and displays of cultural artifacts. USCAR distributed, for free, *Konnichi no Ryukyu* and *Shikari Hikari* as both magazines provided the Center's calendar of events as well as prominently displaying Center activities with color photos and extensive articles. The children activities, libraries and films, coupled with the fact that all performances and activities were free, made the Centers popular for Okinawans. USCAR insured the Center's cultural performances and history lectures enjoyed a broader audience by recording many Center activities and then broadcasting the programs on AKAR and KSAR. The Center's also became regional headquarters for USCAR's outreach program to rural areas. Each center had several AV trucks dedicated to show movies, record local performances, bring Center exhibits to local villages, and as a library on wheels.⁷⁹⁶

Each Center created programs tailored to appeal to a broad spectrum of Okinawan society as children, young adults, and adults found programs catered for each group. In addition, each center also made gender specific programs, such as women's clubs or agrarian exhibits for men. The Centers' outreach to more rural sectors was quite sophisticated as each Center possessed a mobile library unit and mobile AV units to either show current movies or broadcast taped performances of traditional Okinawan

⁷⁹⁶ Okinawa Sengo Seikatsu Shi, (Okinawa: Okinawa Taimusu Sha, 1998, 123-129.

music. The following table and photos illustrates each center's attendance and the popularity of the programs.

Table 6 Cultural Center Monthly Statistical Report, March 1961. ⁷⁹⁷

	Naha Culture Center	Nago Culture Center	Ishikawa Cultural Center	Miyako Cultural Center	Yaeyama Cultural Center	Total
<i>Children's and Young People's Activities</i>						
Attendance	160	1,042	230	N/A	1,729	3,161
<i>Adult Activities</i>						
Attendance	1,817	627	1,091	4,329	1,088	3,952
<i>Special Activities</i>						
Attendance	6,284	22,646	5,368	503	2,952	37,396
<i>Library Activities</i>						
Attendance	10,413	9,670	9,757	2,915	4,211	36,966
Circulation	8,716	2,621	10,002	23,843	4,637	49,614
<i>Mobile-Library Activities</i>						
Attendance	5,234	3,985	5,518	2,260	1,993	18,990
Circulation	620	15,920	1,639	241	7,918	26,338
<i>Film Use</i>						
Attendance	546	6,303	5,200	5,518	1,993	19,560
Number of Shows	4	31	16	7	26	84
<i>Mileage, Gas and Oil Consumption for Mobile Activities</i>						
Total Miles Travelled	1,489	1,613	1,611	--	--	4,713
Gallons of Gas Used	141.1	119.5	112.0	--	--	372.6
Quarts of Oil Used	5.0	3.5	2.0	--	--	10.5

⁷⁹⁷ "Ryukyuan-American Cultural Center Monthly Statistic Report," March, 1961. Box 109 "Monthly, Quarterly, Semiannual and Annual Reports: Cultural Centers," HCRI-PA CAD "USIS Memor to Smithsonian," RG 260, US National Archives II.

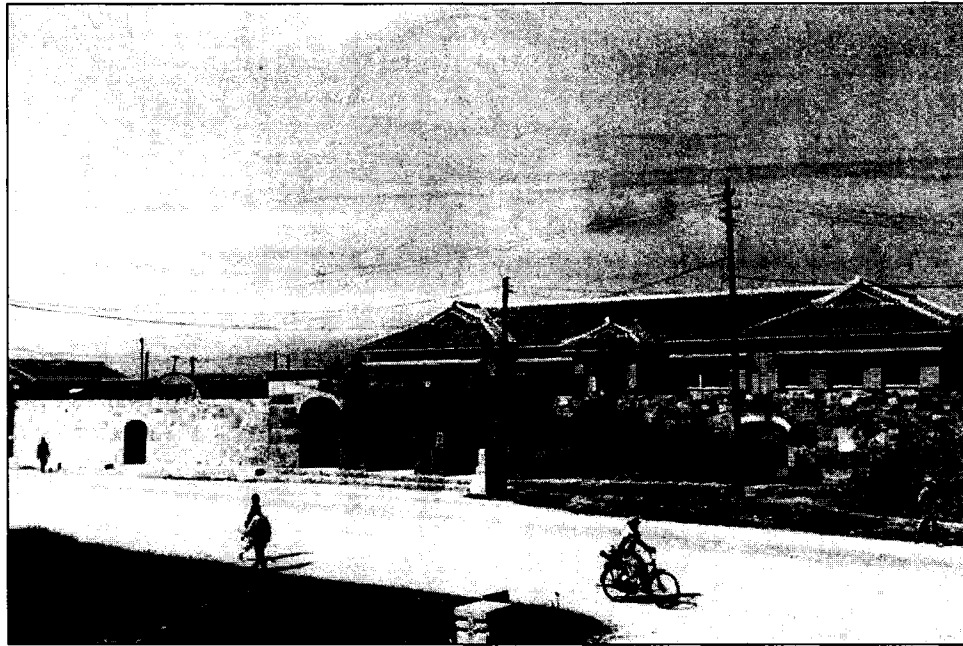


Figure 88 Top Photo: The crown jewel of the Centers was built in Naha. To maximize USCAR's "respect" for Ryukyuan culture, they built the Center on the ruins of Sogenji, the burial ground of the Shô royal family. Bottom Photo: Sponsored by the Ryukyuan-American Culture Center in Nago, a band performs at the Gosaki Shrine Plaza. The black truck in the center of the picture is the Center's mobile AV unit.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁸ Okinawa Ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Naha: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 103.

The Centers promoted Ryukyu-US friendship week and were conducted by USCAR during the first week of May, which originally derived from the 1953 efforts to commemorate the 100 year anniversary of Perry's arrival to the Ryukyus. The most popular events were head-to-head matches between Okinawans and US military personnel, especially in baseball. Shimabukuro Koki, an instructor in the engineering department at University of the Ryukyus, recalled as a teenager watching a championship game between the Okinawans and the Americans. The Okinawan team prevailed in a close match, which he said was one of the happiest days of his life, enhanced by the fact "the US soldiers were visibly upset at the loss."⁷⁹⁹



Figure 89 Large crowds assembled for a karate demonstration held during "American – Ryukyuan Friendship Week."

⁷⁹⁹ Ryukyuan-American Cultural Center Quarterly-Semi Annual Report," 1957-1960. Box 109 "Monthly, Quarterly, Semiannual and Annual Reports: Cultural Centers," HCRI-PA CAD "USIS Memo to Smithsonian," RG 260, US National Archives III Interview conducted in June, 1991.



Figure 90 Photo shows another large crowd assembled to watch traditional Ryukyuan dance performance during American-Ryukyuan Friendship Week.⁸⁰⁰

Americanization

A parallel program to Ryukyuanization was USCAR's program of Americanization. Americanization also attempted to minimize Okinawan's identification with Japan by fostering greater ideological, economic, social, and political linkages with the US. Americanization, USCAR believed, would generate a conviction among the people that

democracy as practiced in the United States is worth emulating; the core of democracy is a respect for individual liberties and human rights—a concept, underlying American social organization, which has provided the spark and catalyst for the

⁸⁰⁰ Okinawa Ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Naha: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 103.

freedom, productivity and strength of this country; the American people are worthy allies who can assist...Ryukyans to provide a spiritual drive to their democratic aspirations; their hearts must join their minds in a genuine urge to cooperate, learn, and share.⁸⁰¹

Since Japan did not have a long tradition of democracy, USCAR hoped that Okinawans would become convinced that their aspirations for political autonomy would be better nurtured under American auspices. In addition, USCAR promoted the idea that America's superior standard of living was a function of its democratic heritage, and hence, a close relationship to American promised prosperity.

Americanization followed both a top-down approach and a grassroots approach. The top-down approach emphasized nurturing and exposing Okinawan political, economic, and intellectual elite to first-hand experience in the US. One such program was the National Leader Program that "dispatch[ed] to the United States (including Hawaii and in certain missions Puerto Rico) leading Ryukyuan professional, business and governmental personnel to see at first hand the American political, social and economic scene." In 1952, for example, USCAR sent nine different missions that experienced various facets of American.

⁸⁰¹ USCAR CI&E, Comprehensive Evaluative Report on National Leader Program," February 8, 1952. Freimuth Files

Table 7 Mission title and number of participants in the Leadership Program for 1952. 802

MISSION TITLE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	MONTH OF IMPLEMENTATION
Labor	4	August 1952
Electric Power	4	August 1952
Judicial	4	September 1952
Legislature	4	September 1952
Police Legislature	5	September 1952
Banking and Finance	5	October 1952
Women & Culture	4	April 1953
Education	4	April 1953
Tax Administration	4	May 1953

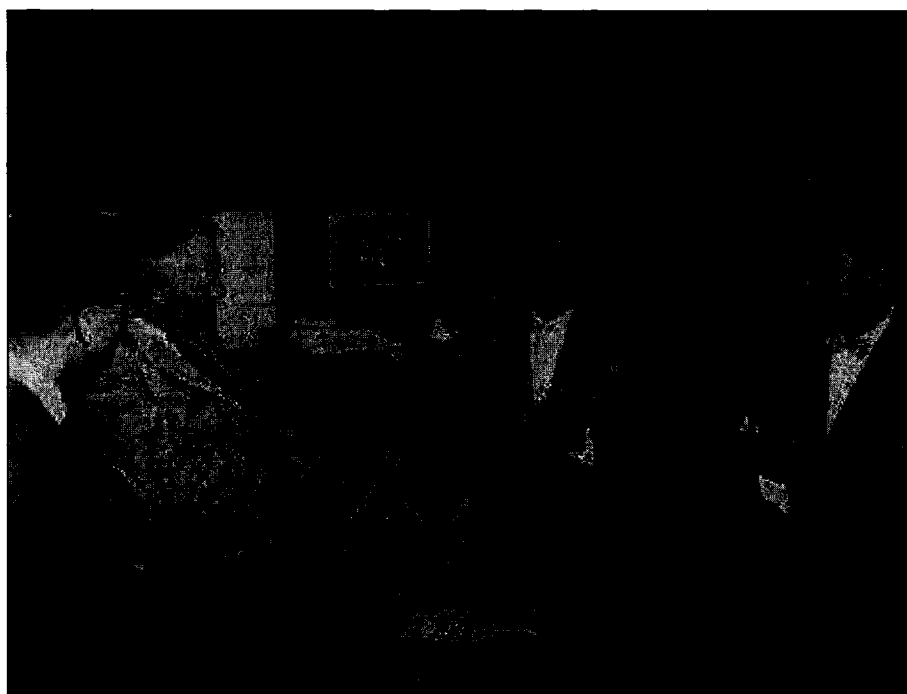


Figure 91 “The managing director of the Ryukyu Broadcasting Company and the president of Nankai Jiho newspaper of Yaeyama visit” USCAR officials after their participation in the National Leadership Program.⁸⁰³

⁸⁰² Ibid.

⁸⁰³ Okinawa Ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Naha: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 133.

Okinawan participants spent anywhere from two weeks to several months on these junkets. USCAR would find an appropriate host, such as Federal Security Agency, Department of the Interior, American Press Institute, etc. that would lavish attention upon their Okinawan guests. The participants were given ample time to visit iconic American sites and then were encouraged to write up their favorable impressions/experiences for publication in *Konnichi no Ryukyu* and *Shurei no Hikari*.

The National Leadership Program, however, had somewhat limited effect as the elite often generally represented an older generation who tended to identify with Japan. USCAR, therefore, concentrated on younger Okinawans, most of whom had no direct experience or relationship with Japan. USCAR believed granting GARIOA scholarships to students, would provide “Ryukyuan students with an exposure to United States standards of education, culture and democracy.” More importantly for USCAR, returning “Americanized” students would occupy “prominent official positions in the Ryukyuan society.” USCAR hoped this new generation of Okinawan elite, by default of their American college experience, would naturally identify with the US instead of Japan. USCAR awarded 1,087 students scholarships to the US and many of these students, such as Ôta Masahide, became prominent figures in Okinawan society.⁸⁰⁴

⁸⁰⁴ Ota received his MA in journalism from Cornell University.

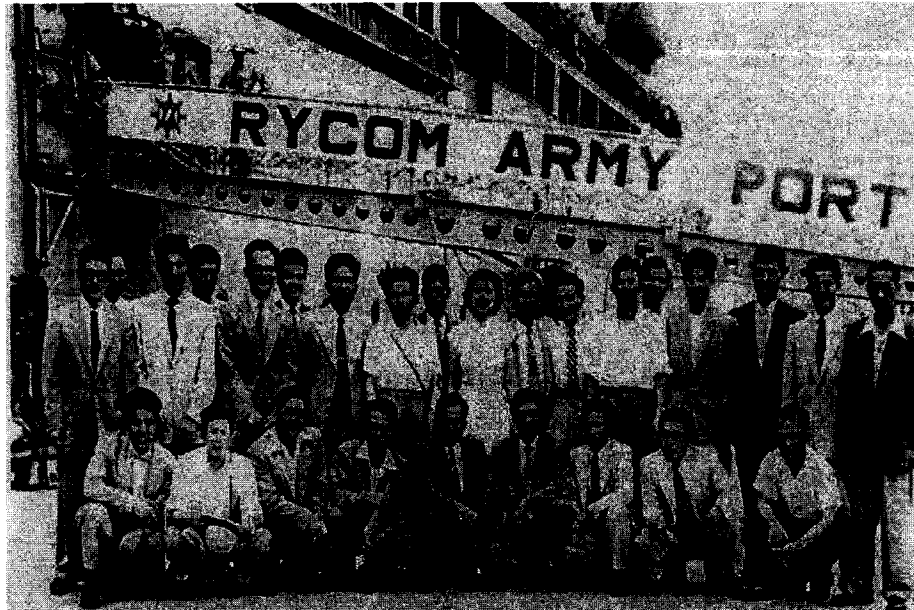


Figure 92 GARIOA scholarship students preparing for the departure to the US, July 12, 1954.⁸⁰⁵

To enhance the American orientation of these students, USCAR created an exclusive alumni organization called the Golden Gate Club. USCAR's High Commissioner and other notable USCAR officials hosted the club's members at the Harborview Hotel, which was the most prestigious and luxurious hotel in Okinawa. Over martinis and steak, the High Commissioner cultivated an elitist atmosphere, reminding the students that their privilege status in society was a result of US support. Those who responded favorably to USCAR's overtures were often rewarded with prime employment opportunities within USCAR and GRI or were given scholarships to pursue graduate studies in the US.⁸⁰⁶ USCAR "encouraged" GARIOA students to write articles for

⁸⁰⁵ Okinawa Ken, *Okinawa Sengo 50 Nen no Ayumi*, (Naha: Naha Shuppan Sha, 1995), 132-133.

⁸⁰⁶ Teruya Yoshihiko and Yamazato Teruya eds., *Sengo Okinawa to Amerika*, (Okinawa: Ryukyu Daigaku Amerika Kenkyu Kai, 1995), 494-508.

publication in *Konnichi no Ryukyu* and *Shurei no Hikari*. Takaesu Toshimitsu was one such student who wrote “My one-year study in the United States” for *Konnichi no Ryukyu*. Takaesu, who studied obtained his law degree at Tulsa University in New Orleans, wrote a glowing account of his studies and of his many travels in the US.⁸⁰⁷ Upon his return, the Naha Public Prosecutor’s Office hired Takaesu as one of their lawyers.



Figure 93 Photo of Golden Gate Club members for “surf and turf” at the Harborview Hotel. 808

⁸⁰⁷ Takaesu Toshimitsu, “My one-year study in the United States,” *Konnichi no Ryukyu*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 1, 1970, 30-32. During his one year at Tulsa, USCAR arranged for Takaesu to visit Kansas City, Indianapolis, Columbus, Cleveland, Buffalo, Toledo, Chicago, Niagara Falls, Houston, San Antonio, Fort Worth, Dallas, Mobile, Montgomery, Atlanta, Washington D. C., Philadelphia, and New York City.

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid.

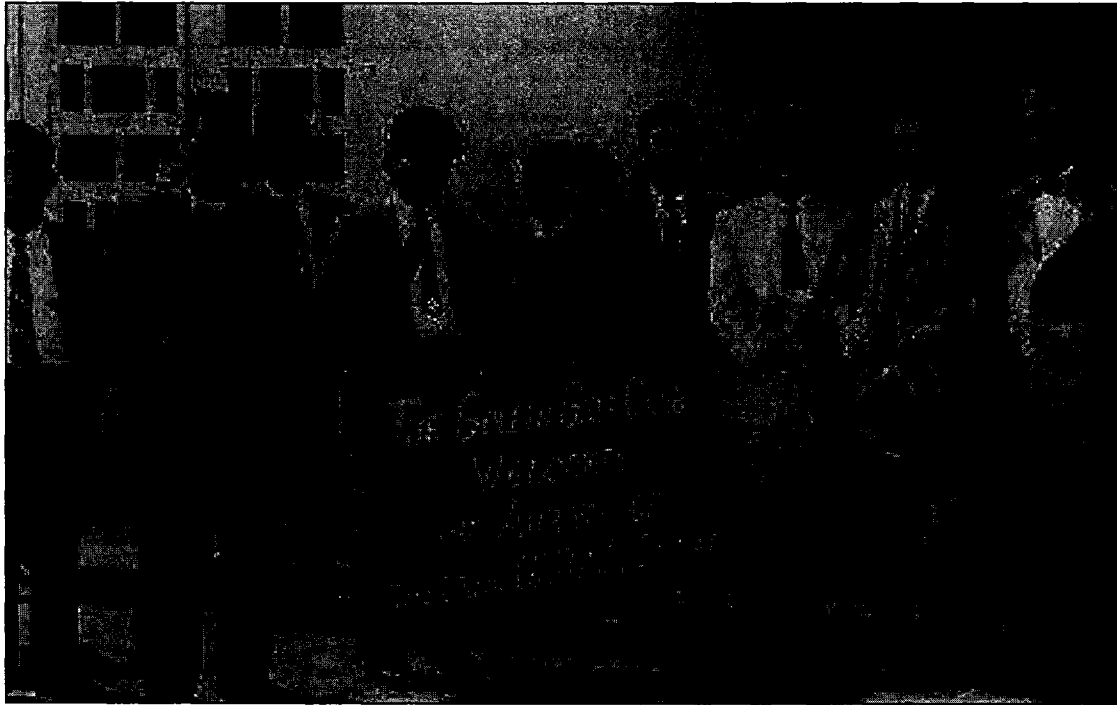


Figure 94 Photo shows Golden Gate Club members welcoming the 200th arrival of a student to their club.

While the National Leadership Program, the GARIOA scholarships, and the Golden Gate Club cultivated an elite who, in theory, were favorably disposed to the US, USCAR created other educational programs aimed at more “blue-collar” Okinawans. The Farm Youth Training in Hawaii, Third Country Training, Technical Training in the U.S., and the University of Hawaii’s East-West Center, offered ordinary young Okinawans opportunities in technical and vocational training.⁸⁰⁹ Typically, these programs were short-term ranging from several weeks to half a year, but the participants had American sponsors who were instructed to show the Okinawan students the

⁸⁰⁹ Education Department, USCAR, “Factors that Affect Current Education Program,” July 1960. Folder: “Operational Plan-Education Dept. (July 1960-1961), Box 280, HCRI-HEW “Records of the Education Division,” RG 260. National Archives II

American way of life. Twenty-six year old Shinei Ameku was one of ten young Okinawans chosen to participate in an aircraft maintenance program. Shinei and the nine other students spent a year studying English and were then flown to Taiwan where “they formally entered the training class at the Air Asia base where Air America keeps its planes in top condition.” After their training, all of the students received FAA certification to work on airframes and engines allowing Air America to hire them all.⁸¹⁰

USCAR also brought “America” to Okinawa in a public effort to promote Americanization. President Eisenhower created the People-to-People Program, administered through the State Department to improve American image abroad. Through this program, USCAR brought in various individuals and groups to share “America” with Okinawa. For example, in the first half of 1960, George Barati, Director and Conductor of the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra, spent two weeks in Okinawa conducting workshops for Okinawan musicians and was a guest conductor for the Okinawa Symphony Orchestra. A Hawaiian dance troupe performed at the Nago Cultural Center while the Little Theater Group put on a play, “Bell, Book, and Candle,” for Okinawan thespian organizations. The People-to-People Program also brought prominent politicians such as Senator Hiram Fong and Representative Daniel Inouye, both from Hawaii, to speak with Okinawan politicians.⁸¹¹ Through the Cultural Centers, USCAR promoted various mutual aid associations such as Ryukyuan International Artists League,

⁸¹⁰ Teruya Yoshihiko and Yamazato Teruya eds., *Sengo Okinawa to Amerika*, (Okinawa: Ryukyu Daigaku Amerika Kenkyu Kai, 1995), 378-400. “Young Ryukyuan Technicians Learn Aircraft Maintenance in Taiwan,” *Konnichi no Ryukyu*. Vol. 9, No. 3, March 1, 1965, 22-26.

⁸¹¹ Cultural Centers Branch Portion of CINCPACREP Report-Jan 1, 1960 through June 30, 1960. Ryukyuan-American Cultural Center Quarterly-Semi Annual Report, 1957-1960. Box 109 “Monthly, Quarterly, Semiannual and Annual Reports: Cultural Centers,” HCRI-PA CAD “USIS Memo to Smithsonian,” RG 260, US National Archives III Interview conducted in June, 1991

Librarians Association, Ryukyuan International Concert Group, American College Graduate Club, Jazz Musicians Club, Stamp Club, etc. that served as “cultural-contact zones” for Americans and Ryukyuan to get together in a cultural and social context.

USCAR established Okinawan chapters of the Boy Scouts and the Girls Scouts in 1954. USCAR explained its support on the grounds that the “Ryukyu Islands provide the keystone for the defense of the Free World in the Pacific. This is the only area in the part of the world which is totally under U.S. control. This area is of utmost value to the United States and is essential to create good relationships with the indigeneous populace. Scouting is a major factor in this process.”⁸¹² USCAR paired the nascent Boy Scouts of the Ryukyus with the Boy Scout Chapters already established on the military bases. USCAR used the Cultural Centers to facilitate meetings for both organizations. In 1959, General Berger gave the Okinawan and American Boy Scout chapters a special patch to commemorate the joint activities of the Boy Scouts conducted during Ryukyuan American Friendship Week.

⁸¹² “Support of Scouting for Indigenous Personnel, Ryukyu Islands.” Box 119 “Ryukyuan Boy Scouts.” HCRI-PAD CAD 1957-71 “Balance of Payment Determination to Ryukyuan Boy Scouts,” RG 260 US National Archives II

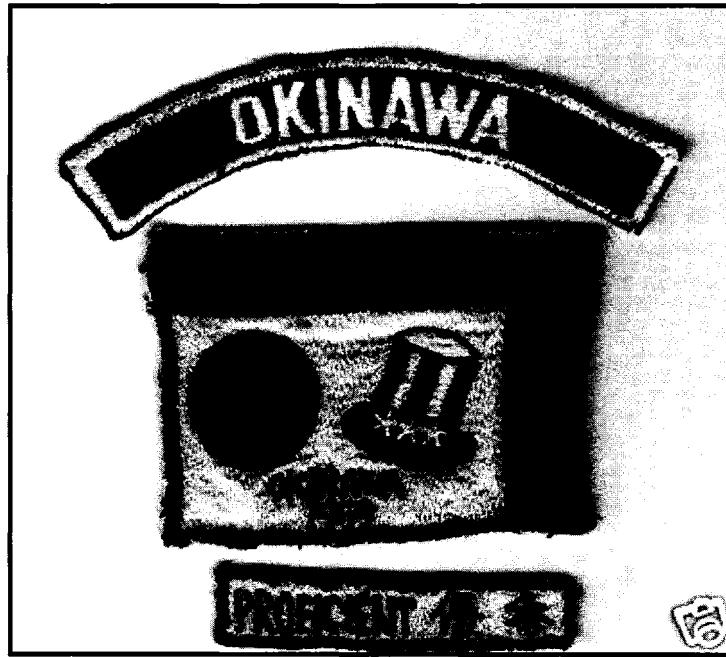


Figure 95 The red and black circle on the left is also considered to be an ancient symbol of the Ryukyu Kingdom.⁸¹³

Although one might see such cultural diplomacy as uncontroversial, in 1963, USCAR's sponsorship of the Okinawan Boy Scouts produced a diplomatic row between Japan and the US. When USCAR attempted to strengthen the organizational ties between Boy Scouts of America and the Boy Scouts of the Ryukyus, "the Boy Scouts of Japan tried to block the project through diplomatic channels." The situation became contentious enough to force the Pentagon to have a meeting with Kenneth Spear, Assistant Director of Field Operations for the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). The Pentagon took the situation seriously enough to send several high ranking officers, Col John Christy, Lt. Col. Robert Carr, and Eugene Sleevi, all of the office of Assistant

⁸¹³ Author's photograph.

Secretary of Defense/Public Affairs, and Col. Joseph Harbison, Civil Affairs Officer, to meet with Spear. Still, Spear waited until the American Embassy in Tokyo cleared the project to authorized the BSA to hire a “professional Scout Executive to direct the Ryukyuan project, and hoped to have him on his way to Okinawa not later than the middle of October [1963].”⁸¹⁴



Figure 96 “New Uniforms for Ryukyuan Boy Scouts,” USCAR official press release from USCAR.⁸¹⁵

⁸¹⁴ Col. John J. Duffy, Director of Civil Affairs, to General Caraway, High Commissioner USCAR, Subject: “Support of Scouting for Indigenous Personnel, Ryukyu Islands,” September 27, 1963. HCRI-PAD CAD 1957-71 “Balance of Payment Determination to Ryukyuan Boy Scouts,” RG 260 US National Archives II

⁸¹⁵ USCAR News Release, “New Uniforms for Ryukyuan Boy Scouts,” September 13, 1963. HCRI-PAD CAD 1957-71 “Balance of Payment Determination to Ryukyuan Boy Scouts,” RG 260 US National Archives II

Conclusion

USCAR's far-reaching and ambitious program to foster Okinawan ethno nationalism through Americanization and Ryukyunization failed in the short term as the impetus for reversion dramatically increased in the 1960s, ultimately forcing the US to return the Ryukyus to Japanese suzerainty.⁸¹⁶ This dual program of assimilation failed for a number of reasons. USCAR often implemented programs that were culturally insensitive, paternalistic, or patronizing. For example when USCAR established the Ryukyu-American Cultural Centers, the Naha center was constructed upon a historic site adjacent to Shuri Castle, that was "400 year old sanctuary of the Royal Ancestors," while the Center's latrine was built on the "site of the old high altar."⁸¹⁷ Similar problems developed at the other Ryukyuan-American Cultural Centers. In the Centers, US officials emphasized, in its educational programs, the need for proper public health and sanitation. The Centers in Nago and Ishikawa, however, had no bathrooms, forcing the Ishikawa director to drive to the next town to go the bathroom. At the Nago Center, the director used the toilet at the "house of prostitution across the street" from the Center until it was pointed out that using the brothel's facilities sullied the Center's outreach program.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹⁶ During the 1960s, demands for reversion was at the forefront of grievances of mainland groups opposed renewal of the the security treaty. See Thomas Havens, *Fire Across the Sea: the Vietnam War and Japan, 1965-1975*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

⁸¹⁷ Kerr compared this act to a hypothetical situation where the Occupation would bulldoze St. Patrick's Cathedral and then proceeded to build a latrine on the "most venerated chapel-site." George Kerr, "Memorandum: Okinawa-A Developing Crisis Situation Conflicting with U.S. Policy, Suggestion for Action," January 8, 1953. Kerr Collection, University of the Ryukyus Library.

⁸¹⁸ George Kerr, letter to John D. Rockefeller III, April 13, 1953. Kerr Collection, University of the Ryukyus Library.

Other Ryukyuanization initiatives produced the opposite effect. For Okinawans, the *Tomoebata* (Ryukyuan flag) episode reminded them that “they neither held the rights and privileges of full Japanese citizenship nor were they granted those of an American. Instead, they found themselves somewhere bewilderingly in between.” Instead of embracing the *Tomoebata*, Okinawans demanded the right to fly the *Hinomaru*, though not necessarily out of a sense of Japanese nationalism. Okinawans simply baited USCAR, “recognizing fully the American sensitivities, particularly those of the military, toward the display of a flag [*Hinomaru*] other than that of the United States in an area over which the military had fought and over which full responsibility and jurisdiction was held.”⁸¹⁹ Nevertheless, both assimilation programs served to accentuate the question of identity, which was a hot topic, especially among the younger generation. The main question among the youth centered on “What are we? Neither Japanese nor Americans” which George Kerr believed indicated the growing “spiritual vacuum” among the people.⁸²⁰

In an attempt to fill this vacuum, Washington sent Vice-President Richard Nixon to the Ryukyus in December, 1953. USCAR and Washington believed that Nixon’s visit would send a powerful signal to the Okinawan people that the US valued Okinawa. Nixon spent time with “friendly” Okinawan politicians as well as photo-ops with ordinary Okinawans. USCAR made sure Nixon visited prominent sites where US financial support had improved Okinawa, both economically as well as preserving

⁸¹⁹ Ibid.

⁸²⁰ George Kerr, untitled memorandum, publication date unknown but sometime in 1955. This memorandum also comes from the Kerr Collection located at the Okinawa Prefecture Archives. Archivist Tony Jenkins shared this memorandum with me on July 8, 1999.

historical sites. Nixon, however, only created greater animosity when he told the local papers that the US would stay in Okinawa until the threat of communism was removed. Nixon also stated that the stationing of US military forces on Okinawa was a small price for Okinawans to pay as the US presence insured Okinawa's democracy.

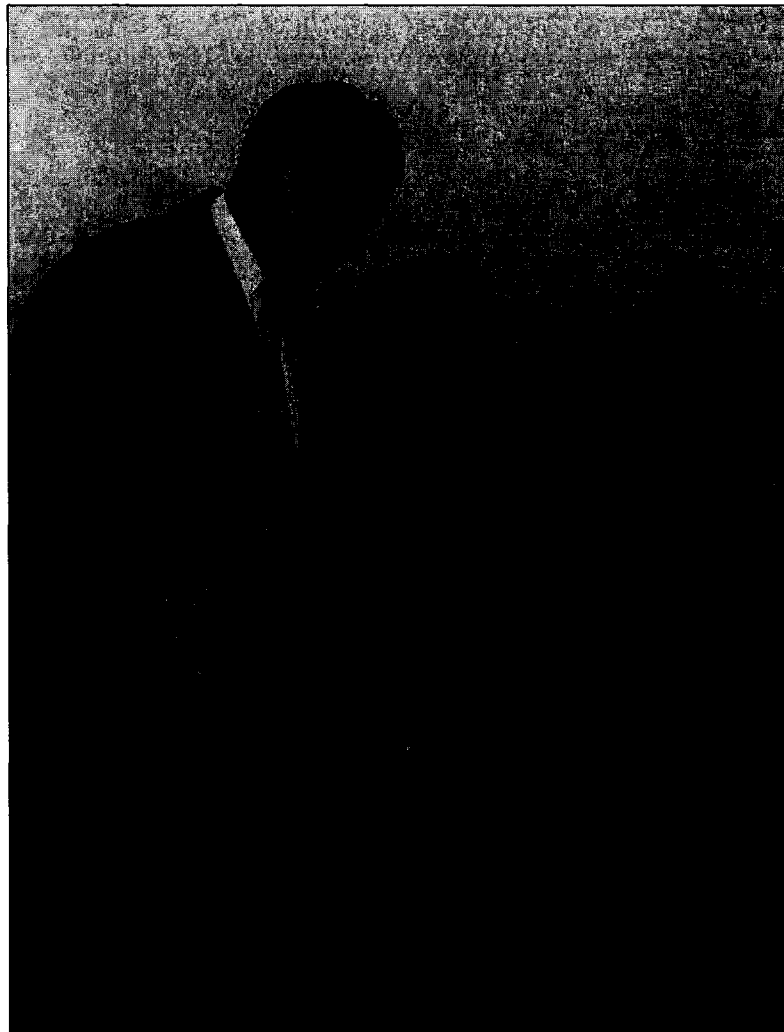


Figure 97 Vice-President Nixon visited Okinawa on November 20, 1953. Nixon declared during his visit that the US would remain on Okinawa until the communist threat no longer existed. Nixon's translator, the uniformed man, could he be asking the elderly Okinawan man if he would consider buying a used car from the Vice-President?

EPILOGUE

Agitation against the occupation, in fact, increased in the later 1950s as Okinawans engaged in massive civil disobedience to protest the military's land seizure policies and heavy-handed stifling of the labor movement. Things went bad to worse when at the height of the land seizure protests, USCAR's arch nemesis, Senaga Kamejirō, was elected mayor of Naha, Okinawa's largest city and its capital. USCAR attempted several back-handed attempts to remove Senaga, who USCAR accused of being a communist, from office. These efforts, however, backfired as new elections for Naha's local assembly increased the pro-Senaga faction to an absolute majority. USCAR then cut off all economic aid to Naha, which led to massive demonstrations and endeared Senaga to the masses even more. A desperate USCAR, without consulting Washington or the Embassy in Tokyo, unilaterally removed Senaga from office. Senaga's expulsion sparked international condemnation and drew the attention of the Japanese public to Okinawa's situation. In 1958, USCAR, facing hunger strikes, massive demonstrations throughout Okinawa, sympathy demonstrations in Japan, and international criticism, mollified Okinawan anger by agreeing to pay higher compensation for land seized and granting labor the right to bargain collectively. While these gestures ended the land struggle campaign and labor strife, USCAR's overall behavior was authoritarian, petty, and contemptuous with the predictable consequence of undermining its efforts of Ryukyunization and Americanization.

In the 1960s the reversion movement entered into a new and more dynamic stage. It became a much broader social movement, incorporating Okinawan labor and youth participation and energized by massive support and sympathy from demonstrations in

Japan. The University of the Ryukyus, which USCAR hoped would train future generations of Okinawans amicable to the US, became a hotbed of student radicalism and anti-Americanism. Ryudai students confiscated copies of *Konnichi no Ryukyu* and *Shurei no Hikari* that personnel from the Cultural Centers had left at the university gates. Students redistributed the two propananda pieces in University lavatories and student dormitories, where students used them for toilet paper. Agitation for direct election of the GRI governor, especially among students, forced USCAR to relent in 1968. Yara Chobyō won the election despite efforts by Okinawan conservative groups, in conjunction with US military authorities and the CIA, to sink Yara's campaign. During the 1960s, Yara had displaced Senaga as USCAR's nemesis as Yara became the "father" of the reversion movement. His election victory was in many ways the pinnacle of the reversion movement as Washington realized that reversion was inevitable. Shortly after, President Nixon and Prime Minister Sato jointly announced that Japan would regain formal sovereignty over the Ryukyus sometime in the early 1970s. Ironically, Sato, and not Yara, won the Nobel Peace Prize for his peaceful efforts to obtain reversion. Moreover, Sato's Nobel Peace Prize reflected the high international profile of reversion.

USCAR had hoped that the direct election for Chief Executive would quell reversion activity, but demonstrations became more confrontational and riots were frequent. On December 20, 1970 Okinawans in Koza, Okinawa's second largest city, rioted after witnessing MP's releasing an American serviceman after he had hit an Okinawan pedestrian with his car. The riot, the worst in Okinawa's history, lasted for

hours as rioters targeted vehicles with military license plates.⁸²¹ In the end, rioters burned over eighty vehicles with military plates. During the riot, rioters for the first time, penetrated a US military base (Kadea Air Base) and burned some school buildings. The Koza riot, coupled with Yara's election and fear of more violent demonstrations, forced the US to announce that reversion would take place in the late spring of 1972.

As demonstrated in the "Introduction" Yara and many others in the reversion movement began to reconsider reversion after 1968 especially as it became increasingly clear that reversion was not going to alter the US military status quo on the island. The collusion of Tokyo with Washington to prevent Okinawa from having any voice in reversion negotiations reminded Okinawans that once again Japan was all too willing to sacrifice Okinawa for Japan's greater interests. By the end of 1971, many supporters of reversion were now leading anti-reversion movements, including such stalwarts as Yara Chobyō and Senaga Kamejiro. As the photo below illustrates, tens of thousands of Okinawans, instead of celebrating reversion on May 15, 1972, demonstrated throughout Okinawa. The photo becomes more compelling upon the realization that that the third figure from the left, holding the anti-reversion banner, was Senaga Kamejiro.

⁸²¹ American military personnel had special plates that distinguished their cars from Okinawan vehicles. These plates, in effect, were a form of extraterritoriality as Okinawan police could not stop any car with military plates. MP's were called in to investigate any traffic issues, and more often than not, US military personnel were released from any charges, including those that involved a fatality.



Figure 98 In the pouring rain, protestors conduct an anti-reversion march in Naha. The third figure from the left, in the glasses, is paradoxically Senaga Kamejirô.

While Yara's and Senaga's dissatisfaction largely stemmed from the provisions of the reversion itself, their actions clearly demonstrated a willingness to resist and contest Japan. For over twenty years, both men singlemindedly pursued reversion to the fatherland, but now that was being actualized, they began to question both reunification and their "Japanese" identity. This questioning did not occur in a vacuum. In fact, the new wave of anti-Japanese sentiment, paradoxically, had its roots in USCAR's Ryukyuanization campaigns of the mid 1950s. In the late 1960s, more Okinawan intellectuals, especially those who had received their education in the US or had worked

closely with American officials, began to critique Okinawa's relationship with Japan. Although not pro-American by any means, as reversion approached, anti-Japanese sentiment increased in proportion to the feelings that Japan as the "fatherland" was a problematic concept. The most prominent manifestation of this turn in sentiment, as mentioned previously, was Ota Masahide's best seller *Minikui Nihonjin (The Ugly Japanese)*, which sold tens of thousands of copies in Okinawa.

A less known work, that anticipated Ota's book, was *Nihon wa, Sokoku ja nai, (Japan is Not our Fatherland)*, written by Yamazato Eikichi in 1969. Yamazato, who was vice president of the "Okinawa for the Okinawans Association," saw the problem as one of false consciousness because Okinawans had failed to ask: what is the fatherland? If this question had been asked in 1879, Yamazato asked, nine out of ten Ryukyuan would not have hesitated to say their fatherland was the Ryukyus. Most of Yamazato's essay explained how Japan had forcibly colonized the Ryukyus and turned the people into "artificial" Japanese. He decried the Japanese assimilation programs that robbed the people of their mother tongue and made speaking in Ryukyuan a crime punishable by death. Yamazato concluded:

Our fatherland can never be Japan. Our fatherland is the Ryukyus. All Ryukyuan will only be saved when the Ryukyu Government flies the flag of independence that will restore our self respect and teach all Ryukyuan "to be proud of our identity before ever becoming Japanese."⁸²²

What did Ota and Yamazato have in common? Both had served in the Battle of Okinawa and both witnessed the many atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers. During the occupation, both were beneficiaries of Americanization and Ryukyuanization.

⁸²² Yamazato Eikichi, *Nippon wa Sokoku ja nai*, *China Post*, June 18-22, 1969.

Ota received his MA from Cornell University on a GARIOA scholarship and obtained a teaching position at the University of the Ryukyus. Yamazato was John Hanna's right-hand man in the first year of the occupation. With Hanna, Yamazato worked diligently to restore Ryukyuan treasures and became the long-term director of the Shuri Museum that the two individuals had constructed together. Both Ota and Yamazato became historians and focused much of their scholarship on Japanese *sabetsu*, Japanese discrimination against Okinawa.

Although Americanization and Ryukyuanization failed to prevent the reversion movement, these two assimilation programs did provide important cultural and social space for some Okinawans to imagine a non-Japanese identity. Ironically, it was in the 1960s when the US had accepted the inevitability of reversion that the first generation of Okinawans who had experienced these parallel programs had come of age and were finally in position to articulate views on Okinawa's problematic relationship with Japan. Moreover, in the post-reversion era, Okinawa has consistently challenged Japanese assumptions of Japan's homogeneous polity. Okinawa's relationship with Tokyo is markedly different from that of any other prefecture, and as the "Introduction" illustrated, Okinawan ethnic nationalism has proved to be a powerful force that has challenged both Tokyo and Washington on matters of provincial autonomy. Okinawa's contentious relationship with Tokyo and Washington reflects the unintended consequence of occupation policies, of democratization and Ryukyuanization.

The full effect of the cultural programs can be seen in the story of Sakihara Mitsugu, who wrote the "Afterword" for the 1987 reissuing of George Kerr's *Okinawa: The*

History of an Island People.⁸²³ Like the members of the Iwakura Mission sent by the Meiji government in 1872, Okinawan students studying in the US in the 1950s returned with new perspectives and expectations based on their experiences. Okinawan historian Sakihara Mitsugu returned as GARIOA student with a much heightened sense of identity as being Ryukyuan/Okinawan. In the “Preface” to his book *A Brief History of Early Okinawa Based on the Omoro Soshi* (1987), Sakihara confesses his confusion and ambiguity of his identity and how occupation programs played a significant role in altering his identity as being Japanese:

My interest in the ancient history of Okinawa began while I was a student in Oregon in 1951-55 and 1958-60. I was a scholarship student under the GARIOA program (Government Aid and Relief in Occupied Areas.) Until my arrival in Oregon, I hadn’t the slightest doubt that I was Japanese. The question never entered my mind. In fact, in 1945, as a member of the high school corps, I fought and was wounded in the defense of Japan in the Battle of Okinawa. However, while in Oregon, I learned that the matter of my nationality was not as clear as I had assumed.⁸²⁴

Sakihara quickly found he was not Japanese officially, at least from the American perspective. He did not have a Japanese passport; instead he possessed a “certificate of identity issued by the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands.” He observed that “It identified me as a resident of the Ryukyus but nowhere stated I was a Japanese citizen.” The issue of who he was and where he came from became problematic when Americans would ask “where do you come from?” His anxiety was reflected further when he wrote “I hesitated to reply, thinking ‘What shall I say, Japanese or

⁸²³ Kerr’s work on Ryukyuan history affected many Okinawan intellectuals as Kerr’s positive account of Ryukyuan history encouraged Sakihara Mitsugu, Ota Masahide, Miyagi Etsujiro, etc. to examine Okinawa’s history from an Okinawan perspective.

⁸²⁴ Mitsugu Sakihara, “Preface” in *A Brief History of Early Okinawa Based on the Omoro Soshi*, Tokyo: Honpo Shoseki Press, 1987, v.

Okinawan?” When he responded that he was Japanese, some Americans insisted he was instead Okinawan.⁸²⁵ This problem of identity and representation eventually led Sakihara to doubt his “Japanese” identity and to begin questioning what identity he possessed. He wrote:

The uncertainty of whether I was an Okinawan or a Japanese led to the question “What is an Okinawan, and how is he or she different from a Japanese?” An Okinawan may legally be a Japanese, but is he or she a Japanese in the same sense that a person from Tokyo is Japanese? Okinawa is said to have been annexed by Japan in 1879. Does that mean Okinawa was not a part of Japan before 1879? *Is an Okinawan therefore a colonial?*⁸²⁶

Sakihara’s ambivalence about his identity led him to read countless works on Okinawan history. Eventually, he wrote a pioneering study of Okinawa’s classic literary text, the *Omoro Soshi* (1987) in order to “recreate the Okinawa of the time of the *Omoro Soshi*, when the nameless people living on these islands *came to be Okinawans*.”⁸²⁷ Whereas the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* are said to be the first representation of being “Japanese,” then the *Omoro Soshi*, wrote Sakihara, “records the very nascence of Ryukyu.” Sakihara’s “discovery” of his Ryukyuan or Okinawan heritage, and others such as Ota, Arakawa, etc. who shared this identity, were a minority in the first ten years of the occupation. These “Okinawans” lacked sufficient numbers to produce a critical

⁸²⁵ Ibid., “Preface” v-vi.

⁸²⁶ Ibid., “Preface” vi. Emphasis added.

⁸²⁷ Ibid., “Preface” vii. Emphasis added. The *Omoro Soshi* or the “Anthology of the poems of sentiments” were compiled in the 16th and 17th centuries. Sakihara writes the anthology contains “over one thousand poems from the villages and islands of twelfth to early seventeenth century Okinawa and Amami-Oshima. These centuries may not be considered to ancient with respect to the histories of other countries, but in the history of Ryukyu, which is a relatively latecomer, they constitute the threshold separating the prehistoric era from the historic.”

mass in challenging reversion. But twenty-years of occupation provided a critical political, economic, social and cultural space for Okinawans to operate independently of Japan. These “Okinawans,” now in their late 30s, occupied important positions of power throughout Okinawan society. As they used their positions to question and critique Okinawa’s historical and cultural relationship with Japan, Tokyo’s contemptuous behavior forced many reversion stalwarts such as Yara and Senaga to question reversion as they began to “hear” Ota’s “Ugly Japanese” argument. Although the inertia of reversion was inevitable, Okinawans, long used to resisting foreign occupation, used this experience to contest another “foreign” occupation, the post reversion period. Not surprisingly, the reversion monument erected on Okinawa’s northern most point, Hedo Misaki, conveys a sense of ambivalence. Although the monument denotes the attainment of reversion, it refuses to celebrate reunification. Instead, this rocky monument commemorates the struggle itself and an inherent paradox. Through this struggle for reversion to Japan, the people’s resistance to the American military occupation led them to discover their own strength to embrace their Okinawan identity. This identity, paradoxically fostered by the occupation policy of Okinawan nation building, resided at the heart of their struggle against foreign occupation, both American and Japanese.



Figure 99 Monument to Okinawa's reversion. Located on Okinawa's northern most point, this stark and somber monument, as Norma Field has noted, not only disavows any jubilation over reversion, but represents Okinawans' ambivalent identification with Japan.⁸²⁸

⁸²⁸ Author's photo. Norma Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor: Japan at Century's End* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

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