

# Making Sense of Diasporic Okinawan Identity within US Global Militarisation

Wesley Ueunten

## Introduction

1. About a year ago, I travelled to Washington DC as an interpreter with an Okinawan delegation that was making a direct appeal against plans by the US and Japanese governments to push ahead with construction of a new US Marine Air Station on the clear blue waters of Henoko. It felt like a quixotic mission as most of the US officials, think tanks, and politicians we met had made up their mind about new base construction at Henoko saying that it was the best plan for the US-Japan security arrangement and for the security of Pacific Asia. What the delegation was trying to get across to deaf ears was that Okinawans have stopped the construction for eighteen years by placing their bodies in front of ships and equipment coming to start construction. I recall vividly how Itokazu Keiko, the female leader of the delegation, looked straight in the eyes of male officials of Departments of Defense and State, saying that the delegation had come to personally appeal to the American sense of democracy because Okinawa was certainly not being treated in a democratic way.
2. The scenes in my memory from that trip are almost comical as the representatives and spokespersons of the largest military superpower in the world seemed to duck and dodge the appeals of Okinawans, who were coming from the small islands at the fringe of what Americans have called the 'Far East.' It was like watching a cartoon of an elephant jumping up on a stool to escape a mouse. The experience was also a bit disconcerting since I was interpreting between my ancestral homeland and the country of my birth, citizenship, and education. Trying to make sense of the situation brought up serious questions of my identity as a diasporic Okinawan.
3. The Okinawans diaspora includes the 1.3 million people who live in the homeland of Okinawa and the estimated 300,000 people of Okinawan descent who live outside of Okinawa. The major overseas Okinawan communities are in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, and the US, but significant Okinawan populations can be found in Canada, Cuba, Guam, Mexico, and the Philippines.<sup>[1]</sup> As can be expected, the overseas component of the Okinawan diaspora is far from homogeneous because of the differences in a myriad of factors related to the time and context of migration and social, political and cultural conditions in the host country. Further, second, third, and fourth generation overseas Okinawans do not usually speak the language of their immigrant ancestors and are increasingly not 'pure' Okinawan due to intermarriage.
4. This paper is an analysis of *diasporic Okinawan identity*, which for heuristic purposes, I refer to as a conscious claim of ancestral roots in Okinawa that entails the assertion of Okinawa as a unique cultural entity. Diasporic Okinawan identity depends on another heuristic concept of *diasporic Okinawan culture* or tangible symbols of Okinawan uniqueness. Diasporic Okinawan culture is a wide net that includes anything from Okinawan music, dance, martial arts, cooking and other practices and performances to Okinawan musical instruments, dance implements and costume, martial arts weapons, fabrics, crafts, art and other artefacts. Diasporic Okinawan culture is a loose

and expansive category because it is a product of the creative agency of diasporic Okinawans. That is, unlike 'traditional' Okinawan culture whose borders are limited by notions of authenticity, the category of diasporic Okinawan culture is constantly expanded as diasporic Okinawans employ a wide range of practices, performances, and artefacts to recover and express their Okinawan identity. Such an understanding of diasporic Okinawan identity and culture challenges the assumption that identity and culture are static 'things' that determine how diasporic Okinawans think, feel, behave and perform. Freeing ourselves from such an assumption enables us to consider that we are not merely passive bodies moving through time and space; we can and do have a role in determining our own identity and culture.

5. I strive to understand and transform diasporic Okinawan identity and culture as a member of the Okinawan diaspora whose maternal and paternal grandparents immigrated to Hawai'i in the early 1900s. I write this paper as one who has constructed an Okinawa identity as a student and performer of Okinawan *sanshin* music, immersed himself in the Okinawan community activities in his transplanted home in Northern California, engaged in academic discourse that is critical of all forms of inequality, and participated in activism against such forms of inequality. This quest for understanding my identity and culture is related to a personal desire for finding meaning in my fragmented and complicated diasporic existence, but it is also tied to my anxiety over what is happening in the homeland of Okinawa. This anxiety is inescapable because there are material and ideological connections due to the very fact that the US, the country of my birth, education and citizenship, has an oversized and overstayed presence in Okinawa, the tiny island homeland of my ancestors.
6. Consequently, diasporic Okinawan identity and culture must be understood within the protracted historical context of Okinawa's central geopolitical role in global militarisation. I am referring to the lengthy history of the incorporation of the Ryukyuan Archipelago into the militarised sphere of Japanese influence that continues to the present with the enormous US military presence in Okinawa. Militarisation of Okinawa to protect Japan from the West and to achieve dominance over other Asian countries—not the extraction of resources and labour—was the main reason for the new Meiji Government's steps to abolish the Ryukyuan Kingdom and establish 'Okinawa Prefecture' in 1879. For example, in 1875 there were voices advocating the 'discarding of the Ryukyus' because it was seen as a drain on Japan's finances without any return on the investment. Oguma argues that economics were not the only factor behind this opinion, but rather strong resistance toward accepting Ryukyuan as Japanese.<sup>[2]</sup> Okinawa's strategic geopolitical location, however, trumped all arguments against its incorporation into Japan; annexation was necessary in the interests of national defence. Japan had already secured its northern defenses against Russia by moving into Hokkaido by the 1870s, but it had not secured its southern borders. The 1879 annexation of Okinawa represented the beginning of this process.<sup>[3]</sup> The drastic social, political and economic changes and displacements brought about by Japanese military colonisation of Okinawa led to Okinawan diaspora formation through large-scale overseas migration of Okinawans.
7. Japan's militarisation of Okinawa as a bulwark against the West ended tragically with the Battle of Okinawa in 1945. In that battle that raged from April to June 1945, at least one-quarter of Okinawa's population was killed to gain time to negotiate for better treatment of the Japanese emperor and for the rest of Japan. The Battle of Okinawa was actually the painful and bloody rebirth of Okinawa as a major part of the post-War global US military dominance—a status it retains seventy years since.
8. The argument I make in this paper is that, whether we like it or not and whether we are conscious of it or not, we in the Okinawan diaspora are part of the struggle over control of our homeland of Okinawa. This argument has corollary arguments. One is that diasporic Okinawan identity and culture is the terrain in which the consciousness of the Okinawan diaspora has been manipulated

and neutralised in the interest of maintaining the abnormally large and destructive US military presence in Okinawa. The other argument is that diasporic Okinawan identity and culture is the very terrain in which the immorality of global militarisation can be exposed and challenged. In other words, both the colonisation and decolonisation of the Okinawan diaspora takes place in the struggle over our identity and culture.

### **Revitalisation of diasporic Okinawan identity and the re-obscuration of the elephant in the room**

9. An apt metaphor regarding the US military presence in Okinawa is the expression, 'An elephant in the room.' This elephant was born onto Okinawa even before the Asia Pacific War ended when the US military began taking over and expanding former Japanese Imperial Army bases in Okinawa. The Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security legitimated these military bases between Japan and the US in 1960. [4] Notwithstanding the fact that Okinawans had no say in the negotiations between Japan and the US over their land, sky and sea, Okinawa is still home to the majority of US military bases in Japan. Thirty-seven facilities, or 75 percent of all those exclusively used by the US military, are in Okinawa. Twenty percent of the main island of Okinawa is occupied by these facilities. The number of US military-related personnel stationed in Okinawa is 45,354. This includes 22,339 soldiers, 1,503 civilian employees and 21,512 dependents. [5]
10. The revitalisation of diasporic Okinawan identity has taken place with little reference to the 'elephant in the room.' To an extent, this situation is understandable since one could say that the elephant has had a faraway existence. For instance, the Okinawan diaspora was established through large waves of overseas Okinawan migration that took place before Okinawa was destroyed during the Battle of Okinawa and subsequently occupied by the US military. Further, the frame of reference of most overseas Okinawans is their adopted homeland and not the physically distant ancestral homeland of Okinawa.
11. However, a remarkable set of interrelated phenomena in the last few decades has reconnected the Okinawan diaspora to the Okinawan homeland through diasporic Okinawan identity and culture. Starting in Hawai'i in the 1970s and 80s and spreading to other parts of the Okinawan diaspora was an 'Okinawan renaissance' that was characterised by a revival of interest in Okinawan identity and culture among *nisei* (second generation) and *sansei* (third generation) Okinawans. Political movements of the 1960s and 70s, through which being 'Black,' 'Chicano,' 'Native American' and 'Asian American' was validated, spurred this revival of Okinawan identity and culture in Hawai'i.
12. In Hawai'i, the effects of the 'Okinawan renaissance' can be seen in the annual Okinawan Festival that draws upwards of 50,000 people. Numerous Okinawan dance and music groups perform at the Festival, which is called 'the largest ethnic festival' in Hawai'i. Throughout the year, Okinawan cultural events are so numerous in Hawai'i that Okinawans seem to represent the majority of the Japanese American community even though they are no more that 20 percent of it. The success of the Okinawan renaissance even led to complaints by *Naichi* (Japanese Americans in Hawai'i with roots in mainland Japan) that the *Hawaii Herald*, a bimonthly Japanese American newspaper in Hawai'i, was being taken over by Okinawans. In September of 2000, the editor of the *Herald* responded to such complaints in an editorial:

We publish 10 stories on Hawaii's Okinawan community organisations for every one we do on any other Naichi prefectural group.... Is that unfair? Perhaps. But the sad reality is that the membership of all of Naichi *kenjinkai* combined is substantially less than the 40,000 members of the Hawaii United Okinawa Association. The Okinawan-related organisations are far more active than their Naichi counterparts. While the Naichi groups may organise a few major functions each year, the Okinawans average one a week. From a journalistic perspective,

there are simply more events to cover in the Uchinanchu community.<sup>[6]</sup>

13. Meanwhile, the reversion of Okinawa to Japan in 1972 was accompanied by Okinawan attempts to achieve parity with the 'mainland' through complete political, economic and cultural assimilation. It became more and more apparent that assimilation led neither to the elimination of face-to-face discrimination or structural discrimination. Reversion to Japan opened the gates for many Okinawans to go to the Japanese mainland as labourers and students. In the mainland, many were targeted for discrimination because of differences in language, culture, customs, last names and even skin colour and facial features. Reversion also led to the domination of Japanese mainland companies and individuals over the Okinawan economy. Perhaps the most salient reminder of Japanese discrimination was the Japanese government's keeping the US military presence in Okinawa virtually intact. In many ways, reversion made Japanese discriminatory attitudes toward Okinawans even more visible, resulting in an even more salient Okinawan identity vis-à-vis the rest of Japan.
14. Renewed discrimination after reversion served to open up wounds of forced assimilationist policies by the Japanese government toward Okinawans that began in the Meiji period (1868 to 1912) and continued to the end of the Battle of Okinawa. These policies manifested themselves in tragic ways during the Battle of Okinawa as Okinawans, especially young students who had been pressed into military service, chose to give up their lives to prove their loyalty and worthiness to the Japanese emperor and the Japanese nation-state. Even worse were the incidents of Japanese soldiers being ordered to kill Okinawans when they spoke the Okinawan language, under suspicion of spying for the Americans.
15. As a *sansei* searching for my cultural roots as a student in Okinawa from 1984 to 1986, I was privileged to be able to study Okinawan *sanshin* music from a *sensei* in his early forties. He was an anomaly since Okinawan music and dance *sensei* tended to be related to those past the age of fifty or sixty. At the time, there was still a stigma associated with anything Okinawan due to generations of forced assimilation. This stigma still kept most young people in Okinawa from wanting to study any aspect of their culture. However, there was a sizeable population of Okinawans—mainly in the generation born before World War II or shortly after—that retained traditional forms of Okinawan culture. Music and dance traditions with roots in the former Ryukyuan court continued to thrive. Other forms of culture such as weaving, stencil dying, ceramics, martial arts and cuisine were also maintained. However, because of the stigma associated with anything Okinawan, the culture remained unpopular among younger Okinawans on the islands.
16. The exoticism of Okinawa as a tropical tourist destination for mainland Japanese as well as the discovery of Okinawan music as a form of 'world music' in the late 1980s stimulated widespread interest in Okinawan culture or what has been termed the 'Okinawa boom' among Japanese mainlanders. In his 2008 book review in *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* of Miyume Tanji's *Myth, Protest and Struggle in Okinawa*, Darryl Flaherty refers to the Okinawan Boom as a 'nearly decade-long, pop cultural fascination with Okinawa.'<sup>[7]</sup> I slightly disagree with him in that I believe the Japanese pop cultural fascination with Okinawa had already been robust during the time I lived in the Tokyo area in 1989 to 1995. I was there to do research on Okinawan identity formation in mainland Japan in comparison to Okinawan identity formation in Hawai'i. One of the first things I did when I got to Japan in 1989 was to start learning *sanshin* from a *sensei* who had migrated to Kawasaki from Okinawa in the late 1960s as a labourer. In 1989, Okinawan music was largely unknown outside of Okinawa and still unpopular even among Okinawans. Only three or four other students attended the *sensei's* weekly lessons. As the other students were all Okinawan, the conversations during our lessons were often in the Okinawan language. However, from around 1991, the number of *Yamatunchu* (Japanese) students seeking *sanshin* lessons would sometimes

overflow the *sensei*'s house. I remembered seeing up to thirty students in our lessons at times. The *sensei* remarked to me that it was interesting that his students were probably the age of children of the *Yamatunchu* who would complain when he played *sanshin* and sang when he had first come to Kawasaki from Okinawa.

17. Nevertheless, Flaherty's description of the Okinawa Boom is extremely valuable:

The Okinawa Boom denatured the struggle and protest elements of the southern archipelago's past and replaced it with a focus on culture. While the Boom can be read in many ways, it ultimately produced a non-threatening, cultural Okinawan out of the prefecture's highly conflictual past. The mainstream main-island fascination with Okinawan culture affirmed Okinawa's place in an increasingly nationalistic Japan, without exploring Japan's domination of the Okinawan periphery.<sup>[8]</sup>

I agree with Flaherty's observation that the Okinawan Boom was winding down by the time Tanji's book was going to press in 2006. However, like ripples spreading outward in a pond, the effects of the Okinawan Boom spread to the rest of the world. For example, the Okinawan-inspired *Shimauta* became the number one song in Argentina in 2001 and was adopted as the theme song for the Argentinean national soccer team at the 2002 World Cup. In more recent years English versions of Okinawan songs performed by New Zealand singer Hayley Westenra have enjoyed international popularity. Further, the sudden interest in the rest of Japan and the world in Okinawan music managed to remove much of the stigma that had been associated with Okinawan culture and led many younger Okinawans to study Okinawan music, dance and other aspects of their past culture.

18. However, another point of disagreement I have with Flaherty is that the Okinawa Boom was not only about replacing Okinawa's conflictual past with a non-threatening culture, it was also about hiding the *present-day* elephant in the room of US military presence in Okinawa for the benefit of the Japanese mainland. Flaherty also leaves out from his analysis of the Okinawan Boom the brutal rape of a twelve-year-old Okinawan girl in 1995. In the aftermath of the tragic event, it was Okinawan women who became the most effective leaders in bringing the attention of the world to US militarisation in Okinawa. Taking the issue beyond narrow nationalistic concerns of getting 'foreign troops' out of Okinawa, the women made US militarisation of Okinawa a human rights issue by showing the physical, emotional and spiritual effects of the US military presence in Okinawa and linking their struggle to the struggles of other people who were similarly impacted in places such as South Korea, Guam, Puerto Rico, Samoa, Hawai'i and the Philippines.
19. The continued colonisation of Okinawa by both the US and Japan began to be critically questioned on an international scale in the years after the 1995 rape as the word 'Okinawa' was associated with the problematic presence of the US military bases in Okinawa. However, by 2000, 'Okinawa' was successfully steered away from connections to US militarisation.
20. Coinciding with the G-8 Summit that was held in 2000 in Okinawa, the Japanese equivalent of the BBC, Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai (NHK) broadcast a daily series called *Churasan*. The series was about an Okinawan family from a rural island. Typical of shows about minorities produced by the majority, the actors portraying Okinawans were predominantly Japanese mainlanders who used insultingly fake Okinawan accents. *Churasan* also depicted Okinawan men as lazy and more apt to drink sake and play the *sanshin* than work. Okinawan women were shown as hard working, but dedicated to their men and families. However, while the way Okinawans were represented in *Churasan* were problematic, equally troublesome were the things it did not represent.
21. In the first episode of *Churasan*, the main character Eri is born on the day that the US 'returns' Okinawa to Japan, 15 May 1972. In effect, Eri's birth on that day symbolises the rebirth of Okinawans as members of the Japanese nation. Throughout the series, which progresses through

Eri's eventual marriage to a Japanese, there is no mention of Japanese discrimination against Okinawans past or present. There is absolutely no mention of Japan's forcible annexation of Okinawa in 1879; the discrimination Okinawans have faced in mainland Japan; or the sacrifice of tens of thousands of Okinawan lives during the Battle of Okinawa to save the 'rest' of Japan in 1945. Further, while there are many shots of Okinawan scenery throughout the series, the cameras deftly avoid capturing any sign that US military bases cover one-fifth of the main island of Okinawa.

22. In the meantime, many overseas Okinawans were able to watch *Churasan* through NHK rebroadcasts or through video copies sent by relatives in Okinawa. Like other Okinawans both in Okinawa and overseas, I was happy that our formerly maligned culture was now validated in the eyes of the rest of Japan and proud that Okinawa was chosen to be the site of the G-8 Summit. However, most of us were unaware of the intrigue behind the G-8 Summit. The massive Okinawan protests after the 1995 rape incident forced the Japanese government to set up a Special Action Committee on Facilities and Areas in Okinawa (SACO). The SACO report made in 1996 specified that major bases such as the Futenma Air Station and the Naha Military Port would be closed. What was not immediately revealed to the public, however, was that bases within Okinawa would be built in their place. One proposal that eventually became public was to build a U.S. Marine air base in Henoko, Nago.
23. As could be expected, the Japanese government denied any connection between its decision to grant Nago the privilege of hosting the Summit and Henoko. However, Okinawa was a late entry among eight prefectural governments in Japan that put in bids to host the Summit. Compared to favourites such as Fukuoka and Miyazaki, Okinawa was far behind in terms of the quality of facilities and ease of security arrangements.<sup>[9]</sup> Further, instead of Naha, the main city of Okinawa, the main venue chosen for the G-8 Summit was in Nago, the same municipality that contains Henoko.
24. Nago had never held a conference at international level and the decision by the Japanese government implied that it would send more development aid with the promise of more construction business for the impoverished municipality. In the background of this decision was the 21 December 1997 non-binding referendum in Nago in which 54 percent of those voting (80 percent of those eligible to vote) opposed construction of the base in Henoko. In the wake of the referendum, the Japanese government persuaded Nago mayor Higa Tetsuya to announce the acceptance of the relocation plan. He resigned after his announcement.<sup>[10]</sup>
25. Kozue Akibayashi and Suzuyo Takazato describe how, 'At the summit, "exotic culture" and performing arts of Okinawa were praised, but the contradiction of the militarised security policies that have caused insecurity in the lives and livelihood of the people in Okinawa was never addressed.'<sup>[11]</sup>
26. The 'Okinawan renaissance' in Hawai'i, efforts to maintain Okinawan culture in the homeland, and the 'Okinawa boom' in Japan effectively transformed the cultural atmosphere: Okinawan identity and culture is no longer stigmatised as 'barbaric' and backwards. The change has been dramatic from a personal perspective. When I lived in Okinawa as a student from 1984 to 1986, having been inspired by the 'Okinawan renaissance' in Hawai'i, I was intent on learning everything I could about my Okinawan heritage. I had gone to Okinawa on an Okinawan Prefectural Government scholarship program that has brought from students of Okinawan descent living abroad to Okinawa to study Japanese language and Okinawan history and culture at the University of the Ryukyus every year since 1982. In my cohort, there were two students from Brazil and one each from Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Peru, the US mainland, and Hawai'i. Generally, the students from Hawaii who came before and after me studied some aspect of their Okinawan heritage such as traditional dance, music, textiles, language or history. This reflected our participation or exposure to the 'Okinawan

renaissance' back in Hawai'i. Contrastingly, at the time, the students from the other countries had little interest in learning about their Okinawan heritage and sometimes thought it strange that the Hawaiian students spent so much time and effort searching for their Okinawan roots. At the time, this sentiment was also shared by most of the Okinawans from Okinawa as well. Since then, however, Okinawans across the diaspora have embraced Okinawan culture in ways unimaginable thirty years ago as the number of young Okinawans from both the homeland and overseas studying traditional Okinawan music, dance and other forms of culture has increased considerably. Further, young Okinawan musicians, in both the homeland and overseas, have found commercial success by performing modernised versions of Okinawan music. *Eisā*, originally a type of dancing done by groups of young men and women in certain village in Okinawa, has spread like wild fire throughout the Okinawan diaspora in a much flashier form. I even saw Okinawans in Cuba performing *eisā* when I visited there in 2005.

### The Sekai Uchinanchu Taikai

27. The Okinawan renaissance and the Okinawa Boom effectively came together in 1990 when the first Sekai Uchinanchu Taikai (Worldwide Okinawan Festival) was organised by the Okinawan Prefectural government. The Taikai, as it is popularly known, brought thousands of Okinawans from the diaspora to the homeland of Okinawa to partake in ceremonies, cultural performances, parades, sports competitions, discussion panels, product shows, exchange visits, tours, etc. Since 1990, the Taikai has been held every five years and draws increasing numbers of participants and hosts increasingly colossal stage performances of Okinawan music and dance.
28. The Taikai has come to dominate diasporic Okinawan identity and culture and has become sort of a mecca for overseas Okinawans to attend before they die. Consequently much of the discourse of diasporic Okinawan identity and culture is devoted to memories of past Taikai and anticipation of future Taikai. Discourse at the Taikai itself is dominated by the success story trope of Okinawan immigrants achieving upward mobility in strange lands while retaining their Okinawan identity and culture and passing it down to their descendants.
29. More importantly for the discussion of this paper, the discourse of the Taikai is directed away from references to the US military presence in Okinawa. I participated in the Taikai twice—in 2001 and 2011. I was struck by the absence of any discussion in speeches or at panels and workshops on the presence of the US military in Okinawa despite the obvious reminders of scores of military aircraft flying overhead, hundreds of uniformed American soldiers walking the streets or riding jeeps and Humvees, and countless miles of chain-link fences keeping Okinawans out of US military bases. This is to be expected since the Okinawan Prefectural government, which is supervised and funded by the central Japanese government, organises the Taikai.
30. It should be mentioned that the Taikai is also the product of tenacious efforts of both overseas Okinawans and well-placed people in Okinawa who brought it to fruition in 1990. I also do not mean to discount the tireless work of many people, including volunteers, who helped out at the Taikai or the efforts of overseas Okinawans who travelled long distances to attend. Nor do I want to make light of the deep feelings of happiness and accomplishment that overseas Okinawans, including myself, experience before, during, and after the Taikai.
31. However, it is critical to show how the Taikai fits squarely with Japan's needs and desires to keep the long-term and large US base presence in Okinawa. The Japanese government's encouragement of a large-scale celebration of Okinawan uniqueness from Japan every five years since 1990 might seem unusual given that it has had a long history of forcing Okinawa to assimilate and of promoting

the idea of Japan being a 'homogeneous' nation. At the very least, however, the Taikai is tolerable for the Japanese government because it does not fundamentally question the militarisation of Okinawa or any other aspect of Japan's exploitive relationship over Okinawa, such as the resortification of Okinawa's best beaches by mainland Japanese companies. The Taikai also has the benefit of displaying Japan's efforts to promote both international exchange and largesse in 'accepting' cultural diversity. Most crucially, the Taikai has effectively neutralised diasporic Okinawan identity and culture. Whether it is by design or not is beyond the scope of this paper, but the Taikai has subtly diverted the Okinawan diaspora's energy and consciousness away from the effects of the continued militarisation of Okinawa.

32. I participated in the Taikai as a 'Goodwill Ambassador.' The Okinawan Prefectural government set up the system of Goodwill Ambassadors in the early 1990s. Okinawans and non-Okinawans, recommended by Okinawan organisations that are recognised by the Okinawan Prefectural government, are given the title of 'Goodwill Ambassadors' and are expected to engage in 'efforts in promoting Okinawa, furthering international exchanges, and developing a human network between Okinawa and your residing country/region.'<sup>[12]</sup>
33. The same theme of 'Bankoku no Shinryō' that was used at the 2000 G-8 Summit has been reused at the Taikai. The term, which was translated into English as 'A Bridge to All Nations,' came from the Ryūkyū's Golden Age during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when it engaged with trade with Japan, China, Korea, Luzon, Palembang, Siam, Annam and other countries.<sup>[13]</sup> This theme evoked a pride in Okinawa's past and was spliced to an appealing narrative of the Okinawan diaspora. That is, the narrative of Okinawan overseas migration was equated to the past fearlessness and adventurousness of past Ryukyuan trade with foreign lands. It was further woven with the story of upward mobility starting from *issei* men in the sugar or coffee plantations in the pre-war period and ending with well-educated and successful *sansei* and *yonseis* in the present. Along the way, the immigrants and their descendants have made important contributions to their adopted countries through their hard work, innovations, loyalty and military service. While I would hesitate to call myself 'successful,' as a *sansei* who grew up in Hawai'i, I can say that it is the story that my own family more or less fits into.
34. The narrative is retold in the numerous success stories of Okinawan immigrants that appear in media coverage of the Taikai or are celebrated at award ceremonies for distinguished overseas immigrants. In all sincerity, I believe that this is a great story because it gives credit to the Okinawan accomplishments and sacrifices that have been heretofore largely overlooked. I must also point out that as a *sansei* male the combination of the Golden Age of Ryukyuan international trade, overseas migration, and upward mobility narratives was appealing because it was a story of masculine guts, *gaman* (stoic perseverance), and *giri* (fulfilling an obligation).
35. This 'grand narrative' is a good story, but we need to look at what it leaves out. First of all, it is a story that is centred on male experiences and achievements. In the story, young men lead the way on voyages to faraway lands. The chorus in the theme song of the 2001 Taikai, *Con el sanshin en la mano* (片手に三線を) exhorts, '*Nisētā yo sanshin muchitachi hichinarashi*' (二才達よ三線持ちたち弾ち鳴らし[青年よ三線か片手に弾鳴らし] [Young men! Pick up your *sanshin* and play it] fits the story well.
36. There is little doubt that pre-war overseas emigration from Okinawa was predominantly male. However, in the grand narrative, men's 'productive labour,' such as working in the fields and factories, is highlighted while women's 'reproductive labour,' such as childbearing, cooking, cleaning, housework, caretaking and other uncompensated work is marginalised. There is also limited mention of the usual case of women doing both reproductive and productive labour as was the case of both



my Okinawan immigrant grandmothers who laboured on the sugar plantations on Kaua'i while cooking cleaning, raising pigs and growing vegetables. My maternal grandmother even produced bootleg alcohol. She raised seven children and my fraternal grandmother raised thirteen children.

37. The grand narrative excludes not only the stories of women from the pre-war emigration period, but also stories from the perspective of the thousands of post-war Okinawan women immigrants who came to the US as wives of US servicemen. Part of the exclusion could be attributed to lingering stigma attached to women who married men—usually from different races—from the former enemy and present occupying country.
38. On the day before the opening ceremony of a Taikai, the main thoroughfare in the main city of Naha, is lined with tens of thousands of Okinawans who come out to watch the thousands of overseas Okinawans and their friends and family in the Parade. The largest contingents represent *kenjinkai* (prefectural associations) from Hawai'i, Brazil, Peru and Argentina, which are the sites of the oldest overseas Okinawan communities. However, in 2001 and 2011, I noticed many contingents from Okinawan organisations from across the US such as Alabama Okinawan Kenjinkai, Arizona Tucson Okinawa Kenjinkai, Atlanta Okinawan Kenjinkai, Midwest Okinawa Kenjinkai, St. Louis Okinawa Kenjinkai, Indiana Okinawa Kenjinkai, and Okinawa Tomonokai of Ohio just to name a few of the forty-seven Okinawan associations in the US. Of the forty-seven, only two, the Hawaii United Okinawa Association and the Okinawan Association of America, are in regions that had sizable Okinawan immigrant populations before World War II. The rest represent Okinawan populations that developed largely from the post-war immigration of Okinawan women married to US servicemen.
39. I have no available statistics on how many Okinawa women who married American military personnel emigrated to the US. However, as indicated by the number of Okinawan associations that represent mainly Okinawan women who came to the US as wives of American servicemen, it is obvious that they and their descendants make up a large part of the Okinawan diaspora. In fact the forty-five Okinawan associations that represent them are more than half of the total of eighty-six Okinawan associations from around the world that were represented at the Taikai. Despite their numbers, post-war Okinawan women immigrants are left out of Okinawan diasporic narrative.
40. At the opening ceremony of the most recent Taikai in 2011, I sat in a baseball stadium filled with about 10,000 Okinawans and non-Okinawans who have some connection to Okinawa through marriage, employment, cultural interest, etc., from all parts of the world. From the section of the stadium reserved for Okinawans from the US mainland, I was impressed and amused by the big four contingents from Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Hawai'i as they were introduced. The Hawai'i contingent contained many of my friends and relatives, flashed *shaka* signs and were uniformly dressed in aloha shirts and *muumuus* with the same tropical print. The Brazilian, Peruvian and Argentinean contingents wore their national colours and, in stereotypical Latin American style, danced and waved their hands in the air. I also felt some envy toward these big four contingents because our US mainland contingent was largely a rag-tag collection of the aforementioned small Okinawan *kenjinkai* that are scattered across the US mainland. However, when we were introduced as representatives of 'America,' I noticed that we were as large, if not larger, than any of the other big four overseas Okinawan contingents.
41. I am loathe to write about another tragic incident that happened in the same year as the Taikai in 2011. However, it is indicative of how asymmetries of US military power can manifest themselves in the lives of Okinawan women, both violently and silently. Although I am sure that many at the Taikai knew about the incident as it was in the mainstream news and hit the Okinawan grapevine, there was no public discussion of it at the Taikai.

42. Several months before the Taikai, there had been a beating death of an Okinawan woman by her American husband in Fairview Park, Ohio. Higa Shinobu, who was 4 foot 11 inches (1.5 metres) and 90 pounds (40.8 kilograms), was beaten by her twenty-seven-year-old husband Peter Primeau, Jr., who was 5 foot 8 inches (1.7 metres) and 190 pounds (86.18 kilograms) and apparently skilled in martial arts. Claiming that someone else had beaten her and thrown her out of a car, he took her to the hospital where she died of 'blunt force injuries to her body' on 16 March 2011.<sup>[14]</sup> She was thirty-six years old when she died.
43. According to a local news report, the couple had met while he was an Air Force staff sergeant in Okinawa from 2003 to 2008. She had been working at an aquarium in Okinawa before moving to Ohio in late 2009. They married in August and by December, neighbours were calling police to report domestic violence in the couple's apartment. Higa denied being struck at the time.<sup>[15]</sup>

### Powerful ironies of the Okinawan diaspora

44. We will never know the exact reason why Higa did not talk to the police or others about what she was experiencing. Without ever having known her, I am grieved by Higa's violent death and the fact that she suffered in silence. In sad and frustrated reflection of Higa's death and the death—both physical and spiritual—of countless others in the diaspora at the hands of militarisation in our homeland and in our adopted homes, I find myself reassessing what 'silence' means and how it relates to the struggle over diasporic Okinawan identity and culture. To some extent, we have silenced ourselves by not speaking out against the violence against us. However, as much as we Okinawans in the diaspora have been silent, it is necessary to also consider how we have been silenced by violence and the threat of violence.
45. After Okinawa had been annexed by Japan in 1879, a group of promising students was sent by the Japanese government to study in Japan. Every student in this group was of upper class background except Jahana Noboru who was from peasant background. His exceptional brilliance, however, was too great to overlook and he was sent to study in Tokyo where he met social activists connected to the Freedom and People's Rights Movement (自由民権運動) that was protesting the autocratic Meiji Government. Upon his return to Okinawa, Jahana created a similar movement to protest the oppressive rule of Governor Narahara Shigeru, a former *samurai* from Kagoshima, over Okinawa. Narahara used his dictatorial power to favour Japanese mainlanders and influential members of the former Ryukyuan upper class in government positions and business opportunities. Despite its dogged efforts, Narahara ultimately suppressed the movement and, as a result, Jahana tragically went insane. However, Jahana's right hand man, Toyama Kyūzo, decided that the best way to help Okinawa in the face of such insurmountable repression was to promote overseas emigration. Through his own dogged efforts, Toyama was able to convince Narahara to allow the first group of twenty-six Okinawan immigrants to leave Okinawa for Hawaii in 1899.
46. Toyama himself did not emigrate, but he did send one of his former movement comrades to investigate the conditions of the first group of Okinawans in Hawai'i. The man he sent was a young Taira Shinsuke, who was born in the northern region of Nakijin in 1876. In 1904, Taira left Hawai'i for California where he held many odd domestic jobs until he was able to buy some land and farm. He eventually opened a restaurant in Los Angeles. During World War II, however, along with over 110,000 other Japanese Americans, he and his family were forced to spend time in a concentration camp.
47. Unknown to most is that in 1936, Taira wrote the words for the popular post-War song called *Hiyamikachi Bushi*. The well-known Okinawan composer and researcher Yamauchi Seihin

composed the music for *Hiyamikachi Bushi*. The song's upbeat theme and tune is appealing and a cursory YouTube search of *Hiyamikachi Bushi* will turn up numerous renditions by various Okinawan and non-Okinawans musicians since the Okinawan renaissance and the Okinawa Boom.

*Nana kurubi kurubi  
Hiyamikachi ukiti  
Washita kunu Uchinā  
Shikē ni shirasa*

Tumbling down seven times over, each time getting up with a yell  
Let our dear Uchinā be known, to the world around us.

48. *Hiyamikachi Bushi* was written in the structure of the *Ryūka* poetry style of three lines of eight syllables and one line of six syllables that is used for the vast majority of the traditional Okinawan songs. *Hiyamikachi Bushi*, which has become a part of diasporic Okinawan culture as one of the repertoire of songs that are performed and listened to by Okinawans around the world, is not only a manifestation of resistance to Japanese assimilationist efforts, but it is also part of a genealogy of Okinawan opposition to social injustice. In the same year that he composed *Hiyamikachi Bushi*, Taira also composed a poem that looked back on the repression in the homeland of Okinawa:

*Yaman arihatiti, kawan karihatiti  
Umanchu nu majiri, sotetsu jigoku  
Taga shicharu kutu ga, nusudu kami machiti  
Hana nu Ōnuyama, mujichi nachusa*

Mountains left untended, rivers have run dry,  
A people's hell of eating sago palm  
And what's it from? Worshipping the thief God  
Turning Ōnuyama's flowers to counterfeit.

49. The poem was written in reference to Governor Narahara, the repressive governor of Okinawa who had crushed the movement that Jahana, Toyama, Taira, and others had been part of in the late nineteenth century. The line, 'A people's hell of eating sago palm' is of particular interest. After Japan's forcible annexation, thousands of mainland Japanese settled in Okinawa. For the first few decades after annexation, people from Kagoshima, where Narahara was from, predominantly staffed the government offices in Okinawa. Kagoshima was formerly the militarily powerful feudal domain of Satsuma that had invaded the Ryūkyūs in 1609 and subsequently exacted huge taxes from the islands until the Meiji Period. The wealth that Satsuma had gained for centuries from the Ryūkyūs enabled it to become one of the major players in the Meiji Restoration.
50. The youthful movement under Jahana's leadership protested Narahara's nepotistic policies that fostered Okinawa's unprotected inclusion into Japan's political economy, which created conditions for widespread poverty and suffering. As sugarcane became a cash crop in Okinawa, much land was appropriated for its cultivation while less land was used to grow food. The result was an increasing dependency on the mainland. In other words, Okinawans grew sugarcane for cash to buy foodstuff from Japan. When world sugar prices dropped and left Okinawans not able to pay their taxes and debts, Okinawans experienced *sotetsu jigoku*, literally translated as sago palm hell, where many people were forced to eat the *sotetsu*, or sago palm, to survive. Since *sotetsu* is poisonous if not prepared correctly, many people suffered after eating it. Aggravating the situation, was the fact that the central government overtaxed the Okinawans. For example, in 1882, Okinawa paid 655,279 yen in taxes to the central government while the same government spent only 455,136 yen on Okinawa.[\[16\]](#)

51. The point of introducing Taira's poems above is to link present-day diasporic Okinawan identity and culture as represented by the upbeat de-contextualised and commodified *Hiyamikachi Bushi*, with a diasporic legacy of struggling for social justice. By doing so, I articulate the unarticulated powerful ironies of Okinawan diasporic existence and voice the unvoiced ironic power that we have at our disposal.
52. For instance, there is an irony in that Okinawan diaspora is expressed through a sort of 'model minority' narrative of Okinawan immigrants succeeding through quiet and uncomplaining hard work while it has roots in a movement that was committed to exposing the abuses of Okinawans by a repressive Japanese government. It is also ironic that a large segment of the Okinawan diaspora consists of South American Okinawans who began migrating back as labourers to Japan and Okinawa in large numbers from the early 1990s, which was right around the time of the first Taikai. At the 2001 Taikai, I remember the rousing performance of the Taikai theme song written by Alberto Shiroma, an Okinawan *sansei* from Peru who migrated to Okinawa in the 1980s and found success as a musician there and in Japan. The theme song, entitled, *Con el sanshin en la mano* reflected the growing pride in being both Okinawan and of immigrant background. The words in Japanese are given with their English translation below:

*Tōku kikoeru shiokaze wa  
Umi no kanata e yume hakobu  
Kono furusato kara tabidatte yuku  
Mitasenu kokoro tsusunde kita*

The sea breeze heard in the distance  
Carries a dream over the ocean  
I will journey from this, my home  
Bringing my unfulfilled heart

53. Ironically, Shiroma who worked at manual labour jobs when he first arrived in Okinawa, composed and performed a song that talks about a different Okinawan diasporic experience that contrasts with the story told in *Con el sanshin en la mano*. *Gambateando*, which gained much popularity among the South American Japanese and Okinawan Nikkei workers in Japan, is sung in the third-person about the experience of a Peruvian Nikkei worker in Japan. Ramon, the protagonist of the song, takes a lonely journey away from Peru to Japan:

*Era una noche oscura  
Ya nadie va caminando  
Está con sus dos maletas  
El DC-10 esperando*

On a desolate night  
When no one is around  
He waits for the departure of the DC-10  
With his two bags

*Aquí lo que más le cuesta  
Es poder comunicarse  
Entre tanta indiferencia  
Difícil es aguantarse*

The worst thing here  
Is not being able to communicate  
Surrounded by indifference  
It's difficult to bear

*Aparte de la rutina*

*Interminable y pesada  
Hay gente que discrimina  
Y lo provoca por nada*

The days pass by  
Long and heavy  
Some people discriminate  
For no reason

54. An irony behind the theme song of the *Taikai* being composed and performed by a Peruvian Okinawan *sansei* was that he once sang about the re-dispersed segment of the Okinawan diaspora that he is a part of. Again, however, the irony leads straight back to US militarisation of Okinawa. During the 1950s, in the name of 'freedom,' 'peace' and 'democracy' the US used bayonets and bulldozers to displace Okinawans from their land to build more military bases.
55. The Okinawans engaged in mass protests over the US military's violent and autocratic occupation. In the Cold War situation, the protests caused great concern for the US government as evidenced by a (declassified) Department of State intelligence report dated 26 October 1956 entitled 'US Administration of the Ryukyus Enters a Critical Period.' The report stated:
- If discontent in the Ryukyus continues to grow, the problem could arouse in Asia the highly-charged theme of 'anti-colonialism.' The Communist bloc, exploiting its pretension that decreasing tensions obviate the need for sacrifices in the name of military security, have begun to encourage Asian misgivings over protracted US military government of the Ryukyus and to threaten action in the United Nations.<sup>[17]</sup>
56. In 1956, Senaga Kamejiro, vocal critic of the US military policies in Okinawa was elected as mayor of Naha, the largest city in Okinawa. One year later the US High Commissioner, who was the de facto governor of Okinawa, forcibly and illegally removed Senaga from office.
57. While the clamour against the US military was going on in Okinawa, the US worked stealthily among Okinawans to encourage migration to South American countries. For example, from 1954 to 1964, about 3,200 Okinawans migrated to an immigrant colony set up by the US in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. This strategy was a 'safety valve' measure to prevent landless younger Okinawans from sympathising with communism in the Cold War atmosphere.<sup>[18]</sup>
58. These powerful ironies are all interconnected with the militarisation of the homeland of Okinawa, but they are also linked to the ironic power that the Okinawan diaspora represents. It has been US global militarisation that has covered, not the Okinawan diaspora. Okinawans may have been silenced, but have not been silent.
59. The overseas spreading of Okinawans has roots in Japanese military designs on Okinawa, but with the defeat of Japan by the US, Okinawa and its diaspora has fallen almost entirely within US global military hegemony. Consequently, Okinawans have been everywhere the US military has been. This is obviously true for the many Okinawan American men and women who have served in the US military and Okinawan women married to American military personnel. Not as obvious is how US military is witnessed by the Okinawan diaspora in other areas. I earlier talked about the tie between the US military expansion in Okinawa and Okinawan emigration to South America, but I must also make mention of the kidnapping of several hundred Okinawa Latin Americans by the US during World War II. These Okinawans were part of the US government's plan to round up 2,264 Japanese in Latin America to use in hostage exchange for Americans in Japanese territories during the war. About 1,800 of the Japanese Latin Americans were taken from Peru, which had a large Okinawan immigrant population. Some of the Okinawans were among those that were exchanged for American citizens during the war. The rest stayed in American internment camps for the duration of the war.

Most of the interned Okinawans were later deported to war-devastated Okinawa. One Okinawan woman I talked to who had been among those deported to Okinawa recalled: 'In Okinawa after the war we couldn't relax. At night, American military personnel would come to the villages and rape women. They would come in the middle of the night.'<sup>[19]</sup>

60. US militarisation itself operates in darkness, hiding its actions and silencing the witnesses of its immorality. Contrastingly, Okinawans have not been silent. On the night of 20 December 1970, Okinawans in the base town of Koza, angry over their colonised status engaged in a rebellion against the US military. Thousands took to the street to burn cars owned by Americans. In the end, eighty cars were totally destroyed and a few buildings on the nearby military base were damaged. Interestingly, there were no deaths or damage to local businesses in the uprising. The incident appeared in major American newspapers on 21 December 1970, but remarkably it was virtually gone from American newspapers by 22 December 1970.<sup>[20]</sup>
61. US militarisation hides well behind popular culture as well. In 1956, when protests in Okinawa were reaching fever pitch, Americans were watching the popular Hollywood movie starring Marlon Brando, the *Teahouse of the August Moon* (dir. Daniel Mann), which portrayed Okinawans as quaint, docile, gentle, and eager-to-please.<sup>[21]</sup> Thirty years later in 1986, another popular Hollywood movie, *The Karate Kid, Part II* (dir. John G. Avildsen) had almost an identical depiction of Okinawans, but also weirdly showed them as being enamoured with 1950s American cars, electrical appliances, and rock-and-roll dancing that they adopted from the American GIs who were ever-present in the movie's background.<sup>[22]</sup> While *The Teahouse of the August Moon* was a story of Okinawans under US occupation and *Karate Kid II* did not hide the American military presence in Okinawa, more recent popular representations of Okinawans, such as the popular book *The Okinawa Program: How the World's Longest-Lived People Achieve Everlasting Health and How You Can Too*<sup>[23]</sup> or the movie *Happy* (dir. Roko Belic, 2012),<sup>[24]</sup> have entirely excluded the presence of the American military in Okinawa while still portraying the people as happy and healthy natives.
62. In 1999, Carmen Higa Mochizuki, the named plaintiff in a class action suit against the US that was seeking compensation and an apology for the kidnapping, incarceration and deportation of her family and other Japanese Latin Americans during World War II, issued a declaration. The case was settled by the US government offering \$5,000 in compensation along with a short letter of apology. Mochizuki, who was born in Peru was brought to a US Department of Justice internment camp in Texas, deported to US-occupied Okinawa, and re-migrated to Los Angeles. She responded with in a written declaration:

Although my family and others suffered the loss of liberty, freedom and assets as a direct result of the action of the United States of America, we can never be adequately repaid. The United States Government has seen fit to compound the travesty by offering to settle for far less than was deemed necessary for others interned under the same conditions. Why would the people, although not citizens of the United States, who were kidnapped from their own country, and interned in the United States, be entitled to any less?<sup>[25]</sup>

63. Like a large elephant trying to hide, US global militarisation seeks the shadows. At times the shadow is provided by purported ideas of 'democracy' and 'freedom.' At other times, it is the tattered excuses of 'military necessity' and 'global security.' However, popular culture has often proved to be the most effective in covering and distorting the impact of US militarisation in Okinawa. In recent years, diasporic Okinawan identity and culture have been most influenced by media images of Okinawa as an exotic land and Okinawans as a docile people. This shadow itself, however, cannot forever provide cover for the elephant from the watchful eyes of the Okinawan diaspora.

## References

- [1] I think it would be a good idea to reference *Okinawan Diaspora*, edited by Nakasone, Ronald Y, here.
- [2] Eiji Oguma, 'Nihonjin' No Kyōkai: Okinawa, Ainu, Taiwan, Chōsen, Shokuminchi Shihai Kara Fukki Undō Made (The Borders of 'Japanese': From Colonial Control of Okinawa, Ainu, Taiwan, and Korea to the Reversion Movement), Shohan. Tokyo: Shinyosha, 1998, pp. 20–21.
- [3] Oguma, *Nihonjin No Kyōkai: Okinawa, Ainu, Taiwan, Chōsen, Shokuminchi Shihai Kara Fukki Undō Made*, pp. 20–21.
- [4] Kozue Akibayashi and Suzuyo Takazato, 'Okinawa: Women's struggle of demilitarization,' in *The Bases of Empire: the Global Struggle against US Military Posts*, ed. Catherine Lutz, New York: New York University Press, 2009, pp. 243–70, p. 244.
- [5] Akibayashi and Takazato, 'Okinawa: Women's struggle of demilitarization,' pp. 245–46.
- [6] *Hawaii Herald*, 15 September 2000, p. A-2.
- [7] Darryl Flaherty, book review of Miyume Tanji's *Myth, Protest and Struggle in Okinawa*, London: Routledge, 2006 in *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, issue 16, March 2008, online:[http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue16/flaherty\\_review.htm](http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue16/flaherty_review.htm) (accessed 29 August 2013).
- [8] Flaherty, book review of Miyume Tanji, *Myth, Protest and Struggle in Okinawa*.
- [9] Moriteru Arasaki, *Profile of Okinawa: 100 Questions and Answers*, Tokyo: Techno Marketing Center, 2000, p. 221.
- [10] Akibayashi and Takazato, 'Okinawa: Women's struggle of demilitarization,' pp. 256–57.
- [11] Akibayashi and Takazato, 'Okinawa: Women's struggle of demilitarization,' p. 257.
- [12] Open letter from Morikazu Nakamura, Executive Director Okinawa International Exchange & Human Resources Development Foundation, to participants of the Taikai, 14 May 2010.
- [13] Mitsugu Sakihara, 'History of Okinawa,' in *Uchinanchu: A History of Okinawans in Hawai'i*, ed. Ethnic Studies Oral History Project, United Okinawan Association of Hawai'i, Honolulu: Ethnic Studies Program, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, 1981, pp. 3–22, p. 8.
- [14] Kevin Kelley, 'Man found guilty in beating death of Japanese wife,' *West Life*, 1 February 2012, online: <http://westlife.northcoastnow.com/man-found-guilty-in-beating-death-of-japanese-wife/> (accessed 27 June 2013); Dan Haggerty, 'Fairview Park man behind bars after his wife dies from brutal beating,' *newsnet5.com*, 7 March 2011, online: <http://www.newsnet5.com/news/local-news/fairview-park-man-behind-bars-after-his-wife-dies-from-brutal-beating/> (accessed 27 June 2013).
- [15] Donna J. Miller, 'Fairview Park man arrested in wife's beating death,' *Plain Dealer* 17 March 2011, online: [http://blog.cleveland.com/metro/2011/03/woman\\_from\\_japan\\_fatally\\_beate.html](http://blog.cleveland.com/metro/2011/03/woman_from_japan_fatally_beate.html) (accessed 27 June 2013).
- [16] See Masaaki Aniya, 'Kengai Dekasegi to Kennai Ijū,' (Labor Migration from Okinawa and Human Movement within Okinawa), in *Okinawaken Shi* vol. 7, Tokyo: Sentoraru Insatsujo, 1974: pp 423–55; and Mitsugu Sakihara, 'The history of Okinawa,' in *Uchinanchu: A History of Okinawans in Hawaii*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1981, pp. 3–22.
- [17] Department of State, Office of Intelligence Research, 'US Administration of the Ryukyus Enters A Critical Period,' *Intelligence Report No. 7366*, 26 October 1956.
- [18] Kozy Amemiya, 'The Bolivian connection: US Bases and Okinawan emigration,' in *Okinawa: Cold War Island*, ed. Chalmers A. Johnson, Cardiff, CA: Japan Policy Research Institute, 1999, pp. 53–70, pp. 58–60.
- [19] I conducted an oral history for the Japanese Peruvian Oral History Project (JPOHP) on a *nisei* Okinawa who was born in Peru, taken to a US Department of Justice Camp in Crystal City, Texas during World War II, deported to Okinawa after the war, and re-immigrated to Peru in the early 1960s. The interview took place at the Centro Cultural Peruano-Japonés in Lima, Peru on 25 March 1999. To keep her identity anonymous, I refer to her as OH-13.

[20] The *Los Angeles Times* front-page article was titled '2,000 Okinawans Storm US Air Base.' The *Washington Post* featured a photo of burned-out cars on a Koza street along with two articles on its front page. The headings on the articles announced, 'Okinawans Battle GIs, Burn Cars and Islanders Resent US Arrogance.' The *New York Times* covered the uprising on page 3 with a photo of some '80 American cars burning.' On December 22, the *Los Angeles Times* and *Washington Post* both had articles on the front page titled respectively 'US to Heavily Cut Forces in Okinawa and Japan by June' and 'US Announces Pullout of 12,000 Troops From Japan.' Neither of those articles mentioned the uprising. The *New York Times* had an article on the US military's need to keep troops in Okinawa and did have a photo of US Military Policemen firing tear gas during the uprising. However, right below that article was another editorial about US plans to cut combat forces in Japan.

[21] *Teahouse of the August Moon*, dir. Daniel Mann, perf. Marlon Brando, Glenn Ford and Machiko Kyo, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1956, Film.

[22] *The Karate Kid, Part II*, dir. John G. Avildsen, perf. Ralph Macchio, Pat Morita and William Zabka, Columbia Pictures, 1986, film.

[23] Bradley Wilcox, D. Craig Wilcox and Makoto Suzuki, *The Okinawa Program: How the Longest-Lived People Achieve Everlasting Health—And How You Can Too*, New York: Harmony, 2002.

[24] *Happy*, dir. Roko Belic, perf. Anne Bechsgaard, Gregory Berns and Roy Blanchard, Wadi Rum Productions, 2011, film

[25] Carmen Higa Mochizuki, *Carmen Mochizuki et al. v. United States of America*, 43 US Court for Federal Claims, p. 99.

MAIN

---

Published with the support of Gender and Cultural Studies, School of Culture, History and Language, College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University.

URL: <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue37/ueunten.htm>

© [Copyright](#)

Page constructed by [Carolyn Brewer](#).

Last modified: 12 April 2015 1739