

Part II: Contemporary Okinawan Society and Culture

Memories of Okinawa: Life and Times in the Greater Osaka Diaspora

Steve Rabson

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Islands of Discontent: Okinawan Responses to Japanese and American Power

Out migration has long been a key component of the modern Okinawan experience. As the poorest prefecture in the country with an extremely limited land supply, there were plenty of economic incentives for Okinawans to seek employment outside the prefecture, and large numbers traveled to such places as the sugar and pineapple fields of Hawaii, the coffee plantations of Brazil, newly established colonies in Bolivia (see the Augustine chapter) and many other places in North and South America, Asia and the Pacific Islands region. As a consequence prewar Okinawa came to have the highest ratio of emigrants to total population in pre-World War II Japan and it is virtually *de rigueur* for families in Okinawa to have relatives who live overseas. Although not as closely documented because of the absence of border control procedures (except for the period of U.S. occupation), even greater numbers of Okinawans migrated to the cities of mainland Japan. Large numbers of Okinawans still travel from job-scarce Okinawa to the mainland in search of economic opportunities.

Steve Rabson has done extensive field work among Okinawans in the Greater Osaka area and in his article mobilizes insights and interview responses he has gathered over the years to provide an overview of the experiences of Okinawan emigrants to the main islands since the early 20th Century. As he makes clear, Okinawans on the mainland were strongly affected by cross-pressures that, on the one hand, stemmed from real and imagined “differences” between Okinawans and mainland Japanese as well as the complex and changing political status of Okinawa vis-a-vis the rest of Japan that was discussed in earlier chapters of this reader. In general, until recently few Japanese thought in terms of hyphenated identity, such as “Okinawan-Japanese.” Perceived differences were readily manifested in unequal treatment and created strong pressures for assimilation. Since the 1990s, however, a “boom” in mainland interest in Okinawa and Okinawan culture—engendered mainly through music and other popular cultural forms—has altered attitudes relating to “Okinawan-ness” somewhat among Japanese mainlanders and among mainland-based Okinawans themselves. As he highlights the interplay of these various currents over time, Rabson makes it amply clear that identity among Okinawans on the mainland is a complex, shifting and multifaceted phenomenon.

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This chapter is based on a study of people who have migrated from Okinawa to greater Osaka and their descendants. Okinawans are defined as individuals with at least one grandparent or two great-grandparents from Okinawa, including those who moved to greater Osaka between late 1945 and early 1972 when Okinawa was officially called “The Ryukyu Islands”¹ by its American military occupiers.² From July 1999 until June 2001, I administered a survey questionnaire to 313 respondents, interviewed more than 100 individuals, collected writings by and about Okinawans in greater Osaka, and attended their social functions, performance events, and informal gatherings. Throughout the two years of this study, I lived among Okinawan neighbors in the largest residential community of Okinawans in greater Osaka which is located in Taishō Ward of Osaka City. This chapter summarizes the history of Okinawan migration to greater Osaka; presents interviews and writings that describe, in particular, their experiences residing in what Okinawan scholars have called “ethnic communities”³; examines the role of prefectural associations and other organizations of Okinawans in greater Osaka; and discusses the ways in which individuals in this diaspora remember Okinawa or view their relationship with an ancestral homeland where many of them have never lived.

Why they came to greater Osaka

Okinawans started moving to greater Osaka in significant numbers, mostly for temporary periods, around 1900, the same year commonly cited for the start of Okinawan emigration abroad. Most came either to work in factories or to sell Okinawan products, such as sugar, *awamori*, and textiles, after regular boat service was established between Naha and Osaka. During this period, Osaka was becoming known as “the Manchester of the East” for its many textile mills that recruited large numbers of workers, mostly women, including many from Okinawa and Korea as well as rural areas on the mainland. Families in Okinawa usually received a lump-sum payment for contracts negotiated through recruiters, and the factories provided their children, often girls as young as thirteen, with gainful employment, regular meals, dormitory lodging, and wages that helped support the household back home.⁴

For mainland Japan, World War I brought enormous economic benefits. Besides adding former German concessions in China and German territories in the South Pacific to its empire after Germany’s defeat, Japan gained a huge export market, which greatly stimulated its domestic industries. Manufacturers were deluged with orders for munitions and supplies as they displaced American and European manufacturers in large sectors both of the domestic consumer market and Asian markets.

The rural economy in Okinawa, already languishing, was devastated by the collapse of world sugar prices in 1921, compelling more Okinawans to leave for South America, Hawaii, and the Philippines, however, the largest number moved to mainland Japan. Meanwhile,

expansion of the industrial and consumer economy on the mainland that started during the “World War I boom” intensified competition for workers among recruiters and employers. This resulted not only in better wages for women and men working in factories, but also made possible access to more prestigious jobs, especially for women, some of whom were now able to leave the spinning factories for work as department store clerks and telephone operators.⁶ New factories in Osaka and its environs brought a rapid increase in the city’s textile, construction, metal processing, and lumber industries. Shipbuilding firms also opened assembly plants in what was then the city’s Minato (“Harbor”) Ward where Osaka’s largest Okinawan community settled in the eastern portion that split off in 1932 to create Taishō Ward.

By late 1914, when Okinawan communities had begun to form, two-fifths of the population of Osaka’s Kita Okajima Precinct (part of Taishō Ward after 1932) was estimated to be from Okinawa.⁷ Of the approximately 20,000 who came to the mainland from Okinawa every year during the 1920s and 1930s, nearly half worked as manual laborers in the factories of greater Osaka. In 1925, for example, of 19,926 Okinawans moving to the mainland, 8,994 came to the Osaka-Kobe area. The recorded population of Okinawans residing there grew from 1,575 in 1920 to 8,994 in 1925 and 20,356 in 1930, declined to 16,929 in 1935, and grew again to 53,678 in 1940. During this same period for the mainland as a whole, the resident population grew from 9,626 in 1920 to 19,926 in 1925 and 43,150 in 1930, declined to 32,335 in 1935, and grew again to 88,319 in 1940.⁸ By 1940, the population of Okinawans on the mainland was approaching 15 percent of the total population of Okinawa Prefecture itself, some 600,000 at the time.

In contrast to Osaka, known as a “labor market,” Okinawans thought of Tokyo as a “center of arts and culture” where young people went to attend school and begin careers in such fields as literature, journalism, and painting, as well as in business. A popular saying in Okinawa at the turn of the twentieth century was “The rich emigrate abroad, the students go to Tokyo, and the poor go to Osaka.”⁹ In reality, of course, students also went to schools and colleges in Osaka and Kyoto. And, despite this “working-class” image of Osaka, many Okinawans in professions such as medicine, pharmacy, law, and education settled there after completing their schooling on the mainland. Okinawans in Osaka worked on the prefectural police force, in the city hall, on newspapers as reporters, and in local hospitals as physicians. By 1910 Osaka had approximately sixty Okinawan schoolteachers and thirty firefighters. Okinawans also worked in banks, shipping companies, and retail stores, managed restaurants and clothing stores, and owned small businesses in the city.

When discussing Okinawan migration, mainlanders invariably refer to the “palm tree hell” (*sotetsu jigoku*). This ironic phrase is commonly used to describe economic conditions in Okinawa during the years following the collapse of world sugar prices in 1921. The devastating shock, felt first by farm families, spread rapidly to related businesses and banks which failed one after another. Employers could not meet their payrolls, and even the Okinawa Prefectural Government, unable to collect taxes, went bankrupt.¹⁰ As in times of famine in the former Ryukyu Kingdom, people resorted to eating the seeds and lower stalks of Japanese fern palm (cycad) plants that provided nourishment, but required careful cooking to avoid food poisoning. Okinawans, however, criticize the term “palm tree hell,” noting that it sounds like some kind of natural disaster, obscuring the responsibility of the

Japanese government for its discriminatory policies toward Okinawa where, before World War II, people paid higher taxes and received fewer social services than in any other prefecture. Okinawans also note that, far from protecting the local sugar industry, the Japanese government abandoned it in favor of an intense program to develop sugar plantations in Taiwan, Japan's colony acquired as one of the spoils of victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95.¹¹

With Okinawan migration to greater Osaka increasing thirteen-fold between 1920 and the early 1930s, the national government dealt with depression-era conditions in Okinawa by rejecting proposals for relief and, instead, sending 56,000 Okinawans as emigrants to Japanese island territories in the South Pacific where by 1940 they outnumbered local populations.¹²

Okinawan residents of greater Osaka today include people who came to rural areas of the mainland initially in the massive evacuation that began in late 1944, and others who barely survived the Battle in 1945. Memories of the evacuation, the Battle, and the firebombing of Osaka in 1945 comprise an important legacy of the Pacific War in the Okinawan community.

When the war finally ended, many Okinawans who had lived on the mainland or evacuated there before the Battle were unable to return during the period Okinawans call "*kaosu*" (chaos) stretching into the aftermath of massive destruction in which whole families were annihilated, villages obliterated, property demolished, and the landscape altered irrevocably. Thousands were finally able to go back, at least temporarily, beginning in 1946, but travel to and from Okinawa was strictly controlled under the U.S. "Military Government" which began requiring that people wanting to return provide family registers that had also, in many cases, been destroyed in the Battle. Those wanting to go to Okinawa included Okinawan soldiers returning from military service abroad or from prisoner-of-war camps in the U.S.S.R., as well as civilians. Occupation authorities on the mainland first established an office in Fukuoka to provide alternative documents, but many people were unable to obtain them. Later, U.S. occupation authorities in Okinawa issued what were euphemistically called "passports" for travel between the mainland and Okinawa, but were really more like the old Soviet exit visas, obtainable only after what were sometimes lengthy investigations. Those who did manage to return in the early postwar years often arrived to find their families decimated, their homes in ruins, little prospect for employment and, in some cases, their lands seized, without compensation, for U.S. military bases. As a result, many had to make U-turns back to the mainland.

Where they settled: growth, movement, and changing conditions in the greater Osaka diaspora

Kansai, the mainland region with the largest number of migrants, encompasses Osaka, Hyōgo, and Kyoto Prefectures, but can also refer, along with Kinki, to a wider area including Mie, Nara, Shiga and Wakayama Prefectures. Okinawans reside throughout this region, but by far the largest numbers live in Osaka and Hyōgo, the only prefectures in Kansai with Okinawan residential communities. This is why, for the sake of convenience, I refer to Osaka and Hyōgo Prefectures as "greater Osaka." Residential communities of Okinawans can still be found elsewhere on the mainland in Yokohama and Kawasaki, while in Fukuoka,

Nagoya, Hiroshima and other cities, where such neighborhoods existed in the past, Okinawan migrants and their descendents have now largely dispersed.

Precise figures for Okinawans now residing on the mainland are not available. Until 1940 such statistics were compiled periodically from official family registers (*koseki*) by the prefectural police in Okinawa. However, since the war, family registers of most Okinawans born in greater Osaka have indicated domiciles on the mainland, not in Okinawa. And many migrants established new family registers on the mainland after their official records were destroyed during the Battle of Okinawa. Prefectural associations have compiled estimates based on their membership lists, but, until recently, these have enumerated households, not individuals, and do not include non-member households. A more comprehensive, though imprecise, mainland-wide survey was published by the Okinawa Prefectural Association of Hyōgo (Okinawa Kenjin-kai Hyōgo-ken Honbu) in November of 2000 which estimated that the two largest populations by far were 36,500 in Yokohama City and 70,000 in Osaka Prefecture. Other sources estimate the population of Okinawans in Osaka City's Taishō Ward at 19,000,¹³ by far the largest in Kansai.¹⁴

Like migrant and immigrant communities elsewhere, Okinawan communities in greater Osaka formed near where jobs were available and where other Okinawans already lived who could provide support and contacts, especially important for newcomers. Many Okinawans also preferred an environment for daily life where it was possible to speak the dialects, eat the food, practice the religious observances, and maintain other social and cultural customs of the homeland to the extent possible in what were, for most, unfamiliar urban conditions. And, like migrants and immigrants in many places, people from Okinawa chose to live in such communities in order to cope with prejudice and discrimination, including denial of lodging and employment, they encountered because societies at large have often tended to look down on or exclude people with differences, real or imagined. Relentless pressures to “assimilate” (*dōka*), coming both from mainlanders and from Okinawans themselves, caused many to abandon much of what was distinctively Okinawan when they stepped outside the community, but inside it people could still live, in many ways, as they had before coming to the mainland. In 1996 Kinjō Isamu recalled his early childhood in Taishō Ward shortly after his family moved there from Okinawa in 1954. By this time, Okinawans had been settling there for some three decades, and his childhood memories are far more positive than those of people who had migrated in the 1920s when the community was still going through its early growing pains.

My parents maintained our Okinawan lifestyle so completely that sometimes we forgot we were in Osaka. We always spoke in Okinawa dialect and, since we were among many other Okinawans in the Manzai-bashi section of Kita Okajima Precinct, it was easy to live this way. My father raised pigs [for the many cuts of pork used in Okinawan cuisine] and grew *gōyaa* [bitter melon] in a vacant lot, and he made brown sugar candy. My mother had her weaving implements sent from Okinawa, and wove [Okinawan style] *kasuri* splash-patterned cloth. We conducted all the annual religious observances strictly by the old lunar calendar, including the spring *shiimii* festival of feast and prayer when relatives gather to honor departed ancestors, and the summer *o-bon* festival [when spirits of the ancestors are said to return to this world for a brief visit].

The distribution of the Okinawan population in greater Osaka has changed over time with shifting labor and consumer demands as old factories closed and new ones opened. The Okinawan community in Wakayama, a center of the prewar textile industry, virtually disappeared after World War II as many of its residents moved to the growing Okinawan community in Amagasaki where small and medium-sized metalworking shops were opening. Such shops can be found as well in Taishō Ward of Osaka, where community residents also work in the two large metal-parts factories, Kubota and Nakayama. Other Taishō residents work as proprietors or employees in stores, selling mostly consumer goods and services, including those which line the three-block long shopping arcade (*shōten-gai*) in Hirao Precinct, and also as professionals in real estate, pharmacy, medicine, dentistry, and teaching. Many single male residents in Taishō Ward work for local private contractors at construction sites, while, as elsewhere in Japan, there is a large and growing population of retirees.

Major movements of population have also occurred within localities, particularly starting in the late-1950s when families of Okinawans, as well as many mainland Japanese, moved from houses or tenements to apartment blocks (*danchi*) being built in large numbers at the time. This movement, however, was not always voluntary. In Taishō Ward, for example, residents of make-shift houses and barrack-like tenements in a low and often-flooded riverbank area of Kobayashi Precinct that Okinawans called “the hollows” (*kubun-gwa* in Okinawa dialect) were relocated by the city of Osaka to newly constructed municipal apartments nearby in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This was part of a citywide “slum clearance” plan that targeted this area of marshy, unclaimed land officially deemed unsanitary and unsafe. Okinawans had begun living there in the chaotic period just after World War II, which had left much of greater Osaka devastated from fire-bombings. On what had been unclaimed land they constructed dwellings from tarpaper, tin, cardboard, plywood, and scrap lumber without official building permits. Interviewed in 1999, a former resident described the origins and growth of the hollows.

Many poor people began living there shortly after the war. When one person put up a house, others followed, building houses, moving in, and starting families. In the aftermath of recent bombings, there were always big puddles everywhere. Around 1950 people began putting up barrack-like tenements using lumber, tarpaper, and cement. Landlords living elsewhere also built tenements they rented.

There was electricity in the hollows, but the puddles slopped over with what seemed like sewer water. They were pumped out occasionally, but most of the time people had to put down boards for walk-paths to avoid sloshing through them.¹⁵

Kinjō Isamu recalled the hollows from the 1950s.

About one-third of the people there were Okinawans, with many of the others from Kyūshū and Shikoku. When new people moved in from Okinawa, their friends and relatives would come to help put up a house using discarded lumber and other materials. No one owned most of the land, so it was squatters’ rights for the first to claim an open space. My father built his first house this way with help from other Okinawans. Instead of paying them, he served food and drink afterwards. This was one of the ways the *yuimaru* (cooperative

labor) system, used in Okinawa for such hard work as cutting sugar cane, also came to be applied in Osaka.¹⁶

Though called by the media at the time an “Okinawa slum,”¹⁷ some of the approximately 1500 Okinawan migrants and their descendants who lived there recall the hollows wistfully as a place with “a spirit of community cooperation” (*kyōdō-tai seishin*) where people helped build dwellings by *yuimaru* and loaned money to each other under the coop system, called “*moai*” in Okinawa, of pooling funds among relatives and close friends that is also practiced elsewhere in Asia. In addition, they made room in their homes for displaced neighbors, especially during such troubled times as when “typhoon Jane” leveled many dwellings and flooded the area in 1950.¹⁸ But other former residents call nostalgia for the hollows a romanticization of the past, and recall freezing winters, sweltering summers, flooding waters where sewage floated, swarming mosquitoes, devastating fires that fed on tar- paper, and taxi drivers who would refuse to take passengers to Taishō Ward for fear of soiling their vehicles in mud puddles or damaging their tires in potholes.¹⁹ Kinjō Isamu recalled that conditions there were much worse than in the neighborhoods of soggy old houses crammed together that we saw in a documentary film shown by one of our teachers at school with a passionate interest in the “Buraku problem.” I realized then that, like Buraku people, many Okinawans were hired only for grueling, dirty jobs, but that, in a way, we faced worse discrimination because, unlike them, we needed “passports” to visit our hometowns [in Okinawa under U.S. military occupation].²⁰

In 1996 Kakinohana Yoshimori remembered his first impression of the hollows from the early 1970s, shortly after he had moved to Osaka from Miyako Island.

Now people in Taishō Ward dress neatly, wearing the latest fashions, but in those days laborers walked the streets in baggy work fatigues. On the one hand, I was relieved to be among other Okinawans, but the place was depressingly poor. When I first saw the hollows, before the relocation, I was appalled, wondering if this was how Okinawans on the mainland had to live. It truly was a slum, though people from there would be angry to hear me say that today. But it’s the truth. One glance at the outdoor sinks and toilets, the maze of alleys, the houses patched together with boards and tin, and anyone would have to agree.²¹

The current fascination among mainland Japanese with things Okinawan, which includes Okinawan communities on the mainland, could explain, in part, why a place commonly called a “slum” in the past has become the object of recent nostalgia in Japan for the early postwar period and of admiration for the resourcefulness of its residents in the face of adversity. This trend could also explain why it has come to acquire a more positive image in the current memories of some Okinawans, and why published interviews and writings have been appearing recently.

Still, whatever “narrative” of the hollows one accepts today, for most residents it was their one and only home when Osaka City targeted it for “clearance” in 1969. Okinawan student leaders organized protests, applying such tactics as sit-ins at municipal government offices learned from local Buraku activists. Protracted negotiations with the city dragged on until most residents agreed to move, with negotiated rent subsidies, to new municipally owned apartment buildings (*shi-ei danchi*) in the early 1970s. The smaller number of people living

in the hollows with deeds to their land were offered alternative lots, though of somewhat smaller size, in nearby precincts.²² Interviewed in 1999, one former resident recalled that “the compensation money the city was offering us to evacuate didn’t amount to a sparrow’s tear. They built fine apartments at the places we were relocated, but moving there put us all deeply in debt. I can still remember how worn out with worry members of the tenants’ association were as they ran around every day trying to scrape up the money for moving expenses.”²³ The last tenant to hold out, an elderly woman, finally moved to a municipally owned apartment in 1979.

After that, the hollows was sunk underwater, flooded deliberately for the artificial expansion of Osaka Bay. Meanwhile, some mainland Japanese living elsewhere in Taishō Ward voiced resentment because they were not offered relocation rent subsidies in the new apartments or alternative parcels of land. Today, nothing of the hollows or anything like it remains in Taishō Ward. Apartment buildings, large and small, and one-family houses predominate, along with residences storekeepers have built above or behind their shops. The Okinawan community there is now a modestly prospering, though far from affluent, neighborhood of merchants and working people roughly comparable in cultural distinctiveness and economic circumstances to Brooklyn’s ethnic neighborhoods in Williamsburg (Italian) and Greenpoint (Polish). As for land, virtually no vacant lots or open spaces remain today like those still available when Kinjō Isamu’s family moved to Taishō in 1954, so Okinawans can no longer raise pigs. However, many families still maintain small gardens of *gōyaa* that are so numerous on one street in Kobayashi Precinct that it has come to be known as “*gōyaa dōri*.” Okinawan foodstuffs for preparation at home and in restaurants are sold in many neighborhood stores, including some run by mainlanders. 46% of the respondents to my questionnaire indicated that they ate Okinawan food regularly; 40% indicated that they observe Okinawan religious practices; and 60% indicated that they perform or listen to Okinawan folk music, which one can often hear walking along neighborhood streets in the evening.

How they coped: adjusting to differences and responding to prejudice and discrimination

People from Okinawa have encountered hardships on the mainland because of differences that are real, but more often imagined or exaggerated in the minds of mainlanders. A proportionally larger population from Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands settled in the Ryukyu Islands in prehistoric times than in what is now mainland Japan.²⁴ As a result of this early migration, physiological characteristics distinguishing Okinawans from mainland Japanese include shorter average stature, darker skin, fuller chests, and rounder eyes. Yet many Okinawans are physically indistinguishable from a majority of people on the mainland where there is also significant individual and regional variation to the extent that some mainlanders are even said to “look Okinawan.” Mainlanders have tended to exaggerate or invent “differences,” cultural as well as physiological, fostering stereotypes which are likely to be activated when someone is *thought* to be Okinawan. Furthermore, people who are said to “look Okinawan,” like Okinawans themselves, have been ridiculed for features that are, in fact, envied by many on the mainland. In what is one of the most popular cosmetic surgical procedures in the country today, women have tissue removed to enlarge their eye openings. And the beaches in Okinawa are crowded year-round with

women and men from the mainland assiduously darkening their skin, suntans acquired in the pursuit of leisure being a mark of wealth and sophistication often associated with travel abroad.

While their physical features have often attracted unwanted attention, language differences have posed more serious problems for Okinawans on the mainland. Again, both real and imagined differences are involved. During the U.S. military occupation of Okinawa, mainlanders sometimes asked people from Okinawa if they spoke English at home. As for actual differences, the dialects of mainland Japan and the Ryukyus are closely related structurally, and are said to have diverged from a single “mother dialect” in a process thought to have occurred between the second and seventh centuries A.D.²⁵ Today Ryukyu dialects have come to be the most divergent among all local dialects in Japan, a distance which has been compared to the difference between French and Italian.²⁶ And, like dialects in northern Honshū and southern Kyūshū today, the dialects of the Ryukyu Islands, some of which are mutually unintelligible, are not understood by people in other parts of the country unless they make a special point of studying them. On the other hand, for more than a century, since the middle of the Meiji Period (1868-1912), “standard” Japanese has been promoted by the media in Okinawa and required—at times punitively—in local schools. With daily discourse among those under fifty now conducted almost entirely in “standard” Japanese, the dialects of Ryukyu are gradually dying out despite recent efforts at preservation in the arts and education.

Nevertheless, many Okinawans on the mainland, especially those migrating after early childhood, have struggled, at least to some extent, with “standard” Japanese. Even younger migrants who have mastered it in Okinawa as their first language often retain a distinctively “Okinawan accent” and may be unfamiliar with certain local idioms, resulting in ridicule and a self-consciousness that hinders their ability to express themselves fully. An “Okinawan accent” includes a more fluctuating intonation (as opposed to a flatter mainland intonation) along with the occasional lengthening and shortening of vowels contrary to the mainland standard (Amagasaki pronounced as “Amagasaaki” and Osaka pronounced as “Osuka”).²⁷ A woman in her late fifties who had come to Osaka in 1953 reported that one reason she had become active in the local Okinawa Prefectural Association was so that “I could feel comfortable about speaking with others in an Okinawa accent (Okinawa-*namari*).”²⁸ When speaking to each other in Osaka, first generation migrants from Okinawa often mix words and phrases from Okinawa dialect with Kansai Japanese. In an ironic reversal, the recent “boom” of interest in Okinawan culture has given the dialect a “trendy” status in Japan today so that mainlanders are now picking up expressions like *chura* (pretty girl or handsome boy), *waji-waji* (angry), and *kūsu* (*awamori* aged at least five years), as well as learning the words for such Okinawan cuisine as *gōyaa* (bitter melon), *mimi-gaa* (pickled pigs’ ears), and *saada-andagii* (spherical donut).

Among Okinawans interviewed for this study who recalled struggles with language on the mainland was a woman in her fifties who had moved to Osaka from Nago in the early 1960s. After finally receiving her “passport,” she arrived in Osaka and was hired in an office where she had to answer the telephone and take messages. She often needed to ask callers to repeat information because she could not understand it the first time or worried that her

reply was not being understood by the caller. At such times she would apologize, explaining that she had arrived only recently from Okinawa.²⁹

A woman in her mid-forties who had come to greater Osaka in the mid-1970s told in a June, 2001 interview of a co-worker from Okinawa at a supermarket who was harassed relentlessly by his supervisors because he couldn't adjust immediately to local customs of repeatedly greeting and thanking customers with the correct phrases of Osaka dialect. And, in a case that became a "cause celebre" in the Taishō Ward community, a nurse trainee from Okinawa was fired in 1977 by a local hospital for alleged "inefficiency" because, her supervisor said, she spoke with an Okinawa accent. Despite intimidation by *yakuza* thugs, her supporters lodged a formal protest with the hospital director and the young woman's dismissal was rescinded. She subsequently resigned her job, received compensation from the hospital as part of a settlement, and returned to her home on Iheya Island.³⁰

Interviewed in April of 2000, a 48-year-old neighbor of mine who had migrated to Osaka in the early 1970s and remains single gave struggles with language as the main reason he never dated women born and raised on the mainland, though he had been approached a number of times over the years, including on two occasions during my residence there, by such women who said they found him attractive. And a woman from Nago in her early thirties who had migrated as recently as 1985 reported that "I had real trouble with language when I first arrived, especially because idioms and intonation was different. I felt depressed because I was often unable to express myself or understand completely what others said. Even today, I have occasional problems."³¹

Aside from language, other differences exaggerated or invented have spawned prejudices and discrimination in their most virulent forms. Japanese who traveled or worked in Okinawa early in the Meiji Period initially conveyed stereotypes that were already widespread and deeply rooted in Japan by the turn of the twentieth century. Perhaps the most blatant (and subsequently most studied) manifestation of these attitudes was the notorious 1903 "human pavilion incident" at the Fifth World Trade and Industrial Exhibition, held that year in Osaka. The so-called "scientific human pavilion" (*gakujutsu jinrui-kan*) was not one of the official, government-sponsored exhibits, but was designed and constructed as a private business venture in consultation with Tsuboi Seigorō,³² known as "the founder of Japanese anthropology." What has subsequently been described as a "freak show" was located just outside the main entrance to the exhibition grounds where it could easily attract some of the estimated 5,300,000 visitors to what was Japan's largest yet international exhibition. Scheduled to open on March 10, it was to feature twenty-one highly exoticized "representatives" of "eight peoples:" five Ainu, four Taiwanese, two Koreans, three Chinese, three (Asian) Indians, one Javanese, one Bulgarian, and two Okinawans, all dressed in their "native" (*genjū-min*) clothing and displayed in cubicles that were later compared to animal cages at circuses.³³ Protests from the Chinese Embassy and from Koreans in Osaka led to cancellation of exhibits from these countries (Korea was "annexed" by Japan as a colony seven year later in 1910), and protests from Okinawa, such as an angry editorial in the April 7, 1903 *Ryūkyū Shinpō* declaring "We must never tolerate such humiliation," led to removal of the "Ryukyu" exhibit in May after two months of display.

Poet Yamanokuchi Baku (1903-1963), born in Naha, who spent virtually all of his adult life on the mainland, poignantly evoked mainland stereotypes of Okinawans. In his short story "Mr. Saitō of Heaven Building,"³⁴ the narrator recalls the experience "of living in Tokyo as a man from 'Ryukyu' for the past sixteen years. I've run into people wherever I go who...stare at me strangely—as if I'm not even human. And in those stares I can hear their questions. Is Ryukyu in Okinawa Prefecture? Do the people there eat rice?"³⁵ More recently, during the U.S. military occupation when far fewer mainlanders than now made visits to Okinawa which then required passports and entry permits, people from Okinawa on the mainland were asked such questions as whether they lived in a jungle, wore grass skirts, or ate with knives and forks.³⁶

Moving from Okinawa to Osaka in 1925 at the age of nine, Oyakawa Takayoshi recalls his first few weeks in school on the mainland.

Some of the other students would look at me derisively, calling me "Ryukyuan." ...I was shocked, having no idea why they made fun of me because I was from Okinawa. ...It got so bad I couldn't stand it, and stopped going to school for about a week. My parents understood what was happening, though, and didn't scold me.³⁷

Drafted into the Imperial Japanese Army in 1937, Oyakawa writes, "the first unit I was assigned to was all Okinawans because, it was explained in the company briefing, soldiers from each prefecture were trained in separate units. But the company commander made fun of us, saying it was really because 'Okinawa is thirty years behind the mainland.'"³⁸ Okinawans have encountered prejudice on the mainland whether, like Oyakawa, they settled there or came temporarily for "work away from home." Kinjō Tsuru went to work in 1919 at the Fukushima Spinning Factory in Shikama, Hyōgo Prefecture.

My contract was for three years, but I ran away after working for only one. ...I just couldn't stand it anymore, always being made fun of because I was from Okinawa.

I was taunted especially by the woman of about fifty who was in charge of our rooms in the dormitory. Whenever she talked to me, she would yell out scornfully, "Hey, you, Ryukyu" or "Listen here, Ryukyu." I'm no weakling, though, and yelled back at her. ... "So what's wrong with being from Okinawa?" or "Didn't you also come out of a womb?" ...

We Okinawan women formed a group that stood up to her, and there were a lot of big arguments. I remember Ms. Yonamine especially. She was about forty and really told that room manager off. "We might be under contract here," she said, "but we haven't sold our lives to you." I'll never forget how good that made me feel. ...

If we were late getting back for the five-o'clock curfew, we'd be called into the office the next day for a bawling out of "you Ryukyu girls." Only one person there, a man working in the kitchen, treated us well because, he said, we had come from so far away. We called him Dad.³⁹

Besides barbs and insults, the problems people faced on the mainland simply because they came from Okinawa manifested themselves in material ways that directly affected their lives and livelihoods. Starting in the 1920s, some employers and landlords posted signs in front of factories, employment offices, and lodging houses announcing "Koreans and

Okinawans prohibited" (*Chōsen-jin Ryūkyū-jin o-kotowari*). In explaining such exclusion, employers sometimes complained that Okinawans tended to change jobs if they were offered better conditions elsewhere, and landlords claimed that Okinawans tended to live with too many relatives in lodgings meant for fewer tenants. It is true that people who traveled long distances to "work away from home" often lived with relatives, at least temporarily until they got settled. But Okinawans were certainly not the only ones coming from remote rural areas of Japan to lodge with relatives in cities like Osaka, especially during the acute prewar housing shortage. Furthermore, large families that often included in-laws and grandparents were still the norm in Japan at this time. And, while it is true that Okinawans would change jobs for higher wages, especially since they had to send at least part of their earnings back to their families, they were surely not the only workers in Japan leaving one workplace for better conditions at another.⁴⁰

In fact, Okinawans might have been motivated, at least in part, to change jobs because employers seem to have considered it smart business practice to offer them lower wages and inferior working conditions. Extensive statistical records from the 1920s and 1930s reveal a pattern of discrimination in employment contracts, housing, and even workplace safety measures. Tomiyama quotes published interviews of company officials who recalled that, seeking workers at low wages, "we made a special effort to recruit factory women from among Koreans, Okinawans, and Burakumin."⁴¹ Employers at mainland cotton spinning factories in particular assumed that "Ryukyuan" could be paid lower wages, would put up with abusive working conditions, and did not require compensation for fires or accidents. This discriminatory attitude manifested itself in a number of management policies, such as housing Okinawans separately and giving them different meals from mainland workers.⁴²

Statistics also show that women from Okinawa were disproportionately assigned the most dangerous and arduous jobs in spinning factories.⁴³ Arakaki Kaeko, who worked in 1927 at the Fukushima Spinning Factory, in Hyōgo Prefecture, describes one of several successful protests against discriminatory treatment of workers from Okinawa.

They deducted 15 sen from our monthly wages for meals, but served only leftovers to the Okinawans. The mainland workers got warm rice, while ours was always cold. It was clearly discrimination.

Finally, we couldn't stand it anymore, and six of us Okinawan factory women decided to take action in protest. "The hell with this," we told them. "You deduct all this money from our pay, and give us nothing but leftovers." Then, as soon as they served us the food, we hurled it back in their faces and knocked the serving trays down on the floor.

This really shocked the company, and after that we got the same food as the mainland workers.

Also, among other insults, our supervisors were always telling us that "Okinawans are dirty because you eat garlic and pork, like Koreans who eat red pepper."

So one day all the Okinawans gathered for a protest in the factory yard. We sat down on the ground and refused to work or eat in what today would be called a hunger strike. Then, maybe after the company contacted him, the president of the prefectural association, Mr.

Kinjō, arrived in a hurry to check out the situation. “We can’t work any more in a place like this,” we told him. “Please get us the money for our return fares.”

At last the factory manager showed up and apologized to us, and since the supervisors had to go along with him, our treatment suddenly improved.⁴⁴

As recalled in interviews, these experiences from the spinning mills indicate, first, that Okinawans did not necessarily accept prejudice and discrimination passively, and, second, that mainland co-workers and supervisors were responsive at times to their protests. Blatant discrimination persisted well into the postwar years despite the fact that it was now illegal. Two people I interviewed for this study reported seeing signs in front of apartment buildings in Taishō Ward as late as 1973 announcing, “Okinawans and members of Soka Gakkai not admitted” (*Okinawa to Sōka Gakkai, nyūkyō o-kotowari*), and a local community leader reported in 1987 that some landlords in the city were still refusing to rent to Okinawans.⁴⁵ A woman interviewed in April of 2000 said she was told by landlords that Okinawans tend to live with too many relatives, the same excuse given in earlier decades, and that members of Soka Gakkai, a Buddhist sect that actively recruits and proselytizes, tend to hold crowded, noisy prayer meetings at night. Signs excluding Okinawans on taverns and restaurants in Tokyo and Yokohama have been observed as late as the mid-1980s, and were given by one interviewee in March of 2001 as a major reason for moving from Yokohama to Osaka.

Protests by women mistreated in textile factories and by supporters of the nurse fired in 1977 for speaking with an “Okinawan accent” represent some of the many ways Okinawans on the mainland have responded to these injustices. Considering that the source of prejudice and discrimination is often psychological—presumptions of superiority by a majority over a minority—many Okinawans have sought to associate themselves in mainland minds with the majority by undertaking prodigious efforts to “assimilate.” Throughout the prewar and wartime years, and during the U.S. military occupation, Okinawans have often identified themselves with this majority by vigorously emphasizing their Japanese nationality. Published reaction from Okinawa in 1903 to the “human pavilion” at the Fifth World Trade and Industrial Exhibition in Osaka did not criticize the inhumanity of such a display, but its inclusion of Okinawans with Ainu and Taiwanese. An April 7 editorial in the *Ryūkyū Shinpō* objected, not to the exhibit in principle, but to its inclusion of “Japanese citizens of Okinawa Prefecture,” and complained that “lining up citizens of Okinawa Prefecture with Taiwanese barbarians (*seiban*) and Hokkaido Ainu is to view Okinawans...as one of these.” With heavy overtones of scapegoating, the editorial described this “humiliation” as the result of “being portrayed as an ‘inferior race’ (*rettō shuzoku*).”

This attitude has been characterized as the victims of discrimination becoming its perpetrators, and was also observed among women factory workers in Osaka from Okinawa and Korea who are said to have hurled the derogatory epithets “Korean whore” (*Chōsen pii*) and “Ryukyu pig” (*Ryūkyū buta*) at each other during arguments.⁴⁶ Furthermore, Okinawans sometimes assign high and low “status” among themselves. A first-generation migrant from Miyako Island, interviewed in April of 2001, reported that some migrants to Osaka from Okinawa Main Island (*hontō*) have tended to look down on

people from the outer islands (*ritō*). Protesting “the evils of discrimination” with a more positive appeal to shared national identity, Okinawan novelist Kushi Fusako pointed out in 1932 that “Like mainlanders, Okinawans serve in the military and perform their other duties as citizens.”⁴⁷

Okinawans who emphasize their Japanese nationality have often, but not always, de-emphasized their Okinawan ethnicity. Their efforts to “assimilate” culturally with majority Japanese (*Yamatun-chu*) have included not only practicing mainland customs of dialect, diet, dress, inter-personal formalities, and religious observances, at least outside the home or neighborhood, but also rejecting traditional Okinawan religious practices and such art forms as classical dance (*ryūbu*) and folk songs (*min'yō* or *shima-uta*), or performing them in private, away from the eyes and ears of *Yamatun-chu*. Oyakawa Takayoshi recalled that, after moving to Osaka in 1925 as a child, he developed a strong aversion for things distinctively Okinawan.

I hated Okinawan dance and *sanshin* [Okinawan *shamisen*] music...and despised the word ‘Ryukyu.’⁴⁸ ...In Chitose Precinct there was an open field where performers erected a lean-to stage, set up a booth for collecting admission, and put on Okinawan plays. Mainlanders would gather to watch in fascination, but they made fun of Okinawans in loud voices and I felt ashamed.

Another thing I hated was when people riding the trains or walking down the street spoke in Okinawa dialect. I thought that in public they should always use standard Japanese or Osaka dialect.⁴⁹

Perhaps the most conspicuous way Okinawans on the mainland have sought to de-emphasize or conceal their ethnicity has been changing the pronunciations, and sometimes the Chinese characters, in their distinctive Okinawan names. This trend started in Okinawa itself after Japan’s victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 when more and more Okinawans wanted to identify themselves with a nation rising in wealth, power, and status. Name-changing is, of course, an expedient familiar to many Americans, like myself, whose names were changed from those of recognizably Irish, Italian, or Jewish origin to inconspicuous “Anglo” alternatives. My grandfather, who emigrated from Russia to the Lower East Side (then a Jewish ethnic community) of Manhattan in 1900, agreed somewhat reluctantly when his children changed the legal family name from the obviously Jewish Rabinowitz (meaning rabbi’s son) to “Rabson” during a time of widespread anti-Semitism in the 1930s. (Despite the legal change, he never used “Rabson.”) Okinawans changed their family names around the same time in mainland Japan so that Kinjō became “Kaneshiro,” Higa became “Hiyoshi,” and Kabira became “Kawahira;” and men also changed their personal names from, for example, Shin’yū to “Masahiro,” Ryōmei to “Yoshiaki,” and Shōtoku to “Masanori.”⁵⁰ In Japan before 1945, changing one’s name to characters or their readings more common on the mainland was a relatively easy procedure, and even officially encouraged at a time when the Japanese government was also endeavoring to “assimilate” residents of colonies in Taiwan and Korea as “imperial subjects.” In fact, such changes were made mandatory in Korea by the notorious “Name Order” of 1939 requiring Koreans to adopt Japanese names.

Yet even during the prewar years when pressures to assimilate were at their peak, some Okinawans on the mainland opposed tendencies to reject their traditional culture, vigorously asserting its value. In 1927 *sanshin* performer Fukuhara Chōki founded a record company in Osaka devoted to Okinawan folk music; and Kushi Fusako wrote five years later, “I do not believe that our customs that differ from those on the mainland should be despised or discarded. [They] have deep roots in our culture [and] natural environment.”⁵¹ Interviewed in 1996, Kinjō Kaoru, who immigrated to greater Osaka as a small child in 1954, asserted that “people being different doesn’t make them better or worse. I think it’s been a mistake for us to try to become Japanese to the extent of destroying our own ethnicity.”⁵² Published in 1996 during a nationwide “boom” of interest in Okinawa, such affirmations of the value of Okinawan ethnicity could well have had more resonance among readers in contemporary Japan than Kushi’s affirmations would have had in 1932 when government policy and popular trends for assimilation were intensifying after the Manchurian Incident the previous year.

How they organized: changing forms and agendas of the Okinawa prefectural associations

Along with the sometimes-painful efforts to “assimilate” with mainland Japanese, migrants from Okinawa have had notable successes organizing for their mutual benefit and advocacy as Okinawans. This organizing, crucial to survival for people dealing with poverty, cultural differences, and discrimination, began informally with the first “pioneer” migrants who provided material assistance and networks of contacts for housing, employment, and even marriage, to friends, relatives, and fellow-villagers moving to the mainland. The first formal organization in greater Osaka was the Kansai Okinawa Prefectural Association (Kansai Okinawa Kenjin-kai), founded in 1924. The association’s newspaper *Dōhō* (Comrades) explained:

Our prefecture is under the same government as the rest of Japan, but, because we are in a remote location and have a different history and economic structure, we encounter unexpected misunderstandings and insults from the people of other prefectures. If we are to overcome the many obstacles imposed only on our prefecture and advance, socially and economically, to the status of people in other prefectures, we cannot possibly rely on the strength of disparate individuals. ...It is through one organization that we must move into society.⁵³

The authors of this article go on to support their call for organizing with comparisons that pose discrimination in global terms, but are sure to raise eyebrows today.

As individuals, the Jewish people have produced great numbers of outstanding individuals compared with other peoples of the world, and, it is fair to say, have been praised and honored since ancient times as being truly the highest among races in human society. Yet, the reality of their daily lives is precisely the opposite. In Europe and America today, Jews are subjected to outrageous insults. This is because their strength as individuals is dispersed and they have not organized as a group. ...In the reverse phenomenon, the Burakumin have not produced outstanding individuals of world-renown, but, in less than

four years time, they have built an organization and forged an ethnic solidarity that have made them the largest and most powerful social movement in Japan.⁵⁴

Despite a founding statement that contained apparently unintended slights of Burakumin and factual errors (there were numerous Jewish organizations in Europe and America in the 1920s), the Kansai Okinawa Prefectural Association built on appeals for ethnic solidarity to establish numerous local branches and subdivisions. The association has subsequently gone through one dissolution and rebirth as well as several re-organizations. Meanwhile, separate associations have been formed in the other prefectures of greater Osaka, the largest and most active today being the Hyōgo Okinawa Prefectural Association (Okinawa Kenjin-kai, Hyōgo-ken Honbu), founded in 1946. People have also organized into groups from local areas of Okinawa, and today there are hometown friendship associations (*kyōyūkai*) of migrants and their descendants for Nakijin, Haneji, Haibaru, Kochinda and other localities from which large numbers of people have moved to greater Osaka.

The roles of the prefectural associations have, of course, differed from each other and changed over time. In the early years, they provided essential support systems, including loans and temporary housing, to new arrivals and, unlike today, they led the movement for improved conditions among Okinawan factory workers. While they have continued to aid new arrivals from Okinawa, they function more as social and cultural facilitators today, presenting concerts and Okinawan products expositions, arranging and providing venues for classes in Okinawan performing and design arts, and organizing regular gatherings of community members. While they cooperate with each other in a wide range of ways, disagreements have arisen from time to time within and among prefectural associations over, for example, whether and how to become involved in political issues.

The first incarnation of the Kansai Okinawa Prefectural Association was led by activists committed to Marxist ideals, and organized on the model of a political party. Established in 1924, it was deeply involved in labor-union efforts to improve the wages and working conditions of factory workers in Osaka, many of whom came from Okinawa. However, within two years, this organization was virtually decimated by arrests of its leaders following brutal government suppression in 1926 of a strike by Okinawan workers that association leaders helped organize at the Tōyō Cotton Industries' Sangenya factory, located in the present Taishō Ward of Osaka. On August 11 union members submitted a fifteen-point written petition to company officials seeking compliance with factory labor laws, freedom to leave the company grounds, an end to mandatory transfers of workers' earnings to their families in Okinawa, equalization of wages, and reforms of other discriminatory practices. The company responded by firing forty of the petitioning union members. A strike began in the early morning of August 14 with 200 factory women from Okinawa leaving the dormitory. The police were quickly mobilized to drag them forcibly back to the factory grounds where many were beaten, kicked, and thrown in the mud by company supervisors. Now the police arrested more than 50 labor activists in the Kansai Okinawa Prefectural Association on charges of inciting a riot, and jailed many of them. Two years later the labor organizing activities of the association were effectively shut down by the massive police round-ups of "leftists" and others viewed as dissidents on March 25 and April 16, 1928, and continuing government suppression resulted in an end to all the association's activities in the late 1920s.⁵⁵

This experience has loomed large in the memories of older Okinawans in Osaka, and was cited by Okinawan sociologist Shingaki Masami as one reason that the current leadership of the Osaka League of Okinawa Prefectural Associations (Osaka Okinawa Kenjin Rengō-kai), established in 1946, a successor organization to the Kansai Prefectural Association, has been reluctant to pursue an active agenda on social and political issues today.⁵⁶ When the Kansai Okinawa Prefectural Association was re-established in 1931, the labor activists were gone and its new leadership was comprised of professionals with university degrees who turned away from labor activism.⁵⁷ In place of the former political-party structure, the leaders re-centered the organization around the hometown friendship associations of people from local areas of Okinawa. Though debate resumed over the relative merits of assimilating or living as Okinawans, leaders called for Okinawans to speak “standard Japanese,” associate more with people from other prefectures, minimize the practice of Okinawan customs, and abandon Okinawan religious practices in favor of mainland Shintō. This was, of course, a highly repressive period of growing militarism in Japan when the government was compelling the worship of state Shinto and banning indigenous religious practices as part of the “policy to make imperial subjects” (*kōminka seisaku*) in Okinawa, as well as in Japan’s colonies and territories.

Since World War II the leaders of prefectural associations have continued to disagree on how to respond to pressures for assimilation and whether or how to advocate on political issues. However, as in Okinawa itself, overwhelming support developed among members for reversion, particularly after U.S. seizures of private land for military bases brought many involuntary “migrants” to greater Osaka. Okinawans there felt increasingly cut off from their homeland after what they called the “disappearance of Okinawa Prefecture” in 1945 and the Japanese government’s agreement to a Peace Treaty that “severed Okinawa from Japan” in 1952.⁵⁸ Overcoming initial reluctance among leaders of the Osaka League, prefectural associations in greater Osaka and elsewhere on the mainland went on to play a major role in the reversion movement. They organized large demonstrations in 1956 which featured speakers from Okinawa as part of the “land struggle” (*tochi tōsō*) protesting U.S. seizures of land for military bases in Okinawa and occupation rule generally. Subsequent protests calling for reversion drew many participants, including a demonstration by more than 10,000 in Osaka City on October 1, 1966 during which a petition was presented to visiting Prime Minister Satō Eisaku.

Large numbers of mainland Japanese joined the struggle for reversion, though Okinawans sometimes complained about ulterior motives among those on the right who seemed interested mostly in recovering territory lost in war and those on the left who seemed intent on using “the Okinawa problem” as a political football to attack the conservative government.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, achieving reversion was crucial materially and psychologically for the entire Okinawan diaspora, removing the stigma of Okinawans as “an occupied people” and freeing the flow of communication, information, and travel.

Japanese citizens no longer needed “passports” to enter Okinawa, and published materials from the mainland were no longer screened by military censors. However, as in Okinawa itself, the terms of the reversion agreement provoked anger and a sense of betrayal because U.S. bases remained virtually intact despite the Japanese government’s constantly repeated promises to reduce the military presence in Okinawa to “mainland levels” (*hondo-*

nami). As a result, the reversion agreement (*henkan-kyōtei*) came to be known sarcastically among Okinawans as the “discriminatory agreement” (*henken kyōtei*).

While the Hyōgo Okinawa Prefectural Association has continued to advocate for removal of the bases, including a petition drive in 2001, the Osaka League has been comparatively quiet on the issue. Residents of the community in Taishō Ward explained to me that one reason is that, since reversion, some community residents, including prominent League members, have been receiving substantially increased “rental” payments from the Japanese government for land seized from them by the U.S. government in the 1950s. In an effort to “stabilize” land-use for bases after reversion, the Japanese Defense Facilities Agency immediately increased these payments to “military landowners” (*gun-jinushi*) by as much as six times the pre-reversion rates paid by the U.S. government.⁶⁰ During 2000 and 2001 I met four individuals receiving such payments, including one interviewee in Taishō Ward who showed me her contract from the Defense Facilities Agency that specified annual payments of 12 million yen or about \$100,000 in 2001. Her land in Oroku, seized originally to build barracks for U.S. Naha Air Base, is now a dependents’ housing area for Japan’s Air Self-Defense Forces which took over the base after reversion.

The Japanese government’s “hush money” strategy has not always worked, however, either in Okinawa, where “antiwar landowners” (*han-sen jinushi*) have formed an active protest organization, or on the mainland. Another interviewee in Taishō Ward told me in February of 2000 that his family in Okinawa, whose land was confiscated in the 1950s to expand Kadena Air Base, contributes these payments to support the anti-base movement while he personally devotes much of his time to organizing protests and speaking at rallies in greater Osaka. Meanwhile, in another example of diverse opinions on this issue, not all Okinawan residents of Hyōgo Prefecture agree with that association’s opposition to military bases. One interviewee from the Hyōgo Okinawan community in Takarazuka City told me in April of 2001 that her father, who also receives “rent” for land seized in the 1950s, gets angry whenever he reads about another protest demonstration, insisting that, if the bases are to be removed, landowners should receive compensation for lost income.

Partly because of such diversity of views and circumstances among members, Osaka League leaders have sometimes been hesitant to “lead” on other issues as well, taking up the banner only after a clear membership consensus develops. Officials explain that their organization, descended from the second, less activist incarnation of the Kansai Okinawa Prefectural Association, has a more conservative membership and is necessarily less “political” than the Hyōgo association, founded in 1946 during a time of vigorous activism on issues such as reversion and military bases in Okinawa. League leaders in Osaka are still haunted by memories of the brutal government suppression during and after the 1926 strike at the Tōyō Cotton Industries’ Sangenya factory, and see their most pressing issue as maintaining their organization of an estimated 7,000 members of whom an increasing proportion are elderly, first-generation migrants.⁶¹ This trend is borne out by results from my survey which showed a 20% higher rate of prefectural association membership among respondents in their 60s and 70s (53.6% and 51.5% respectively) as compared with respondents in their 40s and 50s (35.7% and 30.4% respectively).

Some League officials believe that elderly members would prefer not to be reminded of hardships they have suffered simply for being Okinawan, or to attract too much attention. In the years before Okinawan culture became trendy in the early 1990s, one official discouraged a group of younger community residents in the mid-1970s from organizing performances of *eisa* dances and presenting this annual Okinawan festival in the neighborhood because he feared that, for mainlanders to see these traditional dances in colorful costumes, would “embarrass” the Okinawan community. Another League official in his late sixties has refused to acknowledge in interviews that there has been discrimination against Okinawans in Osaka. Such denials contradict League publications which fully document it,⁶² and interviews by me and others of League members who described discrimination they have personally encountered.⁶³

Nowadays, amidst the nationwide “Okinawa boom,” all the prefectural associations in greater Osaka organize events to which the public is eagerly welcomed, where *eisa-odori* and other traditional dances and music are performed. The Osaka League now actively supports and promotes Okinawan culture in many ways, sponsoring concerts, offering space for training studios in the performing arts, and inviting speakers in various fields from Okinawa to lecture in the Osaka area. The most important functions of this organization today include providing space and organizational support for such social occasions as banquets to celebrate the New Year, honor elderly members, and commemorate such special occasions as the anniversary of the League’s founding, events at which Okinawan music and dance are almost always performed. The League also organizes the annual September “sports festival” in which local Okinawa prefectural associations in greater Osaka and nearby prefectures compete in relay races and other events. In addition, the League sells tickets and rents buses for the semi-annual pilgrimages to root for Okinawa’s representative team in the National High School Baseball Tournament held at Kōshien Stadium in Nishinomiya, an Osaka suburb, where officials from the Osaka League and Hyōgo Association also distribute tickets, arrange bus transportation, help rooters find seats, and clean up discarded trash at the game’s conclusion.

Over the years, the prefectural associations have not only provided for survival-support, advocated vigorously in the 1920s for labor reform and in the 1950s and 60s for reversion, but have also contributed to postwar infrastructural and economic improvements in the community. Prefectural associations in greater Osaka were crucial for the community during the chaotic period immediately after World War II. They aided in the resettlement both of Okinawa residents who had evacuated to rural areas on the mainland, but whose status changed to “refugees” after their prefecture was devastated by the Battle; and, of Okinawan soldiers and civilians who chose to be repatriated to greater Osaka from Taiwan, Micronesia, the Philippines, and other areas formerly part of the Japanese empire because many of them had nothing left to go back to in Okinawa. Prefectural associations continue to assist new arrivals from Okinawa to settle in greater Osaka. The Osaka liaison office of the Okinawa Prefectural Government also helps people from Okinawa to find jobs in greater Osaka, and to secure housing. In the years following reversion, this office recruited migrants to work mostly in factories, while in today’s economy they are more likely to work as nurse trainees, cooks, or waitresses. Approximately 260 young people each year find jobs in greater Osaka through this office. Although some of these people settle in the

area, often becoming managers of stores, restaurants, or small factories, virtually none choose to live in Okinawan communities, preferring, like many other Okinawans coming to the mainland today, to reside near the places where they work or study.⁶⁴ In contrast, many who migrated in the early 1970s before reversion in “group hirings” (*shūdan-shūshoku*) organized by commercial recruiters settled in Taishō Ward after their contract periods ended.

Where things stand: lingering prejudice, a new pride in “roots,” and mixed blessings of the “Okinawa boom”

From what were often troubled beginnings, life for most residents of the Okinawan communities in greater Osaka has improved over the years as many migrants saved their factory wages, started businesses, bought property, and sent their children to colleges or professional schools. And, while their economic resources have not reached the average level of Japanese “salarymen” in more upscale residential areas, many have enjoyed relative prosperity in recent years.⁶⁵ Mainlanders living in the more affluent areas of greater Osaka refer to these communities as “downtown” (*shita-machi*) or, in the case of Taishō Ward in southwestern Osaka, somewhat disparagingly as “the deep south.” With the currently heightened interest in Okinawa throughout Japan, many mainland visitors have been attracted to the community where they shop in stores that sell Okinawan products, eat in restaurants serving Okinawan cuisine where Okinawan music is often performed, and learn to perform Okinawan dance and music themselves at the culture centers and studios. This influx has provided relief for some in the community from the economic doldrums that have been felt in Japan as a whole since the early 1990s.

In the year and a half between June of 1999 and December of 2000, a new store selling Okinawan products and four new restaurants, one with nightly performances of music and dance, opened in a four-block area near the Taishō train station. There were already three Okinawan restaurants, one offering live performances, making a current total of seven in this area which is still three miles from the Okinawan neighborhoods in Kobayashi, Hirao, and Okajima where such businesses can be found in virtually every block. Community residents often make fun of the *Yamaton-chu* tourists, and sometimes express regret for what they see as growing dilution (or “mainlandization”) of Okinawan arts and culture. But most proprietors eagerly welcome the large crowds of visitors who regularly pack local restaurants offering Okinawan cuisine and live music, especially on Saturday nights when even the local regulars (*jōren*) are turned away unless they have reservations.

Many Okinawans in greater Osaka today have themselves developed greater interest and pride in their “roots” (*rūtsu*), using the English word in describing this trend.⁶⁶ Today, second and third-generation Okinawans, as well as mainlanders, are studying the traditional performing arts, design arts, and cuisine, along with learning some Okinawa dialect. Their motivations are many and varied. Interviewees cited the influence of parents and grandparents, strong impressions from a visit to Okinawa, or the effects of a performance they had attended. A professional writer in her late thirties said in November of 2000 that she had never felt pride in her family’s origins, largely because she associated being Okinawan with being poor, until Shō High School became the first team from Okinawa to win the national high school baseball tournament in April of 1999. She felt

proud, she said, because Okinawans had “finally beaten the Yamatun-chu at something.” She is now writing her first novel which is based largely on her father’s experience as a migrant from Okinawa living in Osaka. On the other hand, some second and third-generation Okinawans in greater Osaka still seek to minimize their connections with Okinawa, emphasizing, for example, that “I’m Osakan, though my father came from there.”⁶⁷

Today, amidst the “Okinawa boom” and a popular trend for exploring one’s ethnic “roots,” it is much too easy to look back with a smirk at people who never spoke their local dialect or ate Okinawan foods in public, only practiced *sanshin* secretly in closets, and changed their names. Yet it must be remembered that, during the years of malicious prejudice and blatant discrimination, for Okinawans living and working on the mainland, the issue was often physical and psychological survival. Though discrimination is now illegal, it has by no means disappeared (see interviews cited above). Today prejudices based on stereotypes persist on the mainland despite—and to some extent because of—the recent fascination in Japan with an exoticized and commercialized “Okinawa” that has made recordings of Okinawan pop music into best sellers and singers from Okinawa into super-stars. A woman in her mid-sixties who had migrated to greater Osaka in 1962 commented on her questionnaire that “I was shocked when I first came at how many people were ignorant about Okinawa, mostly because it wasn’t mentioned in school curriculums. But nowadays everyone’s trying to ride the wave of interest in it.”⁶⁸ Since reversion, community residents are no longer asked if people in Okinawa speak English at home or use knives and forks for daily meals, but they are still subjected to such double-edged praise of Okinawans as “so relaxed and carefree” (implying a certain indolence and lack of responsibility) or “so casual and easy-going” (implying a lack of courtesy and diligence). Koreans and Chinese are also subjected to such “praise” in Japan for being “clever” (implying wily or tricky). The president of a loan agency in Taishō Ward told me he never lends money to Okinawans because “they don’t pay it back.” And an executive of a manufacturing company in Osaka told me his firm decided not to locate a factory in Okinawa because “people there can’t do quality work.”

In official ways, too, there are still problems, as when the All-Japan High School Baseball Federation banned the wearing of *eisa* robes by second-generation Okinawan rooters from Amagasaki for the semi-annual national baseball tournament at Kōshien Stadium in Nishinomiya, near Osaka. The Federation explained that its regulations forbid the wearing of “strange” (*kii*) garments, though the Okinawan rooters pointed out that fans from Kōchi and Hiroshima Prefectures were allowed to wear their brightly colored local costumes. Fans have defied this ban recently by carrying their packaged *eisa* robes in through the stadium entrances, then changing clothes in the rest rooms. In recent years, teams from Okinawa have placed high in the tournament, regularly reaching the finals or semi-finals. Then in the spring of 1999, when Okinawa Shō High School became the first team from Okinawa in the tournament’s 55-year history to win the championship, residents of Okinawan communities on the mainland, which always send bus-loads of rooters to their games, celebrated joyously. Savoring this victory of *Uchinaan-chu* over *Yamatun-chu*, Okinawans commented that “the postwar period is finally over for us.” This is a mocking reference to the phrase used by Prime Minister Satō Eisaku who negotiated the Okinawa reversion agreement with U.S. President Richard Nixon in 1969, viewed by Okinawans as

yet another mainland betrayal for failing to include promised reductions in the U.S. military presence.

In September of 1995, the movement among community activists opposing American military bases in Okinawa shifted into high gear after the September, 1995 rape of a twelve-year old elementary school girl in Kin by two U.S. marines and one sailor. Protest marches were organized in Osaka to coincide with the massive demonstration of an estimated 85,000 in Ginowan City, Okinawa. Subsequent marches and rallies drew large numbers of participants in Osaka and Kyoto. In addition, regular information meetings (*gakushū-kai*) have been held in public auditoriums and university lecture halls with activists and scholars from Okinawa as featured speakers. Former Okinawa Governor Ōta Masahide has given a number of well-attended lectures recently in Osaka auditoriums. In greater Osaka and elsewhere on the mainland, singers from Okinawa perform anti-war and anti-base protest songs at regular concerts. Yet, while members of the greater Osaka Okinawan community often take the lead in organizing these events, the proportion of community residents who participate in political activism is comparatively small. Among respondents to survey questionnaires, only 6.8% of migrants and 4.5 of descendants indicated such participation. Though many Okinawans in greater Osaka joined protests against the military bases following the 1995 rape, most of the time one tends to notice the same core of activists from the community turning out for events, which usually draw larger numbers of mainlanders, and for organizational meetings.

The “Okinawa boom” has also made residents aware of the need to convey full and accurate information about the communities to outsiders, especially to the media which is now reporting on them frequently. To keep up with growing demands, the Kansai Okinawa Bunko (Culture Center) has assumed what has become an increasingly heavy burden, offering written materials, recordings, video tapes, lectures, and guided tours to the public at very low cost and with an extremely small, largely volunteer, staff. Groups of students and teachers from public and private schools in greater Osaka and nearby prefectures come regularly to the Bunko for “field work” seminars that include lectures and guided tours as well as performances of Okinawan music. Demands on the Bunko for information and interviews reached a fever pitch during the months leading up to the 2000 G-8 Summit Conference held in Okinawa. Scholars from the Taishō Ward community and from Okinawa have subsequently met there regularly to prepare fuller information and check existing materials for accuracy.

Though the influx of tourists and consumers has provided income for some, the greater Osaka communities, where small and medium industries depend heavily on sub-contracts from larger companies, have been hit hard by economic doldrums afflicting Japan as a whole in the 1990s and 2000s. Residents have suffered in the continuing series of lay-offs, euphemistically called “restructuring” (*risutora*), at the medium-size metalworking factories, and orders for extracted metal and molded metal parts have dwindled at the smaller workshops. Local merchants often complain that business has fallen off sharply since the “bubble burst” on Japan’s economy in 1990-91, and the incomes of construction workers have dropped sharply with local labor agencies offering fewer jobs. A growing number of homeless wander Osaka streets now, sleeping on sidewalks or in parks, as

elsewhere in Japan's cities. And, as elsewhere, the economy is the issue community residents say is of the greatest concern to them.

Clearly, the "Okinawa boom" has brought mixed blessings to Okinawan communities in greater Osaka as well as to Okinawa itself. Nowadays visitors from the mainland sometimes comprise the majority in audiences at live performances there of Okinawan music and a high proportion of the participants in such anti-base demonstrations as the recent "human chains" around Kadena Air Base. Okinawans themselves are divided over whether to welcome mainlanders to partake in the islands' culture and politics, or to discourage their participation. At least one *eisa* performance group in Osaka bars mainlanders because, as the director explains, *eisa* has special religious significance for Okinawans. (This group does accept people with only partial Okinawan ancestry.) Okinawans inside and outside the prefecture are caught between a desire, on the one hand, to convey accurate information about their culture and political oppression to mainlanders and non-Japanese, and frustration, on the other, when these efforts result in a superficial fascination with "Okinawa" that encourages dilettantism, stereotyping, and commercial exploitation.

Interviewed in April of 2000, a teacher at a local junior college in his early forties complained that, for too many mainlanders, "Okinawa" has become a "tasty morsel" to consume in the media and on forays to Okinawa or the greater Osaka community; and, that, for some academics, it has become a "hot topic" they can use to publish research which is too often based on one-dimensional portrayals of Okinawans and the issues confronting them. Perhaps the most important message conveyed in the interviews and questionnaires collected for this study is that Okinawans in greater Osaka have responded in a wide variety of ways to these challenges, and that their responses have frequently changed over time to adjust to new conditions. What is often presented as a dichotomy of "assimilation versus cultural preservation" is, more often today, a continuing series of choices made in daily life that depend on individual preferences rather than on decisions to take one side or the other. An eighteen-year old musician interviewed in February of 2001 explained that, although both her parents were from Okinawa, she had chosen to make her career performing mainland folk music from northeastern Japan (*tsugaru-jamisen*) because she was better able to express what she felt in its melodies and rhythms. At the same time, she preferred Okinawan food which her mother cooked at home.

Nowhere is diversity more evident than in the ways Okinawans in greater Osaka remember or conceptualize a "homeland" they might have left many years ago or where they never lived at all. Among interviewees, several women who came originally to work in textile factories before World War II said they had decided to remain in greater Osaka after their contract periods ended because Okinawa did not offer comparable economic prospects for them, their spouses, or their children. Other migrants from both the prewar and postwar period cited limited social and cultural horizons in the rural Okinawan villages where they grew up as reasons for remaining on the mainland. Descendents who had visited Okinawa only during the U.S. occupation period described a place of natural beauty, but with widespread poverty and an oppressive atmosphere under foreign military occupation. Other descendents associated Okinawa with poverty on the mainland as well as with discrimination their parents experienced there, and tried to minimize their connections with it. The magazine journalist quoted above, who came to appreciate her heritage after

Shō High School won the national baseball tournament in 1999, had previously associated Okinawa with her family's poverty, employment discrimination her father had encountered, and teasing she had suffered in school for her parents' origins. On the other hand, many Okinawans in greater Osaka, migrants and descendents alike, have visited their "homeland" regularly and describe highly positive memories, associating Okinawa with a congenial natural and cultural environment, as well as a leisurely and healthy lifestyle, where people suffer less stress and live longer. A number of individuals over 60 expressed a desire to relocate to Okinawa when circumstances in their lives, such as family obligations, would permit. In the case of one couple in their 70s, the husband had in fact returned in 1999 to enjoy his retirement years living in the family's home on the seashore in a quiet village north of Nago while his wife remained to live with their son's family in Taishō Ward where she preferred the urban life style. Such diverse responses, shared by people in many places with memories of an ancestral "homeland," should remind us that, far from being static and monolithic, attitudes and choices vary widely among individuals in diaspora communities.

This essay is reprinted from Laura Hein and Mark Selden's Islands of Discontent: Okinawan Responses to Japanese and American Power, Rowman & Littlefield, 2003, used with permission.

Notes

¹ "Ryukyu" never caught on as a place name during the U.S. occupation, either in Okinawa or on the mainland. This was partly because the word "Ryukyu" evoked memories of derogatory references by mainland Japanese who identified people from Okinawa Prefecture with what had recently been a "foreign" kingdom. This implied that Okinawans were not fully Japanese and, thus, "inferior" to mainlanders.

In addition, Okinawans at home and on the mainland easily saw through the U.S. military's insistence on calling Okinawa "The Ryukyu Islands" and the people there "Ryukyuan" as part of a heavy-handed effort to separate them from Japan. The failed American attempt to re-"Ryukyuanize" Okinawans was undertaken in hopes of suppressing the reversion movement, which had gained support steadily since the early 1950s.

² In a sense, I was one of those "occupiers," though my job as a U.S. Army draftee in the maintenance platoon at an ammunition depot in Henoko from July, 1967 to June, 1968 had nothing to do with administering the occupation.

³ Kaneshiro Munekazu, "Esunikku gurupu to shite no 'Okinawa-jin'" (Okinawans as an ethnic group), *Ningen Kagaku*, no. 37, (1992): 29-57.

⁴ Fukuchi Hiroaki, ed., *Okinawa jokō aishi* (The tragic history of Okinawan factory women) (Haibaru, Okinawa: Naha Shuppan-sha, 1985), 18, 37.

⁶ Meiō University historian Higa Michiko, interview, November 2000.

⁷ *Yūhi* (Launching forth), Volume of essays and photographs commemorating the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Osaka League of Okinawa Prefectural Associations (Osaka Okinawa Kenjin Rengo-kai, 1987), 40,47; *Yūhi* (Launching forth), Volume of essays and photographs commemorating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Osaka

League of Okinawa Prefectural Associations (Osaka Okinawa Kenjin Rengo-kai, 1997), 50, 62.

⁸ Kaneshiro, 1992.

⁹ *Yūhi*, 50, 61.

¹⁰ *Okinawa-ken heiwa kinen shiryō-kan: sōgō annai* (Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum guidebook), (Okinawa: Itoman, 2001), 27.

¹¹ Ryūkyū Shinpō-sha, ed., *Okinawa: Nijū seiki no kōbō* (Okinawa in the twentieth century), (Naha: Ryūkyū Shinpō-sha, 2000), 130-31.

¹² *Okinawa-ken Heiwa Shiryō-kan*, 31.

¹³ Kaneshiro, 1995.

¹⁴ They are concentrated mostly in its Hirao, Kobayashi, Kitamura, Kita Okajima and Minami Okajima precincts, and comprise about one-fourth of the ward's total population officially listed at 75,043 for the year 2000 (Taishō Ward Office, General Affairs Section, 2001). For the other communities in greater Osaka, unofficial and unpublished estimates are that 7500 migrants and their descendents live in Osaka's Nishinari Ward, next to Taishō Ward, and approximately 10,000 live in or around the Tonouchi section of Amagasaki City, just across the Kanzaki River from Osaka City in Hyōgo Prefecture where another 1500 are estimated to live in the Takamatsu section of Takarazuka City and 900 in Itami City.

¹⁵ Mizuuchi Toshio, *Ōsaka Okinawa Ajia: Ōsaka Shiritsu Daigaku Zengaku Kyōtsu Kyōiku Sōgō Kyōiku Kamoku: Ajia no Chiiki to Bunka Enshū*, Osaka: Osakai Shiritsu Daigaku Kyōomubu, 1999, 46-47.

¹⁶ Ōta Jun'ichi, *Osaka no Uchinaan-chu* (The Okinawans of Osaka) (Osaka: Burein Sentaa, 1996), 89-90.

¹⁷ "Hōchi sareru Okinawa suramu" (Okinawa slum long-neglected), *Asahi Shinbun* (July 15, 1968).

¹⁸ Mizuuchi, 1999, 47-48.

¹⁹ Interviews for this study conducted in September 1999.

²⁰ Ōta, *Osaka no Uchinaan-chu*, 91.

²¹ Ōta, *Osaka no Uchinaan-chu*, 119.

²² Mizuuchi, 2000.

²³ Mizuuchi, 1999, 52.

²⁴ Arasaki Moriteru, 44.

²⁵ Hokama Shuzen, *Okinawa no rekishi to bunka* (Okinawan history and culture) (Chūkō Shinsho, 1989), 94-99.

²⁶ Tomiyama Ichirō, *Kindai Nihon shakai to "Okinawa-jin"* (Modern Japanese society and "Okinawans"), (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōron-sha, 1990), 1.

²⁷ Some Okinawans over fifty articulate the consonant "s" as "sh" in words like *sensei* (teacher), pronounced "*shenshei*," or *sensō* (war), pronounced "*shenshō*." Some of them also articulate the vowel sounds "o" and "e" as "u" and "i," respectively, in words like *teiki* (commuter pass), pronounced "*tiiki*," and *hako* (box), pronounced "*haku*."

²⁸ Written comment on questionnaire, April 2001.

²⁹ Interview, April 2000.

³⁰ Uda Shigeki, *Uwa- nu ukami-sama: Tokeshi Kōtoku no han-sei* (The divine pig: The life of Tokeshi Kōtoku) (Nara: Uda Shuppan Kikaku, 1999), 173-96.

³¹ Written comment on questionnaire, December 2000.

³² Shinjō Eitoku, "Kansai ni okeru Uchinaanchu no ayumi" (The history of Okinawans in Kansai), *Jichi Okinawa*, no. 353, (July 1996): 18.

³³ Chinen Seishin's acutely satirical stage play "Jinruikan" (Human pavilion, 1976) features a uniformed "trainer" brandishing a whip who barks commands at "male" and "female" specimens.

³⁴ Yamanokuchi Baku, "Mr. Saitō of Heaven Building" (Tengoku-biru no Saitō-san) (originally published in 1938) translated by Rie Takaki in Michael Molasky and Steve Rabson, eds., *Southern Exposure: Modern Japanese Literature from Okinawa*, (University of Hawaii Press, 2000).

³⁵ Molasky and Rabson, *Southern Exposure*, 89.

³⁶ Interviews, June and August 2000.

³⁷ Oyakawa Takayoshi, *Ashiato: Oyakawa Takayoshi no kaisōroku* (Footprints: recollections of Oyakawa Takayoshi) (Matsuei Insatsu, 1995), 21-22.

³⁸ Oyakawa, *Ashiato*, 26.

³⁹ Fukuchi, *Okinawa jokō aishi*, 78-79.

⁴⁰ Nakama Keiko, "1920, 1930 nendai ni okeru zai-Han Okinawa-jin no seikatsu ishiki" (Life styles among Okinawan residents of Osaka in the 1920s and 1930s), *Osaka Jinken Hakubutsu-kan Kiyo* (Bulletin of the Osaka Human Rights Museum), no. 3, (1999): 61-74.

⁴¹ Tomiyama, *Kindai Nihon*, 130.

⁴² Tomiyama, *Kindai Nihon*, 111.

⁴³ Higa, 6.

⁴⁴ Fukuchi, *Okinawa jokō aishi*, 120.

⁴⁵ Kinjō Kaoru (March 20, 1987), “Osaka to Okinawa” (Osaka and Okinawa) month-long series of interviews in *Mainichi Shinbun* March 9 to April 9, 1987. *Mainichi Shinbun* interview, March 20, 1987.

⁴⁶ Ryūkyū, *Okinawa: Nijū seiki no kōbō*, 52, 56.

⁴⁷ Molasky and Rabson, *Southern Exposure*, 82.

⁴⁸ Though references to the former Ryūkyū Kingdom and its cultural legacy were usually free of negative connotations, calling someone “Ryūkyū” or “Ryūkyū-jin” was more problematic. As in examples quoted above, mainlanders used the term “Ryūkyū” or “Ryūkyū-jin” derisively when scolding factory workers returning late for curfew; or, when announcing on signs in front of factories and rooming houses “*Chōsen-jin, Ryūkyū-jin o-kotawari*” (Koreans and Ryukyuan prohibited). Women from Okinawa who were displayed like circus animals in the notorious “Human Pavilion” at a 1903 international exposition in Osaka were called “Ryūkyū-jin.” And Hirotsu Ryūrō’s 1926 novel, which he titled “*Samayoeru Ryūkyū-jin*” (The vagabond Ryukyuan), was widely criticized by Okinawans on the mainland for a protagonist caricatured from negative Okinawan stereotypes. Its author subsequently made a public apology and canceled scheduled reprintings.

Recently, however, the status of the word “Ryūkyū” seems to have improved among Okinawans and mainlanders alike, though some connotations remain problematic. Okinawans at home and in the diaspora express varying degrees of pride and nostalgia from historical memories of the formerly independent Ryūkyū Kingdom, in part because hopes have been unrealized for a significant reduction of the military presence and healthy economic development in Okinawa after reversion. Furthermore, there is currently a widespread fascination among mainlanders with cultural manifestations of an often exoticized “Ryūkyū,” which has been exploited commercially. N.H.K. television’s 1993 serial historical drama, criticized by some Okinawans for stereotyped characterizations, was entitled, like the book it was based on, “Ryūkyū no kaze” (The Winds of Ryukyu). The word “Ryūkyū” now occurs frequently in the titles for recordings of widely popular Okinawan folk and folk-rock music, such as the 1995 c.d. “Ryukyu Magic” (Air-4001, Tokyo). Okinawans in the prefecture and on the mainland offer lessons in *Ryūkyū buyō* (classical dance), *Ryūkyū ryōri* (cuisine), and *Ryūkyū min’yō* (folk music) to a growing clientele.

⁴⁹ Oyakawa, *Ashiato*, 2-22.

⁵⁰ Chalmers Johnson, ed., *Okinawa: Cold War*, (Japan Policy Research Institute, 2000), 77.

⁵¹ Molasky and Rabson, *Southern Exposure*, 82.

⁵² Quoted in Ōta, *Osaka no Uchinaan-chu*, 97-98.

⁵³ Quoted in Nakama, “1920, 1930 nendai,” 99.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Nakama, “1920, 1930 nendai,” 99.

⁵⁵ Tomiyama, *Kindai Nihon*, 164.

⁵⁶ Interviewed in September, 1999.

⁵⁷ Miyawaki Yukio, "Kansai ni okeru Okinawa shusshin-sha dōkyō sōshiki no seiritsu to tenkai" (The establishment and development of organizations of Okinawans in Kansai), *Ningen Kagaku Ronshū*, 28, (1997): 91; Oyakawa, *Ashiato*, 293.

⁵⁸ *Koko ni yōju ari* (The banyan tree here) Volume of essays and photographs commemorating the 35th anniversary of the founding of the Hyōgo Okinawa Prefectural Association (Okinawa Kenjin-kai Hyōgo honbu, 1982), 145-216.

⁵⁹ *Koko ni Yōju ari*, 94-95; Steve Rabson, *Okinawa: Two Postwar Novellas*, (Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1989) (reprinted 1996), xi-xii and 22-23.

⁶⁰ Arasaki, 71-72.

⁶¹ Interview, November 2000.

⁶² See *Yūhi*, 1987 and 1997.

⁶³ See Ota Jun'ichi.

⁶⁴ Interviews of Yamashiro Kenkō, Osaka Office of Okinawa Prefecture, September 2000.

⁶⁵ Johnson, *Okinawa: Cold War*, 88.

⁶⁶ Published interview of Kinjō Kaoru, co-director of the Kansai Okinawa Bunko (Culture Center), in *Yomiuri Shinbun*, May 13, 2001.

⁶⁷ Comment from interview of descendant in his mid-30s, February 2001.

⁶⁸ Questionnaire, March 2001.