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OKINAWA: LANDSCAPE OF MINDS

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF OKINAWA

Okinawa is one of the 47 prefectures of Japan, and is located between Kyushu, the southern tip of mainland Japan, and Taiwan. The prefecture consists of the Ryukyu archipelago with 160 islands, of which 48 are populated. The land area is 2,255 square kilometers with a total population of about 1.3 million. Annually, more than 3 million tourists visit this island for sightseeing and vacation. Okinawa enjoys a subtropical climate with an average temperature of 22.4 degrees Celsius (72 degrees F). Okinawa is the land of bright-shining skies, crystal clear blue seas, and is an exotic island rich in fragrance and traditional culture. No matter what worries you may have, when you come to stay on Okinawa, its billowing clouds will soothe your heart.

Archeological discoveries show that human habitation on the islands of Okinawa dates back some 32,000 years. It was not until 605 AD., that the name of the Ryukyus first appeared in the annals of Chinese history. In ancient times, however, the "**Ryukyus**" referred to Taiwan (Formosa) as well as to Okinawa, therefore it is not certain whether the Chinese annals indicated either Taiwan or Okinawa, or both.

Between the eighth and tenth centuries, rulers of villages and countries emerged. In the twelfth century, an upper ruling class called "**Aji**" emerged and started building "gusuku" (castles) and set about extending their authority over the surrounding land. In the fourteenth century, three powerful centers or petty kingdoms ...**Hokuzan** (north), **Chuzan** (center), and **Nanzan** (south)...evolved. Their rulers began trade relations with China which would

fundamentally color Okinawa's culture. Further trade expanded to the southeastern Asian countries of Korea, and Japan. In the fifteenth century, **Sho Hashi**, lord of Chuzan, unified the three petty kingdoms and moved his castle from Urasoe to Shuri.

This first Sho dynasty lasted about 50 years. The first Sho dynasty was then taken over by a man called **Kanemaru**, who declared himself as **Sho En** and established the second dynasty the Ryukyu Kingdom which lasted for 400 years. During the era of this kingdom, fine arts, music, poetry, dance, and Karate flourished.

In 1609, the **Satsuma Clan** of mainland Japan invaded and conquered Okinawa, but allowed the Ryukyus to continue trading with China under the guise of an independent kingdom. In the wake of the **Meiji Restoration (1868)**, the Ryukyu royal family was forced to move to Tokyo. In 1879, Okinawa prefecture was established and the Ryukyu Kingdom was abolished.

During World War II, Okinawa was turned into a fortress by the Japanese military in preparation for the approach of the American forces. This brought about untold suffering, and the hardest fighting of the war on Japanese soil. The **Battle of Okinawa** began on 1 April, 1945, and ended on 23 June of the same year. Over 74,000 Japanese soldiers, together with one-third of the Okinawan civilian population (150,000) lost their lives. American casualties during the entire battle totaled approximately 50,000(of whom 14,000 were killed).

Japan's defeat left Okinawa under military occupation for 27 years. The US. occupies 20 percent of the island's land for use as

military bases. The island, only 0.6 percent of the Japan landmass, now accommodates 75 percent of the total number of American troops in Japan. For America, Okinawa has been the Keystone of the Pacific. The US. occupation has caused many troubles, but at the same time, it has influenced Okinawan culture in many areas.

On May 15, 1972, the US. returned administrative control of the Ryukyus to Japan. Thus, once again Okinawa became a Japanese prefecture. Okinawa has since then shown remarkable economic development, though it has still suffered from various problems caused by the continued existence of the military bases.

Chronology of OKINAWAN History

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 605AD | Ryukyu is first mentioned in the annals of Chinese history. |
| 1372 | The Ming Dynasty in China sends envoy to Loocho (Ryukyu) Tribute mission to China Begins. |
| 1374 | Sugarcane is introduced from China. |
| 1429 | Sho Hashi unifies the three petty kingdoms into one centralized kingdom. |
| 1471 | Trade missions to Java, Malacca, Siam and Korea. |
| 1526 | Consolidation of power by ordering local chieftains to move their residence to Shuri. |
| 1609 | Satsuma invades the Ryukyu Kingdom. |
| 1650 | Chuzanseikan (first history book of the Ryukyus) is compiled. |
| 1718 | Tamagusuku Chokun produces Okinawa's first musical dance drama "Kumiodori". |
| 1853 | U.S. Commodore Matthew C. Perry visits Naha on his way to Japan. |
| 1872 | The Ryukyu Kingdom is changed to a clan of Japan. |
| 1879 | Okinawa Prefecture is established. |
| 1945 | Okinawa is invaded by U.S. Forces on April 1 and fighting ends with the Japanese surrender of the Ryukyus on June 23. |
| 1952 | The Government of the Ryukyus is established. |
| 1969 | In a Joint statement, President Nixon and Prime Minister Sato announce an agreement for the return of Okinawa to Japan. |
| 1972 | Okinawa returned to Japan after 27 years of U.S. control. The United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR) and the Government of the Ryukyu Islands are abolished and the Okinawa Prefectural Government is established. Legal currency is changed from U.S. Dollars to Japanese Yen. |
| 1975 | Okinawa International Ocean Exposition held to commemorate the reversion. |
| 1978 | Okinawa's right hand driving lanes switched to the left. |
| 1987 | Kaiho-Kokutai (The 42nd National Athletic Meeting) is held. |
| 1990 | World-Wide Uchinan-chu(Okinawans) Festival is held. |
| 1992 | Shuri Castle is restored for the 20th anniversary of the reversion of Okinawa to Japan. |
| 1995 | The peace memorial "Cornerstone of the Peace" is erected in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of the war. |

"Nuchi du Takara" (nothing is more precious than life)

The spirit of "**Nuchi du Takara**" dwells deep in the heart of the Okinawan people who long for peace. War destroys everything. Mercilessly, it destroys the lives of both innocent children and caring mothers as well as destroying human rights and the cultures of nations.

During World War II, Okinawa became the only battlefield on Japanese soil. The ensuing battle resulted in the tragic deaths of one in three local residents ... a total of as many as 150,000 souls. In 1995, in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the war's end, the Okinawan Prefectural government erected in Itoman City a peace memorial which was dedicated as "**The Cornerstone of the Peace**". The names of all those who perished during the battle of Okinawa, regardless of their nationality or whether they were friend or foe, were inscribed on the memorial's stones.

In addition to the names of the civilian victims, about 74,000 Japanese soldiers, 14,000 American soldiers, and many other "foreigners" such as the Korean laborers who were forcibly brought to Okinawa by the Japanese Forces, also have their names engraved on the memorial stones. The memorial is the symbol of the minds of the Okinawan people who have gone through the scourge of war, and who thus seek peace. It is a message for the world as well!

Even though there is no available literature on it, the phrase "**Nuchi du Takara**" is said to be the last line of a short poem uttered by the last king of the second Sho Dynasty, King **Sho Tai** (1834-1901), when he was dethroned by the militaristic Japanese government in 1879 the time known as the "**Ryukyu Dispossession**".

The following is the author's translation of the poem:

**"The era of war is now over
The new age of peace and
prosperity
Will arrive here before long,
My fellow people, don't grieve
over the misery,
Life is, after all, the supreme
treasure".**

How sorrowful it was for the king and his people who had witnessed the collapse of the Ryukyu Dynasty which had lasted for 450 years since the 1429 unification of the Ryukyus into one centralized kingdom by King **Sho Hashi**. We truly sympathize with the mind of King **Sho Tai** who declared, in the midst of his adversity, **"life is the supreme treasure...."** When the peoples of the world come to sincerely share this spirit, a truly perpetual world peace will be realized.

"Ichariba Choodee" **(once we have met, we become brothers)**

Okinawan people open their minds even to a stranger and treat him/her as their brother or sister. The phrase "**ichariba choodee**" ideally represents a cosmopolitan characteristic of "**Uchinanchu**" or Okinawans. Though this phrase has been used since olden times, it is said that the song "**choodee guwa bushi**" or a little song of brothers written by **Chosho Maekawa** after the Second World War has made the phrase much more popular.

A part of the song, in my translation, reads:

**"Once we meet, we are brothers.
How can there be any distinction between us.
Let's talk and play together".**

We as human beings are all siblings. There should be no distinctions among us. Let's get together and enjoy a good time. When we recognize the dignity of every human being and deepen mutual understanding through dialogue, we are surely able to create a harmonious culture. When people act toward each other with the spirit of brotherhood, a beautiful flower of culture will flourish.

This spirit shows us that a world without war can be created through the use of dialogue and not through the use of weapons. The word "**play**" used here is anything but an antonym for diligence. It indicates a rich-minded, productive effort to create music and various other arts.

"Ichariba Choodee" encompasses a universal truth by which we believe in the spirit of freedom and in the equality of human beings.

One of the greatest achievements of the United Nations, established in order to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war that has twice in our lifetime brought untold sorrow upon mankind, was the adoption of **"The Universal Declaration of Human Rights"**, in 1948.

Article 1 stipulates:

"All human beings are born equal in dignity and human rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood".

We, the people of Okinawa, must fully embrace the spirit of **"ichariba choodee"**, and must endeavor to be a member of the international society in order to create a better world.

"Bankoku Shinryo" (bridge over the world)

Okinawa is a group of islands. While Japan during the Edo Period, except for a part of Nagasaki, had isolated itself from the rest of the world by using the sea as walls in all four directions, Okinawa had promoted overseas exchanges, from the Middle Ages to recent times, by using the seas as thoroughfares. Okinawa had been a maritime state.

In Ryukyu history, the period from the latter part of the 16th century is called the **"Great Maritime Trade Era"**. The phrase **"Bankoku Shinryo"** means a bridge over the world, and is a part of the inscription on the temple bell cast for, and installed in the main palace of Shuri Castle by order of King Sho-tai-kyu in 1458. The original text is in classical Chinese. I'd like to quote part of the inscription in my translation:

".....the Ryukyu Kingdom, located in an excellent corner of the South Ocean " the land of admiration ..."emerged from the earth between Japan and China. Ships connect the Kingdom with the rest of the world replacing bridges. Foreign goods and treasures fill the land in all directions"

In short, the Ryukyus plays the role of a bridge for all countries, and it abounds with imported goods and treasures.

In the 14th century, Okinawa was divided into three petty kingdoms; **Hokuzan**, **Chuzan**, and **Nanzan** (respectively the northern, central, and southern kingdoms). These minor kingdoms engaged in tributary trade with the **Ming Emperors of China**, bringing much profit, but at the same time they struggled against

one another for an expansion of territory. The three kingdoms were unified in 1429 by **Sho Hashi** who eventually built Shuri Castle, and who founded the Ryukyu kingdom under the first **Sho Dynasty**.

With the establishment of the Ryukyu Kingdom, trading relations with China were consolidated, and diplomatic relations with Japan, Korea, and other Asian countries were officially established. The first Sho Dynasty came to an end after the reign of the seventh king, **Sho Toku**. A man named **Kanamaru** seized the throne and declared himself to be the new king, **Sho En**, establishing in 1470, the second **Sho Dynasty**. During the reign of King **Sho Shin** (1465-1526), the son of Sho En further promoted maritime trade, and stabilized domestic rule enabling the Kingdom to enjoy its "**Golden Era**" ... the most glorious time in Ryukyu history. "**Bankoku Shinryo**" or "bridge over the world", is a source of great pride to Okinawans to this day.

This is the thinking of Okinawans who seek **peace, independence, symbiosis**. In the governor's office in the Prefectural Government building, the "Inscription on the bell for the Bridge over the World" is exhibited in its entirety in the original classical Chinese on a huge folding screen.

FI - TU - YA CHIMU GUKURU" **("Heart" is what fundamentally counts)**

In Okinawa, we use the word "chimu" in many contexts to express the heart. Deep affection and consideration towards others is "**Chimu-ganasa**"; compassion for the pain of others, felt as your own pain, is expressed as "**Chimu-gurisa**", and a pure and beautiful mind is called "**Chimu-jurasa**". The Chinese character used to represent "chimu" means liver, which is the equivalent to another character, "**kokoro**" or heart, the standard word in the Japanese language. These two words are sometimes used as one phrase like "**Chimu-gukuru**".

The word "chimu" appears often in Okinawan folk songs "Shima-uta" or "Songs of the Island". The word is used in the song titled "Futami-Jowa" or the Love story of Futami Village. The following are the first two lines as given in my translation:

"How beautiful are the hearts of young girls of Futami Village.

The scenery of the mountains and the sea is far beyond the other villages..."

The pure heart is like the crystal clear sky and sea of Okinawa, by far the most beautiful thing in this world.

Tei-Jun-Soku, who went to China four times to master the highest level of learning then available, in 1718 established the first public school in the Ryukyus, known as the "Meirindo", located in the Kuninda Village area of Naha. In 1719, He also reprinted and published (at his own expense) the book "**Riku Yu Engi**" from an original he had brought back with him from China. As a result, he set in motion the potential for unprecedented achievements, especially in the development of public education in Japan. Thus, he was called the "**Saint of Nago**".

The **"Iroha-uta"**, the series of 47 poems written in the Okinawan dialect using the Japanese alphabet was said to have been written by him in an effort to teach basic moral philosophy to the common people.

It is quite interesting to note that he used the word "chimu" 23 times in his 47 poems. Human interaction is most important, and heart to heart rapport must be fundamental.

Heart is what counts, not social status, fame or material fortune. After all, mindful consideration toward each individual and compassionate behavior towards friends are the essence of life this is the spirit of "chimu-gukuru". I heartily agree with this thought too.

The book **"Riku Yu Engi"** or **"Lectures on Six Principles"** was presented to the Edo Bakufu (the central military government of Japan) through Shimazu Yoshitaka of the Satsuma Clan. The book was translated into Japanese in 1722 on the order of the **8th Shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune**, and then used at the Teragoya, or public schools, throughout Japan. The book helped nurture the moral minds of the Japanese people at that time. It has had a tremendous impact on the current attitudes of the Japanese people especially when pertaining to civility and human interaction.

"Let's Go abroad and Make the Five Continents Our Home"

Okinawa accounts for the largest share of people emigrating abroad from the prefectures of Japan. The offspring of overseas Okinawan emigrants are widely dispersed throughout many countries as far off as Hawaii, mainland America, Canada, and such South American countries as Brazil, Peru, Argentina, as well as various other countries. Presently, the number of Okinawan descendants residing overseas is estimated at more than 300,000.

In 1990, the Okinawan Prefectural Government hosted the first **"Uchinanchu Festival"** inviting Okinawan descendants from all over the world to attend. The prefecture also appointed 125 persons in 21 countries around the world to be **"people-to-people"** ambassadors in order to initiate the building of an international network.

In 1889, the first group of emigrants went to Hawaii. At that time, there were no prominent industries in Okinawa to support its population. As a result, most of the population lived in abject poverty. The key positions of not only the governorship, but also other decision-making seats within the local administration and jurisdiction of the Okinawan government were monopolized by officials from the other prefectures. One notable example was from Kagoshima Prefecture, otherwise known as the **"Satsuma Clan"**, from which many officials were appointed by the central government on mainland Japan. Okinawan people were discriminated against on a regular basis by the central government. Okinawans had no representatives in the Diet; they had no liberty, equality, nor human rights as put forth in the Constitution.

In an effort to overcome this inequity, one man emerged to take the initiative. Forming the **"Okinawa Emigration**

Movement", he set out to help the Okinawan people escape their bondage by emigrating abroad. This man was **Kyuzo Toyama** (1868-1910), who came from Kin Village. He visited many towns and villages throughout Okinawa encouraging the poverty-stricken farmers to emigrate abroad. Finally, he succeeded in sending an initial group of 27 people to Hawaii. Four years later, Kyuzo Toyama himself led a second group to Hawaii. On his departure from Kin, he recited the following short poem:

**"Let's go abroad and make the five continents our home.
With the spirit of honesty, and to unite the world like a stone
from Kin Village".**

Toyama stayed in Hawaii for more than six months before returning to Okinawa, and encouraged by the success of the Hawaii emigrations, he promoted further emigration to Canada, and to mainland America as well. Responding to his strong call of **"... let's go abroad..,"** Okinawans started flocking aboard ships destined for distant lands. In the 30 years immediately prior to the Pacific war, the number of emigrants from Okinawa reached as many as 75,000, or 11% of the then total of 665,000 emigrants who had left Japan at that time. Kyuzo Toyama has since been respected by the "Uchinanchu" as the **"father of emigration"**.

"Fumari Sushiralia Yununakanu Nareh" (I shall be indifferent to praise or blame)

It can be safely said that the two greatest men in early modern Ryukyuan history are **Sai-On** (1682-1762), and **Tei-Jun-Soku** (1663-1734). Both men came from Kume village in Naha, and both were descendants of naturalized Chinese.

Sai-On (his Chinese name), who was also known as **Gushichan Bunjaku**, served King **Sho-Kei**, the 13th king of the Sho dynasty, during his reign from 1713 to 1751 as one of his three national affairs ministers. He made such unparalleled achievements in the fields of politics, economics, and industries that he is said to have been the greatest politician in the Ryukyuan Kingdom. The following short poem well demonstrates his characteristics:

**"To be praised or blamed is
an usual phenomenon in this world;
One who receives no praises or blame
cannot serve the state and people well."**

As a political leader, **Sai-On** must have had a strong determination to improve the livelihood of his subjects, no matter what blame should fall upon him. He was indeed a man of iron will.

On the other hand, **Tei-Jun-Soku** (his Chinese name), who was a contemporary of **Sai-On**, was a most renowned Confucian scholar and educator not only in the Ryukyus, but also throughout Japan. He later became "**Jito**" of Nago ... a rank equal to that of a Japanese feudal lord but with much lesser power and territory. For those reasons, he was also called **Nago Uekata**, or Lord of Nago.

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He was deeply respected by his people.

His following quote runs directly counter to that of Sai-On:

**"I want neither
To be praised nor blamed:
All I wish is
To lead this life peacefully".**

Nago-Uekata's short poem shows the tranquillity of mind as typified by an accomplished scholar.

How do you want to lead your life ?in the manner of Sai-On or in the manner of Nago-Uekata ? That choice should be different for each individual according to that individual's personality and outlook on life.

"Uyanu Yushigutuya Chimuni Sumiri" (take your parents' teachings to heart)

The folk song "Tinsagu nu Hana" has been a most popular song among Okinawan children. This song has nourished their minds by teaching them to love and to treat their parents with kindness. Even now it is not uncommon to hear primary school children singing this song in their music classes and at their schools' cultural festivals. The song is a type of didactic poetry, but when it is sung using its unique lyrical melody, a heart-warming feeling sinks deeply into our mind. The words of the song are as follows:

Tinsagu nu Hana (garden balsams or touch-me-nots)

**You dye your fingernails
With the pink sap of touch-me-nots
But you shall dye your heart
With the teachings of your parents.**

**You can count the number
Of stars in the night sky
But you can't count the number
Of teachings from your parents.**

**A ship at night sails
With the polar star as its guide
But my parents who gave me birth
Now depend on me as their guide**

The Land of Courtesy

Okinawa has been called the land of courtesy. In other words, Okinawa is the land in which people observe the normal standards of courtesy by treating one another with respect and sincerity.

The phrase "**Shurei-no-kuni**" is inscribed on the frame hanging from the Shurei-mon gate standing at the entrance to Shuri castle, and which is a symbol of Okinawa. During the days of the Ryukyu Kingdom, the kings paid vassal homage to the Chinese Emperors, and engaged in tributary trade bringing handsome profits to the Ryukyus. The coronation of a king took the form of a conferment by a Chinese emperor who issued the Imperial Edict establishing the Ryukyu Kingdom.

The special envoys who delivered the Imperial Edict to the Ryukyus, and who conducted the coronation ceremonies for the new king, were called "**Sapposhi**". These envoys made a total of 23 trips to Okinawa over the period from 1372 (the era of King Satto) to 1866 (the era of the last king Shotai). The phrase "Shurei-no-kuni" or the land of courtesy was derived from the Imperial order issued by Emperor Shin-So of the Ming Dynasty upon the coronation of King Sho-Ei....the sixth king of the second Sho Dynasty. The order reads, in part,

"...Your country, the Ryukyus, far away over the sea, sincerely observes the sacred teachings of China, and has successfully carried out the duties in full to date, and, therefore, deserves to be called the land of courtesy..."

To treat people from foreign countries with courtesy is the true spirit of everlasting Okinawan hospitality.

The "Champloo" Culture of Okinawa

Okinawa, since ancient days, has maintained strong ties with many foreign countries. During the Ryukyu Kingdom Era, Okinawan people had ventured as far as Siam (modern day Thailand), Vietnam, and Malacca as well as China, Korea, and Japan. In the post-Meiji Era, Okinawa sent out a large number of emigrants to Hawaii, the Pacific Islands, the Philippines, Taiwan, as well as to several South American countries such as Peru, Brazil, and Argentina.

After World War II, regardless whether the people liked it or not, Okinawans have hosted Americans in connection with the military bases here. About 50,000 Americans, mostly military personnel and their families, are currently stationed on Okinawa.

This past and present situation has created a unique culture for Okinawa; the "**Champloo**" culture. The word "champloo" means not only a mixture (or jumble), but implies the richness of a multi-ethnic society. Take Okinawan music for example: Okinawan traditional folk songs are usually played on a musical instrument called a "sanshin" which is somewhat similar to a banjo. Okinawan music blends the tunes common to East and Southeast Asia, American hard rock and country songs, reggae and lyrical Japanese melodies. The word "Champloo" can also be found in Okinawan cuisine. Some of the most popular foods served at both ordinary homes and restaurants are "Goya (bitter melon or cucumber) champloo", "Tofu (bean curd) champloo", and "Somen (thin noodle) champloo", etc. These foods are, in short, a kind of light stir fry in oil.

This champloo culture further implies the way of life Okinawan people accept, and how they appreciate different cultures and peoples. That's why most foreign people feel at home and comfortable on Okinawa.

The Spirit of Karate-Do

Karate (its literal meaning is "empty hand" since no weapons are used) is a means of self-defense developed in Okinawa. However, no reliable literature can be found explaining its exact origin. This writer has delved into almost all known books, including those written by prominent historians and scholars of Karate. The first mention of martial arts in the Ryukyus were only a few sentences appearing in a book titled "**Oshima Hikki**" (a Record of Oshima) published in 1762 .

Generally speaking, it has been said that Okinawa practiced a martial art called "**tii**" (in the Okinawan dialect) which, since ancient times has simply meant "hand". Most Karate-ka believe that the prohibition on the use of weapons, including swords, has helped to develop the art. During the reign of **King Sho Shin** (1477-1526), the prohibition against the carrying of weapons of any kind was enacted in order to establish a centralized rule.

In the year 1609, the **Satsuma Clan** of Japan invaded Okinawa and gained control of the kingdom. They strictly forbade the Okinawan people from carrying any weapons. Consequently karate became the only widespread means by which the Okinawan people could protect themselves by the use of their bare hands and feet. Some historians are of the opinion that Chinese Kenpo (fighting technical art) was introduced after the invasion by the Satsuma and thus influenced "**tii**".

Karate is a means of self- defense and is not intended to be used as a means of inflicting injury upon others. That is why the basic philosophy of Karate is "**No first attacks in Karate**".

Furthermore, **Miyagi Chojun** (1888-1953), commonly known as "**Bushi Nahgusuku**", who is believed to have been the greatest Karate-ka in modern times, once stated,

".....not being struck by others, nor striking others; we follow the spirit of no battle as a basic principle....."

This concept has been in place for succeeding generations to follow. In essence, Karate is a way of seeking peace, and at the same time, the way of the Samurai who dared to confront any formidable enemy, and to repel them gallantly with courage and insurmountable power.

The following are the "**Rules of Conduct**" as written by a Grandmaster of Karate. They are included here in order to give the readers a deeper understanding of the traditional martial art.

1. We should not use Karate as a means of seeking publicity or fame.
2. We pursue the correct path of Karate that is the art of self-defense.
3. A karate-ka must place the stability of life, economy, and family as top priorities.
4. A Karate-ka must always have fortitude, and must be unshakable.
5. We must refrain from demonstrating in public.
6. We must always polish our minds, and surpass the conspiracies

of wicked people.

7. We should respect our seniors and cultivate our juniors.
8. Karate is a martial art for ladies and gentlemen who are well-versed in the proprieties of social conduct.
9. Karate-Do is a way of life, therefore, we should not seek a flowery living but a substantial way of life.
10. A Karate-ka who is all talk and no action, who knows only theory and who only writes about the martial arts, is nothing but an empty person.
11. One who neglects training is a person of all talk and no action, a disgrace to Karate and to his own spirit.
12. The martial art of Karate should be carried out for a lifetime. When one releases his last breath, his defense of body and soul can also be released like the cherry blossoms blown in the wind.

*** Original wording by Shijin Gushiken, Grandmaster, 9th Dan, of Muken-kan of the Shorin-ryu school of Okinawa Karate-Do.**
Translation by Kiyoshi Sawada

沖縄空手道の四大流派 The Four Main Karate Schools in Okinawa

各手の先達者

The Forerunners of
each school

・松村 宗昆(1800-1892)

Matsumura Sokon

・糸洲 安恒(1831-1916)

Itosu Anko

首里手
Shuri - te

小林流
Shorin Ryu

Founder:

Chibana Choshin (in 1933)

・松茂良 興作(1829-1898)

Matsumura Kosaku

・本部 朝基(1870-1944)

Motobu Choki

泊手
Tomari- te

松林流
Shorin Ryu

Founder: Nagamine Shoshin (in 1947)

・東恩納 寛量(1852-1915)

Higaonna Kanryo

那覇手
Naha - te

剛柔流
Go-Jyu Ryu

Founder:Miyagi Chojun (in 1930)

・周子和 (?)

Shushiwa,China

中国拳法
Chinese-Kenpo

上地流
Uechi Ryu

Founder:Uechi Kanbun (in 1947)

Okinawa is a Horizontal Society

It has been pointed out that one of the norms of Japanese behavioral patterns is the consciousness of hierarchical relationships. Indeed, we find many occasions in which individual behavioral patterns are regulated by hierarchical personal relations at all levels, and in many aspects of Japanese life. Status, rank, authority, roles, sex, and ages are important factors when deciding hierarchical relationships.

Many works concerning the national characteristics of the Japanese have been published by foreign scholars, and they tend to assert that hierarchical relationship is a main factor in Japanese human relationships. Even though the book received some criticism from certain scholars for its rather simplified assertions, **"The Chrysanthemum and the Sword"** by Ruth Benedict, who had never visited Japan, tried to analyze "patterns of Japanese culture", and is now regarded as the definitive work in this genre. Edwin O. Reishauer, who was a professor at Harvard University, and later U.S. Ambassador to Japan (1961-1966), writes in his book, **"The United States and Japan"** in 1950, stating on page 163, that, ".....no major people in the world places greater emphasis on hierarchy than do the Japanese.....". There are also many books on the same topic by Japanese authors. One of the most well-known of these scholarly studies is **"Human Relations in a Vertical Society"** by anthropologist Nakane Chie. In Japan, if one violates any of the hierarchical taboos upon which human relationships are built, he or she will be subject to public sanction.

Since the **"Ryukyu Dispossession"** of 1879, Okinawa has been incorporated into the Japanese political system and has, as a matter of course, come under the influence of the "vertical society" one of the distinct characteristics of Japanese culture. In particular, you may find that this influences the behavioral

patterns of bureaucrats and government workers.

However, the mainstream of traditional Okinawan culture is rather egalitarian consisting of relationships which may be likened to a "horizontal society". Okinawan people often get together by holding a "**mo-ai**" ...or a social gathering. At this gathering, social ranks and status are not strongly recognized by the attending members. Rather, each person is regarded as an equal. In human relationships within a community, people tend to treat one another without discrimination and differentiation by status or rank. They are, in a sense, one family. One factor which decides the upper and lower class social status is the social reverence for the elderly.

One of the reasons why Okinawa places so much importance on "horizontal relationships" rather than the "vertical relationships" of Japan may be as a result of the distinct differences experienced during the stages of its developmental history. In Japan, the feudal system was established during the Kamakura Era (1185 - 1333), and firmly reinforced and maintained throughout the Edo Era (1600 - 1867). The feudal system under which the newly ascendant military class, the samurai, took power and ruled over the farmers, lasted for seven centuries and thus molded the basic social norms of modern Japan. Even today, the feudal mentality tends to encompass almost all aspects of one's social life. A person's status will, in the long run, be determined by such factors as family background, education, occupation, age, and sex. On the other hand, in Okinawa, a feudal system was never established.

Okinawa had been incorporated into a modern society directly from the Middle-Ages type communal village society, thus the "vertical society" in which feudal master-vassal relationships based on a presumption of hierarchical differences such as status and rank has not emerged in Okinawa. The historical background and social structure of Okinawa, by and large, holds true of south east Asian countries. That is why they feel a kinship with the Okinawan people.

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What is in the mind of Okinawans ?

How, in a few words can you define the "mind" of Okinawans? It is a very difficult question! One's experiences and resulting view of life may affect the response to that question. As the saying goes ... no two minds think alike!

During the period from the era of **Haneji Choshu** (1617 - 1675), who published "**Chuzanseikan**" (the first history book of the Ryukyus) to the era of **Iha Fuyu** (1876 - 1947) who has been called the father of Okinology (the study of Okinawan history and culture), the "mind" of Okinawans for leaders and scholars has been sought as a means of identifying themselves as Japanese. These people had commonly advocated the theory of "**oneness of ancestry**" for both Japanese and Ryukyuans. This fact illustrates their desire to be considered to be of Japanese ancestry.

Shuncho Higa, an Okinawan historian, once said. ".....the minds of Okinawans are foolishly straight forward" In his interpretation, he means that, in general, the Okinawan people are quite affable and patient when dealing with others, but when they are backed into a corner, they will repel the oppressor with a ferocity that you could only imagine.

After World War II, under the American military occupation, **Chobyō Yara** (1902 - 1997), as an educator and in his position as president of the Okinawan Teachers' Association, had dedicated his life to providing the Okinawans with a Japanese education, and to promoting the reversion movement to Japan. Yara became the first publicly elected chief executive of the Government of the Ryukyu Islands (**GRI**), and then served as the first governor of Okinawa

Prefecture upon its reversion to Japan. For Yara, the "mind" of Okinawans has surely been seen in the spirit to seek peace, human rights and equality as defined in the Japanese constitution.

Junji Nishime, a law graduate from the University of Tokyo, succeeded Yara as governor. He left an expression which has since become famous:

"..... the mind of Okinawans is a mind attempting to be Japanese but in vain, for it cannot, however hard it tries....."

He kept saying to his fellow people...

"...never give in to the Yamatonchu, or mainlanders..."

His words bring home to us his complicated emotions as a mainstream conservative political leader of Okinawa which had suffered through Satsuma's invasion (1609), the abolishment of the Ryukyus (1879), and the Battle of Okinawa (1945), a series of invasions, occupations, and exploitation by the **"Yamatonchu"** or the Japanese.

Masahide Ota, a scholar-politician, a former professor of the University of the Ryukyus, and currently the incumbent governor, has been an active advocate for peace continually expounding the miseries of war as based on his own experiences and subsequent research of the Battle of Okinawa. In one of his works titled **"Kyojetsu-suru Okinawa" or Okinawan Rejection** (1971): he writes:

"..... the core of the mind of the Okinawans is, above all, to keep peace, to restore human rights, and to attain independence"

The prevailing slogans of the Okinawan Prefecture Government (OPG) peace, coexistence, and independence must have been derived from his belief in the mind of Okinawa.

Presently, Okinawa stands at the threshold of the 21st century but faces several critical problems at the same time. From the 17th to the 20th centuries, the destiny of Okinawa has been dictated by stronger, outside powers Japan and the United States regardless of the will of the indigenous people who are supposed to have the right of self-determination. In the 21st century, Okinawa must be able to create a new and viable society in which people can decide their own destiny by eliminating external dominance and discrimination.

I, as one of the **Uchinanchu** (Okinawans), wish to help create a vital and flexible 21st century for Okinawa with peace and a cosmopolitan spirit displaying the minds of the Okinawans to the utmost. The mind of "**ichariba-choodee**" (once we meet, we become brothers and sisters) through which we show a broadness of heart by not discriminating against "**uchi**", or insiders nor against "**soto**" or outsiders; the mind of "**chimu-gurisa**" through which we share the suffering of others; the mind of "**yui-maru**" or harmonization of different peoples through friendship as a bridge over the world, and finally, the mind of "**nuchi du-takara**" through which we reject war. Let's look forward to building a dynamic Okinawa together.

COMPARISON of PROVERBS

Japan vs Okinawa

Proverbs are said to be the wisdom of human beings as experienced throughout life. Every nation has its own proverbs. In both the Japanese language and in the Okinawan dialect, ...the **"uchina-guchi"**....., we have hundreds of proverbs frequently used in our daily lives. Proverbs are born out of a cultural heritage, but most of them are common to all cultures. One of the most popular, and oft-quoted proverbs of Japan, is as follows**"a nail which stands out gets hammered down"**seems to have no equivalent in the Okinawan dialect. Also, another proverb**"the way of the Samurai is ...to die !"**..... cannot be found Okinawan proverbs. Rather,**"life is the supreme treasure"** displays the true spirit of Okinawa.

Here, from the Japanese and Okinawan languages, are comparisons of twenty sets of proverbs from the numerous examples that are available.

RyukyuvsJapan

1. "Agai tiidaru wugamaru,
sagai tiidaa wugaman"

You should adore the rising sun, and not adore the setting sun.

"Yoraba taiju no kage"

When you lean on a tree, find a big one.

2. "Kiramaa miishiga,
machigee miiran"

We can see the islands of Kerama, but we can't see our own eyelashes.

"Toodai moto gurashi"

It is dark at the base of the lighthouse.

3. "Rakoo kurushiminu mutu"

Pleasure is the source of pain.

"Raku areba kuari"

After pleasure comes pain.

4. "Ichariba Choodee"

Once we have met, we become brothers.

"Sode fure aumo tashoo no en"

A meeting, even if by chance, is due to the karma of the previous life.

5. "Choo nna duuyaka iindi umuri"

Regard everyone as being superior to you.

"Hito wa mina waga shinari" (Eiji Yoshikawa)

Every man is a teacher for me, because I can learn something from any man.

6. "Acha nu nen chi ami"

We surely have another
day tomorrow.

7. "Ikiga nu kutubaa, shuuman
gaai"

A man's word is his bond.

8. "Kutubaa jin jikee"

Use words as you spend
money.

9. "Shikinoo, chui shiijii,
shiru, kurasuru"

We should help each other
in this world.

10. "Shimee shitchi, munoo
shiran"

He may be a learned man,
but he doesn't know how to
behave.

"Fuyu wa kanarazu haru to
naru"

Winter is always
followed by spring

"Bushu ni nigon nashi"

A samurai's word is as good
as his bond.

"Kuchi wa wazawai no moto"

Out of the mouth comes evil.

"Yo-no-naka-wa mochitsu mo-
ta-ritsu"

In this world, we can't live
alone, we must support each
other.

"Rongo yomi no Rongo
shirazu"

He reads the concourses of
Confucius but doesn't take
them into his heart.

11. "Chichi jumuru,
kanashijumu

You come to like the
person who always comes
to your side.

12. "Chira kaagi; yaka, chimu
gukuru"

Kind hearts are better
than faces.

13. "Iji nu nn-jira tii hiki, tii nu
nn-jira iji hiki"

When you are roused to
anger, put away your fists;
when your fists are
clenched to strike, restrain
yourself.

14. "Yaa naree ru fuka naree"

You behave in the society
as you are disciplined at
home.

15. "Tusee umanu hai"

Years and months run like
a horse.

"Tooku no shinrui yori, chika
tanin

A near friend is better than a
far-dwelling kinsman.

"Mime yori kokoro"

Hearts come before beauty.

"Tanki wa sonki"

Anger is the cause of failure.

"Uchi nu narai wa, soto ni
deru"

Home discipline is what you
show outside.

"Sai-getsu hito o matazu"

Time and tide wait for no
man.

16. "Taiyu nu kashira natin,
kuuiyu nu juu ya naina

Try to be the head of the
minnow, and not the tail of
the carp.

"Keiko to narumo, gyugo to
"naru nakare"

Be a cockscomb, rather than
a cow's tail.

17. "Chiiku kasaniree, jooji
nayun"

You can be an adept man
by constant practice.

"Narau yori narero"

Practice makes perfect.

18. "Cho kadu ru deeichi"

Faithfulness comes first.

"Giri to on"

A feeling of gratitude and an
obligation to society is the es-
sence of life.

19. "Naa turayaka rii turi"

Take profit rather than
honour.

"Hana yori dango"

Pudding before praise.

20. "Chu uyamee ru, duu
uyamee"

If you respect others, you
will be respected by them.

"Kenjyoo no bitoku"

The virtue of modesty pays off.

第四章

Chapter

4

日本復歸の政治的分析

A Political Analysis

of the

Reversion to Japan

1945-1972

復歸の日

我 ハワイにて
胸熱し

A mixture of emotions
Wells up in my heart
On the day of Reversion
Residing on the island of Hawaii

(1) FROM the AMERICAN OCCUPATION to the REVERSION to JAPAN

In November 1969, in an agreement between President Nixon and Prime Minister Eisaku Sato of Japan, the decision to return Okinawa to Japan was made. In 1972, after a quarter century of American occupation, Okinawa once again became one of the prefectures of Japan.

World War II wrought great damage upon Okinawa, the last and biggest battlefield of the Pacific. On Okinawa, 12,000 Americans, 110,000 Japanese soldiers, and approximately 160,000 civilians were killed.¹

Upon occupation of Okinawa, the United States forces established a military government with its headquarters in the central Okinawan town of Yomitan, and declared strict obedience to the laws and regulations as set forth by the military government for the entire Ryukyu Island chain (Okinawa is the largest and most densely populated of the Ryukyu Islands). However, it was not yet clear as to whether the United States wished to continue its occupation for any length of time.

The need for the United States to control Okinawa was supplied by the threat of the spread of communism. The United States was compelled to construct a permanent military base on Okinawa because of the outbreak of the Korean war on July 25, 1950. In addition, the victory of the communists in China in October, 1949 greatly menaced the United States. Because of

¹ Okinawan Nenkan. page 36-37

Okinawa's strategically important location, the primary interest of the United States in Okinawa was the necessity for its use of as an advanced base and jumping-off point for possible retaliatory nuclear attacks against China, and perhaps Russia. From Okinawa, all of the eastern Asian countries are within easy reach by air so a quick response can be made to any situations needing assistance.²

The legal status of Okinawa was determined by the conclusion of the San Francisco Peace Pact which was signed by forty-nine nations on July 2, 1951. Since then, Okinawa had been separated from Japan and placed under the full control of the United States.³

Even though the Okinawan people were in a state of confused exhaustion for several years after the war's end, by 1951, their desire for "fukki", or the reversion to Japan, had already commenced. On March 19, 1951, in the legislature of the Okinawa government, 17 of 20 delegates voted to send three representatives to the United States to demand the reversion of Okinawa to Japan.⁴

In July, 1951, the Association for Reversion of Okinawa to Japan (commonly known as "fukki-kyo") was organized in response to the legislature's decision. The association carried out a campaign for the reversion and in an election collected 72.1% of the total electoral population of 276,000 voters.⁵

However, the reversion movement was suppressed by the

² Ryukyu Fact Book, page 23 - 24

³ American Occupation of Okinawa, 1967. page 41

⁴ Okinawa Nenkan. pp. 36 - 37

⁵ Ibid. page 43

American military government. The attitude of the military government toward the reversion movement was amply displayed in the following quotation from a letter written in February 1954 by General Day Lewis, the American Civil Administrator, to Mr. Chobyō Yara, the president of the Association for Reversion to Japan (he was the president of the Okinawan Teachers Association as well). It reads in part.....

"....to support the return movement is to encourage confusion in the minds of the people, and the only result is to give confidence to the communists the return movement and the policy of the American government cannot exist side by side. To be both concerned with the return movement and to seek the aid of the American people is incomprehensible..."⁶

In 1954, an application for a passport to Japan was denied to Mr. Yara on the grounds that he had encouraged members of the Okinawan Teachers Association to work against

".....the common interests of the Ryukyu and American government....."⁷

Moreover, the American government refused the allotment of funds for the construction of the Okinawa Teachers Association building. They also refused permission to bring money, collected in Japan for the construction of a school building, back to Okinawa.⁸ In this, and other ways, the military government attempted to restrict the

⁶ Okinawa Times. April 27, 1954

⁷ American Occupation of Okinawa. page 46

⁸ Ibid.

movement.

Nevertheless, the movement for the reversion to Japan continued to grow year by year. The result of 25 years of contact with America has left the Okinawans disgusted and angered to the point that they have risen to demand their rights as Japanese, for as Okinawans they have none (until the reversion, the three powers of the government were held by the High Commissioner alone). Each summer, there has been a "return Okinawa" parade which is a 30 day trek around the entire island, and which includes speeches encouraging people to support the return movement.

The governments of Japan and the United States gradually came to acknowledge the Okinawan people's desires. In 1964, a committee composed of both Japanese and American delegates was formed to work out problems associated with the eventual return of Okinawa to Japan.⁹

The willingness of the Okinawan people to agree to reversion, even if they lost a great advantage in their basic economy, is vividly shown by the fact that while campaigning for the first publicly elected governor of Okinawa, officially chief executive of the Ryukyu government, the first governor, Chobyō Yara, insisted that the people of Okinawa must be willing, as they did in prewar days, to go barefoot and to eat potatoes instead of rice.

It was Yara's contention that the maintenance of the American military bases and storage of chemical and nuclear weapons on Okinawa is inconsistent with the welfare of the Okinawan people, although he admitted the great importance of

the bases for the economy. He demanded the immediate return of Okinawa along with the evacuation of all U.S. troops and the full appreciation of the Japanese constitution. Since he was elected, the majority of the Okinawan people have held similar views. It should be noted here that there has been almost no movement toward the independence of Okinawa as a nation-state.

Now I would like to analyze the reasons why the Okinawan people wished to return to Japan. First, they were aware of the fact that they became a people without national identity (Okinawa was neither a nation nor a trust territory of the United Nations). Therefore, they were eager to become not just Okinawans under foreign military rule, but citizens of Japan. Second, the American military bases occupy about 25% of the land of Okinawa, the main island of the Ryukyu chain, and Okinawa has become the most overcrowded area in the world.

A 1966 study showed that Okinawa has a population density of more than 2,000 persons per square mile (compared to 693 in Japan and 424 in India.)¹⁰ Thus, the removal of the military bases has become an urgent task in order to allow the development of Okinawan cities. Lastly, the constant suppression of political rights the High Commissioner has full veto power over any bills passed by the legislature has enhanced the people's willingness to return to Japan in order to get back the fundamental human rights guaranteed them under the Japanese constitution.

The initial attitude of the Japanese government toward the reversion problem was a negative one. Until 1963, Prime Ministers

¹⁰ Ryukyu Shimpo Sha, Kichi Okinawa. 1968. page 142

¹¹ American Occupation of Okinawa, page 178

Yoshida and Kishi denied the necessity for the reversion in the Diet.¹¹

In the post war period, while Okinawa was suffering under U. S. military rule, Japan had risen to become the most advanced and most stable nation of all Asia. Her rapid economic progress made her the world's second ranking power (next only to the United States). However, the economic growth of Japan had been achieved by sacrificing the Okinawan people one percent of the Japanese population.

In fact, Japan has been enjoying domestic peace under the "nuclear umbrella" of the United States which was partly based on Okinawa. Thus, Japan could devote herself to improving her economy without fear of foreign military attack. Consequently, Japan could not demand the reversion of Okinawa against the Asian policy of the United States, although she was acknowledged to hold "residual sovereignty" under the United States - Japan peace treaty signed in 1951.¹²

A slight change appeared in 1961, when the legislature of the Ryukyu government sent three representatives to Tokyo in order to put forth the feelings held by the Okinawan people towards reversion. Then Prime Minister Ikeda met them and promised to negotiate this problem with President Kennedy. Following the negotiation with Prime Minister Ikeda in March 1962, President Kennedy officially announced that Okinawa would revert to Japan when conditions in Asia would permit.¹³

There is no doubt that President Kennedy's announcement

¹² South and North. Vol. 23, page 124

¹³ American Occupation of Okinawa, page 178

gave great hope to the Okinawan people, but the situation became even worse because of the escalation of the Vietnam War. The United States needed to retain full use of the bases on Okinawa as a major staging area for the Vietnam War protected by nuclear weapons: Everyday, B-52 bombers (capable of carrying nuclear bombs) left Kadena Air Base bound for bombing missions over Vietnam. This fact made the Okinawan people disappointed and angry, and the movement for the reversion and demand for the withdrawal of the military bases intensified during the period 1963-1969.

In Japan too, with the leadership of the opposition parties, the Socialist Party, and the Communist Party, the support of the Japanese people increased in size in support of the movement of the Okinawan people. Under this situation, Prime Minister Eisaku Sato visited Okinawa in August, 1965. His speech at Naha Airport indicated a distinct change from previous policy. He stated

".....I fully understand that the post-war of Japan will never end without the reversion of Okinawa....."¹⁴

The speech also indicated that Japanese public opinion had recognized the Okinawan problem as being one of its most important domestic problems, and as a result, the Japanese government was unable to disregard this public opinion.

Four years later, in 1969, Prime Minister Sato went to Washington to meet President Nixon and to negotiate the reversion of Okinawa. It was said that Prime Minister Sato had staked his political future on the reversion of Okinawa.¹⁵ If he failed, he

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Ryukyu Shimpo, August 20, 1965

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Okinawa Times: November 3, 1969

would be forced from office. Moreover the peace treaty between the United States and Japan would not be renewed smoothly because a more active resentment of the Japanese people than what had been seen in July, 1970, during the negotiations would have surfaced.

The reaction of the United States government, under President Nixon, was considerably more flexible in Japan's favor, although there was a strong voice against the reversion by some congressmen.¹⁶ The latter, and most of the military leaders, insisted that if the United States was to continue to guarantee the security of Asia, full freedom of control had to be maintained over Okinawa. These men believed that if the United States returned Okinawa, its bases would come under the same restrictions as those in Japan, although the United States could continue to use them.

This opinion was based on the fact that the Japanese Constitution (Article 9) strictly bans the use of military power beyond self-defense, therefore, the United States could not use the island as a base for offensive combat purposes which, of course, includes chemical, and nuclear weapons without the prior approval of the government of Japan.

On the other hand, some statesmen and scholars maintained that the American bases on Okinawa were invaluable in protecting the free world but that future relations with Japan were even more important to the United States.¹⁷ Without the cooperation of Japan, the Asian policy of the United States would not succeed.

¹⁶ American Occupation of Okinawa. page 327

¹⁷ Ibid.

Also, the United States had to consider the fact that Japan was the second leading economic power in the world, and was the second largest trading partner with the United States. In addition, tactical nuclear weapons stored on Okinawa could be replaced by those aboard Polaris submarines and by Minuteman missiles. Therefore, the return of Okinawa to Japan was not only in the best interests of Japan, but also would serve the best concerns of the United States. This opinion was obviously accepted by President Nixon, and the reversion of Okinawa was finally determined, and announced in a joint communique issued by President Nixon and Prime Minister Sato in November 1969.

Postscript:

As we have seen in the history of post-war Okinawa, and because the writer believes that the prosperity of any nation should not be built upon the sacrifice of other peoples against their free will, both the United States and Japan have a responsibility for the economic development of Okinawa both in the present and in the future. In fact, both nations have benefited by using Okinawa as an American base: the United States has been using Okinawa for more than 50 years in defiance of its indigenous people's collective will in order to carry out its military strategy in Asia in the name of the protection of its own national interests, and Japan has been sacrificing its Okinawan brothers in order to enjoy its economic prosperity.

The successive leaders of both the United States and Japan have asserted that the U.S. - Japan security treaty and the American military presence in Asia based on the treaty are vital and indispensable for the stability of the region.

However, the writer argues that the people made to reduce the exchange rate from both a mid-term and eventually become a friendship.

However, the writer argues that it is crucial that the utmost efforts be made to reduce the excessive burden imposed upon the Okinawan people from both a mid- and long-term standpoint so that Okinawa will eventually become the keystone of the Pacific for peace and friendship.

(2) A Political Background Analysis of the Okinawan Reversion to Japan: 1945-1972

In the wake of the Meiji Restoration, Okinawans were integrated into the Japanese political and cultural systems and were considered to be loyal subjects of the Emperor. This was accomplished in part by the introduction of the Japanese education system into the islands.

Okinawa's greatest asset to Japan was the island's strategic position as a bridge to Taiwan. However, Okinawa possessed neither a strong economy nor a pro-military population. The grand military tradition of Japan did not impress the Okinawan people who simultaneously paid tribute to both Japan and China.

In 1898, military conscription was introduced into Okinawa but with a low quota. In contrast to their Japanese counterparts, Okinawan women openly prayed for their husband's rejection from military service. Already Okinawans sensed that a military presence on their island would lead them into conflict with the stronger contending powers. At the close of the 19th century, Japan already felt the need to establish defenses in her southern territories in an effort to stave off western encirclement. Finally, they saw the opening of the Russo-Japanese War which confirmed their fears.

Fishermen from the Miyako group of the Ryukyu islands spotted the Russian Baltic Fleet, and relayed that information to the Japanese military. Okinawans were praised by the Japanese militarists and were the recipients of propaganda concerning their duties to the Empire. For a short while, Okinawan youths were enchanted by dreams of military glory, but the elders resented this

encroachment upon their authority.

In essence, Okinawa was merely the first line of defense of the Japanese Homeland. The poor islands made no tangible contribution to the war effort. Five airfields were built on Miyako island, and a submarine base was located at Unten. At that time, good harbor facilities were non-existent.

As the tide of war shifted, Okinawa's situation worsened. Japanese army officers sent their families to more secure prefectures as Okinawa was then prepared as a major battleground in order to impede the American advance. Twenty thousand young men and women were formed into special service organizations serving as nurses and ammunition carriers.

On April 1, 1945, an American fleet of 1500 ships bombarded Okinawa with the greatest concentration of naval gunfire yet used in the Pacific. Civil defense had been completely neglected by the Japanese army. During the course of the battle, 12,000 Americans, 110,000 Japanese, and 160,000 Okinawans were killed.

From the beginning Okinawa was integrated geographically by the ruling Sho king and the Okinawan government. Although cultural integration was attained, the traditional revulsion toward militarism remained and was proven to be a legitimate fear.

This led to Chinese assertion of old claims on Okinawa. On July 7, 1942 Sun Fo announced China's determination to regain the Ryukyus. Later, T.V. Soong and Chiang Kai Shek reiterated those claims. The stage was set for the annexation of Okinawa from Japan proper. At the Cairo conference in November 1943, it was decided that Okinawa was to be a separate and non-integral

part of Japan under Allied occupation. However, at the same time, the victors promised to covet no gain for themselves and to have no thoughts of territorial expansion.

The United States secured control of Okinawa as a result of the Japanese surrender on August 15, 1945. However, at the time of the initial occupation, reversion was alluded to by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Since that time, the reversion issue had been confirmed by every American president. President Kennedy acknowledged reversion but stipulated that the turmoil in Asia should be resolved before there could be any consideration of an American withdrawal.

Initially, Okinawa's first military phase was directed at conquering Japan proper, but it was short-lived since Japan surrendered in August, 1945. However, in late 1949, the strategic importance of Okinawa was recognized as part of cold war policy. The next phase was inaugurated with the United States' assuming indefinite control over Okinawa in order to challenge communism in Asia.

Reversion stemmed from three important overtures made by the United States. Under Article 3 of the United States-Japan Peace Treaty, the United States obtained complete administrative, legislative, and judicial control over the Ryukyus. Secretary of State Dulles proclaimed the policy of residual sovereignty to Japan, and American proposals of trusteeship disappeared.¹ For the next 27 years, the political status of Okinawa was most unique.

The next incident supporting reversion was the return of the

¹ U.S. Department of State Bulletin: July 12, 1971

Amami Islands in 1953. But, at the same time, the United States announced its intention to maintain control of the remaining islands as part of its efforts to contain communism. President Kennedy's formal announcement that

".....the Ryukyus are part of the Japanese homeland....."

and his urging of restoration gave hope to the reversion patriots.

The Okinawa Teachers Association and the All Okinawa Military Employee's Trade Union (Zenguro) worked for reversion throughout the 1960s. The Reversion Council was made up chiefly of these two groups and 46 smaller organizations. The latter were factions of the various socialists of left-oriented parties or independents.

In Okinawa, unlike in Japan proper, a political agent who strongly influenced the local communities was the teacher. Teachers were responsible for arousing the political consciousness of the people then. Never before had the whole Okinawan community been so politically active.

The political future of the teachers was in question because their role would have to be modified after reversion. The Japanese educational system is a centralized system which controls the appointment of school boards. In Okinawa, such matters were settled by election.

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) receives support from the farmers and the management sector of the electorate. It was the largest party and cooperated with the LDP in Japan proper. The second largest party was the Social Masses Party, which did

not have a direct mainland counterpart. The party platform was basically in favor of immediate reversion with no regard for any economic repercussions. Economic problems should be worked out after reversion. Indeed, the main purpose of this party was the reversion, and it claimed that it would dissolve once this was achieved. It was thought that the left oriented factions would join the Japan Socialist Party while the more rightist elements were expected to join the Japan Democratic Party. Contrary to their claims, however, the Social Masses Party did not dissolve after the reversion but still exists as an indigenous party with relatively strong influence.

The Japan Socialist Party branch in Okinawa professes basically the same platform as did the mainland JSP, one strongly against war. The Peoples Party was communist and blended with the Japan Communist Party. The Peoples Party maintains an extreme stance concerning reversion, saying that not only was the United States indebted to Okinawa, but Japan had also been at fault. They wanted a complete withdrawal of American troops. At the same time, they felt that Japan should provide industries for Okinawa but that such industries should be "non-polluting" industries.

The Komeito had made headway in Okinawa in the 1960s. In the past, the Komeito was impeded on account of the strong religious implications of the Soka Gakkai. The Komeito in Okinawa opposed the LDP and cooperated with the Socialist Masses Party on most issues.

It must be understood that all other parties cooperated in

opposing any action taken by the LDP. In April 1961,² pressure from the Reversion Council pushed the Legislative Council to request representation in the Diet. At the same time, President Kennedy had reaffirmed that Okinawa was an integral part of the Japanese homeland but at that time Okinawans had no representation in any national government. They, in fact, were governed by the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyus, which could ultimately veto any action taken by the Government of the Ryukyu Islands.

The Japanese government was hesitant at this time to push for the demands of the Reversion Council Communique. However, it was finally agreed to grant Okinawa five seats in the House of Representatives and two in the House of Councilors. In the Lower House, three of the five seats were taken by the Peoples Party, the Socialist Party, and the Socialist Masses Party respectively. The other two seats were secured by the Liberal democratic Party. In the Upper House, one seat went to an independent, and the other to a Liberal Democrat. The election of an independent is facilitated by a collision of factions from the opposition parties.

Okinawa's representatives faced a larger problem when moving into national politics. It was necessary to remain loyal to the national parties while not forgetting Okinawan interests. In the 64th session of the Diet, held on December 24, 1970, they broke party lines and formed an Okinawa Diet Members Club. There was much question as to whether the national parties would tolerate this kind of move.

The Japanese government, dominated by the LDP, had never wholeheartedly supported any issue objectionable to the United States concerning the reversion. On the other hand, the Reversion

Council and the leftist organizations of Okinawa, at times, made what seemed to be outrageous demands.

The JCP had announced, for example, that the increase in the military budget should be used for welfare programs for the Okinawans. Nevertheless, such hard-line stands brought concessions from the United States and decisions on local problems and reversion itself; even if the terms were not always acceptable to Okinawans.

On June 16, 1971, the reversion agreement was signed in simultaneous ceremonies in Tokyo and Washington. However the head of the Government of the Ryukyus, Chobyō Yara, and President Nixon were both absent. This was symbolic of the problems that still plagued the reversion agreement because of terms unacceptable to the Okinawans. President Nixon's absence could have been interpreted as a hint for Tokyo to initiate non-cotton export quotas to the United States. Later, Tokyo yielded to President Nixon's demands.

Yara's absence, however, was in protest against the terms of the reversion agreement. This highlights the fact that the original reversion agreement meant one thing to Okinawans and another to the Japanese-American Alliance. For the Japanese Alliance, it was only a stop-gap solution to the real problems.

The Okinawa issue, which then Prime Minister Eisaku had used to his political advantage became a political liability with the signing of the agreement. The opposition parties in mainland Japan and Okinawa, resented the concessions made by Sato in order to carry out the reversion. Not only did Japan yield to the trade concessions but also the two China policy was co-sponsored by both

Japan and the United States in the United Nations. Demonstrations in Okinawa and Japan in 1971 were directed not against reversion but against its terms. These problems, coupled with Nixon's unilateral recognition of China, lowered Sato's prestige.

Cultural, geographical, and political links had given rise to a strong case for reversion. Consideration must also be given to the Okinawan desire to be returned not as a military bastion, but as a normalized prefecture. Linked with this was the obligation that Okinawa be returned in a nonmilitary status to satisfy the very groups in mainland Japan which have worked for reversion. As has been outlined, these groups held a basically anti-war, anti-military platform.

Further, the military economy of Okinawa offered no job security for workers whose contracts were renewed annually on the orders of the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyus. There was little provision in a military economy for investment and the accumulation of capital. After World War II, agricultural production gradually resumed, but the economy was actually transformed by land and labor resource utilization for the construction and maintenance of a huge military complex.

Most of the work force was employed directly, or indirectly, by the military. The largest single trade union was the All Okinawa Military Employee's Trade Union (Zenguro) with 13,526 members.³ The average income of a military employee was \$1800 annually compared to the \$450 earned annually by a sugar cane worker. Hence, there was a shortage of workers in Okinawa's largest non-military industry.

About three-fourths of Okinawa's farmers grew sugar cane. The sugar cane fields were concentrated in the central area of Okinawa, and on Miyako Island. Narrow cultivating areas, poor soil, and a low production rate, created small profits. Almost all of the sugar produced was exported to Japan meeting only about 10% of the mainland's requirements.⁴

The price of rice rose sharply with the shift from California rice to Japanese rice. High import duties were placed on Japanese products in order to give local products a chance to compete. The difficulty of competing with products from mainland Japan made it necessary for the Japanese government to consider provisions.

One of the biggest problems Okinawans faced was the currency issue which arose from the yen re-evaluation in December 1971. Squeezed by rising consumer prices and low wages, Okinawans strongly demanded that their dollar assets be converted to yen at the old rate of 360 yen to the dollar. In September 1958, the United States dollar was introduced as sole legal tender. In December 1969, the amount of dollars in circulation was estimated to be about \$60 - 70 million.

Some Okinawans tried to transfer United States dollars to foreign banks or purchased luxury items to sell after conversion. A survey was taken to register how much money each person would redeem at the time of reversion, but there were many loop-holes. Compared to mainland Japanese, the Okinawans were not as affluent, however, they were the second most affluent group in Asia. This, of course, was brought about by the American presence on

⁴ Asian Survey: Takezawa Makoto: "Okinawa Reversion to Japan and the Future; Vol. XI, No. 5, May 1971

Okinawa. According to a Ryukyu government announcement made on October 27, 1971, the per-capita income on Okinawa for fiscal 1970 was \$770. This was about 55% of the Japanese level, which in the same year was estimated at \$1400. The \$770, however, represented a rise of almost 20% over the previous year. The Gross National Product (GNP) in fiscal 1970 rose by 18.4%, to almost \$860.4 million. This represented Okinawa's second highest GNP growth rate since 1945.

When compared to the rest of Asia, Okinawa's educational and welfare systems were good. But, here again there was a gap with Japan proper. Japan's social welfare systems far surpassed those of Okinawa. In Okinawa there were 447 doctors (most of whom practice in Naha) for a population of one million, a proportion about 50% lower than that of the mainland.⁵ The Japanese government program to encourage doctors to relocate to Okinawa resulted in only one-fourth of the numbers of doctors in a Japanese prefecture of comparable size.

Okinawa also lacked educational facilities. School space was about 50% less than that of the average school in mainland Japan.⁶ Only 49% of Okinawan schools offered a lunch program, compared to 77% in Japan.⁷ Okinawan schools needed also to contend with the disruptive social influences partially brought about by the military presence. There was a relatively high juvenile delinquency rate constituting 46% of all Okinawan crimes when compared to only 27% in mainland Japan.⁸

⁵ Japan Report: July 16, 1971

⁶ Asian Survey: Takezawa Makoto: "Okinawa Reversion to Japan and the Future; Vol. XI, No. 5, May 1971

⁷ Ibid.

The solutions to these economic and social conditions, brought about by 27 years of American control, were seen to be the responsibility of both Japan and the United States. The economic chaos created by reversion could be mitigated if Japan gave Okinawa a place in the greater economy of Japan. It was also thought that social reconciliation would ease the identity dilemma faced by the Okinawans.

Also linked to the problems of military pressure in the community was the question of civil rights when dealing with the occupying forces. After reversion, the Japan - United States Security treaty, and other related agreements, were applied in Okinawa without any modification. The reversion agreement, however, included a provision which stated that the United States would be granted the use of facilities on the basis of procedures prescribed in the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) under Article 6 of the Security Treaty. Foreign Minister Kichi Aiichi admitted that most of the bases would remain in the islands. However, one of the greatest Okinawan victories lay in the fact that since the bases were under the same provisions as are those bases situated in mainland Japan, American personnel could be tried by civil courts.

In the past, American servicemen had been transferred to other bases or acquitted by military courts, even when the evidence of guilt was overwhelming. Frequently, riots were touched off by these incidents. Under the memorandum covering the handling of United States bases, signed on June 24, 1971, a total of 88 bases would continue to be made available to the United States forces in post-reversion Okinawa.

Base employees on Okinawa did not have the same protection for their jobs as did their counterparts in mainland Japan. In Okinawa, there was no collective bargaining nor any provision made for retirement pensions. At Kadena, 88% of the farmland had been appropriated for military use. This situation resulted in only 15% of the people in the Kadena area working in agriculture.⁹

Since most of the bases remained in operation, the related problems persisted. At the time, there had been close to 200 airplane crashes in and around residential areas. Noise levels were extremely high and most homes in the affected areas routinely used double windows in an effort to reduce the level of noise.

Pollution problems were also prevalent in the military areas. Wells, streams, and shoreline areas had been polluted by unrestricted oil dumping as well as sewage spills.¹⁰ At one time, the east coast could have easily been developed into a tourist area, but instead, a general beautification program was needed to reclaim the beauty of the land.

Another important issue among Okinawans was the fear of chemical, nuclear, and biological weapons. Nothing was explicitly mentioned in the reversion agreement concerning this problem. However, the banning of such weapons from Japanese territory was allowed under Chapter II, Article 9, of the constitution. President Nixon promised that all nuclear weapons would be removed. This would come about by the deployment of such weapons within the Western Pacific aboard Poseidon and Polaris submarines.¹¹

⁹ Honolulu Star Bulletin and Advertiser: February 14, 1972

¹⁰ Japan Times Weekly: April 1, 1972

¹¹ Far East Economic Review: NAKAMURA, Koji; March 17, 1971

While Prime minister Sato and Defense agency Chief Yasuhiro Nakasone publicly declared that Japan may inspect the bases after reversion to confirm that nuclear weapons had indeed been removed from the islands, it was highly doubtful that the United States would agree to such an arrangement. However, even nuclear submarines dispatched to the Western Pacific, would need to be serviced at the same port. It remained to be seen how far Japan could apply the non-nuclear clause. In this sense, the Okinawan reversion made it possible for President Nixon to visit mainland China. While giving Japan a sense of prestige over reversion linked to this unilateral overture to China, the writer feels that Japan recognized the complete faith that was placed in the United States nuclear umbrella.

The Japanese Self Defense Forces trained units in preparation for the reversion. The advance groups for Okinawa consisted of men mostly from Okinawa. Such a unit was stood up on March 1, 1971 at the Kumamoto Garrison. This type of unit emphasized programs to educate the people of Okinawa on the necessity for the presence of Self Defense Force units. Disaster training and rescue operations related to typhoons were also part of the program.

This type of "pacification program" accomplished little in quelling the deep-rooted, anti-military feelings of the Okinawans. Again, the writer wishes to emphasize that this feeling was not so much anti-American as it was anti-military. A campaign was also underway against the Self Defense forces. The Prefectural Reversion Council asked bus, hotel, and shipping companies not to cooperate with the Self Defense forces.

The Council also urged land owners not to renew defense contracts with the Defense Agency. In addition to a speech-making

campaign, radical youths hurled Molotov cocktails, and placed bombs in the offices of the Agency for Ryukyu and Northern Territories.

The Okinawan commitment to reversion not only upset the status quo in Japan, but also relations between Okinawa and its neighbors. The strategic location of Okinawa was recognized not only from a military aspect, but also from an economic aspect. Never before had Okinawa possessed such an opportunity. But then, as in the past, the stronger powers of East Asia laid claim to what seemed to be Okinawan territory.

Here is an assessment of the situation by Kim, Il Young, a Korean geographer:

".....A recent geophysical reconnaissance survey sponsored by the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) found a broad submarine basin extending over the Yellow and China Seas. This basin is separated into three smaller basins (Taiwan, Yellow Sea, and Bohai) by two linear belts of basement ridges. Each basin contains Tertiary and Cretaceous sediments of marine origin. The average thickness of the sediments is approximately 6,000 feet, and it is estimated that the oil reserves in each basin are comparable to the Persian Gulf area. Following the preliminary seismic survey, Japan, the Republic of China, and Korea, independently awarded concessions for submarine oil exploration to various companies. The Japanese oil districts overlap the areas awarded by South Korea, and both the Japanese and South Korean awards overlap the Chinese Petroleum acreage. These conflicts are due largely to the ambiguity of the conventional law of the sea, and the complicated topography of Eastern Asia. The close proximity of communist China to the prospective oil fields and the status of the United

States occupation of the Ryukyu Islands present a further complication...."¹²

Recent surveys indicated that substantial quantities of oil existed in these areas "...perhaps comparable to that of the Persian Gulf..."¹³ Japan, Korea, and the Republic of China had already awarded concessions to various oil companies for the exploitation of submarine oil deposits. Offshore claims varied from nation to nation giving rise to problems such as the overlapping of the continental shelf boundaries of Korea, Japan, and the Republic of China.

At the time, Japan consumed approximately 817 million barrels of oil annually and relied on the Persian Gulf area and Indonesia for 95% of the nation's oil supply. Now that oil was found so close to the homeland, Japan asserted a national interest.

Japan awarded oil concessions from the Tsushima Islands to the Ryukyu Islands. Between Cheju Island, Korea, and Goto Retto, South Korean and Japanese offshore awards overlapped. Both Korean and Japanese awards overlap Chinese Petroleum Corporation acreage. Near Senkaku, the Republic of China granted claims concessions which were apparently already claimed by Japan. Young Il Kim attributed such conflicts to the ambiguity of conventional sea law, and to the complicated topography of East Asia. Until the signing of the Reversion Act, the claimants had not pushed such an issue in order to avoid drawing the United States directly into the conflict.

¹² Prospective Oil Fields on the Continental Shelf in Eastern Asia and some Associated problems, KIM Young Il, p 93.

¹³ Gas and Oil Journal: January 1971

However, since reversion was almost an accomplished fact, the People's Republic of China brought charges that.....

"...the United States is forcibly occupying China's territory in Taiwan province, and of late it has concluded with the Japanese reactionaries and used the fraud of the reversion of Okinawa in an attempt to include in Japan's territory the Tiaonjuu Islands (Senkaku) and other islands..."¹⁴

This statement was made by Chi Yuan at the March 3, 1972 session of the United Nations Committee on Peaceful Use of the Seabed and Ocean Floor.

Japan's counter to this statement provoked South Korea and Taiwan to further strengthen their claims. Almost immediately, the People's Democratic Republic of China, over the New China radio, asserted its claim. Taiwan and South Korea likewise advertised for bids from oil companies.

Foreign Minister Takeo Fukuda announced during the first week of March 1972 at the Special committee on Okinawa and Northern Territorial Problems, that...

"..... there is no doubt that the islands belong to Japan..."

The committee issued an official statement establishing Japan's claim:

- (1) a field survey conducted in 1885 confirmed that there was no

evidence of control over the islands by the Chin Dynasty of China.

- (2) the Japanese government decided at the Cabinet meeting in 1895 to include the islands as Japanese territory.
- (3) the islands were not included in Taiwan and the Peng Hu islands which were ceded to Japan under the Shimonoseki treaty with Ching in May, 1895.
- (4) Article 3 of the San Francisco , United States - Japan Treaty puts the islands under United States administration, and they were included in the territory to be returned to Japan by the Okinawa reversion treaty signed between Japan and the United States last year.

Concerning the survey of October 1885, the Okinawan Prefectural authorities at that time asked the central government for permission to place markers on these islands indicating that they were under prefecture control. In January 1895, the Cabinet claimed Japan's right to the islands on the basis of the theory, and practice, of prior occupation as stipulated in conventional international law.

In reference to the San Francisco treaty, it would seem that the United States had some responsibility in solving the issue. The Treaty brought the islands under the trusteeship of the United States as sole administrator. The territory covered under this provision was identical to the administrative area of old Okinawa prefecture.

Postscript

In this paper, the writer has attempted to analyze those political factors which promoted the reversion of Okinawa to Japan as well as to outline the problems which have plagued Okinawa from the post-war era until 1972.

On 15 May, 1972, Okinawa realized its goal of reverting to Japan. The people of Okinawa are now Japanese citizens with all the basic rights and privileges accorded such citizens. However, they still suffer from the same problems they faced during the American occupation prior to the reversion due to the continuous deployment of large numbers of American U.S. troops to and from the island.

On the island of Okinawa (approximately the size of the Hawaiian island of Kauai, and comprising only 0.6% of Japan) are concentrated approximately 75% of the facilities exclusively used by U.S. Forces, and 60% of all U.S. personnel in Japan i.e. 53,539 military personnel and civilian employees as of September 1996. Most Okinawan people believe that it is necessary both to realign and to reduce the U.S. military presence on the island. At the same time, it is necessary to reduce the number of U.S. personnel stationed on Okinawa in order to create a more stable society, conceding that the continued American presence is still necessary for the stability of East Asia. Otherwise, the Okinawan people may eventually initiate a movement to become a nation-state independent of Japan.

The dependence of the Okinawan economy upon the American bases has been pointed out by many people, but in truth, it has declined drastically from 15.4% at the time of Okinawa's

reversion in 1972 to 4.9% in 1994 in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Chalmers Johnson, president of the Japan Policy Research Institute, points out in his 1997 report titled "Justice for Okinawa" that

".....some Americans like to believe that the American bases employ many Okinawans and are actually valuable economic assets for the local population. According to the best estimates, the incomes generated directly, or indirectly, by the bases are only 5% of the GDP of Okinawa. This is far too small a contribution for establishments occupying 20% of Okinawa's land. Given the choice locations of these bases, if these areas were used as part of the civilian market economy, they should yield more than 20% of Okinawa's GDP. In effect, the U.S. and Japan are forcing upon the Okinawan economy a deadweight loss of 15% of its GDP annually. In a democracy, such an abuse of the state's taxing power should never be tolerated. The bases are the reason why Okinawa is Japan's poorest prefecture..."

He further states

".....inconvenience to civil air transportation due to the restrictions on the use of airspace, closures of port facilities and waters to civilian shipping, fishing, or recreational activities due to naval and other military requirements...."

He summarizes his argument succinctly by saying that

"..... Okinawans want the bases withdrawn and the land returned to its rightful owners so that the market-guided land use may become the foundation for further economic develop-

ment in Okinawa"

In conclusion, without the reduction and realignment of the bases, Okinawa cannot expect to have a brighter future. Should the return of the bases be realized, we can envision, and implement, a better plan for the economic growth necessary for the approaching 21st century. I would like to ask those who espouse freedom, equality, and peace to understand the situation of Okinawa and to support us in building a better future together. After all, the ultimate aim of Okinawans is to realize a peaceful Okinawa without military bases.

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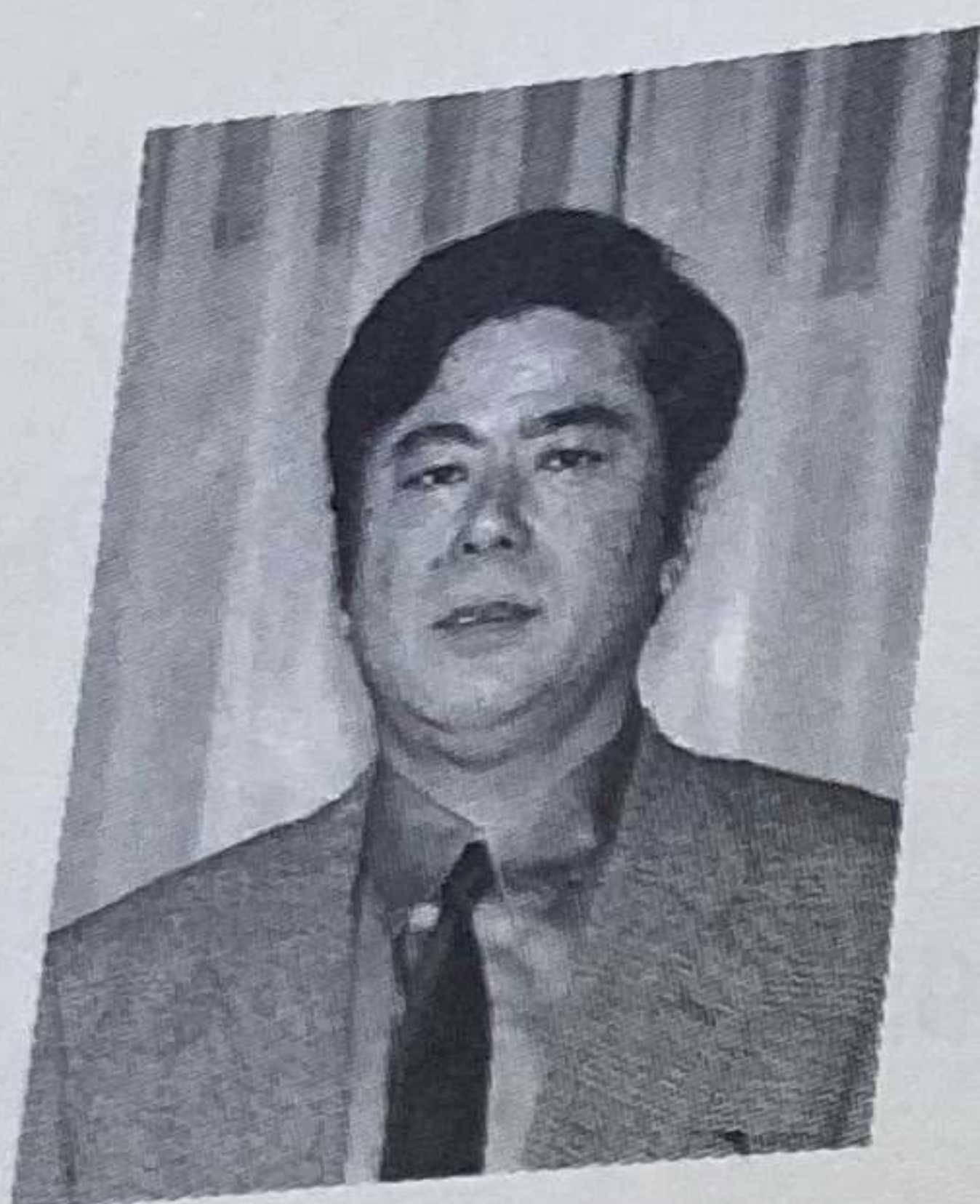
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The author was born on November 3, 1944, in Motobu, a small community on the northwest coast of Okinawa. At the age of six, his family moved to Naha, Okinawa's capital city. There he remained until 1970, when he left for his graduate studies in Hawaii.

While studying in the Okinawa University Law Department, from which he graduated in 1969, the author worked for the United States Army as an interpreter and office clerk. In 1970, he began his graduate studies at the University of Hawaii under the Garioa-Fullbright scholarship program (the United States Government special fund). Graduating with a Masters of Political Science degree in 1972, the author finished his course-work for a doctorate in 1973 when he returned to Okinawa.

Formerly the president of five different companies, including an international trading company, a meat processing and packaging business, the author draws on this wide experience in running the highly successful Sawada English Academy which he established in 1978. The author possesses a Special A (highest) English Proficiency Certificate issued by the United Nations English Testing Association. The author is also a sixth degree black belt and a dedicated follower of Grand Master Shijin Gushiken's Muken-kan Shourin-ryu karate-do.

The author currently lives in the same house he built in 1976 in Nishihara town with his wife Keiko, his daughter Naomi (born in Hawaii in 1972), and his son Masato (born in Nishihara in 1977).