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Okinawa: Jewish New Year, Kamikaze, and Typhoon

I was a navigator in the United States Army Air Corps and in February 1944 was assigned to the CBI. I was stationed in Chittagong. In the spring of 1945, my unit, 4th Combat Cargo, was moved to Myitkyna and it was there that I received my orders to go to Okinawa.

I flew first to Kharagpur where a crew for a C-46 (an unarmed transport) was assembled. With 35 passengers, all infantrymen, we flew from Kharagpur to Luliang and then over Japanese occupied China to Clark Field in the Philippines, and finally to Okinawa.

We arrived at Naha air strip when the fighting there was almost over. As I remember it, the air strip at Naha was pock marked with bomb craters. We were lucky

to land there without incident.

The Air Corps crews were billeted in four-man tents which we erected ourselves in what was formerly a sweet potato field located south of Naha, close to a sea wall. During the first night, there was scattered small arms fire in or near our area, but we sustained no casualties. To my knowledge, this was nearly the end of the fighting. In the morning, we were asked to root out what remained of a Japanese force hidden in nearby caves, but the caves were empty by then.

In a short time, perhaps a week, the fighting was ended and Okinawa was declared as being "safe". And so began the routine of everyday Army life. The four men in our tent pooled our past liquor ration and bartered some of it for lumber which we used to construct a floor for our tent and rafters which attached to the center pole helped support the pyramidal portion of the tent. As it later turned out, this was one of the best things we could have done.

We had mess facilities, a very large tent, and latrine facilities but no facilities to bathe. However, there was a shallow fresh water well close to our area and we showered in the following manner; We would tie a rope to our steel helmet and drop it right side up into the well. When it hit the

water it turned upside down and filled with water. We would then pull the helmet up and douse ourselves with water. During the summer months of 1945, this was not too bad, but as it grew colder bathing became less pleasant. Eventually, an enclosed facility was built.

Laundry was done by Okinawan women. We could not deal with them directly. Since I flew a great deal and spent a great amount of my time away from the island, this was my only contact with any Okinawan civilian.

My life on Okinawa was routine. I would fly out for one or more days and upon my return, take care of all the personal things to which I had to attend. Only three events which are unusual stand out in my memory. The first was the Jewish New Year in September of 1945. For this occasion, we were driven to the remains of a church or a temple, which was completely destroyed, and the service was conducted while I and two others in full dress uniform with our prayer shawls on were standing on a pile of rubble.

The second was a kamikaze attack through which I slept. I had returned from a flight late in the evening and I was extremely tired. After I had something to eat, I hit the sack and was out like a light. During the night, the attack occurred. My tent mates took off for our fox hole but failed to awaken me. There was an anti-aircraft battery about 50 yards from our area and I was told that it fired steadily for the time of the attack. But I slept on! Only one attack aircraft crashed in the area in which our planes were tied down, but it missed everything and the planes sustained no damage.

Of course, the most vivid memory I have of Okinawa was of the typhoon of 1945. This was the most severe storm that I have

ever experienced. When it started, there were just the four of us in the tent. As the wind grew stronger many of the tents began to collapse. Since our tent had a wood frame, we were able to push the frame against the force of the wind and thus keep the tent erect. As the other tents in our area blew down, more of our buddies sought shelter in our tent so that we had additional manpower to fight the wind. The wind reached velocities of 180 miles per hour and was of such intensity that some of our aircraft which had not been tied down actually became airborne. (These ships would fly at 120 miles per hour.) In one instance, one of the aircraft became air borne and flipped over on top of another plane. Both were totally destroyed.

Some of the people sought refuge in the caves formerly occupied by the Japanese troops. I was told by them that the wind velocity was so great that a sharp whistle developed as the wind blew through the mouth of the cave and the sound became so intense that they were unable to remain in the cave. Eventually, they sought shelter in Operations Building which survived the storm. That night in our four-man tent, which withstood the storm, we slept twelve.

Our billeting area was completely destroyed. Only our tent survived. Rebuilding was begun and by the end of the day, all the tents, including the mess hall, were re-erected. However, all belongings were soaking wet and it took many days before the last of them were dry enough to use. Obviously, much equipment was lost.

I remained on Okinawa for about a month after the Japanese surrender, having flown to Atsugi on D-Day and after having spent a week in Tachikawa and Tokyo in Japan. I left

Okinawa about the last week in November, 1945.

Murray Wolf, New York.

The Fifth Academic Conference on Sino-Ryukyuan Historical Relations

The Fifth Academic Conference on Sino-Ryukyuan Historical Relations (第五回中琉歴史関係学術研討会) was held in Fuzhou and Quanzhou, China on November 24-27, 1994. The previous four conferences were held in Taipei and Naha alternately every other year (See *The Ryukyuanist*, No. 21). The conference was initiated by historians in Okinawa and Taiwan. This time the conference was held in mainland China. This is of historic significance in light of the perpetual political tensions between Beijing and Taipei. In contrast, warm personal relationships have lately grown up between many Okinawans and Chinese in the cities of Fujian and Guandong.

The Fifth Conference drew 29 participants from Okinawa (and Japan), 11 from Taiwan, and 70-100 from China. Forty three papers were read. The first part of the Conference was held in Fuzhou and the second part in Quanzhou. The main theme of the Conference was the Tribute System of China with special emphasis on Sino-Ryukyuan relations. Numerous papers on freely chosen topics ranged widely over history, literature, music, religion, painting, folklore, and so on.

During the 10th to the 14th century, China was "among equals" in international relations. For nearly a century it was even ruled by an alien dynasty, the Yuan. When the Ming re-established Chinese hegemony, the Tribute System was re-invented. The system demanded all other states' recognition of China's supremacy and their

submission to China's cultural and moral authority. All aspects of international relations and trade were subsumed under the rites and rituals of unequal cultural and moral relationships between China and non-Chinese states.

However, at the Fifth Conference on Sino-Ryukyuan Historical Relations, the Okinawan participants were most impressed with a paper presented by Professor Chen Jiexian of Taiwan University, titled "Ryukyu gazetteers compiled during the Qing period." Chen wondered why Ryukyuanists did not produce their own Chinese-style gazetteers despite long and strong cultural influences from China. Instead, a few Ryukyu gazetteers were compiled by Chinese and Japanese. Chen's comparative analysis and critique of Okinawa's alleged failures in this respect apparently surprised the Okinawan participants. They took it, however, as a new, illuminating perspective on Ryukyuan studies. Apparently they offered no effective rebuttal to the implied slights.

The Conference proceedings will be published shortly.

Publications (XVI)

We are grateful for the following gifts of publications:

Akazawa, Takeru (赤澤威), ed. 1994. *Sen-shi mongoroido wo saguru* (Exploring prehistoric Mongoloid 先史モンゴロイドを探る). Tokyo: Nihon Gakujutsu Shinkokai. x, 413 pp. ¥1,480. A serious scientific multi-authored volume reporting a number of new breakthroughs in research on the origins of the Mongoloid and their dispersal over Asia and the Pacific.

Ryukyuanists receive a good deal of attention. New findings, hypotheses and theories about them are offered by several authors.

Analyses of ethnic distances and clusters indicate that (1) Ryukyans (*Nansei-shotōjin*) are different from Japanese of the Kofun period as well as modern Japanese, but that (2) they are much closer to Japanese than to Jomonese or Ainu (p.82). This clearly takes exception to Japanese anthropology's mainstream view of Ryukyans (Suzuki-Hanihara-Baba; see *The Ryukyuanist*, No. 19).

On the other hand, a study of cranial variations yields ethnic clusters which put Ryukyans and Ainu together, far removed from Japanese (p.90). This conforms to the mainstream view.

A study of geographical distribution of carriers of ATLV1—adult T-cell leukemia virus (type 1) — shows that a relatively high incidence of ATLV1 is observed among Ryukyans (especially Okinawans and Yaeyamans), coastal-area Japanese of western and southern Kyushu, island Japanese in the adjacent waters (eg., Tsushima, Goto, etc.), and the Ainu of Hokkaido (p.274).

It is generally believed that the people of the geographical margins of Kyushu are closely related to Jomonese. The Ainu are considered directly descended from Jomonese (according to the mainstream view). The ATLV1 distribution apparently supports the mainstream view of the ethnic structure of Japanese population.

No findings of relationships between Ryukyans and Oceanic peoples are reported. Honda, Tetsuo (本田徹夫). 1994. *Amami: kaerazaru nise-tachi* (Amami: The young don't come home 還らざる奄美のニセーたち). Kobe: Maroudosha, 1994. 276pp. ¥2,300. A historical novel set in prewar Kikaijima of the Amami group. Its theme is modernization (Japanization) of the life

and culture of the island, illustrated by the aspirations and disappointments, successes and failures, triumphs and defeats, of a number of fictional young men and women. Throughout the book, one reads excellent descriptions of traditional culture, social and family relations, youth's efforts to adapt to Japanese influences, changing economic conditions, conflict between tradition and modernity, etc. Expressions in local language are effectively deployed to give local color and flavor. As far as the transcribed words and phrases are concerned, they appear almost identical with the language spoken in Okinawa. This is remarkable in light of the geographical distance that separates Kikaijima from Okinawa. Historical relationships between Okinawa and Kikaijima are narrated by one of the figures in the novel as events unfold.

International Research Center for Japanese Studies. 1994. *Nichibunken Newsletter*, No. 19 (November). 18pp. Among "academic activities, May 1994–August 1994," there were two sessions of a seminar "Japanese Basic Culture and Okinawa" organized by UMEHARA Takeshi. May 16, 1994: FUKUNAGA Mitsuji, "Constant Traveling as a Faith;" WATANABE Yoshio, "Tombs Location in China and Okinawa." July 4, 1994: OTSUKA Kazuyoshi, "cultural Exchange between Ezo and Ryukyu;" SHIMONO Toshimi, "Grave System and Services for the Departed Souls of One's Ancestors in the Ryukyu Cultural Area." Kanaseki, Hiroshi (金関恕) and Hiroe Takamiya (高宮廣衛), eds. 1994. *Okinawa no rekisi to bunka* (History and Culture of Okinawa 沖縄の歴史と文化). Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan. 241pp. ¥2,987. Proceedings of a conference held at Tokyo National

Museum in 1992. Reproduced from recordings of presentations at a symposium at the National Museum, Tokyo. On the first day of the two-day conference, the keynote speech was made by Tanigawa Kenichi on implications of Yanagida Kunio's *Kaijo no michi* (sea route). Takamiya Hiroe reports on the state of knowledge about Ryukyuan prehistory based on archaeological finds. Asato Susumu follows it up with the discussion of the "Gusuku" period, also based on archaeological work. Nakayama Kiyoshi presents a prehistory of Amami islands. Richard Pearson argues that Okinawa's state formation was a derivative of an extensive Chinese diaspora network. A plenary discussion session follows. On the second day, Ms Osumi Masako explains Sino-Ryukyuan *ce-feng* relationship. Takara Kurayoshi discusses the sovereign nature of the *Koryukyu* state on the basis of the autonomous administrative structure inferred from numerous *jireisho* (writs of appointment). Amanda Stinchecum's paper is highly methodological and closely examines relationships between Ryukyuan textiles and *Nintōzei* (poll tax). Murai Shosuke looks at the Ryukyu kingdom from perspectives of Muromachi Kyoto's Buddhist centers. The plenary session asks and answers more questions. This useful volume could have been vastly improved if the presentations had been recast in written language and edited in the form of academic/scientific articles. The book is marred by frivolous jokes or gibberish circumlocutions in places.

Okinawa International University: Institute of Ryukyuan Culture. 1993. *Nantō Bunka Bulletin of the Institute of Ryukyuan Culture*, No. 15 (March). 94, 27pp. All

articles in this issue are in Japanese. Titles in English: "Regional Agriculture in Izena Village, Okinawa: Reorganization and Creation of Its Driving Force" by Takashi Adania; "The Natural Environment of Okinawa's Northern Districts and Its Southwest Islands: Characteristics and Conservation Policy" by Kuniharu Miyagi; "Old Songs of Itoman City, Okinawa II: Tsunahiki (Tug of War) Songs" by Nobuo Sugimoto; "Guides to Source Materials and Commentary: Meiji 27th Year Fair Report, No. 1" by Yasuo Kurima.

Idem. 1994. *Nantō Bunka Bulletin of the Institute of Ryukyuan Culture*, No. 16 (March). 56, 26pp. One article is in English. The others are in Japanese. "Ryukyuan Studies in North America: the State of the Field" by Koji Taira, "Migrants from Motobu-cho, Northern Okinawa and Formation of the Business District in Okinawa City" by Ryohei Domae, "Horticulture in Cheju Island, Korea" by Mamoru Ogawa, Hiroe Takamiya, "Selected Papers on Jomon Pottery of Okinawa" reviewed by Masahide Takemoto, "Guides to Source Materials and Commentary: Meiji 27th Year Fair Report," Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7, by Yasuo Kurima.

Idem. 1994. *Taramajima chōsa hōkokusho* No. 2. (多良間島調査報告書) 223pp. Contains 4 articles on religion, gentry, *Sutsu upunaka*, and dialect.

Idem. *Nantō Bunka Kenkyūsho Shohō* (南島文化研究所所報 Report of the Institute of Ryukyuan Culture), No. 36 (1992), No. 37 (1993), No. 38 (1994). Each issue carries a lead article, reports on activities, and a commentary. The commentary in No. 38, by Professor Hiroshi Kikukawa, affirms Ryukyuan studies as an academic discipline by certain criteria, in re-

sponse to doubts expressed by Koji Taira elsewhere.

Okinawa Kyokai. 1995. *Gekkan Okinawa*, No. 215 (January). 4pp. Unusually pessimistic views about Okinawa's ability to turn its face toward Asia, away from Japan, are expressed by several well-known Okinawans. One writer says that until about 1970, Okinawa was clearly "Asian" but that because of what has happened in the last twenty years, Okinawa has become non-Asian. He then wonders whether Okinawa can once again identify with Asia and work with Asians. Another writer condemns a new smugness of Okinawans arising from the recent revival and popularity of their traditional culture and art forms. Because of this false sense of self-satisfaction, according to him, Okinawans are losing the will and ability to change apace with the changing world. It is remarkable that Okinawa's opinion leaders have seen the need for such harsh remarks about Okinawa and Okinawans in their New Year's greetings.

Okinawa Labor and Economic Research Institute. 1995. *L & E* (Nos. 48 & 49, January). 124 pp. ¥500. Special edition, entitled "Okinawan Workers' White Paper." Reviews the past year's global and Japanese economic developments as environmental forces affecting the Okinawan economy in Part 1 and extensively analyzes changes in Okinawa under several headings such as labor markets, wages and hours, household finances, etc.

University of New South Wales, Centre for South Pacific Studies. 1992-1994. *Newsletter*, vols. 6-8. Reports on conferences, publications, library acquisitions, courses, and other academic activities, all in South Pacific Studies. The Centre was estab-

lished in 1987 "to research, collate, and distribute from a variety of disciplines about the people and places of the South Pacific."

In memoriam: Nakasone Seizen(1907 - 1995)

As if to mark the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Okinawa, which killed many of his *Himeyuri* students and colleagues, Professor Nakasone Seizen died of pneumonia in Naha on February 14, 1995. He was 89 years old. He was survived by a son and six daughters and their families. Mrs. Nakasone passed away two years ago.

Professor Nakasone's monumental *Dictionary of the Nakijin Dialect* 沖繩今帰仁方言辞典. (1983), a culmination of his lifelong research into the language spoken in his birthplace, Nakijin, was an instant classic, showered with many awards: Higaonna Kanjun Award in Okinawa, Academy of Scientists Award in Japan, special Ifa Fuyu Award, and others.

Born to a hardworking middle-class farming family in Yonamine, Nakijin in 1907, young Seizen went through an elite course of education: from the First Middle School at Shuri, to Higher School at Fukuoka, to the Imperial University at Tokyo, from which he graduated in 1933. Returning to Okinawa, he first taught at the Third Middle School at Nago and later moved to the Women's Division of the Normal School at Shuri, where he was caught up in the Battle of Okinawa.

During the Battle, the Japanese Army ordered a nursing corps formed of the students of the First High School for Girls and the women students of the Normal School. It was called *Himeyuri* (Princess Lily) Student Corps combining the two

schools' anthems, *Otohime* (Maiden Princess) and *Shirayuri* (White Lily). The Battle raged for three months. Eventually the students and teachers retreated with the Japanese army to the southern shores of Okinawa.

Near the final hours of the Battle, Nakasone was hit by shrapnel, which permanently impaired his hearing in one ear. He lay unconscious for a while. When he came to and joined his charges in a cave, the students were about to kill themselves with grenades the army had given them for the purpose. Nakasone talked them out of it and, with them surrendered himself to the American troops.

Some of the other *Himeyuri* platoons were killed in action or took their own lives. *Himeyuri no to* (Monument to the *Himeyuri*) in honor of 210 students and teachers who died in the battle has been erected on one of the last tragic sites in southern Okinawa.

It filled him with remorse, guilt and pains that so many of his students were killed. After many months of agony, he finally affirmed life. When one of his students needed help to overcome an acute post-survival nervous breakdown, he counseled her with a poem: *Naki tomo no/mitama to tomoni/saki ideyo/kiyoki kedakaki/himeyuri no hana* (in rough translation; Bloom forth, Princess Lily/ noble and beautiful/ With you may the departed souls of your friends/ also rise and thrive). (なき友の みたまとともに さきいでよ きよきけだかき ひめゆりの花)

Now it became clear to him that his life was not only his to live, but meant for a larger purpose. Quietly and steadily inner strength swelled and burst into activities. Nakasone wrote or edited volumes of new textbooks for postwar schools, lent a hand

for the initiation of a new normal school, helped nurture it into the present-day University of the Ryukyus, edited the papers of the *Himeyuri* students, and headed a movement for the collection and preservation of films of the Battle of Okinawa.

During the 1950s, at the University of the Ryukyus, he taught courses on Japanese literature, managed the University library as its director, and served as vice-president of the University. In 1955, he invited Hattori Shiro, his friend since his time at Todai, to the University of the Ryukyus for a short intensive course on linguistics, which later spawned a flourishing study club for Okinawan dialects.

Towards the end of the 1950s, he returned to research that was interrupted by the Battle of Okinawa and postwar exigencies. In 1963-64, he was invited to the University of Hawaii to do research at the Hawley Collection, the largest and most complete library for Ryukyuan studies outside Okinawa or Japan. In 1968, he returned to his alma mater, Todai, for a year's research and writing.

Upon return to Okinawa, he initiated regular meetings of scholars for the study of *Omoro* in addition to looking after the Dialects Study Club. From these *juku* (private schools), affectionately called *Matsugawa juku* after the name of the area of his residence, many prominent scholars (Hokama Shuzen, Nakamoto Masachie, Naka Junichi, Takahashi Shunzo, and others) have emerged. Nakasone retired from Ryudai in 1975. His *Dictionary* was published in 1983.

Professor Nakasone was above all an educator with his primary interest in educating, encouraging, and developing his students' unique potentials. In research, his approach

was thoroughly empirical, characterized by unending searches for data and by extreme care and open-mindedness about interpretations or generalizations. His students, in light of their accomplishments, have clearly inherited and internalized these scholarly values.

Deep down in his inner world, storms of anguish about the human cost of the Battle of Okinawa never subsided. Again and again, he returned to the memories of the *Himeyuri* students. When the *Himeyuri* monument was dedicated in 1946, he offered to the souls of the *Himeyuri* students an unforgettable prayer: *Iwamakura/katakumoran/ yasurakani/ nemuretozo inoru/ manabino tomowa* (crudely, if we may: The pillows of rocks/ we know are very hard/ Dear friends/ pray, rest in peace, if possible at all). (いはまくら かたくもあらむ やすらかにねむれとぞいのる まなびのともは) Later it was engraved in stone and placed near the monument.

In 1951 Nakasone edited and published essays by the survivors of the *Himeyuri* corps about themselves, their departed friends, and Battle of Okinawa. The book has been re-issued several times since then.

Elsewhere (in the preface to Ota Masa-

hide's *The Battle of Okinawa*), Nakasone wrote: "The battle claimed the lives of more than 200,000 persons, military and civilian. They all died in extreme pain, beyond our imagination. They cried out in anguish, never wishing to bury underground with them the precious lesson they had learned with blood, sweat, and tears during the battle. They exist no longer, but they still talk to us, and will forever."

Although he is now gone, we are sure that Professor Nakasone will always be with us and talking to us about what should not be buried and forgotten — the Battle of Okinawa.

Announcement

Koji Taira is on leave effective August 1995. Beginning with No. 30, *The Ryukyuanist* is edited by Karen Lupardus of the Okinawa International University. Shinichi Kyan of the Okinawa Labor and Economic Research Institute continues as its publisher. All correspondence regarding manuscripts, subscriptions, advertising or business should be addressed to Shinichi Kyan, Executive Director, Okinawa Labor and Economic Research Institute, 1-1 Higashimachi, Naha, Okinawa, Japan 900
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