

# The Ryukyuanist

A Newsletter on Ryukyuan/Okinawan Studies

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## In this issue:

Mr. Robert M. Rock takes stock of positive and negative surprises that he experienced during his recent trip to Okinawa (pp. 2-7). He relates his negative impressions to what he perceives as cumulative effects of the Okinawan-style economic development in the past decades. He then makes a number of policy proposals for Okinawa's sustainable economic growth from the perspective of a lifelong environmental engineer.

New co-editor assumes the position and provides a glimpse of things to come (p. 1).

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## Stranger than Paradise

Three years ago I wrote a conference report entitled, "The 2000 G8 Summit Meeting-A Focus on Okinawa: Bases, Economic Development and U.S.-Japan Relations." Under the auspices of The Reischauer Center, where I am the acting director, the purpose of the conference was to provide a snapshot of those specific issues on Okinawa prior to the gathering of world leaders from seven of the most industrialized nations and Russia, in Nago, Japan. Officials from the U.S. Department of Defense, the business community and research institutes in Washington, D.C., and a delegation of scholars, officials and business leaders from Okinawa were invited to openly discuss the future prospects of Okinawa.

From this conference and since then, I've learned not only the complexities involved in the political, economic and the base issues of this southernmost island prefecture but also with identifying my ancestral connection to Okinawa. In the interim, I've been active in the local Okinawa association and was chosen to be the *minkan taishi* (cultural ambassador) by the Okinawa prefectural government. The problem is I've never been to Okinawa.

In a 1984 film, *Stranger Than Paradise*, an amusing conversation between two characters illustrates my dilemma: a young woman tells her new friend that she's going to Cleveland. The friend gushes about what a great place it is but then is asked if he's ever been there. He smiles and answers "no."

Though I went to Japan many times as a youth, studied there as a graduate student and worked as a "salaryman" in Tokyo, what I've always believed in was that Okinawa was a sovereign nation: not out of ignorance but more importantly for defining myself. My name for example, formerly Shimabukuro, gives me solidarity and connection to Okinawa, whose recorded history as the Ryukyu Kingdom goes back over 600 years.

In the conference report, I duly noted America's first encounter with Okinawa was almost 150 years ago with Commodore Perry and his officers visiting the Prince Regent at Shui, capital of Loo Chew (The Ryukyu Islands), on June 6, 1853, *one month prior* to his famous "black ships" landing on the mainland of Japan. I further pointed out that from that historic first contact, to the Battle of Okinawa in the summer of 1945, through the post-war presence of U.S. bases on the islands—Okinawa's destiny has been closely intertwined with developments in the U.S.-Japan relationship.

Now, though, I wonder if it should be.

In the report, I wrote, "The Reischauer Center approached the conference with the operating premise that the ultimate resolution of the base issues must be determined by the U.S. and Japanese Government with full input from Okinawa—but interested scholars, journalists and business leaders from Okinawa and the United States could contribute to that process." Obviously, the narrow confines of academia were evident then.

As an editor of *The Ryukyuanist*, I can include artists, peace activists, environmentalists, linguists and archeologists in my search to define what it is to be of Okinawan descent and what the people of Okinawa are going through, vis-à-vis military bases, so-called "economic development" (see next story) and U.S.-Japan relations. My role is to carry the mantle and further advance the study of a unique culture and place, and also the essence of Okinawa. When Professors Tetsu Yamaguchi and Koji Taira started this newsletter in 1987, they provided a means to travel to Okinawa, even for those who have never been there.

Frank J. Shima, Editor

## OKINAWA 2003

This is a report of a recent visit to Okinawa in November 2002 - that is almost sixty years after my first encounter as a member of the invasion forces in 1945. To sum up my trip in one sentence, it was a never-to-be-forgotten experience, an experience of surprise, of renewal, nostalgia, disappointment and reward. I offer this as an account of what I saw during those weeks as being the present Okinawa as well as what I can now visualize in its future.

### SURPRISES

I was surprised in many ways, some positive, some negative. Let me get the negatives out of the way first.

I was deeply saddened at the extent of disappearance of the hundreds of old villages, their farms, country roads and ancient walking paths now under crowded concrete highways and city streets, on both sides of which are hundreds of miles of multi-storied mildew-stained gray concrete buildings which smite one's sensitivities together with their endless glistening stainless steel water tanks poised on every roof. Nothing aesthetic here, simply a crash program contractor-built "reconstruction," perhaps necessary for its burgeoning population. Add to this the noise and fumes of bumper-to-bumper traffic, stoplights and neon ad signs - no way was this the old Okinawa, having seen the island before all this.

It reminded me of the 80,000-resident capital city of Naha before the war. It also must have been built this way, down through the centuries by happenstance, by individuals doing their own thing with no regard for an overall plan. I am told this was also the case after the war when the U.S. came in and developed the island with no overall plan to follow, and even later when the Japanese came in with their massive building programs in the 1970s - again with little overall planning. All these events appear to have culminated in what I saw on this trip.

In all fairness, I must recognize those occasional home dwellings and public buildings which are beautifully designed, and landscaped. They are lovely, a joy to behold. But they are interspersed between all the repetitive buildings, their beauty often dwarfed by the overwhelming monotony of the contractor concept of urban development.

I was surprised at the number of abandoned automobiles along the roads and in grassy areas. They must number in the thousands. While we were there the newspapers told of plans to collect and recycle them, a much needed project, given not only the ugliness and constant reminder of public neglect, but the slow, creeping contamination of the soils by petroleum

products, battery acids, and corroded metals. I was told one reason for this practice is the high cost of owning a car, in that it is necessary to pay at least \$500 a year for official inspections, and more for resulting repairs. So when the cost of compliance is higher than the cost of a new car it is an easy decision to simply park it on the side of the road and calmly walk away.

I was pleasantly surprised at the cleanliness of the neighborhoods. I was told home dwellers (**not the government**) clean the streets in their own areas, perhaps one of the waning fine customs of old Okinawa.

Another item on environmental cleanliness that caught my attention is the practice of recycling inside households. All wastes are sorted before they are picked up by commercial collectors, and if not sorted, they stay in front of the house until sorted or are brought back from the dump and re-deposited at the front door. In other words, they mean business. These collector vehicles are provided with the same gay musical chimes used by our ice-cream trucks, making the event one of pleasantness rather than the irritating banging grinding noise we usually experience. I also was intrigued by the story of the neighbors across the street whose garbage is often not picked up. The trash man said, "We don't like them". (Even garbage has a personal touch to it).

Also surprising was the discovery that no one in an Okinawan city can ever possibly die of thirst. Soft-drink vending machines have been placed in almost every block. They are as ubiquitous as the trees. Someone is doing a magnificent job of managing this particular program. They are clean, they have hot and cold drinks, fine coffees, chocolate, orange, grape, hot and cold teas. As long as one has 110 yen (\$1) in their pocket, relief is only one block away. Also, they are illuminated. They stand out like thousands of friendly little lighthouses in the dark of night - or a cloudy day. They are sentinels of warmth and care and refuge, constantly at your beck and call. Quite a concept, but I hope they do not clone themselves. There are enough now.

I was surprised at the proliferation of flowers

and natural color. Everywhere, beautiful flowers spring up not only where planted but wherever there is undisturbed soil. Along sidewalks, empty lots, open fields, front yards, the forces of nature cannot be suppressed in this fertile land. While this may not surprise many, to me my memory of the barren war-flattened countryside is far different than what I saw on this trip.

I was most pleasantly surprised by the unending warmth and courtesy of the people. Everywhere at grocery counters, merchant store, buses, offices, on the street people seemed to already be in a peaceful mood, my interruption not being cause for momentary politeness, rather an inclusion in an already pleasant life. Take the bus driver, who upon being confronted by an elderly Okinawan gentleman with inadequate change, simply collected it from the other passengers and sent the man on his way well taken care of. How can this be? How can so many people in a culture be consistently pleasant and polite and friendly and helpful? The answer lies in the hundreds of years of tradition of the island, one that bettered the precepts of Chinese Confucianism by rendering it perhaps even more faithful than the original. Confucius would be pleased with Okinawa.

Here I must mention the kindness of the family with whom I lived for three weeks. The matriarch is Chiyo Kinjo, mother of Toki Steele, Bill Steele's wife, the two people from North San Juan, CA who guided me through this adventure. I found Chiyo a remarkable Okinawan woman who interprets her role of matriarch as one of serving all others in the family, unlike the often-dominating role in many other countries. She carried a perpetual smile on her face. She reveled at being able to feed, to nourish, to care for. And she is good at it. She is one who walked between Nago and Kadena (25 miles) to bring food to her family after the war. She now manages a full household, tends seven gardens, keeps up with the daily news, and still takes the time to travel around the island each weekend to see the sights. She and I shared the same war on Okinawa in our twenties, one as conqueror, the other as conquered. We are now both in our eighties. We have much in common. I love her.

On the subject of family traditions, I found it exceedingly interesting that the ancient practice of families living together is still in effect. I was not surprised to learn that the many small towns scattered throughout the island were originally established by their first families, whose last names were then given to all succeeding generations in those expanding gatherings of

homes. But I was surprised to find that even in the present large non-stop cities, these same families still gather in the same neighborhoods. Here were the Kinjos, all the Kinjos, gathered together in separate homes within a short walking distance of each other, a unique small neighborhood, within all the other neighborhoods, with constant Kinjo family visiting and socializing as in the old days. What a nice custom!

I was surprised at the availability and affordability of material goods. Almost everyone I met had a cell phone, homes had more than one TV, and often many more than one automobile. Prices were about the same as in the States, except that locally manufactured goods were generally less expensive, and imported, more expensive. While coffee in a restaurant was way over a dollar a cup, I could buy a fine handmade Okinawan hat for 100 yen (one dollar). Thousands of Mom & Pop businesses are located everywhere, and large super stores are beginning to go up, like Costco, Walmart, Home Depot though usually under different names.

I was surprised at the lack of English on signs and directions. For a land that welcomes tourists, this seemed unexplainable. It does not encourage one to travel throughout the island. I was even more surprised to learn streets had no names, nor were there addresses on the houses. Instead, a place is found by giving directions from Gate 2, or from a McDonald's, or a prominent building. Speaking of McDonald's, here is the oasis for Americans. If tired, lost, depressed, yearning for something familiar, go to a McDonald's. Here are English-speaking people, hamburgers, French fries, Coke, telephones, restrooms, and companions. I found more military people here than at any other Okinawan establishment, which brings me to a sore point.

### **U.S. military**

The separation between Okinawans and U.S. military was a shock! I observed almost no communication between them, compared to what it could be. Here is one of the most beautiful islands in the world (that is, at least half of it); here are magnificent beaches, beautiful views, extremely friendly people, wonderful monuments, grand museums, perhaps the finest aquarium in the world, reconstructed Okinawan villages over 700 years old, fantastic foods and restaurants; yet I saw only two instances of American military present at these places in my three weeks visit.

Even the TV isolates the two cultures, in that there were no English subtitles to the many wonderful colorful Okinawan TV programs, nor was there one word of English spoken. And the only available English-speaking TV station (Armed Forces Radio & TV) never made any reference whatever to anything Okinawan, just U.S. military. There may well be some effort to introduce these two worlds to each other, but I didn't see it. The result is an uncomfortable relationship between these peoples, which is sad because they both live in this small space together. Unfamiliarity can certainly breed contempt.

Masahide Ota is the former governor of Okinawa and is now a "Councilor" - what we would call a Senator - in the Japanese Diet (Parliament) in Tokyo. He wrote a highly informative book, *Essays on Okinawa Problems* (Yui Shuppan Publishing Co., 2000). He points out that about one fifth of Okinawa's land mass is now taken over by the military, often taken by force from Okinawan land owners such as farmers. Moreover, the entire expense of the U.S. occupation is presently being footed by Japan, which has chosen to locate 75% of this protective shield, not on its mainland, but on this tiny island of Okinawa. The effect of this massive military presence, plus the effect of unlimited Japanese-financed construction has turned the island upside down.

I learned of the loss of wetlands critical to the life of coral and sea-life, as filling-in progresses around the shallow waters off coast. I learned of losses of Okinawa's coral itself, which contained an unprecedented richness in its diversity, 350 species compared to a known 500 in the world. I learned of contamination of its soils by chemical weapons storage, perhaps nuclear wastes, munitions of all kinds, not to mention frequent accidents from constant flights, such as heavy items accidentally dropping from the sky during maneuvers, sometimes entire aircraft.

I am a former military man, one who, as I've said was part of the original invasion in 1945. I respect the military and am proud of my part in it. Further, I respect the many military men and women who are now on Okinawa. But the size of this presence is so overwhelming that it is unbearable. True, the economy may have benefited from this influx of money, but that is not as much the case now as previously. Fewer Okinawans are employed by the military now than before, and the land-use potential of these bases is now far less than if placed back into civilian production. Okinawa is now the poorest

prefecture of Japan, with its younger generation at an unemployment rate of over 14%.

While I also respect those Okinawan civilians presently employed by the U.S. military, I can't help but wonder if they would not be better off if free to develop their own skills and their own creativity in a competitive society. Okinawa has not been self-supporting for several hundred years, having been dominated first by China, then Japan, and now the U.S. and Japan. Its most abundant times were as traders of goods made by others before 1600. While magnificent handicrafts have evolved on the island, there is not yet a sound manufacturing base for economic autonomy. Therefore if the military is to be removed, it would best be done gradually, allowing time for the island to develop its own economy. What happens from this point on is anybody's guess, what with the escalation of wars in the world, and the need for business-minded Japan to take advantage of every opportunity to mend its own economy.

Japan has traditionally, for hundreds of years, regarded Okinawa as an inferior culture, undeserving of equal rights. For example, Japan used the island to bear the brunt of WW II, rather than use the Japanese mainland. Almost one third of Okinawa's population of 420,000 people died as a result. Japan has done some most useful things for Okinawa since taking over in the 1970s, but restoring the economy, the culture and traditions of the island does not appear to be one of the foremost. Again, please read Ota's book.

Perhaps it is appropriate to mention briefly why Okinawa has consistently been victimized for so long in history. Briefly, it is because it is small and is populated by an extremely peaceful people. Since the 1500s they have prohibited weapons of all kinds, developing instead, self-defense methods like Karate. They keep alive the traditions of politeness, kindness and equal rights within the family and community. Theirs might be called an egalitarian society, which expends its energies on labor, arts, music, history, family, rather than conquest.

In *The Chalice & The Blade* by Riane Eisler, the term "partnership" is used to depict this kind of society as one which abhors hierarchy, forced domination, and use of weapons and war. The Minoan island of Crete is used as an example of a beautiful ancient peace-loving nation which, in 2000 B.C.E. was the most highly developed society in the known world, including advanced pottery, metallurgy, fabric weaving, engraving, architecture, and an extensive trade industry,

only to be destroyed by warring northern tribes that swarmed down over the Mediterranean.

The similarity with Okinawa strikes me as significant, since it is so easy to overcome such a culture with the aggression of larger nations. I liken the loss of such cultures to the elimination of the Jewish race in Europe in WW II. While widening its power and material resources, Germany lost its soul in the process, its art, its music, its spiritual life when it destroyed its Jews. The world will lose something valuable if Okinawa is converted into another U.S. or another Japan or another China. These huge countries might do good, but the U.S. is the U.S., Japan is Japan, China is China, and Okinawa is Okinawa. Like salt, too much of a good thing can be no longer good.

### **Old Okinawan homes**

Now I want to talk about something unrelated, but important to me, namely old Okinawan homes. When I was there in 1945-46, I marveled at the beauty of Okinawa's fertile valleys covered with hundreds of small tilled fields and either grass- or red tile-roofed houses. I admit to selfishness in wanting to see this again; it was so pleasing to the eye. But alas, it is all gone. There are no such sights available today. As mentioned, the fields have been paved over for roads and streets and a million new gray concrete buildings. The former vegetable plots are now squeezed in between these streets and roads and those buildings, in tiny terraced patches, wherever space can be found.

In World War II, Okinawa was used by Japan to feed the Japanese Army. The Okinawans have been and are excellent farmers, and they still carry on their tradition in these tiny irregular spaces many of which are lined up in narrow plots between the highways and the walls that surround Kadena airfield. Their produce is superior to anything brought into the country, some think, because it contains the richness of nutrients stemming from the unique soils of Okinawa. Books are now being written about the unusual health and longevity of Okinawans as resulting from their exercise, foods and diet. (See *The Okinawa Program* by M.D.s Wilcox & Suzuki. It is a truly revealing book about how to live a better life.)

But these old villages can still be seen where they have been re-assembled from all over the island into large village museums. One is located alongside the new aquarium in Motobu. It is 100% authentic in every detail. The only added modern devices are little buttons to push at each

structure, describing it in English, Japanese and Chinese, together with state-of-the-art fire protection systems since they are many hundreds of years old, and of aged woods and often thatched roofs. The authentic kitchens with dirt floors are especially interesting. This museum covers an extensive area of perhaps ten acres. It is uninhabited.

The other such historical village is definitely inhabited and is part of the amazing complex at Ryukyu Mura, near Yamada. Here they have assembled not only traditional old Okinawan villages, but they are occupied by craftsmen and craftswomen who are making and selling the unique and wonderful Okinawan fabrics, *saké*, ceramics, enamel ware, all the traditional crafts, together with ancient dances, costumes, music, even an entire museum mysteriously dedicated to the respected, and deadly venomous *habu* snake. An entire day can be spent in this wonderful complex.

Speaking of Okinawan creativity, I must mention the EM enterprise. "EM" stands for Effective Microorganisms. It is based on the discovery by Professor Teruo Higa of the University of the Ryukyus of the uncommon ability of Okinawan compost to neutralize an extremely wide array of contaminants, and to enhance the nutritional value of foods grown therein. It seems the bacterial and viral population of Okinawan soils houses a diversity of microorganisms that is unique in the world. Success has been so dramatic in plant growth, water purification, and in some medical treatments that the products of this industry are being demanded throughout the world. While we were there, the first International EM Symposium was held, with representatives from well over fifty nations attending. The only U.S. contact I have found to date is in Tucson, Arizona, <info@emrousa.com>. But also, try Yuri Ono on Okinawa at <ono@emro.co.jp>.

I was truly surprised at the extent and quality of the new Motobu aquarium, dedicated while we were there. Out on the peninsula, it is a marvel of not only invention, but of the finest environmental maintenance. The salt water systems that support the variety of coral, fish, shellfish and predators must be monumental. Perhaps I can convey a small bit of the impression by describing the main viewing chamber, which must be 150 feet on each of all four sides, forty feet deep with the viewing glass fifteen inches thick, housing the largest of shark, rays and ocean fish, all while visitors sip their coffee at tables at the base of these massive

transparent walls. When I say large, I mean a forty-foot long shark. Scuba divers swam around constantly cleaning the interior of the glass and tending the complex system. Amazing too was the fact that none of the larger fish were observed to eat the smaller ones, which undulated back and forth in huge flowing swarms. What a contradiction Okinawa is, the finest of some things and the worst of others!

### **The purpose of our trip**

A word about the purpose of our trip. Personally, I simply wanted to satisfy a longtime desire to return to what I in my impressionable twenties regarded as an especially beautiful island. I also wanted to stand on some of the same hallowed ground on which unforgettable events had occurred in my life during my first sojourn. Most of the beauty, and all of my hallowed places in the central and southern parts of the island are now indistinguishable under many inches of concrete and asphalt, and only the northern half of the island retains much of its original beauty. But in addition to my own wishes I also wanted to support my host Bill Steele's desires. Bill was a Marine in WW II. After the war Bill spent a good many years as a volunteer civilian on the island, developing Okinawan small industry, and is now distressed to the point of impacting politics to help reverse the present trends of deterioration.

Therefore a good part of our three weeks was spent visiting the heavily populated parts of the island carrying the ancient Okinawa flag of King Sho as a symbol of restoration of Okinawan culture and independence. Two newspaper interviews were held and published, along with meetings with influential leaders such as Masahide Ota. Our theme of beginning the removal of the massive military on the island was met with support from almost everyone, except the military. It still seems extremely unbalanced for the armed forces to have confiscated so much of one small island when a defensive presence in that part of the world can be maintained by using other nearby land areas.

Bill and I appeared at every major part of the island. We included such sites as the underground Naval Headquarters of the Japanese forces on the south end of the island where its leaders committed suicide after realizing victory was impossible. Others were the moving memorials to the hundreds of Okinawan high school girls and boys who were illegally conscripted into serving the Japanese Army, most of whom died in their valiant effort.

Another was the sobering Okinawa Peace Memorial where re-enactment of the island's battle is presented in still and moving pictures of military and civilian casualties. Here is where granite walls (similar to the Vietnam Memorial) display the name of everyone who was killed in the Battle of Okinawa; civilians, military, and foreigners, all. It left me with no desire whatever to again see another war. Perhaps that is the purpose of the peace museum.

We went to the extreme south end of the island as well as the north end, a journey as rewarding to us as to anyone we met. We spoke to old people from both sides of the war, and young ones who were not born then. We "spoke" in gestures, scrawled pictures and at times with interpreters, and all with complete understanding.

### **For sustainable development**

And now, since I have cited so many instances in this report of my disappointments in the way the island is being developed, it behooves me to be more positive, and to take some responsibility by offering some constructive suggestions. In making such suggestions I wish to recognize the many wonderful things that have already been done, such as the authentic old Okinawan villages, the Peace Memorial, the restoration of the castles, especially the Shurijō, the establishment of so many schools and universities, and so on. But this is not enough. As a visitor to the island, here is what I saw as affecting its long-term future.

It is clear to me after this visit that it is entirely possible that this historic island and its Okinawan way of life can be totally destroyed. This can easily be done by: continuing to pave its entire land space and by filling all the shallow waters to accommodate even more expansion - thus destroying all wetlands and their contribution to marine life; by continuing to crowd the island with automobiles and highways partly in order to accommodate a Miami Beach style of tourist living on its beaches and in its picturesque mountain areas; and by maintaining or further expanding its extensive existing military establishments for a beefed-up armed presence in Asia.

Given the wealth of the U.S. and Japan, and the irresistible temptation to make maximum use of this tempting land space for these purposes, it would be easy to continue such development until the final depletion of available resources automatically stopped the process. That would be the end. This scenario is already

approximately half completed. While others might, I do not wish to see this happen. It has already occurred in too many parts of the world. Therefore while there is still time, I make the following specific suggestions:

1. Okinawa is not especially unique in being one of those parts of the globe where the attraction of the area far exceeds its ability to absorb the influx of the outside world. In Yosemite Park, for example, the integrity of the area is being gratefully sustained by limiting the number of campers and cars in the Park. As discouraging as this may be to those who wish unbridled access, it is a far better alternative than allowing the area to be destroyed by over-use. Perhaps it is time to consider this in the case of Okinawa. It is obvious that the beauty of the central and southern half of the island is already being destroyed by excessive land-use practices devoted to highways, auto traffic, wall-to-wall buildings and the military. While I do not know if such already exists, I suggest creating a land-use agency aimed at maintaining some sustainable level of aesthetics as regards commercial and military development of the island, including a parks administration which has the authority to create and maintain green areas within and in between separate towns, cities and villages.

2. A transportation system that limits the number of automobiles on the island, encourages use of bicycles, and provides incentives for bus or rail transport.

3. An agency that has the power to control the filling-in of the shallow waters around the island. In California, it is known that approximately 65% of San Francisco Bay is shallow enough to very easily be filled in, providing much extra land for expansion of housing and industry. But the deleterious effects of wiping out the shallow water and shore-bird populations, and the resulting effects on the entire environment, its fisheries, sports use, and aesthetics, was early cause to create a "Bay Conservation and Development Commission" (BCDC), which has the authority to control and manage this practice. I believe it is appropriate to establish this kind of commission on Okinawa as well. I say this not knowing if it already exists.

4. An Architectural Board that again has not only the expertise but also the power to manage the design and construction of buildings. Since it appears that concrete construction survives the typhoons well, the least that can be done with these gray slabs is to conform to some semblance of the established appearance of historical

Okinawa. In Germany, ancient villages still require that new homes conform to the traditional old architecture, thus rendering these areas uniformly pleasing and attractive to its dwellers as well as to their money-paying tourists. I would also suggest laws that require not only the proper maintenance of structures after they are built, but also the funds to remove them and restore their areas when no longer beneficial. This to minimize the proliferation of abandoned housing and industry.

5. If the military presence is diminished, and the exploitation of that available land for short-term gain is curbed, this land could be a source for a much stronger self-supporting Okinawan economy, revived agricultural development and a strong tourist trade. Therefore, I see a need for an agency that has power to affect the protection and development of Okinawan culture, its products and services such that it can render the island a valuable resource toward offering the world its material and spiritual riches.

6. Above all, I believe there must be a strong and sustained revival of national pride. There is good reason to be proud of being an Okinawan. It is truly a unique place in the world; unique in its culture, unique in its climate, in the vitality of its people, and in the remarkable health of its marine life, in its soils and their unusually rich nutrients that, as EM's Professor Higa claims, can be of benefit around the world. There is already much being done to sustain Okinawan culture such as the arts and crafts, music, fabrics, dance, pottery, but I do not know how much this is self-supported or encouraged by the government. If tourism is to be a major source of income to the island, then I would think the ruling powers would be deeply interested in supporting this. I also would like to see a stronger program in preserving Okinawa's ancient past such as the remaining neglected shrines and places of worship throughout the island. They are beautiful and venerable in their antiquity, a testimony to the ages of the culture. Restoration of these shrines can serve as enhancement to the history of its own people as well as for the edification of visitors from other lands.

In closing I would like to offer one more highly speculative thought. If it is true that Okinawa's soils are unique in the world, and if it is true that those soils were derived over the centuries from the coral of the island, then the very life of the island may depend on maintaining not only the culture of its inhabitants

but the health of this coral and the health of those soils.

Such are my impressions, after my absence of almost sixty years.

Robert M. Rock

#### **The Author**

Born in St. Louis, Missouri and graduated from its Washington University with an advanced degree in environmental engineering, Robert M. Rock worked with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for fifteen years. He retired

after another twenty years working with private consultants and environmental laboratories. On top of professional and scientific publications, he is the author of an acclaimed collection of autobiographical essays, *From There to Here* (San Jose, New York, Lincoln, Shanghai: Writer's Showcase, 2001), which contains several chapters on his life with the U.S. army on Okinawa in World War II. The author welcomes, and gladly vows to answer, any inquiry regarding his Okinawa experience. He lives in Redding, California, <rmr@softcom.net>

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**Publications (XLIII):** We gratefully acknowledge the following gifts of publications.

*Eureka*. 2002. Subtitled a journal of poetry and critique. Japanese text. Vol. 34, No.10 (August), 214 pp. This special issue on *shimauta* ("island song") contains articles, commentaries, interviews, dialogues, and miscellaneous information on folk music and songs of Amami and Okinawa. Amami *shimauta* has recently risen to national and international prominence thanks to such talents as TSUKIJI Shunzo, NAKANO Ritsuki (RIKKI), and HAJIME Chitose. Especially, Ms Hajime's meteoric rise to a celebrity status draws a number of admiring comments.

Notre Dame Seishin University Research Institute for Culture and Cultural History. 2002. *Annual Report of the Research Institute for Culture and Cultural History*, Vol. 15, 220 pp. Professor YOKOYAMA Manabu begins a new series on Frank Hawley: "Frank Hawley as a Correspondent of the London Times (1)." Another Ryukyu-related contribution is "On the Concept of the Soul and the Custom to Enclose the Delivery Room Ritually after Childbirth in Amami and Okinawa Islands (1)." All texts are in Japanese.

University of the Ryukyus Faculty of Law and Letters. 2001, 2002. *Ryukyu University Economic Review* Nos. 61-64. Published biannually (March and September). Japanese text, predominantly devoted to general academic topics. Excellent empirical economic research on Okinawa's long-term economic statistics is pursued by Professor TOMINAGA Hitoshi (Okinawa's Simon Kuznets): see his "An Income Estimation of Prewar Okinawa" (No. 63, March 2002) and "Multiplier Analysis of Okinawan Economy" (No. 61, March 2001).

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