

The Ryukyuanist

A newsletter on Ryukyu/Okinawa Studies

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This issue features a remarkable report by Ms. Etsuko Ogido Higa on the discovery and restoration of Ryukyu Kingdom's cultural treasure, the court music called *Uzagaku* (royal chamber music). Other entries are: communication from Professor Yungmei Tsai; a memorial essay on Albert Miyasato by Ms. Karleen Chinen, and a consolidated table of contents for *The Ryukyuanist*, Nos. 61-70. The desk introduces an important United Nations report on contemporary forms of discrimination in Japan.

Against "all forms of discrimination"

A cliché has it: Okinawa is in Japan, but not of it. Legally, Okinawans are Japanese nationals, but ethnically, or for other reasons too complex to specify, not quite Japanese (Nihonjin). After annexation by Japan in 1879, Okinawa's distinctive history, culture, and language became reasons for the Japanese government's ethnocidal assimilation policy toward Okinawa. Everything Okinawan was declared inferior and subjected to attempts for a complete makeover. Okinawans were labeled second-class subjects of the Empire of Japan. (There were third-, fourth-...nth-class subjects in the Empire, and so Okinawans' second-class status was supposed to be a big favor.) Okinawa's historical legacies viewed so darkly and contemptuously in imperial Japan allowed the Battle of Okinawa, the separation of Okinawa from postwar Japan, the 27-year-long occupation by the United States military, and today's disproportionate concentration in Okinawa of the U.S. military bases that Japan is obligated by treaties to build and maintain. Given this long history of Japanese punishment of Okinawa's differences from the rest of Japan, can anyone seriously believe that post-reversion Okinawa even under the postwar pacifist Constitution is a genuinely autonomous region and people equal in dignity, rights and opportunities to the rest of Japan and Japanese?

The most urgent problem therefore concerns the removal from Okinawa of the state-imposed disadvantages such as the disproportionate concentration of military bases. At the time of reversion, Okinawa demanded "equality" in sharing the burden of national defense (the well-known principle of *hondonami*). This demand, a non-startling entitlement of people in a state that professes to be a democracy, nevertheless fell into a black hole of *mokusatsu* (that Kenkyusha translates: "treatment with silent contempt") of the government of Japan (GOJ). Having killed *hondonami* in this manner, GOJ has since made the maintenance of Okinawa's unequal and unfair share of Japan's defense burden a cornerstone of all cultural, economic, political, social and other policies toward Okinawa, extinguishing Okinawa's spirit of self-reliance, maximizing Okinawa's dependence on GOJ handouts, and permanently disabling what would have been a vibrant, self-regulating cosmopolitan economy. All this amounts to a massive, systemic and structural discrimination against Okinawa and degrades Okinawa to the status of a colony under direct GOJ control. This situation is commonly perceived as Okinawa having become a *Tenryô* (demesne of Heaven, an immodest honorific referring to the Tokugawa shogunate's directly ruled domains – an apt metaphor for contemporary Okinawa ruled by a bundle of special measures laws enacted at the pleasure of GOJ).

Given this reading of Okinawa's basic predicaments, urgently needed are the principles and laws robust enough to force GOJ to cease and desist unfair discriminatory practices against specific groups or regions. A good opportunity for pressing GOJ in this direction has recently arisen at the United Nations. Okinawans and other discriminated groups in Japan should not miss this opportunity. The godsend is an item on the provisional agenda of the sixty-second session of the Commission on Human Rights based on the **Report of the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Doudou Diène, on His Mission to Japan (3-11 July 2005)** (E/CN.4/2006/16/Add.2: 24 January 2006).

In Diène's classification of "discriminated groups," the people of Okinawa constitute one of three "national minorities" of Japan along with the Buraku people and the Ainu. There are also foreign minorities such as Koreans and migrant workers. The history and contemporary conditions of discrimination differ among the groups. In the case of Okinawa, Diène rightly uses the disproportionate concentration in Okinawa of the U.S. military bases hosted by Japan as an indicator of discrimination against Okinawa. (=>p. 7)

The Project to Restore *Uzagaku*, the Court Music of the Ryukyu Kingdom

Etsuko Ogido Higa

Okinawa is presently one of the 47 prefectures of Japan. But unlike the other prefectures, it was an independent country called the Ryukyu Kingdom until 1879. It had developed particular styles of court music and performing arts, presently recognized as Classical Music and Classical Dance of Ryukyu (Okinawa). Aside from these two art forms, there were special types of music used for the king's ceremonial occasions, called *Uzagaku* and *Rujigaku*, both of which were related to Chinese music.

According to the *Chûzan Seikan* (Authentic History of Chûzan), which was compiled by the Ryukyu royal court in 1650, the Ryukyu king received investiture from the Ming Emperor for the first time in 1372 and tied Ryukyu to China by a formal tributary relationship. From that time on, the Ryukyu court learned and practiced the ceremonial music of the Chinese court. The exact nature of this earlier music is not known today, but if it was similar to the *Uzagaku* and *Rujigaku* which were existent in 1879, then we know that there were performances using imported Chinese instruments such as *pipa* (a plucked, four-stringed lute), *erxian* (a two-stringed fiddle), *yangqin* (a psaltery), *sanxian* (a plucked three-stringed lute), *shaona* (an oboe-like flute), *di* (a flute), *tongluo* (gongs), and *daigu* (drums). *Uzagaku* was a chamber ensemble that was usually performed inside the palace while *Rujigaku* was played outside as processional music. Fortunately, *Rujigaku* (together with other court traditions) has been handed down to some descendents of the earlier performing groups, but *Uzagaku* has completely vanished without a trace after the abolition of the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1879.

Recently in 1992 the reconstruction of the Shuri Castle was completed, to the great joy of everyone in Okinawa. Formerly home of the Ryukyu kings, the castle symbolizes the days of the independent kingdom. Since almost all the material treasures of the castle were destroyed during World War II, the restoration of the court culture is a primary means by which the Okinawan people may reestablish their identity. Much research on the Shuri Castle is still being conducted, and among the research projects is one that attempts to recreate the *Uzagaku* music. This project began with no instrument, with no written scores on hand, and with very few written materials of other forms. Since the Restoration Research Committee for *Uzagaku* was organized by the Okinawa prefectural government in 1993, six researchers have collected information and manuscripts related to the music and musical styles of *Uzagaku*.

Through laborious reviews of both Okinawan and Japanese archives related to the records of the envoys from the Ryukyu Kingdom to Edo (now Tokyo), the research committee learned that many gifts were presented to their Japanese hosts during their various trips. For example, they found that a complete set of nineteen *Uzagaku* instruments was presented to the Owari Tokugawa family in 1796. These instruments have been preserved in the private collection of that family in Nagoya. The records also helped the committee discover another set of instruments in the Mito Tokugawa family in Ibaragi Prefecture.

The set of 19 *Uzagaku* instruments of Owari includes the following:

- ? Biwa (Chinese, *pipa*): a plucked, pear-shaped four-stringed lute
- ? Gekkin (Ch., *yueqin*): a plucked, round-bodied four-stringed lute
- ? Chôsen (Ch., *changxian*): a plucked, long-necked four-stringed lute
- ? Shisen (Ch., *sixian*): a plucked, octagonal-bodied, long-necked lute
- ? Sansen (Ch., *sanxian*): a plucked, long-necked three-stringed lute
- ? Nisen (Ch., *erxian*): a bowed, two-stringed lute
- ? Shiko (Ch., *sihu*): a bowed, four-stringed lute
- ? Yôkin (Ch., *yangqin*): a struck, boxed zither
- ? Teisô (Ch., *tizheng*): a bowed, nine-stringed zither
- ? Sôna (Ch., *shaona*): a conical, double-reed aerophone
- ? Dôshô (Ch., *dongxiao*): an end-blown flute
- ? Fue I (Ch., *di*): a long transverse flute
- ? Fue II (Ch., *di*): a short transverse flute

- ? Ku (Ch., *jingu*): a small gong and drum.
- ? Dora (Ch., *tongluo*): large gongs
- ? Sankin (Ch., *sanjin*): a three-gong tree
- ? Suishin (Ch., *xinxin*): cymbals
- ? Sanhan (Ch., *sanban*): a three-piece wooden clapper
- ? Ryanhan (Ch., *liangban*): a five-piece wooden clapper

Although the investigative committee was prevented from making direct contact with the *Uzagaku* musical instruments preserved by the Owari and Mito Tokugawa families, the fact that they were able to verify the existence of the instruments was a significant step forward in the restoration project. These materials, in addition to historical research carried out by Taiwanese instrument-maker Cheng Kun-jin, provided enough information for the reconstruction of the *Uzagaku* instruments to begin.

Chen Kun-jin, who is an expert *nan kuan* flutist and a member of the Han Tang Classical Music Institute, first analyzed photographs and drawings to calculate the dimensions of the instruments, but the finished prototypes were inferior in sound and could not be used for playing a tune. He had to fall back on his experience as an instrument-maker to modify the prototypes into something playable. The research committee admitted this fact, for the first goal of the restoration project was to obtain actual working instruments instead of merely having an exact restoration of every quality as specified by materials and designs of the antique collections of the Tokugawa families.

In January 1997, the research committee visited Fujian, China, in search of musical scores. From manuscripts studied at libraries in Okinawa and Tokyo, the researchers had obtained the names of songs, performers, and instruments involved in Edo performances, but no musical scores were found.

Wang Yaohua, an ethnomusicologist, a specialist in traditional Chinese music and a professor at Fujian Normal University, worked together with the *Uzagaku* Restoration Research Committee to look for the musical scores in China. He first traced five scores with titles matching those of known *Uzagaku* titles among the local repertoires of Fujian music and Chinese operas such as *Huian bei guan* opera, Kun opera, and Beijing opera. The research committee visited a small village near Fuzhou to investigate the bowed zither, similar to the *teisô* (Ch., *tizheng*), and it was only by good fortune that they stumbled upon a performance by local musicians and heard the tune of “Chuntaikēi” (Ch., *Chundajing*: Great Spring Scenery), a song in the repertoire of *Uzagaku*. It is known that a total of more than 70 pieces of the *Uzagaku* repertoire were performed on 14 different occasions in the presence of Tokugawa Shoguns in Edo over the period of 1653 through 1842. In the Chinese song tradition, two songs that share the same lyric and rhyme usually have similar melodic lines. By this hypothesis, Professor Wang has succeeded in matching several *Uzagaku* titles and song texts with traditional pieces of Chinese music.

Among these songs, one called “Taipinko” (Ch., Taipingge: Great Peace Song) was notated in the five-staff western score by Yamauchi Seihin (1890-1986), the pioneer ethnomusicologist of Okinawa, in 1913. This score is collected as a song of Kuninda (Kume-village) in Yamauchi’s publication, *Ryûkyû Ôchô Koyô Hikyoku no Kenkyû* (A Study of the Traditional Music and the Unknown Music of the Ryukyu Court)(1964). (The publisher was Ryûkyû Minzoku Geinô Zenshû Kankôkai [Society for the Publication of Collections of Works on Ryukyu Ethnic Performing Arts].) Kume-village is a special section of Naha City, where Chinese offspring used to live and carried on Chinese tradition in many aspects of their lives. The text of Taipingge resembles that of “Fukujyusho” (Hymn of Happiness and Long Life) performed in 1796 as well as the text of “Fukujyuka” (Song of Happiness and Long Life) performed in 1832 in Edo. From such evidence, it is reasonable for us to believe that the “Taipinko” of Kume was part of the *Uzagaku* repertoires performed in Shuri and Edo.

From the discovery of songs and musical scores in the contemporary form of Chinese numbering notation, the melodies have been reconstructed on each instrument. Unlike Western music, in which melodies can vary for each instrument in an ensemble, melodies in a Chinese ensemble are heterophonically the same for each instrument. This is one of the characteristics usually observed in East Asian ensembles. Thus, once a tune has been realized, it is not so difficult to put together the music for an ensemble.

In May 1997, ethnomusicology researchers, graduates of the Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts, and both the Okinawan and Western classical musicians inaugurated the *Uzagaku* Ensô Kenkyûkai (*Uzagaku* Performance Research Association). They started by learning how to tune and play the restored *Uzagaku* instruments. First, they studied by viewing and listening to a demonstration video that had been made in Taiwan by Chen Kun-jin and his performance group Minpû Gakushyû (Ch., Minhuen Yuetsi; Folk Style Music Group) that could perform both traditional and contemporary Chinese musics. And in February of 1998, the members of Minpû Gakushû came from Taiwan and had an exchange session with the *Uzagaku* members. Thus the performance style of *Uzagaku* first followed the *nankuan* style (south wind style), but later, it has established its own by learning other styles of Chinese classics and taking into account how generations of Ryukyuan musicians had adapted the Chinese-style performances along with their daily music of Ryukyu (Okinawa).

Since the beginning of the fiscal year of 1998, the Japanese government has subsidized ¥8,000,000 toward the *Uzagaku* Restoration Project, and the Okinawa prefectural government has sent the members of the *Uzagaku* Ensô Kenkyûkai to Taiwan in August every year. There they participated in a music workshop with Minpû Gakushû again, polishing their performance techniques on the Chinese-rooted instruments. From 1999 to 2002, the Restoration Research Committee sponsored a visiting teacher from Taiwan to train the *Uzagaku* Ensô Kenkyûkai and to teach other Okinawans interested in playing Chinese music.

In December, 2000, the costumes for *gakudôji* (the young boys before their manhood initiation rites who were trained to perform in the presence of the Tokugawa shogun) were completed by Ms. Ueki Chikako and her sawing team.

Aside from the *Uzagaku* restoration project conducted by Okinawa Prefecture, the Research and Exhibits Section of the Shuri Castle Park Management Foundation started, in 2003, its own project to reconstruct the *Uzagaku* instruments to exhibit in the Shuri Castle. Since the Foundation is managed by the Japanese government, it has succeeded in obtaining a permission to touch the instruments of the Tokugawa Museum of Nagoya and to X-ray the instruments to check the internal structures. The Foundation has been trying to approximate the exact restoration of quality as specified by materials and designs of the collection of the Tokugawa family. Some of the materials have had to be obtained from mainland China and the exactly right lacquer work done by the specialist. This project is still in process and the finished replicas are not yet turned in. However, the exact replicas of the Tokugawa collection of antique instruments may not necessarily be playable. It will be another project in the future if the Shuri Castle Park Management Foundation wants to make the instruments playable.

The preliminary plan of the *Uzagaku* restoration project conducted by Okinawa Prefecture seems to have succeeded in reconstructing musical instruments, musicians' costumes, and musical performances; however, many questions still remain to be answered as the project proceeds further. Is there actually any connection at all between today's musical scores and those used in the Ryukyu royal court? What were the musical traditions during the Ming and Qing dynasties in the places visited by the Ryukyuan tributary missions, such as Fuzhou and Beijing? These questions are pursued by younger scholars in their theses and dissertations.

Furthermore, joint research should also be encouraged among people in musical circles of Okinawa, Taiwan, and China, possibly joined by similarly interested people of Korea and Vietnam in the future. They should work together on issues of common interest in the music traditions of Ming and Qing dynasties and of modern China. An international project like this will definitely contribute to the field of Asian studies.

The author, Etsuko Ogido Higa, majored in voice performance and completed the master's program in ethnomusicology at the University of Hawaii in 1976. She lectured at universities and colleges in Okinawa until 1996, when she was appointed Director of the Okinawa Convention Center. She retired from the post in March 2006. While at the Convention Center, she also presided over the *Uzagaku* Restoration Research Committee. She has published numerous papers including "Okinawan Classical Music: Analysis of Vocal Performance" (1978) and electronic recordings of performances such as *Uzagaku* on CD.

Communication:

Some thoughts provoked by the *Ryukyuanist*

It is always a heart-warming moment to receive and to read the *Ryukyuanist*. Yet, the mixed emotion of anger, dismay, frustration and hope also always appears before I finish reading an issue. The anger and dismay usually come from how Okinawans are being taken so lightly by the Tokyo central government and by the US military in Okinawa and Washington. Part of my frustration comes from having had first hand contacts with some of the Okinawans during my regular visits in the past ten years or so. Many of these educated and/or professional Okinawans appear to have resigned about the trap and the situation they are in. They understand that self-reliance and self-respect ultimately are required for the future of the Islands and yet find it extremely difficult to achieve them. The hope comes from the knowledge that there are Okinawans out there who still believe they can master their own future and their own fate. Their persistent and unflinching efforts are encouraging and our editor certainly is one of the key figures in these endeavors.

The description of Okinawa-Tokyo relations in the *Ryukyuanist* No. 69 reminds me, in many ways, of the situations the Palestinians are facing in Gaza and West Bank. Of course theirs are a lot worse than Okinawans'. Economically, they depend on Israel and the outside world. When Hamas won the election, the rest of the world cut off economic aid and Israel's banks refused to deal with regional banks in both places. To a great extent, Palestinians also depend on relatives living abroad. Okinawa depends on Tokyo for economic survival. Though not as bad as in Palestine, Okinawa's dependency is of the same kind.

The *Ryukyuanist* No. 70 provokes further thoughts. Although Okinawa protests, I wonder if peaceful protests alone would be effective even for bringing about a short term solution to the problem. People in Okinawa should also protest with their votes as well. Unfortunately, Okinawans elect politicians who by and large support and obey Tokyo. Even well-educated professionals I have met believe that military bases are part of the deal. The islands just cannot do without them economically.

I think there is a definite long term solution. With 2 million plus population in and out of the prefecture, bigger than a lot of countries and not far behind Singapore, as well as with a long history as an independent kingdom, Okinawa should certainly reclaim and regain its sovereignty. In today's globalized world, human capital and social capital are more important than raw materials. Okinawa must begin to invest in human capital accumulation more aggressively. With its already good social capital, human capital can be enhanced substantially. Once Okinawa becomes globally competitive, like Taiwan, people will regain their self-esteem and self-confidence that I believe have been taken away by the Japanese first and then by the Americans. As I see them, with their economic success Taiwanese have become more confident and self-respecting. Okinawa can achieve the same results if approached right. Until the people regain self-esteem vis-à-vis mainland Japanese, I see no hope.

Yungmei Tsai

The author, a Taiwanese-American sociologist, is professor of sociology and the founding and former Director of Asian Studies at Texas Tech University. Currently, he is the Director of Community and Urban Studies and the Director of Graduate Studies in Sociology. He is also an Advisory Council member of the Institute of American and European Studies of the Academia Sinica in Taiwan. He has co-authored and co-edited 11 books including *Human Capital in the 21st Century* and more than 50 journal articles such as "Suicide in Japan and the West," "Simulating the 'Tragedy of the Commons'," etc.

In memoriam: Albert Hajime Miyasato, 1925-2006

ALOHA 'OE, "DOC"

He answered to a number of names: "Al" . . . "Dr. Miyasato" . . . "Dr. Al" . . . "Doc Al." For me, he was always just "Doc." Because of the energy and enthusiasm with which he approached everything in life, I almost believed that he would live forever. But Albert Hajime Miyasato understood that human life was never eternal, so he lived the words of Rennyo Shōnin: ". . . [N]othing is more fragile and fleeting in this world than the life of man . . . Though in the morning we may have radiant health, in the evening we may return to white ashes . . . There is nothing more real than this truth of life . . . By so understanding the meaning of death, we shall come to fully appreciate the meaning of this life which is unrepeatable and thus to be treasured above all else . . ."

Doc's time in this life came to an end on February 24, 2006 after having fallen seriously ill just a few weeks earlier. His passing is a tremendous loss for our community, for he was the quintessential community servant — a man who with no fanfare gave of himself to causes he believed in and to many, many community organizations: Jikōen Hongwanji Mission, Pacific Buddhist Academy, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, Hawaii Kimono Cultural Foundation, Club Motobu, his Okinawan club, and the Hawaii United Okinawa Association, Japan-America Society of Hawaii, Japanese American National Museum, Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i, United Japanese Society of Hawaii, Urasenke Foundation of Hawaii; the list goes on and on. Doc somehow found the time — rather, he *made* the time — to support all of these organizations however he could. And while each group seemed to have its own agenda, I think Doc saw one big picture of a Japanese community that really was part of a larger society, nation and world.

He lived his Buddhist faith and values, believing with all his heart in the interconnectedness of humankind, that we are all our brothers' and sisters' keepers. In a 1997 interview with the Herald, he recalled the Japanese saying, "*Hito no tame, ie no tame.*" "If you do something good for somebody, it spreads out to good for the community, the society, the nation, the world. It reverberates like that," he explained, adding, "You do bad, the same kind of thing is going to happen in reverse."

When he had the opportunity in the year 2000 — the year he served as president of the Hawaii United Okinawa Association — Doc chose the Okinawan words, "*Shikê ya Chôdê* — One World, One People," as the theme that would guide the organization that year. The year also happened to mark the 100th anniversary of Okinawan immigration to Hawai'i. That year, Doc pushed hard to introduce a "Gratitude in Action" community service program. It was not enough, he maintained, to merely thank with words the larger community for all the good fortune that the Okinawan community had been blessed with over its 100 years in Hawai'i. He wanted the Uchinanchu community to express its gratitude through community service.

Few among us bridge people, organizations, communities and nations the way Doc did. He introduced the Japanese community to the Okinawan cultural heritage, and got Uchinanchu involved in Japanese community activities. He connected the generations, understanding that legacy is possible only through continuity, fresh ideas, youthful energy and by trusting in the next generation.

Next to his own personal family, I think the people closest to Doc's heart were his Hongwanji family. So much of his life revolved around Jikōen Hongwanji, where the Miyasato family has worshipped for four generations now. In fact, it was because of Doc's parents, Shohei and Fumiko Miyasato, that Jikōen had managed to remain open on a limited basis during World War II while all of the other Buddhist temples were shut down and their ministers hauled off to internment camps, including Jikōen's Rev. Jikai Yamasato.

Thus, the personal loss felt by Bishop Chikai Yosemite of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, whose father started Jikōen and who considered Doc a mentor is understandable. "He was just like an older brother to me," Yosemite told me after Doc's passing. He said that Doc's funeral service would be held at the Hawaii Betsuin under the co-sponsorship of the statewide Hongwanji and Jikōen Hongwanji. After all,

he reminded me, in 1985 Doc became the first Hawaii Kyôdan (statewide) president elected from a temple other than the Pali Highway Betsuin. Yosemite, who had served as resident minister of the Jikôen temple until his election as Bishop, was even prouder that Doc was the first Hawaii Kyôdan president of Okinawan ancestry. His relationship with Doc went back many, many years, to temple clean-ups, preparing for Jikôen fundraising bazaars, barbecue chicken sales, setting up for bon dances — those hands-on efforts in which everyone sweats together and bonds in a very special way. "I've lost a dear person," Yosemite concluded.

Jikôen's current minister, Rev. Shindo Nishiyama, met Doc for the first time in 1991 as a newly arrived minister from Japan. "He welcomed me and made me feel very welcome because I was so nervous," Nishiyama said. Doc encouraged him to study the history of the Jôdo Shinshû Buddhism in Hawai'i because it would help him understand what was valuable about the Hongwanji in Hawai'i. Nishiyama was appointed resident minister at Jikôen last November, succeeding the personable and popular Rev. Bruce Nakamura, a Sansei from Hilo, who had been assigned to the Hilo Betsuin. Nishiyama had conducted services at Jikôen from time to time, but he was nevertheless nervous about his new long-term assignment. Although their time working closely together was short compared to that of Revs. Yosemite and Nakamura, Nishiyama said Doc always made him feel comfortable, talking story with him after Sunday service, commenting on the Dharma message and sometimes sharing stories about his war years in Japan. But the two words Doc never failed to say to Rev. Nishiyama whenever he left for the day in many respects takes us back to the essence of Albert Miyasato: "*Sensei, tanomimasu*" — please take care of this temple."

Karleen C. Chinen
Honolulu, Hawai'i

(continued from p. 1)

The "Report" presents numerous recommendations in Section V. One of them calls for the Government's recognition of the existence of racial discrimination and xenophobia in Japanese society. Another recommendation urges the "adoption of a national law against racism, discrimination and xenophobia, giving effect in its domestic legal order to the provisions of its **Constitution** and of the international instruments to which Japan is a party, which include the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**, the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** and the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**." (pp. 19-20, emphasis added)

The people of Okinawa themselves are conscious of discrimination they suffer from. In Section III **Presentation of Their Situation by the Communities Concerned**, the "Report" summarizes the Okinawans' own presentation as follows (p. 14):

... The most serious discrimination they presently endure is linked to the presence of the American military bases in their island... [T]he people of Okinawa explained that they suffered daily from the consequences of the military bases: permanent noise linked to the military airport, plane and helicopter crashes, accidents due to bullets or "whiz-bangs", oil pollution, fires due to air manoeuvres, and criminal acts by American military officers. The noise due to airplanes and helicopters is higher than the level prescribed by law and causes severe health consequences, including in schools where children cannot concentrate and lessons are regularly interrupted.

These daily sufferings and their long-term adverse effects are imposed on the people of Okinawa by the GOJ policy of disproportionate concentration of the U.S. military bases in Okinawa. The difficulty of correcting the harmful discriminatory policy of GOJ toward Okinawa is due in large part to the absence of a general anti-discrimination law by which the government can be held responsible for illegal discriminatory practices against specified groups of people. There are also conceptual and political challenges to overcome on the part of the discriminated groups. One challenge is to adapt to the Japanese situation a broad enough concept of "discrimination" to cover all these groups and the diverse forms of discrimination against them. Another is whether the groups can unite for a common goal of anti-discrimination. Specifically, can the Ainu, Buraku people, Koreans-in-Japan, Okinawans, and foreigners form an effective political coalition "against all forms of discrimination"? We hope they can. (kt)

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