

## **The Perry Centennial of 1953 in Okinawa: U.S. Cultural Policy in Cold War Okinawa**

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*This paper examines the significance of the Perry Centennial festival of 1953, the 100-year anniversary of the United States' opening Okinawa of 1853. The U.S. government regarded the Centennial as an excellent opportunity to promote American democracy in Postwar Okinawa, particularly at the moment when Soviet pressure in Asia increased. In order to prevent Communist aggression and gain Okinawan people's understanding on U.S. policy in East Asia, the U.S. used the Perry Centennial to emphasize the mutual unity and security with Okinawa. The U.S. military government in Okinawa sought to present the drama of Commodore Matthew C. Perry's diplomacy and the success of his historic naval expedition to underscore the world leadership of the United States in 1953. The article examines such America's cultural diplomacy toward Okinawa, and describes how the Perry Centennial of 1953 helped shape the public opinion on U.S. policy in Cold War in Okinawa.*

**Keywords:** *Okinawa, Culture, Matthew C. Perry, Cold War*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In John Patrick's screen play of Vern Schneider's novel (1954), *Tea House of the August Moon*, Colonel Wainright Purdy III declares, "My job is to teach these natives [Okinawans] the meaning of democracy, and they're going to learn democracy if I have to shoot everyone of them." Captain Fisby's first order of business as the military governor in the village of Tobiki was to deliver an address to the Okinawan people, explaining the meaning of democracy to them. Everyone cheered after his speech. The captain was delighted until his interpreter, Sakini, explained that during 800 years of foreign occupation, the Okinawans had learned to cheer whoever was in charge, no matter what was said.

Colonel Purdy and Captain Fisby were to convert the Okinawans to the "American way of life." The American way consisted of organizing a Women's League for Democratic Action, establishing an education program, and setting up a local industry, like bicycle manufacturer. Nonetheless, eventually both Colonel Purdy and Captain Fisby ended up being converted to the Okinawan way of life. The Okinawan method of living consisted of converting American clothing into fancy kimono pajamas, holding sumo wrestling matches, accomplishing industrialization through the construction of a sweet potato distillery, and finally, building up a pentagon-shaped teahouse for geisha.

Captain Fisby was so impressed with the idea that he gradually immersed himself in Okinawan way of life. Attending official meetings in kimono and experiencing romance with geisha, he came to realize that, in the long run, one could not tell which was the conqueror and which the conquered. While the military Occupation of Japan under MacArthur was successful, the U.S. military Occupation of Okinawa was portrayed in the play as poorly planned and executed.

In its long history of military conquest, Okinawans had acquired their own wisdom on how to protect their own interest under foreign occupation. The portrait of Okinawans in

*Teahouse of the August Moon* is very interesting and persuasive. The play became a sensational hit in NY Broadway in 1953 that the U.S. military in Okinawa planned to release it in Okinawa in 1954 on the occasion of the Perry Centennial event with Okinawan and American casting. Yet, when the play was going to open after several times rehearsals, one local Okinawan who was assigned to play the role of an old man withdrew his participation with the reason that the content of the story was insulting to Okinawans. Despite U.S. military's effort to replace his role with Filipino actor, eventually they were not able to release the play against the opposition of Okinawans (Miyagi, 1992).

This incident reflects the tensions between Americans and Okinawans in 1954 when U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower declared America's infinite possession of Okinawa, and the U.S. military government imposed anti-communist purge of potential leftists in Okinawa. Then, the U.S. military deprived Okinawans of their land property for low rent. Under such circumstances, Okinawans refused to accept America's proposal to put on play together. Today after four decades of the return of the island to Japan, history of the U.S. occupation is becoming a thing of the past among Okinawans. Nonetheless, introduction of American culture has greatly impacted Okinawans' life. This paper examines the interactions between Okinawans and Americans, and the formation of their mutual images through U.S. cultural policy toward Okinawans from the late 1940s until 1953-1954, at the occasion of the Perry Centennial event.

By April 1945, Allied attack was ready to converge on the island of Okinawa, the strategic gateway to the Japanese heartland, and for the first time, Okinawans and Americans faced each other in actual combat by June. Yet, long before the U.S. military landed in Okinawa, American soldiers had been given some information about the island through orientations and brochures distributed by the army. Based on these sources, each individual American soldier shared a common image of Okinawa as an island of full of venomous snakes and communicable diseases. Meanwhile, Okinawans also had their own preconceived perceptions of Americans. They were told that if they were captured, women would be raped and men and children would be murdered. Believing these rumors, thousands of Okinawan civilians committed group suicide to avoid being captured.

Above all, Civil Affairs Handbook published by the U.S. military government greatly influenced American opinion on Okinawa. The document talks about history of Okinawa, its politics, economy, society, industry, education, and even racial tensions between Okinawans and Japanese. It states that despite similarities in language and racial origin, Japanese did not regard Okinawans as equal. Rather, they considered Okinawans somewhat like poverty-stricken cousins from countryside. Okinawans, on their part, did not feel inferior to Japanese as they were very proud of their relations with China and China's influence on its cultural tradition. The document concluded that it would be possible to use those potential conflicts between Japanese and Okinawans for America's political purpose. It also states that Okinawans were not as hostile toward Americans as the militaristic Japanese were and that this was probably due to the fact that many Okinawans were exposed to the "real America" through their experience of immigration to Hawaii. Thus, they would not believe Japanese propaganda.

By stressing Okinawan's unique ethnic identity, the U.S. military expected Okinawans to become their agent or collaborator in their mission of building democracy in Postwar Asia. When the island was placed under U.S. military control in 1945-1971, however, the U.S. military struggled to explain and justify their presence to the local people. Still, until the late 1940s, the U.S. military government did not launch any major cultural propaganda campaign

for the purpose of gaining Okinawans' support for U.S. policy and American idealism.

U.S. cultural propaganda efforts in Okinawa can be divided into three stages. First during the early 1950s, the U.S. military was confident that they could receive Okinawans' support for American democracy and its idealism in the free world. They never thought of promoting Okinawa as the keystone of the Pacific and a showcase of democracy to be contradictory. Therefore, those two messages were meshed into one and jointly advertised.

No matter how obedient Okinawans were to the victors, however, if they were deprived of their land for the U.S. military base, they would not continue to be the followers of Americanism. Toward the mid-1950s, Okinawans started protesting against U.S. policies. This was the second stage of the U.S. cultural campaign in Okinawa. Finally, the issue of land property ballooned into an island-wide conflict. When the Socialist leader Senaga Kamejiro ran for the mayor of Naha city, the U.S. military decided to strip Senaga his eligibility for elected office in 1954 based on fears that Senaga would fuel anti-colonialism and anti-military base protest among Okinawans. By 1960, the U.S. shifted their cultural propaganda campaign focus from anti-communism or protection of democracy to the emphasis on an understanding of Ryukyu culture or America's support for restoration of Ryukyuan identity. This is the third stage of the campaign (Miyagi, 1992).

Among many studies on Postwar Okinawa, *Postwar Okinawa and America*, edited by Teruya Yoshihiko and Yamazato Katsumi is one of the few researches on postwar Okinawa that take on a social and cultural historical point of view. It includes collection of essays on food, journalism, education, literature, architecture and even public opinion. The book introduces enormous data and primary sources focusing on the cultural interaction between the U.S. and Okinawa. Former journalist and native Okinawan scholar Miyagi Etsujiro further examines the power balance between American and Okinawans in terms of cultural and military invasion of the island. In his representative work, *Senryosha no Me* (Conqueror's eyes) Miyagi illustrates Okinawan's struggle and resistance to accept conqueror's system and culture. He concluded that what happened was, rather than a sweeping Americanization of Okinawa, that Okinawans selectively adopted the American system in order to adjust to the local society. Similar to Miyagi's approach, in *Fukeino Sakeme* (Breakdown of Landscape) Tanaka Yasuhiro (2012) demonstrates how cultural colonization took place through establishment of the University of Ryukyu and American controlled mass media, then how Okinawan identity was reborn in popular culture and politics during the sixty years of postwar period. This paper adds another aspect of American cultural policy toward Okinawans on the specific occasion of the Perry Centennial of 1953 to analyze Okinawans' response to U.S. military government's cultural propaganda campaign in addition to the history of America's cultural policy in postwar Okinawa.

## 2. BACKGROUND ON OKINAWA

The strategic importance of the Ryukyu Islands and Okinawa had been recognized by both Japanese and American policy-makers since at least the time of Commodore Matthew Perry's expedition. Until 1879, the Ryukyu Kingdom was an independent kingdom, called Shurei no kuni, "the country of courtesy." Long time before Japan annexed it, the Ryukyus had many contact with other Asian countries as well as Western nations. As early as the 7th century, the Chinese sent their envoys to Ryukyu king. During the 14th century, Ryukyus became one of Ming China's tributary states. Annual tribute was paid to China until 1875,

but the Chinese did not interfere in the internal affairs of the islands as long as Ryukyu kings continued their tributes. Until the 14th century, the Japanese influence upon the islands was relatively smaller compared that of the Chinese. Nonetheless, as Japanese samurai warriors sought to expand their domains by the mid-15th century, the king of the Ryukyus was forced to pay annual tribute to the Japanese as well as the Chinese. The Ryukyuans simultaneously acknowledged two masters in Asia and somehow managed to maintain a stable monarchy until the early 17th century.

In 1609, the Satsuma domain, the Japanese feudal domain, conquered all the Ryukyu Islands including Okinawa. Thereafter, the Ryukyu Islands came under the political supervision of the Shimazu house of Satsuma domain although they were allowed to retain their autonomy. At the same time, the Ryukyus continued to be a tributary state of China. Then, Commodore Matthew C. Perry arrived in Japan in 1853 and he showed great interest in the Ryukyu Islands. He considered the possible consequences of American expansion in East Asia in the 19th century. Perry's visit to Ryukyu palace caused dismay and apprehension among the Ryukyuans. Perry took great pains to figure out the political status of the islands during his expeditions to Japan in 1853-1854. He was not sure if the Ryukyu Islands belonged to China or Japan, or if it was an independent kingdom. Nonetheless, his enthusiasm failed to arouse favorable response from the higher officials in Washington. Once the U.S. successfully opened up Tokugawa Japan, their interest in Ryukyu Islands diminished (Watanabe, 1970:6).

Shortly after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the Japanese set out to incorporate the Ryukyus as an integral part of the nation. In 1874 an opportunity arose for formal Japanese annexation when large groups of Ryukyu fishermen were shipwrecked on Formosa and killed by Formosan aborigines. This incident gave Japan an opportunity to send a punitive expedition to Formosa. Acting as a protector, Japan seized the Ryukyu Islands. An agreement was signed between China and Japan. China recognized Japan's sovereignty in the Ryukyus, referring to the Ryukyu inhabitants as "subjects of Japan" in 1879. Thus the Ryukyus became the Okinawa Prefecture whose governor was appointed by the central government in Tokyo.

When the war in the Pacific ended in 1945, Okinawa was placed under the sole control of the U.S. whereas the rest of Japan was under the control of Allied powers. This meant that Okinawa was controlled directly and exclusively by the American military government while in the mainland Japan, the U.S. was responsible to the Allied machinery of Japanese Occupation such as the Far Eastern Commission. Under direct surveillance, any kind of communication between Okinawa and the rest of Japan were strictly censored by the United States.

### 3. FORMATION OF THE U.S MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN OKINAWA AND CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION

The War in the Pacific ended on 15 August 1945 and signified the beginning of the American occupation in Okinawa. The U.S. military government established the "Administration of the Ryukyu Islands." Its primary goal was civilian relief and rehabilitation. In postwar Japan, while Douglas MacArthur served as chief policy enforcer at his SCAP headquarters in Tokyo, his association with field personnel in Okinawa remained distant. In Okinawa, William E. Crist commanded the Civil Affairs Teams. As early as April

1946, the Central Okinawan Administration was established, and in August of that year, the military government initiated the establishment of the Okinawan Advisory Council. In December 1950, the military government of the Ryukyu Islands became the United States Civil Administration in the Ryukyus (USCAR). *The Ryukyu Islands at a Glance*, a pamphlet published by the U.S. military government, stated the objectives of the USCAR clearly. The primary mission of the United States Forces was the prevention of disease and unrest in the land that had been devastated. The second objective was economic recovery up to the prewar level. The third objective was to bring democracy to the islands. The U.S. side had expected that those objectives could be easily achieved under the leadership of American military government as they viewed Okinawans as incapable of governing by themselves and more “primitive” than Japanese on the mainland. Many American cartoons describing Okinawan farmers, fishermen, and civilians showed how backwards they were in terms of technology and modern political systems (USCAR, 1954:1-40).

The depiction of Okinawans as less sophisticated than the Japanese on the mainland was common. The *Civil Affairs Handbook* (1944), which was compiled by the U.S. Army Service Forces points out the strong tensions between Okinawans and Japanese. The booklet shows the fact that the Japanese did not regard Okinawans as equal, and they had a strong racial prejudice. Because of these conflicts, it stated that there was no enthusiastic patriotism toward Japan among Okinawans. Then, as a conclusion, the handbook suggested that it would be a wise idea to use these tensions between the Okinawans and the Japanese in order to promote U.S. political agenda. They continuously described the differences between the Japanese and the Okinawans in terms of personality, culture, lifestyle, education, language, and racial identity. For example:

In comparison with the Japanese, the Ryukyu natives are reported to be somewhat shorter, stockier, and darker, and to be characterized by more prominent nose, higher foreheads, and less noticeable cheekbones. Their hair is more often wavy . . . . Despite the close ethnic relationship between Japanese and Ryukyu islanders, their linguistic kinship, the people of the archipelago are not regarded by the Japanese as their racial equals. They [are] looked upon, as it were, as poor cousins from the country, with peculiar rustic ways of their own, and are consequently discriminated against in various ways. The islanders on the other hand, have no sense of inferiority but rather take pride in their own traditions and in their longstanding cultural ties with China. Inherent in the relations between the Ryukyu people and the Japanese, therefore, are potential seeds of dissension out of which political capital might be made. It is almost certain that militarism and fanatical patriotism have been but slightly developed (Office of the Chief Operations Naval Department 1944:43).

While the economic aid packages that were over US \$164.5 million were provided to boost Okinawan economy through the Government and Relief in Occupied Areas (GARIOA) Fund, the cultural reconstruction of postwar Okinawa started in November 1948 by the Department of Civil Information and Education (CI&E). Its first purpose was the reconstruction of cultural facilities such as libraries, theaters, radio broadcasting stations, and newspaper companies, which were destroyed during the war. A second aim was the promotion of democratic concepts and engendering Okinawan support for U.S. policies and programs through cultural orientation programs. For those purposes, the CI&E Department of the USCAR set up six information centers in the Ryukyus island chains. The three on Okinawa were located at Nago, Ishikawa, and Naha cities. In other part of the Ryukyu

Islands, the Amami Oshima Center was located at Naze; the Miyako Center was in Hirara, and the Yaeyama Center was in Ishigaki. The purpose of those centers was not only to supply information regarding the U.S., but also to establish a friendly attitude toward America among Ryukyans. Among the events held at these centers, English classes were popular. Exhibitions and movies were also welcomed. Commonly stressed subjects were those concerning the people about America, the American way of life, the meaning of democracy, home and farm improvement, health, sanitation, and public safety.

Numerous meetings were frequently held in order to acquaint the Okinawans with the U.S. military government and its system. The demonstrations and exhibits were used as well as supplemental lectures, roundtable discussions, and motion pictures for their cultural orientation programs during late 1940s and early 1950s. One of the good examples was CI&E's posters and pamphlet distribution campaigns. During the first half of 1949, the CI&E Department began to print numerous posters. For example, one of the early posters was entitled "A Bridge to Democracy," and bore labels and a caption stating that the bridge from a Ryukyu under militarism to a democratic Ryukyu must be supported by pillars labeled freedom of thought, and respect for human rights. Nine thousand posters were produced during May 1949 (Tull, 1953). In support of "Ryukyuan-American Education Week," during 4-10 December 1949, 390,000 leaflets were distributed to Okinawan students. The five subjects to be studied included "Democracy in the Home," "Democracy in the School," "Foundations of Good Government," "Rights of the Citizen in a Democracy," and "Responsibilities of the Citizens in a Democracy." Students were requested to take the leaflets home to their parents and to post them in their homes (Tull, 1953).

A total of 202,500 leaflets were dropped in seventeen flights over Okinawa, Miyako, Yaeyama, and Amami prefectures. Another 100,000 leaflets were distributed by sound truck crews, and local distributors. As indicated by their titles, these leaflets were further indoctrination along democratic lines and also primers for the administration of a democratic government including for example: "The Rights of a Citizen in a Democracy," "The Right Man for the Right Job," and "The Foundation of Democratic Government" (Trafton, 1992: 111).

The CI&E used films as well. 16-mm documentaries and news films with a Japanese sound track were broadcast, including *Ryukyuan Legal Chiefs Visit the U.S.*, *Corporal Cornel and Mrs. Cornel's Welcome to America*, *Ryukyuan Government Leaders Visit Maryland*, *Ryukyuan Exchange Students*, and *Police Mission in the U.S.* The U.S. military government estimated that 20,000 persons watched CI&E films each week. The films with a Japanese language track were loaned through the CI&E Central Motion Picture Distribution Unit to the local cultural centers, health centers, native labor training sections, commercial theaters, amusement parks, agricultural cooperatives, branches of the Education Department, youth clubs, and the University of Ryukyus. Cultural Centers, in turn, showed films through the use of mobile units to remote villages and prisons (USCAR, 1952:199-201).

The CI&E and the USCAR also held exhibitions. During 1952, the Exhibit Unit of the CI&E prepared mounted-picture displays, various types of posters, and several political pamphlets and booklets about the United States. A series of approximately fifty-three such exhibits were held during 1952 on a wide variety of subjects, including American media, agricultural, and sports, and special holidays in the United States. These exhibits were selected to support the CI&E policy: "To operate maximum sympathy and understanding for the United States, its culture, and its aims" (USCAR, 1952:204-205). Generally any exhibition campaign was not as effective as film. It attracted fewer participants, many of the

panels failed to have self-explanatory approach to the less educated Okinawans.

#### 4. THE PERRY CENTENNIAL IN OKINAWA

Among those cultural events initiated by the U.S. military government in Okinawa, the Perry Centennial of 1953 attracted more participants than any other campaigns. The Centennial was celebrated in Okinawa (the largest island in the Ryukyu island chain) and other parts of the Ryukyu as well as mainland Japan.

The beginning of the Ryukyu (Okinawa)-American relation marked on 26 May, 1853 when Commodore Matthew C. Perry and his men sailed in Naha Harbor to establish a coaling station and to open trade with the Ryukyuan. In fact, before Perry appealed to Japan under Tokugawa Shogunate to open trade relations with the U.S., he had made the Ryukyus his base when he negotiated with Shogunate government in Edo. The people in Ryukyu had been awakened from their long silence by Perry's sudden arrival two month earlier than mainland Japanese, and similarly, the talk between Ryukyuan leaders and Perry paved away for the conclusion of a treaty over trade between Ryukyu kingdom and the U.S. (Oyadomari, 1967).

One hundred years after, in 1953 USCAR and CI&E, and U.S military Government in Ryukyu together with Ryukyuan leaders designed the Perry Centennial, the one hundred years anniversary of Perry's arrival in Ryukyu, with the purpose of enhancing mutual friendship and understanding between Americans and Ryukyuan. They organized various cultural events including art exhibitions at American cultural centers, essay contests, sports games, firework shows, and masquerade parade during the Ryukyuan-American Friendship Week, 20-26 May, 1953. It became the largest Ryukyuan-American festival ever held in Ryukyu. Unlike the case of the Perry Centennial in mainland Japan, which had more cooperation from Japanese non-governmental organizations, in Ryukyu where U.S. military bases continued to dominate, USCAR, CI&E and U.S. military government took the leadership of organizing most of the events.

#### 5. PLANNING THE EVENTS

The news report from CI&E, clearly stated their expectation from designing the Perry Centennial. CI&E considered the Perry Centennial as the good opportunity to measure the effectiveness of cultural propaganda. Secondly, if they gain the support from Ryukyuan, the U.S. military government could promote American's friendship and bring Ryukyuan's awareness on America's effort to improve Ryukyuan economy and its security (Press and Publication CI&E and USCAR, 1953a). Thus, the Commemorative Festival Committee was established under the direction of gen. Earl Diffenderfer, and it programmed various athletic and cultural events throughout the Ryukyus.

With the purpose of promoting Perry Centennial event, the post office at Naha issued special Perry Centennial stamps, designed by two Ryukyuan artists. The six yen stamp was designed by Yamada Shinsan, famous Okinawan artist. Old stone fortifications, native vessels, and the landing party approaching the pier are shown in the foreground. The four American ships are anchored in the background. Commodore Perry's picture, a replica of his portrait in the Annapolis Naval Academy, dominates the scene from the upper portion of the

marble blue color stamp. The purple color three yen stamp was designed by Adaniya Seihi, another Okinawan artist. It depicts the reception given Commodore Perry and his staff at Shuri castle by the Okinawan ruler (Press and Publication CI&E and USCAR, 1953a).

Uniquely in Ryukyu's Perry Centennial, A number of athletic competitions were held at the same time. More than twenty thousand American and Ryukuan spectators gathered at Naha and Shuri to enjoy swimming, tennis, volleyball and baseball matches. *Daily Okinawa Press* reported that the Naha high school baseball team defeated the American team by a score of six to three. On 24 May, the second day of the Ryukuan-American Friendship Athletic Festival, track and field events along with a ping pong tournament were held at the Naha high school grounds (Daily Okinawan Press, 1953, 24 May).

The Perry Centennial event was highlighted with the two-mile long parade started from Asahi bridge near the legislative building in Naha in the afternoon of 24 May. About 60,000 people of Naha, many American soldiers and officers participated. The parade was headed by American military and civil administrators in Ryukyu, including Maj. Gen. David Ogden, Deputy Governor and Chief Executive, Higa Shuhei of Government of Ryukyus (GRI), General James M. Lewis, Mayor Matayoshi Kowa of Naha City, and President Ikehata Mineri of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. They were followed by the U.S. army band and a long line of primary and junior high school students with flag of Rising Sun, and Stars and Stripes in their hands. A G.I. disguised as Perry and some Okinawan disguised as Ryukyuan regents, others dressed as Sanshikan (governmental ministers) attracted the most attention of the 100,000 spectators. Furthermore, in commemoration of Perry Centennial Celebration, amnesty was granted to sixty Ryukyuan prisoners by U.S. military (Daily Okinawan Press, 1953, 25 May).

As a part of the Centennial events, the Perry Centennial Hall was constructed at Shuri Museum. On 26 May, 1953, the last day of the Ryukyuan-American friendship week, the dedication ceremony of the hall was held, attended by a large crowd of U.S. military and Ryukyuan officials and citizens. During the ceremony, a number of rare Ryukyuan historical treasures including twenty-two volumes of Omoro-soshi, a rare gilded headpiece and hair pin dated to the Ryukyuan dynasty, sixty ancestral tablets, twenty-six volumes describing the former history of the Ryukyuan islands, other precious Ryukyuan treasures were returned to the Ryukyuan people from the U.S., and placed in the Shuri museum. David Ogden, Deputy Governor spoke of the long and honorable tradition and history of Ryukyu and the heritage of the U.S. at the dedication ceremony. He said that "the United States had no intention of depriving the Ryukyuan people of what was theirs" (Press and Publication CI&E and USCAR, 1953b).

In the opening ceremony of Perry Centennial Hall, Yamaguchi Yuriko, a third year student of Miyako Girl's senior high school, read her essay on "Perry Centennial Celebration," which was selected by a committee of Ryukyuan and Americans as the winner of the essay contest on "How Can We Best Cultivate Ryukyuan – American Friendship?" She received a four-year scholarship to the University of Ryukyu. General Ogden also forwarded a letter of appreciation to another young Okinawan hero, Toguchi Seiko of Motobu Cho who rescued an American pilot in distress during the Okinawan battle. A certificate was awarded to Toguchi for his heroic act of swimming against adverse tides in a rough sea to save an American pilot. H. Earl Diffenderfer, chairman of the Perry Centennial Committee, said that Yamaguchi's essay and Toguchi's heroism embodied the objective of Ryukuan-American Friendship Week and the Perry Centennial that were the promotion of mutual understanding and respect between Ryukyuan and Americans.

Moreover, Diffenderfer emphasized the respect Americans had for the traditions, customs, and culture of the Ryukyuan people. He said that it was Americans' sincere hope that Perry Centennial Hall, the new museum wing, would stand as a tangible symbol of U.S.-Ryukyuan friendship. Following Diffenderfer's speech, Chief Executive Higa Shuhei promised that Ryukyuan would share the responsibilities with Free Nations against Communism. He emphasized the necessity to cooperate with Americans for the peace of the world (Press and Publication CI&E and USCAR, 1953c).

Many congratulatory messages were sent from Washington D.C. including the one from John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, Admiral W. M. Fechteler, Chief of Naval Operations, Robert T. Stevens, Secretary of the Army, and Harry S. Truman, former President. For example, Dulles wrote in his message that "the one hundred years which have elapsed since Commodore Perry first visited Ryukyu shores have marked the awakening of the world in which all men must live as neighbors. He hoped that the respect and understanding between the peoples of the Ryukyus and the United States which this celebration epitomizes continue to flourish to the mutual benefit and to strengthen the cause of peace of the world" (Daily Okinawa Summary, 1953). At Naha Air Base the U.S. military government organized the tour of their base for Ryukyuan guests on 26 May to commemorate the Perry Centennial. The tour program included the exhibition of free movie, fire-fighting demonstration and display of helicopter and airplane (Press and Publication CI&E and USCAR, 1953d).

## 6. OKINAWAN OPINION ON THE EVENTS

Thus, the Perry Centennial of 1953 was designed to promote mutual understanding between Americans and Ryukyuan, and at the same time to decrease Ryukyuan's hatred toward Americans. The U.S. military government and USCAR expected that by cheering up Okinawan swimmer who won the first prize over American G.I.s, by mocking at American player who missed a ball in baseball games, the Ryukyuan would forget the fact that they were the conquered people who lived in the conquered land. The USCAR hoped that the people in Ryukyu were unconsciously immersed into joyful cultural events in a village scale, designed by American military government. The Perry Centennial of 1953 in Ryukyu, however, brought about the mixed result among Ryukyuan intellectuals. *The Okinawa Asahi Shimbun* reporter asked Ryukyuan leaders of political parties and other organizations the following two questions concerning Ryukyuan-American friendship:

1. What should you do to promote Ryukyuan-American friendship?
2. What is hindering Ryukyuan-American friendship?

Taira Tastuo, Chairman of the Socialist Masses party answered that Ryukyuan-American friendship would not bear fruit unless the mutual understanding and confidence are deepened in connection with the following problems. Firstly, the problem of reversion to Japan, secondly, military-requisitioned land problem, thirdly, the problem concerning the treatment of Ryukyuan military employees. Similarly, Araki Seiei, president of the Okinawan Federation of Fishery Association pointed out that without solving rationally the problems of wages of military employees and problems concerning military-requisitioned land, there would be no other way to promote Ryukyuan-American friendship. He also requested the military authorities to understand Ryukyuan's desire for the reversion to Japan.

Shinzato Seitoku, chief of the Administrative Office of the Okinawan Teacher's Association stated that in the tiny islands of Ryukyu two different types of people with different cultural background live. One is the conqueror, other was the conquered people. Shinzato harshly criticized American soldier's violence and vicious acts in the islands. Senaga Kamejiro, Secretary General of the People's Party totally denounced the Perry Centennial as nothing but the cultural propaganda designed by the U.S. military toward innocent Ryukyuan:

Land acquisition and coercive evacuation are being enforced. They say that this is for the cause of freedom. However, I do not see why freedom should be safeguarded at the sacrifice of the living Ryukyuan . . . . Is it impossible to foster democracy without bulldozing potatoes and vegetables grown by farmers, without giving previous notice, without trading on rice which can be reaped only a month later, or without making human-head-sized watermelons victims of a bulldozer like fracturing human skull? (Daily Okinawan Press 1953, 25 May)

Senaga called USCAR as the ruler which preventing the enactment of labor laws which safeguard the fundamental human rights of 100,000 workers in Ryukyu. He concluded that those things must be expelled from Ryukyu Islands. According to him, some people may require such amusements as firework display and other festivities, but such amusements are of no concern of 99% of the people of the Ryukyus. "Given freedom of life to everybody" this must be the basic principle of friendship (Daily Okinawan Press 1953, 25 May).

Senaga's harsh criticism toward USCAR followed what is called "Senaga affairs." In 1954, the Okinawans voted for socialist candidate Senaga Kamejiro for mayor. Immediately, then the USCAR cut their support for the Okinawan civic administration and tried to pass a non-confidence vote for him. As a result, the USCAR succeeded on depriving Senaga of his eligibility and the city council passed a non-confidence vote for him. Such USCAR's pressure on the Okinawan civic administration brought about strong controversy not only among Okinawans but also in the international world itself (Watanabe, 1970:157-158). An article from *Weekly Sankei* called America's conduct as equal to the assassination of Senaga, then strongly criticized contradictive U.S. "democratic" foreign policy:

The United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands changed a requirement for non-confidence in a mayor from to thirds to a majority of the full number of the assemblymen. Because the full number of assemblymen of Okinawa City is thirty and also because the number of Naha City Mayor Senaga's government control party is twelve, it was impossible to resolve non-confidence in the mayor on the condition that these twelve government-controlled party assembly will not attend. This is because the number of pro-American not of the government party assemblymen was seventeen whereas more than twenty assemblymen in favor are required. If the United States desires to purge Mayor Senaga with whom it has found difficulty in dealing without resorting to such an illegal means like assassination, what it can do is to change the requirement for non-confidence from more than two thirds to a majority of the full number of the Assemblymen and if does so, it can surely and legally purge Mayor Senaga. This is because the numbers of pro-American and non-governmental party assemblymen are seventeen which is two more than the majority number of fifteen (Takahashi, 1957, 15 December).

The people in Okinawa responded to the purging of Mayor Senaga and criticized U.S. military government. One of such voices stated:

It is not impossible to imagine that the United States has taken the means as has been taken this time because of its fear that if the United States should have taken the first means, it would have been driven into a more disadvantageous situation than it would be now. If so, the case this time becomes a very queer example when the United States people explain the real nature of democracy which is always advocated by them. I cannot but worry about the benefit according to the great United States if this should be used as material for teaching what democracy is in Japanese primary and junior high schools. I believe that it will go more smoothly if the United States will abandon the administrative power. Furthermore, it is understandable from the Hungarian case that it's impossible to oppress the real intention of the people forever" (Takahashi, 1957, 15 December).

## 7. OKINAWA AS COLD WAR ISLAND

In the late 1940s through the 1950s the advent of a Communist regime in Beijing and the outbreak of the Korean War changed the whole situation in East Asia. Japan's international status shifted from former enemy to the trustworthy American ally to prevent Communist aggression in East Asia. The situation required the U.S. to make a fresh approach to the problem of Okinawa as well. The 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty placed the islands under a United Nations trusteeship administrated by the United States, because American strategists agreed that its occupation of Okinawa was essential to prevent Japan's revival as a hostile power. With the breakdown of the American-Soviet relationship, Okinawa emerged as the military linchpin of containment in the Asia-Pacific area. In the speech on American policy in Asia in January 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson regarded Okinawa as an important link in American defense line along the periphery of the Asia Continent (U.S. State Department Bulletin 1950, 23 January:115-118).

The Okinawan bases played important roles in U.S. planning for the possible operations against the Soviet Union in Siberia, the Sea of Japan and the Sea of Okhotsk. They were vital for the implementation of United States policies toward China, the Korean Peninsula and the newly independent states of Southeast Asia. Therefore, the U.S. government invested \$50 million to build permanent military installation on Okinawa. The U.S. air force could hit a number of important targets in the Eurasian from airfields in the Ryukyus. American planners believed that medium bombers in Okinawa gave an effective advantage in that they could reach all important target areas within an arc including all of Southeast Asia, China, the Lake Baikal area, Eastern Siberia, and the southern tip of the Kamchatka Peninsula in the USSR. The U.S. bombers based in the Okinawa could also hit targets in the European region of the Soviet Union and land at air force bases in Western Europe. Okinawa also proved to be an important base during the Korean War. Three days after the North Korean army crossed into South Korea, the U.S. bombers stationed on the island began flying missions over the peninsula (Sarantakes, 2000:40-91). The New York Times wrote, "Okinawa is for the Air Force what Pearl Harbor is for the Navy" (New York Times, 1952, 21 September). By the 1960s, Okinawa had become the largest offensive nuclear base in East Asia. Especially after the outbreak of the Vietnam War, the island's role as a strategic bomber base became increasingly vital.

Another important reason for the U.S. retention of Okinawa was that U.S. policymakers had doubts about the dependability of the Japanese and worried that the Japanese might adopt a policy of neutrality during the Cold War, abandoning the struggle against communism. Some viewed Japan as an uncertain and unsure ally, and therefore, the United

States needed to keep its bases in Okinawa in case Japan should fail to support the U.S. policy in a moment of crisis. Due to these reasons mentioned above, despite the movement toward Okinawa's reversion to Japan in the early 1950s, the United States strongly desired a long-term military installation on the island (FRUS 1985, XIV:1333-35).

While the U.S. is obsessed with the threat of communism and ideology, how did Okinawans understand Cold War in Asia and Okinawa's position? The Scientific Investigation of Ryukyu Islands (SIRI) report by anthropologist, Haring Douglas, investigated Okinawans understanding of communism and capitalism at that time and stated:

What ideas do Amamians discuss? The range of their knowledge is limited by sketchy, meager news service. The outside world is psychologically remote, even though Amami fishermen occasionally glimpse Russian submarines. But their interests transcend the tidbits of news that trickle over the cables; topics commonly discussed include communism, democracy, science, movies, Amami traditions, capitalism vs. socialism and again communism. In general, their anti-communist, but communism presents the one vivid idea that has burst into their world since the war. They can no more evade the topic than a New Yorker can ignore street traffic. . . . Despite much discussion among Americans, both communism and capitalism continues to be understood vaguely and inaccurately. As long as [sic] communism continues its onward sweep in Asia, its ideology commands general interest and the issue cannot be avoided. Communism may be less prevalent in Amami Gunto than in Japan proper, but it is understood better than capitalism is understood; the latter is presented most ineffectively. . . . The opposition to Communism on Amami Oshima, in my opinion is not the spontaneous fruit of belief in democracy and free enterprise; it is a combination of peasant indifference to politics and the persisting influence of the aristocratic-plutocratic minority that formerly dominated Amami society. Inept U.S. propaganda, abetted by America commercial movies, identifies democracy with material luxury and irresponsible license. . . . [sic] In general democracy is presented in an alien tongue and appears to be something for rich America that could not work in poor Amami; Communist, however, comes from fellow villagers in their own language, in the guise of an extension of familiar patterns of living (Haring, 1953).

As the article shows, few Amamians had deep knowledge about the ideology of democracy and communism, and pro-American cultural orientation programs were not carrying influential message to the remote area of Ryukyu as the U.S. originally had assumed (Glacken, 1953).

In contrast to the significance of Okinawa to Americans, growing popular discontent mushroomed among Okinawans over the U.S. authorities during the 1950s-960s as the island's economy started recovering from the damages of the war. Okinawans tended to blame the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR) for various problems. The situation remained unchanged until 1952 when the Japanese Peace Treaty came into force. Meanwhile, there was a growing demand among the dispossessed landowners for compensation for their lands (Watanabe, 1970:36-37). Japanese newspaper loudly reported Okinawa problems. Thus, such organization as Zengakuren (student organization), Sohyo (Japanese Labor Union) and JCP (Japanese Communist Party) started supporting Okinawan reversion movement. Many Okinawan leaders regarded that reunification with Japan was the alternative to continuous American occupation. This was a severe blow to the Americans who were inclined to talk about the "show case for Western democracy" and Ryukyuan-American friendship on the occasion of Perry Centennial.

## 8. CONCLUSION

In U.S. cultural propaganda campaign in Okinawa toward mid of the 1950s, U.S. military government had extreme optimism that democratization of the island would make Okinawans love America. They thought that if they introduce democracy, people in Okinawa would automatically follow U.S. policy. Why couldn't the Americans be more sensitive over the issue of military bases, ownership of lands, Okinawa's assertion of political autonomy, increasing hostility toward U.S. and eventually even their desire for the reversion to Japan? One reason was that the U.S. military was still heavily relied on the perception of Okinawans as the people whom they can easily influence. At the same time, Americans during the early Cold War had unquestionable faith in democracy and considered that spreading democracy in other parts of the world as part of America's mission even if sometimes they needed to take undemocratic means to do so. Okinawans however, understood that America's democratization of Okinawa was the secondary objectives, and it was just a means to justify the presence of U.S. military bases and U.S. foreign policy in Cold war Asia. In *Cocktail Party* a novel by native Okinawan writer Oshiro Tatsuhiro (2011), the main character whose daughter was raped by an American soldier in Okinawa stood in front of the flag, commemorating Perry's anniversary with sentences "prosperity to Ryukuans and friendship for Ryukuans and Americans." He then shouted that such friendship is faked, pretentious, and hypocritical. We must stop it. Then, he decided to take the American rapist to the court of law despite slim chances of win. Oshiro's character represents majority of Okinawan's opinion on America's cultural propaganda and the Perry Centennial. With mass popularity, the literature won Akutagawa prize in 1967 and indicated Okinawa's complex future relation with the United States at the turn of the century until the real case of Okinawan teenage girl who was raped by American soldier was brought to the court in 1995.

The stationing of American troops in Okinawa had never enjoyed the majority support of the local people and became increasingly unpopular during the 1950s. A poll in 1957 asked, "The U.S.A. is about to withdraw all its troops from Japan except its air and naval forces. What do you think about it?" 66.3% of the public responded "Good" and only 15.95 said "Too soon." This indicates that Ryukyans did not worry about a Communist invasion and did not understand the need for foreign troops on their soil. Their discomfort about the existence of U.S. troops and military bases became a source of further difficulty in U.S.-Okinawan relations when the Japanese mass media started exposing incidents of American GI's involvement in murder, theft, and rape in U.S. military bases in Okinawa. When asked "Do Japanese think that their powerful American ally treats them as an 'equal partner,' as proclaimed by Washington?" almost 50% of the people interviewed in 1956-1958 did not agree (Mendel, 1966:8).

In 1952, the United States and Japan signed the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, which granted the U.S. the right to maintain bases and troops in Japan and prohibited Japan from leasing military bases including the one in Okinawa to a third power without American consent, and gave the U.S. military the right to intervene in Japan's domestic affairs. Many Japanese intellectuals scolded Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru and even Emperor Hirohito for an agreement that they claimed subordinated Japan's independence to American interests, and the loss of Ryukyu Islands. When one takes into account such sentiment, it is hardly surprising that U.S. officials looked to the Perry Centennial Celebration to cement U.S.-Okinawan friendship. For Okinawans in 1953, however, the memory of Perry's arrival of

1853 paralleled Japan and Okinawa's situation immediately following World War II. After experiencing the devastation of atomic weapons, the Japanese Emperor and Prime Minister had no choice but to accept any terms and reforms imposed by the U.S. Okinawa was under total occupation by the United States and was forced to provide military bases for America's interest and national security in the Pacific against Communist aggression. As a result, Japan agreed to sign a "second unequal treaty," the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. Though presented as a symbol of peaceful U.S.-Japan relations, many Ryukyans viewed the Perry Centennial Celebration in terms of America's political and military dominance over Okinawa.

Ignorance of communism aggression, skepticism about materialized American society, and anti-American sentiment, all contributed to the unpopularity of the Perry Centennial particularly among Ryukyu intellectuals. Okinawa remained for 27 years as a symbol of the unequal status of Japan. Thus, the reversion of Okinawa signified the recognition by the United States of the rising status of Japan. The U.S. attempts to make Okinawa as a showcase of democracy through cultural propaganda campaign ended in 1972 when Okinawa was finally returned to mainland Japan under the Nixon-Sato communiqué.

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