

Meeting People



Over the past year, TJF produced the Deai resource, which is designed to introduce the personalities and daily lives of seven real Japanese high school students through photographs and text. "Meeting People" takes up one of the seven students each issue, turning the focus toward topics of concern to the individual student and introducing some of the photographs and text in Deai. In this way, we hope to provide information useful for a better understanding of the seven students and the Deai project. We will also offer, in conjunction with the Deai website (<http://www.tjf.or.jp/deai/>), necessary explanatory material, related resources and data, as well as ideas for class activities. In this issue we take up Tamaki Shun'ichi, who attends a public high school in Okinawa, introducing his thoughts on what Okinawa means to him.

Meet Shun'ichi



Profile

たまきしゅんいち
玉城俊一

年齢: 18才 (沖縄県立南風原高校3年)

家族: 両親、弟5人

育ったところ: 沖縄県の伊是名島

趣味: 本、マンガを読むこと

将来の夢: シンガー・ソング・ライター

たまきしゅんいち こうこう ねんせい さい
玉城俊一です。高校3年生、18才です。ぼくは、伊是名島で育ちました。伊是名島は、沖縄本島の北にあります。伊是名島には高校がありません。だから、今は、沖縄本島的那覇市のおばさんの家に住んで、県立南風原高校に行っています。高校では、沖縄のことは、芸能や歴史なども勉強しています。

ぼくの生活の中心は音楽です。ギターや三線で曲をつくって歌ったり、たいこをたたいたり、授業やクラブで沖縄の音楽を勉強したりしています。将来は、シンガー・ソング・ライターになりたいです。そして、ぼくにしかつくりえない音やリズムをつくりたいです。伊是名島は小さな島ですが、空はとても広いと思います。ぼくは、スケールの大きな音楽をつくりたいので、伊是名の「大きな世界」はとても大事です。



Notes:

伊是名島	Izenajima, an island located northwest of the main island of Okinawa	歴史	history
沖縄本島	main island of Okinawa	三線	sanshin, a three-stringed plucked lute played in Okinawa and the Amami islands
那覇市	Naha, the capital of Okinawa prefecture	ぼくにしかつくりえない音やリズム	The sound and rhythm that only I can create
県立	prefectural		
芸能	performing arts		

Shun'ichi's View—Okinawa

Pride in Okinawa

I am proud to call Okinawa my home. Okinawa has had its own unique styles of music and dance since long ago, and it has a friendly atmosphere that makes people peaceful and relaxed. Maybe it has something to do with the fertile landscape and warm climate. The people of Okinawa once acquired all sorts of goods through trade with China, which they then exchanged in trade with countries in Southeast Asia.¹ Commerce among different countries led to exchange among people from diverse cultures. I think this is what made Okinawans so accepting of unfamiliar peoples. Even now, you can find that spirit among Okinawans; it shows up in Okinawan expressions like "*ichariba chode* イチャリバチョーデー" ("If we've met once, we're brothers"). I wasn't all that fond of Okinawa when I was younger. Okinawa, I thought, was a backwater and behind the times. I yearned for the life of the big city, where I imagined there would be all kinds of exciting toys to play with. I started to like Okinawa after I learned about its history and culture through the study of classical Okinawan music.

Okinawa and Japan

Okinawans call themselves "*uchinanchu* ウチナンチュ" ("Uchina (Okinawa) people") and people from other parts of the country "*naicha* ナイチャー" ("mainland people"). Okinawa is the southernmost part of Japan, and is also distant from any other part of the country, so I think it naturally tends to differentiate itself from everywhere else. It probably also has to do with the fact that long ago it was an independent kingdom, separate from Japan, known as Ryukyu.² The expression *naicha* may sound somewhat derogatory and a degree of prejudice is undeniable. I am sure there are people who, recalling the historical events surrounding the incorporation of the Ryukyu kingdom into Japan³ and the fact that Okinawa became the scene of a land battle during World War II,⁴ harbor a dislike for "mainlanders" that is expressed in the word *naicha*. I've also heard that Okinawans who went to the mainland twenty or thirty years ago were subject to discrimination there. There are proba-



Shun'ichi sings karaoke with feeling.

bly people who developed a dislike of mainland Japanese from hearing about such experiences from their parents. On the other hand, there are also many Okinawans who feel pride in their unique and rich culture, and use the terms "*uchinanchu*" and "*naicha*" to express that distinction. To me it seems narrow-minded to refuse to speak to people or categorically dislike them just because they are *naicha*. There are *uchinanchu* I can't get along with and *naicha* I like very much.

Where is Okinawa?



Shun'ichi, hamming it up with a friend on the way to a performance by their folk performing arts troupe.

U.S. Military Bases

U.S. military bases⁵ on Okinawa occupy about 20 percent of the land on the main island. Many people do not like the bases and there are various protest movements against them. Some people oppose the bases because memories of the war have left deep psychological scars that remain even today. I have heard that some of those who experienced the war become frightened even today by the sight of the airplanes at the bases. Even I found myself in tears while watching a television program documenting experiences of the war. I remember thinking that after all the hardship and suffering such people experienced, it is no wonder they so strongly resist having the bases here. During his visit to Okinawa for the G-8 Summit, Mr. Clinton said the bases were necessary for peace,⁶ but if he had thought about it from the standpoint of the *uchinanchu*, I doubt he would have said that. If the bases are truly for the purpose of protecting the safety of the world, I can understand, but there is no proof that the bases will not bring about another war in the future. There are weapons on the bases, and where there are weapons, there is the possibility that someday the tragedy of war will happen again. When I think about it that way, it makes me very nervous.

On the other hand, the closing of the bases, upon which a large amount of local business depends, would deal a tremendous blow to the Okinawan economy.⁷ I think some people support the bases for this reason, therefore, even though they would really prefer not to have them. We might not want to have U.S. military bases on our soil, but what would we do if the economy suffered as a result? It is a very difficult issue. To be quite honest, I do not know what the best resolution to this problem might be.



The Cornerstone of Peace Park where former president Bill Clinton gave his speech. The memorial is carved with the names of those who died in the war on Okinawa, including residents of the islands, Japanese soldiers, and soldiers from the United States and Great Britain as well.

Okinawa's Future

Many Americans associated with the military bases live on Okinawa. There are also many people from other countries. I think the variety of people is fascinating and a good thing for the islands.

My hope for now is that Okinawa can become a place for exchange of some sort—economic, musical, or anything really—with many other countries. The term *bankoku shin-ryō* (万国津梁 ばんこくしんりょう), chosen for the name of the Summit conference hall, carries the meaning of “bridge linking all nations.” With its history, geography, and other features, Okinawa can play a vital part in helping a variety of things to connect. I would really like to see Okinawa become a lively and flourishing place by fulfilling its potential as “a bridge linking all nations.”

Notes:

1 The Ming dynasty (1368-1644) founded in China in the middle of the fourteenth century used its great strength to exact pledges of allegiance from surrounding states. Only states that accepted its hegemony and agreed to pay tribute to the Ming emperors were allowed to trade with China. The Ryukyu kingdom paid tribute to and traded with Ming China. It also engaged in “relay trade,” transporting goods from Okinawa, China, and Japan to the Southeast Asian region and bringing goods back for Japan, China, and Korea. This trade flourished from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries, and the Ryukyu kingdom was founded on the wealth that accrued from it. As the kingdom grew economically, it also developed a unique culture. This period is also known as the Ryukyus’ “Great Age of Trade.” When Japan began sending its “vermillion seal” (licensed) trading ships directly to Southeast Asia, the preeminence of the Ryukyus in this trade began to fade, leading ultimately to the decline of the Ryukyu kingdom.

2 The kingdom of Ryukyu ruled for 450 years, from 1429, when the first Sho dynasty was founded by Sho Hashi, to 1879, when the Meiji government made Okinawa a prefecture of Japan and ended the second Sho dynasty.

3 In 1609, the Satsuma domain (now Kagoshima prefecture) invaded the Ryukyus with the backing of the Tokugawa shogunate. Afterwards, though placed under the control of the Satsuma domain, it essentially continued to exist as a kingdom. When the Meiji government, established in 1868, adopted a policy of integrating the Ryukyus into the territory of Japan and in 1879, under the threat of military force, placed the islands under central government control as Okinawa prefecture, the Ryukyu kingdom collapsed.

4 In the final phase of World War II, land battles took place between U.S. forces and Japan on Okinawan soil, and many local people were caught up in the ensuing fighting and destruction. The battles, which continued for about three months beginning at the end of March 1945, killed about 94,000 Okinawan residents, 94,136 Japanese soldiers (including 28,228 originally from Okinawa), and 12,520 U.S. soldiers (data from the relief section of the Okinawa Prefectural government). After the war ended, Okinawa was occupied by the U.S. military. Even after the implementation of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1952, the U.S. military's occupation on Okinawa continued until sovereignty was returned to Japan in 1972.



Class Ideas

* More information about Tamaki Shun'ichi is available on the Deai website (http://www.tjf.or.jp/deai/contents/search/photo_top.html).

*Questions

1. 俊一は何才ですか。
How old is Shun'ichi?
2. どこで育ちましたか。
Where was he brought up?
3. 将来、何になりたいですか。
What does he want to become in the future?

*Discussion points

1. 俊一は、沖縄が自分のふるさとだということを誇りに思っています。どうしてですか。
Shun'ichi is proud to be from Okinawa. Why?
2. あなたは、自分のふるさとについてどう思いますか。どうしてですか。
What do you think about the place you are from? Why?
3. 沖縄の人や自然が写っている写真を探してみましょう。
Let's search for photographs that show the people, landscape, and other aspects of Okinawa.
4. 沖縄の音楽や踊りにはどんなものがあるでしょうか。インターネットで探してみましょう。
What kinds of music and dance does Okinawa have? Let's find out by using the internet.
5. 俊一は、沖縄には「本土」の人のことを嫌いな人がいるのは、なぜだと思っていますか。俊一は、「本土」の人のことをどう思っていますか。
According to Shun'ichi, why do some people in Okinawa dislike "mainlanders"? What does Shun'ichi think of "mainlanders"?
6. 俊一は、沖縄の米軍基地について、どう思っていますか。あなたはどう思いますか。
What does Shun'ichi think about the U.S. military bases on Okinawa? What do you think?
7. 俊一は、沖縄がいろいろな国の交流の場になるといいと言っています。あなたが、いろいろな国の交流の場をつくらしたら、どんなことをしたいですか。
Shun'ichi says he would like it if Okinawa became a place for exchange between various countries. If you wanted to create a place where many countries could interact, what would you like to do?

5 The U.S. military facilities and training grounds mentioned in the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty are generally called U.S. military bases. Twenty-six of the forty-seven prefectures in Japan have U.S. military facilities. About 75 percent of all facilities specifically designated for use by the U.S. military (excluding those for temporary use) are in Okinawa and U.S. military bases occupy about 20 percent of the land area of its main island (data as of March 2001).

6 Former president Clinton gave a speech in front of the Cornerstone of Peace Park when he visited Okinawa to attend the G-8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit held in July 2000. Shun'ichi is probably referring to the following remarks in that speech: "Over the past 50 years, our two nations have come together in this spirit, to meet that responsibility. The strength of our alliance is one of the great stories of the 20th century. Asia is largely at peace today because our alliance has given people throughout the region confidence that peace will be defended and preserved. That is what alliances are for, and that is what ours must endure." (For more about the contents of Clinton's speech, refer to the Department of State's website: http://www.state.gov/www/issues/economic/summit/000721_clinton_okinawa.html)

7 Income from military bases (salaries of Japanese employees working on U.S. military bases, fees paid to landlords for property occupied by military bases, consumption activities of those connected with the bases, etc.) was equivalent to 5 percent—or in monetary terms, 183.1 billion yen—of total expenditures by citizens of Okinawa prefecture for fiscal year 2000.

Reference

- ❑ **Okinawa Prefecture's Home Page**
<http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/index.html>
- ❑ **Mahae Net (by Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau)**
<http://www.ocvb.or.jp/english/index.html>
- ❑ **Ryukyu Cultural Archives**
http://museum.mm.pref.okinawa.jp/web_e/index.html
- ❑ **The Okinawa Times**
<http://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/index-e.html>
- ❑ **The Ryukyu Shimpo Internet**
<http://www.ryukyushimpo.co.jp/english/eindex.html>
- ❑ **Okinawa Kodomo Land**
<http://www.pref.Okinawa.jp/kodomo/top.html>