

## Editor's Note

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In the “Editor’s Note” for the inaugural issue of the *Okinawan Journal of Island Studies*, I wrote, “The objective of *OJIS* is to bring island interests to the fore and to put island agency at the center of its endeavor; it is to engage with our place and communities in and outside of academia and to contemporaneously be their bride” (iv). This volume embodies the continuation of that effort by bringing forth multiple modes of island articulation in the journal as an intersectional space. “Okinawa,” the home of *OJIS*, in many ways has been a space for the voices of islanders resisting the containment of the genealogies of “Okinawa” since the Ryukyu Kingdom was militarily replaced during the Ryukyu Shobun in 1879 and was incorporated into Japanese sovereignty. Immediately after WWII, Okinawa was placed under US military occupation for twenty-seven years. Sokoku Fukki in 1972, a “reversion to the Japanese fatherland,” embodied the hope for a demilitarized Okinawa for many Okinawans. Yet despite their hope, a large percentage of US bases remain, leaving Okinawans with a sense of ambivalence between belonging and resistance to assimilation into the nation-state.

The contributions to “Forum: *Miduri*” disrupt such discursiveness of nation-state formation. In “Why Do You Write?” Tami Sakiyama, an Okinawan writer, describes how writing about that time of Sokoku Fukki overwhelms her with a sense of “loss for words [. . .] like roots extensively growing underground.” Pondering the event’s lasting effect on her writing and her life, she continues to “search for ‘island’ or ‘islandness,’” which Sakiyama calls “an obsession of something from which I desperately want to be free.” Yet it is “an island (*shima*)” that she tried to find “beyond her actions.” Ikue Kina contributes to this volume a translation into English of two of Sakiyama’s short essays quoted here by successfully connoting the poetics of each word that Sakiyama wove into her short essays while maintaining the translator’s distance from the author. Sakiyama and Kina’s co-articulation of journeying among islands and islandness in “Okinawa” exemplifies, to me, one important mode and method of island studies from “Okinawa.”

In the short prose “Homecoming,” Shō Tanaka describes his “homecoming” experience to his ancestral roots in Okinawa as “fraught with loss.” His words travel from moments of uncertainty through a sense of loss by tracing nonlinear genealogical routes of past and present and memories that were lost in between. His prose emerges from what he calls a “culture of forgotten intimacy” and “a climate of cultural emptiness” in the diaspora. By engaging with, rather than ignoring, the temptation of romanticization and nostalgia about his homeland, he seems to ground his genealogical roots in his relationship to the present moments of encounter in Okinawa.

Disarticulating the notions of subtropical island paradise and refusing the femini-

zation of the Asia Pacific islands, five feminist scholar activists make a deliberate linkage of militarism and islands in the COVID pandemic through a feminist lens in the interview titled “Okinawa, Guåhan, and Hawai‘i: Feminist Insights into the Linkages between Colonization, Militarism, and COVID-19.” Margo Okazawa-Rey interviews four women from Okinawa, Guåhan, and Hawai‘i. Through the conversation, they offer a vivid account of how US bases scattered around the Asia Pacific emerge as a global empire and urge the reader to redefine “peace and security” from island feminist perspectives to imagine a world of “genuine security” that does not rely on militarism.

Daniel Iwama’s paper “Tides of Dispossession: Property in Militarized Land and the Coloniality of Military Base Conversion in Okinawa” investigates the militarized colonial dispossession of indigenous lands in Okinawa to unpack colonial formations of urban planning. Iwama does so with a framework he calls “*champur* colonialism,” which “demonstrates both settle and extraction logics and that is based on the production and export of military power as a resource necessitating the seizure and deconstruction of land.” Foregrounding seminal literature of indigeneity, Iwama contextualizes his interviews with Okinawan landowners and planners to unpack the operation of “*champur* colonialism.”

The three essays in the “Special Topics” section draw attention to crucial works ahead in the island studies field. In “An Expanding World of Islands: The Emergence of Chinese Island Studies,” the educative editor of the *Island Studies Journal*, Adam Grydehøj, describes island studies as “a small but widely dispersed research field” that is “always forming” and “constantly formative.” The description resonates with the emerging efforts of the Research Institute for Islands and Sustainability at the University of the Ryukyus, which publishes *OJIS*. Further, Grydehøj acknowledges the problem of English-language centeredness in “mainstream” island studies, where certain regions of islands are omitted from the analysis. He then celebrates Chinese scholars’ involvement in the “English-language research field” as they have contributed some of the “most theoretically innovative and boundary-pushing research in island studies today.” English having become a lingua franca in academia is one important reason that *OJIS* publishes works in English, with the purpose of engaging in scholarly discussions, creating a network among island scholars and communities, and sharing the voices of island communities that might otherwise remain unheard. Yet at the same time, as an island studies journal, *OJIS* must continue to be critical of the effect of English dominance, which has its roots in the history of colonialism, as does the Japanese language in Okinawa. For many Pacific Island communities in decolonial movements, English is used as a tool and a platform of decolonization.

Yukiko Toyoda and Masaaki Gabe’s article “The Precarious Linkage between Trade and Security: A Trade-Off Involving Textile Limits and the Reversion of Okinawa” is a translation of its original Japanese version. Toyoda and Gabe remind us, however, that the paper in this volume is not a direct translation of the original. It has been modified, improved, and written for the audience of English-reading communities. Such an effort

highlights the social and political issues involved in translation and reminds the reader that translation is not a simple transfer of messages from one national language to other.

The island studies field has a responsibility to assist in the development of methodologies for multi-lingual collaboration and fieldwork in non-English communities. One example is “Akina: An Ecocultural Portrait of an Island Community through the Photographic Lens of Futoshi Hamada,” written in collaboration between Evangelina Papoutsaki and Suelo Kuwahara in this volume. The visual essay evolves around the photographs of Futoshi Hamada. Hamada is an Amamian visual storyteller and photographer who documented “the life cycle of Akina Village through its rice cultivation and harvest festivals.” Papoutsaki made sure that Hamada read, understood, and gave his permission to publish this paper before *OJIS* could move forward with the process, and Hamada did so with the help of his family, who translated this essay to him. Listening to non-English island communities, translating islandness among islands and within islands, then, for island studies, is a methodological necessity, and perhaps a responsibility, when participating in knowledge production.

In the book review section, Keisuke Mori discusses a recent work of Kozue Uehara’s *Kyōdō no Chikara (Power of the Commons: 1970–80s Kin Bay Struggle and Its Philosophy of Survival)*, which traces the Kin Bay Struggle, an antidevelopment resistance movement organized against the construction of an oil reserve base in Okinawa around the time of Sokoku Fukki.

As described above, the works featured in this volume exceed their categories of articulation to coalesce and speak well with each other around themes of un/belonging, disruption of nation-states, demilitarization, and translation.

On behalf of the *OJIS* editorial committee, I welcome lively discussions, debates, and meaningful criticism of the featured works in this volume. I would like to express my appreciation to the contributors, readers, and island communities whose efforts create this space as an engaging and mutually constructive venue.