A Review of *Kyōdō no Chikara* [*Power of the Commons: 1970–80s Kin Bay Struggle and Its Philosophy of Survival*]

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Uehara, Kozue. *Kyōdō no Chikara* (*Power of the Commons: 1970–80s Kin Bay Struggle and Its Philosophy of Survival*) (Kanagawa: Seori Shobō, 2019), 319 pp. ISBN: 9784866860053. Hardcover, JP¥3,850.

Introduction

The author specializes in the history of the post-WWII social movements in Okinawa. This book examines the Kin Bay Struggle (*kinwan tōsō*). The Kin Bay Struggle was an anti-development resistance movement organized against the construction of an oil reserve base in Okinawa at the time of the return of administrative rights from the US to Japan in 1972 and the ensuing reclamation of Kin Bay on the east coast of the island of Okinawa. From the 1960s to 1970s, about the same period as the Kin Bay Struggle, the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements in the US, opposition to nuclear testing in the Pacific Islands and other countries, and the anti-pollution and anti-pollution export movements against corporate expansion in East Asia were developing.

At that time, when the resistance movements against military and capital aggression began to try to cross borders, protests against the construction plans for the Central Terminal Station for petroleum (CTS) and aluminum smelting plants began on the east coast of Okinawa Island. On Miyagi Island, the Miyagi Island Land Protection Association (*miyagi jima tochi wo mamoru kai*) blocked the entry of Gulf Oil Corporation, the Alliance against the Construction of Toyo Oil Base in Nakagusuku Village (*tōyō sekiyu kichi hantai dōmei*) resisted the entry of Toyo Oil Corporation, and the Citizens' Council against the Attraction of Aluminum Factory (*arumi yūchi hantai shimin kyōgi kai*) in Ishikawa City (now Uruma City) blocked the entry of aluminum companies. However, since 1970, Gulf CTS and oil refineries have been moving into the area, and in Kin Bay, which has already been repeatedly hit by oil spills and soot damage, a second CTS is scheduled to be built by Mitsubishi Development Corporation of Okinawa, and reclamation of the sea area has begun (Uehara 2019, 3). The contribution of this book is to clarify

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the politico-economic process in the background of the Kin Bay Struggle, describing the concrete interactions and practices of the Kin Bay Struggle. The author also seeks to situate the struggle in the contemporary peoples' movements struggling to protest against the deprivation of their commons by capitalism (Uehara 2019, 4–5).

Book Chapters

The chapter structure is as follows: Chapter 1. Modernity and Loss in the Coastal Area of Kin Bay (*Kinwan enganchiiki no kindai to ushinawareta mono*) and Chapter 2. Pre-History of the Movement: Until the Development of Kin Bay at the Time of the Return of Administrative Rights to Japan (*Undō zenshi: Shiseiken henkanji no kinwan kaihatsu made*) trace the modern and contemporary cross-border experiences of the people of the Kin Bay coastal region, describing their experiences of migration and emigration, as well as of conscription, evacuation, and repatriation following the start of World War II. The chapters also examine the expectations of the people for economic development in the midst of the transformation of their communities and lifestyles from the modern era to the Battle of Okinawa and from US military rule to the return of administrative rights to Japan. Specifically, the reclamation process of Kin Bay and the construction of the CTS is examined in the process of exploring post-war reconstruction and economic independence under US military rule.

Chapter 3. "Every One of Us Is Representative": The Beginning of the Protest by the Kin Bay Protection Association (*"Hitori bitori ga daihyō": Kinwan wo mamoru kai no kougi no hajimari*) reveals how the Japanese anti-pollution movement network at the time of the return of administrative rights identified the construction of the CTS in Okinawa as part of the problem of "exporting" pollution to East and Southeast Asian countries from the 1970s onward, and how the Kin Bay Struggle was organized in the formation of a network between Okinawa and Tokyo. This process is analyzed with newspaper articles, the publications of the Kin Bay Protection Association, records of sit-down meetings (*zadan kai*), and interviews with individuals. In Chapter 4. Okinawa's Political Turmoil by "Peace Industrial Capital" (*"Heiwa sangyō" Shihon niyoru okinawa seiji no yuragi*), the author describes the process of confusion and turbulence over the oil industry attraction by the leftist government of Okinawa Prefecture and the collapse of its "CTS Withdrawal Statement," based on the protest statements of leftist parties and organizations, the minutes of prefectural assembly meetings, and the memoirs and journals of Governor Yara Chōbyō.

Chapter 5. The Struggle in Kin Bay against the Violence Associated with Development (*Kaihatsu ni tomonau bōryoku ni taiji shita kinwan tōsō*) examines the responses to the prefectural government's "anti-CTS" policy, the conflict over the advantages and disadvantages of development at a potential development site, including the incidence of violence against protesters and police intervention, based on newspaper articles, records of roundtable discussions, and interviews with individuals who worked as members of the

Youth Action Team (*seinen kōdō tai*) of the Kin Bay Protection Association. Chapter 6. The State and Rights Questioned by the Philosophy of People's "Survival" (*Minshū no "seizon" shisou ga tou kokka to kenri*) attempts to understand the Kin Bay anti-CTS trial in the context of the judicial system and court battles in Okinawa's post-war history by tracing the process of the trial over the legal flaws in Governor Yara's permission for the reclamation of Kin Bay's public water.

Chapter 7. Solidarity between the Ryukyu Arc and the Islands of Micronesia (*Ryūkyū ko to mikuroneshia no shimajima tono rentai*) examines the cultural practices and exchanges with the people of the Ryukyu Arc and the Micronesian Islands that had begun in the course of the increasingly difficult court battles, and analyzes how they expressed "resistance" to the logic of "national policy" (*kokusaku*) and "national interest" (*kokueki*). From 1952 to 1975, atmospheric, underwater, and subsurface nuclear tests in Micronesia were conducted by the United States, Britain, and France. From 1970 onwards, there were plans for the construction of a CTS in Palau with Japanese capital, and from 1980 onwards, there were plans by the Japanese government to dump radioactive waste into the Pacific Ocean. Anti-nuclear groups, lawyers, mayors, and others from Guam and Palau came to Japan and through Japanese peace and anti-nuclear organizations, petitioned the National Diet, held exchange meetings, and made street appeals. As a result, the group not only stopped Japan's Pacific project but also made the issue of regional nuclear power plant development, which is difficult to see from a central perspective, visible in Japan. Through the project against dumping radioactive waste into the ocean, the Ryukyu Arc residents' movement began to interact with the anti-nuclear groups of the Chamorro indigenous people of Guam and the people of Palau. Through these exchanges, a critical perspective on the view of the islands as isolated and small was cultivated in the Kin Bay area, and interest in the anti-nuclear and autonomy movements in the Pacific Islands increased.

In Chapter 8. Seeking Power of the Commons in the Struggle of Kin Bay (*Kinwan tōsō ga mosakushita "kyōdō no chikara"*), the philosophical meaning of the words exchanged in the Kin Bay Struggle is analyzed in relation to the contemporaneous discourse. How those who encountered, accompanied, and played a role in the Kin Bay Struggle and delineated the concepts of "Japonesia"[1] and "the Ryukyu Arc perspective" as well as that of "regionalism," "commons," and "community" are highlighted. Furthermore, how the movement from around the 1980s to date inherited the ideas developed in the Kin Bay Struggle and what kind of community was sought in the practice of the movement is discussed.

Locating the Kin Bay Struggle in Three Waves of Mass Mobilization of Postwar Okinawa's Social Movements

I will now try to place the Kin Bay Struggle in a longer history of social movements in postwar Okinawa. In his study of the history of social movements in postwar Okinawa,

Moriteru Arasaki (1999) describes three periods of mass mobilization of social movements (the first wave: 1956–58, the second: 1967–72, the third: 1995–2000).[2] The first wave, according to Arasaki, originated in June 1956 with island-wide land struggles. After the return-to-Japan movement gained momentum right after the San Francisco Peace Treaty was signed in 1951, the reversion movement was re-organized in 1953, led by the Okinawa Islands Reversion Society (*okinawa shotō sokoku hukki kyōgikai*). However, the US Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR) considered the reversion movement to be beneficial to the international communist movement, and the movement was forced to spontaneously disappear around 1954.

The origin of the island-wide land struggle in 1956 was triggered by the US House of Representatives Armed Services Committee's Price Recommendations, which investigated possible land for new US military-base construction in the Ryukyu Islands. The specific impetus for this movement was the forcible land requisition of US military land on Isahama and Ie Island. Even with the significant number of mass mobilizations of Okinawan people, including direct action, against it, the first wave came to a temporary end at the end of 1958 due to a compromise among USCAR, the government of the Ryukyu Islands, and landowners on the "lease" price of the land being forcibly confiscated. As a result of it, the majority of the Marine Corps bases, including the Northern Training Area, Camp Schwab, and Camp Hansen, were built under the authoritarian military regime during this period.

The abeyance period between the first and second waves from 1959 to 1966 saw the development of the anti-war anti-base movement, the labor movement, and the movement for greater autonomy. With the outbreak of the Vietnam War, the economic environment for the military and the surrounding area changed dramatically in 1966, when a plan to seize land in Gushikawa Village was proposed by the US Military to reinforce the Tengan Pier, a port facility on the Pacific coast, to support the Vietnam War. The landowners were urged to stop this plan, and they began a sit-in on the construction site. In addition, the struggle to prevent the enactment of two laws (the Local Education District Civil Service Act and the Special Provisions for Educational Civil Servants Act) that sought to limit the political activity of the Teachers' Association of Okinawa (*okinawa kyōshokuin kai*), having played a central role in the reversion movement, emerged as a period of prominence on the political left and symbolized the rise of the second wave.

The second wave emerged from the victory of the struggle to block the enactment of the above-mentioned two laws (*kyōkō nihō soshi tōsō*) in February 1967 and continued until the return of administrative rights in May 1972. The anti-Vietnam War movement was in the background and coincided with the student movement (*zen kyōtō*) at that time. It was not a non-partisan movement like the first wave, but the movements created by the progressive camp overwhelmed the conservative ones. However, the general strike, which was a peak for the times, was set back due to a scenario devised by Japanese and US diplomats, and a cut-throat action by the US military authorities just before the start of the strike (Aketagawa 2008, 259).

After the setback in the general strike, the struggle to prevent Prime Minister Sato's visit to the US in the fall of 1964 and the general strike to shatter the Okinawa Reversion Agreement in June 1971 continued. In addition, anti-reversionism, which attempted to offset the reversion movement, and the struggle against the relocation of the Self-Defense Forces to Japan, along with the reconsideration of the role of the Imperial Army during the Battle of Okinawa, led to the line of thinking that critically reconsidered the Japanese emperor system (Kano 1987; Yoshihara 1968). The Kinwan Struggle was a parallel movement that emerged at the end of this "political struggle" (Arasaki 1999) in Okinawa.

Social Movements as a Collective Medium to Establish a New Way of Life

Finally, I will offer an assessment of Uehara's book and its challenges. Uehara's work is outstanding for its detailed examination of how Okinawans confronted the postwar Japanese capitalist system that landed in Okinawa after the return of administrative rights. In examining the struggle for Kin Bay, Uehara discovered the following:

> In confronting the enclosure of land and resources associated with national policy, the displaced experiences of people brought about by the Battle of Okinawa and the land seizure during the US military occupation was evoked, and those who had cultivated a critical eye for the empires organized the Kin Bay Struggle. It was not only the Mitsubishi Development Corporation of Okinawa, but residents integrated into corporate capitalism and economic modernization, that was confronted by the Kin Bay Struggle. The Kin Bay Protection Association was clearly aware of the resistance to the administration, political parties, labor unions, and local residents who were trying to integrate themselves into it, and it tried to organize a struggle to gain a sense of community that transcended the violence of development. (Uehara 2019, 185)

Because of the emphasis on the movements' political outcomes, the outcome-based perspective (Gamson 1990; Kitschelt 1986; Tilly 1999) tends to evaluate by victories or defeats and undervalues the productive aspects of collective knowledge and cultural practices within social movements. Uehara's citing of Sakihara Seishū, one of the participants and one of the well-known thinkers within the Kin Bay Struggle, shows us an often-neglected perspective that is in opposition to the outcome-based perspective: "It is not a matter of winning or not winning but rather of establishing a way of life for the people in their own selves and in their communities through the movement" (Uehara 2019, 188). While the outcome-based perspective tends to emphasize the political outcome of social movements, Uehara emphasizes, via Sakihara, the collective creation of anti-capitalism agency in the movement process.

Uehara's book, on the other hand, faces several challenges. The first is on a theoretical perspective. The title of the book, the "power of the commons," can be considered to be the result of the historical practice of the struggle in Kin Bay, which was discovered inductively from Uehara's nominalistic description. In spite of this, the concluding part of the paper does not sufficiently define the power of the commons, and the nominalist

nature of the concept is diminished. The second point, which overlaps with the first, is about the definition of "modernization." It is unclear what modernization refers to during the Kin Bay Struggle, and how this "modernization" is related to militarism and the US military administration in the book. Since modernization is a polysemous term (in the Weberian and Wallersteinian sense), it needs to be more elaborately defined.

Despite the above challenges, this book is a valuable and pioneering work of contemporary history that connects the history of the movement in the 1970s and 1980s to the present.

Notes

1. Japonesia is a word coined by the writer Toshio Shimao (1917–86). The word is a combination of the Latin word "Japonia," or the modern Greek word "Iaponia," referring to Japan, and the classical Greek ending "nesia," referring to an archipelago, which means the Japanese archipelago, not the country of Japan. In redefining the term Japonesia as a cultural linkage that is not state-centric, Shimao saw the Ryukyu Archipelago as a "Ryukyu Arc" (*ryūkyūko*), as a cultural linkage of peoples distinct from national boundaries. This concept influenced the residents' movement, including the Kin Bay Struggle, and within the movement, the residents' movement of the Ryukyu Arc created a new map while reinterpreting its own movement as a link between the islands.

2. Miyume Tanji criticizes Arasaki's heterogeneous representation of mass mobilizations because it tends to emphasize mass mobilization as a possible turning point affecting the (inter)national security policy of the US and Japanese governments. Therefore, it tends to overlook the internal diversity of the mass mobilizations (Tanji 2006).

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