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Chapter Author(s): Wesley Iwao Ueunten

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II

Militarized Movements

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5

Rising Up from a Sea of Discontent

The 1970 Koza Uprising in U.S.-Occupied Okinawa

Wesley Iwao Ueunten

Burn, burn, let the whole world burn!

—Overheard by journalists during the Koza Uprising
(Takamine, *Shirarezaru Okinawa no beihei*)

I came across an account of a riot that occurred in Okinawa on December 20, 1970, that made its way to the front page of many major American newspapers but then suddenly disappeared from news coverage the next day. In the aftermath of the "Koza Riot," or what I choose to call the "Koza Uprising" because it was not merely a chaotic and mindless fracas (a point about which I will address later; see Figure 5.1), over seventy cars owned by Americans and a few buildings on the huge Kadena Air Force Base, for which the town of Koza served as an entertainment district, were burned by Okinawans. No such violent protest by Okinawans toward U.S. military occupation can be remembered before or since then.

This chapter seeks to examine critically the historical and social context of the Koza Uprising; in doing so, it aims to reveal the nature of a tripartite relationship between Okinawa, the United States, and Japan. That is, the Koza Uprising took place against the backdrop of U.S. imperialism in Asia and its colonial rule over Okinawa. Japan had previously been the colonial ruler of Okinawa after forcibly annexing the former Ryûkyûan Kingdom in 1879. Consequently, the U.S. takeover of Okinawa in 1945 was the transfer of control from one colonial ruler to another. However, Japan has benefited from U.S. colonial rule over Okinawa, as its postwar "economic miracle" was made possible by the U.S. military umbrella concentrated in Okinawa. In the postwar period, then, Japan became a "junior partner" to

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the United States' hegemonic influence in Asia; Japan's defeat meant that it was forced to acquiesce to a subordinate status under the United States, but it did not mean giving up dominant status over other Asian countries.

Okinawa became the "keystone" in this unholy alliance by allowing Japan to contain the most blatant aspects of U.S. domination in a place far enough away to remain out of the consciousness of the general American and Japanese populations but near enough to offer the benefits of U.S. military presence. Even now, about 20 percent of Okinawa, the main island in the Ryûkyû Archipelago, is occupied by U.S. military bases. About 75 percent of all U.S. military facilities in Japan are located in Okinawa, despite the fact that Okinawa comprises less than 1 percent of the land area of Japan. To put things into perspective, the size of Okinawa is approximately 454 square miles, or almost exactly the size of the city of Los Angeles, and smaller than the island of Kaua'i in the Hawaiian archipelago.[1]

Interestingly enough, the tripartite relationship bred the conditions for the development of a "Third World" consciousness among Okinawans. Given that Okinawa was and still is a colonized space, it is not surprising that Okinawans developed an affinity to other colonized peoples in the world. A Third World consciousness, with strong ties to U.S. movements, also became concrete and interpersonal with the presence of a large number of soldiers, many of whom came from inner-city and working-class backgrounds. Among these soldiers were African Americans, who were disproportionately represented in the Vietnam War. There were also white political activists from the United States with whom Okinawans were in direct contact. Thus, in the midst of the uprising, Okinawans consciously refrained from harming African American soldiers and their property.

However, given that the United States' entry into Asia was from the start a masculine incursion (starting from at least Commodore Matthew Perry's landing in Okinawa in 1853) and that the U.S. military has always been led and "manned" predominantly by males, we cannot analyze Okinawa as merely a colonized and racialized space. Okinawa must be seen as part of a larger network of U.S. military installations and U.S.-friendly countries that catered to the sexual needs of American troops. This network resembles and even overlaps the former Japanese military's arrangement of military installations and brothels (euphemistically referred to as "comfort stations") and the present Japanese system of economic incursions and sex tourism throughout Asia and the Pacific. In this way, both

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Japanese and American empires in Asia must be seen as gendered and sexualized projects and projections.

According to 1969 statistics, 7,400 Okinawan women, or about one in every 40 to 50 women in Okinawa aged 10 to 60, were involved in prostitution.[2] Koza, where the uprising took place, was the major site for the bar and sex industry that catered to American troops. Shannon McCune, former civil administrator in Okinawa and later president of the University of Vermont, describes Koza in the early 1970s in *The Ryukyu Islands*: "Koza has little design, being completely dependent for its livelihood on the American servicemen who flock to it while one passes from Kadena airbase, the Marine training camps located to the north and the Army barracks to the south. Koza is a city of bars, pawnshops, 'hotels' and various clothing and souvenir shops. The neon signs and garish billboards are ugly though eye-catching. In recent years the illicit drug traffic has been a major problem. There is truly little of the charm of Okinawa to be found on the crowded streets of Koza!"[3] McCune devotes less than a page in his book to describing Koza, choosing to focus on Okinawa's scenery, quaint history, and interesting culture—aspects of Okinawa that had more "charm." Perhaps the charm of Okinawa lies in its seeming conformity to an Orientalist notion that it is stuck in an "ancient time" and not able to move forward without the West's guidance. Koza with its "neon signs and garish billboards" and "illicit drug traffic" is too modern and, perhaps, too similar to many blighted areas in the United States to be charming. Consequently, Koza uncomfortably reveals the racialized, gendered, and sexualized aspects of the U.S. military presence in Okinawa while reminding Americans of the racialized, gendered, and sexualized aspects of American society itself.

It is perhaps with the desire to believe the notion that Okinawans are stuck in time and in need of guidance that McCune writes about them: "The Okinawans are an island people. The sea, and particularly its typhoons, is ever present in their lives. Insular and isolated, they tend to feel that the whole world revolves about them. In fact, however, the major decisions that have changed their history and their destinies have been made in places far distant from their shore."[4] From the view of island people such as Okinawans, "empire" and "colonization" are not abstract concepts, since they manifest themselves in concrete experiences of death, destruction, diasporization, discrimination, exploitation, and oppression. Resisting empire and colonization is not simply a matter of believing that they

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Figure 5.1. Photo of a burning car in the aftermath of Koza Uprising. Photo by Koh Yoshioka, reproduced with permission

do not exist. However, a critical examination of the Koza Uprising reveals the postwar U.S. colonial empire for what it really is: an insular and isolated island in itself.[5] Its existence depends greatly on the fragile idea that the world revolves around it and on its ability to keep from view the seas of discontent on which it floats. This chapter follows the nearly concealed routes on this sea of discontent, connecting the Koza Uprising to the past and to the shared destinies of people from distant shores.

The Koza Uprising

According to U.S. military documents based on local Okinawan civilian police records, at about 1:00 a.m. on December 20, 1970, an American under the influence of alcohol hit an Okinawan pedestrian, who was also drunk, as he was crossing a street in Koza. The victim was taken to the hospital at about 1:30 a.m. and the local Okinawan police began conducting an investigation. The investigation was completed without trouble except for the jeering and hissing of the crowd that had gathered. The trouble began when the police tried to have the offender's vehicle removed from

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the accident scene. By then the crowd had grown to about two hundred people. According to the report, the crowd began crying out, "Don't turn over the car to the MPs [military police]," "If we permit the car to leave here, we will see the Itoman case repeated again," and "Put [the American offender] under the people's trial."[6]

A few weeks earlier, on September 18, 1970, an intoxicated U.S. soldier driving in the town of Itoman struck and instantly killed Kinjo Toyo, an Okinawan woman who had been walking on a sidewalk. As the U.S. military tried to tow the car involved in the accident away, a crowd of Okinawan civilians surrounded the tow truck and demanded a thorough investigation. Civilians kept a vigil at the accident scene for seven days, but the U.S. military later found the soldier innocent of any wrongdoing. Incidents such as this happened with high frequency in the 1960s, and the death of Kinjo brought the anger of Okinawans to a boiling point. Okinawan civilians thus organized a public demonstration in Itoman that took place only four days before the Koza Uprising.[7]

The Okinawa civilian police went ahead and had the car taken to the Koza police station, driven by an MP officer, with the offender and an unidentified Okinawan woman in the backseat.[8] Five or six MPs remained to control traffic, but the Okinawan assistant inspector at the scene judged that it was wise to have the MPs leave the scene immediately because of the increasingly unruly crowd. However, the retreat by the MPs led the crowd to become even more aggressive as the group stopped one of the MP cars from leaving, causing its passengers to flee on foot. The crowd kept growing to about five hundred people. At about 2:10 a.m., a car driven by an American approached the gathering, upon which four or five Okinawans dashed out and shouted, "An American car is passing!" and "Kill!"[9] The original words used by the Okinawans might have been *kuruse* or *takkuruse*, or even the Japanese word *korose*. *Korose* literally means "kill," but the Okinawan *kuruse* or *takkuruse* could mean both "hit" and "kill." Seldom do Okinawans use the word "kill," and, in the case of the Koza Uprising, it is likely that the crowd was threatening to beat up the Americans rather than kill them.

It is imperative here to emphasize that the uprising was not about senseless killing and violence. In fact, the uprising resulted in no deaths, damage to private businesses, or looting. Further, of great importance is the fact that the Okinawans were selective of their targets: in the midst of

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the mass action, the participants called out to each other not to hurt the black soldiers.[10]

The crowd stopped the American car from moving, and at about 2:15 a.m. they began throwing rocks. A piece of a cement block, the size of a human head, was thrown into the windshield, hurting a person inside. Another similar-sized piece of cement block was thrown through the back window, hurting another person. By that time, the crowd grew to one thousand. At 2:30 a.m., four MPs arrived and began firing shots in the air. The crowd retreated, giving the MPs and the Okinawan police a chance to take the injured persons in the car away. As the MPs and police drove away, however, the crowd went completely out of control and proceeded to split into two groups, overturning cars with yellow plates, or plates with F-numbers, which indicated that they were owned by Americans. They pushed the cars into the road and burned them. The crowd even went onto Kadena Air Base and set fire to some buildings.[11]

The U.S. military's report of the incident said that after the group split, an MP formation fired a volley of warning shots. However, it reported that "a well organized and disciplined group of approximately sixty Local National youths came out of an alley on the west side of Moromi Street in a formation of three columns about twenty persons deep in a quick-time step carrying wicker baskets of rocks and bottles."[12]

According to Aniya Masaaki, the crowd also yelled, "Yankee Go Home!" Women working in bars came out to fill cola bottles with gasoline to feed the fires. The military mobilized about five hundred armed soldiers and tried to stop the crowd with tear gas and fire hoses, but they were repelled by flying rocks. After six hours, about seventy cars had been burned and nineteen Okinawans had been arrested.[13]

The Okinawan mayor of Koza at the time recalled that he had never seen anything like the uprising even though he had lived through World War II: "Even though there were over one thousand people moving about, they did not say anything or make a sound. The group of young ones came, turned over the Americans' cars, and threw cola bottles filled with gasoline on the cars and set them on fire. The people watching folded their arms, sat down, and watched the overturned cars burn. It was really strange."[14] The incident was covered internationally in the news and appeared in major American newspapers on December 21, 1970. For example, a *Los Angeles Times* front-page article was titled, "2,000 Okinawans Storm U.S. Air Base." The *Washington Post* had a photo of burned-out cars

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on a Koza Street along with two articles on its front page with the headings "Okinawans Battle GIs, Burn Cars" and "Islanders Resent U.S. 'Arrogance.'" The *New York Times* covered the uprising with a photo of "some 80 American cars burning" on page three. Americans became painfully aware of the anger of an island people about whom they knew little beyond such representations of being "quaint" and "docile" as in the popular movie *Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956).

The news of the Koza Uprising quickly disappeared from American newspapers. Any follow-up to the uprising was conspicuously absent from the newspapers that had covered it the day before. Interestingly, some papers reported U.S. plans to reduce the number of troops in Okinawa but made no mention of the Koza Uprising.[15]

Contextualizing the Koza Uprising

> Tou nu yu kara, yamatu nu yu, yamatu nu yu kara amerika yu *(From the Chinese world to the Japanese world, from the Japanese world to the American world)*
>
> —Postwar Okinawan folk song, "Jidai nu nagari" (The flow of the times)

To depart from imperialistic worldviews that cannot understand the seas of discontent from which the Koza Uprising rose up, I invoke the Okinawan concept of *yu*.[16] This term corresponds with the Chinese character 世 (*shì*). The Okinawan concept of *yu*, similar to the Japanese *yo*, corresponds with the English words "world" or "society," but *yu* also refers to a particular era and the social relations of that era. More than the Japanese concept of *yo*, however, *yu* expresses Okinawan historical memory of external introductions and imposition of world orders, world systems, and worldviews. The following contextualization includes Japan's use of force to integrate Okinawa into the Japanese world (*yamatu yu*), the world of war (*ikusa yu*) in the form of the horrific Battle of Okinawa in 1945, and the American military occupation (*amerika yu*) from 1945 to 1972. It must be pointed out here, however, that each *yu* is not in a linear temporal relationship to the others. Rather, *yu*'s coexist, overlap, and interact. For example, Okinawa is now an official part of Japan and has thus returned to *yamatu yu*, but the presence of American military bases needed

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to protect Japanese economic and political interests still places it clearly within *amerika yu*. *Ikusa yu* is alive in the scars and trauma of the Battle of Okinawa's survivors and their descendants, as well as in attempts by the Japanese government to cover up its military atrocities against Okinawan civilians during the battle. The continued use of Okinawa as a staging ground for wars to protect American and Japanese interests serves as a daily reminder to Okinawans that *yamatu yu*, *amerika yu*, and *ikusa yu* are not just abstract memories of the past.

Yamatu yu (The Japanese World): Japanese Colonization

Ironically, the era of Japanese colonization over Okinawa was spurred by nascent American imperialism in Asia. In 1853, American naval officer Commodore Matthew C. Perry and a fleet of gunboats arrived in Okinawa on its way to force open Japan's doors to trade and diplomacy. In Okinawa, Perry coerced the Ryûkyûan Kingdom to sign a treaty with the United States after having marched his way into Shuri Palace with a company of marines in full dress, two fieldpieces, and a band that played "Hail Columbia!"[17]

Perry left a part of his crew in Okinawa when he departed for Japan. During their stay, an incident took place that foretold the coming injustices and crimes against Okinawan women by American military personnel. The event concerned an attempt to rape an Okinawan woman by one of Perry's crewmembers. A group of local Okinawans later pursued the crewmember, leading him to a precipice where he fell into the ocean and drowned. Upon his return, Perry ordered the trial and punishment of Okinawans who were involved in the death of his crewmember.[18]

Perry's arrival in Edo Bay in 1853, and his gunboat diplomacy, drove home the point that Japan needed to catch up with the West to avoid being colonized by it. This realization led to the overthrow of the obsolete Tokugawa government in 1868 during the Meiji Restoration. Playing a major role in the Meiji Restoration was the feudal domain of Satsuma in the southern region of Japan. In 1609, Satsuma staged a military invasion of Okinawa, known then as Ryûkyû,[19] under the pretense of punishing it for not contributing to Japan's earlier attempts to invade China. The Ryûkyûan Kingdom was allowed to remain in existence, but, for over 350 years, Satsuma used the threat of military force to skim off profits from Ryûkyû–China trade and extract taxes from Okinawa.

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Oguma Eiichiro writes that the dual relationship of the Ryûkyûs to China and Satsuma was possible in the international order of East Asia before the introduction of the modern nation-state model. However, when Japan adopted the nation-state model in response to the advancement of Western nations into East Asia in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the dual allegiance status of the Ryûkyû Kingdom became unsustainable. This began the process in which, according to Oguma, "Ryukyuans" became "Japanese."[20]

If it had been simply an issue of Japan's relationship to Ryûkyûs then it is likely that Japan would not have annexed the former kingdom because of the rather strong domestic resistance toward accepting "foreign" Ryûkyûans as Japanese. The reason for Japan's annexation of the Ryûkyûs was national defense. Japan had already secured its northern defenses against Russia by moving into Hokkaido by the 1870s, but it had not secured its southern borders. The annexation of Okinawa in 1879 was the initial stage of the solidification of Japan's southern frontier against the rest of the world.[21]

The assignment of "prefecture" rank to Okinawa barely concealed its status as a Japanese colony. The several thousand Japanese who settled in Okinawa soon after 1879 were mainly from Kagoshima (formerly known as Satsuma before the Meiji Restoration) and Osaka. The government of Okinawa Prefecture was predominantly staffed by Kagoshima men, with the exception of lower officials who were token natives. Commerce was controlled by people from Osaka. Okinawa's sudden inclusion into Japan's capitalistic system created conditions for widespread poverty and suffering. Since sugarcane became a cash crop, much land was appropriated for its cultivation, while less land was used to grow food. Consequently, the Okinawans were forced into an increasingly dependent situation where they grew sugarcane for cash to buy foodstuff from Japan. When world sugar prices dropped after World War I, Okinawans experienced what they call *sotetsu jigoku*, literally translated as "cycad hell," where many people were forced to eat the *sotetsu*, or cycad, to survive. Since *sotetsu* is poisonous if not prepared correctly, many people died from eating it. To make matters worse, the central government overtaxed the Okinawans. In 1882, Okinawa paid 655,279 yen in taxes to the central government, while the government spent only 455,136 yen on Okinawa. Other available figures show that in the ten years from 1919 to 1928, Okinawa paid sixty-eight

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million yen to the Japanese government, which spent only twenty-three million yen on Okinawa.[22]

The economic exploitation of Okinawa went hand in hand with racial discrimination. Every aspect of Okinawan culture was seen as inferior. Even outside of schools, Okinawan music, dance, religion, and customs were discouraged, while everything that came from the Japanese mainland was seen as civilized, modern, and superior. Okinawan scholar Nomura Koya provides a sophisticated analysis of the link between Japan's forced military annexation of Okinawa and its forced assimilation of Okinawans. He writes, "The military annexation of the Ryukyuan kingdom was part of the territorial expansion of Japanese imperialism and the beginning of colonial violence toward the Okinawans. As have others who have been colonized, the Okinawans were labeled as 'backward,' 'uncivilized,' and 'second-class citizens' by the Japanese from the very beginning of annexation. Since simply discriminating against the Okinawans would only heighten their dissatisfaction and thus make it difficult for Japan to govern the colony effectively, the one issue that surfaced for the colonialists was how to have the colonized identify with Japanese nationalism."[23] Nomura's further discussion reveals deeper aspects of the Okinawan experience under Japanese colonization and paves the way for understanding the affinity that Okinawans later had for Third World consciousness. He writes that assimilation for Okinawans was not simply the process of acquiring Japanese culture. Utilizing the concept of *intellectual colonialism*, which Edward Said used to describe how "the colonized internalize the values and substantive perceptions of the colonizers," Nomura talks about the deep psychological effects of being under Japanese colonial rule. In other words, the inclusion of Okinawans into the Japanese nation-state entailed the internalization of the notion that they were "backward," "uncivilized," and "second-class citizens."

Ikusa yu (The World of War): The Battle of Okinawa

Of further importance to understanding the Koza Uprising is the strong Okinawan consciousness of how being Okinawan—culturally, linguistically, racially, and otherwise—could result in unspeakable death, despair, and destruction during the Battle of Okinawa, which took place from April to June 1945. To protect the "homeland"—of which Okinawa was not considered a part—the Japanese military fought a desperate battle on

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Okinawa, in which, as historian George Feifer writes in *The Battle of Okinawa*, some 150,000 *noncombatant* Okinawans died.[24] The final Okinawan death toll, however, is probably higher, since among the dead were many Okinawan teenagers who were recruited by the Japanese Army as soldiers and nurses.

Survivors of the Battle of Okinawa pass down stories of how Japanese soldiers requisitioned cave shelters, food, and water, forcing Okinawan inhabitants to fend for themselves. There are also stories of Japanese soldiers terrorizing Okinawan mothers to smother their crying babies. Further, there are abundant stories of Okinawans being killed by Japanese soldiers for speaking the Okinawan language. This linguistic profiling was seen as necessary by the Japanese military to prevent Okinawans from spying for the enemy.[25]

For example, on April 9, 1945, the Japanese military gave the following order: "From now on soldiers and civilians as well are all required to use nothing but standard Japanese. Those who speak Okinawan will be regarded as spies and receive appropriate punishment."[26] Master Sergeant Kayama Tadashi, who carried out executions of civilians on the off-lying island of Kume, explained his acts in terms of the need to control Okinawans rather than to protect them: "My troops consisted of a mere thirty or so soldiers while there were ten thousand residents. So if the residents had turned on us and sided with the Americans, we would have been finished right away. So . . . we needed to take firm measures. So I conducted executions in order to keep the civilian residents under our control."[27] Death that did not come directly at the hands of either Japanese or American soldiers often came in a more tragic form: forced suicides and honorable deaths in the name of the Japanese emperor. Stories of Okinawans being coerced by the Japanese military to kill themselves in order to escape torture and rape by Americans abound in Okinawa and in the diaspora.[28]

Amerika yu (The American World): American Occupation

Prior to these forced suicides and honorable deaths, plans for the U.S. military occupation of Okinawa were drawn up in conjunction with the U.S. military invasion of Okinawa sometime in the summer of 1944. Fifteen navy and four army officers were dispatched from Washington to Schofield Barracks on O'ahu, Hawaiʻi, to plan the U.S. military government

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of Okinawa. Consequently, the combat forces involved in the invasion of Okinawa had the central role of preparing the postwar blueprints for Okinawa.[29] While the U.S. military may have shown more concern for the lives of Okinawan civilians than the Japanese military, U.S. military interests ultimately held the highest priority over the livelihood and liberty of Okinawan civilians. U.S. Brigadier General William Crist, who was responsible for the military government project on Okinawa, announced in a radio broadcast to the rest of the United States that "the first aim of the military government is to make it possible for combat units to concentrate on the war without having to worry about non-combat personnel." He added that "the military government will take measures to provide the minimum relief needed for civilian survival under international law" but "minimize the economic burden on the United States by promoting economic self-sufficiency in the occupied territory." Crist then stated brusquely, "We have no intention of playing Santa Claus for the residents of the occupied territory."[30]

It is with this attitude that the United States invaded and occupied Okinawa in 1945. It did not officially relinquish control until 1972, when it "returned" the islands to Japan. Consequently, Okinawa became a U.S. colony in which the democracy of the Okinawans was sacrificed. In 1950, the United States set up the U.S. Civil Administration of the Ryûkyûs (USCAR) and the Government of the Ryûkyû Islands (GRI). The USCAR was controlled by Washington and oversaw the GRI, which consisted of a USCAR-appointed Okinawan executive and a popularly elected legislature. However, the GRI was clearly subordinate to U.S. interests, as Taira Koji, an Okinawan scholar, writes, "It was clear that civil liberties under the USCAR-GRI regime were inferior to those enjoyed by citizens in any prefecture of Japan under the 1947 Constitution. A matter of symbolic importance was that governors of Japanese prefectures were popularly elected, while the chief executive of the GRI was not. Bills passed by the Ryukyuan legislature were also subject to a USCAR veto. Decisions of the Ryukyuan courts were sometimes reviewed, reversed, or removed from their jurisdiction by USCAR."[31] In the years following the Communist takeover of China in 1949 and the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the United States stepped up efforts to expand its military facilities on Okinawa. Land was often taken from Okinawans violently, with the use of guns and bulldozers. An account given by the Okinawa Prefectural Cultural

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Promotion Foundation illustrates the brute force employed in obtaining land on Okinawa:

> On 5 December [1953] at 8:15 a.m. the American military bulldozers suddenly arrived. 1,200 residents hurried to the scene, surrounded the bulldozer, and demanded that the bulldozers leave. Then, about one hour later, fourteen or fifteen armored vehicles arrived with four or five light machine guns and more than a dozen heavy machine guns with live ammunition. The residents were surrounded by 350 armed soldiers in full battle gear. The somewhat surreal atmosphere at first gave the impression that it was all being done just for show, but as the circle tightened and the bayonet points began to touch flesh, many began to fear the day would end in a bloody massacre.
>
> Irritated at the obstinate resistance tactics of the residents, the U.S. soldiers finally began attacking the people with their rifle butts, kicking them with their combat boots, and throwing them into drainage ditches, among other things.[32]

Along with these strong-arm tactics, the U.S. military employed dubious "democratic" means to acquire land for military facilities in Okinawa. In June 1956, the Price Report was presented by a special subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee in the House of Representatives, chaired by Rep. Melvin Price. The Price Report that resulted from the special subcommittee's inspection tour of Okinawa led by Price in the fall of 1955 recommended a lump-sum payment to Okinawans for land acquired for U.S. military facilities. The terms of the payment were not acceptable to the Okinawans, and widespread protest swept through Okinawa.[33] In the cold war situation, the protests caused great concern for the U.S. government as evidenced by a Department of State intelligence report. Dated October 26, 1956 (since declassified) and entitled "US Administration of the Ryukyus Enters a Critical Period," the report stated, "If discontent in the Ryukyus continues to grow, the problem could arouse in Asia the highly-charged theme of 'anti-colonialism.' The Communist bloc, exploiting its pretension that decreasing tensions obviate the need for sacrifices in the name of military security, have begun to encourage Asian misgivings over protracted US military government of the Ryukyus and to threaten action in the United Nations."[34] As shown previously, the U.S. military tried to

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put up a facade of democracy in Okinawa by establishing the GRI. Reminiscent of the Japanese military's disregard for the protection of Okinawan lives and lands, the Price Report unapologetically revealed that the U.S. military had no genuine concern for Okinawan democracy:

> We are in Okinawa because it constitutes an essential part of our worldwide defenses. In Japan and the Philippines, as in other parts of the world, our base tenure is dependent upon the continued existence of friendly governments. In the Ryukyu Islands the circumstances of our political control and the absence of a belligerent nationalistic movement allow us to plan for long-term use of a forward military base in the offshore island chain of the Far East-Pacific area, subject, of course to our own national policy. Here there are no restrictions imposed by a foreign government on our rights to store or to employ atomic weapons.[35]

Important in this historical discussion is the early censorship of Okinawan writers by U.S. occupation authorities. In *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory*, Michael Molasky provides an informative account and analysis of the work of Arakawa Akira. In 1953, Arakawa founded *Ryūdai bungaku* (Ryûkyû University literature), which was the student literary magazine at the University of the Ryûkyûs. The magazine was closely associated with the protest movement against the U.S. military, as several of its editors were key organizers in it. In 1956, the poem Arakawa submitted to *Ryūdai bungaku*, "An Orphan's Song," was censored by occupation authorities because it encouraged resistance against the occupation. To circumvent censorship, the editors of *Ryūdai bungaku* published the next issue without submitting it for clearance by the American censors. In the cold war environment of the time, the American authorities cracked down on the magazine by recalling copies that had been distributed, banning publication for six months, and expelling four editors who had been part of the protest movement.[36] One of the submissions in the magazine, Arakawa's poem "The Colored Race," threatened the American authorities because it talked about racial discrimination by people from the white race as well as the common subordinate statuses of the yellow and black races. For example, in one part of his poem, he writes,

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Your skin, like ours, is not white
A rugged dark brown, it is
the color of iron.
Covering ineradicable welts
from the whip
Your brown skin is
Strong, like stone.
You who are Black
and we who are Yellow,
Together, we are the Colored Race.[37]

In other sections of the poem, Arakawa talks about the racial identities imposed by the dominant whites with pointed references to skin color:

As for "Yellow,"
If you want to call us "Yellow"—
Go right ahead!
We don't mind being the Yellow Race
We are the unadulterated Yellow Race.
Go right ahead! Call us your
"*Yellow Fellow*."[38]

Molasky argues that Arakawa's poem illustrates the arbitrary and changeable nature of racial categories imposed by the white occupiers. He writes that "'The Colored Race' suggests that oppressed peoples perpetuate their own subjugation by internalizing the subjugator's discourse, and the poem attempts to usurp authority from the white occupiers by redefining the language of race."[39]

Up to the 1960s, the presence of U.S. military bases, military personnel, and military dependents brought many disruptive elements into Okinawa. These include the screeching of military airplanes that cause stress to the people living near the bases, the storing of nuclear weapons and nerve gas that always pose the threat of a potential catastrophe, and the committing of crimes by U.S. military personnel toward Okinawans that evoke feelings of stress, fear, and pain. In June 1967, for example, the Okinawan newspaper *Ryûkyû shimposha* conducted a public survey of Okinawan attitudes toward the U.S. military. When asked if the U.S. military bases made Okinawans feel secure, 45.5 percent of the respondents expressed

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strong anxiety for their safety, whereas 30.0 percent felt "somehow insecure." Only 1.7 percent felt that their safety was assured by the presence of U.S. bases.[40]

Other incidents that happened in the late 1960s illustrate why the respondents would be so strongly concerned with U.S. military occupation. In 1965, a trailer carried by a Lockheed C-130 aircraft fell to the ground and killed an Okinawan schoolgirl. In 1966, a KC-135 jet-fuel tanker skidded at Kadena Air Base, crashed into a car, and killed a man on a nearby highway. In 1968, drinking water and crops were contaminated by a fuel-oil leak from a military pipeline. In the same year, a bomb-laden B-52 headed on a mission to Vietnam failed to take off and exploded at Kadena Air Base. Fortunately, the crash occurred on base and not in a densely populated area or near ordnance storage facilities, which were believed to store nuclear weapons.[41]

Crimes committed against Okinawans by Americans connected to the U.S. military also increased from an already-high number of 973 cases in 1964 to 1,003 cases in 1965. By 1966, the numbers rose to 1,407. Of those totals, "atrocious and violent crimes" exponentially rose from 265 cases in 1964 to 446 cases in 1966.[42] The lion's share of these "atrocious and violent crimes" was against women. Just as in Perry's time, American military interests in Okinawa were a greater priority than the protection of Okinawan women against sexual violence perpetrated by American military personnel. In most cases, Americans who committed crimes against Okinawans were often let go or given light punishment. A sampling of the crimes against Okinawan women by American military personnel in the years from 1969 to 1971 gives us a graphic illustration of the asymmetrical power relations between male American servicemen and Okinawan women. This asymmetry is evidenced in the punishment administered toward American servicemen.[43] Figure 5.2 is a small portion of a much longer list that has now been made available to the public. This list, along with other documents, was introduced to people who attended presentations by Okinawan women activists who traveled across the United States in 1996 after three U.S. Marines raped a twelve-year-old Okinawan girl. While the original list starts in 1945 and ends in 1995, the excerpt includes only the incidents that happened around the time of the Koza Uprising. As with most statistics on crimes against women, this list cannot be said to be complete and, moreover, does not include sexual violence in the form

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Date	Description of Crime	Punishment
2/22/69	A twenty-one-year-old hostess is found and her nude body disposed of by a private second-class in an artillery regiment in Koza City.	Arrest, no record
3/3/69	The body of a twenty-year-old hostess is found, and the official autopsy leads to the conclusion that the crime was committed by a general infantryman (GI).	Unsolved
11/?/69 [exact date unknown]	A twenty-year-old woman, returning from her part-time job in Naha City, was raped and stabbed with a knife repeatedly on a public street when she resisted her GI assailant.	Two-month salary cut and discharge
5/28/70	A twenty-one-year-old woman was attacked at her job on a military base in Urasoe City by a GI.	Not guilty Insufficient proof
5/30/70	A high school student is attacked by a U.S. military sergeant, and is stabbed in the abdomen and head in a failed rape attempt. School teachers, women's organizations, and high school students issue a strong protest and the suspect is arrested.	Three-year sentence, demotion
[exact date unknown]	A woman proprietor of a bar is raped when a GI forces his way behind the counter.	Accused is transferred during trial
4/23/71	The nude body of a twenty-two-year-old hostess is found at a grave. The testimony of a witness results in the arrest of a Marine corporal.	Acquitted due to lack of evidence
5/1/71	A forty-one-year-old woman is stabbed to death in Kin Town by a Marine private first class and is arrested after his fingerprints and blood are found.	No record
5/21/71	A junior high school student is raped by a GI in Koza City.	Suspect not found
5/23/71	A twenty-four-year-old hostess is abducted, taken to an abandoned house, and raped on her way to work.	Unsolved
7/10/71	A mentally retarded twelve-year-old girl who is playing in front of her house is gang-raped by three GIs in Ginowan City.	Arrest, no record

Figure 5.2. Crimes committed against Okinawan women by U.S. military personnel, 1969–1971

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of prostitution and "consensual" relationships based on false promises by American men of marriage and life in the United States.

From *Yu* to Us: Koza as a Nexus of Internal, External, and Sexual Colonialism

Why would unarmed women and men stage a violent attack against the most powerful military in the world? Why was it that the protesters seemed to have been disciplined enough to overpower the MPs? Because the women working in the bars in Koza quickly produced the Molotov cocktails used in the uprising, had they already been anticipating such an event? Finally, what do we make of participants in the uprising who made a conscious effort to refrain from hurting African American soldiers? Such questions require looking at Koza as a meeting place of U.S. internal colonialism, characterized by racism against African Americans and other nonwhites, and external U.S. and Japanese colonialisms, manifested with impunity in Okinawa. Further, internal and external colonialism cannot be analyzed separately from sexual colonization because the oppression of African Americans and other racial minorities in American history has been inextricably linked to the commodification, exploitation, and subjugation of nonwhite female and male bodies.

The city of Koza did not exist before the American occupation. It developed as a base town that catered to Kadena Air Base, the largest U.S. military base in Asia, in the central part of Okinawa. A large proportion of the people of Koza settled there after having been displaced by the destruction of the Battle of Okinawa and by the construction of Kadena and other U.S. military bases. Others were returnees from Japan's former colonies in Asia and the Pacific Islands. Many of the displaced groups depended economically on the bars, strip clubs, and other components of a recreation industry that catered to young male Americans during the Vietnam conflict.

Koza was where local Okinawan rock bands entertained American soldiers nightly. Surviving the often unruly and violent audiences of soldiers on their way back from the war in Vietnam, a handful of these rock bands became wildly popular among American soldiers for their macho personas that matched their ear-piercing singing, aggressive guitar riffing, and driving bass and drum rhythm making. The ultra masculine personas that Okinawan rock bands developed perhaps also reflected an Okinawan male response to the sexualized and feminized positionality that Okinawa, in general, and Koza, in particular, was forced to hold in East Asian

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geopolitics. The temporary control that they achieved over American soldiers through their performances was a brief relief from the lack of control they had in their own lives under U.S. military occupation.

While they could captivate their American-soldier audiences in nightly performances, like other Okinawans, Okinawan rock musicians were reminded daily of the sexualized nature of the U.S. occupation and of their powerlessness against American extraterritoriality. For example, in an oral-history interview, one musician talks about how his wife and younger sister were half white because of the American occupation army. The musician also explained how a military jeep driven by an American soldier hit and killed his grandmother as she was waiting for a bus. The driver fled into the military base and was never found. Recalling both his grandmother's death and his participation in the Koza Uprising, he says, "I still don't like Americans. There are good and bad people among them, but I must say that the bad feelings that I have held for them since I was a child exploded in the Koza incident."[44]

Higashionna Tsuneo was born in the Philippines in 1938 and moved to Misato Village after the war and later to Koza. Using the pen name of Higashi Mineo, he wrote a novella entitled *Okinawa no shōnen* (Okinawa boy) in 1971 that was awarded the prestigious Akutagawa Prize in 1972.[45] The novella is a coming-of-age story of the protagonist Tsuneyoshi, whose family returns from Saipan to Okinawa after the war and ends up running a bar in Koza that caters to American soldiers. The bar is actually their family home, and Tsuneyoshi often has to give up his bed to prostitutes and their customers when the bedroom next to the bar was filled. The following is an excerpt from *Okinawa no shōnen* where Tsuneyoshi is awakened by his mother to give up his bed:

> "Let them all use one bed together," I said, sitting up.
>
> "Don't be silly! Now hurry or we'll lose this chance to make some money."
>
> Mom unfolded a starched sheet as she rushed me out of bed.
>
> "This sure is a lousy business you're in."
>
> "There's no use complaining. It's how we eat, you know."
>
> "It's still lousy."
>
> It made me want to cry, thinking people would probably do anything to eat. I took my school cap and satchel off my desk and pushed them under my bed out of sight.

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> "Excuse us," said Michiko. She came into my room leading a soldier by the hand. As she put her arm around his waist, she glanced at me with a faint smile.[46]

Higashionna's writings express the seething discontent of the people of Koza over their racial, economic, and sexual subordination to the occupying U.S. military. Such discontent lay just below the surface of the forced civility that Okinawans had to display toward American military personnel in order to survive as their service providers and entertainers. It is because of this context of discontent that surrounded Okinawan life in Koza that I have chosen to use the word "uprising" rather than "riot" to describe the events of December 20, 1970. My choice of words follows Okinawan historian Aniya Masaaki's insistence on describing the events of that day using the term *minshū hōki*,[47] which can be roughly translated as "popular uprising," "popular revolt," or "popular rebellion." He explains,

> Since this *minshū hōki* was not something planned, had no leaders, and was carried out in response to the course of events at the time, one could call it a *sōdō* [disturbance or riot], but it was not a disorderly *sōdō*. Even though it was an anti-American *sōdō*, it was not simply an exclusionist act. It was instead a response to the unjust and tyrannical rule of the U.S. military.
>
> At the time, the U.S. military could not hold the people down using military force. One could say it illustrated both the strength to fight in response to the 20 years of oppression since the war ended and to the weight of history. [48]

His argument is similar to critiques of the word "riot" when used to describe urban revolts in the United States during the 1960s. For example, Herbert Gans wrote in 1968, "Events commonly described as riots or civil disorders are in reality *spontaneous rebellions*, carried out impulsively by Negroes disenchanted with the way they have been treated by white American society. These rebellions are the natural outcome of the years of anger that have been building up in the ghettos of the nation's cities and towns."[49] Similarly, Robert Blauner wrote that the "ghetto riots" in several urban areas across the United States were not merely attempts by blacks to gain fuller integration into the social order and access to the material benefits that were enjoyed by the majority of American citizens. Rather, "the

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revolts pointed to alienation from this system on the part of many poor and also not-so-poor Blacks." Blauner's description of "internally colonized" blacks rising up to resist rings similarly to Aniya's explanation for his use of the word *minshū hōki*: "One of the most significant consequences of the process of colonization is a weakening of the colonized individual and collective will to resist his oppression. It has been easier to contain and control Black ghettoes because communal bonds and group solidarity have been weakened through divisions among leadership, failures of organization, and a general disappointment that accompanies social oppression. The riots are a signal that the will to resist has broken the mold of accommodation."[50] In explaining the application of the "internal colony" model to blacks in the United States, Blauner points out that "the classical colonialism of the imperialist era and American racism developed out of the same historical situation and reflected a common world economic and power stratification." That is, the African slave trade weakened Africa and made it less able to resist European colonialism. Slavery also contributed to the accumulation of wealth in America and Europe, which allowed for those areas to develop technological and military superiority over non-Western and nonwhite peoples. This process laid "the basis for racist ideologies that were elaborated to justify control and exploitation of non-white people." Consequently, Western colonization over nonwhite people necessarily entails racism.[51]

Okinawan experiences of death, destruction, and discrimination under Japanese rule no doubt increased their comprehension of American racism in Okinawa. However, the intense daily contact between American soldiers and Okinawans in Koza was also reflected in sophisticated understandings of race, as evidenced by the previously mentioned poem, "The Colored Race," by Koza resident Arakawa. Another perceptive observation of race can be found from the account of a Koza rock musician who himself was half white but identified closely with Okinawan issues: "Up to the 1970s, Teruya was the black town and Center Street was the white town. It was the era of racial discrimination and Orientals were looked at very differently. Yeah, there was discrimination toward Orientals . . . Vietnamese people, Okinawan people all looked the same to them (Americans). In other words, they thought of themselves as nationals of a superior country and since they saw Okinawans being of the same race as the people from the country they were fighting, they didn't see us as being equal to them."[52] The black segregated district of Teruya described by the

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rock musician reveals the irony that the American forward presence in the Far East was to protect and promote freedom and democracy. In fact, many white Americans brought attitudes characteristic of the segregated Deep South. At the time of the uprising, Koza and other base towns in Okinawa were similarly segregated into black and white entertainment districts. Takamine Tomokazu, an Okinawan journalist who covered U.S. military base–related issues, writes that the black section of the town was referred to by white soldiers as the "Bush," while the black soldiers called it "Four Corners" or its original name "Teruya."[53] Okinawans also referred to Teruya as "Mokutangai," or "Charcoal Town," and to the black soldiers as *Teruya seinen dan* or the "Teruya Youth Group."[54]

Takamine's description of the black section of Koza provides a view of intimate exchanges between the black soldiers and Okinawans that no doubt had lasting effects on Okinawan consciousness. For example, in the black section of Koza there existed a group of black soldiers called the Bush Masters who, according to Takamine, wore jackets with a panther embroidered on the back suggesting a connection to the Black Power movement, the Black Panther Party, or both.[55] At its peak in 1969, the group had over one hundred members. The Bush Masters met in a bar in the black section of Koza where they discussed Black Power movement movies and literature that came in from the United States. The group was also a moral force in the black section, protecting white soldiers who wandered into the black section from physical violence. They would also collect money to recompense bars and restaurants when black soldiers did not pay for their meals and drinks. Takamine even writes how the Bush Masters coordinated a blood drive for one Okinawan woman who needed an operation.[56]

Takamine points out other things that tied black soldiers and Okinawans together. Because they tended to be lower ranked and lower paid than white soldiers, the black soldiers consumed local products more than white soldiers. For example, the preferred alcoholic beverages of the black soldiers were Akadama port wine (a cheap Japanese brand), Orion Beer (a locally brewed beer), and Zuisen (a brand of traditional Okinawan liquor). On the other hand, white soldiers often consumed more expensive drinks, such as Heineken, Johnny Walker, Napoleon, and Schlitz. However, the matter was probably more than just economics and involved a feeling of closer affinity that the black soldiers had with the local, nonwhite culture. In the summers when young Okinawans would parade down the streets of

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Teruya in the Okinawan *eisa* drum dance, it was a familiar sight to see the black soldiers joining in.[57]

This sense of public affinity between blacks and Okinawans sometimes transmitted into political spheres of resistance as well. The manner in which Okinawans took to turning cars over and burning them (with women working in the bars quickly producing gasoline-filled bottles) can perhaps be contextualized within Okinawans' contact with African American soldiers. This style of protest against oppression on a mass scale is glaringly absent in Okinawa before or since. However, the model for this type of action may have come from an incident that happened a little over a year before the December 20 uprising. On August 30, 1969, a group of fifty or more black soldiers got into a confrontation with some MPs over a trivial incident: the group's anger exploded when an intimidated MP fired his gun. The group overturned the MP patrol car and set it on fire.[58] The incident also seems to be reminiscent of the ghetto riots across the United States that took place between 1965 and 1968, which observers such as Gans and Blauner point out were more than physical acts of violence and looting but rather were "spontaneous rebellions" against the white, racist treatment African Americans experienced in the United States.

However, the relationship between the black soldiers and the Okinawans was not always harmonious. Okinawans were not immune to their own racist attitudes toward black soldiers. Although Okinawan discrimination against black soldiers was no doubt an extension of Japan's internalization of white supremacy, Okinawans' own prejudices against darker skin could be linked to other dynamics. For example, darker skin was not simply associated with the preannexation peasant class; after Japanese annexation darker skin became a marker of the impurity and inferiority of Okinawans vis-à-vis Japanese from the main islands of Japan. Darker skin came to signify "natives" from the so-called primitive places of the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia.

Further, black and Okiwanan relations were aggravated by the sexualized nature of heterosexual interactions between black soldiers and Okinawan women. Both groups suffered the indignities of colonization and racism. And while the black soldiers were heirs to a long history of white sexual domination over black women, in Okinawa they enjoyed some limited sexual privilege over Okinawan women, a fact that Okinawan males resented. The tensions between the two groups manifested in a scuffle on August 17, 1971, between black soldiers and Okinawans. The scuffle

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stemmed from an incident in which three black soldiers were refused service in a bar. An altercation followed where the soldiers were beaten up by a group of Okinawan bar employees. The three black soldiers managed to escape and gather a group of about twenty to thirty other black soldiers.

These tensions seem to have already arisen around the time of the Koza Uprising as black soldiers were defying the de facto segregation. For instance, a declassified confidential report made to U.S. Civil Administration of the Ryûkyû Islands, approved with the signature of the Chief of the Counterintelligence Division and dated July 10, 1970, gives us a glimpse of what was happening at the time. The report, entitled "Negro Personnel Reportedly Desiring to Take Over Koza City, Okinawa," stated that "an increasing number of Negroes are frequenting the Gate 2–B.C. Street areas of Koza (which was the 'white' section of the town)." The source of the report, identified as having "furnished reliable information in the past," also described a meeting on July 3, 1970, held in the Gate 2–B.C. Street vicinity in which a speaker "said that the Negroes will take the area over as their own."[59]

Given black efforts to desegregate Koza's "entertainment" district, then, the group of black soldiers mentioned previously consequently marched through the streets chanting antiracial discrimination slogans. The demonstration caused fighting to break out between the black soldiers and the Okinawan bar employees. According to Takamine, the Okinawans were already well organized from earlier base workers' strikes and were able to gather over one hundred people. The Okinawans then chased the black soldiers back into the base. Some of the Okinawans began breaking the windshields of American cars parked near the gate and beating up any black soldier that passed by. The Okinawan police were able to calm the situation down, but, by unfortunate chance, there was a car accident involving a black soldier and an Okinawan. This caused a mob of 1,000 to 1,500 Okinawans to surround the accident scene and the MPs who had come to investigate. The MPs and the black soldier involved in the accident escaped to the Koza police headquarters. The crowd, however, threw bottles and rocks at the headquarters, causing several people to be injured.[60]

Relations between the Okinawans and the blacks were later improved on January 15, 1972, when various black organizations, Latino and white soldiers, and Okinawans took part in a twelve-kilometer march in memory of Martin Luther King, Jr. Okinawans watching the march applauded the participants when they learned about its purpose.[61]

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Along these lines of discord and solidarity, a dialogue emerged between blacks, Okinawans, and others regarding the antiwar movement in the United States. Several notable white antiwar activists, including Jane Fonda, came to Okinawa to lead protests against the Vietnam War and U.S. militarism. Within the antiwar movement there were people of color who clearly saw the connection between white racism and the war. For example, Cuban-born Green Beret Alfonso Toledo actively participated in the antiwar movement after being disillusioned by the futility of the war. According to Takamine, he engaged in discussions with other Latino and black soldiers about his antiwar position and about questions of ethnic self-determination.[62] A photo of him at a strike rally of Okinawan base workers in 1971 shows him raising his fist in the air. There are also photos from 1971 showing meetings between black soldiers, white activists, and Okinawan activists. In the background of one such meeting, as shown in Figure 5.3, is the famous poster of Black Panther Party leader Huey Newton sitting in a wicker chair holding a rifle and spear.[63]

Mapping the Koza Uprising in the Sea of Discontent

As previously shown, the forced proximity of Okinawans and African American soldiers in Koza led to both interracial conflicts and mutual understanding. A flyer written in English and Japanese, distributed by African American soldiers to Okinawans in the aftermath of the Koza Uprising, reinforced their shared status:

> So you see we both are in the same situation. With this you see that we have a problem. With every problem there is a solution. Black GI's are trying to become a part of the solution, not the problem. The Black GI's are willing to help and talk to the Okinawans in order to form much better relations between the oppressed groups, because we have so much in common. So why not get our heads together and come up with a solution to destroy the problem. The Black GI's are aware of the situation that brought about the riot, and this was truly a RIGHT-ON-MOVE. That's the only way they'll bend.[64]

From across the ocean, African Americans had already been conscious of what was happening in Okinawa. For example, the January 4, 1969, issue of *Black Panther* reported a rally of three hundred Okinawan university

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Figure 5.3. Antiwar–antimilitary activists in Koza, Okinawa, 1971. Photo by Koh Yoshioka, reproduced with permission.

students that demanded the withdrawal of B-52s and the dismantling of U.S. bases. With much admiration of the students in Okinawa, *The Black Panther* reported, "The forceful action of the students threw the U.S. and Japanese reactionary pigs into a panic. The latter sent out about five hundred armed policemen to ruthlessly suppress the demonstrators. Braving the pigs' brutal suppression, the students stormed the base several times and fought bravely with the police."[65] In an age long before the word "transnationalism" became widely used and before faxes, the Internet, affordable international flights, and cheap long-distance phone calls made it easier to travel and communicate between the corners of the U.S. global empire, political movements in the United States were strongly conscious of what was happening in Okinawa. This was evident in the early Asian American movement. Two longtime Japanese American women activists and friends, Minn Matsuda and Kazu Iijima, who wanted to create a Japanese American group in New York for their college-age children, established Asian Americans for Action (AAA) in the fall of 1968. One of its early members was Yuri Kochiyama, a close friend of Malcolm X and an icon of radical politics.[66] In one of its undated publications, AAA

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urged "the American people to join the people of Okinawa and Japan in demanding the complete removal of all U.S. bases, personnel and military equipment from Okinawa and Japan." It added that "we must insist on liberation and self-determination for the people of Okinawa as for all of the Third World."[67]

Similarly, the Koza Uprising was brought to the attention of the Asian American movement on the West Coast through the radical Asian American publication, *Gidra*, based in Los Angeles. Hatano Terumasa from Japan wrote in *Gidra*, "This action of the people of Okinawa clearly embodied the dawn of a new age, with revolutionary significance equal to the occupation of Shinjuku area (central part of Tokyo) in October, 1968 and the rebellion in Watts."[68] In 1970, pioneering Asian American activist and scholar Yuji Ichioka wrote an article in *Gidra* that was highly critical of the way the conservative Japanese American Citizens League supported the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty and the reversion of Okinawa to Japan.[69] Mike Murase, a *Gidra* staff writer, also examined the adverse environmental and social impacts (with much emphasis on the rape of Okinawan women by U.S. servicemen) of the bases on Okinawa in an article titled "The Keystone of the Pacific." In another *Gidra* article in May 1972, Tracy Okida described the Okinawans as being a "vanguard struggle related to the revolutionary movements of other Third World peoples."[70]

Conclusion

The Koza Uprising is a contradiction in itself: the rampage of "angry," "organized," and "politicized" Okinawans against the U.S. military in the dead of night is at odds with the popular image of Okinawans as "friendly," "pleasant," "agreeable," "gentle," "peace loving," and "passive."[71] However, the contradictory nature of the uprising is part and parcel of other contradictions that arise from Okinawa's particular positionality in global geopolitics. Japan's chronic unwillingness to accept genuinely Okinawans as fellow humans is at odds with its strategic need to keep Okinawans in the Japanese nation-state in order to strengthen Japan's defense against invasions from perceived enemies. The United States' self-proclaimed leadership of the democratic free world is equally and grossly inconsistent with its deprivation of the practice of democracy in Okinawa.

An interesting paradox that arises from these contradictions is worth mentioning. Okinawa is but a small island territory with very limited

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resources at the fringes of the U.S. empire as well as part of a Japanese national sovereignty that depends on that empire.[72] Okinawans are a relatively small minority group scattered in a diaspora that stretches from Okinawa and mainland Japan to the estimated three hundred thousand Okinawans in the Americas, Asia, and the Pacific Islands. In total, Okinawans perhaps number less than two million. The irony is that, despite Okinawa's peripheral geographical existence and its small population, of which a large percentage has spread to other parts of the world, the United States and Japan have constantly been preoccupied with putting a lid on Okinawan dissent. Still, Okinawans live in and navigate the sea of discontent, despite efforts by the United States and Japan to quell their unpredictable tides. The swiftness in which the Koza Uprising appeared and disappeared from the American media seems to be a case in point: dissent is the Achilles' heel of empire.

Perhaps more threatening is the fact Okinawan women take more leadership roles in antimilitary protests, bridging international connections with women in places where global militarization violates the human rights of women and children, such as Guam, Hawai'i, Japan, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and South Korea. Okinawan women have also helped to unleash major protest movements in Okinawa as a result of the 1995 rape of a twelve-year-old Okinawan girl, among other pressing issues. In short, Okinawan women are formidable in their role as navigators in the sea of discontent, as they rely on matriarchal Okinawan cultural values that emphasize the sanctity of life and nature while they steer Okinawans toward political alliances with the larger world.

This does not mean that the empire has just lain down and died. On the contrary, it has struck back by actually encouraging Okinawan culture and "worldwide" Okinawan networks. The Japanese government pushed Okinawa to accept, under veiled threats of economic sanctions, the construction of a heliport over a pristine reef in Nago. It "rewarded" Okinawa and the city of Nago by hosting the United Nations G-7 summit at a resort in Nago. Before and during the summit, the Japanese government promoted Okinawa's unique culture (which it suddenly claimed to be Japanese culture) as well as promulgated a version of Okinawan history that emphasized its ancient history as a seafaring nation that linked different countries through entrepot trade. A television drama series about an Okinawan family was also broadcast around the time of the summit. The series was benevolent in showcasing Okinawan music and dance and portraying Okinawans as

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friendly, warm, wise, and happy-go-lucky people. Understandably, since it was shown on NHK, the government-run broadcasting organ, not once did the series delve into "negative" issues such as discrimination against Okinawans by Japanese, the Battle of Okinawa, or the U.S. military bases.

Despite the new "positive" image that Okinawans enjoyed, it served to direct the Japanese public's attention away from Okinawans' discontent over the presence of U.S. military bases in Okinawa. It also helped to transform Okinawan culture into a commodity for consumption by an increasing number of people who claim to "love" everything about Okinawa, except the U.S. bases. The United States continues to push forward with plans to build a heliport in Nago, and the plan for reducing the military burden in Okinawa is to shift it to Guam.

Now, more than ever, we need to hone our navigating skills.

Notes

Japanese names follow the convention of surname followed by given name.

1. Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000), 36.

2. Suzuyo Takazato, "The Past and Future of Unai, Sisters in Okinawa," *AMPO Japan-Asia Quarterly Review* 25, no. 4 (1995): 76.

3. Shannon McCune, *The Ryukyu Islands* (Harrisburg, Pa.: David & Charles, 1975), 162.

4. Ibid., 15.

5. Here I find inspiration from French sociologist Michel De Certeau, who urges us to shift our focus away from the obsession of scientific institutions on analyzing systems that repress individuals to one that examines the practices that take place within and against these systems. The former type of analysis is privileged because scientific institutions study the very system of which they are a part and "conform to the well-known genre of the family story." He writes, "Seeing this elucidation of the apparatus by itself has the disadvantage of *not seeing* practices which are heterogeneous to it and which it represses or thinks it represses. Nevertheless, they have every chance of surviving this apparatus *too*, and, in any case, they are *also* part of social life, and all the more resistant because they are more flexible and adjusted to perpetual mutation. When one examines this fleeting and permanent reality carefully, one has the impression of exploring the night-side of societies, a night longer than their day, a dark sea from which successive institutions emerge, a maritime immensity on which socioeconomic and political structures appear as ephemeral islands" (41). Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

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6. Okinawa-shi Heiwa Bunka Shinkoka (Peace Culture Promotion Section of Okinawa City Offices), ed., *Beikoku ga mita koza bodo* (Koza riot as seen by the United States) (Okinawa: Yui Shuppan, 1999), 22.

7. Aniya Masaaki, "Koza minshu (Koza peoples)," in *Shashin ga toraeta 1970-nen zengo koza hito machi koto anata ga rekishi no mokugekisha* (Koza people, streets, and events around 1970 in photos: you are an eyewitness of history), ed. Heiwa Bunka Shinkoka (Okinawa: Naha Shuppansha, 1997), 187.

8. It is assumed that the unidentified Okinawan woman was with the offender at the time of the accident.

9. Okinawa-shi Heiwa Bunka Shinkoka (Peace Culture Promotion Section of Okinawa City Offices), *Beikoku*, 38.

10. Ibid., 11; and Masamichi S. Inoue, *Okinawa and the U.S. Military: Identity Making in the Age of Globalization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 55.

11. Okinawa-shi Heiwa Bunka Shinkoka (Peace Culture Promotion Section of Okinawa City Offices), *Beikoku*, 40.

12. Ibid., 118.

13. Aniya, "Koza minshu (Koza peoples)," 187.

14. Takamine Tomokazu, *Shirarezaru Okinawa no beihei: beigun kichi 15-nen no shuzai memo kara* (Unknown truth about U.S. troops in Okinawa: from notes of fifteen years reporting on U.S. bases) (Okinawa: Kobunken, 1984), 68. Translation provided by this author.

15. For example, on December 22, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post* both had articles on their front pages titled, respectively, "U.S. to Heavily Cut Forces in Okinawa and Japan by June" and "U.S. Announces Pullout of 12,000 Troops From Japan." Neither of those articles mentioned the uprising. The *New York Times* had an article on the U.S. military's need to keep troops in Okinawa and did have a photo of U.S. military policemen firing tear gas during the uprising. However, right below that article was another editorial about U.S. plans to cut combat forces in Japan.

16. The epigraph cited in this section is taken from Kadekaru Rinsho, one of Okinawa's premier postwar *minyo* (folk music) singers, who used the words in the first verse of a song called "Jidai no nagare" (The flow of the times): *Tou nu yu kara yamatu nu yu / Yamatu nu yu kara amerika yu / Mijirasa kawataru kunu Uchinaa . . .* (From the Chinese world to the Yamatu world / From the Yamatu world to the American world / How strangely this Okinawa has changed . . .).

17. George H. Kerr, *Okinawa, the History of an Island People* (Rutland, Vt.: C. E. Tuttle Co., 1958), 315–16.

18. Francis L. Hawks, *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan Performed in the Years 1852, 1853, and 1854* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1857), 566–67.

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19. "Ryûkyû" is derived from Liuch'iu, the name that the Chinese used to describe the island kingdom.

20. Oguma Eiji, *"Nihonjin" no Kyokai: Okinawa, Ainu, Taiwan, Chosen, shokuminchi shihai kara fukki undo made* (The boundaries of the Japanese: Okinawa, Ainu, Taiwan, Korea, from colonial control to the reversion movement), 1st ed. (Tokyo: Shinyosha, 1998), 19.

21. Ibid., 20–21.

22. See Aniya Masaaki, "*Kengai dekasegi to kennai ijuu* (Interprefectural sojourning and intraprefectural migration)," in *Okinawaken Shi*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Sentoraru Insatsujo, 1974), 423–55; and Mitsugu Sakihara, "The History of Okinawa," in *Uchinananchu: A History of Okinawans in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1981), 14.

23. Nomura Koya, "Colonialism and Nationalism: The View from Okinawa" in *Okinawan Diaspora,* ed. Ronald Nakasone (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press), 111.

24. George Feifer, *The Battle of Okinawa: The Blood and the Bomb* (New York: First Lyons Press, 2001), xi.

25. Masaie Ishihara, "War Experiences of the People of Okinawa and the Development of the Okinawan Philosophy of Peace" (paper presented at the International Conference on The Politics of Remembering the Asia/Pacific War, East–West Center, in Honolulu, Hawai'i, September 7–9, 1995). The paper cited here is an expanded and revised version of "The Memories of War and the Role of Okinawa in the Promotion of World Peace."

26. Masahide Ota, "Re-examining the History of the Battle of Okinawa," in *Okinawa: Cold War Island*, ed. Chalmers Johnson (Cardiff, Calif.: Japanese Policy Research Institute, 1999), 30.

27. Ibid.

28. As a member of the Okinawa Kenjinkai of San Francisco, I have heard stories of forced suicides and other Japanese military atrocities against Okinawan civilians here in the Bay Area. Most of the members of the Okinawan Kenjinkai are Okinawan women who immigrated to the United States after World War II as wives of U.S. military personnel. Of these members, a large portion experienced the Battle of Okinawa. Despite these accounts and the general consensus of researchers that the Japanese Imperial Army "forced and steered" Okinawan civilians to commit mass suicides, the Japanese Ministry of Education in 2007 instructed high-school textbook publishers to remove references to those suicides from textbooks to be used in 2008. The move by the Ministry of Education sparked a large public uprising by Okinawans, which was highlighted by a protest rally that drew 110,000 people in Okinawa. For a reference in English, refer to "Military 'Forced' Okinawan Mass Suicides: Expert Defies Ministry to Go Public

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with Criticism of Textbook Revisionists," *The Japan Times Online*, November 28, 2007, http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20071128a5.html.

29. Ota Masahide, "The U.S. Occupation of Okinawa and Postwar Reforms in Japan Proper," in *Democratizing Japan: The Allied Occupation*, ed. Robert E. Ward and Sakamoto Yoshikazu (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1987), 285.

30. Ibid., 289.

31. Koji Taira, "Troubled National Identity: Okinawa," in *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, ed. Michael Weiner (London: Routledge, 1997), 160.

32. Quoted in Michael Molasky and Steve Rabson, *Southern Exposure: Modern Japanese Literature from Okinawa* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 94.

33. The Price Report did not offer a specific formula to determine lump-sum amounts. Instead, it criticized the U.S. military's method of land assessment based on a comparable sales approach as unrealistic because agricultural land was usually kept within family ownership and seldom sold in Okinawa. A somewhat vague alternative method was presented: "It is the view of the subcommittee that in arriving at compensation for land best suited for agricultural production, the United States should give predominate consideration to current agricultural productivity and income data relating to similar lands now in agricultural use in Okinawa." The Okinawan proposal was for annual rental of $8,263,178 for forty thousand acres of land used by the U.S. military plus $14,363,103 as payment for "outstanding claims for destruction of land and property and for incidental expenses and losses incurred as a result of land acquisitions." The Price Report concluded that, under the Okinawan proposal, the market value of the fee title to the property, as estimated by the army, would be paid out in a little over two years as rental payments and other claims. Armed Services Committee, "Report of a Special Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee, House of Representatives, Following an Inspection Tour, October 14 to November 23, 1955" 84th Congress (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), 7651–67.

34. Department of State, Office of Intelligence Research, "US Administration of the Ryukyus Enters a Critical Period," Intelligence Report No. 7366, October 26, 1956.

35. Armed Services Committee, "Report of a Special Subcommittee."

36. Michael Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory* (New York: Routledge), 92.

37. Ibid., 97.

38. Ibid., 97.

39. Ibid., 98.

40. Akio Watanabe, *The Okinawa Problem: A Chapter in Japan–U.S. Relations* (Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1970), 66.

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41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., 65.

43. From an unpublished list compiled by Suzuyo Takazato and Harumi Miyagi (n.p., February 1, 1996).

44. Okinawa-shi Heiwa Bunka Shinkoka (Peace Culture Promotion Section of Okinawa City Offices), ed., *Rokku to koza* (Rock and Koza) (Okinawa: Kobundo Insatsu Kabushiki Kaisha, 1994), 167.

45. Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa*, 55–56.

46. Quoted in Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa*, 59.

47. My choice of "uprising," rather than "revolt" or "rebellion," is mainly based on aesthetics. "Uprising" connotes the downtrodden standing up against oppression and seems to fit the Chinese characters that are contained in *hoki*, which consists of *ho*, the character for bees or wasps, and *ki*, the character for awakening, rising, and beginning.

48. Aniya, "Koza Minshu (Koza peoples)," 187.

49. Herbert J. Gans, "Urban Riots: Violence and Social Change," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 29, no. 1 (1968): 42.

50. Robert Blauner, "Internal Colonization and Ghetto Revolt," *Social Problems* 16, no. 4 (1969): 399.

51. Ibid., 395–96.

52. Ibid., 54.

53. Takamine, *Shirarezaru* (Unknown truth about Okinawa), 203.

54. Okinawa-shi Heiwa Bunka Shinkoka (Peace Culture Promotion Section of Okinawa City Offices), ed., *Rokku to koza* (Rock and Koza), 54.

55. Besides the Bush Masters, there were other black groups existing throughout Okinawa such as Black Hawk, Son of Malcolm X, Maw Maw, Afro-American Society, People's Foundation, and Zulu.

56. Takamine, *Shirarezaru* (Unknown truth about Okinawa), 206.

57. Ibid., 209.

58. Ibid., 203.

59. Public Safety Department Records of the Operations Division of U.S. Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands, "Negro Personnel Reportedly Desiring to Take Over Koza City, Okinawa." Record Group 260: Records of the United States Occupation Headquarters World War II, National Archives and Records Administration. Box No. 20 of HCRI-PS, Folder 6. Copy obtained from the Okinawa Prefectural Archives in Okinawa, Japan, on November 25, 2009.

60. Ibid., 217–18.

61. Ibid., 219–20.

62. Ibid., 162.

63. Okinawa-shi Heiwa Bunka Shinko (Peace Culture Promotion Section of Okinawa City Offices), ed., *Shashinga toraeta* (Koza people, streets, and events), 63.

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64. From photo in Ibid., 66.

65. *The Black Panther*, January 4, 1969, http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/bpp/bpp040169_8c.htm (accessed December 8, 2006; site now discontinued).

66. Andrew Hsiao, "100 Years of Hell-Raising: The Hidden History of Asian American Activism in New York City," *The Village Voice*, June 23, 1998, http://www.villagevoice.com/news/9825,hsiao,226,1.html (accessed May 30, 2008).

67. "Implications of the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty," prepared by members of Asian Americans for Action, circa 1970.

68. "Okinawa: A People's Struggle," *Gidra*, April 1971.

69. "JACL and the US-Japan Security Pact," *Gidra*, June–July 1970.

70. "Okinawa Kaiho," *Gidra*, May 1972.

71. These descriptions have been cultivated and promulgated in the writings of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western explorers who visited Okinawa, by Hollywood movies such as *The Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956) and *The Karate Kid, Part II* (1984), and by books such as *Okinawa Program: How the World's Longest-Lived People Achieve Everlasting Health—And How You Can Too* (2001).

72. Perhaps not directly linked to Okinawa, but nonetheless a part of "the sea of discontent," was a simultaneous transpacific movement by island people who were similarly displaced, discriminated against, and disaffected. In 1971, a group of immigrant Cook Islanders, Samoans, Tongans, and other Pacific Islanders in Aotearoa, New Zealand, founded the Polynesian Panther Movement (PPM). Many of its members were university students when they joined, and most had grown up in inner-city Auckland. Following World War II, emigration from Pacific islands to New Zealand increased, reaching a peak in the 1960s and early 1970s. The New Zealand government encouraged this immigration as the Pacific migrant workers provided the necessary labor for the country's expanding industries.

The PPM channeled the anger and frustrations of the Polynesian youth in Auckland toward promoting solidarity with the indigenous Māori liberation struggle, expressing positive views of Pacific Islander identities, and working for fundamental, radical change. The PPM published its own newspaper, set up programs to serve the community, and organized and participated in political demonstrations. See Melani Anae, ed., *Polynesian Panthers: The Crucible Years 1971–74* (Auckland, New Zealand: Reed Publishing, Ltd., 2006), 21–58.

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