

1. The Circumstance of the Ryukyu / Okinawa

(1) Relevant Recommendations of the Committee, and statements of the Government Report

-Paragraph 21 of the concluding observations (CERD/C/JPN/CO/7-9)

-Paragraphs 34, 35 and 36 of the Government Report (CERD/C/JPN/10-11)

(2) Main Points

We demand that the recommendation in Paragraph 21 of the concluding observations (CERD/C/JPN/CO/7-9) be retracted.

(3) Background: Reason for retraction

(a) The citizens of Okinawa Prefecture regard themselves as Japanese and do not recognize themselves as indigenous people.

[Basis]

- i. Statement demanding the retraction of the recommendation submitted by Ishigaki City, Okinawa Prefecture (Appendix 1)
- ii. Statement demanding the retraction of the recommendation submitted by Tomigusuku City, Okinawa Prefecture (Appendix 2)
- iii. Question by Representative Miyazaki Masahisa of Okinawa Prefecture, the House of Representatives, about the demand for retraction (Appendix 3)
- iv. No statesman publicly supporting an independent Okinawa has ever elected as a member of the Diet in Okinawa. All candidates who have run in favor of Okinawan independence have failed.
- v. There is a group of people called the Society for the Independence of Ryukyu People. This society has only several hundred members. Only a limited number of members yearn for independence.
- vi. The call for independence of the Ryukyu dates to the time when Chiang Kai-shek attempted make the Ryukyu independent. At that time, the history of Okinawa was stated in a very distorted manner and those who believed in the distorted history became pro-independence.

(b) In either the Diet or in local assemblies, there has never been a discussion on

whether the Okinawans are Japanese or indigenous people. Demands for rights as indigenous people have never been taken up by local assembly.

[Basis]

- i. Governor Onaga's speech in the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly (Appendix 4)
- (c) The term "the right to decide on our own" is often used in Okinawa. However, this term is wrongly translated into English as "self-determination." Governor Onaga, who gave a speech in the United Nations, said that he did not at all mean "racial self-determination."

[Basis]

- i. Governor Onaga's speech in the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly (Appendix 5)
- (d) An NGO's suggestion that the UN Council on Human Rights recommend the Japanese Government recognize the Okinawans as an "indigenous people" does not represent Okinawan people's true sentiment. On the contrary, the suggestion is wholly "fabricated".
- (e) It is an act of discrimination against Okinawans, who are Japanese, as well as an infringement on human rights and against the *raison d'être* of the Committee, for the UN Human Rights Council to recommend that the Okinawan people be recognized as an "indigenous people."
- (f) The language of Okinawa is a Japanese dialect and part of the Japanese language. Okinawa is a very rich region with local traditional art. Ryukyu folk songs, music, and dancing are passed on from generation to generation. At the same time, the Ryukyu dialect is also passed on from generation to generation as well, so there is hardly any possibility of its extinction. Though it is not used in daily conversation, it will continue to be inherited in a manner of traditional arts, like Kabuki and Noh plays in Tokyo.
- (g) Dialects in Okinawa vary from region to region. Even in the same school district, dialects slightly differ. So, to teach dialects at school, standardization of dialect will be required, which contradicts the basis of dialects. In other words, it is impossible to "teach" dialects at school. Even if one masters a dialect, it is not very useful in other parts of Okinawa, where people use different dialects—a "standard" dialect may then be necessary. There is hardly any practical reason

in teaching dialects. Okinawan academic achievement is the lowest compared to the rest of the country. Limited time and precious resources could be better spent on teaching English or other useful subjects, rather than teaching “dialects”.

- (h) Analysis of the human nuclear genome, or DNA, of people living in the present-day Ryukyu Islands shows that they have no genetic relatedness with people living in Taiwan or on the Asian Continent. They are in fact genetically close to people of Japan proper.

[Basis]

- i. Genes of the Okinawan people similar to people of the main islands of Japan, *The Ryukyu Shimpō*, dated September 17, 2014 (Appendix 6)

(4) Conclusions

- (a) Okinawan people were born Japanese, are educated in the Japanese language and have lived as Japanese citizens. As stated above, they do not regard themselves as “indigenous”. There has been no call for demanding such a right; such a campaign has never taken place. For a long time, no one even knew about the UN Recommendations. Thus, the prefectural government would find it extremely difficult to explain the Recommendations to the Okinawan people. The Recommendations are so far removed from common sense that it took much time and effort, but we finally can now stand up in Okinawa, and demand the retraction of the Recommendations. With the help of an understanding member of the Diet, our statements were adopted by several city assemblies in Okinawa. Our toil would have never been necessary in the first place.
- (b) To send Recommendations saying that Okinawan people, who are Japanese, are indigenous people is to send the wrong message to the international community, inflicting unnecessary harm against the Okinawans and infringing on their human rights. This act also against *raison d’être* of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Therefore, we request that the Recommendations be retracted immediately. At the same time, in order to not to repeat the same mistake, we ask for an investigation into the source of the misunderstanding about the Okinawans and to take relevant measures to prevent the recurrence of such a grave misconception.

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The Circumstance of the Ryukyu / Okinawa Appendix 1
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INT_CERD_FCO_JPN_26502_E

(Provisional translation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Opinion statement requesting the UN to retract their recommendations that “the people of Okinawa are indigenous people”

The Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination have made recommendations to the Government of Japan on four occasions, in 2008 and 2014 for the former and in 2010 and 2014 for the latter, requesting the Government of Japan to recognize the people of Ryukyu/Okinawa as indigenous people, and to protect their rights, traditional culture and language.

In the Okinawan dialect, there still remain several words of the ancient Japanese language; the lifestyle is the same as mainland Japan, and (the people of Okinawa are) of the same ethnic group. Therefore, the claim that the people of Okinawa are indigenous people is incorrect.

At the same time, traditional arts and culture that remain in the respective regions of Okinawa are being passed down voluntarily and actively, and an issue concerning protection of the rights should be solved by domestic politics and in accordance with domestic laws, and thus should not be subject to recommendations from the UN.

The people of Okinawa, as is the case with citizens of other Prefectures of Japan, enjoy the highest level of human rights and receive high quality social welfare, health care and education.

Although the recommendations by the UN that “the people of Okinawa are indigenous peoples” are not legally binding, they are potentially dangerous since they may cast doubts as to the attribution of territories including the Senkaku Islands, which is a part of Okinawa Prefecture, territorial waters, and natural and marine resources. For that reason, the Council of Ishigaki urges the Government of Japan to call on the UN to retract those recommendations.

We submit this opinion statement in accordance with Article 99 of the Local Autonomy Act.

June 20th, 2016

City Council of Ishigaki

INT_CERD_FCO_JPN_26501_E

(Provisional translation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Opinion statement requesting the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies to revise their understanding that the “people of Okinawa are indigenous people of Japan” and to retract such recommendations

On September 22nd, 2015 Mr. Takeshi Onaga, Governor of Okinawa, made a speech at the UN Human Rights Council, held in Geneva, Switzerland from September 14th to October 2nd, 2015. The speech was arranged by Shimagurumi-kaigi (“Island-Wide Council for Leading to the Future and Realizing the Okinawa Statement”) in coordination with The International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) and Shimin Gaiko Center (SGC) which are UN NGOs (sic). These two UN NGOs have lobbied the UN that the “people of Okinawa are indigenous people,” and Governor Onaga’s speech, which was made using SGC’s speech slot, sent out the erroneous perception that the “people of Okinawa are indigenous people,” to the world, regardless of the content of the Governor’s speech or his intent.

This is due to the fact that, as early as 2008, following appeals made by Mr. Yasukatsu Matsushima (The Association of Comprehensive Studies for Independence of the Lew Chewans) who was advised by the SGC, the UN issued a recommendation to the Government of Japan that the people of Okinawa are indigenous people and are not Japanese.

The recommendation reads: “32. The Committee notes with concern that the State party has not officially recognized the Ainu and the Ryukyu/Okinawa as indigenous peoples entitled to special rights and protection (art. 27). The State party should expressly recognize the Ainu and Ryukyu/Okinawa as indigenous peoples in domestic legislation, adopt special measures to protect, preserve and promote their cultural heritage, adopt special measures to protect, preserve and promote their cultural heritage and traditional way of life, and recognize their land rights. It should also provide adequate opportunities for Ainu and Ryukyu/Okinawa children to receive instruction in or of their language and about their culture, and include education on Ainu and Ryukyu/Okinawa culture and history in the regular curriculum.” Although the

Government of Japan has not accepted the recommendation, the UN repeated the recommendation in 2010 and 2014.

Most people of Okinawa do not consider themselves to be indigenous people, and it is extremely regrettable that such recommendations are being made without the awareness of the people of Okinawa.

Even during the period of US military administration, we the people of Okinawa had always considered ourselves to be Japanese, continued strongly to hope the return to our homeland, and on May 15th, 1972, we achieved the return. Since then, we have continued to enjoy peace and happiness as Japanese citizens, exactly in the same way as citizens of other Prefectures.

Nonetheless, if the people of Okinawa were to claim their rights as indigenous people, we will be seen as non-Japanese minority by the rest of the Japanese, thus promoting reverse discrimination.

We shall never forget the thoughts of our ancestors who sacrificed their lives to protect our homeland Japan and Okinawa in the Battle of Okinawa. The people of Okinawa are Japanese, and are definitely not indigenous peoples. Therefore, we request the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies to immediately revise their perception that the “people of Okinawa are indigenous people,” and to retract their recommendations. We also request the Government of Japan and the administrative agencies of Okinawa to reach out to the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies so that the Treaty Bodies revise their perception that the “people of Okinawa are indigenous people,” and retract their recommendations.

We submit this opinion statement in accordance with Article 99 of the Local Autonomy Act.

December 22nd, 2015

City Council of Tomigusuku, Okinawa Prefecture

<http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/SENTAKU/syugiin/190/0002/19004270002014a.html>

<https://youtu.be/RrTe0o2BzxQ>

Representative Miyazaki Masahisa, House of Representatives (Cabinet Committee)
April 27, 2016



From the official record of the proceedings of the 190th Session of the Diet, the 14th Cabinet Committee,
April 27, 2016

Representative Miyazaki: This is Miyazaki Masahisa of the Liberal Democratic Party. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to ask questions today. I would like to start my questions now.

First, I would like to address the United Nations Recommendations to the Japanese Government, which demands various measures be taken on the understanding that Okinawans are indigenous peoples.

Since October 2008, the United Nations have on numerous occasions sent to the Japanese Government Recommendations saying that Okinawans are an indigenous people. With the permission of Mr. Chairman, I have distributed papers on this matter. Please refer to papers 1 and 2.

Paper 1 shows recommendations concerning the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The upper part shows the 2008 version. I will read the underlined part. The State party, here, refers to Japan. “The State party shall clearly recognize people in Ryukyu and Okinawa as indigenous peoples and protect, preserve and promote their cultural assets and traditional way of living and admit the right to their land in accordance with the domestic laws.”

The underlined part in the section below shows the statement of August 2014, which to the effect demands that the State party amend the law and take further measures to fully guarantee rights to the land and natural resources of the Ryukyu/Okinawa community.

I understand that the government knows about all this. Please answer what the government’s position is and whether Japan recognizes Okinawans as indigenous peoples.

Mr. Iijima, speaking for the Government: It is well understood that people living in Okinawa have inherited a unique, ethnic culture, tradition and custom over a long period of time. However, the Japanese Government regards only the Ainu people as indigenous peoples and no one else.

Our position has also been explained to the Human Rights Committee. Therefore, our position on the matter has not been changed despite the conclusions and recommendations of these UN committees.

Miyazaki: Firstly, please explain the proceedings of the UN matter and what these recommendations are all about.

Japan is a member State of the UN and the State Party of the Human Rights Committee. Paper 2, though I didn’t read it out loud, includes materials regarding the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. There were two recommendations in 2010 and in 2014, respectively. Is it necessary to follow these recommendations? Will you tell us whether they are effective both in terms of domestic law and international law and what kind of restriction Japan is going to face in accepting these recommendations?

Iijima: UN committees on various conventions on human rights have been established based on the regulations of each convention. The committee’s work is to investigate reports submitted by the governments of States Parties of the Convention and to send recommendations to them. For example, as you just mentioned, the Human Rights Committee, of which Japan is State Party, is established based on Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Based on Article 40-4, Japan, as State Party, considers reports that will be submitted to the Committee. The Committee

considers the report submitted by the State Party and the Committee will send its report and appropriate observations of general nature to the State Party. The Committee's concluding observations and recommendations do not have any legal standing.

Miyazaki: Each citizen of Okinawa Prefecture has his/her own thoughts and opinions. As Japan is a democratic state, freedom of speech is guaranteed to every person. However, many Okinawans, or I should say, the majority of the Okinawans do not think that they are indigenous peoples. In fact, out of 130 million Japanese, almost no one would think that the Okinawans are indigenous peoples.

From my point of view, and I am sure most Japanese share my view, what the recommendations state are very rude, indeed. Suppose a person enters my house without permission. I have three children, and the person says to one of my sons, "OK, you think you are brothers, but you are not." My impression of the Recommendations is just like that.

As I said before, it is likely that almost no Japanese know about the UN Recommendations and neither do the Okinawans, who are the subject of the Recommendations. They are being treated as if they were indigenous peoples without their knowledge.

You just said that the Recommendations have no legal status. For our part, we want the Government to protest and to tell them not to say what is not true. I sincerely hope that the Japanese Government will not allow such a rude act, which is almost equivalent to dividing peoples.

I think the recommendations embrace grave risk to our national interests. The Recommendation of August 2014 in Paper 1--I will read it again. It says "the State Party," meaning Japan, "should amend law and take further measures to fully guarantee the right of the Ryukyu/Okinawa community to the land and natural resources."

This would involve the issue of the ownership of the land and natural resources of Okinawa, including the Senkaku Islands.

There is no need to repeat the explanation here. Okinawa, including the Senkaku Islands, is Japan's territory. It is a matter of fact. And yet, I cannot help but think that they dare to question this. Beyond doubt; Okinawa belongs to Japan.

There is an ethnologist named Yanagida Kunio. He is famous for his work on dialects. The language that originated in Kyoto, Japan's old capital, spread like concentric circles. Consequently, in regions

far away from Kyoto, people use the same words. For example, the same words are used in the Tohoku region in the north and in the Kyushu region in the south. Yanagida worked out a hypothesis that dialects spread in concentric circles and has established the basis of Japanese ethnology. Okinawa has exactly the same pattern of dialects.

For instance, there is an insect called *TOMBO* (“dragonfly” in English). The oldest form of the word appears in *Kojiki, Records of Ancient Matters*, as *AKIZU*. The word *AKIZU* spread in concentric circles and in Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures in the Tohoku region, the word *AGEZU*, meaning dragonfly, exists to this day. Then, far down south in Miyazaki and Kagoshima Prefectures, people say *AKEZU*. In Okinawa, the old word for *TOMBO* is *AHKEHJUH*, which is akin to *AKIZU*.

Another interesting example: Some words which appear in *Kojiki, Record of Ancient Matters* and in *Manyoshu, The Collection of One Thousand Leaves* are still used in Okinawa.

From the perspective of languages alone, the fact is that Japanese people using the Japanese language have lived in Okinawa since the ancient times. We Okinawans are Japanese for sure and not at all an indigenous people. I would like the Japanese Government to protest to the UN and to urge them to retract these unacceptable recommendations.

Please refer to Paper 3. Here is a resolution adopted by the Assembly of Tomigusuku City, Okinawa Prefecture, on December 22, 2015, demanding that the UN Recommendations that Okinawans are an “indigenous peoples” be retracted. In the fourth paragraph from above, this is pointed out: “However, almost all of us Okinawans do not regard ourselves as indigenous peoples. It is utterly regrettable that this kind of recommendation is issued without our slightest knowledge.” I am in perfect agreement with them.

In Okinawa, we have various difficult problems that have yet to be solved, such as the United States’ bases in Okinawa and historical issues based on the previous War, and so on. As for the US bases, we want to have our heavy burdens lessened. We want all of Japan to share our burdens. All 1.4 million of us Okinawans sincerely hope that actions will be taken toward the solution of these problems.

In terms of history, Okinawa has culture to boast of. I myself participate in one cultural event. There is a picture scroll of a ceremonial parade, which was performed during the time when Ryukyu was under the rule of a Chinese emperor. The king of Ryukyu received the Emperor’s envoy from China at Shuri Castle and was recognized as king. To celebrate the occasion, a ceremonial parade took place. Okinawans enact the parade these days. It’s been twenty years or so since I first participated in the parade. In the parade, I sometimes get dressed like a Chinese officer and walk in a procession.

Grownups and children alike enjoy the occasion, proud of taking part in the act of preserving the precious culture.

But this has nothing to do with the matter of indigenusness. The matter is completely different in nature. It should never be left unattended. It should be addressed in earnest.

As I have shown in Papers 1 and 2, Japan received these recommendations four times, and every time, to the same effect. If the same recommendations continue to come, accumulating one after another, and the Japanese Government does not take appropriate action, without protest and demanding retraction of the UN recommendations, what will happen? I fear these Recommendations will be established as fact and the international community will recognize them as such. I urge you again to promptly take effective steps. Let me hear the Government's view.

[The chairman leaves the room and Deputy Chair Nakane takes the seat.]

Deputy Minister Kihara: Let me answer your question. Representative Miyazaki, you have been addressing the issues of Okinawa for long and your questions are full of devoted passion. We have received the ardent resolution of the Tomigusuku City Assembly.

I will explain the process again. First, the State Party, Japan, reports to the UN Committee. On receipt of the report, consideration will be made, including a preliminary one and on the basis of the consideration, recommendations or closing observations are proposed. Once the recommendations or closing observations are issued, it is my understanding that the process to retract a part of or the entire of the contents is not within the UN system.

However, the process I have just explained is not completed in just one round. When the next process takes place, we will have taken appropriate actions against recommendations or observations which differ from the position or views of the Japanese Government, or which do not reflect the true situation of Japan, by asking the UN to either retract or correct them. We will continue to work in this manner.

As to the resolution presented by the Tomigusuku City Assembly, we will take care to have it present in the process.

What Representative Miyazaki intended in his question is not only how the process works, but also from a wider perspective, what effective measures can be taken. We will consider in earnest and from a wider perspective of what the government can do.

Miyazaki: Thank you. I understand that this process is exactly as Vice-Minister Kihara explained. Accordingly, the government stated its observations in the next process. What I want to say and want you to consider is that what you have done is not enough. If the recommendations or closing observations are unacceptable, say so when they are issued, not waiting until the next process, regardless of the process by which the UN Committee is supposed to work. I believe that if what the UN recommends is unreasonable and unacceptable, the Japanese Government should protest, clearly expressing what it believes is right.

Please reconsider what the Japanese Government should and can do. Thank you for your efforts in advance.

Governor Onaga's speech in the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly ①

<http://www2.pref.okinawa.jp/oki/Gikairep1.nsf/bf76642d1ed57158492581ed00348311/6c0b691f33583cb149258212000c0114?OpenDocument>

1) The 7th Okinawa Prefectural Assembly, 2015 (the regular session)

From #5 minutes, October 2

Hanashiro Daisuke: In addition, I'd like to ask a favor of Governor Onaga lastly on this issue. As you know, the UN Human Rights Council sent recommendations to the Japanese Government in 2008 and in 2014. The point is that since the Okinawans are indigenous peoples, the Japanese Government should protect them as such. Recently Governor Onaga visited the UN in Geneva and made a speech as a member of an NGO, which to my understanding gave an impression that the Governor of Okinawa supported the assertion of the NGO trying to promote the recognition that the Okinawans are indigenous peoples.

In the name of the Governor of Okinawa Prefecture, you should tell the United Nations Human Rights Council that it has never been discussed in Okinawa whether Okinawan people are indigenous peoples or not and that the UN recommendations referring to Okinawans as indigenous peoples are not right and should be corrected. What do you think? (Someone spoke irregularly.)

Chairman (Kina Masaharu): Quiet please. Governor Onaga, go ahead.

Governor (Onaga Takeshi): Regarding the right to decide on one's own, many citizens have their opinions, and Mr. Hanashiro has just explained his view. Some people think that Okinawans are indigenous peoples. Okinawa's independence has been talked about ever since we were under the US military control. Some said that Okinawa had better be a state of the USA, while others said that Okinawa should be returned to Japan. So, it's been talked about in many ways. That's the natural way things went in Okinawa. However, I myself have never discussed that Okinawans are indigenous peoples nor it was never my view. I talked about history, objectively and neutrally. I am not in a position

to decide what people would think when they heard my speeches. In my opinion, liberty, equality, human rights, democracy...Well, speaking of democracy, we had four elections last year and public consensus was clearly manifested. But nothing changed. In other prefectures, regardless elections, when the governor or mayor said, "It cannot be done," (the Government) will take it back. But things are different in Okinawa. After four elections, we said "No," to the Government. But they would not hear us. I cannot help but say in protest that on our part this situation is extremely unreasonable and violent. I don't know what people think of my speech. But it is my belief that I must say what I must say as a Japanese national and Okinawa citizen. I hope you will understand me.

2) The 3rd Okinawa Prefectural Assembly, 2016 (the regular session)

From the minutes of July 8, 2016

Chief of Governor's office (Jahana Kiichiro): I read the statement and resolution of Tomigusuku City Assembly. What is expressed in them are Okinawan people's feeling and thought when Okinawa returned to Japan. I sympathize and share with them in some parts.

I understand them. However, as I have just answered, there are many things to consider such as historical recognition, the disposal of Ryukyu, the land warfare during the previous War, the twenty-seven years of the US military control over Okinawa and at present burdens of US bases too heavy on our shoulders. And the UN recommendations and the resolution of Tomigusuku City. We respect their resolution.

We hear many opinions and views. **As Okinawa Prefecture, we have not yet reached any conclusion. Therefore, we are not in a position to state our view.**

Hanashiro Daisuke: Let me add that this year Representative Miyazaki from Okinawa Prefecture of the House of Representatives mentioned this subject in the Diet. After that, *The Ryukyu Shimpō* , put the Diet members' comments on the matter in their paper. Members of the so called "All Okinawa" are against demanding the retraction of the UN recommendations. What do you think of this, Mr. Governor?

Governor (Onaga Takeshi): Let me answer Mr. Hanashiro's question. Regarding the issue of the indigenous peoples, my answer is the same as what I already said today and yesterday in the assembly.

I don't know what Representative Miyazaki asked in the Diet. The issue of the indigenous peoples has not been discussed very often, including in the Assembly. You just mentioned the right to cross-question. As the executive office, we have the right to reply. And we try our best to make our reply as comprehensible as possible. Sometimes we were not good enough to make ourselves understood. In any case, we will continue our efforts in this matter.

I don't have a clear idea what other Diet members said about the indigenous peoples. On the part of Okinawa Prefecture, what we have explained so far during this assembly is our basic view.

Hanashiro Daisuke: In my opinion, you should express yourself as governor. In October last year, when I questioned about this issue, I didn't have the information about the fact, which was mentioned later during Mr. Onaga Masatoshi's question, that you went to Geneva with the very NGO in Tokyo that worked on the UN to recommend the Japanese Government the recognition of the Okinawans as indigenous peoples. You even attended side events and gave a lecture or something.

My point is, what kind of message will the fact send that Okinawa Governor acts in company with the NGO responsible for the recommendation that the Okinawans are indigenous peoples. If the Governor was well aware of the situation and yet joined the company, it will be concluded that the Governor shares the same idea with the NGO. The Governor went to Geneva with the NGO members. Based on this fact, I asked if the Okinawans are indigenous peoples during the regular assembly in September last year. I also asked if the independence of Okinawa was in the Governor's mind. I asked if the Governor had intention to rescind the UN recommendation. You didn't clearly reply to these three questions, which is much rumored even today. I think you should clearly express yourself on this matter.

Governor (Onaga Takeshi): Let me answer, again. As I just answered, the issue of indigenous peoples has not been discussed among the citizens. There has never been any hot discussion in the Prefectural Assembly, either.

Weekly magazines talk about a prospect of Okinawa's independence. Considering all these, I'm not fully convinced to conclude what the consensus of the Okinawa citizens is.

Therefore, I don't think it appropriate for me as Prefectural Governor to definitely answer whether I am for or against the recognition that the Okinawans are indigenous peoples.

Regarding the UN, aside from what the NGO intends, I went to Geneva to explain the situation of Okinawa seventy years after the War to the Human Rights Committee. Especially, the right to decide on our own (self-determination) is included in the local autonomy, as indicated in the Japanese Government's official brochure. The term "self-determination" is not perfectly in syn with the concept of indigenous peoples. In the sense of human rights, the right to decide on one's own is very important. In the seventy years after the War, the right to decide by ourselves has been neglected in most parts. And after the recent elections, I talked about the difficulty of the removal to Henoko as public consensus. Under these circumstances, I emphasized the importance of human rights and self-determination so that the Okinawans can choose and decide on their own. I didn't mean to speak in terms of self-determination of indigenous peoples. Though I understand Mr. Hanashiro's intention, I don't think it necessary for me to refute the UN as he suggested.

Hanashiro Daisuke: Behind the Governor, there is a group of people who worked to have the UN recommend that the Okinawans are indigenous peoples. Some Diet members from the "All Okinawa" support the UN recommendations.

If the Governor has no intention to address himself, the Assembly should adopt the statement against the recommendations.

I fear this might be used in sync with the issue of the Senkaku Islands. And so we must deliberately discuss this. The UN recommendations have been issued four times without the knowledge of Okinawan people. The term "indigenous peoples" is not clearly defined. How is this matter treated in the world? First of all, the Okinawa citizens should be well informed of these things. And the members of the Prefectural Assembly should continue to make efforts so that fair discussions will be held. I hope we will have such an opportunity soon.

Governor Onaga's speech in the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly ②

<http://www2.pref.okinawa.jp/oki/Gikairep1.nsf/bf76642d1ed57158492581ed00348311/67eb5eca90e9e00149258212000bdadc?OpenDocument>

The 7th Okinawa Prefectural Assembly, 2015 (Regular session)

From Minutes No. 5, October 20

Hanashiro Daisuke: Allow me to speak. I am Hanashiro Daisuke of the Liberal Democratic Party.

First, Governor Onaga, welcome back from Geneva, Switzerland. Thank you for previously meeting with us, the Liberal Democratic Party group, before your departure to Geneva. You received our request and told us that there was nothing disagreeable about it and that if anything happened, it would be discussed in the Assembly. So, let me ask a few questions.

As I said earlier, when we met before you left for Geneva, our secretary general, Gushi, asked you in advance to be cautious at the UN, to not to create a misunderstanding that Okinawans are an “indigenous people”. And on my part, I asked you to be careful about what you say in the symposium sponsored by a party with a certain ideological slant. Then, you said that you have never recognized the Okinawans as an indigenous people and that you have always been proud of being Japanese. Nevertheless, judging from what you related in the symposium and the primary purpose of the NGO's symposium, it is likely that you disseminated the impression that the Okinawan people are indeed an “indigenous people”.

Governor Onaga, please let us hear your view.

Chairman (Kina Masaharu): We will recess.

10:49: In recess

10:50: Session resumed

Chairman (Kina Masaharu): The session will resume. Chief of the Governor's Office,

please respond.

Chief of the Governor's Office (Machida Masaru): Allow me to answer.

As to the issue of indigenous peoples, since we have never stated whether the Okinawans are an indigenous people, it is my understanding that the Governor did not state this view.

This time, at the UN Human Rights Council, the Governor explained Okinawa's situation and position in terms of human rights and the right of Okinawans to make their own decisions, based on the global scope of the protection of human rights and increased autonomy.

Hanashiro Daisuke: Your answer does not address my question. I'm talking about a grave situation in which the Governor clearly disseminated the notion that Okinawans are an indigenous people.

In particular, the Governor used the English term "self-determination" during his speech at the Human Rights Council. [Mr. Machida laughed.] Maybe my pronunciation was bad. The term "self-determination" refers to "racial self-determination." And this is not a commonly used term. The term "self-determination" is reserved for those who we describe as "indigenous peoples". Again, within the context of "racial self-determination." So, in the context of Governor Onaga's speech, it is the Okinawan people that were the point of discussion. The Governor mentioned "self-determination" in his speech describing Okinawa's situation. The general impression the Governor gave when he used the word "self-determination" was that the people of Okinawa are a distinct race and that they are an "indigenous people".

Let us know if Governor Onaga used the English term with full understanding of its meaning.

Chief of the Governor's Office (Machida Masaru): The part of the speech to which Mr. Hanashiro refers is translated into Japanese as follows: "Please pay attention internationally to the situation of Henoko. It is a case in which the Okinawan people's right to decide for themselves is neglected." So here, the term "self-determination" is used to mean the right to decide "for themselves" (in the sense of local autonomy).

Hanashiro Daisuke: Let me state again. The term “self-determination” means “racial self-determination” and therefore, it was used on the premise that the Okinawans are an indigenous people. I am asking for your view on this point.

Chief of the Governor’s Office (Machida Masaru): The term was used, not to mean “racial self-determination”, but the right of the Okinawans to decide for themselves.

Hanashiro Daisuke: I will end this circular argument now. [Someone spoke.] Someone just said, “We are *UCHI NAN CHU*.” (meaning “Okinawan people” in the Okinawan dialect). Of course, we are. I am happy that I was born in Japan. And I feel proud that I was born and grew up in Okinawa. Now, the term “indigenous people” is often mentioned, which truly hurts my pride. That’s why I insist on answers to my questions. I feel that this situation is very crucial because we now we have to state out loud that we are Japanese and that we are citizens of Okinawa Prefecture. Someone hooted. Well, I want the person who just hooted to express his own thought and view.

I would like to ask him if he recognizes us as an “indigenous people” or if he wants our children and grandchildren to be treated as an “indigenous people”.

Now, I resume my questions to Governor Onaga.

Whether intentionally or not, as a consequence, Governor Onaga disseminated a message that will likely be misunderstood by the international community. This is my conviction. I wonder if his act goes beyond the Governor’s authority. Please relate your view.

Chief of the Governor’s Office (Machida Masaru): Let me answer. In my opinion, it is within the Governor’s authority to explain the present situation of Okinawa to delegates from various countries, NGO’s and others.

Hanashiro Daisuke: As I’ve said repeatedly, that is not my point. I want to know what you think about the fact that the misconception that the Okinawans are an indigenous people was disseminated to the rest of the world.

Chief of the Governor’s Office (Machida Masaru): As I repeated over and over, the Governor did not use the term “indigenous peoples.” In his speech at the UN, he

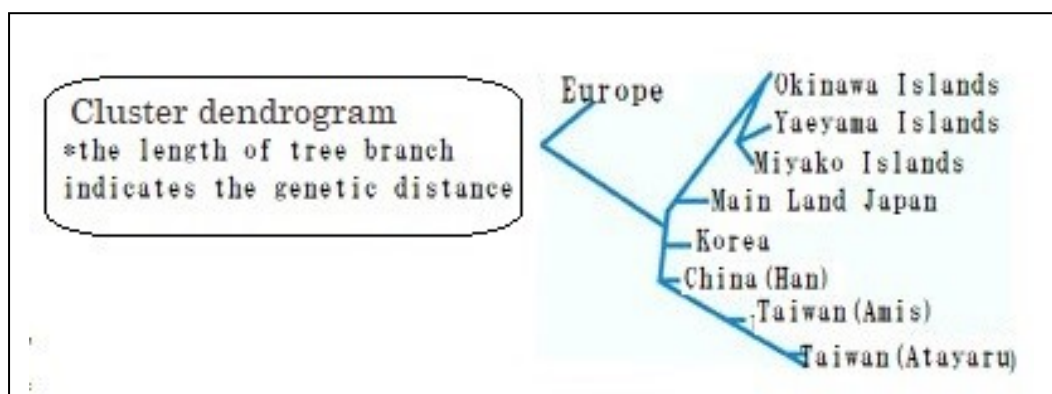
explained various incidents and accidents related to US military bases, and how greatly these impact Okinawans' lives. He also emphasized that he would stop the construction of a new military base at Henoko, using every possible means and measures. [Someone spoke out of turn.]

<http://english.ryukyushimpo.jp/2014/09/29/15386/>

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Genetic DNA of Okinawan people similar to
people in the main islands of Japan

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Modern people living in the Ryukyu Islands are genetically more closely related to those in the main islands of Japan than people in Taiwan or mainland China, a research team has found. The researchers announced their findings on September 16 after analyzing nuclear genomic DNA. The team consists of Takehiro Sato Ph.D, a research scholar of the University of the Ryukyus, who specializes in medical research, an associate professor of the university Ryosuke Kimura and researchers of the Institute of Statistical Mathematics of Kitasato University. According to the researchers, people started moving from the Ryukyu islands to Miyako and Yaeyama islands 10,000 years ago. The team concluded the Pinza-Abu Cave Man, which was found in Miyako Island and dated to 26,000 years ago, and the Shiraho saonetabaru Cave Man, dated to 20,000 years ago, of Ishigaki island, are not the main ancestors of the people living in Miyako and Yaeyama today.

Previous research results have also shown the people of the Ryukyu Islands are more similar to those in the main islands of Japan than mainland China or Taiwan from

bones and DNA analysis of remains. However, this new analysis of nuclear genomic DNA got the same results.

The research results could help further study of the origin of the people of the Ryukyu Islands.

The team collected DNA from a few hundred of people from the main islands of Okinawa, Miyako and Yaeyama islands. The researchers analyzed 600,000 Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms in the human genome. The results showed the native people of the Ryukyu islands and those of Taiwan are in different genetic groups. According to the research results, the people of the Yaeyama islands are genetically not related to those living in Taiwan despite their geographical proximity.

A representative of the team said, “We analyzed the migrations of people of the Ryukyu Islands and Han in China after the Jomon Period. We found that it is highly possible that Minatogawa Man is not the main ancestor of the people in the Okinawa islands.” The researchers said further investigation was needed.

(English translation by T&CT)