

# Chapter 1

## OKINAWA'S TOURISM IMPERATIVE



### Introduction

A basic familiarity with Okinawa's history and political economy is essential to understanding the prefecture's tourism industry in the early twenty-first century. In this chapter, I provide a brief overview of the historical circumstances that have produced tourism dependency in Okinawa. I trace the development of Okinawa's tourism imperative to explain the contemporary practice and presentation of ecotourism in northern Okinawa.

### Island Geographies, Populations, and the Politics of Naming

Okinawa is Japan's southernmost prefecture. The formal prefecture consists of roughly 160 islands encompassed by a longer chain of islands collectively known as the Ryūkyū Archipelago (琉球諸島), about forty of which are inhabited by people. The Ryūkyū Archipelago stretches over a thousand kilometers, extending southwest from Kyushu (the southernmost island of Japan's four main islands) to Taiwan. The archipelago is usually divided from northeast to southwest and includes four geographic subgroupings: Okinawa, Miyako, Yaeyama, and Senkaku Islands. The prefecture's capital city, Naha, is centrally located on Okinawa Island (*Okinawa hontō*),<sup>1</sup> by far the largest of the Ryūkyū Islands and the primary site of my fieldwork.

Okinawa's political history can be examined through the lens of language, which is also deeply linked to the questions of cultural authenticity, exoticized otherness, and regional pride that continue to shape touristic representations of the island today. The former semi-autonomous Ryūkyū Kingdom operated centrally in an expansive trading system that began during the seventh century, connecting the archipelago with China from the fourteenth

century, and Japan from the fifteenth century, until the late nineteenth century, throughout which the Ryūkyūan government paid tribute to both powers (Zabilka 1959: 15–17).

The name, according to the Chinese, is of Chinese origin, for the word “Lew-k’ew” [Ryūkyū] means “hanging beads” and refers to the fact that this island chain is like a string of tassels on the skirt of China. But though the Japanese have allowed their own pronunciation of this name to stand, they favor the name “Okinawa” or the “long sea rope” which stretches as a cable between Japan and Formosa [Taiwan], and thus makes these islands and Formosa an integral part of Japan proper. (Gast 1945: 12)

The expansionist Japanese government formally annexed Okinawa in 1872, establishing Okinawa Prefecture in 1879. Americans referred to the same group of islands as “Ryukyu” from their first involvement in the mid nineteenth century until the end of the post–World War II U.S. military occupation (1945–72).

The Okinawan-language term for Okinawa is *Uchinaa*. There are many ways to refer to the Okinawan language, each carrying a different political valence. In Japanese, the now dominant language of Okinawa Prefecture (and the language in which I conducted the bulk of my fieldwork), one is most likely to hear the terms *Okinawa-go* (Okinawan) or *hōgen* (dialect of Japanese). In Okinawan, however, *Uchinaaguchi* (literally “mouth of Uchinaa”) denotes the umbrella language that was spoken throughout the island, with some regional variation, until Japan’s forced assimilation policies systematically eradicated it from classrooms and other public spheres during the early twentieth century.

Linguists such as Rumiko Shinzato have recently established that *Uchinaaguchi*<sup>2</sup> is not, in fact, a dialect of Japanese. While the two languages are genealogically related, Okinawan is less than 70 percent cognate with standardized Japanese and the two are mutually unintelligible (2003: 284). Shinzato (2003: 284–291) identifies the following six distinct periods over the course of less than one century, a period during which the Okinawan language was purged from daily life but eventually emerged as a key marker of cultural pride and difference:

- 1) Before the creation of Okinawa Prefecture (1879): Okinawan exists as an independent language of the Ryūkyū Kingdom
- 2) From 1879 until the start of First Sino-Japanese War (1895): Okinawan is gradually marginalized through the “top-down” imposition of Japanese-language-only schools and conversation training centers for monolingual adults

- 3) From 1895 until Japan invades China again, effectively beginning the Second World War (1937): Japanese becomes the language of education through a period of more grassroots standardization, while Okinawan is still spoken at home
- 4) 1937–45, a period which spans the Second Sino-Japanese War and World War II: Okinawan is denigrated as a dialect, the use of which is punishable in increasingly militarized schools during a period of extreme Japanese nationalism
- 5) 1945–72, the period of the formal U.S. Military occupation of Okinawa: Okinawan declines rapidly under postwar U.S. policies designed to propagate English and squelch the rise of pro-Japanese sentiment
- 6) 1972–present (Reversion to Japan in 1972): Okinawan resurges as a point of prefectural pride following Okinawa's political reversion to Japan

Until 1879, Okinawan monolingualism was standard throughout the Ryūkyū Kingdom; today, Okinawans under age sixty speak and understand Okinawan-accented standard Japanese. The Japanese (and later, the U.S.) government's political conquest of Okinawa was achieved in part through "linguistic conquest" (286), and I very briefly summarize these periods to historicize one of the most intensive processes through which *Uchinaanchu* (people of Okinawa) have come to regard themselves as "Okinawan" and, to a lesser degree, "Japanese."<sup>3</sup> Okinawan-language greetings such as *Haisai!* (Hello) and *Menso-re!* (Welcome) are much more likely to be directed at sunblocked tourists than spoken between Okinawans in everyday conversation.

Okinawans also have many names for mainland Japan<sup>4</sup>: *Yamato* (which indexes the ancient Japanese capital of Nara and the dominant Japanese ethnic group, known in Okinawan as *Yamatonchu*), *Naichi* (a relic of the Japanese colonial period that indexes the main islands as the "internal" or "home" territories), and occasionally even just *Nihon* (today's most commonly used Japanese language name for Japan). My informants frequently used these descriptors selectively to imply varying degrees of historical, cultural, and linguistic separateness from Japan.

My informants regarded the reclamation and continued use of Okinawan, and of dialects of Okinawan unique to the northern area where I worked, as central to the joint enterprises of revitalizing local pride and strengthening small-scale tourist economies. Whether for the edification and entertainment of mainland Japanese tourists or for the benefit of Okinawans, the preservation of the Okinawan language functions as a strategic claim to authenticity by emphasizing the islands' cultural and historical difference from Japan.

## Okinawa's "3-k" Economy

Your assignment to the Ryukyu (Ree-YOU-que) Islands—of which Okinawa is the largest—will place you in pleasant surroundings, face to face with people quite different from those back home. If you have not been in the Far East before, the sights you see and the people you meet will seem strange at first. But you will feel at home once you get acquainted with the Ryukyuan people and make friends with them.

It would be a mistake, in an essentially rural and village country such as the Ryukyus, to expect the dazzling attractions found in Tokyo, London, or Paris. But the Ryukyus have much to offer, not the least of which is the natural beauty of a varied landscape. And wherever you go, you will find the Ryukyuan people friendly and hospitable. These winning traits of the people have earned for Okinawa such titles as "Land of Courtesy" and "Isle of Smiles." Even the most glum visitor will enjoy the good-natured smiles and laughter of the Okinawans . . .

Because of the strategic importance of the Ryukyus, it is essential that you understand the islands' background and people and the political circumstances under which the United States retains control there. This guide will help you appreciate the Ryukyuan point of view by telling you a little about the Ryukyuan people, their way of life, their problems, and their aspirations. The more you know about the Ryukyuan people, the more you will appreciate them and enjoy your tour of duty among them. Take advantage of an unusual opportunity to know at close range these delightful Asian people. (A Pocket Guide to Okinawa,<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Defense 1961)

The above excerpt, taken from an early 1960s U.S. Department of Defense "Pocket Guide to Okinawa" written for military personnel, illustrates key aspects of the deep connections between Okinawa's tourism industry and the presence of U.S. military bases on the island (see Figure 1.1). Glenn Hook and Richard Siddle (2003: 6) reject the image of Okinawans as "non-threatening, laid-back and relaxed 'exotic' islander[s], ever ready to burst into song and dance, happily supportive of the status quo and the 'warm' relationship with the mainland," a stereotype reified through similar kinds of pamphlets now directed at mainland Japanese tourists instead of U.S. soldiers.

The formal U.S. occupation of mainland Japan ended in 1952 with the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which recognized Japan's "residual sovereignty" (Tanji 2006: 61), but allowed U.S. forces "to be stationed all the time in and about Japan." Of Okinawa, President Eisenhower proclaimed in his 1952 State of the Union message: "The Ryukyu Islands will be held for an indefinite period," thus reinscribing the politicized differences between *Uchinaa* and *Yamato* described previously. Another twenty years passed before Japan and the United States negotiated the return of Okinawa to Tokyo's jurisdiction.

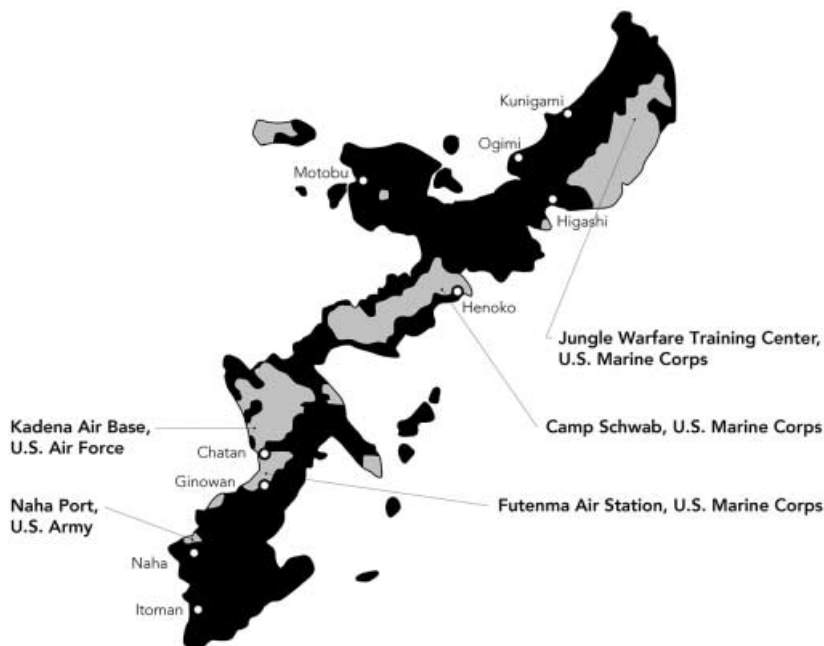


FIGURE 1.1 • Map of U.S. Military Bases in Okinawa<sup>6</sup>

Note: Not all U.S. military facilities are labeled.

On 15 May 1972, seven new laws were implemented to administer the islands, including a law to address “Special Measures for Promotion and Development of the Islands of Okinawa” (Asato 2003: 234). Tourism fell under the rubric of the Promotion and Development Plan, meant to help Okinawa achieve parity with mainland Japan. In 1973 the mayor of Nago City foreshadowed the issues I explore here when he criticized Tokyo’s industry-driven approach to development: “Human beings have become enslaved to productionism, which results in the destruction of the basis of our existence. Rather, we citizens of Nago should take as our goal the creation of the most favorable life environment” (234). The mayor’s criticism of Okinawans’ postwar development imperatives as “productionism” can be read as a response to the Okinawa Tourism Association’s (OTA) attempts to produce what members called “tourism consciousness” (*kankō ishiki*) in the prefecture beginning in 1954 (Figal 2012: 37). Gerald Figal’s (2012: 39) description of the OTA mission can be understood as a kind of virtualism wherein “Okinawans needed to view physically and conceptualize discursively their island in terms consonant with the expectations of outsider visitors.”<sup>7</sup> The Tropical Paradise/

Tourist Okinawa mentality expressed by so many Okinawans today had to be learned as an alternative narrative to the all too real “poverty-stricken, foreign-occupied, war-ravaged homeland” (39) Okinawans were forced to contend with in the postwar period.

Once the 1972 Reversion eliminated strict U.S. policies that required passports and visas for travel between Okinawa and Japan, a newly domestic tourism promoting the “subtropical climate, the beautiful ocean, and the exotic city scene” became a major industry (Shinzato 2003: 290). Gavan McCormack (1999: 275) identifies the 1975 Marine Expo as the beginning of mainland Japanese interest in Okinawa’s touristic potential, which led to a decades-long “wave of steel” and concrete in the form of resort development. Tourist visits jumped from 800,000 annually in 1974 to 1.8 million in 1975, 3 million in 1992, and nearly 6 million in 2009.

By the mid 1980s and 1990s, streamlined travel was furthering the spread of a so-called “Okinawa boom” across Japan: Okinawa-themed music, theater, and cinema gained popularity on the Japanese mainland, driving renewed interest in the revival and preservation of the Okinawan language and mainstreaming a renewed sense of Okinawan pride. Domestic tourism continued to rise as things Okinawan grew in popularity and commercial profitability, and the previously stigmatized idea of “Okinawa Time” (a slower, more relaxed pace of life) found new currency among stressed mainland visitors (Nelson 2008: 236).

Now, in the midst of what Hook and Siddle (2003: 6) identify as the “third wave” of the post-Reversion tourism frequently characterized by battlefield tours and organized shopping trips for cheap goods, Okinawans involved in ecotourism are actively resisting the typical travel packages that place visitors in mainland-funded luxury hotels staffed by non-Okinawans.

Tourism forms one leg of Okinawa’s basic economic structure, often referred to as the “3-k” economy, meaning that *kichi*, *kankō*, *kōkyō jigyō*—“bases,” “tourism,” and “public works,” respectively—constitute the main sectors of employment in Okinawa. These three industries frequently come into conflict over questions of aesthetics and environmental health. Hook and Siddle describe how human intervention in the form of widespread U.S. military base construction subjected postwar Okinawa to “the good, the bad and the ugly” (2003: 3). Bases bring at least four major kinds of suffering to Okinawans living nearby: clamor, calamity, contamination, and crime (Gillem 2007: 17). Linda Angst (2003) and Cynthia Enloe (2014) show that Okinawan girls and women are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence perpetrated by U.S. soldiers, who between 1972 and 2001 constituted four percent of Okinawa’s population and were responsible for 1.7 percent of crime (Cullen 2001, quoted in Gillem 2007: 308). Chronic aircraft-related noise pollution,<sup>8</sup> oil spills, accidental jet and auto crashes, and robberies and

murders committed by U.S. soldiers are among the many complaints voiced by Okinawans (Gillem 2007: 48).

Among Japan's forty-seven prefectures, Okinawa comprises just 1 percent of Japan's landmass but holds 75 percent of U.S. bases in Japan (Hein and Selden 2003: 5). The United States, which has more overseas military bases than any other country (Enloe 2014: 126), currently maintains fourteen military bases on or near Okinawa Island. These bases occupy close to 20 percent of the island's landmass and comprise roughly one-third of Yambaru in the form of jungle training areas (McCormack 1999: 267). In 2016, there were roughly 27,000 active-duty service members stationed on Okinawa, a number that doubles when Department of Defense civilians and dependents are included (Narang 2016). The social problems caused by U.S. military bases remain the top priority in contemporary Okinawan politics, and grievances frequently invoke base-related environmental destruction and the loss of natural habitat for Okinawa's animals.

In 1996 the Okinawa Development Agency's expansive public works projects constituted more than half of all construction business in Okinawa (Hein and Selden 2003: 4). The "pristine" forests of the north become increasingly valuable when juxtaposed with the "bulldozed and concreted" rivers, beaches, and land, the damage from which feeds into the coastline in the form of red soil runoff, killing coral and other sea life in less obvious ways (5).

### **Redefining "The Environment" in the Postwar Period**

To approach defining a "favorable life environment," we must first consider how the meaning of the term "environment" has taken shape throughout Okinawa's history. Okinawa-based scholar Eiko Asato succinctly outlines the development trajectory I explore in this work: the destruction of the natural and social environment, Asato (2003: 236) writes, "began with the devastation of war, was followed by the degradation of the environment through military base construction [and was] followed by industrial and tourism development."

Shin Yamashiro's (2005: 51–55) summary of the "critical phases" of Okinawa's environmental history complements Shinzato's earlier analysis of Okinawa's linguistic history:

- 1) Preparation for War (1940s to October 1944)
- 2) Direct Impact of the War (1944–45)
- 3) Aftermath of the War (1945–72)
- 4) Preservation and Conservation of Natural Resources (1972 to the 1990s and onwards)

During the immediate postwar period, the newly formed United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyus (USCAR) Department of Health, Education and Welfare focused on urgent matters such as sanitation, disease control, and the primary concern of better “health” (52)—better social environments where people could live. During the 1950s, U.S. administrative archives used the term “environment” in reference to other issues such as family planning, water quality, and pest control (52) (likely the control of the rodents, snakes, and mongooses I will discuss in Chapter 2). In 1950s and 1960s Okinawa, concerns for the environment revolved around infrastructure and public health.

The reversion movement for Okinawan “interdependence” was framed as a nationalist, anti-capitalist effort, as was common for decolonization movements throughout Asia and Africa following World War II; and for many Okinawans (and Japanese) the struggle for Okinawan independence represented not only the retrieval of Okinawa for Japan but also a strong assertion of Japanese independence (Tanji 2006: 86). By the 1970s, Okinawa’s environmental administration had shifted from a “human-centered” orientation toward a more comprehensive view that incorporated human and nonhuman species as well (Yamashiro 2005: 52). Yamashiro identifies the 1970s post-Reversion period as the moment of the Okinawan environmental movement’s emergence, a time “through which we can witness how environmental affairs became infused with attempts to protect the endangered natural environment and to preserve Okinawan identity” (52).

In the early postwar period, the tourism industry was seen as an economic sector with “great potential for national economies, opening up opportunities for recreation and leisure for large parts of the population in industrialized countries” (Gössling and Hall 2006: 13). Although the notion of tourism-as-development persists in many countries, the rise of the Green Movement in the 1960s and 1970s raised public interest in issues such as erosion and beach crowding. The confluence of differing attitudes toward the environment by U.S. military and Okinawans produced the milieu of environmental politics that shapes discourses of the environment today. In the 1960s, for example, U.S. military interest in developing central Okinawa’s Ishikawa Beach for recreational purposes led to the discovery that the seawater was severely contaminated by nearby Ishikawa City—a finding that eventually led to the first water and sewage disposal system in Okinawa (Yamashiro 2005: 53–54).

In early twenty-first-century Okinawa, discourses of environment-as-health and environment-as-nature remain intertwined in ways strongly influenced by the tourism imperative. Dolphin Therapy and Forest Therapy, which I discuss at length in Chapters 3 and 4, further naturalize contemporary beliefs that affiliating with nature improves human health and overall well-being.



## **Tourism in Okinawa Today**

Following reversion to the Japanese state in 1972, Okinawa has undergone major economic transformations. The Okinawa Development and Promotion Plan (ODP) (drafted by the prefectural government in cooperation with Tokyo) was designed to reduce the socioeconomic gap between Okinawa and mainland Japan and improve Okinawa's economic self-reliance (Kakazu 1994: 151), primarily through an expansion of domestic agricultural exports and tourist imports. Small islands such as Okinawa tend to suffer from what Kakazu calls "dis-economies of scale": overdependence on external trade and official economic assistance, extremely limited resource bases, high costs of transportation and other infrastructure, extensive out-migration, and vulnerability to natural disasters and environmental disruptions (217). Okinawa's former agriculture (primarily sugar) and manufacturing industries have shrunk rapidly in the face of increasing global competition, and the prefecture depends heavily on the Japanese government for domestic development aid.

Tourism and associated service sector activities constitute the most profound change in Okinawa's economic and geographic landscape post-Reversion. During the U.S. occupation, tourism accounted for only 4 percent of Okinawa's gross prefectural product; by the 1990s tourism had reached 25 percent (Egami 1994: 829), and by 2004 tourism accounted for 20 percent of Okinawa's total external receipts, of which 40 percent is spent on imported goods and services (Kakazu 2011, quoted in Murphy 2011: 16). Toward the end of the U.S. occupation, the Okinawan labor of the "house-keeping force" required for non-tactical, non-operational chores became the "prime pillar" of Okinawa's economy (Morris 1968: 3). Today military bases constitute only 5 percent of Okinawa's GDP, down from 15 percent in 1972 (Gillem 2007: 233). According to University of the Ryukyus economist Tetsuo Umemura (2007 n.d.), in 2006 Okinawa's economic structure by industry was as follows: primary (agriculture, fishery, and forestry) 1.9 percent, secondary (manufacturing and construction) 11.8 percent, and tertiary (services, including tourism) 90.3 percent. The gradual shift from a military-based to a tourism-based economy has also produced the greatest economic boom in Okinawa since 1972: more than ever, Okinawa Prefecture's 1.4 million residents rely on mainland tourists who spend more than JP¥400 billion<sup>9</sup> (approximately US\$4.7 billion) annually—close to a quarter of Okinawa's gross regional product (Kakazu 1994: 5).

The tourism industry grew roughly tenfold from the 1960s to the mid 1990s (Kakazu 1994: 1), yet Okinawans still rank lowest among Japanese in terms of per capita income: a report by the Japan Cabinet Office shows Okinawans earned an average of ¥2,021,000 (\$24,000) in 2005, less than half that of the average Tokyo resident. Nonetheless, Okinawa currently has

the fastest-growing economy in Japan (2.6 percent, 2003–2013), and the prefecture’s population, unlike that of the rest of the Japanese archipelago, continues to grow.

Tourism has expanded as U.S. military base–related spending has declined, and the results of this substantial industrial changeover have been mixed. Resort facilities, for example, run the risk of becoming economic fortresses that never fully integrate with the local economy, even as they vacuum up precious natural resources to draw mainland visitors. The rapid “resortization of the Ryukyus” (Kakazu 1994: 151) involves giant Japanese firms edging out local hotels to build massive resort complexes replete with eighteen-hole golf courses and multiple swimming pools. Hotel development is always capital- and space-intensive, but water use statistics are perhaps the most staggering: while the average Okinawan household consumes 391 liters of water per day, a typical city hotel and a grand resort hotel respectively use more than 810 and 1,192 liters per guest per day. Mass tourism may ultimately cause the demise of the beautiful beaches and lush sceneries that make Okinawa such an ideal place for a luxuriant new resort. Okinawa’s ability to resume its Ryūkyū Kingdom status as a host of international (touristic) exchange depends on the preservation of the islands’ most cherished natural resources.

Ecotourism in Okinawa is part of a broader localization movement intended to stem what Hiroshi Kakazu calls the economic “boomerang effect” of large-scale package tourism, whereby Japanese investment funds quickly boomerang back to mainland Japan with limited spillover effects on the local economy (Kakazu 1994: 159). Ecotourists visiting Okinawa would ideally do a homestay, patronize a local *minshuku*,<sup>10</sup> or rent a pension for one or two weeks, during which time they would participate in trekking, snorkeling, canoeing, and kayaking tours operated by local nature interpreters<sup>11</sup> rather than spending their money on bus tours run by guides who typically come from mainland Japan.

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) estimates that by 2020 more than 1.6 billion tourists will have visited the Asia Pacific region, and Okinawa’s former governor Hirokazu Nakaima worked to attract at least ten million of these visitors to Okinawa by 2017 (Murphy 2011: 16). Under the banners of sustainable rural development, local income generation, and the preservation of biodiversity, international lending and aid agencies have pumped millions of dollars into ecotourism projects worldwide since the late 1970s (Honey 1999: 7). Thus, over the last twenty years the practice and philosophy of ecotourism has developed in response to the mass tourism “Big Bang” (Oshiro 2007) that has already hit the Asia Pacific.

Amidst a sprinkling of Taiwanese duty-free shoppers, South Korean golfers, and families of American soldiers, the vast majority (95 percent) of tourists in Okinawa still come from mainland Japan (Okinawa Tourism Direc-

tory). The ODP estimated the “eco-footprints” of an additional one million tourists annually in 2013, a source of major concern and protest among the many Okinawans who would prefer to increase the quality of tourists rather than their quantity. Many residents feel that the islands’ touristic carrying capacity has already been surpassed and do not support former governor Nakaima’s ODP because of the long-term social and environmental risks posed by extensive tourism development in Okinawa.

### **Mobilizing Difference: Distinguishing the Exotic**

Anthropologists have noted the “ambivalent valorization” (Nelson 2008: 14) of Okinawa as culturally separate from a Japan that remains invested in discourses of its own ethnic homogeneity (see also Hein and Selden 2003; Molasky 1999). Over the last 150 years Okinawans were often portrayed as racially different from Japanese. This led to social effects with grave material consequences, including poverty and famine, forced labor and migration, and military conscription and occupation (Nelson 2008: 12). Being distinctive, on the other hand, can also mean being desired. In the context of the tourism industry, the cultivation of Okinawa as an exoticized tropical<sup>12</sup> paradise (as opposed to a backward colonial outlier) has sustained the cultural “boom” needed to support the prefecture economically.

During fieldwork my Okinawan informants intermittently referred to their islands as “Japan’s Hawaii” (paradisiacal), the “Galapagos of the East” (biodiverse) (McCormack 1999: 263), and the “Keystone of the Pacific” (strategic) (Zabilka 1959: 21). The latter term adopts the U.S. military’s perspective on the island but has more recently served to promote international business tourism as well. The 2010 Okinawa Tourism Promotion Plan appeals to business travelers incentivized by the prefecture’s exoticized beauty to attend international conferences and conventions held in Okinawa, a place that can be reached within four hours by plane from many major cities in Asia, including Hong Kong, Manila, and Seoul. Emphasizing Okinawans’ unusual longevity<sup>13</sup> and the population’s “overall superior state of wellness” (Willcox et al. 2001: 423), medical anthropologist Craig Willcox even likens the archipelago to “The Real Shangri-La” (healthy) (2001: 1) (cf. Zhang 2017). These kinds of images are what attracted the six million domestic and international tourists who visited Okinawa in 2009.

Upon closer examination, however, each of these highly marketable characterizations of Okinawa contain a much deeper history of the island’s environmental and political vulnerability to outside forces. Ecological wounds inflicted on Okinawa during World War II are today reflected by the absence of certain features of the landscape, such as formerly vibrant villages and

greenery in the south. The southern half of Okinawa Island was left as a geographic palimpsest in the wake of the Battle of Okinawa; a surface on which the “traumatic erasures” (Daniel 1996) of recent history can still be seen. The obliteration of so many features of the prewar landscape eventually created the space to reinscribe the memory of human life lost during the war. At the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum in Itoman the names of more than 240,000 war dead<sup>14</sup> are engraved onto row upon row of black granite walls known as the “Cornerstone of Peace.” More than 100 stones fan out across Mabuni Hill, the location of Japanese military headquarters during the Battle and the site of some of the fiercest fighting at the end of the battle. The stoic memorialization of the wounded dead in this case historicizes an acute instance of violence, while the legacy of defeat keeps Okinawa vulnerable to U.S. military interests decades later.

The war-based “dark tourism”<sup>15</sup> (Lennon and Foley 2000) conducted in the south grows stark when juxtaposed with the “green,” nature-based tourism of the north. Taku Suzuki, following Maria Tumarkin (2005), characterizes the postwar “touristification of traumascapes” in southern Okinawa as “neither a gradual nor a linear transformation of a place of horror and sorrow into a place of consumerism and pleasure” (Suzuki 2010: 16). Suzuki articulates the historical push and pull between touristified former battle sites, labeling them as places for “sincere mourning of the victims and serious commitment to pacifism” and as sites of sheer vulgarity (16). Suzuki’s example of the Himeyuri Cenotaph,<sup>16</sup> a war memorial visited by more than 800,000 people per year, suggests that battlegrounds shift in meaning and recognition over time, in accordance with tourist popularity and a changing political climate.

J. John Lennon and Malcolm Foley (2000: 11) theorize the popularity of visits to war memorials and battlegrounds in the early twenty-first century as secular pilgrimages made possible by global communications technologies, advertised through the commodification of destinations for their educational value, and ultimately driven by their capacity to introduce visitors to “anxiety and doubt about the project of modernity.” If the tragedies of World War II can be reified through the present-day preservation and commercialization of dark locations, then where and when does the war end? What can a close examination of the places where the Battle of Okinawa did *not* devastate the landscape—where there is an absence of stone memorials and dated, quantified placards—teach us about the full scope of Okinawa’s traumascapes?

The tourism imperative has shaped the way that human history is told in Okinawa. The legacy of the Battle of Okinawa can also be found in the presence (and preservation) of new features of the landscape, such as accessible highways,<sup>17</sup> marked battle sites, and historical museums. The northern

Okuni Forest Road, built between 1977 and 1994, crosses thirty-five kilometers through the heart of Yambaru and has paved the way for the invasion of “hitherto unknown feral animals,” including dogs, cats, and mongooses (McCormack 1999: 269). The next chapter unravels the discourses of vulnerability that have come to shape human-animal touristic encounters in northern Okinawa today.

## Notes

1. Unless otherwise noted, when I use the terms “Okinawa” and “Okinawan” I am referring specifically to Okinawa Island and its human inhabitants.
2. I indicate romanized Japanese-language long vowels using conventional macrons (ā, ū, ō, etc.). I present Okinawan-language long vowels differently (*aa, uu, oo*) to reinforce the linguistic differences between the two languages that my informants unflinchingly pointed out to me.
3. Particularly when traveling abroad, many Okinawans will introduce themselves as Okinawan first, and Japanese second, to demonstrate their pride and, as a few of my informants mentioned, because most of the Americans they meet are already familiar with Okinawa owing to the U.S. military connection.
4. When Okinawans speak of mainland Japan (*bondo*) they are referring to the four largest islands of Honshu, Kyushu, Shikoku, and Hokkaido. (Residents of Hokkaido Prefecture, another relatively late addition to the Japanese state, tend to speak of only the first three as Japan’s “mainland”). In this text, “mainland” indicates the Okinawan perspective unless otherwise indicated. Within Okinawa Prefecture, Okinawa Island is considered the main island of the Ryūkyū Archipelago and is referred to as *Okinawa hontō*.
5. This Department of Defense official publication (DOD Pam 2–50) was created by the Office of Armed Forces Information and Education. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara endorsed the guidebook for use by U.S. military personnel.
6. Courtesy of Megan M. Scheminske.
7. See Thompson (2006) for a more general discussion of island (re)tropicalization and Picard (2011) for analysis of host-community agency within the context of the tourism imperative.
8. For the first half of my fieldwork, I lived about 3 km from U.S. Marine Corps Futenma Air Station in Ginowan (central Okinawa) (see Figures 0.1 and 1.1). The noise blaring from aircraft flying overhead shook the walls of my American-style house a few times each week. I escaped this noise pollution entirely when I moved north to Nago.
9. Due to constant fluctuations in the exchange rate between Japanese yen and U.S. dollar, I quote most monetary figures in yen. At the time I conducted my fieldwork (2009–2011), the average exchange rate was JPY85 to US\$1. (Hereafter currency will be represented as “¥” for Japanese yen and “\$” for U.S. dollar.)
10. *Minshuku* translates roughly as “peoples’ lodgings” or “staying with the people.” This form of lodging is popular throughout Japan: Okpyo Moon discusses the mutual benefits of such an arrangement in her case study of Hanasaku (Gunma Prefecture) (Moon 1998: 117–18).

11. Honey (2000: 30) defines nature interpreters (discussed at length in Chapter 5) “well-trained, multilingual naturalist guides with skills in natural and cultural history, environmental interpretation, ethical principles, and effective communication,” and key agents of ecotourism’s success.
12. Following Eva Keller (2015), I recognize that “the tropics” is both an imaginative and an empirical concept. Because the notion of the tropical is deeply embedded in discourses of European colonial expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (some, but not all, of which resonate with the Japanese colonial project during the same time period), in this ethnography I avoid using the language of tropicity except where I am quoting secondary sources.
13. According to 1996 World Health Organization and Japan Ministry of Health and Welfare statistical data, Okinawans ranked first in the world for longevity, with an average lifespan of 81.2 (compared with 79.9 in mainland Japan) (Willcox et al. 2001: 2). By 2008, however, researchers at the University of the Ryukyus found that Okinawan female longevity had declined slightly while male longevity had dropped from first place to twenty-sixth out of Japan’s 47 prefectures (NIH 2008 n.d.).
14. This figure includes military and civilian deaths across nationality and ethnicity, and also accounts for the war-related deaths of Okinawans in other parts of Japan and abroad. While the name “Cornerstone of Peace” alludes to the U.S.-Japan security agreement, the inclusion of the names of all non-Okinawan casualties is meant to express a more universal and transcendent “philosophy of peace” (Hein and Selden 2003: 69). Sociologist Masaie Ishihara describes this philosophy as “a kind of habitual way of life born of Okinawan historical experience” (Ishihara 2001, quoted in Hein and Selden 2003: 69).
15. A competing term coined to encompass the phenomenon of morbid tourism is Tony Seaton’s *thanatourism*. Seaton (1996: 236) defines thanatourism as “travel to a location ... motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death.”
16. The Himeyuri Cenotaph memorializes the gas bombing deaths of the Himeyuri Nurse Corps, a group of 211 high school girls who cared for wounded Japanese soldiers during the Battle of Okinawa.
17. The construction of an extensive network of highways across Okinawa in lieu of trains during the U.S. occupation made the island susceptible to the global politics of gas and oil in an unprecedented way, and precluded the rebuilding of the old railway system in the age of the automobile. Since 2003 a monorail has run throughout Naha City, but Okinawa remains the only prefecture in Japan without a sophisticated railway system.