A Master Narratives Approach to Understanding Base Politics in Okinawa
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Analysis

Japan -- A Master Narratives Approach to Understanding Base Politics in Okinawa

The following guide uses a "master narratives" approach to help explain Okinawan attitudes and behavior regarding the US military presence there. Master narratives are the historically grounded stories that reflect a community's identity and experiences, or explain its hopes, aspirations, and concerns. The Open Source Center (OSC) identified five such narratives for Okinawa -- some of which are more deep-seated than others, and most of which present some degree of challenge to US policymakers. An understanding of how these narratives function should help analysts put Okinawan attitudes into context and help communicators plan messaging and outreach efforts.

In order to relate the essence of each narrative, OSC gave them descriptive names and drew first person statements that capture their content. These narrative portraits are summarized with context and implications for US interests in the table on page three and discussed in detail in this guide. The narratives -- listed in the order they appear -- are: Victimization, Discrimination, Peaceful People, Beautiful Island, and Asia Crossroads.

METHODOLOGY NOTE This guide draws upon the Master Narratives methodology recently developed by the Open Source Center to uncover five master narratives that help explain attitudes and behavior pertaining to base issues in Okinawa. It explains the historical basis and current use of the narratives as well as their implications for US policy. Research for the guide was based on a review of primary and secondary sources -- including media treatment of basing issues, education materials, memorial sites, museums, literature, and popular entertainment.

KEY FINDINGS The narratives of Victimization and Discrimination present the greatest challenges for the United States when it comes to messaging and alliance management. The narratives are rooted in traumatic or degrading experiences in the past that are widely memorialized and taught on the island. Local politicians, opinion leaders, and media often frame their messages in the context of these narratives, keeping them current in the Okinawan public's view.

- The narrative of Victimization has a historical foundation in Okinawans' memories of WWII and the US occupation of Okinawa. Okinawans' sense of injustice and perceptions of helplessness over ongoing incidents and accidents involving US military personnel on the island contribute to a feeling that some degree of recognition of Okinawa's "burdens" in hosting US military bases should be forthcoming from Washington and Tokyo. Attempts to counter this narrative by reframing the discourse -- such as focusing on the positive "impact" of bases while not acknowledging their perceived burden -- are unlikely to resonate with Okinawans and could backfire.

- The narrative of Discrimination has a historical basis in past ethnic discrimination against Okinawans by mainland Japanese and differential treatment of the prefecture at the hands of the central government. It reflects perceptions that Tokyo still does not act in the interests of Okinawans and treats them as second-class citizens. Okinawans look

* For more on the methodology, see "Master Narratives Methodology Document, 23 January 2011."
to Tokyo to address the question of why US bases must be concentrated in Okinawa rather than elsewhere. They also expect Tokyo to afford them respectful treatment and offer them measures to mitigate their base hosting. Fundamentally, the discrimination narrative is about Okinawa's complex relationship with Tokyo, and it is not likely to be countered by any direct action on the part of the United States. Indirectly, US statements would probably have an impact to the extent that they converge with Tokyo's policies and Tokyo's approach in seeking the Okinawans' understanding of basing issues.

The narratives **Peaceful People**, **Beautiful Island**, and **Asia Crossroads** capture values that affect the way Okinawans perceive the US base presence and interpret messages regarding the US-Japan alliance.

- **The Peaceful People** narrative draws upon the lessons of Okinawans' World War II experiences and a cultural tradition of cherishing life. Okinawans claim a special moral authority within the broadly pacifist culture of Japan. They attribute this authority to the island's experience as the site of the only major land battle fought on Japanese soil during the war and also to long-held beliefs, such as ancestor worship and self-discipline. The peaceful people narrative manifests itself as a general anti-military attitude that is not directed specifically at the United States. US messaging that addresses the role of Okinawa-based forces in regional humanitarian and disaster relief efforts would be consistent with the general themes of the narrative. Okinawan media would most likely look for ways to criticize such a message, but the public might be less cynical about it.

- **The Beautiful Island** narrative is relatively recent but widely shared. Okinawans see their natural environment as a source of pride, and both traditional and ecotourism rely on the natural environment to attract visitors. Okinawans will probably want any new base construction projects to be undertaken with high regard for the environment. Likewise, they will want returned US base land to undergo thorough environmental remediation measures. In this respect, Okinawan support for environmental preservation presents challenges to alliance managers who seek to minimize the negative impact of the bases. US actions demonstrating a policy of good stewardship of base land, such as quick and transparent response to accidents that could be detrimental to the environment, could help in this regard. US messaging regarding such a policy would possibly be viewed skeptically unless well supported by actions and examples.

- **The Asia Crossroads** narrative has a weak historical basis in the distant past. It represents an aspiration, primarily of Okinawan leaders, to define a future vision of the prefecture as a crossroads in a dynamic, economically linked region. In this vision, US bases are implicitly presented as obstacles to a prosperous future. This narrative probably has limited resonance with the public now to the extent that it describes the origins of their distinct culture. It could gain traction among base opponents if Okinawa becomes more successful in diversifying its economy, and US bases are seen as an impediment to such efforts. As of now, however, the narrative does not directly challenge the presence or maintenance of US bases in Okinawa or affect sentiment toward bases. The United States could shape its message so that it is consistent with this narrative by pointing out that the bases in Okinawa help to keep the region safe and thereby enable enhanced regional economic and cultural exchange.
<table>
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<th>Master Narratives</th>
<th>Condensed Description</th>
<th>Context</th>
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<tr>
<td>Victimization</td>
<td>&quot;We have been the victims of oppression, domination, and episodic violence.&quot;</td>
<td>This narrative directly involves the US presence in Okinawa today — in the form of noise, accidents, and crime. Okinawans do not feel like the United States adequately acknowledges the perceived negative effects of the US military presence on Okinawa.</td>
<td>Okinawans' sense of injustice and helplessness over events involving US military personnel on the island contributes to a feeling that some degree of recognition of Okinawa's &quot;burdens&quot; should be forthcoming from Washington and Tokyo. Focusing on the positive 'impact' of bases while not acknowledging their perceived burden is unlikely to resonate with Okinawans and could backfire.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>&quot;Tokyo treats us differently than other prefectures in Japan, seeing us as second class citizens and expendable.&quot;</td>
<td>Okinawa's political leaders and media have shaped the discrimination narrative to implicate the United States by making their central grievance with Tokyo the &quot;disproportionate burden&quot; of hosting US Forces.</td>
<td>Fundamentally, the discrimination narrative is about Okinawa's complex relationship with Tokyo and, therefore, is not likely to be countered by any direct action on the part of the United States. Further, Okinawans may react with frustration to messages about the deference value of US forces, because that does not answer their &quot;why us?&quot; question.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peaceful People</td>
<td>&quot;We embrace nonviolence and believe we have a moral obligation to be ambassadors for peace. Our culture has long valued the principles of peace and cherishing life, and our experience during WWII has further cemented these values.&quot;</td>
<td>Okinawans are taught in school that international conflicts are best addressed by treasuring life rather than by making war. Anti-base activists use Okinawans' strong valuation of peace to cast the US military presence as inimical to the Okinawan spirit.</td>
<td>US messaging that addressed the role of Okinawa-based forces in regional humanitarian and disaster relief efforts would be consistent with the general themes of the narrative. Such messaging, however, would likely be viewed with skepticism by Okinawa's media. It is possible that the Okinawan public would be less cynical about such messaging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautiful Island</td>
<td>&quot;Okinawa is a beautiful island. We are responsible for preserving our natural environment and have an obligation to hand it down to future generations.&quot;</td>
<td>Okinawans express an intense pride in the natural beauty of their islands. Okinawans will want new base projects to be undertaken with high regard for the environment and returned base land to undergo thorough environmental remediation measures.</td>
<td>US actions demonstrating a policy of good stewardship of base land — such as quick and transparent response to accidents that could be detrimental to the environment — could help in this regard. US messaging regarding such a policy would possibly be subject to criticism unless well supported by actions and examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia Crossroads</td>
<td>&quot;Long ago, our ancestors travelled the ocean and prospered through trade with China and Southeast Asia. We have a future as a crossroads of exchange and trade in Asia.&quot;</td>
<td>Influential Okinawan figures often use the narrative implicitly, but sometimes explicitly, to present the US bases as obstacles to a prosperous future for Okinawa.</td>
<td>Because most Okinawan leaders appear to be realistic about the prospects for quickly realizing credible alternatives to the bases, this narrative does not present a near-term challenge to the bases. The narrative might provide opportunities to highlight the role of the bases in fostering a stable environment for regional economic integration.</td>
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According to the Okinawa Prefecture Government, the prefecture includes 160 islands across 1,000 km of ocean east-west by 400 km north-south.¹
POPULATION DENSITY NEAR US BASES ON OKINAWA

This OSC-created map estimates the population densities near US bases on Okinawa. Click the icon to view the map in full resolution.
HOW THIS GUIDE IS ORGANIZED

This guide is organized into five narrative portraits, which appear in the following order: Victimization, Discrimination, Peaceful People, Beautiful Island, and Asia Crossroads.

The narrative portraits consist of the following content categories:

- **The HEADER** helps readers keep track of their location in the guide.

- **The FIRST-PERSON STATEMENT** surfaces the narrative's "characters" (its heroes, villains, or scapegoats) and articulates the general plot that drives the narrative's core story. It is written from the point of view of someone who believes in the narrative.

- **The DESCRIPTION** provides background on the narrative's origins and explains how the narrative remains current today.

- **NARRATIVE IN ACTION** shows how the narrative is used in a contemporary policy context by examining public statements of groups and key influencers.

- **The WHAT'S IN A WORD? box** highlights a vernacular word or phrase that is closely associated with the narrative. Master narratives often incorporate unique phrases, images, or symbols that can remind, reinforce, or even trigger behavior.

- **AUDIENCE RESONANCE** discusses how deeply felt or widely held the narrative is with the Okinawan public.

- **IMPLICATIONS** identifies actionable opportunities for US communicators to connect with the Okinawan public and also flags potential communication pitfalls.
The narrative of victimization is deeply held and rests on Okinawa's historical grievances primarily against Japan and the United States. The narrative manifests itself today in messages about the perceived negative impact of US bases in Okinawa. These messages probably resonate widely with Okinawans precisely because they are received in this historical context. Attempts to counter this narrative, such as by focusing on the positive "impact" of bases while not acknowledging their perceived burden, are unlikely to resonate with Okinawans and could backfire.

"Okinawans continue to suffer today from noise and crime associated with the US military bases. This is just another example of Okinawa's long history of suffering at the hands of outside powers. Since the late nineteenth century, we have been victims of oppression, domination, and episodic violence."

Okinawa's history, as conveyed by educational texts, memorials, literature, and pop culture, is often presented as a tragedy. Okinawans associate the following four key events with their historical victimization: (1) Satsuma's invasion of the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1609; (2) Japan's annexation and assimilation of Ryukyu as a prefecture in 1879; (3) the heavy casualties inflicted on Okinawans by US and Japanese forces during World War II; and (4) land seizures by the Japanese military in the prewar period and by the US military after the war.

• "SATSUMA INVADED THE RYUKU KINGDOM"
The Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education in "The History and Culture of Okinawa" records that the Ryukyu Kingdom was "conquered and tormented with oppression" following the 1609 "military attack" by Satsuma, one of Tokugawa Japan's feudal domains. "Shuri Castle," it goes on, "was occupied and many royal belongings were taken. King Sho Nei and his retainers were taken prisoner and sent to the Edo Shogunate." The Ryukyu Kingdom, which continued its tributary state relationship with the Ming Dynasty in 1372 and developed a favored trading relationship as a tributary state to China (1993).2

• Well-known Okinawa historian Kurayoshi Takara said the Ryukyu Kingdom subordinated itself to the Ming Dynasty in 1372 and with China, however, relates most strongly to the Asia Crossroads narrative.

What About China? Accounts of Okinawa's history recognize the influence of China as the dominant external power during the Ryukyu Kingdom's "Golden Age of Trade" from the late 14th to the 16th century.

5 The Ryukyu Kingdom was an independent kingdom ruling most of the Ryukyu archipelago, including Okinawa, from the 15th to the 19th century. It held trading relationships with China, Korea, and Japan.
Qing Court of China, bore the "double pressure of Satsuma and China" and saw "its royal treasury bled heavily" (2000). 3

- **"JAPAN FORCED OKINAWA'S ASSIMILATION"** Okinawa's Board of Education in "The History and Culture of Okinawa" says the Japanese Meiji Government "forced" the dissolution of the Kingdom and brought "an end to the tribute system with China." The Kingdom "lost its independence" and became "part of the Japanese national system" in 1879 (2000). 4

- **"US, JAPANESE FORCES SLAUGHTERED OUR PEOPLE"** The 1945 Battle of Okinawa, often referred to as the Typhoon of Steel (*tetsu no boufu*) by the media and educational texts, is central to the victimization narrative. Senior archivist at the Okinawa Prefectural Archives Kazuhiko Nakamoto contends that the high number of civilian casualties during the battle contributes to a close and enduring association between war and civilian death among Okinawans today. 6 The history of the battle is further complicated by stories of the Japanese military forcing Okinawans to commit group suicide. 7 8

- **"JAPANESE, US MILITARY TOOK OKINAWA'S LAND"** The public-private Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau described the Japanese military as "forcibly seizing" land, houses, schools, and other property for the construction of airfields and barracks beginning in the summer of 1943. "The Japanese military conscripted Okinawans from all regions into the forced labor service," it says in its tour guide reference book. The account continues in the postwar period with the US Military seizing private land in the early 1950s with "bayonets and bulldozers" and turning Okinawa into a "fortress island" or an "Okinawa within bases." 9 An NHK broadcast in 2010 showed US bulldozers taking land from Okinawa for bases in the early 1950s (30 December 2010). 9 The show commemorated the 50th anniversary of the US-Japan Security Treaty.

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Kenzaburo Oe, the 1994 Nobel laureate in literature, chronicled the role of Japan's imperial army in coercing Okinawan civilians to commit suicide rather than surrender in his 1970 book "Okinawa Notes." Two plaintiffs representing two Japanese garrison commanders sued Oe and his publisher in 2005 for libel. In April 2011, the Supreme Court turned down the plaintiffs' appeal and ruled in favor of Oe.
The victimization narrative can be found in stories about atrocities committed against the island’s civilian population, in portrayals of a forced takeover of Okinawan property, and in popular accounts of Okinawa’s historical subjugation by dominant powers.

- Yomitan-based sculptor Minoru Kinjo’s 2007 exhibit "War and Humanity" depicted the history of Okinawa as told through a 100-meter-long relief. The exhibit prominently featured scenes from the Battle of Okinawa, such as Japanese soldiers expelling Okinawans from caves, mass suicides, and Japanese-American soldiers trying to convince civilians to surrender. It also included scenes from the postwar period, such as land seizures by "bayonets and bulldozers" at the hands of the United States. Americans are not always remembered as oppressors. Kinjo’s 2007 exhibit also included scenes of humanity, such as US soldiers giving water to locals during the Battle of Okinawa.

- The Tsushima Maru Memorial Museum in Naha memorializes the lives lost when a US submarine sank a Japanese evacuation ship on 22 August 1944. Of the ship’s 1,788 passengers and crew, 1,418 were lost, including 775 school children. The memory of this event, said museum foundation chairman Seisho Takara in a note posted on the museum’s website, should be used to "communicate the preciousness of peace and life to our children." An elderly Henoko resident described the US military as "suppressing" opposition to base construction in the 1950s.

- Japan’s public broadcaster NHK cast Okinawans as victims in a special program on the 50th anniversary of the US-Japan Security Treaty in 2010. The program aired a close-up interview with Munenobu Kayo, an 86-year old resident of Henoko in Nago City. In describing the construction of Marine Corps Camp Schwab in the 1950s, he said, "The US military used force to suppress the local residents’ opposition -- just like the Japanese military before it" (NHK, 5 December 2010).

- Anthropologist and Professor of Cultural Studies at the University of Kyushu, Yoshinobu Ota, in a 1997 essay on Okinawan popular culture, said: "Many Okinawans recall their history in terms of the politically dominant with whom they have been negotiating their lives." Excerpt from Okinawan folk legend Rinsho Kadekaru’s "The Flow of Time" originally recorded in the 1960s and rerecorded in 2000 by Takashi Hirayasu from the Okinawan pop group Champaloose, who added an additional line to account for Okinawa’s reversion to Japan.

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See the Peaceful People narrative for more on the use of tragedy as grounds for promoting peace.
HIMEYURI PORTRAYAL BY MAINLAND, OKINAWA MEDIA SURFACE COMPETING NARRATIVES

The subject of several film and narrative depictions, the Himeyuri -- or the Princess Lily Student Nurses -- were female student recruits during the Battle of Okinawa. In Tokyo-produced films, they are portrayed as valiant and self-sacrificing. In Okinawa, however, stories of their deaths are linked to compulsory group suicide at the hands of the Imperial Japanese Army.

- The 1952 award-winning film and mainland Japan production "Tower of Himeyuri" (Himeyuri no To) and its 1982 remake feature multiple scenes of student nurses and their teachers determined to "stick together until the end," portraying them as choosing of their own free will to use hand grenades to commit suicide. 19 20

- Himeyuri survivor and former guide at the Himeyuri Memorial Museum, Kikuko Miyagi, in a 2007 interview with Okinawa Times, said: "Education at that time taught that dying for one's country was virtuous. Passing out hand grenades was the same as issuing an order to 'die rather than be captured.'" Miyagi said, "Japanese troops who passed out hand grenades bear a grave responsibility (2 September 2007)." 21

Faced with the prospect of capture, two student nurses commit suicide with a hand grenade in the 1952 award-winning "Tower of Himeyuri."

A Himeyuri memorial on Arasaki Coast in Itoman City carries the poem: "At the island's edge, beloved students fluttering down as flowers, pray for peaceful sleep."

NARRATIVE IN ACTION Okinawa's politicians and anti-base activists draw on Okinawa's history of victimization in public statements when commenting on certain contemporary policy issues, such as those involving history education or US military-related accidents.

- Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima, at a September 2011 news conference in Washington, said that if Japan's central government goes ahead with the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma relocation as agreed on by the US Government, it would be tantamount to using "bayonets and bulldozers." He said that the United States built Futenma by "bayonets and bulldozers" in the first place, according to Japan's private news service Jiji Press (21 September 2011).22

- Naha Mayor Takeshi Onaga in 2007 emphasized the importance of Okinawa's history of victimization to the island's identity when the Education Ministry recommended the removal of descriptions of coerced group suicides from high school textbooks. "We must accurately pass on the true story of the Battle of Okinawa so as to convey to the next..."
generation the tragedy of war and preciousness of peace" (Ryukyu Shimpo, 30 September 2007). 23

- Seiken Akamine, a Diet member from Okinawa representing the Communist Party, said after the 13 August 2004 crash of a US Marine Corps helicopter into Okinawa International University that "Okinawa's citizens have actual experience with the fear of death. If we are to learn from these lessons, Futenma Air Station must be closed" (Okinawa Times, 26 August 2004). 24

- A prominent Yomitan anti-base activist, Shoichi Chibana, has called the central government's approach to handling US basing issues in Okinawa the "fourth Ryukyu Shobun." In a February 2011 speech, he characterized negotiations over the relocation of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma as a continuation of Okinawa's history of assimilation into and subordination to Japan. Chibana's speech was delivered in Kobe and posted to a blog maintained by the mainland Japan anti-war group Kanjitsu Sanrizuka.25

WHAT'S IN A WORD? "RYUKYU SHOBUN" The term "Ryukyu shobun" is used in Japan to describe the dissolution of the Ryukyu Kingdom and its subsequent annexation by Japan in 1879. It is presented as a neutral term in officially sanctioned history texts, but it has negative connotations for Okinawans.

- History books published in Okinawa Prefecture argue that the term "shobun" is "humiliating," "ignores Okinawa's viewpoint," and connotes a "rightful punishment" -- therefore implying moral justification for the forceful dismantling of the Ryukyu Kingdom. 26

Viewed through the lens of the victimization narrative, accidents or other incidents involving US bases can take on greater symbolic meaning. For example, the anniversaries of significant US military-related accidents continue to receive prominent coverage in the local media and to attract the attention of local leaders.

- All four of Okinawa's local newscasts on 30 June 2011 covered a memorial ceremony at Miyamori Elementary School in Uruma City commemorating the 52nd anniversary of a fighter jet crash there in 1959. Some 500 people attended the ceremony, including the school's students and families of the victims. "No matter how many years pass, Okinawan citizens cannot forget the grievous memories of 30 June," said one local broadcaster while introducing a five-minute segment on the ceremony at the beginning of its newscast (QAB's "Station Q"). 27
Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima held a news conference in August 2010 on the sixth anniversary of a US Marine helicopter crash that occurred on 13 August 2004 at Okinawa International University near Marine Corps Air Station Futenma's southern fence line in Ginowan. Nakaima called for "removing the current risks of the Futenma base as soon as possible" (Kyodo). All four Okinawa television broadcasters led their evening news segments that day with stories about a rally at Okinawa International University attended by University President Moritake Tomikawa.

Okinawa broadcasters showed two US helicopters flying near an annual rally at Okinawa International University commemorating the sixth anniversary of a US Marine helicopter crash there in 2004 (2010).

AUDIENCE RESONANCE Okinawans see strong feelings of victimhood as a negative aspect of the prefecture's character. Consequently, there are social pressures against asserting victimhood frivolously. The narrative is central to their identity, however, and a sense of victimhood often emerges around a singular event, crime, or accident that galvanizes the public.

- The Okinawa Prefecture Planning and Coordination Division found in its two most recent polls in 2009 and 2005 that the public ranks "strong feelings of victimhood" (higaisha ishiki ga tsuyoi) among the top 10 "shortcomings" of the prefecture and its citizens.
- The brochure of the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum says, "Okinawa's war experience is at the very core of what is popularly called the 'Okinawan Heart,' a resilient yet strong attitude to life that Okinawan people developed as they struggled against the pressures of many years of US military control."
- The power of this narrative is often most evident when it is publicly challenged. In 2007, the Japanese Education Ministry recommended that school textbook publishers remove direct references to the Japanese military's forcing Okinawans to commit group suicide during the Battle of Okinawa. This case prompted the largest public demonstration in Okinawa since reversion in 1972 -- reportedly 110,000 people.
- The 1995 rape case involving a young Okinawan schoolgirl continues to have currency in Okinawa. Media refer to it in the context of "a string of crimes and incidents involving US military personnel" and use the incident as a marker from which to judge progress since the 1996 US-Japan agreement to return the land used by MCAS Futenma. At the time, the incident set off a chain of protest activities by women's groups, teachers' associations, labor unions, reformist political parties, and various grass-roots

*Education minister Kisaburo Tokai announced on 26 December 2007 that the reinstatement of history textbooks would include references to the Imperial Japanese Army driving civilians into committing mass suicide in Okinawa. Okinawan media attributed the decision to the protest rallies.
organizations across Okinawa Prefecture. A prefectural mass rally on 21 October 1995 reportedly drew 85,000 people, including business leaders and conservative politicians who had seldom criticized the US military presence (Ryukyu Shimpo, Okinawa Times; 22 October 1995).

IMPLICATIONS The narrative of Okinawa's victimization by dominant powers has become tightly linked to the continued US military presence on Okinawa. Okinawans' sense of injustice and helplessness over events involving US military personnel on the island contributes to a feeling that some degree of recognition of Okinawa's "burdens" should be forthcoming from Washington and Tokyo. Attempts to counter this narrative by focusing on the positive "impact" of bases while not acknowledging their perceived burden are unlikely to resonate with Okinawans and could backfire.

- In the past, Okinawa's local media have reacted negatively to leaders, such as Prime Minister Kan, who expressed gratitude for Okinawa's "base hosting burden" (Ryukyu Shimpo, 12 June 2010). Okinawa media also reported that the Okinawa Prefecture Government advised former President Bill Clinton against using the term "gratitude" in his 21 July 2000 speech at the G8 Summit in Okinawa (Ryukyu Shimpo, 19 July 2000; Okinawa Times, 22 July 2000).

- Okinawan cultural authorities like novelist Tatsuhiro Oshiro have argued that "Okinawans desire even belated recognition" of "Okinawa's sacrifices for the prosperity of the mainland" (Asahi Shim bun, 7 July 2011).

Recognition, in this case, probably means understanding Okinawa's "burdens" rather than expressing gratitude for them. Former Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi provides an example of an effective use of recognition. In the year before the 2000 G8 Summit, media quoted Obuchi numerous times recognizing Okinawa's history and post-war hardships. His selection of Okinawa as co-host of the summit was welcomed by Okinawan leaders including the governor at the time, Keiichi Inamine.

- Obuchi told the Japanese media, "After the war, Japan lost its administrative rights over Okinawa, and Okinawa faced many hardships. During the war, Okinawa greatly sacrificed [for Japan]. Even today, Okinawa hosts bases. I am fully aware of this pain." Obuchi said that he wanted the world's leaders to "experience Okinawa's rich empathy and beautiful natural environment," as well as learn about Okinawa, which "overcame and survived many difficulties" (Mainichi Shim bun, 30 April 1999).