

Die Akzeptanz einer derartig gemischten Denkstruktur in breiten Kreisen der Bevölkerung gilt es wahrzunehmen. Die These eines impliziten Gesellschaftsvertrages klingt plausibel. Und in der Zwischenzeit ist nicht nur die chinesische Bevölkerung am Erfolg des Systemmodells interessiert, sondern auch die Weltökonomie.

Auf den Wegen der Seidenstraßen könnte sich eine Verständigung ergeben, die z.B. einen auch europäischerseits wieder möglichen größeren Respekt vor Autoritäten und Gemeinschaftsdenken zum Ergebnis haben könnte – was natürlich einen kulturellen Wandel in Richtung Realismus bedeutete. Sieht man die Dinge so, stellt der Aufstieg Chinas auch eine kulturelle Herausforderung dar und impliziert einen Lerneffekt. Vielleicht überfordert man die Europäer noch – Mauern abzubauen benötigt Zeit.

*Tilman Mayer*

INA HEIN / ISABELLE PROCHASKA-MEYER (eds), *40 Years since Reversion. Negotiating the Okinawan Difference in Japan Today*. (Wiener Beiträge zur Japanologie 44). Wien: Universität Wien, 2015. 277 pages, €25.00. ISBN 978-3-900362-27-0

Volumes of conference contributions, such as this one from the conference in Vienna in 2012, really pack it in. A potpourri of assorted topics and different levels of quality, they are not generally popular with publishers, reviewers, not to mention readers. Normally they collect dust on university library shelves without harming or enlightening anyone. However, Okinawa is a subject the academic world has given little attention to, so this particular collection of articles could certainly arouse interest.

The contributions are indeed very eclectic: there is one essay each on the annexation of Okinawa by Japan in 1879, on the reversion in 1972, and on the civil rights movement since then; there are three articles on the languages which have almost gone out of use on Okinawa; then there is an essay each on such diverse subjects as an interpretation of Ryukyu stamps, contemporary literature, shamanism, ancestor worship and the development of tourism on Okinawa. Given this range of subjects it is difficult to be equally enthusiastic about all of them. This is particularly the case when, in keeping with the current German academic fad, some essays commence with a barely readable apparatus of questions of theory and definition, directed at doctoral and post-doctoral scholars, but calculated to lead readers interested in cultural studies to skip the entire section. Some of the contributions also show an enormous love of detail, whether the programmatic hairsplitting of the citizens rights' movement, the annual cycles of the stamp issues, the vowel shifts of dying languages, or variants in calling up spirits and accounts of the last of the female shamans on some small islands. The astonished layperson ultimately asks themselves whether these marginalia,

conscientiously researched and presented in cumbersome academic jargon, are really worth being passed on in such exhaustive detail.

Stanislav Meyer (Krakow) opens the volume with an excellent essay. He describes the annexation of Okinawa in even greater detail than we were already familiar with from George Kerr. Colonies are normally acquired because of their natural resources and their markets or in the case of Hokkaido and Manchuria to create space for settlement. None of all this applies to Okinawa. The bureaucrats of the new Meiji Japan were really only interested in defining new national boundaries and keeping the Chinese and western colonial powers out of certain areas. And they did so successfully. After the acquisition of Taiwan, Okinawa became strategically uninteresting and turned into an isolated fringe province. As such, local customs from temple schools to large feudal estates were initially tolerated, with the result that Okinawa became the poorest and economically most backward prefecture in Japan. All that was set up was a system of Japanese-speaking primary and junior high schools and a teachers' academy. The health and transport system remained underdeveloped. Meyer thus sees only a "touch of colonization": the large Japanese islands only contributed marginally to development and apart from a few profits from trade in sugar cane they received little in return.

Gabriele Vogt (Hamburg) describes the citizens' movement for the reversion of Okinawa, originally mainly supported by teachers: their specific left-style patriotism was inspired by a sense of betrayal through the peace agreement of 1952. They rejected the status of Okinawa as an American military colony, but even after the reversion to Japan in 1952 many areas in the prefecture served as US military bases. Unfortunately a number of errors found their way into this worthwhile contribution: for example, there was never an emperor on the Ryukyu Islands (p. 44) but only a king from the Sho dynasty for 450 years. There is also no mayor of Okinawa (p. 58) but of the capital city Naha. And there were not 49,000 Americans killed in action there in 1945, but "only" 14,000 (p. 49). Beata Bochorodyz (Posen) also deals with the left citizens' movement in the post-war period. It is noteworthy that these articles make no mention of Tokyo's admittedly one-sided standpoint: namely that the island is given massive subsidies in return for the continued presence of the military bases. This policy is accepted by half the population and the voters, so in fact the society is politically divided. It is simply not true that the majority of Okinawa citizens support the high-sounding demands for independence and autonomy, as a number of articles suggest. Most of those directly concerned see no economic basis and thus no future for such demands.

A brief contribution from Eiko Asato (Okinawa University) on the struggle against Henoko, the US Air Force base in the east of the island smacks of agitprop, and is very questionable. Among other claims the author maintains that the terrorist attack on *Charlie Hebdo*, the French satire magazine, in Paris in January 2015, is a sign of growing nationalism in Europe. And that the sym-

pathizers who provided apples and candy for the demonstrators in Heneko were practicing an element of “self-government” (p. 99). It is a mystery how such a contribution could find its way into a book with a claim to serious scholarship.

Patrick Heinrich (Venice), Sayaka Kawasaki (Vienna), Alexandra Jarosz (Posen) and Alfred Majewicz (Thorn) present research on Okinawa’s five dying languages, which cannot be called mere dialects because of their major differences to Japanese and the fact that they are mutually incomprehensible. Jarosz’s and Majewicz’s presentation of Nikolai Nevsky’s dictionary and lexicography of languages and customs on Miyako is fascinating, though it was largely thanks to coincidence that the two researchers discovered his work and brought it back into circulation. Nevsky also produced good work on the language of the Ainu and Siberian languages such as Tangut. He was later accused of being a spy for Japan and together with his Japanese wife was murdered in 1937 in Leningrad by Stalin’s henchmen.

Sepp Linhart (Vienna) offers an interpretation of the policy behind the issuing of Ryukyu stamps during the US occupation. Not surprisingly he confirms that there was an attempt to produce a distinct island identity visually. The themes and the occasions for new issues were different from those in central Japan and had references exclusively to Okinawa. After the reversion, Okinawa stamps put out by the Japanese Post were decorated only with uncontroversial themes selected from folklore and nature – tourist advertisements in miniature form. Linhart’s findings cover 26 pages with numerous pretty philatelic reproductions, and could have been considerably shortened.

Ina Hein (Vienna) describes the “postcolonial” i.e. contemporary literature of Okinawa, which deals critically with current reality on the island. These texts contradict the cliché of the exotic idyll, partly escape into “magic realism” along the lines of Latin American literature, and occasionally use local language elements from Katakana, which most Japanese readers cannot understand. Okinawa’s best writers have already won a number of literature prizes, but they have never been translated, which is why they are completely unknown outside Japan.

Ryoko Shiotsuki (Atomi Womens University) analyses the way female shamans (*yuta*) are presented in Japanese media. These shamans practice their dying art of healing and calling up spirits on only a few remaining islands, and they are generally mature, in fact elderly women. In films and television programs serving the “New Age” beliefs of their audiences, the shamans are always fashionable young women who perform wonders in exotic settings. Likewise as dying cult, the once so important worship of ancestors and evocation of spirits on the various different islands is presented by Masanobu Akamine (Ryukyu University).

The closing contribution is from Osamu Tada (Hitotsubashi) and describes the development of tourism on Okinawa. The model of Miyazaki as a popular destination in the 1960s, offering honeymooners palm-fringed beaches, was systematically and successfully duplicated on Okinawa after the reversion to Japan

in 1972. This final chapter is succinct, gets to the point, offers new knowledge well-documented and in the eyes of this reviewer it is in fact the best contribution in the book.

In general it is interesting to note that a good many of the articles make a reference to the Battle of Okinawa, which without doubt has ongoing traumatic significance in the history of the island(s), given that it led to the death of a third of the civilian population and physically wiped out the island culture. However, none of the authors seems to have really dealt with the historical circumstances of the battle. It is not enough simply to cursorily quote the former governor Masahide Ota, who at the time was a youthful member of an elite, behind-the-lines unit, and later, disillusioned, became a pacifist. Bochorodyz writes, for example (p. 72) that the Japanese authorities made no effort to evacuate civilians. But that is not true: The evacuation, which was probably started too late, was halted in August 1944 when the US navy's submarine *Bowfin* sank the refugee ship *Tsushima Maru* with 1,500 women and children on board (clearly a war crime). Furthermore, many other articles insinuate that the 100,000 civilian deaths were a war crime carried out by the Japanese military in the form of forced suicides or executions of alleged spies. This was certainly the case for a few hundred people. But in fact most of the deaths were brought about by the US military's ceaseless bombing, the artillery fire over months, the death zone along the front, the flame-throwing, explosives and hand grenade attacks on caves and shelters, and the systematic burning of all thatched peasants' dwellings. So, a statement like the following comes across as cynical: "American soldiers seemed surprisingly friendly at first" (p. 74). When US war propaganda creeps into the contributions unchallenged, then all the scholarly efforts for exactness are threatened.

As to be expected in publications of this genre, this collection of articles provides a good many highlights in the contributions on the history, the language and the culture of Okinawa, but the biased political comments unfortunately tarnish some of these achievements.

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JAN BREMAN, *Mobilizing Labour for the Global Coffee Market. Profits from an Unfree Work Regime in Colonial Java*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015. 412 pages, €99.00. ISBN 978-90-8964-859-4 (hb)

This recently released book examines colonialism and its impact on the social structure of the Priangan Highlands in Java, the main coffee-producing region of South-East Asia. During the eighteenth century, the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC) evolved a system of compulsory cultivation of coffee by local peasants and its delivery at a price far below the real value. The success of the beverage on the world market produced rising