ANTI-Futenma Relocation Movement in Okinawa:
Women's Involvement and the Impact of Sit-In Protest

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This thesis examines how women’s participation in the anti-U.S. military base movement in Okinawa influenced both the women themselves and the larger movement. I looked at the movement that evolved in 1996 as a result of a new joint proposal between the United States and Japan. In reaction to Okinawans’ anger toward the rape incident in 1995, the United States and Japan set up a Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) to discuss measures to “reduce” the Okinawas’ burden of living with a concentrated military presence on the island. Their proposal included the closure of U.S. Marine Corp Futenma Air Station, one of the most dangerous and deteriorated air stations in Okinawa. The closure, however, came with a condition: to relocate its function to elsewhere in Okinawa. Henoko Bay was selected as a relocation site – Japan proposed to build an air station on water, filling in the beautiful and resourceful ocean. The fight to stop the relocation began at that point and included the establishment of a number of women’s groups that have been fighting for demilitarization since 1995. This thesis focuses on the emergence and development of those women’s groups. More specifically, I demonstrate how the beginning of a long sit-in protest in 2004 changed the course of the movement and strongly impacted not only the overall dynamic of the movement, but specifically women’s involvement.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DFAB: Defense Facilities Administration Bureau

Heiwa Shimin Renrakukai: Okinawa kara Kichi wo Nakushi Sekai no Heiwa wo Motomeru Shimin Renrakukai

Herikichi Hantaikyo: Kaijyo Herikichi Kensetsu Hantai – Heiwa to Nagoshisei Minshuka wo Motomeru Kyōgi Kai

Inochi wo Mamorukai: Heripoto Kensetsu Soshi Kyougikai Inochi wo Mamorukai

JDA: Japan Defense Agency

Jyannu: Jyan nu Kai

Kamadu: Kamadugwa tachino Tsudoi

OWAAMV: Okinawa Women Act against Military Violence

SACO: Special Action Committee on Okinawa
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This paper examines women’s participation in the anti-U.S. military base movement in Okinawa and how it influenced women and the movement. I am looking at the movement that seeks closure of U.S. Marine Corp Futenma Air Station and opposes the relocation of Futenma to Henoko, Nago city, in the northern part of Okinawa. The movement started in 1996 and its course of resistance changed in 2004 when a long sit-in protest began. The sit-in had a strong impact on the dynamic of the movement, especially on women’s involvement. The objectives of this paper are to investigate how women came to take a leading role in the movement, what changes they brought to the movement both before and after the sit-in, and how these events changed the women.

Women’s leading role in the movement traces its roots to the 1995 rape case, where a group of women succeeded in introducing a women’s rights perspective into the long history of the anti-bases movement in Okinawa (Gabe 2003). I suggest that women added two major dimensions to Okinawa’s anti-base movement scene. First, they established alternative discourse, organizational structure, and tactics to fight the issue, which were different from the traditional way or men’s way of conducting a social movement. Second, some women began to move proactively in an attempt to separate themselves from Japanese participants, as ways to resist Japan’s institutionalized discrimination and Japanese people’s indifference toward Okinawa. These actions resulted in enhancing their nationalistic Okinawan identity. The first dimension was a result of bringing a gender perspective into the movement, while the second dimension focused on Okinawan ethnic identity.

These two dimensions, gender and ethnicity, intersected in the movement, which complicated participants’ relationships with each other. The complicated relationship became
more apparent after the sit-in protest that started in April 2004, in which men and women, Okinawans and Japanese, all came together to fight the issue at one location without having a set ending date. The sit-in protest changed the dynamics of interaction among women and men, and Okinawans and Japanese; calling into question the issue of ownership of the movement.

I will focus mainly on two women’s organizations, *Kamadugwa tachi no Tsudoi* (nicknamed *Kamadu*), a women’s group based in Ginowan, the city where Futenma is located, and *Jyannu Kai* (nicknamed *Jyannu*), a women’s groups from a district near Henoko. In addition, I will look at some women of *Inochi wo Mamorukai*, a group from Henoko, and some women who participated in the sit-in protest as individuals. I will particularly focus on *Kamadu* and *Jyannu* because they were the two most prominent grass-roots women’s groups that led the anti-Futenma relocation movement.

My research questions are:

1. What is the significance of women’s involvement in the anti-Futenma relocation?
   1a. How did women come to take a leading position in the long-standing male-centered anti-base movement?
   1b. What is the nature of women’s activism?

2. How and why did the sit-in protest impact women’s activism?
The anti-Futenma relocation issue is fairly recent, but it has become a popular topic to study in order to develop deeper understanding of the history of Okinawa's military base issues and resistance, as well as to cultivate understanding of local autonomy and identity politics. The majority of the literature focuses on the macro level; locating the anti-Futenma relocation issue in relation to the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty by questioning its nature and how it impacts Okinawa's relationship to Japan (Arasaki 2005; Gabe 2003; Idaka 2001; Teruya 2003; Yoshioka 1997). Most of the literature points out the discriminatory attitude or treatment the Japanese central government has taken toward Okinawa in reference to military base issues. Many trace its roots back to Okinawa’s historical relationship to Japan. Okinawan identity is often discussed in a political sense, as in relation to hopes of gaining local autonomy, and in a cultural sense, as in promoting Okinawa's distinct tradition; yet the ethnic identity claim emphasizing the separation between Okinawans and Japanese is relatively subtle.

A fairly recent book published by a young Okinawan scholar, Nomura Koya (2005), straightforwardly criticizes the Japanese central government for its colonial mentality. It also challenges Japanese people’s unconscious colonial mindset toward Okinawa. Nomura’s binary distinction between Japanese and Okinawans has raised a heated debate among anti-base activists. Asato (2005), disapproved of Nomura’s Okinawa nationalism, warning that his argument simply blames and uses Japan as a scapegoat when discussing military issues without engaging in sufficient political discussions. Furthermore, she expresses concern that Nomura’s emotional discussion would foster Okinawans’ emotional discontent toward Japan, which she calls Okinawa’s grudge against Japan (Asato 2005; Nomura 2005).
Aside from the sit-in protest in Henoko, there was another sit-in protest that took place in front of the U.S. Embassy. Women’s group started the sit-in in reaction to the rape incident conducted by a U.S. soldier in June 2001. It was held during the lunchtime every Fridays and it had become an important place to exchange information. One day at the Friday sit-in, a long-time anti-base activist, praised Nomura’s book, saying that it spelled out the colonial relationship between Okinawa and Japan well and articulated Okinawans’ bitter feelings toward Japan (Field notes 8/19/2005). Relating his own experience, he mentioned that there were many occasions that he felt uncomfortable talking to Japanese people. Even when he was in a situation where he had to talk about Okinawa, he had to swallow his honest feelings toward Japan and Japanese. He said Okinawans in their thirties and forties may have more courage to manifest their ill feelings towards Japan or Japanese than older Okinawans who have lived through the Battle of Okinawa and the U.S. occupation, adding that the book makes it easier for the older generation to speak up (Field notes 8/19/2005). The argument in Nomura’s book is basically similar to what some women activists shared with me, and he refers to those activists quite often. However, his aim is not to discuss women’s active role as advocates of viewing Okinawan and Japanese people’s relationship critically and taking action to change the unbalanced power relationship.

In addition, it is widely understood that women’s swift and powerful engagement triggered mass mobilization after the 1995 rape incident, when 85,000 people gathered to protest on Okinawa Island alone (Gabe 2003). However, little of the literature focuses on women’s role in the movement and in the sit-in protest. Much of the literature is written by individual activists or movement organizations to illustrate their first hand experience of the movement and their interpretation of the issue (Herikichi Hantaikyō 2005; Makishi 1999;
Makishi, Sakihama, Higashionna, Takazato, Mashiki, Kunimasa, and Urashima 2000; Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Linkai 1999; Onishi 2005; Urashima 2002; Urashima 2005). Some women writers include a section or two to describe their particular take on the movement, but there are hardly any studies so far that specifically analyzed women’s grass-roots groups’ participation and their contribution to the anti-Futenma relocation movement.

Among the very few studies that do exist, a group project entitled Okinawa Yanbaru Kasonoson ni Okeru Jinko Koureika to Kaijo Herikichi Mondai reported by International Environmental and Agricultural Science students of Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology looks at the Futenma relocation issue and the issue of increased aging population in the under-populated agricultural districts of northern area of Okinawa. It provides a section on how military bases impact women’s lives. In that section, there is a discussion of the women’s anti-relocation movement. It suggests that women who participate feel responsible for voicing and reflecting the opinions of those women who want to participate in the movement but cannot (Wakabayashi Kenkyūshitsu 2000).

In a small, conservative city like Nago, people know each other and what they do. Participating in the movement shows one’s position on the issue and it was not uncommon for people to get fired when their opposition conflicted with the company’s opinion (Wakabayashi Kenkyūshitsu 2000). Over the years, talking about the relocation issue became a taboo in some districts in Nago city since it split the districts in two; based on opposing or supporting the relocation. Therefore, women who could participate kept in mind that there were some people who wanted to take action but could not, in order to protect their jobs or avoid confrontation with their neighbors. This raises the question of what kinds of impacts such a social environment brings in sustaining women’s groups and what tactics women used
to overcome such hindrance. What kinds of negative experience did they have and how did they deal with them? How does being a woman or non-Okinawan affect this social environment?

Moreover, the same study reports that the future goal for the women’s groups is to spread their network in Japan and worldwide (Wakabayashi Kenkyūshitsu 2000). Takahashi (2000), points out that the success of the women’s peace movements in Japan was based on its networking among groups within Japan and worldwide. A prefecture-wide network “Kokoro ni Todoke Onnatachi no Koe, Nettowaku” (Women’s Voice Network, Women’s Voice for short) was established after the referendum in 1997, connecting women’s groups in the south of Okinawa to women of Futenma and Nago. Later, Kokoro ni todoke worked with women’s groups in Tokyo to have a demonstration march in Tokyo (Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū linkai 1999). However, while women were empowered by working on large-scale projects, many women returned Okinawa with disappointment after finding greater indifference in Japan than they expected and receiving much less media attention than they had hoped for (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004; Takazato July 29th, 2004; Urashima July 3rd, 2004).

In addition, women’s groups from Okinawa had a conflict over what to demand and what not to when they traveled to Tokyo. They did not have a chance to resolve this conflict for a while and it created a little uneasiness among some participants. Networking may be an important strategy in raising awareness and in getting media attention. Although it may strengthen solidity among people who share a common grievance, sometimes it works as a constraint to the flexibility of the groups by limiting what they can say or do, in order to maintain good relationships with one another. In this paper, it is necessary to investigate how
networking with other groups in Okinawa as well as with groups in Japan affected the effectiveness of the movement and relationships among the women.

In the second stage of the anti-Futenma relocation protest movement, when sit-in protest started, the sit-in became crucial in sustaining the movement. Winning in this stage of the resistance brought hope to Okinawa, where there is an intense feeling of fatigue toward participating in social movements.

However it is also important to look what baggage people brought into the sit in and how they created tension at the sit-in. Many conflicts or dilemmas arise in a movement since there are various people with different ideas. Holding a common goal does not necessarily mean that movement participants agree on all organizational aspects such as what tactics to use, decision making processes, which group to network with and so forth. Especially when the issue drags on for years, it is important for an organization to manage diverse opinions, in order to concentrate on pursuing their mutual goal. The sit-in environment intensifies the conflicts or dilemmas, since people stayed together daily for a long period of time without knowing when the protest would end. Especially when the disagreement with their antagonist becomes intense, the build up of trivial incidents may trigger confrontation within the group. The question becomes, what are some ways to sustain a movement or manage conflicts?

Staggenborg (1996) suggest that one of the ways to sustain the movement is to frame the issue so it will resonate with larger publics, and to make sure members of the movement understand what the issue is. For example, in the Narita airport movement (Narita tōsō or Sanrizuka tōsō) which started in 1965 in Japan, the initial concern of farmers from the districts in the Narita area where the government proposed to build an airport was that they were being forced to give up their livelihood as farmers (Apter and Sawa 1984). With such
common concerns, farmers established an organization, *Hantai Domei* (Opposition league) to fight the government in a peaceful manner. However, when they realized that the government did not intend to hear their legitimate concerns, and when ten farmers gave in their land to the government in exchange for substantial compensation, thus threatening to divide the movement, the farmers felt that violence was the only resource for them to fight against the government (Apter and Sawa 1984).

The movement started in 1965, which was during the heat of radical social movements in Japan to oppose the revision of US-Japan Peace Treaty. Confrontation with the government escalated after New Left sects and representatives from the All Japan Student League (*Zengakuren*) joined the movement in 1967 (Apter and Sawa 1984). In addition, farmers incorporated a ready belief that the airport was intended to be used for the military, and the struggle “became a symbol of U.S. imperialism and Japanese subservience to American military needs” (Apter and Sawa 1984: 8). The anti-imperialism frame was brought in by the New Left, who was one of the main actors of *Ampo* (US-Japan Peace Treaty) struggle. As time went on, and with the growing participation of militants, farmers were politicized and radicalized and soon New Left activism became the model for the Narita airport struggle (Apter and Sawa 1984). Such shift in frame attracted some people and enabled the movement to mobilize outside people, but at the same time, it caused more internal conflicts. In 1983, *Hantai Domei* split into two hostile groups due to internal organizational problems (Apter and Sawa 1984). One of the critical members of *Hantai Domei*, who resigned from his position in 1982, claimed that *Hantai Domei*’s initiatives were taken over by *Chukakuha*, the dominant New Left group active in the Narita protests (Apter and Sawa 1984).
The movement, which started as a local grass root movement, attracted many activists from different political backgrounds and political orientations. As the movement grew, the gaps between ideologies among the participants had widened. In addition, the level of commitment for those who lived in the area was very different from people from the New Left sects. For the farmers, the movement was part of their everyday life, whereas for the New Left activists, the movement itself was their life. In other words, local residents had other daily activities to engage in to sustain their life along with participating in the movement, but for the people from the sects, participating in the movement was the center of their life.

*The Narita Airport* struggle was a perfect site for the militants to pass on their agenda to the next generation. A shift in frame may encourage a broader population to participate in the movement, however at the same time, it also may attract groups of people with differing agendas. The case of the Narita Airport protests shows how organizations with strong political ideology can affect the minds of grass-roots groups, manipulate the framework and take over the movement. In case of the sit-in protest in Henoko, there was no obvious competition over political ideology. However, the great number of Japanese participants was becoming a threat to Okinawan participants, especially those who could not participate in the protest as often as the Japanese could. As Melucci (1995) points out, individuals need to feel that they are part of the group, otherwise participants would feel they either are unwelcome, or are ignored by the movement. Some of the Okinawans who participated irregularly told me that is how they feel when they come to the sit-in. Therefore, to see how the movement is sustained, it is critical to analyze the interaction among various
groups and how the issue is framed at the sit in to maintain coherence and solidarity among the participants.

As discussed earlier, participation of women’s groups was very influential in the Henoko movement’s growth, Ferree and Subramaniam (2001) distinguish between women’s movements and feminist movements. A women’s organization is defined as “the work of women who are motivated as women to work on issues that they view as particularly important...[and it] involve[s] a collective mobilization of women as social and political actors” (Ferree and Subramaniam 2001:497). Feminist group is part of women’s movement, involving those who “are concerned with gender relations as a target of social and political changes” (Ferree and Subramaniam 2001:497). Feminism refers to “an ideology and action focusing on changes in women’s social status in three critical dimensions: access to economic resources, power to affect decisions in the community as a whole, and autonomy in relation to personal life choices,” and feminists, who “are concerned with gender relations as a target of social and political change, are but one part of the women’s movement” (Ferree and Subramaniam 2001:497). The women’s groups that I will focus on have characteristics of both types described above. However, how the women see themselves may differ according to the group or individuals in the group, depending on how conscious they are of the idea of feminism. Although almost all of the women I spoke with or observed emphasize the importance of reflecting women’s perspective in the movement, my focus will not be to investigate whether they are women’s groups or feminist groups. Rather, I will examine how women reflect their views as women through activism; in other words, what forms of activism they think is women’s way of activism.
Data collection methods

I drew my analysis mainly from two sources of data. One is primary data which includes interviews and participant observations I conducted between summer 2004 and fall 2005. I stayed in Okinawa for about two months to conduct field research in summer 2004 and my follow up interviews and site visits continued during three short trips between fall 2004 and fall 2005 and a month and a half stay in Okinawa during summer 2005. Altogether I interviewed thirteen women and a couple, including follow-up interviews. I interviewed five leaders, two female politician/activists, and six individual participants in the protests. Among those thirteen I was able to conduct follow-up interviews with six women. Six interviewees were residents of Nago city; the others were from outside of Nago city. Interview time varied from person to person. It lasted at least an hour, and some lasted for couple of hours. Most of the interviews were audio recorded with the interviewees' permission.

In order to find interviewees, I used a snowball sampling method. I asked some of my acquaintances that have connection with movement participants to introduce me to some of the women. Those women then introduced me to some of their friends who are also movement participants. I interviewed a few people whom I had met at sit in or other related events. Interview data will be treated without personal identification, except for the interviews of the leaders, who gave their consent for their names to be used. Since using the real names of the organization is crucial, giving pseudonyms to the leaders is meaningless. In addition, because of the nature of the study, it is essential to report which opinion or statement was made by a particular leader. Therefore, I will associate their opinions with
their real names. Since signing consent form in not practiced in Japan and may make the
interviewees uncomfortable, I chose to ask for oral consent.

I have also done extensive participant observation during my visits. Mainly I was at
the sit-in at the relocation site. The sit in began from seven in the morning and lasted until
4:30 in the afternoon every day. I was at the sit in at Henoko twenty seven days in total
usually from 11am to the end of the day. Another sit-in took place in front of the US embassy
in Ginowan-city every Friday. Women’s groups had started the Friday sit-ins, and mostly
women from Kamadu attended. The sit in took place for an hour during lunch time. I was at
the Friday sit-in seven days in total. At the Friday sit-in, update on the Henoko sit-in, and
other issues were reported. I also had the opportunity to participate in several related events
which were mainly to report what the current stage of the movement was, and what was
happening at the sit in. In addition, I attended one male-dominated informal study group that
consisted of some long-term participants who seemed to have much influence on the
decision-making. There were two important male figures of the movement at the meeting.
One was a current prefecture assemblyman who once had run for Nago-city mayor. The other
was one of the leaders of three leading organizations of the sit-in. At the meeting, I was able
to briefly learn what decisions were made on how to carry on the sit-in and what concerns
males at the meeting had. Casual conversation with the sit in participants and exchange of
information which took place at the sit-in is considered part of participant observation.

In addition to my first hand observations, I referred to literatures that were written by
activists, scholars, and journalists about the issue, newspaper articles, and academic journals.
I also collected information from a magazine that is published quarterly in Okinawa which
mostly has issues on the anti-base movement and similar topics. A group called Shin
Okinawa Foramu Kanko Kaigi that is led by couple of intellectuals publishes the magazine. Published video recordings of the sit in site are also used to analyze the issue.

Theory

The study of social movements will be used as a theoretical framework for this paper. What strategy and tactics to use are very important in developing and sustaining the movement. McAdam (1997) notes that tactics are significant for the challenging groups to overcome their powerlessness. He suggests that challenging groups need to create “negative inducement” which will “disrupt their opponent’s realization of interests to such an extent the cessation of the offending tactic becomes a sufficient inducement to grant concessions” (McAdam 1982; McAdam 1997). Some of the examples of disruptive tactics include sit-ins, jail-ins, marches, and freedom rides (Almeida and Stearns 1998:38). In order to sustain the leverage attained from the use of certain tactics, the challenging group needs to either “parley its initial success into positions of institutionalized power” or “continue to experiment with non-institutional forms of protest (McAdam 1997:340).” Otherwise, even the most effective tactics would be countered by the opponents if used too long. McAdam calls the process of creating new tactics tactical innovation while he calls the process of opponents’ ability to counter them, tactical adaptation (McAdam 1997). The two processes interact with each other (tactical interaction) and how challenging groups and opponents succeed with their task impacts the outcome and pace of the movement (McAdam 1997).

McAdam’s model of tactical innovation is a helpful tool to investigate interactions between the challenging group and their opponent. He notes that the importance of tactical interaction is best observed when it is contextualized in a larger political and structural
His political process model stresses two structural factors, organizational readiness and availability of political opportunities, and they allow us to examine the significance of the tactics (McAdam 1997). In terms of organizational readiness, the presence of indigenous groups which foster tactical innovations and carry them out is a necessary aspect. Indigenous groups play a significant role "to mobilize community resource in support of new tactical forms and to supply leaders to direct their use, participants to carry them out, and communication networks to facilitate their use and dissemination to other insurgent groups" (McAdam 1997:341). It is McAdam's emphasis on the central role of indigenous, or local grass roots groups with a direct interest in the outcome that distinguishes his approach from some aspects of the resource mobilization approach, which emphasized the importance of support from outside groups with greater resources.

Another significant aspect is political opportunity. As pointed out earlier, challenging groups usually have less political and economic power compared to their target groups. Therefore, in an ordinary political environment, challenging groups' voice and claim are easily repressed or ignored. McAdam suggests that "tactical innovations only become potent in the context of a political system vulnerable to insurgency" (McAdam 1997:341). A political system becomes vulnerable when its status quo is disrupted by certain events or broad social processes that challenge the established political structure, such as "wars, industrialization, international political realignments, prolonged unemployment, and widespread demographic changes" (McAdam 1982:41).

In addition to looking at the disruptive events which create cleavages that challenging groups can exploit, I also would like to focus on two additional variables, external allies and elite instability, in analyzing political opportunity. In their study on political opportunity and
grassroots movements, Almeida and Stearns (1998) focus on these two variables. In terms of elite instability, they identify three types of instabilities. One is election, in which politicians are forced to take a position on issues that would affect support from their constituencies. This type of instability is important to study in the sit-in protest in Henoko because there were two major elections that impacted the movement, from the time the sit-in started until the central government "gave up" on the drilling survey. The second type of instability is intra-governmental conflict among local, prefectural and national government concerning the movement. In the case of Henoko, ongoing negotiations among the local, prefectural, and central government on relocation created tension among them as they tried to figure out how each level of government would react to the challenging groups. Sometimes the negotiations revealed their inconsistency about policy on a particular issue. This caused disputes among the general population, which created favorable conditions for the challenging groups to legitimize their opposition. In addition, governments' unstable attitude raised subtle discontent among officials of Naha Defense Facilities Administration Bureau's (DFAB) who had to mediate between central government and opposition groups. The last type of instability centers on symbolic government gestures which refer to the government's acknowledgment of the claim raised by the challenging group (Almeida and Stearns 1998).

External allies play an integral role in structuring political opportunity for the grassroots group by providing resources such as "finance, strategies and tactics, ideologies and collective action frames, legal and scientific consultation, as well as public exposure and participants for public demonstration" (Almeida and Stearns 1998: 40). External allies include political allies such as various social movement organizations as well as political parties, students, labor unions, intellectuals, religious organizations, and mass media.
My other interest is on how the sit-in protest was sustained in terms of attracting participants, how the participants interact with each other and what impacts this interaction has on the sustenance of the movement. McAdam points out the importance of linking political opportunities to action which involves mobilizing people. He suggests participants need to understand and attach meanings to the situation and the action they are about to take (framing) (McAdam 1982). The process of defining the situation as unjust and recognizing its need to be fixed by collective action needs to occur prior to launching collective action (McAdam 1982). As discussed earlier, framing is important both in motivating the participants to take action and in sustaining the movement (Staggenborg 1996). In terms of sustaining organizational strength, McAdam argues the need for a shift in power by establishing formally constituted organizations that can act as a central body to direct the movement, a task initially done by grassroots groups (McAdam 1982).

The emergence of women's groups and their impact on the larger anti-base movement is a central focus of this paper. Women's groups not only entered the anti-base movement which was traditionally men's field and created a space for women to voice their concerns toward the issue, but they also created space to openly discuss their historically imbalanced power-relationships with Japanese people. To understand how women come to create organizations and institutions through which to do this, it will be useful to refer to Nancy Fraser's work on "subaltern counterpublics" and her discussion of what counts as public concerns.

Nancy Fraser (1992) suggests that Habermas's idea of public sphere is essential to the critical social theory and democratic political participation and she raises two important aspects of it. One aspect is the political participation through dialog or talk. People form a
space separate from the state where they can openly share, discuss and circulate their ideas that is critical of the state. Another aspect is his notion to distinguish public sphere from official economy. Public sphere is a place to debate and deliberate rather than to engage in economic exchange such as buying and selling. In summary, Habermas’ conception of public sphere distinguishes it from the state, markets, and democratic association. However, Fraser points out that his notion of public sphere is only open and accessible to “Category of Bourgeois Society” but not to all (Fraser 1992:111-112). Women and members of plebian classes were excluded.

She points out that the historical formal exclusion of women and men of subordinated classes were eliminated as time went by. However, what is critical to focus is the informal exclusion within formal inclusive public arenas. She argues social inequalities among the participants remained but it was rather made less obvious. Women and members of plebian classes were informally marginalized in order to prevent them to participate in the discussion as peers. Fraser implies that it is impossible for “interlocutors to deliberate as if they were social peers in specially designated discursive arenas when these discursive arenas are situated in a larger social context that is pervaded by structural relations of dominance and subordination” (Fraser 1992:120-121). Then the question becomes what and how gap between the dominant and subordinate groups could be narrowed.

Fraser argues that “contestation among a plurality of competing publics” will better promote the model of participatory equality than “a single, comprehensive, and overreaching public” (Fraser 1992:122). Why? Because in a single, comprehensive, overarching public sphere, there are no ground for the subordinate group to express or foster their needs, goals, and strategies since dominant group have control over them. In that case, members of
subordinated groups will not be able to articulate their thoughts but render their thoughts in
the comprehensive public sphere which what Mansbridge notes "absorbing the less powerful
into a false 'we' that reflects the more powerful" (Fraser 1992:122).

To overcome the participatory inequality, subordinate groups find it helpful to create
alternative publics which Fraser calls "subaltern counterpublics." It functions "to signal that
they are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and
circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities,
interests, and needs" (Fraser 1992:123). Subaltern counterpublics enable marginalized groups
to deliver their perspective or voices to the wider publics.

In stratified society, Fraser suggests subaltern counterpublics have a dual character.

"On the one hand, they function as spaces of withdrawal and
regroupment; on the other hand, they also function as bases
and training ground for agitational activities directed toward
wider publics. It is precisely in the dialectic between these
two functions that their emancipatory potential resides. This
dialectic enables subaltern counterpublics partially to offset,
although not wholly to eradicate, the unjust participatory
privileges enjoyed by members of dominant social groups in
stratified societies" (Fraser 1992:124).

In Habermas's sense, public sphere is a space where private people discuss public
matter. Public matter refers to matter that are state related, accessible to everyone, of concern
to everyone and pertaining to a common good or shared interest. However, Fraser critiques
that the "common good" is usually based on interest of ruling class without incorporating
subordinate groups' concern. Therefore, what is referred as public and private could be very
ambiguous. In terms of concern to everyone, she argues that only the participants can decide
what a common concern is to them through contestation and topics discussed in public sphere
should not be limited to "common concerns" which rules out "private interests" (Fraser
1992:128). These ideas are useful in analyzing the emergence of women's anti-base group in Okinawa as well as to investigate why women's group later diverted from each other. Women first used 'gender' as a common ground but as movement lasted long, Okinawa identity became integral part for some women.

In addition to Fraser's work, in order to examine their change in collective identity, I draw my theoretical frame on Sudbury's (2001) work where she explains how gender and race intersected in constructing Black women's collective identity. Two important points she raises are to create nuanced theorization which treat gendered racialized identities as "fluid, contested and strategically invoked" process and "to capture the contradictory impulses and dilemmas involved in identity formation" (Sudbury 2001:32). Her later point is drawn from Gamson (1995) and Thayer's (1997) work that point out the "internal differentiation within movements, and the tension between the need to create a unified collectivity and the simultaneous tendency to destabilize these identities from within" (Sudbury 2001:32). This framework will help me investigate how women in the movement I am looking at negotiated their collective women's identity.
CHAPTER 2
BREAK THE SILENCE: EMERGENCE OF WOMEN’S ANTI-BASE GROUPS

During World War II, Okinawa experienced the only field battle in Japan, the famous Battle of Okinawa, which lasted for three months, killed more Okinawan civilians than Japanese soldiers, and severely devastated the island (Öyama 1997; Takazato 1996b). After the end of the war, Okinawa was under U.S. Military Occupation for twenty-seven years until its administration was returned to Japan in 1972. Many of the former Japanese Imperial Army’s military bases were taken over by the U.S. military and more were built as the Korean War intensified (Miyazato 1999). Various injustices were done to the people and the land of Okinawa during the process of constructing a U.S. military empire in Okinawa. The U.S. military forcefully acquired local Okinawans’ lands using bayonets and bulldozers, and numerous criminal acts such as murder and rape occurred without adequate arrangements to bring justice (Aniya et al. 1996: 69, Fukuchi 1999:62, and Takazato 1996a: 30). The constant fear of possible U.S. military aircraft accidents, forest fires due to training exercises using live bullets, and the roar of military aircraft in heavily populated areas all violated people’s basic human rights to live peacefully. Resistance against the U.S. military bases continued throughout the post war era. The situation has not changed much since Okinawa became part of Japan upon reversion in 1972; this simply added one more super power to fight against.

The U.S. presence particularly oppressed women and girls. Sexual transgressions against women started from day one of the U.S. landing in Okinawa and continue to today (Takara 1997: 51) Although it was an extra burden or suffering for women to live with the fear of such sexual transgressions, the issue was considered a private matter which women and girls had to deal with, and it was against the social norms to treat it as a political issue. In
addition, social expectations hindered women from taking initiative or a leading role in any kind of anti-base movement. Men were the leaders and advocates of the movement and women were expected to be in the back seat of the car and to play the supportive role while men controlled the steering wheel. However, the dynamic shifted after the 1995 rape incident and women’s active participation successfully introduced and promoted the idea that military presence threatens women’s human rights. Women’s involvement changed women as well as the movement. In this chapter, I would like to examine how women’s groups came to emerge as part of the anti-base movement, how they developed through their initial years, and how their involvement influenced other women and the larger movement. I will also point out some concerns that surfaced along the way.

**Origin of Women’s Activism after 1995**

In 1995, a twelve-year old school girl was abducted and raped by three U.S. servicemen in Okinawa. Around 8pm on September 4th, the girl was on her way home after purchasing a notebook at a nearby stationery store. Two marines and a sailor had pulled her into their rented-car and kidnapped her. Her eyes and mouth were covered and her arms and legs were immobilized with duct tape (Kuwae 1999: 63). She was taken to remote beach where she was raped and abandoned. Soon she was found by her parents who came to look for her and was taken to the hospital right away (Kuwae 1999). Later, the authorities were able to locate the three rapists due to the girl’s description of the car and men and the vehicle number (Angst 2001).
News of the incident shook people in Okinawa. To many Okinawans it reminded them of a brutal rape and murder of a six-year old named Yumiko by a U.S. soldier on September 3rd, 1955, exactly forty years earlier. It was a clear illustration that nothing much had changed fifty years after the end of the war. To some feminist activists, it also reminded them of a rape by a U.S. serviceman that had occurred two years previously. At that time the women had failed to support the victim and to act against the rape quickly and effectively. Therefore, this time, they took immediate action to support the victim and to protest against the rape. Women joined the planning committee to hold a prefecture-wide mass demonstration, which resulted to mobilize 85,000 people at the protest. Success of the protest and women’s other independent campaigns resulted in U.S. and Japan to form Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) in attempt to reduce Okinawa’s military burden.

The question then becomes, what conditions were different in 1995 from 1993 that enabled women to have a successful campaign against the case along with introducing women’s rights perspective? There are several aspects that worked together to bring about their success.

Before discussing what the women did, I should first describe who they are. The women who established a group called Okinawa Women Act against Military Violence (OWAAMV in short) two months after the 1995 rape were already members of an executive committee that had been formed to prepare for their participation in the Fourth U.N. World Conference on Women in Beijing that was held earlier the same year (Kuwae 1999). After their swift and powerful reaction to the rape incident in September 1995, they decided to form a group to fight strategically against violence against women (Kuwae 1999). Their group had two leading representatives, Takazato Suzuyo, then a Naha city assemblyperson,
and Itokazu Keiko, then a prefectural assemblyperson. In 2004 she was elected as the first female House of Councilor member from Okinawa to the Japanese national Diet. Members of the group are mostly professionals such as journalists, politicians, psychiatrists, and social workers. Many of them had been involved in promoting women's rights in Okinawa for some time and had focused on military violence against women such as rape and prostitution.

There were several elements that women were successful in utilizing. One was timing. The year 1995 was the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II and many memorial events as well as forums took place to revisit the war experience after post war Okinawa. Awareness of Okinawa’s history and problems resulting from continuous U.S. military presence was heightened among the general public. The same year, Governor Ota’s dramatic bureaucratic resistance against Japan by refusing to sign the land lease documents that would force unwilling landowners to continue to lease their land to Japan for the use of U.S. military bases in Okinawa caught the public’s attention and raised people’s expectations, although he subsequently lost his legal fight.

Second was availability of resources, especially the ideology, legal and scientific knowledge OWAAMV were able to base their argument. Women had tools or language to articulate their claims. Participating in the Women’s Conference in Beijing was a perfect opportunity for OWAAMV to learn and prepare themselves to demand and systematically argue for women’s rights. Seventy-one women from Okinawa participated in the meeting, for which they had prepared eleven different workshops on six topics related to women’s issues (Kuwae 1999). One of the workshops discussed institutionalized violence by the U.S. military against women in Okinawa since the end of war (Kuwae 1999). Their arguments were based on their experience as Okinawan women who lived the post-war era in Okinawa.
and those arguments were: 1) the military cultivate institutionalized violence against women, 2) the military threatens peace, and 3) peace and military do not coexist (Takazato 1996a). In their opinion, it was crucial to protect human dignity in order to seek peace (Takazato 1996a), which coincided with the fundamental objective of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The rape incident occurred right after they had returned from Beijing. OWAAMV was ready to use their women’s rights discourse to point out the underlying problem of the rape incident by referring to the internationally recognized Beijing Declaration.

Other crucial resources that led to the success was the presence of a strong leadership. One of the most important people in the group was Takazato Suzuyo, who was serving as Naha city assemblyperson at that time and was a leader of the Okinawa delegation to Beijing. In the interview I conducted with her, she explained how she got involved in the women’s rights issue and her experience with victims of military violence. Takazato first became truly aware of the relationship between U.S. military bases and local women where bases are present when she studied abroad at a university in the Philippines. She studied at a college in Olongapo city, where there was a big U.S. military base, Subic Bay Naval Base. In the interview, she shared how shocking it was to see all the bars around the base which aimed to entertain U.S. soldiers. Many local Filipina women worked there and it was exactly the same scene she had seen in Okinawa. She then realized that bar towns around bases were not unique to Okinawa but existed everywhere military bases existed.

After she graduated from college in the Philippines, she moved to Tokyo to study to become a social worker. She worked in Tokyo as a female guidance counselor for four years and then moved back to Okinawa. In Okinawa, she worked at an institution for women who
had worked in the entertainment businesses for U.S. soldiers and who as a result had developed psychological problems. She also worked as a public female guidance counselor for Naha city. Through these experiences she had seen many women who had been raped by military personnel, who had worked as prostitutes for the GIs and who had had an emotional breakdown due to their experiences. Many of those women were not able to get back to a normal life. She said she realized how badly the Vietnam War had impacted women’s lives in the long term. Without her experience with those women, she would never have become the person she is now. In addition, she said that she had always questioned why women had to go through this and why society tries to ignore those women’s suffering.

Takazato was proud to work for Okinawa and admired female activists such as Miyazato Etsu and Hokama Yoneko who had contributed to improve women’s lives during Okinawa’s post war reconstruction and who had later contributed to document the history of women’s struggles in Okinawa. Takazato later became a Naha city assemblyperson and served for four terms before she resigned from her office to run for Naha City mayor in 2004. During the years she was in office, she had a chance to participate in a forty-day Women’s Speaking Tour of the U.S. with seven other women who were from the countries where U.S. military bases existed. She was one of the founding members of Ajia Te wo Tsunagu kai which aimed to support the women in the Philippines who were trying to learn skills so that they could get out of entertainment business for the GIs. Acutely conscious of the relationships between U.S. military and women, she began to view military violence against women as a form of institutionalized violence against women which was cultivated in the military system.
With the political opportunity and great resources, all the OWAAMV needed was to be successful in attaching meanings to the issue which general public could resonate. The foremost reason women were able to commit to activism with so much power and dedication was because it was the victim’s wish to make it an issue and to “lock the bad soldiers in the jail forever, so that they can never get out” (Kuwae 1999:63). She was very brave and courageous because she asked her parents to report the incident to the police so that “it would not happen to other girls” (Kuwae 1999:63). The girl’s decision encouraged the women to take on a very sensitive but crucial issue, a women’s rights issue, within a masculine movement culture and paternalistic culture in general.

A lesson learned from the 1993 failure was also an important aspect of the success. In 1993 a nineteen year old woman was abducted by a U.S. serviceman while walking down the street and taken onto a military base where she was raped (Takazato 1996a). The feminist activists only found out about the incident when a newspaper article reported that the suspect had fled to the U.S. while he was under U.S. custody. The publication of this news prompted the U.S. military to have an investigation involving the FBI and Interpol to locate the suspect and bring him back to Okinawa (Takazato 1996a). The suspect was brought back to Okinawa after six months but during this period the feminist activists were busy writing and rewriting protest statements the situation changed.

When the suspect was returned and the activists were about to demand that the trial be held in the U.S., where rape is more severely punished than in Japan, the victim dropped the charges (Takazato 1996a). For the victim, six months was just too long to wait. During that period, she was the center of the issue in the media. On top of the shock and pain resulting from the rape itself, she continuously had to deal with it whenever it was covered
on the news, and she had to deal with all sorts of criticism and comments from the public. It was only then that the activists realized that they had failed to provide essential support to the victim by being with her to encourage her and make her feel secure about pressing charges against the rapist. From this incident, the women learned the importance of providing emotional support to the victim as well as acting to protest the incident at the public or institutional level quickly.

As mentioned earlier, when the 1995 rape incident became public, the incident reminded many Okinawan residents of the tragedy of six-year-old little Yumiko who was raped and murdered by a U.S. soldier on September 3rd 1955. The coincidence of the dates of the two rapes of children reminded people nothing had changed much for the last fifty years (Urashima 2002). Sympathy to the two children and other nameless girls and women who were victimized during the previous fifty years was high, and for many Okinawans this resonated with the women's claim that violence against women is an act that violates women's human rights and is one of the harms resulting from the U.S. military presence.

The women of OWAAMV did a terrific job of intertwining all the resources they had available to frame the issue by introducing the women's human rights perspective to the anti-military base movement. In addition, they were able to exploit the political opportunity that had disrupted Japan and the U.S.'s status quo regarding Okinawa. The incident triggered the accumulated anger of the Okinawan people toward Japan and the U.S. and it worsened the intra-governmental conflict. Moreover, OWAAMV had powerful support from external allies. The fact that OWAAMV's ideology was based on the Beijing Declaration gave them more legitimacy and great media attention honoring their involvement.
Creation of Subaltern Counterpublic

Nancy Fraser (1992) suggests that creating alternative publics or subaltern counterpublics enables subordinate social groups to formulate and disseminate counterdiscourses to deliver their perspectives or voices freely to the wider public. Moreover, subaltern counterpublics function as a space for withdrawal as well as an arena in which to train members in agitational tactics to raise the wider public's consciousness. It is the dialectical relationship of the two processes that enables members to counterbalance the privileges that are not granted to them in a stratified society. I argue that OWAAMV created a subaltern counterpublic within the long male dominated anti-base movement culture.

The central concerns of the dominant anti-U.S. military base movement in Okinawa usually are land issues, noise issues, and accidents resulting from military operations and they are identified as political issues deeply connected to U.S.-Japan Security treaty (Okinawa Women Act against Military Violence 1996). The three-party political relationships between Japan and the U.S., Japan and Okinawa, and Okinawa and the U.S. are the ultimate concern and for Okinawa specifically, the primary concern is their sovereignty. In addition, base issues are primarily captured and discussed in terms of space, which focuses on how much land bases take up and as a result, how it is hindering the lives of Okinawans. Moreover, military bases are the places that produce noise, and the places where training in preparation for war takes place, the places from which U.S. troops are sent to war zones (Takazato 1996a).

However, those are concerns that result while the soldiers are on duty. What happen off duty such as various criminal acts or car accidents is not included in these core concerns; rather, they are discussed only when accidents or crimes happen. Even then, concern soon
shifts back to the sovereignty issue (Takazato 1996a). The problem of overlooking the incidents that take place during off duty hours of the military is in fact overlooking the full impact of the U.S. military presence in people’s everyday lives. Those problems were also neglected by Okinawa prefecture. Until November 1995, Okinawa prefecture had not included criminal acts or accidents committed by U.S. servicemen during off duty as problems derived from the military presence in their publications (Takazato 1996a).

According to Takazato, the political issues with bases were never viewed from a human rights perspective or as a violation of women and children throughout the anti-base movement, nor were they viewed from this perspective by the Okinawa prefectural government (Okinawa Women Act against Military Violence 1996). In addition, as cited in former Governor Ota’s (2004) recent book, lawyer Chikashi Kinjo argues that despite the fact that women were under direct inhumane oppression, their problems have not been dealt with in postwar Okinawan movements including both the reversion and anti-military movements. Kinjo also points out that neglect of women’s issues is due to the sexual discrimination rooted in Okinawan society; thus, in order to fight the US military presence which violates human rights and causes prostitution and sexual violence, sexual discrimination needs to be eliminated from the society (Ota 2004:449).

One of the women’s agenda items to change the movement was to break the routine of actions taken by traditional male-centered organizations and institutions whenever U.S. military-related problems occurred. The routine was that first, the prefectural assembly, human rights council, bar association, political parties, and labor unions would submit a list of grievances regarding the incidents; second, these groups would demand enforcement of strict official discipline to U.S. consul-general and Japanese Defense Agency, and third, the
accused institutions would promise to enforce strict official discipline (Takazato 1996a). Such routine of action had become a symbolic reaction to the base issues, and had not produced any changes. This time, women did not want to respond to the incident with symbolic and empty promises. They wanted concrete change. And they believed change would only occur when the incident was recognized as a violation of human rights and women’s rights. This was the counterdiscourse OWAAMV raised.

They claimed that the act of rape is a violation of human rights and women’s rights and to normalize this perspective as a public concern. They were not anti-American, they were anti-military. They argue that the military dehumanizes the soldiers and the military system nurtures discrimination against women. With this ideology, they fought against the U.S. military for the U.S. military’s violence against women and at the same time, they challenged the dominant masculine ideology in the anti-base culture that had been preserved for a long time.

OWAAMV also emphasized the importance of women voicing their concern in public as well as encouraging women to take action for change rather that to wait for government or other people to bring the change. On September 23rd, with two other women’s groups, they had a prefecture-wide three-day campaign that demanded “no more violence and human rights violations against children and women” (Agora 1995). At one of the meetings, participants were given the opportunity to express their thoughts in one-minute voluntary speeches, and a group discussion (Agora 1995). This tactic was intended to give agency to each participant rather than having the leaders speak for all the women. In addition, OWAAMV established a Rape Emergency Intervention Counseling Center Okinawa (REICO), the first support center for rape victims in Okinawa, in October 1995.
Later in the movement, after the anti-Futenma relocation movement had started, more women's groups sprouted throughout Okinawa with slightly different emphasis than OWAAMV had. However, they were certainly inspired by and supported by OWAAMV to establish their organizations.

**Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) and Emergence of Futenma Relocation Issue**

Seeing the overflowing anger of the Okinawans against the 1995 rape incident, the U.S. and Japan set up a Special Action Committee on Okinawa, or SACO, to discuss ways to reduce the impact of the military on the peoples of Okinawa. SACO was launched in November 1995 as a one-year committee under so called two-plus-two US-Japan Security talks. The members were the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Japanese Minister of State for Defense, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, and the U.S. Ambassador to Japan. SACO had twenty meetings, including unofficial meetings, and produced an interim report, before it produced its final report on Dec 2, 1996 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1996b; Okinawa Times December 2nd, 1996).

On April 12th, 1996, three days before SACO announced its interim report, the U.S. and Japan agreed to close U.S. Marine Corp Futenma Air Station and return the property, without mentioning any conditions that would go along with the closure of Futenma. Return of Futenma meant a lot to Okinawa since Futenma Air Station was regarded as the most dangerous military base in the world because of its location in the heart of Ginowan city (Figure1). It is surrounded by sixteen educational institutions (K-12 to university) and about fifty buildings such as pre-schools, hospitals, condominiums where large numbers of people gather (Iha September 12th, 2004). Asia Times reported that when U.S. Secretary of Defense
Donald Rumsfeld visited Okinawa in November 2003, he viewed Futenma from the air and acknowledged the danger of Futenma Air Station, commenting that “he could not believe there were not more accidents in such a place” (Takahashi September 9th, 2004).

However, in the SACO interim report, the US and Japanese governments suggested Futenma Air Station to be returned within five to seven years, only “after adequate replacement facilities are completed” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1996a). The interim report suggested that Futenma’s functions should be maintained by relocating them within U.S. bases in Okinawa which would require the construction of a substitute heliport within Okinawa (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1996a). Many scholars and activists suggest that the real purpose of SACO is to realign and consolidate military functions in Okinawa as well as to prepare for further consolidation of the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance under the guise of reducing military impact on the people of Okinawa (Arasaki 2005; Makishi et al. 2000; Teruya 2003). The SACO final report recommended closing eleven facilities, but seven out of the eleven required relocation within military bases in Okinawa (Sakihama 2000).

Where to relocate was the next issue the two governments had to decide. On June 26, 1996, it was revealed that the U.S. government had unofficially proposed to Japan their nomination of three locations for Futenma. The three alternatives suggested were, 1. unutilized area within the Kadena Ammunition Storage Area (in Okinawa city, Kadena town, and Chatan town, Figure 2), 2. an area close to the coast of Camp Hansen (in Kin Town, Figure 2), and 3. within Camp Schwab (in Nago city, Figure 2) (Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū linkai 1999). The news upset the municipal governments as well as residents who lived in the nominated areas and the governments of all three sites rejected the
relocation to their lands, which gave a major headache to both the U.S. and Japanese governments. After some discussions between top officials from the two governments, the SACO final report issued in December 2, 1996 announced that they would construct a sea-based facility without naming where exactly the facility would be built (SACO final report). The report only said that the relocation would be offshore of the east coast of Okinawa Island, which implied offshore of Henoko bay, Nago city, within a U.S. military sea zone that is also used by civilians, adjacent to Camp Schwab (Figure 3). Although the selection of the relocation site was presented as a difficult task to pursue by both the U.S. and Japanese governments, Makishi (2000) argues that the plan to build a sea-based air station at Henoko bay was already discussed as early as 1965, but did not materialize for financial reasons. SACO was a good opportunity for the U.S. to relocate the almost fifty year-old deteriorated Futenma Air Station to a new facility with cutting edge technology at Japan’s expense (Makishi 2000).

Japan’s Prime Minister Hashimoto had once expressed his understanding that the Japanese central government would never pursue the relocation without consulting with the local government and its people (Okinawa Times 1998). However, although the resistance of the Nago city government and its residents was consistently present, on January 14, 1997, Kajiyama Seiroku, Chief Secretary of Japan, announced that the Japanese and U.S. governments had reached an agreement to relocate Futenma to offshore of Camp Schwab (Ishikawa 1998). The relocation plan was to build a floating heliport that has a 1500 meter long air station with a 1300 meter long runway approximately 5 km off the coast of Camp Schwab (Okinawa Times 1998). The Defense Agency of Japan suggested that residents would not suffer from the noise, which contradicted the plan to be carried out by the Marines.
in 2001, namely to change their helicopters from CH46 to V22 Osprey which was predicted to cause greater noise problems (Okinawa Times 1998). Further battle against the plan began for Nago city, especially the east coast residents.

Birth of Women’s Anti-Futenma Relocation Groups

Emergence of two grassroots women’s groups

Many women’s groups emerged all over Okinawa while the surge to bring about a successful referendum was getting bigger and bigger in Nago city (Urashima 2002). Among many newly born women’s groups against relocation, the most prominent groups were Kamadugwa tachi no Tsudoi and Jyannu Kai. Although the two groups and OWAAMV are all women’s groups trying to incorporate women’s perspective into their activism, they had slightly different perspectives, or rather different priorities. Referring to Ferree and Subramniam’s (2001) definition of women’s and feminist’s groups, both Kamadu and Jyannu could be considered women’s groups since they are motivated as women to pursue the issue and they mobilized as social and political actors. On the other hand, OWAAMV is more of a feminist group that aims to attack the gender power relations in the society and holds a strong vision to change such ideology. No doubt Kamadu and Jyannu consciously attempt to introduce a new wave of tactics which they as women feel more comfortable practicing, but they do not put forward women’s rights viewpoint as the same level OWAAMV does.

Common to all three groups were that most of the participants both Okinawans and Japanese had a full time jobs and many of them were single mothers. Although almost all of them had some degree of emotional support from their family, they were expected to balance
their work, home, including all the family related affairs, and activism. It was difficult to balance them all of those role expectations, yet, most women seemed to have accepted the expectation or had to accept them to get involved. Women's degree of engagement differed mostly based on types of occupations women had, age of their children, and whether or not they had an elder family member to take care of.

*Kamadugwa tachi no Tsudoi (カマドウ小たちの集い)*

Kamadugwa tachi no Tsudoi (Kamadu in short) is a women's group whose members are residents of Ginowan, where Futenma Air Station is located. Kunimasa Mie is a representative as well as a founding member of the group. As a resident of Ginowan city, Kunimasa was happy to hear the proposal on the closure of Futenma, but had questioned the proposal of relocating Futenma to Henoko (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). She felt moving Futenma from one place to another would not reduce the danger of having the military bases, but rather it would consolidate its function and lead to everlasting presence of US military bases in Okinawa. As days went by her urge to do something about it got stronger and stronger (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004).

One day she contacted Matayoshi Kyoko, a participant in the *hitotsubo* (1 tsubo=3.3square meters) anti-war landowners movement, whose members have purchased tiny pieces of base land in order to refuse to sign leases that permit the military to use the land Matayoshi also lived in Ginowan City. Kunimasa did not know Matayoshi personally but knew her status as an anti-base activist. Matayoshi shared Kunimasa's concern and offered to call some people who might be interested in joining their activism (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). One week after their initial conversation, fifteen people including the
two of them gathered at a conference room at Matayoshi's workplace. Coincidentally all the fifteen people were women, ranging from teenagers to women in their sixties. Since almost no one had prior experience in movement activism, they did not where to start so they first introduced each other and talked freely on various topics. Later, they decided to make newsletters so that everyone could use their free time at home to write about what they think of the issue. (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). They thought about having a protest event but it was difficult to set a date when all of them could gather since everyone had a different schedule and most of them had family to take care of. A newsletter was convenient for them since they could use their free time; in addition, it allowed individuals to express their thoughts. Also, they decided to make flyers and visit individual households in Nago city during the weekends to inform them of the negative effects of having the military base and to ask them to protest against the relocation in the Nago city referendum on heliport relocation (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004).

The name Kamadugwa tachi no Tsudoi is quite unique and at first glance does not convey what the group represented. Kunimasa explained that when they were discussing a name, they did not want to use names that portrayed them as activists (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). They knew a group from Onna village with the name Unna Nabi no Kai, which was named was after a famous female poet Unna Nabi, who was from Onna village. Since there was no famous artist from Ginowan city, they decided to use a common old name for female, Kamadu. Amma, mother in Okinawan language, was also raised as an alternative but they decided to use Kamadu since not all the members were mothers. Tsudoi, which means to gather in Japanese, was used instead of Kai or group to sound more frank.
Kamadu meets with Jyannu Kai

After two weeks of Kamadu’s visits to Nago city, Ishikawa Mao, a renowned anti-base photographer, introduced Kamadu to the women’s division of Herikichi Irainai Futami Ihoku Jikku no Kai. Their meeting resulted in the women’s division giving a new name to their group in an attempt to work independently of the main, male-centered Futami Ihoku (Kēshi Kaji V18, 1998). The women’s division named their group Jyannu Kai, which has two meanings. The word Jyannu is an Okinawan word made up from two words, Jyan and nu. Jyan means Dugong and nu means the possessive, equivalent to no in Japanese. So is the name means Dugong’s group. The other meaning was taken from a famous French heroine Jeanne d’Arc (Kēshi Kaji V18, 1998).

I believe their names make a very interesting comparison with Okinawa Women Act against Military Violence. Choosing what name to use reflects their ideas on what they think of themselves and how they want to be perceived, in other words, their identity. Both Kamadu and Jyannu used names that represented women and Okinawan-ness. Also, both names are not self-explanatory of what they aim for or what they are, as is common for other groups. I suggest that it reflects their intent to avoid being viewed as activist, who tends to be perceived as extraordinary women who are different from others. On the other hand, OWAAMV tries to make it clear that they are a group of women from Okinawa who protest against military violence. Although what form of violence they are focusing on is not clear in the name, one can assume they hold a women’s perspective.

Members of Jyannu Kai first started to participate in the movement to assist men, mostly providing traditional support such as preparing meals. However, their encounter with the women of Kamadu made them realize that they could do more than cooking to support
the movement. Since then, they have become active participants in the movement and eventually, along with Kamadu, Jyannu became one of the leading women’s grass-root groups in the movement.

**Jyannu Kai (ジャンヌ会)**

*Jyannu Kai* (shortened to Jyannu) was the women’s division of a local based group named *Herikichi Irenai Futami Ihoku Jikku no Kai* (ヘリ基地いらない二見以北10区の会) or No to Heliport! Association of 10 districts north of Futami. The area where relocation was proposed was east coast of Nago city closest to the US military facility Camp Schwab. Nago city is a large city which four towns and villages came to form one city in 1970. East coast of Nago city was once called Kushi village and still referred as Old Kushi village. Old Kushi village was made up of thirteen districts that spread out on the east coast of Nago city. Camp Schwab splits the coastline of the thirteen districts into two parts; three districts of Kube (Henoko, Toyohara and Kushi) and the ten districts (Futami, Oura, Okawa, Sedake, Tima, Mihara, Abu, Kayo, Sokoniya, and Teniya). Futami was located in the beginning of the chain of ten districts, so the ten districts were usually referred to as ten districts north of Futami. As the name represents, Futami Ihoku Jikku no Kai (shortened to Jikku no Kai) was an organization established by the residents of the ten districts north of Futami.

Members of Jikku no Kai originally worked with Inochi wo Mamorukai, a group comprised of residents of the other three districts of Kube (Urashima July 3rd, 2004). About ten months later, Jikku no Kai formed their own group because of the physical distance from the Inochi wo Mamorukai office and the Kube districts where most of the meetings took place, but also because of the difference in their stance on the existing military base, Camp
Schwab. Inochi wo Mamorukai was against relocating Futenma to Henoko, but they did not intend to demand the closure of Camp Schwab. On the other hand, Jikku no Kai was opposed to both the existing base and the relocation of the heliport. (Urashima July 3rd, 2004). The reason behind it was that Jikku no Kai residents were experiencing negative impact from the base but did not receive any economic subsidies by hosting the base, while Inochi wo Mamorukai residents received the economic support. Jikku no Kai used this opportunity to protest against Camp Schwab while Inochi wo Mamorukai refrained from raising it an issue since there were many residents in their districts whose lives are supported by the income they make from the military.

Women’s Way of Activism

After Jyannu met with Kamadu, they started to join in the house-to-house visits to encourage people to vote against the relocation in the city referendum. Yaruk'-zu, women’s group made up of Nago city’s west coast residents, Okinawa Women Act against the Military Violence and some other women’s groups soon supported them. Making house-to-house visits and making and distributing flyers when they visited the house-to house visits were the two main tactics that Kamadu first engaged in and the rest of the women’s groups joined their efforts. Visiting individual household was easier for Kamadu because it gave the women a chance to speak with the residents face to face and individual to individual (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). The tactic worked very well since the majority of the residents who answered the door were women (Miyagi August 8th, 2004) and both sides felt less intimidated, which created an atmosphere to have a genuine dialogue (Miyagi September 24th, 2004). In addition, making flyers allowed members to share their feelings about the
relocation. It was also convenient for women because they could use their free time at home rather than traveling outside, which would have consumed more time that interfered with their commitments with family and work (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004).

Since only Nago city residents had the right to vote at the referendum, Kamadu aimed to raise awareness among Nago city residents on how awful and dangerous it was to host an air station. Kunimasa criticized the widespread notion in Nago city that accepting relocation would help free Futenma residents from danger and suffering (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). She firmly said they were not expecting such cheap sympathy and rather wanted Nago city resident to say no to the relocation (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). Many of the Nago city residents were surprised to hear that and Kamadu explained them that moving Futenma Air Station to Henoko was not a solution to free Futenma people from danger because helicopters from Henoko could still crash at Futenma (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004).

It seemed that they were having a positive feedback and reaction until five days prior to the referendum. Mashiki, leader of Jyannu called Kunimasa for help and they had an emergency meeting on the next day at Mashiki’s house (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). The problem was that some households who had showed opposition when they last visited them had become relocation supporters. The women were desperate to find out the reasons for the change and did not know what to do (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). It turned out that two hundred people from Japan’s Defense Agency (JDA) were sent to Nago city to practice the same tactics that the women were engaged in, to persuade residents to support the relocation at the referendum. It was said that they bribed the residents with money and one by one, residents who were against the relocation took sides with the central government.
Those who received the money told them that they thought they could just say yes to the JDA and get the money, but show their opposition by voting no in the referendum. However, the JDA had set up many posters that had a picture of one big eye on the center of the poster, and those received money were afraid they were being watched by the JDA and felt guilty about saying no to the relocation since they had received the money (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004).

Many women gathered at Mashiki’s house for the emergency meeting. After talking about what to do about it for hours, they decided to organize a demonstration march. Many opposed having the march since their image of marching was the one they had seen in the 60’s and 70’s that zigzag along the streets or participants shouting and raising their fists in the air (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). In the end, women decided to have michi jyune, which was a traditional, lively parade that accompanied some festivities in Okinawa. They agreed that the demonstration march would not aim to compete with their counterparts, but instead aim to appeal as mothers to other mothers expressing their vision of what kind of Okinawa they want to pass on to their children (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). In addition, they talked about wearing nicer clothes than T-shirts and jeans to make it look more attractive, and holding nicely decorated banners with cheerful expressions, so the bystanders would not feel the demonstrators were imposing their opinion, but instead, would take their appeal to heart (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004).

The problem was they only had four days until the referendum, which was not enough time to get the permission to have a parade on the streets. Women from west coast Nago repeatedly visited the police station to negotiate with the person in charge and finally the day before they planned to have the parade, police made special arrangements for them to
have it (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). *Michi june* took place a day before referendum day and more than three hundred women and children participated in it (Urashima 2000b). When they were walking down town Nago during the *michi june*, people threw water at them, but Mashiki urged all the members to stay calm to avoid conflict (Kēshi Kaji V18, 1998: 38). Some journalists the women knew told them that they noticed changes in bystanders’ facial expressions and saw many people showing support, and thought they might win the referendum (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). As they had predicted, the referendum resulted in a majority expressing opposition. The women were praised for their hard work and their contributions were recognized as a leading factor in winning the referendum (Okinawa Times December 24th, 1997).

**Prefecture-wide women’s network**

Although the referendum ended in victory for the opposition groups, then mayor Higa accepted the relocation and resigned from his position (Urashima 2002). Women had spent their time and energy to win the referendum believing that if the majority showed opposition, the relocation to Henoko would not happen. As the day of the referendum got closer, they had prioritized activism over taking care of family, hoping that they could end the Henoko struggle and concentrate next on fighting to get rid of Futenma (Kēshi Kaji V48, 2005; Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004; Urashima July 3rd, 2004).

As mentioned earlier, although the referendum ended in success, Futenma’s relocation to Henoko had made progress toward the direction that satisfied the central government. The women realized that women’s groups throughout the prefecture should consolidate their network in fighting for demilitarization together. In December, women met
to discuss their future activism and founded “Kokoro ni Todoke Onna tachi no Koe Netto Waku (心に届け女たちの声ネットワーク)” or “Women’s Voice Network” (Urashima 2000b). There were 20 groups in the Network and Kunimasa of Kamadu and Mashiki of Jyannu were chosen as chief representatives. It was common for those women’s groups to have multiple representatives and they preferred to have “representative” rather than president to avoid to create hierarchical structure in the group.

Women often incorporated humor in their appeals and developed creative tactics (Makishi et al. 2000). The very first activity as Women’s Voice Network was to visit the governor to express their opposition on January 19th, 1998. Women collected letters from individual members and placed them in a huge basin and put a ribbon on it (Urashima 2002). The message they sent to the governor was to fight against the central government’s attempt to play a game of musical chairs; to move the military bases within Okinawa from one place to the other. This “game” was often called “tarai mawashi” in Japanese, which literally meant “to circle the (wash) basin.” Women were being humorous in using the washbasin, which Mashiki held up high and swung to the left and right. This humorous “tarai mawashi” skit was used quite often after that and became a symbolic act for Mashiki as well as Women’ Voice Network. More than three hundred women gathered at the prefecture office lobby to make a “courtesy visit” to the governor (Urashima 2002). Kunimasa recalled the day when they visited prefecture in such a big number and said they never thought of limiting the visit to representatives but thought whoever wanted to join should join (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). There were many elders who were visiting the prefecture office for the first time. To add to their excitement, they had been told the governor would not be at the lobby to greet them, but he showed up and promised that he would not make a wrong decision (Kēshi
Kaji V18, 1998). The governor was very touched to hear testimonies and appeals from ordinary women who had shared their experience and appeals in their own words and in trembling voices (Okinawa Times August 26th, 2000). In the elevator on the way back to his office, he said to the prefecture officials “My heart aches. Women were the ones who suffered the most [referring to the post war reconstruction of Okinawa]. That was ordinary people’s true voice not those of activists. I must show opposition. I cannot accept [the relocation]” (Okinawa Times August 26th, 2000). Later in February, governor showed concrete opposition to the relocation for the first time.

Along with their first michi jyune which is viewed as a success in influencing its constituency, women succeeded once more. This time they succeed in influencing the governor’s decision. In the interview, Kunimasa looked back at their activism and said,

“At that time, we did not think much about its [their strategies] effectiveness. We just did what we wanted to and what we could do. Later people said what we did was effective and it was something new. I thought oh well that’s good!....... For us we did not know what were considered ‘normal’ (or conventional) things to do [in the movement] but whatever we did was in our view normal. Whether our approach was new or old, it did not matter to us since everything was new to us and we could only do what we can” (9/23/2004).

At the michi jyune, women stressed to include all the women and children in their effort and when they visited the governor, they suggested that instead of sending delegation, everybody who wanted to meet with the governor should go. Common thing here is that they tried not to create a hierarchy within the group dividing themselves in ‘leading group’ and ‘following group.’ However, that does not mean they did not believe in having a leader. Role of leader was considered to be more as a moderator rather than person with authoritative rank.
Women’s Voice Network continued their vigorous activism, incorporating creative ideas that women’s groups of other movements throughout Japan and around the world had used. Their expressions included creating a “Tree of Peace” by connecting handkerchiefs with messages on them (learned from women’s opposition to a nuclear plant in Niigata), “Peace Ribbon” which was introduced by women in U.S. who used it to remind the Pentagon of women’s demand to reduce war expenditures (Makishi et al. 2000), and the Friday Meeting in front of the US embassy, which they had learned from women in Korea who gathered in front of the Japanese embassy every Wednesday protesting against injustice done to Korean women who were forced to provide sexual services to Japanese soldiers during WWII.

After the 1995 rape incident, women had led the movement with their enthusiastic, creative and spontaneous activism and changed the mood of the movement. Kamadu and Jyannu had enjoyed the subaltern couterpublic that OWAAMV had established. Together, they cooperated to enhance their knowledge, and introduced new tactics and organizational structure that were different from traditional anti-base activism that had inherited the characteristics of Japanese Left style of protest.

Steinhoff (1989) points out that the Japanese Left style of protest during the late 60’s to early 70’s was dominated by the Communist and Socialist parties, labor unions, and radical students political sects. Their organizational ideology comes from the leaders and the members usually follow what the leader says (Steinhoff 1989) which is what anti-base movement culture in Okinawa looks like to this day, except that non-violence is a deeply respected virtue in Okinawa. In terms of political activities, the description of public demonstrations in Japan in Steinhoff’s account is also somewhat similar to demonstrations in
Okinawa, which women hesitated to incorporate into their activism. As discussed above, women preferred to emphasize individual agency by having each member share her thoughts, rather than shouting or chanting in unison the same phrases prepared by the leaders. They also avoided creating hierarchy within the group. As in their visit to the governor, instead of limiting participation to the leaders, they encouraged everyone who wishes to take part to join in the visit. Women emphasized enjoying expressing what they believed in, rather than looking desperate or angry. That mentality allows them to be creative and humorous.

After organizing many protest events, they took a break for a while and resumed their activism in July 2005. Although they worked as a coalition, member organizations utilized variety of ways to disseminate their message. Okinawa Women Act against Military Violence frequently reached out to their global allies. In fact, Okinawa Women Act against Military Violence was one of the founding members of East-Asia, U.S., Puerto Rico Women’s Network Against Militarism. Also, they had sent delegation of women to the U.S. to introduce Okinawa’s situation to the U.S. citizens while grassroots groups like Kamadu and Jyannu focused their activism through everyday life and being close to their locality (Asato 2000; Makishi et al. 2000).

**Diversity and Divergence**

All the women’s groups in Women’s Voice Network viewed women’s involvement in the movement as important because it created a space for women to voice their concerns and provided alternative ways to fight the relocation issue. However, women did not necessarily have a consensus on every aspect of the movement, which at times caused disagreements. Throughout their eight years of involvement, there were some critical
moments that influenced women’s activism and their relationships with each other. Those critical moments gave opportunities for women to think about how they wanted to approach the issue and why it was important for them to make their own choices. There were two critical moments after the referendum which determined their trajectory: participation in Tokyo Action, and the beginning of sit-in protest at Henoko bay. In this chapter, I will examine participation in Tokyo Action and its impact.

Tokyo Action

In May 1998, Women’s Voice Network organized an event with women in Tokyo. The event was called Tokyo Action and 124 women from the Network participated in the three-day event to publicize Okinawa’s situation to the people in Tokyo (Makishi et al. 2000). Women had a michi jyune demonstration in the Ginza, did a skit and picture-story show at Harajuku, and conducted a workshop. It was a first event for the women to reach out to the people in Japan. They learned a lot and gained confidence after organizing such huge event. After their participation, the women realized how difficult it was to do an event in Tokyo and felt respect for their Japanese allies who engaged in political events in such an environment (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004).

They found people in Tokyo were too busy to care about the demonstration that was going on in the street. They passed by and even though some had stopped to ask what the event was for; they mostly gave a cold look or superficial sympathy. Two broadcasting companies had tagged along with the women to report the event and when women asked bystanders for interviews, most of the people agreed to speak only when the camera was present, but when there was no camera around, they hesitated to shared their comment
A common comment was that they feel sympathetic but do not wish to accept a military facility in their back yard, which was in the range of women’s expectation.

Only two national media, Asahi and Kyodo Tsushin, showed up to report the event, yet the article was very small and the purpose of the demonstration was not clearly laid out (Urashima July 3rd, 2004). Urashima at the interview showed a frustration against the report and said “The picture was pretty big but the report was only about ten lines…. The report was very vague. It did not give much information on what our intention was. It was more like women from Okinawa came to Ginza and had an event. I think the reader would only think women from Okinawa did something different. That’s it. It was such a disappointment” (Urashima, July 3rd, 2004). Women had incorporated various cultural symbols such as dressing in Eisa attire and beating drums, using expressions in Okinawan language here and there, playing Okinawan music and so on. Urashima complained that the newspaper article had captured only the unique ethnic expression rather than what their protest was about (Urashima July 3rd, 2004).

The women reviewed their style of activism from this experience and from other occasions when they were invited to speak in Japan. Takazato mentioned that she hardly felt any connection with Japanese people when she was invited to talk in Japan. She rather felt a distance. However, when she had joined in a conference where women from Korea, the Philippines, China, and Cambodia participated, she could easily connect with them because they all shared common grief and experiences (Makishi et al. 2000). Other women also shared the same idea. Such repeated discomfort however, made women reflection their activism in Okinawa. They wondered how much awareness the general Okinawan population
had and whether their concerns had reached young people, students, and neighbor island residents in Okinawa (Makishi et al. 2000). As a result, they began to focus their activism on their home ground in Okinawa to consolidate their foundation.

Tokyo Action was also an important event where critical ideological differences between Okinawan women’s groups had surfaced. On the day of their departure for Tokyo, women of Kamadu and Jyannu had a disagreement with women of OWAAMV on the banner Kamadu and Jyannu had prepared. The banner said “Futenma Air Station on Sale (普天間基地大セール).” OWAAMV requested Kamadu and Jyannu not to display the banner; otherwise they would have to withdraw from participating since it was against their idea (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). The idea was based on Kamadu and Jyannu’s demand for or relocation of military bases out of Okinawa, which was against OWAAMV’s belief. OWAAMV believed the military as an institution was evil and the bases that cultivated and practiced militaristic values should not be relocated but eliminated. In the eyes of OWAAMV, the concept of selling Futenma was wrong because what Okinawa did not wish to keep should never be imposed on the rest of Japan (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). Without reaching agreement, Kamadu and Jyannu proceeded to hold the banner and promoted selling Futenma by chanting “Anyone want Futenma? Now it comes with a development plan!” throughout the demonstration (Futenma kichi irankane~, ima nara shinkoaku tsuki desuyo~) (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004).

Kamadu first suggested the idea of relocation out of Okinawa before they departed for Tokyo and there were intense discussions within the Network. Everyone at the meeting agreed on the principle of OWAAMV’s idea that military bases should be removed rather than being relocated from one place to the other (Urashima July 3rd, 2004). However,
Kamadu members felt they had suffered from Futenma for too long. Demanding base removal sounded a little unrealistic and would take too long to achieve (Urashima July 3rd, 2004). Urashima explained, “for two nights we discussed about this concept. Some felt claiming for ‘relocation out of Okinawa’ will damage our relationship with supporters in Japan. Even though our claim of base withdrawal was a valid one, the injustice situation was not being resolved. For women from Ginowan, suffering for nearly sixty years was just enough. They could not take it anymore. …..for those whose lives were literally affected by the military presence, claim of withdrawal was mere abstract” (July 3rd, 2004).

Relocating Futenma within Okinawa was not a solution to reduce their burden; therefore they had come to raise the idea of relocation out of Okinawa. In addition, Kamadu aimed to use the slogan as a way to raise the question to Japanese people (Urashima July 3rd, 2004). Kamadu felt that Japanese people in general do not understand the suffering of hosting military bases if they do not experience living with military bases around them (there are places in Japan that host military bases but what Kamadu is referring to is Japan in general). Therefore, if they were able to have people in Okinawa support the idea of ‘relocation out of Okinawa,’ Japan would feel threatened and start to oppose it seriously (Urashima July 3rd, 2004). Or if Okinawa’s momentum resulted in actually relocating some bases to Japan, that would be the time Japanese would really understand Okinawan’s hardship through the movement they would have to engage in (Urashima July 3rd, 2004). In any case, behind the slogan, there was Kamadu’s wish to make Japanese people realize the seriousness of the issue and feel the suffering Okinawans had gone through for so many years.
The idea of relocation out of Okinawa did not limit its destination to Japan but out of Japan as well. It had emerged more from a perspective of getting the bases out of Okinawa. However, since the motivation to raise it as a slogan included raising Japanese people's attention, it was often perceived and discussed in a way that limited the relocation to Japan. In fact, Urashima's Japanese friend had perceived the slogan as meaning Okinawan women were demanding that the bases be moved to Japan and Urashima's friend questioned why she could as a Japanese support or promote such an idea (Urashima July 3rd, 2004). “My friend accused me how could I, as Japanese, support such an idea to relocate bases to Japan by my Japanese friend in Japan. I said I supported that idea because I am Japanese” (Urashima July 3rd, 2004). Urashima had shared to me earlier that how shocked she was to see the military situation in Okinawa when she first came to live in Okinawa. It was beyond her imagination and how she felt responsible as a Japanese to have put Okinawa in a situation to shoulder a burden for Japan’s national security. Urashima had lived in Okinawa for almost six years at that time and had realized Japan’s peace was maintained by sacrificing Okinawa. And as a person who had realized that, she said she felt responsible to correct the injustice (Urashima July 3rd, 2004).

Even though there were some disagreements within the Network, they continued to work together for a while. The Network went into abeyance by the time sit-in protest started, but individual women’s groups continued to organize events regularly. Kamadu and Jyannu still were disappointed about their difference in ideas with OWAAMV and attributed the cause of the disagreement to the difference in background, suggesting that OWAAMV did not understand their hardship because most of them were from the capital city of Naha, where there was little impact from the military presence in their daily lives (Urashima
2000a). By the time the sit-in protest started, Jyannu went into abeyance as well. The sense of marginalization that filled the hearts of Kamadu and Jyannu consolidated after sit-in protest started and triggered Kamadu to take a radical step forward.

I suggest Kamadu and Jyannu’s claim of “relocation out of Okinawa” and all the discussions behind it within the Network was the beginning of a divergence between Kamadu and Jyannu and OWAAMV. For Kamadu and Jyannu it also marked their initial formation of creating new counterdiscourse separate from the original one created by OWAAMV adding emotional ethnic relations in it. Although concentrated base presence and hindrance due to the unfair SOFA was widely recognized and discussed in terms of institutional discriminatory act against Okinawa by both Japanese and U.S. governments, Kamadu and Jyannu had pointed out the responsibility of individual agents, Japanese people, who permitted such discrimination and practice it consciously and unconsciously.
Chapter 3
The Sit-in Protest and its Impact on Women

Okinawa is the southernmost prefecture of Japan, made up of chains of islands and surrounded by the beautiful ocean. In the eyes of Okinawans, Okinawa is a nation with a rich heritage distinct from Japan and at the same time a nation with a heartrending fate. Before becoming Okinawa prefecture, Okinawa was the independent Ryukyu Kingdom that prospered with peaceful trade relations with Southeast Asian countries. In 1609, the Shimazu clan of Satsuma invaded Ryukyu and in 1879 the Kingdom was overthrown and formally annexed as one of Japan’s prefectures by the Meiji government of Japan.

Thereafter, the fate of Okinawa was always in the hands of Japan and later, Japan and the United States. The cultural Japanization process after annexation required Okinawans to give up their customs and language; the Battle of Okinawa devastated the island killing many Okinawans to protect Japan; the U.S. Occupation took away Okinawans’ ancestral land to train U.S. soldiers to kill and it neglected Okinawans’ human rights; reversion resulted in Okinawa becoming a dual-post colonial society beholden both to Japan and the U.S. Throughout their modern history, Okinawans have questioned who they are, what they are to Japan, what they will next have to bear. Research that asks “Are you Okinawan or Japanese?” cannot be seen in the rest of the prefectures in Japan except possibly for Ainu or other minorities.

On the other hand, in the eyes of many Japanese, Okinawa is a “paradise,” a cool place to spend their vacation. Many visit to enjoy the blue sky and beaches, many come to live in a laidback atmosphere, but not many really try to see the reality of Okinawa. The 1996 SACO report proposed to construct a new floating airbase on the ocean off Henoko. A sit-in
protest to halt the preliminary drilling survey conducted by the Defense Facilities Administration Bureau (DFAB) in preparation for construction started in April 2004 and some Japanese start to see that the beautiful beach they long to visit is going to be damaged. They came to support the sit-in as protest tourists. Some Okinawans praised their contribution, some Okinawans doubted their agenda, some Okinawans criticized their transitory participation, and some women stood up to resist them.

This chapter aims to examine the sit-in protest at the relocation site in an effort to see how the sit-in protest impacted the dynamics of the movement and women’s activism. To begin, let us travel to Henoko to get some sense of how it looks to live in a place with heavily concentrated military bases and to provide some background on Henoko.

I stayed in Okinawa city where my parents live. From Okinawa city, it took one hour and a half by car to reach Henoko, the sit-in protest site. If I took the expressway, the time would be shortened to about forty-five minutes, but I usually traveled through regular roads. During my trip to Henoko, I passed by five towns and cities: Okinawa city, Gushikawa city, Ishikawa city, Kin town, and Ginoza village. In every city, I encountered US military bases or housing areas. I met countless numbers of cars with “Y” numbered license plates, which were exclusively designated for military personnel and their family members. As I got closer to Henoko, I passed on a lot of military vehicles on the street and saw military aircraft flying overhead.

The first couple of weeks in Okinawa always shocks me and reminds me how strange it is to see so many US military facilities, soldiers, “Y” numbered cars, military vehicles, aircraft, TV programs, or anything “military” in Okinawa when it is not even part of the United States. I would pull over my car and take pictures of the military vehicles, English
and Japanese advertisements for flea markets at Marine bases on the local busses and so on. After a couple of weeks, I would gradually get used to the environment and soon what I encounter became “normal” to me. Military presence becomes, in a sense, “invisible” when it is part of people’s everyday life. Okinawa has been a military island for over sixty years and no doubt people in Okinawa have become paralyzed by its environment. In such environment, it is difficult for people to be conscious about the military issues every minute of their lives. You will find at least several articles on military related issues in local newspapers on a daily basis, and you will see military related news on news channels on a daily basis. News on noise issues, military aircraft accidents, auto-accidents involving military personnel, sexual insults, robbery and property damage by military personnel would be perceived as just another happening out of countless crimes committed by U.S. military, unless you or someone you know became a victim. The fatigue over military issue and fighting against the military presence is widespread in Okinawa and my mother’s reaction to such news “manate-~” or “again?” in a very dry tone with a sigh is the common reaction of Okinawan people.

Even under such gloomy circumstances, Okinawa has maintained a long history of anti-base movements. However, when military presence becomes part of people’s everyday life, organizing against it or participating in the anti-militarism becomes difficult. Especially in Okinawa, the poorest prefecture of Japan, people’s priority in life becomes to secure economic stability rather than to look at the roots of Okinawa’s economic and political problems. In addition, because the movement is not a one shot problem but an endless one and because the English proverb “The squeaky wheel gets the oil” does not really apply most of the time when it comes to military issues, people hesitate to commit themselves. Many
times on my way to Henoko, I wondered what then makes those people who are so dedicated to the relocation issue commit their time and energy to the movement when they can, if they want to, spend their time doing something more enjoyable and stress-free.

Henoko is located on the east coast of the northern part of Okinawa Island. Henoko currently is part of Nago city, but it used to be part of a separate town called Kushi village before it merged into Nago city in 1970 ("Memory of 5000 Years" Editing Committee 2000). Henoko is one of the thirteen wards that belonged to Old-Kushi village. Old-Kushi is divided in two parts, south and north of Henoko Mountain, which now is occupied by US Marine Camp Schwab. Three wards, Kushi, Toyohara, and Henoko are located south of Camp Schwab and ten wards, Futami, Okawa, Oura, Setake, Tiima, Mihara, Abu, Kayo, Teniya and Sokoniya are located to the north of Camp Schwab (Figure 4). People from old-Kushi still refer to themselves as people of Kushi. They separate themselves from people who live in down town Nago, which used to be old-Nago town. They often referred to them as people of the west coast and called themselves people of the east coast. Compared to the west coast of Nago-city, which serves as the center of politics and economy, the east coast only had minimum infrastructure developed.

The ten districts from Futami to the north especially feel resentful toward people in the west since they have impact from landfills and military bases but they do not have good quality public utilities and receive no income from the military (Takahashi 2001). Although this economically underprivileged rural district has a higher elderly population, there is no hospital near the area (the closest being about 30 to 40 minutes away by car), and there are only three buses daily that take residents to downtown Nago (Urashima 2000a).
Okinawa has strong regionalism and it was fairly strong in old-Kushi. When the kingdom of Ryukyus ended in 1879, many people who worked for the royal family lost their jobs and moved to old-Kushi area or other Northern districts (Urashima 2002). Those people reclaimed the land, creating new residential areas apart from the “locals” (Urashima 2002). The descendants of those newcomers still tend to be treated as less-legitimate locals even though they have had roots in the area for more than three generations (Urashima July 3rd, 2004). This is particularly strong at Henoko, where many residents also flowed in from all over Okinawa during the late 1950’s when Camp Schwab was being constructed. Henoko’s population jumped from 1,389 in 1960 to 1,900 in 1961. The population increased to about 2,100 by 1967 but it started to decrease after that and went down to 1,524 by 1985 (Nago Shishi Henzan Iinkai 1988).

Many people moved to Henoko to start new businesses for the US servicemen, mainly bars for the GIs. There were about 120 bars in Henko by the end of the Vietnam War and only twenty among them were owned by local Henoko people (Ishikawa 1998). Along with that, many people who worked in the construction business moved to the district as well. They were there for the base construction as well as building infrastructure for the neighboring districts, which was promised in exchange for providing land to the military (Henokoku Henzan Iinkai 1998). Today, people from Henoko distinguish themselves by which area they live in. According to them, people who live in lower Henoko are the pure Henoko people while those who live in upper Henoko are new comers (Urashima July 3rd, 2004). Purity or roots in the area is very important for them, and this was used as one of the attributes to determine their personality or political attitude.
The more I got closer to Henoko, the smaller and the quieter the town became. I saw more greenery and felt the air was fresher. After getting right into the Henoko area, I saw many newly constructed buildings that stood out in the old village. The awkwardness did not only come from the structure of the modern buildings, but what the buildings were for. In the area where depopulation and the imbalance of young and elderly is quite severe, almost all the buildings were related to computer technology industries such as Okinawa National College of Technology and Nago city Multimedia Center & Global Oceanographic Data Center, Northern Okinawa Center for Employment and Human resources Development and Nago City Multimedia Center 2. There was a community center that had just been renovated after years and years of requests. All of these buildings were built with the funding from Japan called “Development Subsidy Program and Development of Futenma Air Base Relocation Site and the Peripheral Area” which has a budget of 100 million yen per year for ten years, from fiscal year 2000 to 2010 (Okinawa Prefecture Homepage). Except the community center, none of the buildings served to make the residents’ living conditions better.

The northern development subsidy program was suggested by the central government to then Nago city mayor Kishimoto in 1999 as a reward if he would accept the relocation. After numerous negotiations, mayor Kishimoto accepted the relocation in December 27th, 1999, and the 100 million per year budget was implemented less than four months from after Kishimoto’s announcement of acceptance. Moreover, by summer 2004 when I visited the Henoko area, those building listed above were already built and in use. Residents of the rural Henoko area were overwhelmed by the fact that the central government had actually allocated a huge amount of budget for the northern area and rapid construction of those
buildings was the visible proof that their small quiet village was finally being taken care of. Such factors made the residents zip up their mouths and pretend to ignore the negative effects that the new base would bring. What was so ironic was that although those new facilities occupied their area, the improvements the residents expected such as progress on community infrastructure and increased employment opportunity was not fulfilled (Okinawa Times December 21st, 2004).

A few minutes after passing those ill-matched modern buildings, I would take a right turn into the district heading to the ocean shore where the sit-in took place. As I proceeded to the lower side of Henoko toward the ocean, I saw the resonance of the once crowded entertainment district in the old GI bars’ English signs. Most of the bars are out of business today and the district is quiet and solitary. In contrast to the new buildings in the upper side of Henoko, the lower side was filled with old houses and buildings with faded paint. A park in the district was also old, with rusted playground equipment. An unattended bookcase built with concrete and covered with sliding glass doors stood near the park, filled with books with faded covers. It was kind of a community library where residents were able to borrow books. Occasionally, I heard announcements from loud speakers scattered around the area that notified events such as funerals and meetings, or information from the city office. Both the unattended library and extensive use of speakers to disseminate community related announcements are symbolic of the perseverance of rural life.

As I drove through the narrow road with houses on both sides, the office of Inochi wo Mamoru Kai appeared near the end of the road. Further down the road connects to Henoko bay, where a barbed wire fence separates the seashore; this side of the wire fence was a civilian area and the other side was Camp Schwab, which only authorized people were
allowed to enter. Henoko bay is within Camp Schwab’s water area, where the military has free access for training. Henoko beach was mostly used by the marines to conduct exercises using amphibious vehicles and to practice storming up from the ocean. Local fishermen also use the sea area with some restrictions.

Camp Schwab was constructed in Henoko in the 1950’s. During the 1950’s, much of the land in Okinawa was forcefully taken away from the residents to construct military bases. Residents everywhere resisted handing over the land, but their protests did not end in success. Henoko (Old-Kushi) was a very poor neighborhood with little basic infrastructure. Seeing the struggles of people of other areas, the leaders of Henoko and neighboring districts decided to accept the base construction in exchange for a promise to develop the area’s infrastructure (Ishikawa 1998). People who oppose the relocation today believe the decision to accept Camp Schwab almost fifty years ago was wrong and said they did not want to repeat the same mistake, while people who supported the relocation believed the new air station would boost the economy as it did when Camp Schwab first came (Ishikawa 1998; Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū linkai 1999).

Before reaching Henoko bay, there was an entrance gate to the Henoko fishing port on the right side. Facing the ocean, there was a building of the fishermen’s association on the right side and a parking space for boats on the left side. Between the boats and the seawall, there was a green plastic fence that the DFAB had made to provide a place to stockpile their construction materials. There were two guards hired by the Defense Agency to protect the area. In the entrance to the boat area, there was one banner by Inochi wo Mamorukai, the local Henoko anti-relocation organization, and two flags of Herikichi Hantaikyo, the Nago citywide organization protesting the relocation.
Background of the Sit-in Protest

How the sit-in protest started

After both Nago city mayor and Okinawa prefecture governor accepted the Futenma relocation to Henoko bay in late 1999, a committee to discuss concrete measures regarding the relocation facilities was established (Okinawa Times August 26th, 2000), followed by another committee to discuss agreement on the use of the facility (Okinawa Times January 28th, 2003). In early March 2003, the Japanese central government announced the start of various tests at the relocation site as well as a four-month drilling survey at sixty three points to assess the feasibility of the seabed of the area planned for Futenma relocation, beginning in the middle of May 2003 (Okinawa Times March 8th, 2003). DFAB conducted surveys to study the geological structure of the seabed from April to August (Okinawa Times April 8th, 2003; Okinawa Times July 10th, 2003). The survey was to prepare for the actual drilling tests. Anti-relocation groups protested against the survey, stating that appropriate environment assessment needed to take place first, before the government should proceed to the survey (Okinawa Times April 30th, 2003). Although a strong resistance toward the drilling survey delayed the government’s schedule, the government finally sent their contractors to Henoko bay on April 19th, 2004 to attempt to begin the drilling survey after one year delay.

According to an interview with the secretary of Inochi wo Mamorukai, prior to their visit to Henoko bay on April 19th, Naha Defense Facility Administration Bureau (DFAB) announced that they would start the drilling survey at Henoko on April 19th from 9am (Tomita June 22nd, 2004). Inochi wo Mamorukai, and Herikichi Hantaikyo, the Nago city-wide organization mobilized people to get together at the site at 8am. However, later they got
information from their secret informant that DFAB was actually planning to come at 5am. So the organization changed to the meeting time to 5am and as they had been informed, about 120 people from the DFAB and their Japanese contractors for the drilling survey arrived at five in the morning (Tomita June 22nd, 2004). After the initial encounter and three hours of negotiation, the people from DFAB agreed to leave and to give up the survey for the day. However, they returned an hour later in attempt to fulfill their mission. DFAB’s return gave the participants the impression that they could not be to do as they had said they would. People from the opposing organizations felt the need to be ready to fight whenever the DFAB came back and decided to have a sit-in right in front of the space that DFAB had reserved to keep their building materials (Tomita June 22nd, 2004).

Foundation of sit-in protest

Long before the sit in at the bay started, Inochi wo Mamorukai already had an office near the bay since 1997, to watch and guard over the relocation site in order to prevent Japanese Defense Agents from entering and conducting any kind of survey for the relocation (Ishikawa 1998). When the government had conducted preparation for a drilling survey in May 1997, members of Inochi wo Mamorukai had set up tents near the entrance of Henoko fishing port to protest and watch the DFAB’s activities. Later in July it was moved to a prefabricated house built near their tents (Ishikawa 1998). Since then, primarily elderly members had coordinated a rotation schedule to sit-in inside the office for seven years (2639days). A sign set up in front of one of the current sit-in tents displays the number of days since the sit-in in April 2004 started. On top of the days, there was a number that said “2639 days” which referred to the length of the sit-in at the office from 1997 to April 19,
2004. The reason “2639 days” was displayed on the sign was to always remember that the current sit-in was founded on the previous watch that elderly members continued tirelessly for seven years (Urashima 2005).

During the seven years, many people had visited the hut to cheer the Inochi wo Mamorukai members and to show support for the movement. Miyagi, one of the long-time Inochi wo Mamotukai member, recalls the days before the sit-in at the bay started and said “When we were sitting in at the hut, many people came to the hut to encourage us. But they would say ‘Ganbatte Kudasai’ (Keep up or keep going) and leave. After they left, we used to say ‘why do we have to work hard? Would all these people come and support us when we really need them?’ They really came on April 19th! We were very happy! (Kēshi Kaji V48, 2005).” After seven years of “watch”, direct confrontation with the DFAB on April 19th, 2004, marked the beginning of the sit in at the bay at last.

The Inochi wo Mamorukai office served an integral role for movement. The office was built in 1997 and since then it has been a place where journalists, students, activists, scholars, politicians and so on come to study or show support to the movement. But it was not easy for Inochi wo Mamorukai to serve this significant role in the beginning, as a grass-root citizens group with no knowledge or experience in protest movements. Nishikawa, the first leader of Inochi wo Mamoru Kai, recalled that the group went through difficult times trying to deal with the relocation issue, to organize and sustain the group, and to manage the large number of visitors all at the same time (Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokusshū Iinkai 1999). Later with the support of external allies, things went more smoothly. Currently Inochi wo Mamorukai has a paid secretary and a well managed internet site, where the young secretary Tomita posts updates on their activism on a daily basis. The website has contributed
enormously by disseminating information on the sit-in situation and the overall issue, calling for donations, and recruiting participants. Tomita received messages of sympathy and support from people who had read the online diaries and responded from various places in Japan and around the world, which he shared with the participants at the sit-in tents (Tomita June 22nd, 2004). Those messages encouraged the sit-in participants, and leaders used those opportunities to show how participants were impacting the movement by their activism and encourage them to be proud of their contribution to sustain the movement.

**Location Change**

The sit-in at the bay changed its location a couple of times. The location change took place to respond to the change in external conditions of the situation. It was mainly a consequence of tactical interaction between the protestors and DFAB, and the counter tactics utilized by both DFAB and the protestors reflecting the political situation at that time. First location (4/19-4/30) was right in front of the area where DFAB placed their materials to use for drilling survey. On May 1, the thirteenth day of the sit-in protest, the sit-in moved its location right next to the building of the fishermen’s association, about one hundred meters away from the original location. The second location was on the walkway right outside of the entrance to the fish port. The location change occurred due to the concern that sit-in participants’ presence in the fishing port would interrupt the fishermen’s operation (Okinawa Times May 1st, 2004). In addition, leaders saw a mounting frustration among the fishermen who were being exposed to media and knew that the fishermen did not want any disturbance within their workplace (Okinawa Times May 2nd, 2004).

The Inochi wo Mamorukai dairy on May 1 hints that there was some kind of incident between the participants and the fishermen or a complaint from fishermen. The diary says
“during this time, we have come to recognize fishermen’s feeling that the ‘fishing port is a sacred place for the fishermen where they depart into the ocean, putting their life in stake’ and we moved our sit-in protest to the entrance of the fishing area (Inochi wo Manorukai Homepage).”

There was tension between the opposition groups and fishermen because when the DFAB first announced their plan to conduct the drilling survey in early 2003, Nago city fishermen’s association had agreed to assist DFAB with the drilling survey by providing their boats and fishermen, and some of the fishermen from Henoko fishing port had agreed to work for DFAB. This upset the protest participants and they criticized DFAB for causing a conflict between locals. They also expressed their disappointment to the fishermen who had agreed to work with DFAB, the very people who were trying to destroy the ocean on which the fishermen made their living. In addition, the fishermen’s frustration also stemmed from anxiety over losing income by just sitting at the fishermen’s association. Some fishermen who had agreed to work for DFAB were prevented from going out in the ocean to fish, but were obliged to stand by at the fishermen’s association so that they could sail out whenever DFAB asked them to. During that time, the fishermen had no source of income and in late May they requested that DFAB resume the survey soon to secure their living (Okinawa Times May 19th, 2004). The leaders were aware of the situation and wanted to avoid unnecessary trouble with the fishermen.

I conducted most of my participant observation at the second location and what I would describe in this paper will also be about the second location. The sit-in took place at this location until September 2004, when the protest expanded to the ocean. On August 13, 2004, a CH53D helicopter of Kaneohe Marine Corp training at Futenma airbase clashed into
Okinawa International University located adjacent to Futenma base, and the demand to close Futenma heightened. The accident proved the danger of having a military base and training in the middle of the busy city and the anti-relocation crowd used this incident to urge the government to close Futenma and give up relocation. However, the central government used the same rhetoric to counter the anti-relocation participants' demand and said Futenma needed to be relocated as soon as possible to resolve the danger. Until September 9, sit-in participants had successfully prevented DFAB from conducting the survey but on this day, DFAB finally managed to get out into the ocean. The protest and confrontation on the sea continued for about one year (Urashima 2005).

Setups and Activities

Set up of Sit in Tents

The sit in tents were built on the side walk facing the ocean, next to the building of the fishermen’s association. All together there were four tents at the site. Huge blue plastic sheets were spread out on the ground and three tents were built next to each other covering the blue sheets on the ground. Each of the three tents was about twelve feet long, nine feet tall and nine feet wide. The tents were surrounded with plastic covers to protect the participants from rain blowing in. Both right and left end of the tent was covered with a blue plastic sheets and heavier brown covers draped around the backside of the tent. Covers for the sides and back were usually rolled down and the bottom corners of the covers were tied to sandbags to weight them down. The sandbags were kept a little behind the edge of the tent to create some space between the tent and the cover, so the ocean breeze could blow through. The front side was draped with a transparent cover which was usually rolled up and rolled
down only when it started to rain. Plastic sheets also covered the space between the tents. The sheets were attached so they collected rain and drained it outside the tent area.

A table was set up at the first tent closest to the fishermen’s association. Various flyers related to the anti-relocation campaign were spread out on that table. What happened each day was described in an online diary written by the young Inochi wo Mamorukai secretary. Files of printed out diaries since the beginning of the sit in were made available to read. Also, there was a notebook similar to a guest book where participants signed in with their name, address, and organizational affiliation. Tōyama, a participant from one of the leading organizations, was in charge of the sign in book. He usually sat at the end of the table to greet participants as they came in. He also explained the situation to the newcomers or anyone who wished to hear the explanation, using a large picture of Henoko bay with the proposed heliport drawn on it. At the entrance to the first tent there was also the sign that showed how many days have past since the sit-in started. The middle tent had a small table in the center of the tent. Cooler boxes filled with canned juice or tea, two huge containers filled with Japanese tea and water and cups were set out near the table. The third tent was just an open space. There was another smaller tent, nine feet long, eight feet tall and six feet wide, located about fifteen feet apart from the three large tents. The three tents were for the regular participants while the smaller tent was for the leaders. At the smaller tent, leaders used binoculars to watch the end of the road where Japanese Defense Agents entered. The rest of the participants were not allowed to stay at the smaller tent because leaders wanted to be alert to the cars that came into the port. The regular tents, leader’s tent and the Inochi wo Mamorukai office were connected with a walkie-talkie system and leaders from the leading organizations carried walkie-talkies around to communicate with each other.
Days at the Sit in

Every morning around seven o‘clock participants and leaders would gather to set up the tents, spread the mat on top of the blue sheets, deliver water pots, cups, coolers, and other necessary stuff from the office, unfold the table, spread flyers and other materials on the table. They also hung posters of the enlarged blueprint of the relocation plan and a large poster of Ahagon Shoko, a respected non-violent activist who is referred as the Okinawan Gandhi.

After the tents are up, they have the morning briefing. Participants come and go freely depending on how much time they have. Some stay until the end of the day, which was around four-thirty in the afternoon and others left after being at the sit-in for a couple of hours. Lunch or bento was provided at the tent for 200 yen. The bento was called “danketsu bento” or solidarity bento. Several Okinawan women, mainly women of Inochi wo Manorukai, took turns preparing lunch at the kitchen of the Inochi wo Mamorukai office. One lady was from Henoko, but currently lives in Motobu, a neighboring town and another woman came from Ginowan city. The rest of the women were from Henoko or nearby hamlets. They gathered early in the morning to prepare lunch for the participants.

The money collected was mostly used to pay the utilities and to purchase ingredients for bento and utensils. They also received a large amount of food as donations from all over Japan. People sent rice, vegetables, fruits and other food stuffs. In the beginning, the lunch or bento was very small with some rice and one or two other items. Gradually the bento became bigger in size and rich in content as donations, both monetary and food, increased. Lunch was only provided for those who requested it; so one of the women from the kitchen would come to the tent between eleven and eleven thirty to count how many people needed lunch.
Some people brought their own bento to the sit-in. I estimate the number of lunches the women prepared ranged from fifty to seventy per day.

The women stopped preparing bento for a while in August because it is the hottest month in Okinawa and they were worried about the danger of food poisoning. So during that time, participants ordered bento from a caterer. Beverages and desserts were abundant at the sit-in, mostly donated. Some people brought mangos or oranges that were harvested from their own trees and some brought a shave ice machine and all the ingredients to prepare shave ice for all the participants.

At the sit-in, usually there was no set schedule or program. Participants chatted with each other, read newspapers or a book, took a nap, and did all kinds of activities. Participants informed me that they used to practice to defend themselves from being pulled out from the crowd or pushed back by DFAB or police. From the old photos I had a chance to look at, I learned that when the participants practiced, they occupied the road with layers of people holding each other by their arms and the leaders of the sit-in would try to pull individual out from the crowd. Participants would learn how to prevent themselves from being pulled out without being violent.

Some popular activities were mini lectures by various participants. Those who were knowledgeable about farming or gardening shared knowledge on a particular fruit or vegetable, or shared techniques and gave tips on how to become good gardeners. Those who knew yoga showed the yoga poses to make people stretch and relax. The elderly shared their war experience and their post war struggles. Many of the elderly were female and they had lost their husband and sons in the war. They had raised their children alone, working day and night. Most of them were from the near by district or had spent their post war years in the
area. They had a special attachment to the ocean and often commented that they were able to survive because they could gather a lot of seafood from the ocean that sustained their lives.

From time to time musicians of various genres came to perform. The two musicians that came most often while I was there were folk musician Mayonaka Shinya and instructor of Okinawa Sanshin (three string instrument similar to Japanese Shamisen) Kinjo Minoru. Mayonaka was a long time activist whose songs were generally on anti-base, anti-war and peace themes. Kinjo also was an activist. He played at various political events. Kinjo usually came with his Japanese students and brought taiko drums and other Okinawa musical instruments. Many participants seemed to look forward to Kinjo to come and play Okinawan music. Some Okinawan participants danced with the music and some Japanese participants tried to learn how to play the taiko drums or samba (Okinawan castanet). Leaders at the sit in sometimes became nervous when participants got too excited. One of the leaders who was especially concerned about the relationship with nearby residents often reminded the participants to calm down. He said nearby residents may be disturbed by the noise participants were making or they may question the purpose of the sit-in and would think participants were just gathering to have fun. Music and yoga was usually enjoyed by all the participants, but the mini lectures were usually in a small group in one of the tents, except when they had special guests.
Participants

There was a huge variety of people at the sit-in in terms of their purposes, level of commitment, affiliation, goals, and prior experience. Many of those at the sit-in were one time participants. In addition, many of the participants who came regularly had prior experience in other movements and many were involved in other movements while participating at the sit-in. The number of people who visited the sit-in varied from day to day but I would say it ranged from about 30 to 100 during my stay. Usually, there were a total number of about 50 to 60 people per day. About half of the participants were Okinawan and the rest were Japanese. However, when I looked closely there were more Japanese than Okinawans who came regularly and after the direct physical confrontation started and escalated at the ocean, there were more Japanese at the sit-in.

Many of the Okinawans came from the labor unions, especially those who worked in the public sector. They had a rotation shift and they were there to represent their union branch, so different people came every time. The majority of the people who came to the sit-in were retired, out of work, had their own business, or worked for a church. There was a priest from one of the Buddhist temples and there was a local kaminchu (shaman). This is natural because the sit-in took place during the day, while full time workers were at work. This also shows many of the people were from the older generation.

The young people who came to the sit-in were mostly students or those who did not have regular jobs. Almost all of the young people were from Japan. Some came for a few weeks, a few months, or without a set plan. There was a group of people from all over Japan who came to Okinawa for a particular reason. Those young people had
problems interacting with people while they were in Japan. Many of them either dropped out of school due to “toke kyohi” (school refusal) or “hikikomori.” (acute social withdrawal). Some had finished high school but had become hikikomori after they were adults. There was a person from Japan who took care of those young people, supporting them to become independent. This person had a recycle shop in downtown Nago city where some of the young people worked. Others had part time jobs or were in the process of adapting to the outside world by participating in the movement (Miyagi September 24th, 2004).

There was a good balance of males and females at the sit in. However, there was a major difference in their attitude. Most men seemed to be comfortable in following the lead of male leaders. On the other hand, women were more vocal in showing disagreement with leadership in more visible ways. In addition, they organized some events outside of the sit-in or continued to support events that women had initiated before the sit-in at Henoko bay started. Most of them were actively involved in the women’s groups that emerged after the Futenma relocation became an issue. Many women no longer were active in an organized group, but worked individually or in small, spontaneous and ephemeral groups. I will discuss more on women’s experience at the sit-in in the later section.

There were many visitors at the sit-in from all over Okinawa, Japan and around the world. For example, a group of participants from various other struggles such as environmental causes, residents fighting against the construction of US military urban warfare facilities in Kin Town, residents fighting against construction of a communications station for the Japanese Self-defense Forces in Toyohara, Motobu,
residents from Yokosuka or other cities in Japan which host US military bases, Korean anti-US military activists, and other foreign visitors with common struggles. There were also groups of Christian ministers, a group of students of various levels, a group of teacher's union members and their families from various communities, scientists visiting Okinawa from all over the world for conferences, and so on.

Depending on their size, some group came in a big tour bus. Usually when they came, the bus stopped near the Inochi wo Mamorukai office to unload and load visitors and when they left the site, the bus would pass by in front of the sit in tents and both the visitors and sit in participants would wave to each other. There were also some people who came alone. Those from Japan would spend from a couple of days to several months at the sit-in. I got an impression that the majority of the people who came alone from Japan repeatedly visited Henoko after returning to Japan. There were also some who decided to live in Okinawa.

There was a pattern in which tent participants sat. Usually, local elderly women, Japanese female participants and some long time local male participants who came from time to time or for short periods of time sat in the first tent. Other local males who were there almost every day and Japanese males sat in the second tent. Union members from prefectural and municipal governments usually sat in the third tent. Other participants from political sects and political parties sat either in the second or the third tent, usually closer to the third tent. Local women and non-regular participants sat wherever they felt comfortable or wherever there was an open space. I usually sat in the first tent because it was closest to the side entrance, or in the second tent facing toward the first tent when I had to enter from the front. There were two reasons that I sat near the entrance. One was,
I felt uncomfortable being looked at by other participants when I came in, because I was the only one standing to come in and the rest were sitting down looking up at me. The other reason was because I felt people in the first half of the space (first tent to middle of the second tent) were more approachable and friendly. Perhaps this was because there were more women, especially the vocal ones, in the first tent.

The atmosphere differed slightly from tent to tent. Although there was a general dullness all over the sit-in, the first half of the space, from the first tent to the middle of the second, had more liveliness compared to the other half. As described earlier, people at the first tent were older local women, Japanese women, or those who have been involved in the movement for quite sometime. Most of them knew each other and were comfortable having a group conversation. Also, most of them were associated with grass-root organizations or churches. People in the second half of the tents were usually quiet. Most of them had come alone or were not associated with particular movement organizations. There were people sent from political parties, the radical left, and labor unions. There was not much communication among these different groups.

Also, people in the first tent seemed to have more confident, perhaps because they had been engaged in this movement longer, in presenting themselves as owner of the movement. On the other hand, people in the other half looked unsure. They gave an impression that they looked at themselves as “visitors” or “supporters” of the movement rather than the owner of the movement. Generally speaking, those who looked confident were mostly Japanese participants and the quite ones were Okinawans. I believe Japanese looked more confident because they were articulate and did not hesitate to talk to new comers and explain the situation to them even though the new comers were Okinawans.
The point I want to make here is the awkwardness of seeing or experiencing Japanese people lecturing or explaining Okinawan about base issues in relation to the suffering Okinawa went through during the war and post war. Time to time I would feel the Japanese people’s colonial attitude at the sit-in; generous, self-righteous, and friendly Japanese helping quiet, poor, weak Okinawans.

Organizations in Command

Three organizations were leading the sit-in protest, Inochi wo Mamorukai, Herikichi Hantaikyo, and Heiwa Shimin Renrakukai. Herikichi Hantaikyo was the group formally in charge of the protest. According to the flyer that was passed out at the sit-in that lists rules for participants, Hantaikyo was listed as the responsible organization at the sit-in and participants were expected to follow their instructions. Onishi and Ashitomi (Herikichi Hantaikyo), Kinjo and Tomita (Inochi wo Mamorukai) and Taira and Toyama (Heiwa Shimin Renrakukai) were recognized as people in charge, and among them Ashitomi, Onishi, Kinjo and Taira were considered as leaders of the sit-in protest.

へリポート建設阻止協議会 命を守る会:
Heripoto Kensetsu Soshi Kyougikai Inochi wo Mamorukai
(Shortened to Inochi wo Mamorukai)

Council for Stopping the Heliport Construction, Society to Protect Life

Inochi wo Mamorukai was founded by residents of Henoko, Kushi, and Toyohara wards. According to Ishikawa Mao and Inochi wo Mamorukai pamphlet, this group was established on January 27, 1997 (Inochi wo Manorukai 2004; Ishikawa 1998). However, the group had existed with four original members from December 1996, said
Kayo Muneyoshi, one of the original members of the group (Kayö August 10th, 2004).

The chief representative of this group at the time I observed the sit-in was Kinjo Yuji, an Osaka-born second generation Okinawan who had returned to Henoko more than thirty years earlier. Along with protesting against relocation to Henoko, the group aims to claim human dignity and bases its actions on the principle that “Nuchi Du Takara” or life is precious (Inochi wo Manorukai 2004).

Members of the group were mostly from Henoko ward and the majority of them had no background in social movements. Within that group, they had another smaller group whose members were elders, and it was called “Jyugon no Kai” or “Society of Dugong.” Currently, most of the members were in their 80s and the eldest was in her early 90s. They had lost several members since they had organized. Members of Jyugon no Kai had been sitting in at the Inochi wo Mamorukai office since 1997 and held a meeting every 15th of the month (fifteen in Japanese is Jyugo. They meet on this date because it sounds like jyugon) (Kayö August 10th, 2004).

Tomita Shin is the paid secretary for Inochi wo Mamorukai. He took care of the homepage, wrote the daily online report and was in charge of correspondence and public relations. He was a very young Japanese man. He was 21 year old and just had attended his coming of age ceremony early in 2005. He had been working for the group for three years. He told me that he was motivated to get involved in the movement when he heard a story from an elderly woman from Henoko. A long time activist informed me that he was not able to go to school for psychological reasons and used to come to Okinawa every summer to participate in an eco tour in the neighboring district. After a few visits, he quit high school and moved to Okinawa. The activist also mentioned that he became
close to Inochi wo Mamorukai members and was recruited by Kinjo Yuji to become secretary for the organization.

As described earlier, the Inochi wo Mamorukai office was located near the Henoko port. The land was provided by one of the Jyugon no Kai members, Miyagi Kiyoko, for free. Miyagi Kiyoko was a Himeyuri Student Corp survivor who lived in Kushi, in the neighboring ward of Henoko. Himeyuri was a unit of schoolgirls who were ordered to work as nurses at Japanese Army field hospitals during the Battle of Okinawa (Himeyuri no Tō Homepage).

Although Inochi wo Mamorukai was the oldest grass-roots organization among the three leading organizations at the sit-in, they seemed to have less authority compared to other two professional organizations. Ashitomi, Onishi, and Taira appeared to be more in the front line giving directions to the participants while Kinjo was mostly in the back stage and engaged in less leading role. Some women believed sit-in was actually led by Herikichi Hantaikyo and Heiwa Shimin Renrakukai but included Inochi wo Mamorukai to show courtesy and to show “local” grassroots organization’s involvement (Kunimasa September 23rd 2004).

海上ヘリ基地建設反対・平和と名護市政民主化を求める協議会:
Kaijyo Herikichi Kensetsu Hantai – Heiwa to Nagoshisei Minshuka wo Motomeru Kyōgi Kai (Shortened to Hantai Kyo)

Council to Oppose Heliport Construction and to Demand Peace and Democratization of Nago City

This group was established as a successor to an earlier group “Shimin Tohyo Suisin Kyōgi Kai” (Promoting Referendum Council) in October 17, 1997 (Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū linkai 1999). It was established to fight against heliport construction
(Kaijyo Herikichi Kensetsu Hankai) and to promote peace and democracy in Nago city
(Heiwa to Nagoshisei Minshuka wo Motomeru) and it was a coalition of eighteen
organizations including political parties, labor unions, and civic groups who worked
together against the relocation (Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Iinkai 1999). There were
four representatives but two of them, Ashitomi Hiroshi and Onishi Teruo, were the only
ones who were visible and active at the sit in. When interviewed by media, they were the
two who mostly represented the Hantaikyo, or the whole movement. While I was at the
sit in, Onishi was there most of the time and he was the one who did the morning briefing
and decided to end the day with his wrap up greetings. Onishi was a retired high school
teacher who was very active in union activities. He was also active in reversion
movement since he was in high school (Onishi 2005). He continued to spend his college
life in the movement and his involvement continued after he became a school teacher
(Onishi 2005). The teacher’s union was a central actor in Okinawa’s reversion movement
during the 1960s.

沖縄から基地をなくし世界の平和を求める市民連絡会:
Okinawa kara Kichi wo Nakushi Sekai no Heiwa wo Motomeru Shimin Renrakukai
(Shortened to Heiwa Shimin Renrakukai)

Citizen’s Liaison to Withdrawal Military Bases from Okinawa and to Demand World
Peace

This group was formed in August 1999, a year before the G8 Summit was
scheduled to take place in Okinawa (Heiwa Shimin Renrakukai Homepage). The purpose
of its establishment was to show opposition to the G8 Summit and to deepen solidarity
among groups working toward peace. It consists of 34 groups including anti-military base
and anti-war groups, civic groups which focus on human rights, women’s issues,
environmental issues, and others (Heiwa Shimin Renrakukai Homepage). It sponsored or co-sponsored number of peace movement activities in Okinawa. Herikichi Hantaikyo belongs to this liaison group and some groups that belong to Herikichi Hantaikyo also are organizational members. Heiwa Shimin Renrakukai is a prefecture-wide organization and aims to support all sorts of movements related to peace, while Herikichi Hantaikyo focuses specifically on the relocation of Futenma to Henoko.

They have eight representatives and one secretary. Two members from this group, Taira Natsume and Toyama Sakae are always at the sit-in and are considered to be part of the leaders’ group. Taira Natsume is a Christian pastor whose father is also a pastor. His parents are long time anti-military, anti-base, peace activists who are actively involved in the Henoko issue. He is very straightforward when he gives orientation to the people who visit the sit-in. He often said a sit-in is not a place where people make friends, study, or have fun. It is a place where people fight against the construction of a new US military base. Toyama Sakae is a retired public worker who is from Sashiki, in the southern part of Okinawa. He stays at Inochi wo Mamorukai office during weekdays, returns to his family on weekends, and comes back again on Monday morning. As mentioned earlier, he is in charge of the sign in sheet and the regular tents. He is also in charge of explaining where and how the heliport is planned and what kind and how much damage that will bring to the environment.

Nature of the Protest and its Impact on Women

In the eight years of anti-Futenma relocation movement history, participants in general as well as women had mostly engaged in conventional tactics such as
demonstrations, marches, colleting petition, organizing symposium and study sessions, and filing lawsuits. Most of these were discrete political events, meaning they were one-shot event that allowed participants and organizers to balance their activism and everyday life activities. In addition, each group had more autonomy in representing their ideas and engaging in their own style of activism. On the other hand, the sit-in was a continuous event that had no fixed ending date. It also differed in level of structural rigidity and participant composition, which resulted in limiting some parties’ participation and in creating subtle, unequal power relations and boundaries among the participants.

When the sit-in started, both Jyannu Kai and No! to Heliport, Association of Ten Districts North of Futami (shortened to Jikku no Kai) were no longer active organizations. Those two groups were very critical to the movement since they had maintained their grassroots origin. Unlike Inochi wo Mamorukai, they were not co-opted by the professional organizations and valued the citizen’s power rather than political ideology. In addition, according to the long time female activists of Jikku no Kai, the group had more equal relationship between male and female which to her eyes Inochi wo Mamokurkai lacked (Urashima, July 8th, 2004). In the absence of those two groups, the sit-in protest at the Henoko bay was ruled by professional organizations and the nature of the sit-in impacted on many anti-Futenma relocation groups. The impact on women was great as well, because it minimized women’s ability to practice their flexibility and creativity. At the sit-in, various people and groups with different ideologies and ideas gathered every day, each bringing in various baggage with them, and from time to time issues spilled out of the bags that created tensions among participants. The women
experienced conflict in two main areas. One is conflict with leading organizations over their style of activism; the second is conflict with Japanese participants.

**Conflicts over style of activism**

As mentioned in the earlier chapter, women had established their own style of activism which was different from the men’s style that had been heavily influenced by Japanese Left activism. Women did not have much say at the sit-in and had to be receptive to whatever men decided. In his work on relocation issue prior to sit-in, Inoue (1999) suggests that Henoko has a strong male-centered tradition and reports that some women showed frustration for not being heard or taken seriously at the movement organization meetings. Inoue argues that women’s subordinate position is linked to the strong kinship structure in Henoko. Okinawan kin structure is called *munchuu* and it dates back to the Kingdom era (Inoue, 1999). Originally, only ruling class practiced the *munchuu* system but after the overthrow of the kingdom this patrilineal munchuu system spread among the commoner and became an important social organization in Okinawa (Inoue, 1999). The system put emphasis on son, more specifically the eldest son who will inherit the privilege of the munchuu such as property and fortune. On the other hand, women are expected to give birth to male children to preserve her husband’s lineage. *Munchuu* system is also a base of ancestor worship of which traditionally women take care of the religious rites. Although women are given respect as practitioner and successor of the important rituals given to ancestors, their power is more symbolic one and in the everyday lives, they are oppressed within the male-centeredness (Inoue, 1999).
A story of a woman I talked to gives a good example of how the *munchuu* system and its importance of male-centeredness are still practiced. Ms. Higa (pseudonym) was a long time feminists advocate who had just retired from the prefecture government office (Anonymous informant #1 June 24th, 2004). She mentioned that the notion of male-centeredness was widely penetrated idea in Okinawa, but the degree of it could be different throughout the island. Henoko could be one of the more conservative areas in Okinawa and an area where she was originally from, close to Henoko, also had very conservative nature. Her male siblings had died young and the property she was supposed to inherit under the constitution went to her relative who took over the responsibility of carrying on the *munchuu* in the absence of male figure in her family. Although she had held a feminist consciousness for a long time and questioned the inequality *munchuu* system fostered, she was not able to fight her own relatives, although reluctantly, she did not want to bring any conflict to her family who strongly believed in the system (Anonymous informant #1 June 24th, 2005).

As Inoue’s study illustrates, one of the young women I interviewed also told me that she experienced the male-centeredness mentality when she was working with Inochi wo Mamorukai. She was a college student at a university in Nago city when the relocation issue first arose. With her feminist professor, she had participated in the movement but upon graduation, she decided to stop participating because she could no longer bear with the chauvinistic attitudes Inochi wo Mamorukai brought into the movement (Anonymous informant #2 July 2nd, 2004). Although many women at the sit-in had more autonomy while working as women’s group, once they joined the sit-in they were put in a position to follow the old male-centered tradition. However, women did not
just keep their mouth shut and obey the men. Unlike their male counterparts, they complained openly and sometimes confronted the leaders, even though their complaints were not well received. The women complained most about four issues.

One issue was on ways to negotiate with DFAB. When the DFAB visited the tents to persuade the leaders to have them proceed with drilling survey, it was always only the leaders who were allowed to talk to them. When there were some other leaders from influential organizations or one of the elderly men who was an original member of Inochi wo Mamorukai, they were accepted as participants in the negotiations, but regular participants and women were never allowed to take part in the dialogue. One time on May 26th 2004, when members of DFAB were invited into the tent that the elderly occupied, an elderly women shared with DFAB how much blessing they received from the ocean through the abundance of seafood that had sustained their lives after the war (QAB: Ryūkyū Asahi Broadcasting May 26th, 2004). A 92 year-old grandmother, eldest of the sit-in participants, had shared how she had raised her five children alone and sent all her five children to college. She had lost her husband during the war, as many grandmothers at the sit-in had. She asked DFAB what gain there will be to destroy an ocean which protected their lives and change it to a place where soldiers are trained to kill living beings (QAB: Ryūkyū Asahi Broadcasting May 26th, 2004; Urashima 2005). Such words that came from the heart of a citizen had brought tears to some young DFAB officials’ eyes.

Urashima claimed that all the participants who wished should be given a chance to talk to DFAB so that they would understand how important the ocean was for the citizens and how threatening it was for the citizen to have another military installation in
their neighborhood (Urashima July 3rd, 2004). The content of the conversations that took place at the sit-in between DFAB and the leaders were things they could have said when they visited DFAB to file a complaint. However, listening to individual citizens’ concerns and feelings was something DFAB could only do at the sit-in. It was a good opportunity for citizens to talk with DFAB members, who usually do not lend an ear to citizens’ concerns and hear their story. Instead of creating a channel for citizens to share their voices, the leaders tended to have their own political voice heard all the time.

The second issue was how the leading organizations used the presence of the elderly and their eight years of dedication as a symbol of the sit-in protest, claiming that those elderly people’s commitment should never be wasted and should be passed on to the younger generations. However, at the sit-in’s 100 day demonstration, those same elderly were asked to sit in the very last row of a temporary stage, behind all the politicians who were invited to the event. The next day at the sit-in, participants were wondering why the leaders who always talk about how important the elderly are to the sit-in protest did not provide seats in the very first row where people could see them and recognize their dedication.

In addition, regular participants were not allowed to enter the Inochi wo Mamorukai office, which was reserved for elderly who continued their routine rotation of sitting-in at the office. The restriction was made out of consideration for the elderly to secure space for them and to have a safe environment for them. However, they restricted the freedom of the elderly to go out to the sit-in that was taking place outside at the tents. There was always someone who would stay at the office to “watch” the elderly. One time, when the person at the office said that one of the elderly women had “escaped”
from the office, it upset female participants, who accused him of treating the elderly as hostages. Of course, elderly would not listen to the "guard" and would come out to the sit-in tents when they wished to, but the attitude of members of leading organizations toward the elderly raised questions and doubts. Other participants criticized their use of the elderly as mascots for the sit-in protest without respecting their autonomy.

A third issue was the leading organizations’ lack of flexibility and spontaneity. After the US military helicopter crashed into a university adjacent to Futenma Air Station, Okinawans were further provoked by the way the US military handled the investigation, closing the campus and not allowing Okinawan officials to enter the area. The shock and rage against this high-handed investigation had triggered Okinawans’ anger against the US military and the Japanese central government. People were especially angry about Prime Minister Koizumi’s reaction, when he turned down Okinawa governor Inamine’s request for a meeting right after the incident because he was on vacation. He was watching a movie at the theater when residents near the university were filled with terror. Residents of Okinawa needed a way to express their anger about the helicopter crash and the Prime Minister’s insensitivity and it would have been great timing for the leaders of the sit-in to utilize the momentum to demand Futenma’s immediate closure and reinforce their opposition to relocating the base to Henoko. However, three days after the accident, the leaders of the sit-in announced that on September 26, more than a month after the accident, there would be a prefecture wide demonstration to report on the sit-in situation as well as to protest against the accident.

The day this announcement was made, Kunimasa, who lived near the university, had visited the sit-in protest and women were talking in circle about the accident. One of
the women from Inochi wo Mamorukai questioned the leader of Hantaikyo, asking why
the protest was not on August 26 rather than September 26, complaining that it was too
late and it was better to have it earlier while shock was still fresh. The leader just
responded that it was already decided at the meeting and there would be no changes. The
truth was, Hantaikyo had a general meeting before the accident had taken place and had
decided to have a prefecture-wide campaign on September 26 to report the sit-in situation
and to raise awareness. They had just added the protest against the helicopter accident to
their scheduled protest event, instead of having a separate event in reaction to the
accident.

The fourth matter for complaint was about the atmosphere leaders tried to create
at the sit-in. To enjoy activism was one of the mottos the women had, but the sit-in
leaders tended to create a heavy, tense mood, as if they were trying to spur participants’
combative spirit. Taira had a tendency to remind all the participants that tents were a
place for resistance, not a place to make friends, study, do research, or talk stories, which
is what many participants usually were engaged in. He was also in charge of giving an
orientation to a new group of people or visitors and he used the opportunity to emphasize
his view, which made the newcomers nervous and uncomfortable. He was a pretty
approachable and sincere man, but many of the women did not understand why he was
trying to create a tense atmosphere and scaring groups of visitors. Women agreed that the
sit-in protest should have some sort of tension to make participants alert; however, they
believed the sit-in should have a friendly atmosphere.

Especially when the protest is expected to be a long-term one, women thought
people should have some level of latitude to have fun, so that they would not stress out
and burn out. DFAB was waiting for the participants to get tired. Also, they were expecting the protest to collapse, thinking that the longer and more intense the protest would be, the more prone the participants would be to become divided over trivial conflicts. The women thought that making the protest fun would release tension among the participants, which as a result would counter DFAB’s expectation that the participants would give up. Urashima mentioned that “we get all stressed out with what the leaders do and don’t do. We (long time female members) sometimes complain and fuss about it at kitchen but there is always someone at the office so once in a while we go out to a fast food restaurant to just burst out our frustration! But in the end we would agree we need to be patient since we don’t want to cause a collapse at the sit-in by exploding our frustration” (July 3rd, 2004).

Conflict with Japanese participants

The women also expressed conflict with Japanese participants. Many women who participated in the sit-in were members of Women’s Voice Network who had joined the Tokyo Action, but they had participated in the sit-in as individuals rather than as representatives of the group, except for the women of Inochi wo Mamorukai. This was because Jyannu was inactive at the time and Henoko was too far for Kamadu members to join the sit-in regularly. The nature of the sit-in protest made it difficult for women who had full time jobs, to participate. In addition, Henoko bay was located quite far from the central and southern areas of Okinawa where most Kamadu members lived. From where Kamadu members lived, it took more than two hours by regular road and about an hour by the expressway. Unlike in the United States, expressway cost money and from...
Nishihara to Ginoza exit it costs 1200 yen one way that is about ten dollars (calculated based on $1=120).

For residents of nearby areas, since the emergence of the relocation issue had damaged all sorts of personal relationships by splitting the village, it had become taboo to talk about it and people feared of being stigmatized by showing their stance in public. Under such conditions, the sit-in protest was sustained by a limited number of committed regular participants and a large number of irregular participants, the majority of whom came from mainland Japan. The imbalanced population composition became problematic in various ways and the complex ethnic relations between Okinawans and Japanese made the problem more sensitive and complicated to handle.

One of the fundamental problems of Japanese participants was that they would come to Okinawa to join a movement organized in Okinawa by Okinawans, but did not take the initiative to organize their own movement when they went back to Japan. Although the military issue was a national issue, there were many Japanese who believed the issue to be Okinawa’s problem and not theirs. Therefore, participating in the movement in Okinawa made Japanese people feel proud of themselves for using their money and time to show their support (Murayama 2004). However, Kunimasa claimed that Okinawans were being forced to fight for a national issue in addition to coping with the heavy burden of hosting US military bases to provide “security” for the people in Japan (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). The women’s basic claim was that Japanese should take the issue as their own problem and start acting in their own locality, instead of coming to Okinawa. This, they felt, would cause more disruption for the government.
In the worst case, many Japanese participants came to Okinawa for a short time and the majority of them came part of their vacation. There were a number of times during my stay that groups of Japanese would come to the sit-in in a big chartered tour bus and stay for about an hour, or sometimes even only for thirty minutes. It was just so uncomfortable to see them wave to the participants from inside of the bus when they passed by in front of the tents on their way out to their next destination, most likely to a pineapple garden near by. Kamadu member Chinen Ushi referred to such people as “Undo Kanko kyaku (運動観光客)” or protest tourists (Chinen 2002).

Increased Japanese participation was helpful to the sit-in, but at the same time it threatened the ownership of the movement. It was not an easy task to sustain the movement for such a long time. However, many Japanese participants acted as if they had made the movement just by participating since the sit-in protest had started, and Okinawans felt their eight years of earlier struggle were neglected (Kēshi Kaji V48, 2005). To my surprise, there were many Japanese participants who spoke for Okinawans and even lectured Okinawans who came to participate later on, about how Okinawa had been traumatized and had suffered. But again, the majority of those Japanese who dedicated their time for short periods had done nothing after they went back to Japan.

I had a chance to ask some young Japanese who had participated in the sit-in for a couple of months the reason for their commitment to the movement. The answers were mostly that as a student they wanted to participate in something that was meaningful. Similarly, a young man who had left his job recently said that he began to question capitalistic society after he stared to work and got tired of being exploited. Just about the time he decided to quit work; he heard about the relocation issue and decided to join the
sit-in protest. What was common among them was that it did not have to be this particular movement for them to join. Rather, learning about Okinawa's military situation shocked them and remote Okinawa was the best location for them to detach themselves from reality and become immersed in a resistance which was led by less-privileged people. Taking part in the resistance was just one event to enrich their life experience. They were able to "graduate" from the resistance after they decided they had had enough, by simply leaving Okinawa. Moreover, they have a legacy to share to their children about their moments of youth fighting against the injustice.

The women of Inochi wo Mamorukai had taken on traditional and back stage tasks to protect their movement from being hijacked. At the sit-in protest, lunch was provided that was cooked in the Inochi wo Mamorukai kitchen, prepared mostly by the women of Inochi wo Mamorukai. Women who worked in the kitchen were primarily those who were very active in the movement. I was quite surprised to see them being in the kitchen taking a traditional role and engaging in behind the scenes tasks, but for them it was important to take the role of cook in order to protect Inochi wo Mamorukai from various groups with various agenda who came to participate in the sit-in. They wanted to protect the kitchen, a symbol of the household and women's territory, from being invaded by those people who had not shared their eight years of struggles (Kēshi Kaji V48, 2005).

A gap between their attitudes about how to engage in protest was quite problematic as well. Most of the Japanese protest tourists and some Japanese who lived in Okinawa lacked the laidback attitude that a lot of Okinawans, especially women, brought to the protest. Male leaders tended to make the movement very rigid and full of rules, especially after the sit-in protest expanded in the ocean. A woman I talked to said
that it was impossible for her to participate in the sit-in at the ocean even if she wanted to, because the leaders limited people who could go out to the ocean to those who could come very early in the morning and could stay until the end of the day (Anonymous informant #3 March 6th, 2005). That made it even difficult for Okinawan participants who could only join at certain times of the day. She was also told by a Japanese canoe rider that she should wear diapers, since once they go out to the ocean they do not come back until the end of the day (Anonymous informant #3 March 6th, 2005). The situation changed over time and became more accommodating to the participants, as a result of negotiations.

Even though there was a need for more Okinawan participants, since fishermen who were hired by DFAB acted more violently toward Japanese people than toward Okinawans, the time requirement for participation hindered Okinawans from joining. Therefore, she asked whether they could create shifts, dividing the canoe team into those who could take part in the morning and those who could do so in the afternoon (Anonymous informant #3 March 6th, 2005). The idea was rejected at that time and the rigid rules continued for a while. But for the Japanese, the strict rule was not much of a problem since they had more time. In addition, since they could quit anytime, the intense environment did not bother them but rather made them feel heroic.

Okinawan people were very sensitive to the actions and reactions of the Japanese and their criticism toward Japanese people and Japan as a structure was severe. This was because Okinawans’ relationship to Japanese had a deeper and more complex link to the history of Okinawa. After experiencing and learning about how discriminatory Japan was toward Okinawa during the Battle of Okinawa, the US occupation, and after reversion to
Japan, many Okinawans had internalized distrust against Japan and ill-feeling toward Japanese people. In addition, Okinawans’ emotional distance from Japanese was based on their ethnic identity of being Uchinanchu (Okinawans) who were once people of independent country ethnically different from Japan. Therefore, the threat of Japanese people’s domination at the sit-in, their frustration about Japanese people’s irresponsibility in not considering the military issue as their own issue, and the lack of initiative to raise awareness and fight against the injustice in Japan added to Okinawans’ accumulated distrust against Japan. Unlike the case in the Narita airport movement, where outsider simply meant those who do not live in that area, in the case of Okinawa, the definition of outsider had more complex ethnic issues embedded in it, because of the emotional distance between Okinawans and Japanese.

Interestingly, Japanese people also differentiated themselves from Okinawans. There was a woman in her early seventies who had lived in Okinawa for more than thirty years, having married to an Okinawan man. Both the husband and wife had been active in the anti-base and peace movement for many years. The woman was respected for her age and her dedication at the sit-in and often shared her experience with other participants. Once she mentioned that Okinawans preferred not to participate in the meeting or political event where many Japanese gathered. It was her explanation for the lack of Okinawan people’s participation in the sit-in protest. In addition, she often attributed Okinawans’ reaction to their Okinawan-ness, saying, “Okinawans are too quiet, therefore they cannot do XYZ” or “Okinawans are too kind, therefore they are treated XYZ.” Most of the Japanese participants were not as vocal as she was, but sentences that began with “Okinawans are....” were uttered just as commonly among Japanese participants as were
sentences containing “Japanese are...” were among the Okinawans, generalizing their actions to the fact of their being Japanese. Although criticism against Japanese and skeptical feelings toward Japanese existed at the sit-in protest, there were no attempt to take any overt action against them, except for members of Kamadu, who engaged in the movement mostly outside of the sit-in tents. They tried to stop connecting with Japanese allies whom they felt hindered the Okinawans, by openly accusing Japanese people of indifference and irresponsibility (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). Their hostile action toward Japanese people created a sensation within the larger anti-Futenma relocation movement.

Kamadu’s perspective on Japanese people

Kamadu did not intend to arbitrarily attack Japanese people just because they were Japanese. They could not bear Japanese people’s indifference toward the central government’s discriminatory acts toward Okinawa, and the superficial solidarity Japanese people have with Okinawa, which they felt hinders Okinawans from speaking against them (Kunimasa 2004). They believed Japan and Okinawa could build solidarity only when Japanese people could truly understand what it means to live with the military bases (Kunimasa 2004). It was not just about unequal distribution of military installations; it was not just about how much land was occupied by the military; it was about both the obvious and the subtle impact that results from hosting the military bases, which was closely connected to their daily lives. It was the aircraft that flew over their heads day and night creating unbearable sound; it was the fear of accidents and criminal acts done by the military; it was the fact the residents were not granted the rights to
protect themselves so they could have safe lives; it was the dilemma base workers feel by working at the military bases; it was the agony of sacrificing their everyday lives to wage movement; it was the fatigue and helplessness resulting from protesting for sixty years for the same reasons; and list goes on and on.

When Kamadu members started to participate in the movement, they were invited to Japan many times. They felt they were invited because Japanese wanted to learn to understand what Okinawans go through or feel, but they came to feel that they were invited to fulfill Japanese people’s curiosity and appetite for knowledge (Makishi et al. 2000). At a Palestine photo exhibition, a Japanese person raised a question and said, “Why don’t Okinawans show interest in anti-war issues? Why don’t Okinawans explode like the Palestinians did? (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004)” This person had moved to Okinawa after leaving her full-time job in Japan because she liked Okinawa and liked the Okinawans she had seen on a popular TV drama, which had portrayed Okinawans as kind, strong, and cheerful people. However, she was shocked to see that no one at her new workplace in Okinawa was interested in participating in the anti-base events. These types of comments were not rare, but Okinawan women activists could never get used to them. Such comments made them feel that their effort in engaging in activism and sacrificing their daily lives were being neglected and denied (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). A series of similar experience piled up their anger and frustration. They exploded when they learned that many Japanese participants at the sit-in protest come and feel satisfied for their contribution in Okinawa, but rarely go back to start their own movement in their locality to correct the injustice they had supposedly had seen in Okinawa (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004).
Kamadu’s proactive approach

Kamadu saw anti-Futenma relocation as confrontation between Uchinanchu and the Japanese nation, which included the people who sustain the nation. Kamadu adhered to their pride in being Uchinanchu and viewed their relationship through the dichotomy between Uchinanchu and Japanese. In the Okinawan language, Uchinanchu refers to Okinawan people. It contains a notion of Okinawan identity and in this occasion I use this word intentionally to refer to Okinawans as having a separate ethnic entity.

Discontent toward Japanese people was based on Okinawa’s historical colonial relationship to Japan and was enhanced as a result of their interaction with Japanese during their eight years of activism. After the sit-in protest started, protest tourists from Japan flowed into the sit-in to the extent that Japanese participants comprised the majority at the protest. Such an imbalance in population composition and the atmosphere of welcoming them with open arms threatened Kamadu, who feared that the sit-in participants’ dependence on Japanese participants would further reinforce the unequal power relations between the two. Kamadu believed Okinawan people were forced to fight the military issue for a long time because Japanese people had ignored their share of the fight, and therefore they should not be overly praised for their participation in the sit-in (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). Such increased superficial solidarity threatened Kamadu, because they thought it would make it even harder for Okinawans to raise their voices against Japanese. To overcome this situation, Kamadu took a radical step.

What Kamadu did was resist alliance with Japanese people. Two days after the helicopter crash at Okinawa International University adjacent to Futenma Air Station, Kunimasa visited the sit-in protest with pictures of the accident scene that one of the
Kamadu members had taken and a petition sheet. The petition sheet already had “Okinawa prefecture” on the address line which allowed only those who lived in Okinawa to sign the petition. It was their first concrete gesture to show they do not ask for Japanese people’s support. In addition, it was not just to resist Japanese people’s support; it was also to avoid any type of support that free rode on what Okinawan people were doing. One of Kunimasa’s friends had asked her if it was okay with her to send the petition sheet to her Okinawan friend in Hawaii, but Kunimasa had turned down her request saying “if Uchinanchu in Hawaii would like to show support, they should start something of their own (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004).”

In addition, Kamadu had started to turn down all offers and requests for interviews from Japanese mass media as well as from Japanese university students. They did not want to talk to Japanese media because Japanese people would not understand what they were saying anyway, and they did not want to talk to students because there were many occasions when the students only viewed them as “subject” of their research rather than to feel Okinawa’s suffering and to take the issue to their heart (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004).

When I made my first appointment with Kunimasa in mid August, she called me on that day to cancel the appointment. Later when I called her in an attempt to make a second appointment, I was able to sense her hesitation on the other end of the telephone. After explaining my purpose more in detail, she asked me whether I was Okinawan or not. When she found out that I was Okinawan, she agreed to meet right away. At the interview, she told me why she had decided to meet with me. She understood that I was not just interested in the issue for academic reasons but to learn about it as my personal
issue. She then felt responsible to share their story with me and wanted to exchange each other’s power (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). She further explained that Kamadu had decided only to talk to Okinawan media and people in attempt to reserve their power and strength within Okinawa and to be able to stand up to speak against Japan (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004).

Kunimasa emphasized the need to prepare Okinawans to detach them from Japan and to stop resting their hopes in Japan (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). Moreover, she said that especially when Japan was trying to discard its honorable Article 9 of their constitution that was referred to as a peace constitution, Okinawa should seriously think of discarding Japan before Japan cuts Okinawa off, implying that Japan would make further attempts to subjugate Okinawa to advance its own national interest (Kunimasa September 23rd, 2004). Although she did not say it explicitly, Kamadu seemed definitely inclined to support pro-independence ideas for Okinawa.

**Reaction to Kamadu’s approach**

OWAAMV and Hantaikyo explicitly criticized Kamadu’s new approach but women at the sit-in did so more subtly. One of the OWAAMV members had disapproved of Kamadu’s exclusive approach to dealing only with Okinawans, criticizing that it would take them nowhere except to detach them from other groups and from reality (Asato 2005). In addition, she stated that their approach was dangerous since it seemed to have emerged out of nationalism that had chased them into a corner without any exits (Asato 2005).
The cleavage between Kamadu and OWAAMV seemed to be getting bigger after they resumed working together. Women’s Voice Network had resumed their activity in mid 2005 in order to respond to the requests that emerged at the sit-in protest. Although Kamadu had participated in it initially, some of their members questioned why OWAAMV insisted on working in coalition, while they were more well known and had the resources to work on their own. Although some women at the sit-in seemed to want to avoid talking about it, both the women and OWAAMV were overwhelmed by Kamadu’s radical approach— not only their reaction toward Japanese, but a sarcastically creative funeral event that Kamadu had held in front of one of the gates of Futenma Air Station in an attempt to symbolize Futenma’s death (elimination), instead of relocation (Okinawa Times May 2nd, 2005).

The leaders of Hantaikyo also disapproved of Kamadu’s approach, which they called Uchinâ Bikën or Okinawans-only approach. Ashitomi emphasized the importance of accepting each other and displayed his opposition to their approach. Onishi also expressed opposition to their ideas, saying that appreciating the beauty of the island and the beauty of the spirit was not only granted to Okinawans. He criticized fellow Okinawans who do not participate in the protest to protect that beauty, but try to name call Japanese (Onishi 2005).

**Kamadu’s impact on the movement**

The trajectory of Kamadu’s perspective on Japanese people had been shaped gradually, and was very much influenced by the sit-in protest. Their ideas were transformed into action after the helicopter accident at Okinawa International University,
when Kamadu began to collect petitions and received many interview requests from the media. Since their approach was still new, during my participant observation I was not able to grasp how it had impacted the participants’ relationships at the sit-in nor observe its impact on the movement as a whole. As I have emphasized repeatedly, the sit-in protest was not a convenient tactic for many Okinawans to take part in since it required high level of physical and economic commitment. This was true of Kamadu as well. Therefore, Kamadu’s approach was mostly practiced outside of the sit-in protest, to the extent that it seemed not to have had direct impact on the sit-in. However, given the fact that their approach was unpopular among OWAAMV and Hantaikyo, one can assume that bigger organizations so far have viewed Kamadu’s actions as being a threat to the movement.

It is inevitable that their approach would cause some degree of a split between organizations that support and oppose Kamadu’s radical stance. Should the conflict intensify further, it would benefit the counter-movement to manipulate the instability created in the movement.

On the other hand, there was another person who shared a similar intransigence in his view of Okinawa. A long time peace activist and a Christian pastor, Taira Osamu was a regular participant at the sit-in. He had seen many Japanese coming and going at the sit-in protest, as well as seen their perspective on Okinawa. He often expressed his fundamental intransigence about Okinawa, even though others say his view was narrow (Okinawa Times May 11th, 2005). For Taira, questioning Japanese who have no understanding of Okinawa and questioning Okinawans who accept those Japanese without a sense of skepticism was a way to practice his deep commitment to Okinawa
Interestingly, he drew his idea from the Korean concept of han. Koo (2001) defines the concept of han as:

"... in broad terms it can be defined as long accumulated sorrow and regret over one's misfortune or as simmering resentment over injustice one has experienced ... Han is a concept of contradictions, involving both the passive acceptance of one's situation as fate and the intense desire to overcome it or to revenge oneself on those who are the cause. It is an intense feeling that accumulates over time, unresolved, coiled, and suppressed, yet yearns to be released. Han, therefore has an explosive quality (136)."

Taira stresses the importance of persisting in holding the sorrow and resentment was a way to overcome it, rather than to flush away the ill-emotions by forcing oneself to forgive or to forget it (Okinawa Times May 11th, 2005). Kamadu's approach could also be explained by the concept of han where they tried to overcome the accumulated resentment over injustice caused by Japan and sustained by Japanese people's indifference and unconscious colonial mindset by resisting alliance with Japanese, by criticizing their attitude, and by consolidating solidarity among themselves to "promote strong feelings of affinity" (Koo 2001).

Although viewed as radical and exclusive, I believe Kamadu had brought up a very important issue that was long suppressed and had been treated as a personal grudge that was regarded as inappropriate to be mixed with political matters. But Kamadu tried to form a counterdiscourse to the mainstream notion of Okinawa-Japan relationship that avoided questioning individual Japanese people's responsibility to recognize the institutional discrimination perpetrated by the Japanese government and to take action against it. Creating a subaltern counterpublic sphere where Okinawan women can
intersect their women’s identity and Okinawan identity enabled them to release their *han* by freely expressing their emotions such as anger, frustration, disappointment, humiliation, and distrust toward Japanese people without being pressured by dominant groups. Such space also allowed women to train themselves to disseminate their ideas to the wider public.
CHAPTER 4
CONCLUSION

This study has examined women's participation in the anti-U.S. base movement in Okinawa, focusing on the movement that seeks closure of U.S. Marine Corp Futenma Air Station and that opposes the relocation of Futenma to Henoko. The movement started in 1996 and had its major shift in 2004 when a long-term sit-in protest began. The beginning of the sit-in had a great impact on the whole movement, especially on women's involvement.

My research on Henoko revealed three major findings. These involved the nature of Okinawan women activists' tactics; the inter-group tensions that emerged among the Japanese and Okinawan activists and protestors; and the intra-group tensions among Okinawan activists and protestors.

Social movements against military bases have always existed in post war Okinawa. Yakabi (1997) suggests that the general movement can be divided into three phases. The first phase was between 1956 and 1958, during which the resistance centered on land issues; second phase was from the late 1960s to early 1970s which centered exclusively on the U.S.-Japan Joint Security Treaty and so-called “Okinawa problem” that entailed Okinawa's reversion to Japan, and the third phase since 1995 has centered on demands for human rights, peace, and self-determination.

Women had participated in the movement since the 1950's, yet the emergence of Okinawa Women Act against Military Violence (OWAAMV) after the 1995 rape and their demand to protecting women's rights and human rights added a new dimension to the anti-base movement. Emergence of OWAAMV triggered many women's grassroots
groups to sprout throughout Okinawa demanding a halt in their hardships living with military presence in their localities.

The three main women’s groups I studied, OWAAMV, Kamadu gwa tachi no Tsudoi (Kamadu) and Jyannu Kai (Jyannu), came from different backgrounds with different perspectives although they shared the ultimate goal: to close the Futenma base without relocation. They all believed in women’s power, but their priority differed. While members of OWAAMV were mostly professional women from the capital city with clear feminist perspectives, members of both Kamadu and Jyannu were ordinary women who suffered from direct impacts of military presence in their everyday lives.

Women’s groups not only added a new perspective, but also introduced new tactics. Since most of the women were first time activists, they did not know the routine ways to organize political events or what approaches they could take to reach out to the public. They did not know what to do, but they knew what they did not want to do; they wanted to avoid what men had been doing. They did not want to follow men’s model because they thought men’s way was too masculine and patriarchic. Men were putting too much emphasis on projecting heroic gestures between themselves and their adherents. Because they did not have substantial preconceptions on how to do activism, there were able to break the “norms” set by men and be innovative.

Women’s way of activism was fundamentally based on two aspects: practicability and creativity. Women were from all stages of life. Most of them had various family obligations and a full time job. They were expected to balance their activism with taking care of the house, unlike their male counterparts who had wives to take care of the house. As a result, it was difficult for women to just pick a day when all could gather to do
something. As a result, women chose activities which they could work on individually or in a smaller group, such as door to door visits to talk and pass out flyers, creating newsletters, and lunch time sit-ins. In addition, they had to be creative in making an environment where other women could participate in their political events. A good example of this is to provide nursery service at events and to combine flea market or farmers market with their event so that women could participate in supporting the movement while getting their shopping done.

Humor was an important ingredient of being creative. Examples of these tactics included each of the women writing “love letters”, as they called it, to the governor and placing them into a washbasin wrapped with huge ribbon. They also did skits presenting their suffering and did one on “Futenma on Sale” at their march.

Women also consciously incorporated Okinawan culture by using an Okinawan name for their group, using Okinawan language in their signs and banners, in their skits and the titles of the political events, wearing Okinawan eisa attire with eisa drums at the march and more. Having fun was an important aspect and humor, spiritual link to nature and ancestors, and dressing pretty were ways to enjoy their activism. In sum, women’s way of activism was to take on convenient ways for women to participate and to reflect their Okinawan identity.

Having equal opportunity for all the participants and reducing the social distance to their adherents were crucial for women. For example, when the women visited the governor, they felt instead of sending a delegation, everyone who was willing to meet with him should go and express their concerns. Similarly, when the women’s organization was asked to speak at general demonstrations, write articles for magazines,
or talk to the media, they tried to alternate the task so that all of the members would have the chance to share their views. A chain of one-minute speeches was often practiced at the political gatherings they organized as well.

In addition, women preferred to project themselves as ordinary persons just like every other woman or mother. They preferred to reach out to individuals or smaller groups of people rather than launching mass demonstrations. Having a dialogue with other women was very important to them. When they marched, they often tried to present a less aggressive atmosphere by making sure they dressed respectably, appeared upbeat, were creative with signs and banners, and avoided having “fist in the air” type of chanting.

Women’s activism in Okinawa is a good example of Nancy Fraser’s (1992) notion of a subaltern counterpublic, where the women could shape alternative perspectives and tactics that differed from the mainstream male-dominated anti-U.S. base movement. In addition, McAdam (1997) notes that the need to be innovative in coming up with new tactics is very important in order to overcome powerlessness and to have a successful activism. Being innovative is more important for women since usually they are more disadvantaged than men and they experience multi-layered oppressions. Being an Okinawan woman means they are an ethnic minority living in a patriarchal society and the poorest prefecture of Japan whose average income per person is seventy percent of the national average (Statistics Division Department of Planning, Okinawa Prefectural Government). When fighting against military issues, they are also fighting against patriarchy and gender inequality.
McAdam also suggests that the challenging groups need to use tactics that would disrupt the opponents’ realization of their interests. The sit-in is one of the major disruptive tactics which was used to fight against the Futenma base relocation to Henoko. With various types of individuals and organizations from throughout the island, Japan, and worldwide participating in the sit-in, the sit-in was primarily framed to protect the environment, specifically the dugong, an endangered species that inhabited the waters of the relocation site. The environmental perspective was less threatening for people to support the issue than questioning militarism or U.S.–Japan relations. With a well-accepted frame, support from various organizations and political parties, the sit-in successfully stopped the Japanese government from conducting an underwater feasibility test. However, I argue that the sit-in also came with consequences.

There were some major consequences that were related to one another, creating a spiral effect. The fundamental problem women saw in the sit-in was its high cost. First of all, the very nature of the sit-in—the fact it took place every day without a fixed ending date, from morning to late afternoon, at a considerable geographical distance from the center of Okinawa where many women were from—made it almost impossible for women to participate on a regular basis. The high degree of commitment expected by the male leaders of the sit-in made it even more difficult for women to participate. The same was true for many Okinawan men. As a result, at the sit-in lasted longer, the demographic characteristics of the participants shifted gradually from Okinawan to Japanese participants.

The increase of Japanese participants was crucial in sustaining the sit-in. However, it also raised discontent among the women because they found many Japanese
people's attitude condescending. Most of the Japanese participants from Japan participated because of their high political consciousness, but they often showed a colonial attitude toward Okinawans. The most critical question they raised was the lack of Okinawans' participation. However, they did not understand the cost Okinawans had to pay to participate in the sit-in. Participation in the sit-in meant stating one's political view. Even though many women were confident in their political decision, participating came with stigma. The military issue can be a very sensitive issue in Okinawa where many, whether directly or indirectly, depended on its economy. Many Okinawans suffer from such a dilemma and it is not easy for the general public to take a strong position on the issue, and even more so for women since they are also challenging the patriarchal gender expectation by getting involved in politics.

Unfortunately, many women who were not able to participate regularly felt guilt about not being able to be at the sit-in. They were doing whatever they could in their region but the pressure from male organizations hit their guilty consciousness. This created a cleavage between regular participants who had first hand experience of the sit-in, and those who learned about what happened at the sit-in second hand. Solidarity among the regular participants created an emotional isolation from the non-regular participants.

Leadership was another issue women found problematic. Three male-dominated organizations were taking leadership: a local Henoko hamlet based group; a Nago city-wide coalition; and a prefecture-wide coalition. Their strategies were very masculine and they created a masculine atmosphere by enforcing many rigid rules, promoting hierarchy, and excluding non-leaders from interacting with the Japanese officials. The way men run
the movement was very different in nature to women's approach. Women felt frustrated because they knew what they wanted to do and how to do it, but were excluded from decision-making. Since creating friction would damage the whole sit-in, the best they could do was to continue making complaints, even though they were ignored, and to organize small scale events outside of the sit-in that would not harm the sustenance of the sit-in.

"Fight to the death" mentality, one of the ideas that men leaders promoted, contributed to an emotional distance between the Japanese and Okinawan women. After the direct physical confrontation against Japanese government officials started and expanded to the ocean protest, the ethic of heroism got intensified and many Japanese participants, both men and women, bought into the heroic ideal with little criticism. Again, this was something Okinawan women could not afford to do.

Due to the heavy media attention to a group of people who went out to fight against the Japanese government on the ocean, which required higher commitment and was dominated by Japanese participants, they were viewed as the real participants and those who sat-in on the land, mostly Okinawans who had to come and go since they could only stay for a limited amount of time, were perceived to be "supporters," rather than actors of the sit-in.

Japanese participation gradually threatened women's sense of belonging and ownership of the movement. Soon, women turned Japanese people's question on lack of Okinawans' participation around to question their failure to take the movement back to their locality in Japan. Military presence in Okinawa often is referred to as the "Okinawa problem" by Japanese media and central government, while it is a national issue. Many
Japanese participants carried this mentality, behaving as if they are "helping" Okinawa to fight the military issue. Women criticized such attitude and questioned Japanese participants' sense of responsibility as Japanese citizen and demanded that they see the military issue as their own Japanese issue.

Among the Okinawan women, women of Kamadu pushed forward this criticism most aggressively. Their criticism against Japanese people became concrete resistance when they cut their ties with the Japanese alliance. With their strong Okinawan identity and sense of nationalism, they began to seek independence from Japanese people's support. Kamadu's criticism was not just coming from their experience with Japanese at the sit-in. It was deeply related to the history. The ethnic conflict between Okinawans and Japanese is based on about four hundred years of historical relationship, ever since Satsuma's invasion of the Kingdom of Ryukyus in 1609. Okinawa suffered from the Japanese invasion, the overthrow of its kingdom, its annexation, and its assimilation, the Battle of Okinawa, and the U.S. Occupation. Even after the administration of Okinawa was returned to Japan, the structure of subordination to Japan did not change much. Therefore, Okinawans historically held a sense of distrust against Japan and Japanese. The ill-feelings against Japanese were reinforced through their personal interactions with the Japanese participants over time and escalated when Japanese domination at the sit-in began to threaten Okinawans. The sit-in had contributed to the reemergence of the ethnic conflict that had been kept under the surface for many decades if not centuries.

I assert that the biggest difference between the Okinawan male leaders and Kamadu who went ahead and cut ties with the Japanese allies lies in the basis for their strategies. While Okinawan male leaders prioritized being strategic by using their brain,
putting aside their historically accumulated doubts against Japanese, the Okinawa women prioritized speaking from their Okinawan pride.

The historical power relation between Japanese and Okinawans may be compared to that of White people and Black people in the U.S. bell hooks (2000) claims that it was only when Black people introduced race into the feminist movement that they were able to look realistically at the status of women. Until they had faced the reality, they could not capture the real feminist politics. The same thing could be said about Okinawa’s relationship to Japan. Both Okinawan and Japanese have to face the reality of the fundamental power relation that underlies the military issue, if they really want to get to the bottom of it. In that respect, the new discourse Kamadu brought to the movement could be recognized as a critical step forward to capture the fundamental mechanisms that are revealed through the military issue.

Moreover, Kamadu’s discourse is a process of decolonization that challenges the dependent structure, a feature of colonialism. Okinawans had internalized their subordinate position and had held an inferiority complex toward the Japanese. But what Kamadu is doing is empowering themselves by saying no to the powerful, in an attempt to bring Okinawa to the same level as the Japanese.

This case study reveals that disruptive tactics could bring success to the movement in fulfilling its goal, but its intense environment also brings some unintended consequences that marginalize certain groups of people. Particularly for women, this type of long-term sit-in was not compatible with their living style and their approach. In other words, it was not the sit-in itself that isolated them, but it was how the sit-in was carried out. By this I mean women also practiced sit-ins but how they conducted it was very
different from the case in Henoko. The difference is somewhat based on the nature of the circumstances. Yet I argue that if the male leaders had listened to women’s suggestions or had granted them equal participation in the decision making process to a greater extent than they did, the cleavages and isolation would have been minimized. McAdam stresses the importance of creating a negative inducement in a general sense; however, this case study showed that it comes with great cost. More attention needs to be paid not only to which tactics to use, but also how the tactics should be orchestrated to maintain healthy relationships among the participants.
Figure 1. U.S. Marine Corp Futenma Air Station in Ginowan city, Okinawa

Source: Ginowan city Homepage
http://www.city.ginowan.okinawa.jp/DAT/LIB WEB/1/0184.jpg
Figure 2: Map of U.S. Military Facilities on Okinawa Island

Source: Okinawa Prefecture Homepage
http://www3.pref.okinawa.jp/site/view/contview.jsp?cateid=14&id=589&page=1
Figure 3: Map of Okinawa

Source: http://www.bekkoame.ne.jp/~pyonpyon/nago/map/map3.htm
Figure 4: Old-Kushi Village

Source: http://www.bekkoame.ne.jp/~pyonpyon/nago/map/map4.htm
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January 28th, 2003

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August 26th, 2000
December 24th, 1997
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