

Nature as a Locus of Resistance: Representation and Appropriation of Nature in the Grass-roots Movement Against the U.S. Military Exercises in Hijudai, Japan

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I. Introduction

“Oh Palestine! Oh Jerusalem!” Palestinian people call their home land with deep attachment to them as if they called lovers. Olive trees grow, orange trees bear fruit, wheat fields spread like golden ocean and stone houses stand there. That landscape is inseparably connected to the memories of lives there for over hundreds of years, suffering, sorrow and pleasure lived by Palestinian people (Oka 2001:106).

A Japanese critic of Arabic literature, Oka (2001) sympathizes with the viewpoint of Palestinian people who refer to the land in the second person. “Oh Palestine!” “Oh Jerusalem!” These callings are directed neither to the state nor to humans, but to the land where people live. In contrast with this viewpoint in the second person, she criticizes the viewpoint of reconnaissance satellite through which U.S. governmental leaders and most of the mass media see Afghanistan. This “satellite view” does not see the land of Afghanistan as the place where people live their lives, but sees it as a topographical map on which the points to drop bombs and food are marked. Oka (2001) raises for us the question, “from whose viewpoint do we see the world?”

This is an important question that makes us reconsider the position from which we speak of the problem of “nature.” Of course, she does not naively insist on conserving the nature and landscape of Afghanistan. She insists on the necessity to grasp the suffering of people exposed to bombing in relation to the suffering of burnt trees, smashed rocks and land destructed from the bombing. This is a problem of our imagination: whether we imagine Afghanistan people as an abstract object of a bombing attack and humanitarian aid, or imagine them as a concrete subject of human lives constructed on the material environment of “nature.” Taking the latter image, we could proceed into more democratized politics of security founded on people’s lives and nature, that is to say, “people’s security.”

Though the concept of “people’s security” has not been fully elaborated upon even in the fields of political sciences, it has gradually become a key concept in the alternative peace movement developed especially in Okinawa¹). “People’s security” aims to produce an alternative to national security that is constructed at the sacrifice of local people. For example, approximately 75% of the U.S. Military Base related areas in Japan are located in Okinawa, which

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comprises only 0.6% of the entire land area of Japan. People in Okinawa have continuously suffered from various problems caused by the presence of U.S. Forces even after the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese control in 1972. Though the concept of “people’s security” has mainly been developed in the anti-base, antiwar movements of Okinawa, it has recently spread to other U.S. Military Base related areas on the Japanese mainland and Korea.

This paper looks at a grass-roots movement against the U.S. military exercises in Hijudai, a local area of Oita Prefecture on the Japanese mainland, as a case study. The features of the grass-roots movement in Hijudai are 1) an extensive network between the maneuver areas including Okinawa and Korea, 2) a variety of activities from political agenda to musical concert and film production, and 3) an emphasis on the affinity between the lives and the nature in Hijudai. By mainly focusing on the third feature, this paper attempts to explore the potentials of socially produced nature for “people’s security.” In the grass-roots movement of Hijudai, nature represents a source of peaceful lives, and the conservation of nature is regarded as the security of local lives. On the basis of this perspective of nature, local people attempt to construct various natural formations through parks, photographs and festivals. They are natures alternatively imagined and re-appropriated by local people rather than dominated and managed by the state.

II. Place of “Hijudai”

In 1996, the Final Report of the Special Action Committee on Okinawa specified that the impact of the U.S. military presence on Okinawa should be reduced and the artillery live-fire exercise should be relocated from Okinawa to the five maneuver areas of the Self Defense Force on the Japanese mainland (Figure 1). The extensive grassland in Hijudai (area is approximately 4,900 hectares, distance is 16 km from east to west, and 5km from north to south) in Oita Prefecture is one of those five maneuver areas, and the local people of Hijudai have practiced radical and flexible resistances

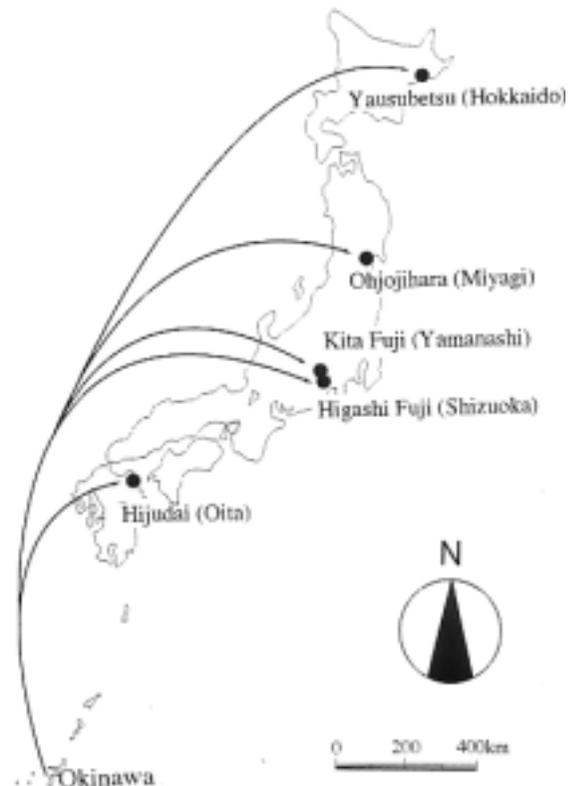


Figure 1 Relocation of the U.S. Forces’ artillery live-fire exercise from Okinawa to the five maneuver fields of the Self Defense Force in the Japanese mainland

against the U.S. military exercises since that time.

Before 1900, when the maneuver field of the Japanese Army was first established in Hijudai, there had been some settlements, paddy fields, crop fields and pasturelands in it. As described in Table 1, since 1900 Hijudai has been continuously utilized as a maneuver area of the Japanese Army (1900-1945), the U.S. Forces and Allied Forces (1946-1957) and the Self-Defense Forces (1958-). Although settlements and agricultural lands were moved out of the maneuver area, utilization of communal pastureland within the maneuver area by local farmers has remained as customary land use. Even now, local farmers burn off the pastureland in the spring, leave the cattle to graze in it during the summer season, and mow the grass in the autumn.

However, violent artillery live-fire exercises by the Self-Defense Forces for more than two hundred days a year have caused various kinds of environmental destruction in Hijudai: they have damaged the land, caused bare grassland to appear, and accelerated the soil erosion of the fields. Furthermore, local people living adjacent to the maneuver fields have suffered from the terrible noise and vibration of the explosions, accidents of false bombings and so on in their daily lives. Under such circumstances, relocation of the U.S. Forces' artillery live-fire exercise from Okinawa to Hijudai has stirred up fierce urge and rebellion by the local people.

Table 1. History of Hijudai

Year	Date	Events
1900		Commencement of the Japanese Army's military exercise
1901~1909		The Japanese Army purchased the land of Hijudai
1908		Superintendent of the Hijudai maneuver field was established
1946	June	The U.S. Forces and the Allied Forces occupied Hijudai maneuver field
1953	Nov	The Self-Defense Forces commenced military exercise in Hijudai
1957	6.Oct	The U.S. Forces and the Allied Forces released Hijudai maneuver field
1962	28.Sep	The U.S.-Japan Joint Committee has agreed on the U.S. Forces' reuse of Hijudai maneuver field (Military exercise was not practiced)
1987	Nov	The 1st U.S.-Japan Joint Military Exercise in Hijudai
1991	Nov	The 2nd U.S.-Japan Joint Military Exercise in Hijudai
1995		(The rape of a Japanese schoolgirl by U.S. military soldiers in Okinawa fueled public opinion against the U.S. military bases in Okinawa)
1996	29.Aug	The U.S.-Japan Joint Committee has agreed to the relocation of the U.S. Forces' artillery live-fire exercise from Okinawa to five maneuver fields on the Japanese mainland including Hijudai
	4~17. Nov	The 3rd U.S.-Japan Joint Military Exercise in Hijudai
	2.Dec	Final report of the Special Action Committee on Okinawa
1997		(The U.S. Forces' artillery live-fire exercises in three maneuver fields on the mainland: Kita Fuji, Yausubetsu, and Ojojihara)
1998		(The U.S. Forces' artillery live-fire exercises in four maneuver fields on the mainland: Higashi Fuji, Kita Fuji, Yausubetsu, and Ojojihara)
1999	4~12. Feb	The 1st U.S. Forces' artillery live-fire exercise in Hijudai
2000	3~10. Feb	The 2nd U.S. Forces' artillery live-fire exercise in Hijudai
2001	8~16. Feb	The 3rd U.S. Forces' artillery live-fire exercise in Hijudai
2002	1~8. Feb	The 4th U.S. Forces' artillery live-fire exercise in Hijudai

The first grass-roots movement against the U.S. military exercises was conducted by the people of Yufuin, a famous hot spring resort adjacent to Hijudai. Yufuin is famous for its unique town development centered around the hot spa. For the tourist resort Yufuin, relocation of the U.S. Forces' artillery live-fire exercise was considered damaging the sophisticated images of a tourist resort. Yufuin Tourist Association, Hotel and Inn Union of Yufuin town, and other NPO groups conducted a campaign to collect signatures and petitioned against the U.S. Forces' artillery live-fire exercise in Hijudai. Next, they organized the "People's Liaison Conference against the U.S. Forces' Exercise" (P.L.C.) which aims to make contact between three Towns (Kusu, Kokonoe and Yufuin Town) adjacent to the maneuver areas. The P.L.C. developed the grass-roots movement in each town, and each village, for example, had a local meeting and a "Green Postcard Campaign" against the U.S. Forces' Exercise.

On the other hand, the people of Onobaru district (Kusu Town) next to the maneuver areas conducted a simple but steady protest movement against the U.S. Forces' Exercise. Onobaru district is an agricultural area, and most of the residents are farmers whose ancestors had lived within the maneuver areas before 1900, and had utilized the communal pastureland of Hijudai. They organized the "Hitomi-kai" group, which is a youth group in the local community. Although "Hitomi-kai" has petitioned the Kusu Town Office to stop the U.S. Forces' Exercise and has put up signboards and a flag protesting the U.S. Forces' Exercise, their voices are not very loud and they do not have any political power to mobilize influential politicians. However, after participating in the P.L.C., they have gradually become associated with the people of Yufuin.

Since the inauguration of "Local NET Oita, Hijudai: What should we do with the U.S. Military Bases and Japan?" (Local NET), the nature of the grass-roots movement has changed. Though Local NET was formed by the parent organization of the P.L.C., it consists of various kinds of groups and individuals from a women's group, youth group, pacifist organization, religious organization, theatrical group, and chorus group to a photographer, artist and musician. It is the network itself which connects different people in different places with each other. Originally, Local NET was designed as a sub-network of "National NET: What should we do with the U.S. Military Bases and Japan?" which consists of five sub-networks based on the five maneuver areas on the Japanese mainland: Yausubetsu (Hokkaido), Ohjojihara (Miyagi), Higashi Fuji (Shizuoka), Kita Fuji (Yamanashi) and Hijudai (Oita). However, this National NET does not have any substantially unified power and each Local NET works well independently. Among them, Local NET Oita, Hijudai is the most active one, and it is recently developing closer contacts with the people of Okinawa and Korea who have lived adjacent to the U.S. Military Base and suffered from serious damages.

III. Producing Natures: Imaginative and Maternal Construction of Nature

Local NET organizes various events in Hijudai and Yufuin: protest rallies, lectures, photograph exhibitions, music concerts, festivals, movie showings and so on (Table 2). The contents of its movement vary from those with a political agenda to cultural events. These diverse events, however, have a general feature in common. Locality of the movement is emphasized by

focusing on the affinity for nature of Hijudai.

At first, the problem of nature in Hijudai was mainly concerned with the environmental destruction caused by the artillery live-fire exercises and the compensation for it. Since 1957, the Japanese government has acknowledged the serious damage to the physical environment of Hijudai caused by the U.S. Forces' military exercises, and has compensated the local people and the related municipal government for the damage through subsidies. According to the report on compensation (Association for the compensation construction of the Hijudai maneuver field 1962), the destruction of the land and the soil erosion in Hijudai caused by the artillery live-fire

Table 2. History and events of the opposition movement against the U.S. Forces' military exercises in Hijudai (1995-1998)

Year	Date	Events
1995	11.Nov	Yufuin Tourist Association and Hotel & Inn Union of Yufuin gave a presentation to Yufuin Town Office against the relocation of the U.S. Forces' military exercise
1996	17.Mar	Yufuin Protest Rally against the relocation of the U.S. Forces' Military Exercise
	10.Apr	Inauguration of the Yufuin People's Liaison Conference against the relocation of the U.S. Forces' Military Exercise
	27.Jun	Inauguration of the Kusu, Kokonoe, Yufuin Liaison Conference against the relocation of the U.S. Forces' Military Exercise
	7.Jul	Protest Rally against the relocation of the U.S. Forces' Military Exercise (Kusu Town)
	1.Aug	"Hitomi-kai" group gave a presentation to the Oita Prefectural Government against the relocation of the U.S. Forces' Military Exercise to Hijudai
	27.Sep	"Message from women of Okinawa" (at Yufuin Town Public Hall)
	Nov.	"Springhead Festival of Hijudai: Mountain is fine" at Yufuin and Hijudai
	4.Nov	The Oita Protest Rally against the U.S.-Japan Joint Military Exercise (the 1st)
	10.Nov	The Oita Protest Rally against the U.S.-Japan Joint Military Exercise (the 2nd)
	28.Nov	Inauguration of "the Local NET Oita, Hijudai: what should we do with the U.S. Military Bases and Japan"
	23.Dec	Session on the actualities of Okinawa (at Yufuin Town Community Center)
1997	22.Mar	Okinawa-Ohjojihara-Hijudai Joint Rally (at Yufuin Town Community Center)
	23.Mar	Oita Protest Rally against the relocation of the U.S. Forces' Military Exercise from Okinawa to mainland (at Kokonoe Town, Usa Town and Saiki City)
	Apr.	Municipal governments of Ohjojihara, Kita Fuji and Hijudai maneuver fields officially accepted the U.S. Forces' Military Exercise
	27.Apr	"Women's rally for secure lives" (at Kusu Town Public Hall)
	30.May	Opinion advertising "Please remove your Marines from our soil!" (<i>New York Times</i>)
	4.Jun	"Mayonaka shin'ya, Okinawa antiwar singer's concert" (at Yufuin Town)
	1.Jul-3.Sep	"Memories of Wind, Photograph Exhibition: Photo Document of Hijudai and Okinawa"
	27.Jul	"Lecture of Allen Nelson, ex-soldier of the U.S. Marines" (at Yufuin Town Community Center)
	8.Aug	"Evening concert of <i>Sanshin</i> and the history of Okinawa" (at Kusu Town)
	6-7.Sep	"Champur Forum in Yufuin: rethinking the security of lives" (at Yufuin Town)
	Oct.-Nov.	"Peace Art Exhibition" (at Oita City, Kusu Town, Kokonoe Town)
1998	24.Nov	"Peace Message from Oita" rally against the U.S. Bases in Japan (at Beppu City) (Lecture by a famous journalist, a chorus concert, and an Okinawa folk song concert)
	25.Nov	"Rethinking agriculture, livelihood and life" rally (at Yufuin Community Center)
	17.May	"Springhead Festival of Hijudai: Mountain is green" at Ryumon Fall
	2.Jul	" <i>Mensore Okinawa</i> " Okinawa comedy show (at Hita City)
	5.Aug	" <i>Yuntanza Okinawa</i> " movie show (at Yufuin Public Hall) Panel discussion on " <i>Yuntanza Okinawa</i> " : talking with the director Nishiyama
9.Aug	" <i>Nanumu no ie</i> " (Habitual sadness) Korean movie show (at Oita City) Lecture "Japan and Korea, past, present and future: thinking through <i>Nanumu no ie</i> "	
23.Nov	Opinion advertising "It's time to bring the U.S. Marines home!" (<i>New York Times</i>)	

exercises brought about an inflow of sand and mud into the river, and often caused floods along the river. For the same reason, the drinking water supply and the irrigation canal were seriously damaged. The Japanese government carried out various types of construction as compensation, such as dam construction, improvement of the river and irrigation canal, construction of water supply facilities, and road construction. Furthermore, as compensation for damages to agriculture and daily lives, a tomato sorting center, a cold storehouse for vegetables, a garbage disposal facility, a swimming pool, a day nursery and other related facilities were constructed. Thus, the compensation system of constructing infrastructure has involved local people in interdependent relationships with the national and municipal government. In that system, ironically, environmental destruction is a source of compensation, and nature is material for such compensation. Although some of the local people who live the closest to the maneuver field and suffer everyday from many damages managed to oppose the presence of the maneuver field itself, their voices were lost in the political and financial system of compensation.

The movement of Local NET is completely separate from this type of compensation system. It does not receive any support from the national and municipal government. It does not appeal to any politicians. Instead, it receives various types of support from non-governmental organizations and individuals. It appeals to people's power. Therefore, it needs to attract as many people as they can. One of the strategies to do so is the use of events and the media. It holds many events, and one of the important motifs of those events is the nature of Hijudai. By looking at several cases, we examine how they represent and re-appropriate nature of Hijudai.

1. Festival

On the 17th of May 1998, Local Net held the "Springhead Festival of Hijudai: Mountain is Green" at Ryumon Fall adjacent to the Hijudai maneuver field. This festival was held in response to the "Human Chain" protest rally at Futenma U.S. Air Station in Okinawa on the same day. The program of the Springhead Festival included a chorus, a theatre, a musical performance of Japanese drums, a traditional dance of Okinawa, and a massage from Okinawa. Nearly four hundred people participated in it. The Declaration of the Springhead Festival reads as follows:

"Source of the peace is this beautiful air, water, and the mountain and grassland which produce them. Source of the peace is those who are able to entrust themselves gently to such an atmosphere... It is the very precious treasure for our home land that mountains remain green forever." (Local NET Oita, Hijudai 1998: 1)

Hijudai is located at the springhead of three large rivers in Oita Prefecture and, as mentioned above, the river environment of Hijudai was formerly damaged by the artillery live-fire exercises. Though at that time nature was resources for compensation, nature in this festival is represented as "treasure" to be conserved. That is to say, conserving the treasure of nature is translated into saving the home land. Nature conservation and security of homeland are described in an equivalent context. This type of narrative of nature often appears in other discourses in leaflets, posters and brochures published by Local NET. For example, Yoji Eto, the chairperson of Hitomi-kai, describes his feeling about it in his essay (Eto 2001: 65) as follows:

Three months after the third U.S. Force's military exercises
 Hijudai in May is the most comfortable of the year with breeze from
 the earth
 Faces of people living here seem the most bright in the year, too
 In this season
 These wonderful lives and nature
 I come to think that by all means I want to hand them down to the
 next generation

Eto is a livestock farmer. For him, the nature of Hijudai is the fields of labor and life. During my interview with him, he said that he would not engage in livestock farming again if he moved out of Hijudai. The nature of Hijudai and livestock farming cannot be separated from each other. Therefore, nature conservation and security of homeland are the same problem for him.

2. Exhibition

In 1997, "Memories of Wind, Photograph Exhibition: Photo-Document of Hijudai and Okinawa" was held at Yufuin Town, Fukuoka City and Kitakyushu City. Photographs of nature and people in Hijudai and Okinawa were exhibited. Tsuyoshi Takami, a photographer and the director of Yufuin Fancy Forest Museum of Art, organized this project and held the exhibition in three cities (one of them was at his own museum). After the exhibition, he published a book of those photographs titled *"Memories of Wind: Photo-Document of Hijudai and Okinawa 1996-1997"* (Association for the Publication of *"Memories of Wind"* 1998). It includes photographs of the artillery live-fire exercises, U.S. soldiers, local people, cattle, settlement and nature in Hijudai and Okinawa. Restrained monochrome photographs illustrate the contrast between soldiers and residents, tanks and cattle, choppers and farm tractors (Figure 2). Tank trails spreading over the field like capillaries remind us of the pitiful scratches on the earth (Figure 3). These photographs illuminate the incompatibility of war and peace in the scenery of nature in Hijudai and Okinawa.



Figure 2. Tanks and cattle in Hijudai.
 Photograph by Akimitsu Enomoto. Source: *Memories of Wind: Photo- Document of Hijudai and Okinawa 1996-1997*. Reprinted with permission of the photographer



Figure 3. Pitiful scratches on the earth.

Aerial photograph of Hijudai by Fumio Hashimoto.

Source: *Memories of Wind: Photo-Document of Hijudai and Okinawa 1996-1997*.

Reprinted with permission of the photographer

The natural scenery of Hijudai is represented in several ways. For example, primrose is used as a symbol of Hijudai where primrose blooms in spring. It is printed on postcards, stickers, brochures and towels that Local NET has produced for its fund-raising campaign. Cattle are also used as a kind of trademark of Local NET on those products, leaflets and brochures. The movement of Local NET actively exhibits the nature of Hijudai through photographs and illustrations. Through such concrete forms, they attempt to embody the objects they are trying to save in their movement. As suggested in Eto's essay, the objects they are trying to save are the lives and the nature in Hijudai.

3. Parks

As described above, Onobaru district is an agricultural area where most of the residents are engaged in the production of vegetables, rice and the raising of livestock. Due to the damages caused by the artillery live-fire exercises, the depression of the livestock industry and the decrease in the youth population, Onobaru has been situated as one of the marginalized regions in Oita Prefecture. In addition, in October 1999, the Defense Facilities Administration Agency (D.F.A.A.) proposed a compensation plan for people to move out of Hijudai. The D.F.A.A. specified 145 houses in Hijudai as objects of compensation for moving out. Until now, six houses have already moved out of Hijudai, and several other houses have applied. The price of



Figure 4. “Green Dream Park” constructed by Hitomi-kai.

Photograph by author

the compensation payment for moving out is relatively high compared with the ordinary land price of Hijudai. Therefore, many residents of object houses have become interested in this plan. Although moving out is not compulsory, some of the Hitomi-kai members criticize this plan, “it will accelerate depopulation in Hijudai and dissolve the local community.”

In order to do away with those negative images of Hijudai, members of Hitomi-kai set about constructing two small parks in Onobaru district. First, in April 2000, they constructed “Green Dream Park” beside Onobaru dam (Figure 4). The aim of this small but sunny park is to attract many people both from within and without Hijudai. This project was further developed in September 2001, when Hitomi-kai constructed a second park called “Spring of the Earth.” Members of the Hitomi-kai wanted to let people experience the clear water and wonderful nature of Hijudai and to visit and enjoy Hijudai. On the 8th of September 2001, “Hijudai, Home of the Earth and Water Festival” was held as an opening ceremony under the auspices of Hitomik-kai and Local NET.

IV. Conclusion: Toward “Revolutionary Environmentalism”

Thus, the grass-roots movement in Hijudai has evolved from the performances of festivals and the representational practices of photograph exhibitions into the material construction of parks as well as protest activities against the U.S. Force’s military exercises. It has focused on the security of nature and lives in Hijudai rather than on political ideology or “militant” opposition. It clearly denies “national security” that presumes military security by the state. Instead, it advocates “people’s security” that presumes non-military security by the people. Local NET has

learned much about “people’s security” from Okinawa. Through active exchanges with the social movement in Okinawa, members of Local NET have become conscious of the importance of their own lives and nature at home. They define lives and nature as objects to be saved and conserved. This is exactly the issue of “security.”

In realizing that “people’s security,” Local NET focuses on “nature” as both concept and material for its movement. It represents nature as a “treasure” to be conserved, and sees it as inseparable from people’s lives at home. In other words, saving their lives and nature is considered the same issue. It embodies the object to be saved by exhibiting nature in the forms of photographs and illustration. Furthermore, it constructs a “second nature” of parks where people from both within and without Hijudai can enjoy the wonderful nature of Hijudai. Of course, these are not authentic natural parks. They are socially constructed “second natures.” However, by constructing these “second natures,” it could re-appropriate the meaning of nature by itself which was formerly reduced to the material of compensation by the government.

Smith (1998: 280) notes, “The raw materials for a revolutionary re-enchantment of nature are simultaneously scarce, yet all around.” We cannot know at the present time whether the grass-roots movement in Hijudai can succeed in the difficult task of the revolutionary re-enchantment of nature or not. However, Local NET’s attempts to represent and re-appropriate nature are surely based on the steady criticism against First World consumerism and capitalist globalization. Local NET is recently attempting to circulate local currency named “Yufu.” Though its circulation area is still limited, its attempt aims to challenge the intrusion of global capitalism into the regional economy of Yufuin. Furthermore, it is constructing a broader network with other nature and other people. These grass-roots movements have made it possible not only to empower the local people of Hijudai, but also to bring together the marginalized people of maneuver areas on the Japanese mainland, Okinawa and Korea. In addition it may produce an alternative geopolitics of “the people’s security” that would replace the conventional geopolitics of national security.

We are able to see a potential for such alternative geopolitics in the lyrics of Okinawan folk singer Tetsuhiro Daiku’s song “*Okinawa kagayake*” (*Okinawa, Shine*) and “*Hijudai kagayake*” (*Hijudai, Shine*) performed during his live concert at Yufuin.

Kagayake Okinawa (Okinawa, Shine)

With bearing the deepest sorrow
Sun-shinning, flower-blooming island,
Oh Okinawa
Songs tell us people’s sincerity
In Okinawa without war
Heal your soul in Okinawa
Enjoy your dream in Okinawa
Okinawa, shine, Oh Okinawa, shine

Kagayake Hijudai (Hijudai, Shine)

Blown by blue wind
Field green with fresh grass
Oh Hijudai
Fertile land irrigating all the lives
Vastly spreading over the home of Hiju
Birds sing, flowers bloom
Quiet waterside, last forever
Save Hijudai, Oh Hijudai, shine

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Note

1) The concept of “people’s security” is differentiated from that of “human security” originally advocated by the United Nations Development Program. Although both of them argue for the necessity of social, economic and environmental security centered on human lives and dignity, they have some remarkable differences in the agent of security and the attitudes towards global capitalism. While “human security” admits roles of the state and the military organization as agents of security, “people’s security” situates them as one of the principal sources of people’s insecurity, and defines people themselves as agents of their security. Further, while the former does not confront the complicit relationships between global capitalism and international security organization, the latter criticizes the process of globalization itself as one of the principal sources of people’s insecurity (see Mushakoji 2000; People’s Plan Study Group 2000).

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