

THE JAPAN VOICE

COOL JAPAN from New Yorkers' Viewpoints

"Power of Diversity and Pride of Democracy"

New Okinawa Governor Denny Tamaki Criticizes Governments at N.Y.U.



New Okinawa Prefectural Governor Denny Tamaki made his first visit to the United States since his election on October 4, 2018 (he visited the United States on three occasions when he was a congressman between 2009 and 2018) and gave a speech at N.Y.U. (New York University) on November 11 under the title, "Power of Diversity and Pride of Democracy." In front of Okinawan residents in America and American citizens, he criticized the Japanese government in enforcing its policy to build a new American military base at Henoko District in Nago City, Okinawa.

He decided to make a speech in the highly diversified city of New York in order to discuss the power of diversity and democracy in Okinawa. In his speech, he stated, "Okinawa has been struggling with the American military base issue for 73 years after the War. We cannot



back up the construction of a new base at Henoko, Nago City. Now I am the new governor, and the Japanese media is watching out for what sort of steps could be taken to stop this new base construction. I wish that the citizens of Japan and the United States take this as a guideline for their future actions, not just seeking a solution in Okinawa." He further mentioned, "This conflict is not an ideological argument from the viewpoint of anti-American sentiment or anti-bases. We simply do not need another base; that is the real voice of Okinawans living there." He detailed the current issue of the new base construction at Henoko, Okinawa. The gist of his speech is as follows:

"The present population of Okinawa Prefecture is 1,450,000. It enjoys a strong economy mainly with its tourist industry that rivals that of Hawaii. The base-related income is just 4.5% of the total prefectural income. Although the area of Okinawa is only 0.6% of the total area of Japan, 70.3% of the exclusive American military bases in Japan are concentrated there. Despite its overwhelming concentration, the Japanese government is trying to force a new base construction at Henoko. 60 to 70% of Okinawans

oppose it. I do not demand the immediate closure of all American bases as a political issue; I oppose a further burden on Okinawans due to the construction at Henoko. We support the United States-Japan Security Arrangement. This is our dilemma; the government presses that dilemma, taking it for granted. If Japan is a democratic nation, Japan should face this dilemma and make efforts to resolve it between the government and the people regarding the American

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base issue. As long as Okinawa has this dilemma, Okinawans say that it is impossible to solve the democracy issue of Japan without solving the issue of Okinawa. On August 31, Okinawa Prefecture cancelled the landfill work approval for a new base at Henoko. The government then nullified the cancelling under the Administrative Appeal Act. It means that the government exercised its authority as a private entity, twisting the law. I am critical about this,



The Diary of Anne Frank on Innovative Stage with Impact of Animated Space

Opera Pomme Rouge presented a novel production of The Diary of Anne Frank from November 1 to 4 at the Producers Club Theater in Midtown.

The General Director of this company, Anna Etsuko Tsuru, directed this monodrama as a magical fusion of animation and opera with her cutting-edge ideas. Music Director Ishmael Wallace's live accompaniment and lead soprano Kate

Fruchterman's beautiful voice and acting finesse expressed a remarkable range of emotions: an average day in a girl's life, the fear of being discovered by the Gestapo, the terror of the prospect of concentration camps and the desire to be a part of a better future. Projection Designer Yuriko Katori's 2,000 animations made a great impact on this production. All the words of the show were projected in the animation, designed as if the audience were watching Anne write the diary throughout the entire performance, creating a true people's opera.

(Article by Kaoru Komi/Photo and Translated by Opera Pomme Rouge)

because it is not an action for a law-abiding nation to take. The government even applies the exception clause of the law to enforce Okinawa to have another American base. The United States is the other party involved. Okinawa Prefecture wishes to hold a tripartite meeting among Japan, the United States and Okinawa. The United States simply treats the issue as irrelevant to them, saying that it is an internal affair of Japan. If Okinawa complains to the United States, it is conveyed to the Japanese government, and the Japanese government cuts off Okinawa under the Japan-United States Status of Forces Agreement. The base issue is then erased as if there were no voice of the people. No politician either in Japan or the United States listens to the voice of Okinawans concerning the issue of the American military base. Under these circumstances, how can Okinawans raise their voices? Both Japan that builds the base and the

United States that uses it are the parties involved. Where can we deliver the voice of Okinawans? How can Okinawans define what democracy should be? How can we Okinawans realize our desire to share the dignity of democracy with the United States? Dignity is very precious. The government should seriously meet with Okinawa. It would be like opening the Pandora's box of Asian security if Okinawa is neglected. As a prefectural governor, I strongly urge the United States to respect the voice of the people living in the Okinawan community. Japan is one of the most important allies for the United States. But, the United States is taking a stance to kick out democracy from Okinawa. Security is not an ideological issue; it is a matter of reality."

(Article and Photograph by Ryoichi Miura/Translated by Kunio Shimura)

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●Focusing historical issue from the overseas point of view chapter 22

73 Years After World War II, Two Billion Yen Paid by the Japanese Government

The Japanese government paid one billion yen twice to the government of South Korea as a reparation for the former "Comfort Women." However, the Korean government keeps condemning the Japanese government and saying that Japan has never officially apologized or paid any reparations to former "Comfort Women." The Korean government furthermore has appealed to the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations and allowed former "Comfort Women" to talk about their experience at the meetings of the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations. All of them who appeared at the meetings of the Human Rights Committee insisted that their experience was almost comparable to the "Holocaust." Furthermore, on July 30th of this year, a ceremony was held in Glendale, California to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the "Comfort Women" statue in the park.

According to the KAFK (Korean broadcasting company), Akira Chiba, Japanese Consul-General in Los Angeles, California, requested the influential members of the City Council to help remove the statue of "Comfort Women" from the public space. However, those members of the City Council

revealed their firm resolve not to remove the statue. Consul General Chiba also visited the Mayor of Los Angeles with some Japanese scholars and explained that the story of "Comfort Women" is completely fabricated. In order to promote good relations, Consul-General Chiba made arrangements to invite a garden architect from Japan for repair work at the Japanese Garden in Los Angeles. In April 2018, Consul General Chiba co-hosted a "Cherry Blossom Festival" along with the Mayor of Los Angeles. Thus, he has been trying to promote good relations between Japan and the City of Los Angeles, but it seemed to be difficult to persuade the Council members to remove the "Comfort Women" statue.

On December 13, 2017, Osaka City had decided to dissolve its Sister City relationship with the City of San Francisco. In terminating the agreement, he insisted that "to record the one-sided and untrustworthy assertion as the real historical fact does not only distort the real history but also smears the good relations between our two countries." Mayor Lee of San Francisco who was a Korean-American suddenly passed away on December, 2017. Therefore, the dissolution of the "Sister City" relationship was postponed and officially notified to the new

mayor in October 2018 after the Mayoral election.

On August 15 and 17 of this year 2018, the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations decided to take up such subjects as "Ainu," "Okinawa," "Koreans who live in Japan" and "Comfort Women." The representatives of the Japanese Government headed by Masato Otaka, Director General of the Foreign Policy Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, explained the present status of those subjects, and he received fairly good comments from the members of the committee about each subject, except for "Comfort Women." Some members of the Committee insisted that the issue of "Comfort Women" still has to be examined further. There is much evidence that the story of "Comfort Women" has been told plausibly. However, since the Japanese government paid a large amount of indemnity twice to former "Comfort Women," most Committee members firmly believe that "Comfort Women" were abducted and forced to be sex slaves by the Japanese military. It was a vital mistake by the Japanese government to pay indemnity without a correct description that 70 years ago the brothels were approved as commercial activities both in Japan and Korea. Even

though the ways of handling this matter by the Japanese government were awkward, the Korean government shamelessly distorts and fabricates the facts of "Comfort Women" on the international stage and keeps asking for indemnity.

On September 22, 2017, the "Coalition of Justice for Comfort Women" commemorated the first anniversary of the statue. Some members insisted that the purpose of this ceremony is to remember those women who were forced to be sexual slaves by the Japanese military. This is good evidence that those who are urging to build the statue of "Comfort Women" are completely ignorant about the history of Asian countries. The statue, which has been approved by the San Francisco City Council, was built at St. Mary's Park.

I am shocked and disappointed by some Koreans and Japanese who live in the United States and fully believe the allegations of former "Comfort Women." They are completely ignorant about the history of the country which their parents came from.

Yoko Wiles
Publisher, Potomac Newsletter