

Okinawa of now okinawa is a part of

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Okinawa is famous for their breathtaking sights and sparkling blue beaches. It is made up of one hundred other small islands forming a chain in the Pacific Ocean. But, these islands located between Japan and the Asia continent has more elements than just their amazing views. Okinawa has a very rich history, important political and social issues as well as creative literary pieces. As of now Okinawa is a part of the country Japan however, this was not always the case. Okinawa was originally under the ruling of the Ryukyu kingdom before being annexed by Japan and invaded during World War II. Sho Hashi was the first Ryukyu Dynasty founder and passed it down from generation to generation.

It was formed into its own independent nation and made its own distinct culture. But, according to the website “ Facts and Details” by Jeffrey Hays, “ In 1609, a feudal clan from the southern Japanese island of Kyushu invaded Okinawa and defeated the Ryukyu kingdom”. The website continues to state, “ In 1879, Okinawa was annexed by Japan and made into a Japanese Prefecture and Okinawans were assimilated into Emperor worshipping Japanese culture”. Okinawa was under the authority of Japan for the remainder of the time until the start of World War II, where the United States came into play. The Battle of Okinawa was one of the bloodiest battles in history between the United States and Japan. The US had their mind set on invading the Ryukyu islands which was part of the Operation Iceberg plan.

The website article “ Battle of Okinawa” by History. com confirms that, American forces were still painstakingly conquering Japan’s Home Islands, one after another. After obliterating Japanese troops in the brutal Battle of Iwo Jima, they set their sights on the isolated island of Okinawa, their last

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stop before reaching Japan. Okinawa's 466 square miles of dense foliage, hills and trees made it the perfect location for the Japanese High Command's last stand to protect their motherland. They knew if Okinawa fell, so would Japan. The Americans knew securing Okinawa's air bases was critical to launching a successful Japanese invasion. The Battle of Okinawa left both the US and Japan with a lot of bloodshed and lost lives.

The Japanese finally surrendered on August 14, 1945 ending World War II. The Battle of Okinawa still has greatly impacted Okinawa currently within political and social issues. In 1972, Okinawa was given back to Japan under their ruling however, Okinawa is still home to many US marines who are stationed at the Futenma Air Base.

The base is in the middle of a city which is very dangerous to many of the locals. The website "The Conversation" also asserts that, the bases where they live bring noise pollution and environmental degradation. US personnel stationed at the base have on occasion been charged with serious crimes, including rape and murder. Military facilities also eat up space that could be used for local development projects. Opinion polls suggest that more than 75% of Okinawans would like to see the US presence on their islands removed or reduced. This has been an issue for quite a while but, Trump's new administrations add to the complication by stating that Japan's interest is "too expensive". Getting rid of the US military could also have pros and cons to this issue as well. The website also continues to say, The current debate is highly polarised, meaning real progress is not forthcoming.

Politicians and business leaders need to start thinking with clarity, and to approach this unstable moment as an opportunity rather than a crisis.

This includes acknowledging that while the heavy US military presence comes with some short-term advantages, in the long-term, it comes with serious social, environmental and economic ills. The history of Okinawa has led to many great pieces of literature. Music is very popular in Okinawa which originated from the early Ryukyus. The book *Chimugukuru the soul the spirit the heart* written by Hui O Lailima, implies that “ The first known music of the Ryukyus were the ancient prayer chants of the nuru (priestess), called Omoro”(55). This was used for vocal music during celebrations or religious gatherings. The book also says, “ The main force behind the development of Ryukyuan music was the arrival of Chinese immigrants from the southern province of Fukien”(55). Folk songs and music are a part of Okinawa’s tradition. The website “ Okinawa Island Guide” agrees that, Okinawan music includes many old work songs, heartrending ballads and lively Kachaashii dance tunes as well as more modern experiments which are often the result of overseas influences.

The songs also vary greatly from island to island. In addition to Okinawa itself, the outer island groups of Miyako and Yaeyama as well as Amami to the north all have their own distinctive songs and individual sounds. The songs describe a way of life and are also played at Bon Odori or traditional dances that Okinawans partake in.

The website also says, “ The music of Miyako is notable for its plaintive, beautiful melodies”. Overall, there is plenty of activities and beautiful

scenery to take in when visiting Okinawa. But there is much more meaning and history in the roots of Okinawa that people may not know. Okinawa has gone through a lot from the battle in World War II, to being granted back to Japan all leading to the present political issues regarding the US.

Okinawa has many unique elements that are also in their literature pieces.