

Lecture 09:
“Sacrificed Stone”: Okinawa and the War

1. Premodern Position among Powers to 20th century

- a. Independent kingdom since ancient times
- b. Loose tributary relations with China: lucrative trade since late 13th c.
- c. Under rule of Satsuma domain of Kyûshû from 1609 to 1868
- d. Annexed as full-fledged prefecture of Japan in 1879
- e. US interests: Perry (1853) wants Okinawa as US protectorate

2. The Battle of Okinawa: “Typhoon of Steel” (March 26 to June 23*, 1945)

- a. The Dead Speak Volumes:
 - about 150,000 Okinawans (1/4 of population) comprised of:
 - 28,228 conscripts
 - 55,246 civilian combatant participants
 - 68,754 civilian non-combatants**
 - about 65,908 Japanese regular troops
 - about 12,520 US combatants
 - plus: up to 10,000 Korean colonial subjects, hundreds of Taiwanese, dozens of British
- b. US Images and Attitudes of the Battle
 - Kamikaze attacks and “Killing Ground”
 - THE reason to drop the atomic bombs
 - Territory won by blood of 12,500+ men
- c. Japanese Images and Attitudes of the Battle
 - Heroic Defense of the Homeland
 - Okinawans as Loyal Subjects and as Spies
- d. Okinawan Images and Attitudes of the Battle
 - Island stripped bare: human, natural, cultural assets decimated
 - Caves: sites of refuge and “shûdan jiketsu” (“group suicides”)
 - Refugee camps, rations, and blackmarkets
 - Legacies: bases, bombs, and bones