

Anthropocentric Ideology and Politics: Critical Remarks on the Anthropocentric Approach to Nature and Avian Fauna in Japan

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本論は、日本の行政・政策レベルにおいて、環境アセスメント制度の整備や密猟禁止の法制化を含め自然保護と野鳥保護のための措置を進める上で、環境保護運動の意義が大きくなってきている点に注目し考察する。ドイツや北欧諸国におけるグリーン・ポリティクスとの比較を通じて、日本の政治が人間中心主義的なイデオロギーに強く影響されていることを明らかにする。日本政府は第二次世界大戦後になってようやく自然保護への覚醒し、諸分野での改善の進行も遅いものであった。エコロジー思想がよく浸透しているとはいえない日本においても、最近では環境問題が一層の重要性を帯びるようになった。本論では、諫早湾、藤前干潟およびヤンバル森林地区といった事例を分析し日本の環境問題の中でもとりわけ緊急の争点について詳細に議論する。

This paper focuses on the increasing significance of the environmental activism in Japanese society that urges officialdom and decision-makers to develop more adequate environmental impact assessment procedures and to implement the measures for nature conservation and bird protection including the anti-poaching legislation. Through a comparison with the green politics in Germany and Nordic countries, it will be argued that Japanese politics is strongly based on anthropocentric ideologies. The Japanese state woke to environmental protection and conservation only after the World War II, making only slow progress in many fields. Though the ecological thinking has remained less prevailed in Japan, recently the environmental issues have become more significant in Japanese politics. This paper analyses more closely some of the most acute environmental controversies, including the ones of Isahaya Bay, Fujimae mudflat and Yanbaru forest.

1. Anthropocentric Politics

In the field of environmental politics reform environmentalism has often been criticised for being primarily concerned with human well-being. Some authors prefer to use the distinction between "shallow ecology" and "deep ecology" to describe the difference between the anthropocentric approach of reform environmentalism and the "biocentric" approach, which is motivated by a concern for nature in its own right. Whatever we wish to call the approaches that challenge the anthropocentric approaches of politics, one has to admit that these forms of political thought open a whole new horizon and represent one of the clearest examples of paradigmatic shifts in contemporary political and social thinking. Sometimes those who have analysed the foundations of "deep ecology" are keen to point out that these forms of thought are based on the realisation that all things in the biosphere or all living things in the universe have an equal right to live and seek their self-realisation. Furthermore, it may follow that going beyond anthropocentric thinking can itself be seen as a form of spiritual growth or emancipation of suppressed potential. Humans should be able to discover their true self as part of the biosphere and universe. In some ways that realisation may be similar in its nature to the other emancipation processes that human societies have experienced (cf. Macdonald 1991: 337-38).

The idea of seeking meanings from a possible symbiosis between humans and nature is directly opposed to the whole idea of the modern concept of ecosystem that was created to free scientific discussion from anthropomorphic and romantic connotations. The concept of ecosystem was (in its modern form)

introduced by the British ecologist Arthur G. Tansley to describe how energy and chemical particles flow in nature according to the laws of physics (Rytövuori-Apunen 1995: 179). Any discussion about a "sound" or "healthy" ecosystem, or about "sustainability" in general, is bound to make value-judgements about the morality of the politics or management of that particular ecosystem or environment (cf. *Ibid*: 178-188). It is no wonder that many people who have adopted any kind of worldview that is based on modern biology often have serious problems in accepting some of the views of "deep ecology". Of course, another way to challenge anthropocentric conceptions of the world is to reduce even people into a flow of chemical particles.

From the emancipatory perspective it is understandable that many ecologists are prone to seek their political allies from those who are primarily concerned with inequitable relationships within the human world. However, it may not always be easy to harmonise the ideas of "social justice" with those of "natural justice", since we are dealing with two different philosophical approaches that do not share many of their concepts. Any kind of "natural justice" must be based on the idea that the existing humans must assume responsibility for future humans and other species, and 'represent' their rights and potential choices. The current political practices are yet to take into consideration such an understanding of human responsibilities or obligations. However, from the point of view of politics the main issue often seems to be how to construct an anti-anthropocentric ideology and put it into practice.

Most of the Green political movements and parties have challenged some of the tenets of anthropocentric approaches to politics and tried to develop their own solutions to reorganise modern societies, economies and politics. However, the most successful Green Parties, most notably the German Greens, have been pushing a platform that seems to be primarily based on reform environmentalism, pacifism and social reformism. One cannot be entirely convinced of the sincerity of the convictions of the German Greens, either. Nonviolence was for many years one of the ideological fundamentals of German Greens, but look what happened once they got into government. German armies are once again being sent abroad to fight for reasons largely unknown even to the Green cabinet ministers. Of course, any political party that is operating in an affluent industrial democracy has to adjust to the political realities and maximise its popular support and coalition prospects. However, if even the "successful" Greens seem to be unable to go beyond anthropocentrism or to defend their main values, it does not promise a bright future for a quick political change in favour of non-anthropocentric or ecological politics. It still remains to be seen whether the German Greens will be more successful in their reform environmentalism now that they have a real chance to influence national decision-making.

In some respects the existing Green Parties and movements have already been able to produce tangible results in their societies. Finland now has the second Cabinet in a row with the Greens taking part in the coalition government and it seems like the party has come to be perceived as part of the political establishment and mainstream. The existence of a relatively powerful Green Party has also made most other parties re-evaluate their environmental agenda and in some cases seek close cooperation with the Green Party. In the Finnish case, the Greens have been most successful in reform environmentalism and possibly in their attempts to seek cooperation from the rest of the European Union to widen the scope of Finnish

environmental issues to Europe. In issues of "social justice", the Finnish Greens have found their most natural ally in the Social Democrats. As to the extent of how far Finnish politics has been "greened" by the new Constitution (approved for the second time by the Finnish Parliament by more than a two-thirds majority on 4 June, 1999), which has been under construction for decades and comes into force on March 2000, it contains a number of items that give a substantially higher political profile to the environment and sustainable governance. The new 21st article reads: "Responsibility for the environment: Responsibility for nature and its diversity, the environment and cultural heritage belongs to everyone. Public power has to strive for the protection of the right to a healthy environment and an opportunity to influence the decision-making about one's environment to everyone". It is also noteworthy that the new Constitution in its equality article (§ 6) addresses directly the rights of children to equal treatment: "Children must be treated equally as individuals and they should get to contribute, according to their development, to issues that have an effect on them." In other parts of the text, the frequent references to human rights, including specific references to the rights of the handicapped and foreigners, mark a clear shift away from the old-fashioned citizen-centred view of democracy. At least the new Constitution has been able to accommodate the ideas of biodiversity and responsibility for the environment as well as questioning the idea that only the present voters/ majority are the ones that count in democratic societies (Helsingin Sanomat verkkoliite. Uusi perustuslaki: <http://www.helsinginsanomat.fi/kotimaa/a-mappi/990213amappiperustuslaki.html>).

The example of Finnish politics indicates that reform environmentalism is gradually becoming part of the political mainstream. In the Finnish case the Greens have obviously played the role of the catalyst of change, but one should not overestimate their role as the motor of social change. In some other countries the Greens have taken the role of a more radical opposition force. In Sweden, most Greens are vehemently opposed to the European Union, European federalism, the European Monetary Union and any change in Swedish neutrality policy. In short, the Swedish Greens have effectively been working for the isolation of Sweden from the processes of European integration. The position of the Swedish Greens is in direct contrast with that of the Finnish Greens, who have had less problems in finding their place within European politics and cooperation. Many Finnish Greens and the Ministry of Environment under the Green Ministers have often welcomed the help of the European Commission and the Brussels bureaucracy in forcing the national governments to step up environmental protection and many Finnish Greens are ready to use the opportunity to influence European environmental and other policies. On the contrary, the Swedish Greens seem to be more concerned with the issues of democratic decision-making and the maintenance of Swedish national traditions and sovereignty. In many cases the Swedish Greens share their confidence in the universal superiority of the Swedish national institutions with many other political forces, especially with the Swedish Social Democrats. Most industrialised societies also have their "Green dissidents" or people who favour far more radical solutions to save the planet and/or the human race. In Finland Pentti Linkola, an esteemed biologist and author, is well known for his ideas of ecological totalitarianism and his criticism of the suicidal ways of the modern world. His writings are widely read and they have obviously greatly influenced Finnish ecological and political discourses. However, all influential Green and other

politicians are always quick to distance themselves from Linkola's ideas since sympathisers with Green dictatorship could not expect to win any elections or find political allies. However, Linkola's well-documented and well-written analyses of the collective suicide of mankind seem to appeal to a wide audience since they address both the anthropocentric-oriented mainstream and the ecologically oriented minority (for Linkola's most recent writing: Linkola 1999: 62-69).

If we want to generalise about the role of Greens in democratic industrialised societies, we may come up with the idea that any politically successful Green Party seems to have to refrain from too radical criticism of industrialism and economic growth. In short, the road to power is paved with compromises and reformist political agendas that repeat many of the old anthropocentric virtues. Moreover, it may be true that even the most successful European Greens often think in terms of national politics and have a long way to go to reach the level of a truly global ecological view.

2. Anthropocentric Politics and Japan

2.1. Anthropocentric Politics and the Environment in Japan

Japanese politics is very strongly based on anthropocentric ideologies. Environmental issues are an integral part of Japanese politics, but it seems that they are still all too often regarded as being part of "low" politics or "soft" politics and not something that really counts in the world of Japanese politics. When one observes Japanese political discourses, it is usually the national economic policies that get the most intense attention. In terms of ideological choices it seems that security policy provides an inexhaustible source for party battles and in-fighting and consumes the most ardent fervour for open ideological struggle. When the environment makes it to the political agenda, human-prudential reasons usually dominate the discussion. As a political strategy, reliance on the human-prudential reasons may offer the best hope for gathering support for less anthropocentric policies. Japan is a democracy and most politicians still believe that they need to make some kind of personal contact with their voters. Interest groups in Japanese politics usually represent quite narrow economic or ideological interests and it may be difficult to persuade the politicians that there are voters with a genuine concern for other people, not to mention non-humans.

Anthropocentrism may reach accommodation with environmental action. People in Japan should be aware that destroying the balance of nature has economic and social costs. We are talking about a society that has created and experienced such cases of massive pollution as the Ashio copper mine case (early Meiji period), the Minamata mercury poisoning case, the case of Toyama *itai-itai* disease, the case of Yokkaichi industrial pollution and recent discoveries of extremely high levels of dioxin in most parts of the country. However, most people's concerns seem to be limited to direct health risks. Moreover, when it comes to political parties and political behaviour, environmental politics is still rather undeveloped in Japan. There is no significant Green Party in Japan or a political force that has ideas that are critical of industrialism and economic growth. Japanese political forces that are critical of capitalism, most notably the Communist Party and the Social Democrats, have a very strong anthropocentric bias and in many cases are still seeking comfort from their fossilised tenets. As for the people in general, there

are studies indicating that the Japanese rate among the lowest in industrialised countries in environmental concern and awareness (cf. Kalland and Asquith 1997:7). Japanese society surely has its share of environmental activism and activists, but for various reasons the ecological arguments and green political philosophy seem to have difficulties entering the political agendas of the country.

2.2. Mystification of Japanese Traditions and Nature

Japanese perceptions of nature have been discussed for a long time. There is obviously a widespread myth that the Japanese people have a special kind of "love of nature". At the same time the Japanese are at least equally well-known for the environmental destruction they have caused at home as well as abroad. As an economic superpower, Japanese society bears a heavy responsibility for the world economy, for its successes and efficiency and for its inherent problems. Certain elements of Japanese culture clearly emphasise the aesthetic appreciation of nature and forms of religious or metaphysical relating to nature. However, it is sometimes pointed out that ideas and concepts of nature and culture often become blurred in Japan. Taming nature by the processes of cultivation or socialisation is often regarded as being perfectly natural. Therefore, Japanese culture may be seen to have a cultivating/refining impact on Japanese nature. On the other hand, environmental objects falling outside the culturally valued aesthetic boundaries tend to be ignored or even seen as unnatural. (cf. Kalland and Asquith 1997: 6-13) It further complicates the picture that rural "traditional" Japan is often idealised as the place representing the real Japan or something essentially Japanese that is uncontaminated by Western, industrialist or capitalistic influences (cf. Moon 1997: 228-229). The mystification/ reconstruction of Japanese traditions is largely based on an idealised image of a continued special relationship with nature. I agree with Tessa Morris-Suzuki that in Japan there has always been a multiplicity of "traditions" and that different ways of understanding the natural environment have evolved over time and have created a vocabulary and imagery which have been central to modern constructions of what it means to "be Japanese" (Morris-Suzuki 1998: 38).

Having discussed the issue of "garden" (*niwa*) with several members of my community and after observing the gardening practices of Miyazaki residential areas, I truly feel like a representative of an alien civilisation. Although the gardens in Miyazaki are often quite large, reflecting the affordable cost of land (by Japanese standards), a fairly large segment of my sample obviously appreciates the aesthetic beauty of concrete surfaces and the minority (whom I would call the traditionalists) keep their garden so tidy that there is no room for anything wild and uncultivated. However, it can be argued that for many Japanese city-dwellers their tiny gardens usually represent their closest contact with nature. It is also something that people are usually free to treat in the way that they want to. Most seem to unconsciously prefer taking a nature-domination and anthropocentric approach. It is difficult to find gardens with large trees, rich and diverse vegetation, birdhouses or feeders: all aspects that would make life much easier for the avian fauna (and that can be found in most Finnish residential areas). In short, the residential areas of many Japanese cities provide rather poor habitat for most bird species. The birds have to retreat to those spaces that are left uncontrolled, often this means the river banks and parks in cities. However, the river banks are frequently layered with concrete in the name of

flood control (and economic profit) and parks are often layered with concrete for the apparent purpose of creating nice places where people can walk on concrete surfaces. For many animal and plant species the mountains and remaining unspoiled coastal areas are the only places where they can continue to live. The simple fact that much of Japan is so mountainous that most land is not readily available for intensive use and human settlement has made it possible for much of the Japanese natural values to survive.

Of course, there are many Japanese people who frequent the Japanese "wilderness" and who can appreciate the diversity of Japanese nature - but those people still form a minority and in many urban areas there are an increasing number of people who are becoming more and more alienated from Japanese nature. It is also quite interesting that many people in the rural areas seldom visit the nearby areas of wilderness or have very little interest in what can be found there. In recent years the old term *satoyama* (literally the village mountain) has been much used to describe the liminal space where people and nature meet.¹ The idea has been to encourage people to pay more attention to their immediate natural surroundings and in this way to become aware of the environmental problems of their community. However, it may be argued that this way of thinking often represents just another form of the anthropocentric ideology of using nature for the benefit of people, in this case, for recreational use. The point, of course, is how the encounter between the Japanese people and nature takes place.

2.3. Killing Spree in Japan

In the Edo period (1603-1868) the behaviour of people was closely controlled by the rigid feudal social system. For domestic security reasons most people were not allowed to own weapons. In addition, the Buddhist and Shintōist ideas and beliefs about the sanctity/sacredness of life had a great impact on the thinking of people as well as on laws and regulations. However, what was most important, was that the intersubjective social practices did not allow casual killing of most living things. In his diaries written in 1690-1692 Engelbert Kaempfer wrote that "Wild, and by nature timid, fowl have become so tame within the confines of this densely populated country that many kinds ought to be regarded as domestic species" (Kaempfer 1999: 73-74). Kaempfer also describes in detail how people keep chickens and ducks but for "superstitious reasons" seldom to kill or eat them. Kaempfer also remarked about the abundance of such birds as storks and goshawks, both of which have become threatened in this century. His only comment that refers to the eating of birds is about the Cuckoo (*hototogisu*, Japan has four species) being "a rare night bird that is served as a great delicacy at grand banquets. When its calcinated ashes are mixed into *sake* that has gone sour, the sake becomes drinkable again" (Kaempfer 1999: 75). Kaempfer also provides another strange example of the exploitation of birds by writing that the Ospreys (*misago*, *pandion haliaetus*) are known to store the leftovers of their catch in a hole of a cliff and that people are in the habit of stealing some of the fish, but not too much at a time. The dish is then called *misago zushi* and it is very expensive and salty (Kaempfer, 1999: 75). In any case, there is compelling evidence that birds were doing reasonably well in Japan during the Edo period and sources such as Kaempfer also testify that Europeans at that time had a difficult time in understanding the Japanese relationship with nature and, in particular, birds.

The situation changed dramatically with the Meiji Restoration (1868) when advanced firearms suddenly flooded the Japanese market and when the authorities for some time did not seem to want to bring hunting under stricter control. The Birds and Beasts Hunting Regulation of 1887 established licensed hunting regulations but at the same time made it clear that wildlife was really for the hunt. With subsequent additions and revisions the national hunting laws provided very little protection for wildlife and it seems that the lawmakers and the public usually understood that hunting was about recreation, pest control and meat procurement. (cf. Brazil 1991: 18-19).

The end of the 19th century was the time of a great massacre of many Japanese species. The once vast flocks of waterfowl, geese in particular, were wiped out by uncontrolled hunting in a matter of a few decades. Before that time such species as the Snow, Lesser White-fronted, Brent and Canada Geese were all extremely abundant. At the same time the populations of cranes, storks, ibises and most other larger birds declined dramatically as a result of hunting. Most of these populations never recovered and for some species this was the beginning of a decline that would lead into extinction. As for smaller birds, they were quite indiscriminately caught by millions in fine mist nets. However, for many passerines, it is easier to make a comeback if the intensity of persecution declines. Some species have, in fact, been able to hang on quite well. Mist nets were banned for hunting in 1947 but the enforcement of most bird protection regulations has been most inefficient. In various prefectures mist nets are still widely used to catch considerable numbers of passerines, such as thrushes and buntings, in their thousands to supply the grilled-bird (*yaki-tori*) market. In their informative article, Matsumoto and Nakamura write about the widespread use of mist nets in Gifu Prefecture. The intended catch is usually the "edible" birds, most notably the Dusky Thrush (*tsugumi*, *turdus naumanni*), Pale Thrush (*shirohara*, *turdus pallidus*) and Brown-Eared Bulbul (*hiyodori*, *hypsipetes amaurotis*) but in reality such popular songbirds as the Bush Warbler (*uguisu*, *cectia diphone*), Blue- and White Flycatcher (*ôruri*, *cyanoptila cyanomela*) and Japanese Robin (*komadori*, *erithacus akahige*) meet their fate in nets. (Matsumoto & Nakamura 1998: 38-43). However, there is also a continuous campaign to stop poaching with mist nets and bring cases to court. Cases that have been taken seriously by authorities have often dealt with large numbers of such rare (and popular) birds as the Ryûkyû White-Eye (subspecies of *zosterops japonica*) Yachô 3-4/ 1999: 40-43). Moreover, many rice farmers are still ready to kill most flying objects as rice-stealing "sparrows" (*suzume*). Legal nationwide hunting seasons still exist for a wide range of birds, such as Black-crowned Night Heron, Copper Pheasant, Hazel Grouse, Chinese Bamboo Partridge, numerous Teal, Duck and Merganser species, Common Snipe and Eurasian Woodcock. In addition, the so called "harmful game birds" can be controlled under prefectural jurisdiction (cf. Brazil 1991: 18-20).

Another example of widespread illegality and public ignorance is provided by the continued practice of letting petshops trade in rare and endangered species. In the city centres of such large cities as Tôkyô and Kyôto anyone can always find on sale in petshops such rare birds as the Snowy Owl (*shirofukurô*, *nyctea scandiaca*), Great Grey Owl (*karafutofukurô*, *strix nebulosa*) and Peregrine Falcon (*hayabusa*, *falco peregrinus*)² Trade in imported animals is widespread in Japan and the authorities do not seem to care about enforcing even the most basic regulations, such as the

Washington Convention. In some cases the petshop owners are said to tell authorities that the illegal animals in their store or in printed advertisements are not for sale but only to attract customers.³ However, anyone visiting Japanese petshops cannot avoid seeing rare animals, including birds, suffering in tiny cages—with clearly marked price tags and information about the animals. Much of the regulation of the bird trade in Japan has targeted the protection of domestic songbirds. It is still a widespread practise to take from nests and keep in cages such popular songbirds as the Japanese White-Eye (*mejiro*, *zosterops japonica*) or Bush Warbler (*uguisu*, *cettia diphone*). In many places there are still annual singing competitions for *mejiro*, that gather huge crowds of people. However, the local authorities have demanded that domestic birds must be registered and that there should be a strict quota for each household. Information about registering your *mejiros* is distributed to all houses in many locations. Since there are restrictions, although weak, on the trade/registering of domestic birds, much of the bird trade has shifted to imported birds (for instance, in the case of Japanese White-Eyes, to Korean and Taiwanese subspecies). Since the international trade and transportation of wild birds kills/removes far more individuals than are actually traded, this development cannot be considered to be particularly bird-friendly.

The birds experienced a small victory in May of 1999 when the Japan Department Stores Association decided to ask its members to cease selling those Japanese wild birds whose capture and marketing are banned by law. The association apparently saw that it was better to halt selling the birds after it had received a petition from a Kyôto-based activist group. The national anti-bird poaching union (*zenkoku yachô mitsuryo taisaku renrakukai*) conducted a survey of major department store operators last year and found that quite a few outlets, mostly located in Tôkyô, Yokohama and Kyôto, were marketing such wild birds such as White-Eyes (*Mainichi Daily News*, 16 May, 1999, <http://www.mainichi.co.jp/english/news/archive/199905/16/news07.html>). In any case the department store campaign shows that publicity can be useful in such cases where the criminals care about their general reputation and want to avoid further public discussion (or possible legal consequences). In this respect it seems to be easier to pressure the department stores than the petshops.

When we analyse the bad treatment of birds we must bear in mind that the frenzy of killing was not limited to birds only. The relationship with nature seems to have experienced a major qualitative change during the Meiji period and only during the recent years can we see some signs of a possible re-evaluation of the continued destruction. For many species it is already too late to change the policies. For instance, both the Hokkaidô and Honshû subspecies of wolf (Ezo wolf, *ezoôkami*, *canis lupus hattai*; Japanese wolf, *nihonôkami*, *canis lupus hodophylax*) were hunted and poisoned into extinction during the Meiji period. The last Japanese wolf was apparently shot in 1905 in Nara Prefecture. In the case of wolves it can be speculated that the Japanese wolves were really caught by the modernisation process. In Hokkaidô, wolf hunting was related to newly introduced livestock/dairy farms and to the slaughter of the deer that used to inhabit most of the best grazing grounds. The dairy farmers apparently saw both the deer and the wolves as their enemies. In any case the Ezo wolf disappeared by 1889 following a large-scale wolf-poisoning campaign organised by the new livestock farmers. In recent years there have been some calls for the re-introduction of wolves but it seems unlikely that the majority

of people would accept the presence of wolves, especially "foreign" ones (see e.g. Yamane 1996: 105-111, Knight 1998: 47).

2.4. Environmental Protection and Public Administration

For most other species the modernisation process has had an impact in the form of habitat loss due to population growth (of humans), urbanisation, new methods in agriculture and forestry and industrial pollution. The trend in Japan that started in the Meiji period is to regard nature as the property of the people who own/ inhabit that territory. This change itself was led by the central government that wanted to make Japan affluent and strong (as the famous Meiji catchword *fukoku kyōhei* defines). The priorities were modernisation and industrialisation and the awareness of the need to protect the environment and the habitat of endangered species took a long time to develop in Japan. The prewar Japanese state largely ignored the need to protect the environment and modern environmental protection and activism has gradually grown during the postwar years. Knowledge of the environment has longer roots in Japan since biological and, for instance, ornithological research started to develop in the Meiji period. However, it took a long time before that knowledge was brought to serve the purposes of serious conservation. The Wild Bird Society of Japan was established in 1934 but it is only in the last decades that it has grown into the leading birdwatching and conservation society in East Asia. In 1950 the Wild Bird Society of Japan had just 677 members, 9688 in 1980, 50 821 in 1997 and 53 100 in April 1998 (*Yachō* 5/97: 44, *Yachō* 5/1998:46)⁴ One has to remember that even today hunters greatly outnumber birdwatchers in Japan and that the general awareness of the need and regulations to protect birds and their habitat is still quite undeveloped. However, the numbers of birdwatchers in Japan are steadily increasing. Unfortunately there are not too many well-known birdwatchers among Japanese politicians. In this respect the younger members of the Imperial family are making a better contribution to their society. Among the top politicians the most famous nature-related interest currently is collecting (dead) butterflies (about the history of ornithology and birdwatching in Japan, see Matsuyama 1997).

Japan has tried to maintain a strong central government since the days of the Meiji government and its national strategies to modernise Japan. This approach has focused on the idea of "national interest" and the administrative organisation has worked hard to produce the best knowledge of the interests of the nation. In short, the rule by strong central government has emphasised the virtues of rationalist argumentation and systematic thinking/planning. The national (imperial) universities saw from the beginning that their role was to train a national elite capable of scientific thinking and running the national bureaucracy. In short, the national government has usually been quite efficient in enforcing its will and in preparing national strategies. Therefore the Japanese government was initially in quite a good position to improve environmental protection having an efficient bureaucratic organisation and access to scientific knowledge. However, the national government has often appeared to be dragging its feet when it comes to environmental issues.

It seems that sometimes the local administrations have been more adept in addressing important social issues. The environmental regulation/legislation in Japan was largely initiated by local governments in the late 1960s and 1970s when

they wanted to take swift action against local polluters and they started to use long-unused formal statutory powers and assume a policy role in the field of environmental regulation in advance of the central government. This became possible after the opposition parties had sweeping election victories in a number of major Japanese cities and prefectures. The forerunner of the new trend was the Tōkyō Pollution Prevention Ordinance of 1969. Different kinds of pollution ordinances that took into account the local conditions were soon adopted by local governments in all parts of the country. This also sent a message to the Diet members and soon the parliament itself was known as the "pollution parliament" for the environmental legislation that it produced in 1970. After this, the government took on the task of strengthening regulations and upgrading national environmental standards. A major qualitative change was the enactment of the Environmental Protection Act of 1972 (Abe, Shindō and Kawato 1994: 67). It also seems that "horizontal competition" between the local governments is often instrumental in making local governments follow the improvements that have been adopted in some other locations. The ministries have also become skillful in putting pressure on the least progressive local governments to follow the general trend (cf. Muramatsu 1997: 50-51).

However, it can be argued that Japanese local administrations can not be expected to possess all the knowledge that is needed to handle complex environmental issues and that in many cases local interest groups have all too close links with the local authorities. For the local administration it is, of course, much more difficult than for the national government to lend their support to some endangered bird (that most bureaucrats have never heard about), if they face the unified resistance of local interest groups, such as the farmers, cooperatives and hunters. The parliamentary bill being currently debated to revise hunting legislation would transfer much of the powers of controlling wildlife from the central government to the local governments. This bill is a result of a lobbying campaign by farmers and a farmers' lobby group including a fair number of members of Parliament belonging to the Liberal Democratic Party. They claim that animals are destroying their crops and that government gives too much protection to wildlife. This campaign is trying to benefit from the current national policy agenda of decentralisation (*chihō bunken*). The national government is following a type of Reaganomics recipe for decreasing the role of central government. The idea is to keep national taxation at a low level, fix the fiscal deficit and decrease dramatically transfer payments and subsidies from the central government (For more about the *chihō bunken*, see Shindō 1996, Tajima 1996, Shigemori 1996 and Matsushita 1996. About the Wildlife Control Bill controversy, see Miyakawa 1999: 18).

The decentralisation scheme is also a way for the Liberal Democratic Party (*jiyūminshutō*) to modify its image and to seek more electoral support from the big cities.⁵ In economic terms the city-dwellers of large urban centres would certainly end up winners from decentralisation if the policy succeeds in its goals, but the idea of wider self-governing powers and greater citizen-participation has wide appeal also among those people who can expect that government subsidies to their communities are going to dry up in the future. The new hunting bill illustrates what kind of problems there are if the local governments are vested with more powers to make decisions that previously required national government approval. If local interest groups understand that their participation is valued in all matters, this may

easily turn against environmental protection in communities where environmental awareness is undeveloped and where the anti-protection forces tend to be far better organised. The whole idea of democracy is that the wishes of citizens are weighed equally by the government (cf. Saward 1996: 82-83).

Anthropocentric ideas may help to turn Japanese society into a more participatory and democratic society but improvement in "human rights" can sometimes take place at the expense of nature or "animal rights". It may also be argued that the Japanese central government, political parties and politicians in general have a similarly poor track record in environmental issues and that encouraging greater citizen-participation could provide a necessary stimulus for environmental activists to learn to cooperate better with authorities and to foster environmental awareness in general. It can be claimed that the Japanese political elite does not represent a much more informed or refined view on environment than do most others within the society and, at least in the Japanese case, there is no basis for defending authoritarian rule in Japan, whether on an eco-dictatorial basis or some other grounds.

In some narrow ways there is already environmental concern among the Japanese public, and popular movements against industrial pollution have a long and distinctive history in Japan (see e.g. Shimizu 1995). However, this concern tends to be extremely anthropocentric by its nature. Such issues as dioxin emissions, global warming and environmental hormones have caused something like hysteria among some people. Of course, the issues themselves are important but it is quite interesting that the public debate as well as much of the academic and popular literature is dominated by "hard" natural sciences. The issues of "traditional" nature conservation and protection are often minimal in Japanese environmental literature and texts often show a pathological interest illustrating in detail how pollution/environmental destruction takes place. Even standard ornithology books can sometimes suggest that a way to gather knowledge on the diet of nestlings is to cut their bellies open. The approaches of academic and popular environment literatures reflect the society around them. On the basis of media coverage and what is available in bookshops it seems that environmental hormones, dioxin and zero emission sell better than less anthropocentric topics.

3. Recent Cases of the Anthropocentric Approach to Nature Causing Threats to Avian Fauna in Japan

Among the most persecuted birds in Japan are birds that rely on wetlands. Since Japan lies on the route between various northern breeding grounds and more southerly wintering areas, it is ideally located to receive large numbers of migratory birds. Japan also provides a wintering ground to a substantial part of the bird populations breeding in the Kurile/Chishima Islands, Kamchatka, Eastern Siberia and parts of China and Mongolia. Many of these species are particularly dependent on wetlands. Most Japanese marshes have been reclaimed for rice cultivation and basic topography has prevented the formation of large river deltas. In addition, much of Japan's natural coastline has been lost to concrete structures and other artificial development schemes. The loss of tidal wetlands has been particularly deplorable since they are indispensable for migratory birds, but also because they play several roles in the ecosystem, such as purifying polluted seawater and

providing food (cf. Brazil 1991: 6, Kadono & Yûma 1995: 116-117 and *Daily Yomiuri* 11 May, 1999: 11).

The disappearance of habitat and feeding grounds together with persecution has directed many bird species to the last remaining tracts of wetland. These areas are usually of minor economic value so they have not been reclaimed earlier. However, some of these internationally well-known wetlands have been threatened in recent years by "development plans". Under the Ramsar Convention that provides international recognition and protection standards for wetlands, Japan had registered 11 wetlands, the latest being Lake Man, a large mangrove-covered tideland in Okinawa, by the seventh Ramsar Conference that was held in Costa Rica in May 1999 (*Asahi Shinbun* 17 May, 1999: 3 and 22). By Asian standards this is a good beginning but, for instance, Britain had registered 135 sites. In the Japanese case the fifth Ramsar Conference, held in Kushiro, Hokkaidô, in 1993 was significant in increasing awareness of wetland conservation. It also demonstrated that the Japanese authorities were at that time totally unprepared to cooperate with environmental NGOs. They even tried to prevent Japanese NGOs from participating. Japanese administrative practices have also made it difficult to designate wetlands under the Ramsar Convention or to guarantee any other type of effective protection. For instance, having a wetland registered under the Ramsar Convention, requires that the Environmental Agency must first designate the site as a specially preserved district under the "Law Concerning Protection of Wildlife and Game". However, this procedure also requires that the agency must obtain the consent of local authorities. In some cases the local authorities are the ones who represent the direct threat to these areas, as was the case in Nagoya with the Fujimae mudflat. Furthermore, the Environmental Agency has its own bureaucratic ways and arbitrary rules. For instance, the Agency has set a rule that to make Japanese sites eligible for Ramsar recognition there must be at least 20,000 migratory birds visiting them each year. In the case of the wetland in Anparu, Okinawa, the local government requested a Ramsar designation, but the Environmental Agency refused to cooperate because their condition of 20,000 migratory birds was not met (cf. *Daily Yomiuri* 18 May, 1999: 11, for a good introduction to the Japanese wetlands, Kadono Yasurô & Yûma 1995).

What was different in the two recent cases that I will describe in the following, was that these two cases, Isahaya Bay and Fujimae mudflat, were accompanied by wide debate and media interest in Japan. These cases were also instrumental in forcing a change in the environmental impact assessment procedures. Furthermore, there was immense pressure for the Environmental Agency to review some of its practices. Both cases also sent some message to politicians and made them think about the issues of wetland conservation. In both cases activists also tried to make use of foreign pressure (*gaiatsu*) by trying to seek international publicity for their cause. For instance, the city of Nagoya has been competing to host several international meetings/ events and some of the local politicians must have felt somewhat uneasy when they noticed that their city was becoming best known internationally for environmental ignorance.⁶ The wide media coverage apparently contributed to better environmental awareness in Japan. However, one should not overestimate the impact of these debates. In spite of all the noisy controversies concerning wetlands there is almost regular news about new threats being posed to the last remaining habitats for migratory birds in different

parts of Japan (about the current situation of mudflats/ tidelands and their birds, Kuwabara 1998: 27-33. For the plan to destroy a tidal flat in Junninchô, Kagoshima Prefecture, *Asahi Shinbun* 17 May, 1999: 22).

After the biggest danger was over in Fujimae, the most important environmental battle concerning wetlands was fought in Sanbanse, Chiba Prefecture. There was a plan to build a second highway around Tôkyô Bay and as a part of that project to reclaim 740 hectares of tideland off the coast of Ichikawa and Funabashi cities. According to the original plan, the highway was supposed to go through the central part of Sanbanse tideland which is the largest remaining tideland in Tôkyô area and one of the major habitats for wetland birds in Japan. However, the Chiba Prefectural Government conducted its own environmental assessment survey and as a result decided to substantially reduce the planned area of land reclamation to 101 hectares. Under the revised plan, the new highway will go through the site near Ichikawa and will leave much of the Sanbanse area as it is. The prefecture also canceled its plans to build housing areas, industrial complexes and garbage disposal facilities in the planned area. In part, those decisions are based on the low growth of the economy (*Asahi Evening News*, 9 June, 1999: <http://www.asahi.com/english/enews/enews.html>). The result of the Sanbanse scheme should not be a cause of celebration since the project will have still a harmful effect to the tidal areas. However, this time one of the most powerful prefectural governments changed its plans due to growing public pressure and dissatisfaction. The principal reason for revising the plan was stated to be the protection of wild birds and as such this decision is of foremost importance. Furthermore, it seems like in this case the environmental assessment survey served as a face saving way to provide a way out for the Chiba Prefectural Government and it would be most welcome if the other prefectures would also get used to taking their own environmental assessment surveys seriously. Of course, in all the big Japanese wetland battles one would not have needed much of an environmental assessment survey to become convinced of the value of these areas or to understand that reclamation would be quite detrimental for a wetland.

3.1. The Isahaya Bay Land Reclamation Project

Isahaya Bay in Nagasaki Prefecture off the Ariake Sea used to have tidal flats extending over more than 3,000 hectares at low tide and was the largest such area remaining in Japan. The bay is an important area for migratory shorebirds, including many rarities. On 14 April 1997, a seven kilometres long seawall constructed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery closed off about a third of the bay. The authorities cited two reasons for the project: 1) to create farmland and 2) to control floods. The history of the project goes back to the 1950s and then agricultural land was badly needed. The project took shape in the 1970s and was kept going by the bureaucracy. However, local priorities changed many times during that period and when the construction of the floodgates started there was no need for extra farming land in the area and many of the local people had already started to question the wisdom of the whole project. The flood control argument that was invented after the farmland argument became widely questioned was too far-fetched and did not convince most observers. The project appeared to many as a typical example of the bureaucratic mismanagement that characterised Japanese central government. At the same time "administrative

reform" (*gyōsei kaikaku*) was one of the leading political catchphrases and the Isahaya Bay reclamation project could easily be used to illustrate why there was a need for reforms. The Tōkyo-centred national media picked up the topic and various opposition politicians, most notably the present Minshutō leader Kan Naoto, tried to use the issue to embarrass the government. The public debate did not seem to have much impact on the politicians and bureaucrats (including the Environmental Agency) who had approved the project a long time ago. In fact, it seems that several LDP politicians felt like they would have lost face if they had given in to the pressure.

However, there was no argument raised about the importance of Isahaya Bay for migratory birds. It was also clear from the beginning that a massive reclamation of land would greatly decrease the number of migratory birds in the area and would most likely contribute to the drastic decline and eventual extinction of several species. The bureaucrats and politicians who approved the project did so with the knowledge that the project would destroy one of the most important sites for migratory birds in Japan. This shows that they did not care much about the birds as such and that they did not worry too much about the possible international consequences either, migratory birds, after all, are clearly not only a Japanese concern.

Isahaya Bay used to accommodate some 10,000 birds during the migration peaks. These birds included a wide variety of waders and plovers. As for its specialities, the Australian Curlew (*hōrokushigi, numenius madagascariensis*) and Saunder's Gull (*zugurokamome, larus Saundersi*) are among the most characteristic. After the flood gates were closed the number of birds in the area has, of course, been in decline. Most of the area is now a dry, cracked wasteland, covered with dead shellfish. The numbers of migratory birds have been reduced to fewer than one hundred in the reclaimed area. Nowadays the best place to see Ariake Sea birds is probably the Saga Prefecture side especially at Daijugarami. Among the quite unusual birds that have been seen in the area are, for instance, the Spotted Greenshank (*karafutoaoashishigi, tringa guttifer*), the Caspian Tern (*oniashisashi, Sterna caspia*) and the Spot-Billed Pelican (*haiiroperikan, pelecanus philippensis*) (for Daijugarami and the current birding situation of the Ariake Sea and Isahaya Bay, Miyazaki 1999: 38-39 and *Daily Yomiuri* 27 April, 1999: 11).

In the Japanese media the Isahaya Bay struggle, however, was symbolised by the pictures of dying mudskippers (*mitsugorō*). Before this, many Japanese people probably had never learned about the existence of these sympathetic looking and relatively rare creatures. Seeing them die for a questionable project was something that disturbed a significant part of the Japanese public. It may also be argued that the type of emotional media coverage that the Tōkyo-centred national media suddenly gave to Isahaya Bay alienated many local people: the Tōkyō journalists seemed to care more about the mudskippers than about the people and the problems of remote parts of Nagasaki Prefecture (for the Isahaya Bay case, see Yamashita 1998, Yamashita 1996: 27-29 and Suwa 1997: 203-212).

2.2. Fujimae Higata

Fujimae mudflat is the other highly contested bird territory in Japan. It is located in Aichi Prefecture near the centre of Nagoya City. The city has been growing rapidly and in the process most of the wetlands in the river delta have

been reclaimed and layered with concrete. A relatively small area very close to the city has remained and forms an irreplaceable location for migratory birds. In terms of numbers, Fujimae Higata comes fairly close to the numbers of Isahaya Bay. It was this lucrative spot of wetland close to the city that the city administration wanted to turn into a garbage dump. What followed was an unforeseen battle for birds in Japan. Nagoya is home to many environmental groups and has a large urban population. That made it easier to form a rapidly expanding movement to save the wetland. What proved to be crucial was that this campaign tried to monitor and pressure carefully all the environmental impact assessment procedures. It can be argued that because of this pressure the Environmental Agency was ready to take a more active role in demanding that the City of Nagoya take seriously all the environmental impact assessment procedures. The city's basic position was that only part of the wetland was included in the garbage dump plan and that the birds could use the remaining areas or find new areas (very possibly built by the city). For the pro-protection side it was easy to prove that the city's position was untenable and in the end the Environmental Agency found the courage to use the powers given by the environmental assessment legislation to stop the project and assign Fujimae mudflat a status as a bird protection area. The Fujimae is regarded as a precedent in terms of environmental assessment, and from June 1999 the legislation will further improve transparency and the opportunities for citizen-participation in environmental assessment (for more about the environmental assessment procedures and the battle for Fujimae, *Yachô* 2/1999, several articles: 4-15 and *Yachô* 3-4/ 1999: 44).

As for the birds of Fujimae, the Australian Curlew (*hōrokushigi*, *numenius madagascariensis*), Whimbrel (*chūshakushigi*, *numenius phaeopus*), Greenshank (*aoashishigi*, *tringa nubularia*), Gray-Tailed Tattler (*kiashishigi*, *tringa brevipes*), Ruddy Turnstone (*kyōjoshigi*, *arenaria interpres*), Terek Sandpiper (*sorihashishigi*, *xenus cinereus*), Great Knot (*obashigi*, *calidris tenuirostris*), Red Knot (*koobashigi*, *calidris canutus*) and Asiatic Dowitcher (*shiberiaōhashishigi*, *limnodromus semipalmatus*) are among the most characteristic species. As for plovers, such species as Mongolian Plover (*medaichidori*, *charadrius mongolus*), Greater Sand Plover (*ōmedaichidori*, *charadrius leschenaultii*), Ringed Plover (*hajirokochidori*, *charadrius hiaticula*) and Black-Bellied Plover (*daizen*, *pluvialis squatarola*) can be found together with their more ordinary relatives. The Fujimae tidal land protection society (*fujimae higata o mamoru kai*) chose the Curlew (*daishakushiki*, *numenius arquata*) as its symbol. The (Eurasian) Curlew is an uncommon transient in Japan (Isahaya used to be the other place to find them) and for many European birdwatchers it is quite surprising to meet this old acquaintance in a public relations role in Japan (for the birds of Fujimae Higata, see Morii 1999: 32-33).

4. The Anthropocentric Approach to Nature and the U.S. Military Bases in Okinawa

4.1. The Situation of the American Military Bases and the Unique Nature of Okinawa

The U.S.-Japan Security Treaty has served as the basis of Japanese security policy since 1951. However, the Ryūkyū Archipelago, the Prefecture of Okinawa,

was maintained under American military occupation until 1972 when it was finally returned to Japan. During the years of occupation Okinawa became heavily militarised and after the reversion much of the American military presence continued. Even today some 80% of the American military bases in Japan are located in Okinawa. In January 1998 there were 235 square kilometres of land used by 37 U.S. bases in Okinawa Prefecture. However, at the time of reversion (1972) there were 83 bases and therefore we can see that there has been a gradual downscaling of the foreign military presence in Okinawa. Much of the land used by bases is private property that has been leased without the consent of the landowners. The bases have understandably greatly disturbed the local communities. Especially after the widely publicised rape incidents in 1995, which made the Okinawan situation well known in other parts of Japan, there has emerged a wide political consensus that there is a need to be more sensitive to the wishes of Okinawan population (for more on the Okinawa bases, *Bôeihakusho, Heisei 10 nenban/* 1998: 310).

As for its nature, the Ryûkyû Archipelago is a truly unique place in the world. The islands are part of a narrow peninsula that once connected the present Taiwan and mainland Asia with all the islands of the Ryûkyû Archipelago. However, between the Amami Islands and the Tokara Islands there is a trench and the ancient peninsula ended just off the coast of Kyûshû. Therefore the so called Watase Line still marks the zoogeographical boundary between Japan and the Ryûkyû Islands. When the ancient peninsula turned into a chain of islands, the different islands with their diverse habitats turned into a laboratory of evolution and a museum of relic species. Much of the flora and fauna of the Ryûkyû Islands is endemic to the islands since they have been isolated from the mainland populations for some 500, 000 years. Many of the surviving species represent ancestral forms of modern continental species. One example is the Amami Black-rabbit (*amaminokurousagi, pentalagus furnessi*,) that lives on Amami Ôshima and nearby Tokunoshima. The Amami Black-rabbit is currently endangered due to habitat loss and human-introduced pets. In recent years the biggest threats to its last remaining habitats have been posed by golf course plans (for the Amami Black-rabbit, see Sugimura 1996: 60-61. For the nature of the Ryûkyû Islands, Short 1999: 11).

However, industrialisation/modernisation (including new farming and forestry methods), the military campaign of 1945 and the subsequent large-scale military presence have irreversibly destroyed much of the natural habitats of Okinawa. What has been tragic for the Ryûkyû Islands is that members of the American military are not best known for their kindness to birds and in some cases they have secured a place in Japanese history by their massacre of local birds, in addition to their contribution to the destruction of various prime habitats. During the Allied Occupation Period (1945-51) the Occupation Troops are known to have shot significant numbers of Inner Sea area loons (*ôhamu, gavia arctica* and *shiroeri-ôhamu, gavia pacifica*) that were greatly respected and revered by the local population. The American soldiers apparently mistook the loons for ducks or treated them as fish thieves. However, the local fishermen had for ages received significant assistance from the loons in locating their most valuable catch, the Tai fish. (Momose 1995: 92 and Momose 1997: 9).⁷

The situation in Okinawa, is, however, much more complicated. It seems like the massive 4000 hectares U.S. Marine training area in Yanbaru that covers all of the northeastern part of the Okinawa main island has, due to military use, remained

one of the most well-preserved areas in Japan. This mountainous area provides a rich habitat for species that are not found anywhere else and for many other species that have seen a dramatic decline in their numbers elsewhere in the Ryūkyū Islands. Of the 283 species described as endangered by the government of Japan, 88 can be found in the mountains of Yanbaru and most of these in the eastern part of it that is under the control of the U.S. Marine Corps. In the western part of Yanbaru the main employment is in forestry and construction. A network of forest roads was completed at the end of the 1970s. In the absence of other work opportunities it is very difficult to convince the local population of the need to preserve nature. Since the 1970s the destruction of nature in the western part of Yanbaru has proceeded rapidly. Subtropical/tropical nature is very vulnerable to deforestation. When trees are cut down, the thin top layers of soil are exposed to the natural elements and the soil will flow into rivers during rainfall. After that the forest and its ecosystem are gone forever. The eroded soil will still cause problems for the river ecosystems making it difficult for fish to breed. The coral reefs in the Yanbaru area (as in much of Okinawa) are on the verge of extinction (for Yanbaru nature, see e.g. Sakaguchi 1997: 11, for Yanbaru birds with travel tips, see Nihon rettō. *Yachō* mappu 1994:124-125. For the current situation of the Yanbaru, *Yachō* 7/1998: 12).

When the Okinawans organised mass protests in 1995 against the bases and some people in Japan started to question the whole security arrangement, the government (primarily the cabinets of Hashimoto and Obuchi) tried to find solutions that would decrease the territory held by U.S. bases in Okinawa. Some of their functions can be moved to other locations in Japan since there are some communities that still welcome American troops for political and economic reasons. However, most existing host cities already have their share of problems with bases and there is no community in Japan that is ready to be taken over by a large-scale military build-up. Moreover, according to most military analysts Okinawa is strategically well-situated and keeping most military functions close to each other brings obvious benefits through synergy. In short, there is no alternative location for the Okinawa bases in other parts of Japan.

The remaining option has therefore been to find new alternative locations within Okinawa that cause less problems for the Okinawan people and are acceptable to the Americans. Among the Okinawans one of the priorities has been to get rid of many of the military functions in close proximity to the provincial capital of Naha. The relocation of Futenma airbase has been made conditional on finding a new location elsewhere. The public discussion has largely been dominated by a quite imaginative plan to build a floating heliport to protect the local population from the people who are supposed to be there to protect them. The Americans have politely but firmly let it be known that they would rather have firm ground under them. The pressure has been accumulating to move some of the functions of the other military branches to the vast Marine country of Yanbaru. The Marines obviously have no choice but to admit that they do not necessarily need every inch of that land for their training (for the Okinawa bases land issue, see e.g., *Bōeihakusho, Heisei 10 nenban/ 1998: 309-318*).

However, the Marine Corps apparently do not want to give away their land without fighting. After the Japanese government started to look for territory where seven helipads and their access roads could be located in Yanbaru, the Marine Corps hired a Ryūkyū University research team headed by Professor Iwahashi

Osamu to survey the environment of the seven alternative proposed locations within the Yanbaru base. The team discovered that all the candidate sites are habitats of rare species of animals and plants. Twenty two of the species discovered are native only to Yanbaru and there were at least 95 species that are included on the Japanese government's lists of endangered species. As for the birds, the species that is most threatened by the base relocation scheme seems to be Pryer's Woodpecker (*noguchi gera*, *sapheopipo noguchii*), which has a population of less than 200 individuals (Brazil 1991: 191, writes that the population estimates have, since the 1950s, ranged between 40 and 200 individuals. Brazil mentions 90 woodpeckers as the most recent estimate)⁸

For most birdwatchers Yanbaru is best known for the Okinawa rail (*yanbaru kuina*, *rallus okinawae*). This crane could hide among the marines without anyone identifying them for science before 1981. These birds should be easily distinguishable for their flaming red bill, legs and feet and conspicuous white cheek patches. At least there is no other bird with whom they could be confused. These relatively large birds are not even extremely rare compared with some other Okinawa species. Brazil puts forward an estimate of probably 1000-2000 individuals and writes that from his experience it was widespread in the mid 1980s throughout the northern part of the island wherever suitable habitat remained (Brazil 1991: 112).

Iwahashi's research team submitted in April 1999 a letter asking for a review of the relocation plan to the Defense Facilities Administration and the U.S. Embassy in Tôkyô. The Wild Bird Society of Japan (*nihon yachô no kai*) also requested in April that Okinawa Governor Inamine Keiichi review the relocation plans. On April 27 the Japanese and American governments through their joint Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) reached a decision on the return of part of the Yanbaru training area, the relocation of the Sôbe communications facility to Camp Hansen, in the central part of Okinawa island, and the relocation of a number of residential areas for U.S. military personnel. Both governments specifically pledged that the construction of alternative facilities would have minimal impact on the environment (see e.g., *Daily Yomiuri*, 26 April, 1999: 2, 29 April, 1999: 2, *Asahi Shinbun* 17 May, 1999: 1).

A few days after this decision the Japanese government announced that the main site for the G-8 summit for the year 2000 will be the small village of Busena and its resort hotel in the central part of Okinawa Island. The home village of the newly elected Okinawa Governor Inamine Kei'ichi (Liberal Democratic Party), who was personally praised by President Clinton during Prime Minister Obuchi's visit to the United States in May 1999, is next to the site. In Japan and Okinawa the choice of the location for the next G-8 summit is regarded as mega news and it seems that for some time there is not going to be much discussion about the problems involved in the return of the Yanbaru training area. It seems that the American and Japanese authorities (including the Prefecture of Okinawa) have been able to find some mutually acceptable solutions for the base issue and have taken some heat out of this hot political issue. It remains to be seen how serious all the involved parties are about the "minimum impact on the environment" but there is a reason to be concerned about the motives of both governments. Any change in the status of Yanbaru can expose its unique nature to the dangers of development, including recreational use. It is quite sad that the people who seem to care most about the birds of Yanbaru are the U.S. marines.

4.2. Going Beyond Anthropocentric Politics in Okinawa

The Okinawan people have, since the loss of their independence in 1879, been deprived of many of their democratic rights. Okinawa Prefecture is the poorest of all the 47 Japanese Prefectures and the massive military presence has had a distorting impact on the whole community. It is no wonder that among the priorities of most Okinawans is: 1) to have more power over their own lives; 2) to minimise the military presence; and 3) to find alternatives for social and economic development (for the contemporary social and political situation in Okinawa, see e.g. Okinawaken 1996 and Arasaki 1996). In this kind of social and historical situation one cannot expect that there would be, for instance, widespread popular support for turning the whole Yanbaru area (about a quarter of Okinawa island) into a nature sanctuary. For the governments of Japan and the United States it is relatively easy to ignore the rights of the animals and plants of Okinawa after having ignored the people of Okinawa and their rights for so many years. Moreover, it can be argued that the Yanbaru training camp is in many ways similar to the Galapagos Islands (and its problems) and that its unusual natural values are part of the common heritage of this planet, which should not be subject to the narrow interests of humankind, Japanese or Okinawans. Japanese politics is very strongly based on anthropocentric ideologies. When the national anthropocentric bias is combined with a foreign policy and a security policy approach that is essentially based on power politics and political realism, nature in Okinawa does not have many sincere defendants.

In such an environment one is left with human-prudential reasons for the protection of Okinawan nature. It may be argued that destroying the balance of nature in places like Yanbaru or Okinawa's coral reefs will just bring economic and other kinds of damage to the people of Okinawa and that it will easily end up destroying the basis of the lives of people. On the other hand the destruction will also remove the option of using the natural wonders of places like Yanbaru for the economic gain of the local people, for instance, in the form of (more or less) sustainable ecotourism. As a political strategy reliance on human-prudential reasons may offer the best hope for gathering support for less anthropocentric policies. It has been pointed out that in some other democratic societies political ecologists/green politicians have a tendency to publicly give human-instrumentalist reasons for care for the environment, but they are still likely to have been motivated to do so by considerations of the intrinsic value variety (see e.g. Dobson 1995: 66-71)

The years of political oppression and mass movements have turned Okinawa into a highly politicised community. The Okinawan local elections, such as the heliport referendums or the recent elections of the Okinawa governor (where the incumbent Governor Ôta was replaced by Inamine) have national and international importance and the population of Okinawa is becoming increasingly aware of their new international role. Generations of people of Okinawa have already lived thousands of years together with their environment and they must be given credit for preserving what is still left of the unique nature of the Ryûkyû Islands. In the intrinsic value judgements of the people of Okinawa there must be something that could serve as a basis for developing wider awareness of the value of Okinawa's nature which could help the people unite to protect their environment. These solutions must always be culture-specific: local conditions and cultures will always

have an impact on the ways that people relate to nature. In addition, one could argue that, in democracies, people do not only always just get the kind of leaders that they deserve, but also the kind of environment that they deserve.

5. Prospects for a New Type of Ecological Citizenship and Symbiosis with Nature in Japan

To become ecological rather than narrowly anthropocentric citizens, existing humans must assume responsibility for future humans and other species, and "represent" their rights and potential choices according to the duties of environmental stewardship. In most societies there are already clear moral and legal obligations to assume responsibility and protect the rights of those humans who cannot be defined as morally competent or full citizens. However, to pay sufficient attention to all the moral obligations that are related to sustainable governance and global environmental responsibilities there is a need to radically reinterpret the whole concept of citizenship and citizen-participation. The new kind of ecological citizenship will by its nature be transnational or global (cf. Christoff 1996: 158-163). Unfortunately, it seems to be most difficult to bring about an international political force that could assume the duties of such an environmental stewardship. Even in Europe, where the Green Parties have been relatively successful in a number of different societies, international cooperation has been relatively ineffective. In Western Europe, the European Commission and its agenda of economic rationality has created an atmosphere where anthropocentric politics rules and where even its critics usually have to be satisfied with moderate reformist policies.

In the context of contemporary Japanese society and its political practices, it seems like the anthropocentric paradigm is not going to collapse anytime soon. Japanese decision-makers are not blind to both the global and local needs to set society and economy on a more sustainable course. Japan is a country where national and local administrative organisations have long experience of long-term planning that often touches the needs and rights of future generations. However, when it comes to assuming moral responsibility for other species, Japanese society is obviously not too amenable to such ideas. The Japanese environment will for some time be saved or destroyed based on human-prudential reasons. As for a redefinition of citizenship and democracy, that will gradually take place probably as a result of continued social change and realignment of current political forces. As the result of the social changes and processes of internationalisation, Japanese society has been steadily globalising from within and the old type of nationalist or insular thinking has less appeal to younger generations. Future Japanese citizens will grow more unpredictable in more ways than one. That means that political parties or other political organisations cannot rely on the steady support of any interest group if they do not know whom the groups represent. The atomisation of society is the first step toward a new social organisation and a new kind of social participation, and a new understanding of the place of human beings in society, culture and environment.

For avian fauna, the future does not look particularly bright in Japan: it is most likely that there will be quite a few extinctions of species before humans are ready to move to a more holistic and sustainable paradigm in relation to the environment. The natural conditions of Japan have been favourable for maintaining

an unusually diverse and distinctive bird life and ecosystem, in general. It remains to be hoped that the destiny of the Japanese Crested Ibis (*toki, nipponia nippon*) is not a premonitory sign of the future of the Japanese environment. There is still hope—even for the the Toki: the two individuals, You You and Yang Yang that were brought to Niigata in January of 1999 as symbols of Sino-Japanese friendship are doing well and suddenly there is again hope that there will be new generations of Japanese-born *tokis*.

The first successful artificial breeding of the Crested Ibis in Japan produced the first chick on 22 May, 1999 at the Sado Crested Ibis Conservation Centre. The chick remained top news in Japan for weeks, replacing the war in Kosovo and economic issues. One has to congratulate NHK for having the right priorities for once. Also the national newspapers covered the story of the Crested Ibis chick well (see e.g. *Asahi Shinbun* 23 May 1999: 28 and *Asahi Shinbun* 29 May 1999: 1). The publicity that the Crested Ibises have lately received has certainly done a lot to improve the awareness of Japanese people about issues of extinction and the need to find solutions before it is too late. In relation to the Crested Ibises there has also been speculation about possible high-tech solutions to help endangered species. As for the *tokis*, the first thing to do would be to resuscitate the lineage of Japanese Ibises by using the preserved DNA of the deceased Japanese-born Ibises and the last remaining individual (female), the elderly *toki* named Kin (see e.g. Kobayashi 1999: 11). During the time in late May 1999 when "toki fever" reached its climax, the Environmental Agency and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries announced that they were resorting to tough measures to protect two other bird species, namely White's Ground Thrush (*zoothera dauma amami, ôtoratsugumi*) and the Amami Woodcock (*scolopax mira, amami yamashigi*). Protection may include artificial breeding of the species. Furthermore, the Environmental Agency will conduct more research to help prepare measures to protect these species and their habitat as well as run a poster campaign to make people aware of the need to protect these species (see e.g. *Asahi Shinbun* 28 May 1999: 30 and *Daily Yomiuri* 29 May 1999: 2).

It is difficult to say whether the sudden popularity and fame of the Crested Ibises is a sign of a new willingness to seek symbiosis with nature and an appreciation of life in all its many forms. After years of indiscriminate persecution and destruction of habitat it seems that the Crested Ibis has at the same time won national fame and become something like a rare and valued treasure for the people of Japan (for the history of *toki* and their protection, Kunimatsu 1998). Few people in Japan even take notice of the fact that the Latin name of this particular bird should touch the national sensitivities of the nation. Is the *toki* one more example of the need to first become a national (or local) and cultural symbol before a bird species can expect to receive effective protection? It is also somewhat worrisome if bird conservation debates in Japan start to be dominated by cloning techniques and artificial breeding methods. It would surely be nice to clone a few thousand Crested Ibises, but it would make more sense if the destruction of the habitat of other endangered species would be stopped at the same time. When it comes to the Environmental Agency, it seems that in some cases it is the same people who are responsible for letting the destruction of prime bird habitat proceed who are planning high tech solutions for bird protection. That raises the question whether anthropocentrism in Japanese nature conservation is somehow related to national

decision-making practices. It may be that the bureaucrats of the Environmental Agency are just thinking about the "national interest" from their narrow anthropocentric perspective. If the alternative is to make citizens exercise their ecological responsibility, it will take more than a few poster campaigns to achieve tangible results.

Notes

¹ For the historical types of *satoyama* cultures that developed around local natural conditions in different locations in Japan, see Yasuda 1996: 164-191. Some of the Japanese *satoyama* discussion seems to be characterised by sweeping generalisations about the relationship between the "Europeans" and their forests as a contrast to Japan. Yasuda 1996: 192-208.

² The prevalence of Northern birds of prey among the pet shop birds strongly suggests that there is a widespread bird trade with Russian suppliers/smugglers. For instance, such birds as the Great Grey Owl can hardly be found naturally even as vagrants in Japan.

³ When the authorities actually decide to act, the charges often reveal much about the actual attitudes of those in charge of law enforcement. For instance, when there were widespread complaints about the sale of orangutans in an Ôsaka petshop, the owner was finally detained for allegedly violating a local ordinance concerning the display of untamed animals. In this case we are dealing with a large number of primates that should be protected by the Washington Convention. Yamamoto 1999.

⁴ As a contrast it may be noted that the American Audubon Society, founded in 1886, had 780 thousand members in 1994 and the British Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, founded in 1889, has some 940 thousand members. *Yachô* 5/97: 44

⁵ The LDP has traditionally been dependent on the farming population's vote. However, the issue of the liberalisation of trade and deregulation first forced the LDP to choose its side and align itself more clearly with the business interests of the mainstream of Japanese economy. Decentralisation would also allow the LDP to maintain more diverse policy agendas in different locations. The LDP may also consider that the farmers do not have any other political party that would listen to their opinions and that they can afford to break free from too close a relationship with the declining farming population.

⁶ In fact, the Aichi Prefectural Government also had to scale down its plans to destroy 540 hectares of forest to build the main venue for the 2005 Aichi Expo (that is supposed to attract some 25 million visitors) in order to protect Goshawks (*ôtaka*, *accipiter gentilis*). Goshawks are endangered in Japan after years of persecution and this Nagoya hill is one of the few places where there are still 12 Goshawks nesting. The decision of the prefectural government to build some of the facilities in other areas can be seen as a measure to make it appear that it is doing something while actually making no significant concessions. It is most likely that the completion of the 2005 Expo venue will destroy one of the last remaining Goshawk habitats in Japan. However, the Aichi Prefectural Government at least had to take the trouble to pretend to be concerned about the environment (which is one of the themes of the Expo). (*Mainichi Daily News*, 3 June, 1999: <http://www.mainichi.co.jp/english/news/archive/199906/03/news01.html>) Most Japanese environmentalist groups have demanded from the beginning that the site should be

changed. Some Fujimae mudflat campaigners even spread information all around the world about the environmentally hostile politicians of Nagoya to stop the Expo being given to Nagoya.

⁷ However, it should be pointed out that within the Allied Occupation Forces there were several individuals who had a great interest in improving and learning about the situation of Japanese wild birds and who cooperated with Japanese birdwatchers. For more, Matsuyama 1997: 194-212.

⁸ The Wild Bird Society of Japan is trying to do its share to protect Fryer's Woodpecker and the Okinawa Rail and with the financial assistance (¥5 million) of the Amway Corporation it acquired in 1993 three hectares of forest in Yanbaru. The Yanbaru area is one of the five wildlife reserves owned by the Wild Bird Society of Japan.

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