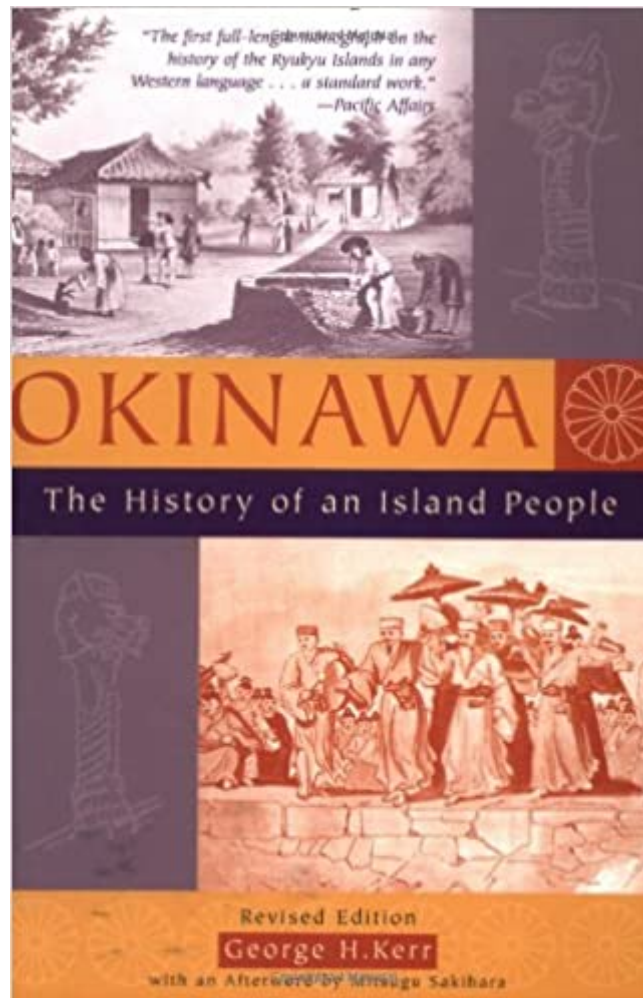




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# Okinawa: The History Of An Island People



## Synopsis

"The first full-length monograph on the history of the Ryukyu Islands in any Western language—a standard work."—Pacific Affairs  
This book is the definitive work on Okinawan History and an important scholarly work in the fields of Japanese studies and Japanese history. Few people can point to Okinawa on a map, yet this tiny island sitting between China and Japan was and continues to be one of the most crucial Asian nerve centers in all U.S. strategic defense. Ninety percent of all U.S. military forces in Japan are located on Okinawa, one of the Ryukyu Islands, and it was through these troops that the martial art of karate was exported to the United States. In *Okinawa: History of an Island People*, noted Eastern affairs specialist George Kerr recounts the fascinating history of the island and its environs, from 1314 A.D. to the late twentieth century. The histories of Japan, Okinawa and the entire Pacific region are crucially intertwined so the study of this fascinating chain of islands is crucial to understanding all of East Asia. First published in 1958, this edition features a new introduction and appendix by Okinawa history scholar Mitsugu Sakihara, making this the most comprehensive resource on the small, vital, and intriguing island of Okinawa.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"[*Okinawa: The History of an Island People*] is history, firm, frank, organized and detailed, from the mythical past to the military present. It is a lifetime work of scholarship, full of life"

—Mainichi Daily News  
"The first comprehensive history of the Ryukyuan people to appear in any Western language—recommended to students of East Asian culture, who will find it a

valuable addition to their libraries." "The American Anthropologist"[Okinawa: The History of an Island People is] a book that answers the questions of the curious layman, satisfies the standards of critical scholarship, and is readable and fascinating besides." "American Historical Review"Comprehensive and well-researched, this definitive book of the history of the Ryukyus is able to capture the essence of the Okinawan people. Their trusting and peaceful nature; strength and tenacity through typhoons, poverty, disease, and invasion; and grace and adaptability are all in evidence as they juggle dual allegiances to China and Japan; interact with interlopers and bellicose outsiders including Christian missionaries and Commodore Perry; and adjust to the post-WWII American presence, Reversion, and transition to a tourist economy." "Goodreads

George Kerr, a Far Eastern affairs specialist for more than sixty years, served a variety of roles for the U.S. government, taking assignments in Formosa, Korea, China, the Middle East, Okinawa, and Europe. He is the author of Formosa: Betrayed and Okinawa, Vol. 12 of the Ballantine Illustrated History of WWII, in addition to many articles for journals. After retiring from government service, he lived in Hawaii, where he continued to write and research until his death in 1992. Mitsugu Sakihara is a professor and the president of Hawaii International College. Prior to assuming his duties at Hawaii International, he taught for many years at the University of Hawaii-Manoa, where he continues to teach an annual course on Okinawan history. Dr. Sakihara was a 1987-88 Fulbright professor to Japan, and he is the author of Brief History of Early Okinawa: Based on the Omoro Soshi and co-translator of The Status System and Social Organization of Satsuma.

I first found this book in the local library on the Marine Corps base I was stationed at in Okinawa, Japan. It was a great read, for anyone interested in the history of Okinawa at least, and as I researched Okinawa for my college degree I realized the author is one of the leading authorities on Okinawa's history. I highly recommend this book.

There are few books in English of the history of this island state. Okinawa has a proud history, despite being dominated by the Chinese, Japanese, and Americans. It was an independent kingdom for hundreds of years and the Okinawan people are still proud of that heritage. I read the first edition of Kerr's book and still have it somewhere on my shelf. This newer edition adds some post-WWII information and deals with the issues of modern Okinawa. A must read for anyone looking beyond the resorts, beautiful beaches, and omnipresent military bases of present day Okinawa.

I bought the Kindle edition. There were probably hundreds of typos but it's still readable. Words like "life" were sometimes printed as "Ufe" and stuff like that. The writing itself is a bit dull but there is good information. One of the reasons I was reading this book was to find out more about what happened in Okinawa during WWII but that part of the book was very short. More time was spent talking about the antics of some nut called Bettelheim.

Super hard read. One page at a time. But you will walk away knowing a lot about this wonderful island. Wonderfully researched.

Read the book just before a recent visit to Okinawa. I wanted to understand the history of the island(s) and the people that live there. It was comprehensive and very revealing and greatly enhanced my experience. It opened my eyes to the cultural differences between Okinawa and the main Japanese islands and I was able to better understand the subtleties I observed. It also helped me understand the transformation of feudal, isolationist Japan to Imperial power. It was all very much worth it when I first saw my first ancient mausoleum and I had an idea of what I was looking at and what it meant. Great stuff.

This book needs to be updated but it is still a good read. Sections on the early history of Okinawa are especially interesting. There is a lot of new information that might contradict some of the information in this book, given it was written nearly 60 years ago. Still, Okinawa: The History of an Island People is well written and accessible to general readers.

Interesting

Many many things I didn't know about the Okinawan people. A great book.

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