Okinawan-English Wordbook
I would like to express my best wishes on the publication of the Okinawan-English Wordbook.

It has been more than a century since the first Okinawan left here for the island kingdom of Hawai‘i, sowing the seeds of a relationship that now produces a very special flower. The Okinawan-English Wordbook, like the island cultures that nurtured it, bears the traces of a wide variety of people and cultures.

For many years, the late Dr. Mitsugu Sakihara, who came to the United States from Okinawa in 1951, painstakingly matched the words of his youth to the words of his adopted home, eventually compiling an Okinawan-English dictionary with nearly 10,000 entries. After his death in 2001, his unpublished manuscript was studied extensively by linguistics scholars at the University of the Ryukyus, who shared their work with their colleagues at the University of Hawai‘i. Two years ago, the Center for Japanese Studies at the University of Hawai‘i, and the University of Hawai‘i Press, took on the task of publishing Dr. Sakihara’s work in wordbook form, timed to coincide with the 4th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival.

This work, the dream of an Okinawan immigrant to Hawai‘i, was brought to completion through the efforts of people from two distinguished universities. Okinawa Prefecture would like to adopt the Okinawan-English Wordbook as a memento of the the 4th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival.

I hope that the Wordbook will form a bridge between the Okinawan immigrants overseas and the Okinawan people in this prefecture, and that this bond will be further strengthened to develop mutural contributions in the future.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deepest respects to all the individuals involved in this project.

Keiichi Inamine
Governor of Okinawa Prefecture
January 2006
Okinawan-English Wordbook

A short Lexicon of the Okinawan Language with English Definitions and Japanese Cognates

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University of Hawaiʻi Press
Honolulu