

Topics

(2) Meet the “Okaka,” the Leading Ladies of the Protest Movement

A group of Uchinada women who called themselves the “Okaka” were highly active throughout the Uchinada Struggle. At that time, because most of the men of Uchinada were fishing offshore, many of the wives, mothers, and other women who remained in town became central players of both the sit-ins and the petition activities.

However, because the Okaka were also tasked with supporting their families by doing farm work, fishing in the Kahoku Lagoon, and selling their family’s wares, the prolonging of the protests resulted in many of them becoming destitute if they neglected their other responsibilities too frequently. Recognizing the Okaka’s double bind, many of the students who were active in the protest movements began to help them with their farm work and fishing. Also, because many villagers’ incomes sharply fell from participating in the sit-ins, they were flooded with financial support and daily necessities tirelessly sent in from all over Japan. Supported and encouraged by people from the entire country, the Okaka were able to help continue the protests.