

## “You are the future of Japan and its environment”: A message from African conservation activists during the third Yakushima Fieldwork Seminar (August 2001)

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Ninyi ndiyo kesho ya Ujapani na mazingira yake (Swahili title)

Maana kwa ufupi katika Kiswahili (Swahili abstract)

Mwaka wa 2001 Agosti, katika kisiwa cha Yakushima, kusini ya Kyushu Ujapani, kulikuwa mikutano ya watu wanayojitahidi kuhifadhi misitu na viumbe vyake katika Kenya na Democratic Republic of Congo. Watu waliowahi kufika kutoka Afrika ndiyo hawa: Bw. Wilberforce OKEKA (Msimamizi wa KEEP, Kakamega Environmental Education Program, West Kenya), Bw. John KAHEKWA (Msimamizi wa POPOF, Polepole Foundation, Kahuzi-Viega National Park, DRC), Bw. Kanyunyi BASABOSE (Mtafiti wa sokwe-mtu katika Centre de Recherches en Sciences Naturelles, DRC), Bw. David BISIMWA (Mchoraji wa POPOF). Watu waliowakaribisha wageni hawa Waafrika walikuwa: Dr. YAMAGIWA Juichi (Mwalimu wa Elimu ya Kima katika Chuo Kikuu cha Kyoto), Dr. YUMOTO Takakazu (Mtafiti wa Elimu ya Mazingira katika Chuo Kikuu cha Kyoto), Bw. TETSUKA Kenshi (Mchoraji na mwongozi wa watalii katika Yakushima) na mkewe Bi. TETSUKA Tatsuko (Mchoraji) pamoja na Dr. ANKEI Yuji (Mwalimu wa Elimu ya Maisha ya Binadamu katika Chuo Kikuu cha Mkoa wa Yamaguchi) na mkewe Dr. ANKEI Takako (Mtafiti wa Elimu ya Mazingira). Wanafunzi ishirini kutoka sehemu mbalimbali ya Ujapani na wakaaji wa Yakushima walifudhulia mikutano. Walinzi wa misitu walianza kueleza magumu ya kazi yao kati ya vita na ukosefu. Mwanafunzi mmoja aliuliza swali moja kuhusu jinsi walinzi waliweza kupata nguvu na moyo wa kuendelea na kazi yao ya kulinda mazingira. Bw. BASABOSE alieleza maana ya mazingira na kazi yake ya kulinda maisha yetu. Bw. OKEKA na Bw. KAHEKWA walitaja jina la Mungu anayesaidia kuongeza nguvu zao za moyoni kila mara. Walieleza jinsi wanajaribu na bidii katika msitu wa Kakamega, Kenya na Msitu wa Mlima wa Kahuzi. Wakasema kwamba wakaaji na serikali wakiungana mikono pamoja na NGO na watafiti, wataweza kufaulu kabisa. Tena wakiongeza waliwaambia wanafunzi hivi: “Tumefurahi sana kuweza kubadilishana mawazo pamoja na ninyi vijana. Kwa sababu elimu ya

mazingira mnayoyajifunza leo ndiyo kitu cha kwanza cha lazima kabla hamjaanza kuhifadhi mazingira yenyewe. Tafadhalini msisahau kwamba ninyi ndiyo kesho ya nchi yenu na mazingira yake."

Keywords: community-based conservation, environmental education, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Yakushima

### Introduction

This article aims to introduce readers to an example of the ways in which today's environmental education may be conducted. Researchers in field sciences, ecology and cultural anthropology for example, are more and more confronted with ethical issues of research in the midst of local and global problems concerning so-called "development" and the conservation of biological and cultural diversities (Ankei, 2002; Ankei, 2003; Ankei & Fukuda, 2003; Baba & Ankei, 2003).

Three NGO's appear in this article, one from Japan, and two from Africa. Here are brief introductions to each of them.

YFS, or the Yakushima Fieldwork Seminar was started in July 1999, and has been held annually for a period of one week. It was created with the initiative of researchers who agreed to work as voluntary tutors, and the municipal town of Kamiyaku-cho has offered it with moral and financial support. It is a part of the activities aiming to establish an open-air eco-museum (Yakushima Field Museum) in the World Heritage Site in Yakushima (Ankei 1999). Every year some twenty students from different universities participate in it, and several students from the Yakushima High School are also invited. We help these students to experience a variety of topics in field sciences: the life of macaques, deer, plants, insects, culture-nature relationship, and so on (Ankei *et al.* 2002, Shimizu 2002, consult the YFS's websites).

KEEP, or the Kakamega Environmental Education Program was personally began in the late 90's by Mr. Wilberforce OKEKA, who worked as a subordinate staff in Kakamega forest, the unique debris of African tropical rainforests in West Kenya. It has grown up very quickly to one of the most active and potentially effective community-based NGO's working for the conservation of endangered forests in Kenya (Okeka, 1999; Ankei, 2002).

POPOF, the Polepole Foundation was created in the eastern end of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC, former Zaire) with the initiative of Mr. John KAHEKWA. It has aimed to find out a sustainable relationship between the existence of Kahuzi-Viega National Park (World Heritage Site, famous for its Gorilla tours) and the local people surrounding it. In spite of the unimaginable difficulties during Mobutu's regime and the civil wars that followed, it has survived and continued its activities steadily, just like its name Polepole, which means slowly in the Swahili language (consult POPOF's website for more details).

### Many encounters

In August 2001 we had a chance to invite our old friends to Yakushima from Kenya and Democratic Republic of Congo. We have long wished to have such an exchange of experience among Africans and Japanese who have worked very hard for the conservation of endangered forests and their wildlife. These were the participants: Mr. Wilberforce OKEKA, chair of the Kakamega Environmental Education Program (KEEP) Kenya (Okeka, 1999). Three experts from Democratic Republic of Congo which was under continuing civil wars: Mr. August Kanyuni BASABOSE, primatologist who comes to Yakushima Island for his second time, Mr. John KAHEKWA, the founder of Polepole Foundation (POPOF) which aims to conserve the Gorillas in Kahuzi-Viega National Park, east of DRC, and Mr. David BISIMWA, the leading artist for POPOF. Mr. TETSUKA Kenshi and his wife Mrs. TETSUKA Tatsuko of Shirakoyama village carefully arranged their stay and activities. Dr. YAMAGIWA Juichi kindly accompanied them during their stay in Yakushima. Apart from their experience in the forests and fields, river and ocean, they had a lot of occasions for encounters with local peoples. Let us enumerate some of them.

(1) 16 August 2001. ANKEI's house in Yamaguchi City. Dinner with some members of the Association for the Marronier Forest. Their aim is to hand down clean and abundant water for our future generations by way of planting and conserving broad leaved tree which have been neglected in the making of recent man-made forests.

(2) 17 August 2001. Festival in Kita-Kyushu City. Exposition on the theme of African forest conservation. Three seminars 15 minute each with some performance of music by Prof. Ankei and his students. Kenyan tea was also served to the participants.

(3) 18 August 2001. Academic reports at Kyushu International University, Kita-Kyushu City. Dr ANKEI Takako, Mr. OKEKA, and Mr. BASABOSE gave a presentation each, and Mr. Kahekwa showed a video of POPOF activities in an annual

meeting of the Japanese Society for Environmental Education. On our way from Kita-Kyushu City to Kagoshima City, we had a chance to pay a visit to Japan's biggest camphor tree growing in Kamou Town's shrine.

(4) 19 August 2001. Kagoshima City. Joined Mr. BISI MWA and Dr. YAMAGIWA coming from Kyoto. A big typhoon kept us from departing for two days. 21-26 August, we jointly had activities with the students, tutors and professors of Yakushima Fieldwork Seminar, which was in its third year. Students comprised of 16 university students and 3 pupils of Yakushima High School. Drs. ANKEI supervised four students studying the relationship between human life and its natural environment, and invited them to have a conversation with us.

(5) 23 August 2001. Miyanoura town, Yakushima. A symposium on African forest conservation in the big hall of the Foundation for the Environmental and Culture of Yakushima. More than 100 persons participated, a number much more than we expected.

(6) 26 August 2001. Participated in an outdoor concert on a bank of Miyanoura River. We sang a well-known African song *Malaika* with Mr. YAMAGUCHI Michio, who stayed a long time in Africa as a tour-planner, and we also sang "*Amenohiniwa amenoutao, harenohiniwa harenoutao* (Rain song for a rainy day, sunny song for a shiny day)" during a song of *Ippon no Ki* (A single tree) by the Big Stone Band directed by Mr. NAGAI Saburo, an activist for the conservation of the forest in Yakushima. Two Japanese girls came to see their old friend Mr. OKEKA all the way from Tokyo.

(7) 27 August 2001. Miyanoura Town. We organized an Eco-tour Workshop. A total of more than 50 guides and other local people participated and had a very frank exchange of opinions. We had an auction for POPOF in which pictures of wild animals drawn by Mr. BISI MWA were auctioned.

In this collection of narratives of our African friends, we would like to underline the following words as the core of their messages: "Youngsters, you are the future of Yakushima Island and the future of Japan."

Let us exchange our countries.

Students: *Jambo!* How do you find Yakushima Island and Japan?

Okeka: After our visit to Kyoto, Yamaguchi, Kita-Kyushu and Yakushima, I am now convinced that Japan is a country, which we Kenyans can regard as a good example for us. I would like to live here in exchange for you! Everywhere in Japan there are beautiful forests and the roads are well cleaned. This is evidently a result of the endeavors of the government, and of the endeavors of the people who have worked hard to keep this country green and beautiful.

Kahekwa: I feel quite honored to have had a chance to visit Yakushima, a World Heritage Site just like our Kahuzi-Viega National Park of DRC. Here in Yakushima, high mountains are covered with forests and people live between the forest and the ocean, and they seem to conserve well the fauna and flora. We walked only some 30 kilometers in Yakushima guided by Mr. Tetsuka, and we had an impression that the destruction of the forest stopped about 20 years ago. Forests are well conserved and the roads are well cleaned.

Basabose: Japan has an advanced technology in the domain of industry and also of conservation. But even in Yakushima local people do not know very well about their forest. Although they live close to the forest, many of them do not visit it, nor know of it. It is queer, isn't it? So, I believe that you have a lot of things to do here in Yakushima concerning environmental education. It is almost unbelievable that some Yakushima people have never seen the forest or monkeys. As for the clean and good roads of Japan, good will and technology will not be enough; we should note that we need economic background to maintain these roads in such a good condition. Please continue your efforts to environmental education. I very much appreciate your Fieldwork Seminar as an example.

### The importance of the forest

Student: Thank you for your comments. But what drives you so strongly to the activities of forest conservation?

Basabose: We cannot live without forests, or without the wildlife living in them. When I understood that fact, I began working hard for forest conservation. Forest is, so to speak, the house for wildlife, and it is also important for my research of feeding ecology of chimpanzees. Further, Kahuzi-Viega National Park is a World Heritage Site. It is not the property of the Congolese only; it is the property of all the people of the world. So, Japanese, British, and Congolese, we all should make an effort to conserve this treasure of the world.

Okeka: I first came to know the forest when I got my job as a subordinate staff in the forest department of Kakamega Forest. What I realized first was that trees have been there before we humans appeared. We benefit a lot from the forest: for edible fruits, barks as medicine, timbers for houses and so on. We can live a better life thanks to the forest. I knew that forest provide us abundant and clean water. We can breathe in a good atmosphere thanks to the forest. Birds, butterflies, snakes, and primates all depend on the forest.

Since ancient times humankind have lived in the forest and have benefited from it with other wildlife. I learned that the important forest is rapidly disappearing because of growing human population and their activities. For example, Kakamega Forest was once a part of the great tropical rainforest that expanded from the Atlantic Ocean to Uganda and West of Kenya. But now, only 240 square kilometers are left, which is about half of Yakushima Island. Kakamega Forest has been isolated, got much smaller, and is losing the continuous canopies that covered the forest. Local people have collected firewood, made charcoal from trees, and have removed bark for medicine, to the effect of consuming more than the forest can produce.

Thus Kakamega Forest is now disappearing, and its wildlife is in danger of extinction. Now I am convinced that we must do something to conserve the forest. Endemic birds of Kakamega Forest may become extinct. Birds travel from Europe to Kakamega Forest or stop in it for further travelling. They do not tend to come to big cities like Nairobi. It is my hope that the generations of my children and their children will be able to see birds coming from Europe and many other wildlife of Kakamega Forest. We must stand up to assure that the future generations will enjoy the benefits from the forest as we do now.

### Towards forest conservation by local people

Student: Can you tell us some of your activities to conserve the important forests

for us and for future generations?

Kahekwa: In Kahuzi-Viega National Park of DRC the government protected the forest using guns. Such protection was and is necessary because local people tend to slash trees and transform the forest into cultivated fields. But, such protection brought no benefits at all for the local population. Although elephants and baboons often come from the National Park and destroy their fields, there was no compensation from the government. Tourists pay as much as 150 American dollars or more to see wild gorillas in the forest for only one hour. All the money was directly sent to the central government at Kinshasa and did not benefit local people. Afterwards, it was determined that 40 percent of the income from the tourist was to be used locally.

Ankei: One hundred and fifty dollars corresponds to the average annual per capita income of Congolese people.

Kahekwa: Local people thought that one day they would revenge the National Park and its wild animals, which continued to destroy their crops. This is why we began our activities of POPOF in 1992. We aim to find a way of reconciliation between the National Park and local peoples surrounding it. The new logo mark of POPOF clearly shows our standpoint.

Okeka: The attitude of the government is almost the same in Kenya. Protection of the forest by the government means to use guns to catch poachers and illegal cutting of trees. They are sent to the police, and after a court decision they are fined or jailed. Local people regard this "protection" as an act of harassment of the government to them. I understand very well what they feel since I worked as a patrol of the forest department.

Basabose: "Protection" means, for example, surrounding a plot with a high fence. Conservation is something quite different from that kind of protection.

Okeka: Exactly! Power can only protect, but it cannot conserve the forest. It is true that we must depend on the products of the forest to some extent, but we only exploited the forest and we have not cared for it. That is the problem.

Any and every NGO that aims to conserve the environment must also aim to fight against poverty. It is education of people that diminishes poverty. Otherwise, we cannot stop the destruction of the environment. Along with education endeavors, planting useful trees will also diminish the increasing population pressure to the forest.

If only a small number of people protect the forest and local people know nothing of conservation, we cannot arrive at solution of the problem.

Further, protecting a certain species may badly influence other species that are

not protected. In short, conservation of the forest means for me to know it and to know to use it in a wise way.

#### Environmental education first

Student: Please let us know of your present activities.

Basabose: Protection by the government should be continued for the present. We must endeavor to teach local people for the conservation of the forest and the wildlife. Five years ago, I agreed to be a member of POPOF, and have worked hard to teach local people. Our aim is that local people understand themselves, agree themselves with, the importance of the forest, and the importance of finding a way to co-exist with it.

Okeka: We cannot conserve something we do not know. I began by teaching children and pupils, those who will benefit for a longer time than us. At the beginning, I got only five children including mine from one primary school. Afterwards I got to teach older people. Now as many as 300 children come to the Resource Centre and Classroom of KEEP on Saturdays. These children tell their brothers and sisters what they experience in the Resource Centre, and they will bring them to the next classes. They also tell what they learned in KEEP activities. As a result, many parents now agree to be KEEP members, and they are now as many as one hundred and twenty. In this way, our efforts to conserve the Kakamega Forest through education of local people have come to be well expanded in the region.

Basabose: Last year, thanks to the invitation by Professor Ankei, I had a chance to visit Kakamega Forest and see their activities. Partly inspired by KEEP activities, we POPOF also began a course of parataxonomy for nature guides. Further, we began to teach small children, aged 3 and 4, about gorillas. I am convinced that these children will conserve their environment when they grow up. Thank you for your audience.

#### In the midst of difficulties

Student: What made you so determined in your conservation endeavors in spite of many obstacles and difficulties?

Basabose: Let me explain an outline of our difficulties in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. During the civil war of Rwanda in 1994, the UNHCR set up refugee camps consisting of as many as 250,000 refugees just on the outskirts of the Kahuzi-Viega National Park. The UNHCR bought all the trees growing in the villages near the camps and made them into firewood. Many refugees could not help depending on the National Park for their food, firewood and medicine, or all their daily necessities.

Kahekwa: Then, civil war broke out in our country in 1998. Many guns were distributed among local peoples, and we were deprived of our guns to protect the National Park.

Basabose: People have hunted animals since long long ago, but they used bow and arrows, spears, and small traps to catch game. It was sometimes very dangerous and needed a lot of courage to do hunting in the forest. An elephant killed in the forest was equally divided among the villagers for consumption. Nowadays poachers kill many elephants for the purpose of taking their ivory and not for their meat. Civil war drastically changed hunting methods: dozens of elephants and gorillas can easily be killed with machine guns in a few seconds. According to the latest census we carried out last year, all the families of gorillas habituated to tourists disappeared. The total number of gorillas came to about a half, and 600 elephants have been killed to leave only a trace of two or three elephants.

Kahekwa: We must persuade the poachers to agree to come to our side of conservation. We tell them this way; "You risk your life everyday, and get only a small amount of money for it. Come and work with us for conservation using your knowledge of wildlife, a continuous work for everyday, a work of hope instead of destruction."

Basabose: We must find a way to talk with our enemies in order to accomplish our work of conservation.

Kahekwa: It is true that some refuse to abandon poaching, but the result was quite wonderful. Many poachers returned their guns to the government, and became members of POPOF. This may be regarded as the biggest success in our trials. Americans and Europeans working as cooperative aids in Kahuzi-Viege were all against our project of inviting poachers to cooperate. The staff of the National Park said, "Why on earth do you believe that we can cooperate with poachers?" After one year of our endeavors, poaching drastically decreased and all of the donors and staff of the National Park were convinced of our project, and they totally agreed with us.

#### Civil wars and political problems

Okeka: In our country, politicians usually tend to favor the demand of the population rather than conserving wildlife.

Ankei: The situation may change if wildlife had a vote, a vote for a rhinoceros viper of Kakamega, for example. By the way, what about election and government in the Democratic Republic of Congo?

Basabose: We almost forgot election in the years 1980, during the later half of Motubu's regime. Now our country is in a civil war, and there are at least four major

governments! The area we live in is occupied by one of the rebel governments. Since they are at war, none of the governments care for local people and their welfare.

Kahekwa: Countries and societies helping the rebels are interested in the economic value of the occupied area. For example, they dig a mineral called Colombo-tantalite, which is sold very expensively abroad. Tantalum is a rare metal now indispensable for the production of nuclear weapons, personal computers, mobile phones, and so on.

Student: So, you mean that our "civilized" lifestyle is deeply linked with African civil wars?

Kahekwa: Exactly! I appreciate your comprehension. We have also the problem of ivory illegally imported to Japan for your luxurious stamps.

Okeka: The reason for today's African civil wars is, among others, that the population do not know their own country nor have confidence in their political leaders.

Kahekwa: During such a war, it is beyond imagination, the difficulty of telling people to conserve wildlife; people are in a famine, are killed with guns, and dead bodies surround our houses. We are often asked if we are not crazy speaking of wildlife conservation in such an extreme situation of war. Yes, it is really difficult.

Basabose: I work for the government as a researcher of a national institute, but I have received no salary at all for as long as six years until today...

Kahekwa: Nor have I received anything from the National Park for fifty-six months. I got started to work for POPOF, and after several years, life became more and more difficult. And for a whole week I could not find food for our children. They cried and cried for hunger. My wife asked me if I could do some other job, even a small one, which might bring us some income. I went to my bedroom and burst into tears. If I gave up POPOF, I would have thrown away my years of endeavors into a ditch. But I also could not put up with my family suffering that way. When I came out of my bedroom, my Lord, I received a letter from our friend Professor YAMAGIWA. He sent us a message to have the courage of continuing POPOF activities, essential for conservation, and inside the envelope there was some donation from Japanese friends...

We will never forget this earliest help offered to us during our hardest times of POPOF.

Okeka: I am always fighting against a voice inside me: it tells me to abandon such hardships. Since we continue to overcome such temptations and difficulties, we managed to be here in Japan to exchange our ideas and to encourage each other.

We have a hope.

Student: Do you think that the problems like the destruction of life (both human and wild) and the environment can be solved in the future?

Basabose: Yes, of course! We strongly believe that the problem will be solved in the very near future, on the condition that you will help us help ourselves. It is as if we Congolese are in a deep hole, and are struggling hard to find our way out. Every time we approach the exit of the hole, there appears someone who pours oil on us so that we slip down again to the bottom. Please learn the process of our civil war and make your personal effort to find a way to stop those who pour oil on fire.

Okeka: My experience in Kenya may be different from yours. As I told you, we do not know our country or our constitution. So long as the nation do not understand the leaders of their country, they will not esteem and have respect for their country. It will be possible, in a country like Kenya, to give an education to people that enables them to understand their own government and to understand themselves. That will be one of the ways, if not the fastest, to prevent civil wars.

Kahekwa: For nature conservation, the role of the government, the role of local peoples, and the role of NGO's that stand in between the former two are equally important. We must be quite careful because in each of these three you may meet with your enemy that hinders your activities. And, as we have already talked of, the hardest enemy is always concealed in one's self.

#### Eco-tour guide as a profession

Okeka: As I have already told you, we can never conserve something that we do not know well. Learning will be the most important element to enable community-based conservation of the environment. When I began working as a subordinate staff of the Forest Department, I also worked as a patrol to seize poachers and illegal cutters of trees. They have big bush knives, and they may attack you. So, guards having guns often accompanied us.

We send them to the police, and they are fined or jailed. If a man is jailed, his family loses the person who worked and got the principal cash income for them, and difficulty increases in this family. Perhaps they can no more obtain food to give their children.

As a guide, I came to realize that it is far from satisfactory to help tourists to walk in the forest and show some of the wildlife there. I thought that we must find a way in which any and every person living around the forest may continuously get something important without destroying it.

Kahekwa: I would like to ask our fellow guides of Yakushima Island, who are now as many as 70 persons, "Do you really love and care for the natural environment of

Yakushima through your daily activities as guides? Or instead, are you simply exploiting it? Will you agree to continue to work as a guide if your income is cut down to 40 percent of what you receive today?"

Okeka: A guide is a person who can best teach the importance of the environment. A guide knows the environment, can conserve it with local people, and help younger generations to learn to sing and dance in their mother tongue, so that they can enjoy and master their traditional cultures as something alive in themselves. Nature guide is a beautiful job.

You are the future of Japan.

Kahekwa: As a conclusion, I would like to underline the importance of environmental education for conservation. I am proud to stand in front of you students; you agreed to come to Yakushima from all over Japan. You are well taught by good professors and tutors as well as by local NGO's. You are the future of this island Yakushima, and you are the future of Japan and its environment. How lucky you are that you can learn and think for the future of your environment in this World Heritage Site.

Okeka: I believe that we should begin conservation at home. You have learned what is going on in Kenya or in Democratic Republic of Congo. Based on that knowledge as examples, please start something here in Japan. You begin to clean your garden first. Then, you will expand your trial to villages and towns you live in. I tell you youngsters. Don't wait until you get old. Stand up today and encourage others to be in motion. But don't take my words as something like a home task. I hope you will be able to do it as a volunteer, based on your sincere wishes to conserve your environment. Stand up and cooperate with many others: young and old. Feel encouraged to influence younger generations, who will enjoy the environment when our generations will be gone.

Kahekwa: I know that there are many obstacles wherever you live. Yakushima Island is no exception. But, if only the government, local people, and NGO's together with you youngsters can cooperate together, you can surely manage those difficulties. Always have a good humor, and enjoy solving the problems. Thank you so much, and God bless you.

Ankei's and students: Thank you very much, and *asante sana*.

Departure and prayers

During our journey with our African friends and exciting encounters, we met with two sad news.

On our arrival in Kagoshima City, we were told that Professor ITANI Junichiro

departed from us at the age of 75. With Dr. YAMAGIWA, Yuji's classmate of the same age in his laboratory, we shared the meaningfulness of the unexpected loss of this extraordinary field worker, teacher, and organizer. In the year 2000 we published a book entitled "Messages from Southern Islands" a collection of the narratives of Japanese local peoples (ANKEI & ANKEI, 2000). We put our dialogues in between the narratives, and we were shocked that the dialogues were always about the teaching of Professor ITANI who guided us throughout our study and life in his quite unique way. He dreamed of a science that will permit us researchers to sincerely collaborate with local peoples. He has always encouraged himself and his students to continue the construction of academic institutions where we can learn the essence of the sciences he searched for. We pledged in our mind that we would also do our best to succeed in what he wanted to accomplish.

The second news arrived early in the morning of 28 August. After the workshop of eco-tour and conservation on 27 August 2001, we had an open-air party on the bank of Miyanoura River. People talked, sang and dance. Drunken youngsters jumped and swam in the river with their cloths on. Near the end of the party, we were informed that news arrived that Mr. YAMAO Sansei, poet and spiritual leader of the people working for conservation, had just passed away. At this news, most of us hugged each other and burst into tears.

The next day, we visited Mr. YAMAO's house, and spoke these words after praying. "Thank you so much for what you have done for all of us, my Dear Sansei. We will follow your dreams in which the water of all the rivers and streams of the world turns clean and potable."

And we played with our ocarina, a song of *Hurusato* (Home sweet home) that contains the following phrases.

I pledge to return to see my homeland,  
Where there are green forests,  
Where there are clean watersheds.

Thus, our journey ended with such a pledge and prayer. And it became to be the beginning of a new journey in which we continue to look for an alternative way to live a new millennium. In order to accomplish this, we will surely need to collaborate with our younger generations and local or grass-root peoples of the world.

Mr. KAHEKWA asked us if the triangular exchange of Congo, Kenya and Japan is to be terminated. We answered them that this is just the beginning. Even if the change may seem slow, "strong wishes that may come to human minds will not simply

disappear" (here we quoted one of the mottos of Late Mr. NAKATA Shoichi, an eminent leader of Japanese volunteers for digging wells in the Third World).

Mr. OKEKA prayed for us with other Africans for our safe and happy journey to and from Gabon for which the departure was scheduled a week after the day of our departure from Yakushima. In exchange, we prayed that wars shall be over, and poverty shall be eliminated from Africa and all over the world. We hugged each other and promised to meet again in a near future, either in Japan, in Kenya, or in peaceful Democratic Republic of Congo.

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Legends for the figures.

Fig. 1 Kamamega Forest in Kenya and Mt. Kahuzi in DRC.

Fig. 2 Mr. KAHEKWA with local children who came to see the Great Camphor Tree at Kamou Town, a national monument.

Fig. 3 Enjoying a walk in the conserved primary forest of Yakushima.

Fig. 4 A meeting with local eco-tour guides.

Fig. 5 With the students of Yakushima Fieldwork Seminar.

Fig. 6 Children singing for the forest of Kakamega Forest, West Kenya

(Figures are deleted from this internet version.)