

## Save the Valuable Ocean

In late November last year, when Yutaka Umisedo, one of the heads of the Save the Dugong Campaign Center (SDCC), told me that that a concert would be held in Nago in March, I became excited and wanted to participate.

In October 2010, COP10 was held in Nagoya at the same time that the First Official Signatory State Meeting was held in the United Arab Emirates, marking the emergence of the worldwide drive to save the dugong. Now there is a chance to use this trend to create a protective area for these animals.

Susumu Inamine, the mayor of the city of Nago, is trying to make the municipality and surrounding region less dependent on the base. The SDCC is working to collect names for a petition to present to the Nago City Council in order to create a protective area through cooperation with the city. The SDCC will submit its views to the Nago City Council in March.

Dugongs and other living organisms such as blue coral thrive in the natural environment in Ohura Bay near Henoko. We decided to hold a photo exhibition with the people in the area in order to share our desire to save the ocean. At this exhibition, we will also display photos about the forests of Yanbaru, rather than just the area's marine environment. The forests and coastline of this area are a treasure, because Yanbaru is a precious natural environment. We want to inform many people about the forests and marine environment of the Yanbaru region.

"We have been able to bring up our children and grandchildren because we have been given a gift from the ocean," said an old woman who runs a morning market stall every Sunday in Sedake, Nago city. "We are concerned about the destruction of the ocean. We won't give up, and we will work hard so we don't have to depend on the base."

One day, I asked a local person how to create a protective area.

“The more we value our ocean, the closer it’ll get to becoming a protected area.”

This response really struck me. We want to create a protective area step by step, by protecting the ocean and appreciating its blessings. We hope that Henoko can become a peaceful sightseeing spot. We are looking forward to the photo exhibition.

Written by Emiko Ikegawa  
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□ We will collect the signatures appealing for the dugongs to be saved till May 10th for the third time. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. We submitted 45,259 signatures to the Japanese government last year.