

## **Vocational school and University**

### **Great**

#### **“Adding Sports Facilities in Theme Park”**

3<sup>th</sup> Year, Meio University by Shota Tamaki

People who live in Okinawa Prefecture may wonder why there is not even a theme park in Okinawa, and I think there must not be few of them who want to have a large-scaled theme park like Disneyland or USJ built in the area. Amusement parks or theme parks like those in cities with many tourists do not exist in Okinawa Prefecture. Although my consideration may be simple, building a theme park or a large amusement park in Okinawa Prefecture, where many tourists visit may not be a bad idea. It is believed that by building in Okinawa Prefecture a theme park that allows guests to play all day, not only can local residents use the facility at any time, it also attracts families to go, leading to an increase in the length of stay of visitors.

In the past, three amusement parks existed in Okinawa Prefecture. They were Ocean Expo Park Okinawa Expoland, Yonabaru Tech and Children's World. However, two of them are now closed because of reasons like high maintenance costs, poor management and aging of facility. For the remaining one in Okinawa, Children's World, attractions are not the main part. As part of the zoo, there are only three facilities: Merry-go-round, Mini SL and a boat attraction. It cannot be even called an amusement park. Okinawa Prefecture has less population than metropolis cities like Tokyo and Osaka. The only means of transport from other prefectures is by air. Visitors cannot easily go there solely for the purpose of going to amusement parks.

It is also believed that it is difficult for residents in Okinawa to spend a lot of travel expenses to visit an amusement park many times in a year, as their income is low as compared to other prefectures. Therefore, despite of the external factors, to ensure a stable number of visitors as in Disneyland or USJ would be difficult in Okinawa Prefecture. So, I think the theme park construction has to take into account the strengths of Okinawa that attract attention rather than to build a theme park simply large-scaled.

I think up here is the proposal to build complex type of facilities combining sports and theme park in Okinawa Prefecture. Operation for just a simple theme park would be difficult if it is the case like Yonabaru Tech and Expoland. Being strong on sports, Okinawa Prefecture holds camping activities for such professional baseball and J-League teams. With reference to the large-scale sports facilities and theme park in Guam, a large-scale complex type of theme parks and sports facilities is my idea of building a theme park.

Leo Palace Resort Guam in Guam is a sports complex type of resort hotels with more than a total of 14 sports facilities (including those under construction) in large facilities combined to one. In the resort, there are facilities such as sports gym that suits various kinds of sports, baseball field, official sized MLB, athletics stadium certified in the United States, second, third soccer field size corresponding to international matches, tennis courts, table tennis courts, bowling alley, and fishing ponds. Many tourists use these facilities during the year. Also, many professional athletes, including the members of varsity teams in swimming, baseball and J-League, come for voluntary practice. The facilities are also open for the general public. Not only do they allow children swimming clubs, school trips, and youth baseball to use, they also support the use of any scale such as experience learning for elementary schools, schools, private clubs, individuals, and groups.

Blessed with the good climate, it is considered that if a sports facility of about the size of a resort is built in Okinawa, where professional sports teams like baseball and J-League holds a camp every year, it will be able to attract more sports teams. In

addition, in Okinawa Prefecture, where local sports are very popular, you can expect local general customers including participants in sports events and local residents to use it, besides tourists. And not only that, the theme park also provides guests with the "Okinawa" feeling that make them want to play even all day long when tourists to explore Okinawa again. It is also a playground for the local residents, with reasonable entrance fees. These are some important factors that we need to consider as well. Moreover, in the light of the location of the facility, I think that to take into account the point of view of using the former military base to build large-scale sport facilities with theme park using that piece of land is not a dream.