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Introduction

Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need for arsenals and forts.

"The Arsenal at Springfield"
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1845

For many Japanese and Americans, Okinawa still brings to mind the last and worst battle of the Pacific War. The eighty-two days of bitter fighting with massive casualties on both sides, the kamikaze airplane attacks on American ships offshore, and the ritual suicides of Japanese senior commanders just before U.S. forces occupied the last stretch of ground on the island's southern tip in late June of 1945 are all horrifying memories of the war's final phase. In Japan, historical accounts and dramatic portrayals of these events appear regularly in print and on film. Although the Battle of Okinawa receives less attention in the United States, high school textbooks recount it at some length, and veterans who survived it are still interviewed by newspaper and television reporters at each anniversary of this murderous confrontation.¹

Fewer Americans and Japanese outside Okinawa Prefecture remember that of the more than 230,000 who died in the fighting, over 147,000 were local residents, about one-third of the prefecture's wartime population.² Okinawa conscripts served and

¹ Members of American veterans' groups opposed the 1969 reversion agreement because they felt the United States should retain territory that was acquired at the cost of such enormous casualties.

² Figures cited are from Okinawa Prefectural Government, "Heiwa no ishiji" (Monument of peace) (Naha, Okinawa, 1995). (All Japanese-language sources cited herein were published in Tokyo unless otherwise indicated.)

died with the Japanese army, which fought tenaciously against advancing U.S. forces. However, thousands of civilians including children were caught in the cross fire or trapped in buildings and caves, where they were killed in machine-gun, flamethrower, and grenade attacks. Many others died when Japanese soldiers ordered mass suicides to stretch dwindling food supplies and forced civilians out of overcrowded caves into heavy enemy fire or shot them down at point-blank range.³ When the "typhoon of steel" finally ended, almost all who survived found themselves destitute or without homes or both. Later, unknown numbers died in the aftermath of battle from exposure, unattended wounds, malnutrition, or illness.⁴ If Japanese soldiers often showed little regard for the lives of local residents during the fighting, there were also reports of U.S. soldiers mistreating civilians held in refugee camps and shooting those who attempted to escape in the weeks after the Japanese defeat before American relocation and relief efforts were organized.⁵

These efforts remained makeshift and piecemeal for some time. Even after the war ended in August 1945, the scale of devastation in Okinawa and its remoteness from Supreme Allied Headquarters in Tokyo hindered the flow of relief. Nevertheless, U.S. forces made the best of what they had during the first months after the battle. They worked long hours on duty and volunteered their time off to distribute canned goods, military fatigues, medicine, cigarettes, and other supplies both as free rations and, later, to compensate for such labor as clearing war debris and driving trucks.⁶ Many relief items came from large stocks brought to the island as supplies for the assault on mainland Japan that was

³ Shinzato Keiji, Taminato Tomoaki, and Kinjō Seitoku, *Okinawa-ken no rekishi* (The history of Okinawa Prefecture) (Yamakawa, 1980), pp. 213-221; and Ienaga Saburō, *The Pacific War (Taiheiyō sensō)*, translated by Frank Baldwin (New York: Pantheon, 1978), pp. 198-199. See Jo Nobuko Martin's novel *A Princess Lily of the Ryukyus* (Shin Nippon Kyōiku Toshō, 1984) for an excellent firsthand account in English of the Battle of Okinawa from the perspective of a high school student conscripted as a nurse.

⁴ M. D. Morris, *Okinawa: A Tiger by the Tail* (New York: Hawthorn, 1968), p. 39; and George Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People* (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle, 1958), p. 472. Considering Kerr's sharply critical account of the early phase of the American occupation, I cannot share the narrator's view in *Cocktail Party* that this book "was written to justify U.S. foreign policy" (see p. 37).

⁵ Shinzato, Taminato, and Kinjō, p. 223. Americans I interviewed in 1985 who were stationed there shortly after the battle reported incidences of rape.

⁶ Morris, pp. 55-57.

anceled after the Japanese surrender. People in Okinawa do not have pleasant memories of living in army tents, eating K-rations, and drinking powdered milk, but these early arrangements saved tens of thousands from starvation and disease.⁷ Late in 1946 conditions had improved to the extent that the American military could assist in the repatriation and resettlement of more than 112,000 people to Okinawa who had been living on the mainland or in the Philippines, Saipan, and other areas formerly under Japanese control.⁸

Aside from subsistence measures, however, little was done to rehabilitate the local economy for the next three years. During this time Okinawa acquired its nickname "the rock" among American military personnel who considered it a bleak and isolated outpost. Many were "dumped" there because they had been found incompetent or unfit for duty elsewhere; and, not surprisingly, crime and corruption involving American soldiers were widespread on the island. A visit of army officials from Washington in 1949 resulted in a high-level shake-up of the local command.⁹ After that Okinawa also began to receive more of the substantial economic and technological aid that was already flowing into mainland Japan and occupied areas of Western Europe. The U.S. government continued to give military needs priority, but its agencies started providing long-term assistance ranging from agricultural commodities to college scholarships. In addition, Congress allocated limited annual subsidies to the local economy for the remaining years of the occupation.

While humanitarian motives played a part in these later programs, U.S. policymakers also undertook them in Okinawa and elsewhere with a view to political and military advantages in a "postwar" world of intensifying hostilities. If the decision to invade the island in 1945 resulted from its strategic location on Japan's "southern flank," the decision four years later to rebuild the commerce and transportation infrastructure had much to do with U.S. desires for a secure bastion from which military power could be projected over a wide area of Asia. The strategic value of Okinawa under U.S. control was outlined in a report entitled

⁷ Ibid. Also see Higa Mikio, *Politics and Parties in Postwar Okinawa* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1963), p. 26, in which the author writes that "as many as 160,098 cases of malaria were reported in 1946, but this disease was gradually eradicated as a result of a U.S. public health program."

⁸ Higa, p. 26.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

"The Ryukyu Islands and Their Significance" prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency for President Truman in August 1948.

1.... Possession or control of these islands, particularly Okinawa, will give the occupying country: (a) an advantage in either defensive or offensive operations in Asia; (b) a watch post to guard the sea approaches to Central and North China and Korea; and (c) a base for air surveillance over a wide area, taking Okinawa as the center.

2. U.S. control of the Ryukyu Islands would: (a) give the U.S. a position from which to operate in defense of an unarmed post-treaty Japan and U.S. bases in the Philippines and other Pacific Islands; (b) obviate the possibility of the Ryukyus falling under the control of a potential enemy; (c) neutralize, to some extent, Soviet positions in the Kuriles, Korea, and Manchuria; and (d) give the U.S. a position from which to discourage any revival of military aggression on the part of the Japanese.¹⁰

A year later the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a confidential directive stating that "it is the policy of the United States to develop and maintain a substantial degree of contentment among the civil population in order to contribute to the accomplishment of military objectives."¹¹ Considerations of long-term military strategy were overriding, too, in the decision to retain U.S. administration of Okinawa after the Allied occupation of mainland Japan ended in 1952 and to prolong it for twenty years more. Forces were initially reduced between 1945 and 1948, but the bastion there expanded rapidly after the Chinese Communists' victory in 1949 and grew again in quantum leaps with U.S. involvement in Korea and Vietnam. Responding to criticism in Japan and elsewhere of American military rule in Okinawa, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles proclaimed that Japan held "residual sovereignty" over the Ryūkyū Islands.¹² However, three American presidents sub-

¹⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, "The Ryukyu Islands and Their Significance" (August 6, 1948) (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office).

¹¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Draft Directive to Commander-in-Chief, Far East for Military Government of the Ryukyu Islands," July 29, 1949, in *Foreign Relations* 7 (1949): 817.

¹² Kerr, pp. 6-9. This ambiguous term had been included in Article 3 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty to characterize the status of the Ryukyus vis-à-vis Japan. Kerr subsequently notes that Dulles "unexpectedly shifted" the American position in 1956 and "broadly hinted that... the United States might have to reconsider the doctrine of 'residual sovereignty' if Japan agreed to a peace treaty with the U.S.S.R. that conceded permanent Soviet occupation of the disputed northern islands.

sequently asserted the "military imperative" of "continuing the present status" of Okinawa "in the face of threats to peace in the Far East."¹³ And one of them, John Kennedy, asked "forbearance" of the island's residents.¹⁴

Nothing in Okinawa's long and troubled history can match the devastation of 1945 or the scale of the military presence that has developed there since then. But efforts by outside forces to exploit the island's strategic location for military advantage go back as far as Kubilai Khan's ill-fated invasion of Japan in 1274. In those days Okinawa was an independent kingdom with a language, mythology, and social structure most closely akin to Japan's. When King Eiso refused Khan's orders to provide troops and a staging area for his planned assault, the Mongol emperor sent his forces onto the island and took Okinawan captives back to China. Fortunately, this proved to be only a temporary disturbance. Over the next three hundred years Okinawa grew prosperous, developing cultural ties and a loose tributary relationship with China as well as a flourishing trade with China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia. But by the end of the sixteenth century the kingdom became increasingly caught up in a rivalry between China and Japan over, among other things, claims to suzerainty in Okinawa and control of its rich trade. In 1590 Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who had emerged from a long period of civil wars as the military overlord of Japan, ordered King Shō Nei to provide troops and supplies for Hideyoshi's planned invasion of China through Korea. After initially demurring, the king reluctantly sent food provisions to the Japanese forces, which failed to gain a foothold in Korea and withdrew after Hideyoshi's death in 1598.¹⁵

Though spared embroilment in a war between its neighbors, Okinawa now became an object in the conflict among warring factions in Japan over Hideyoshi's succession. When Tokugawa Ieyasu prevailed in the fighting that ended in 1600, he placed Okinawa under the domain of Shimazu Iehisa, the daimyo of Satsuma province in southern Kyūshū, as part of the settlement designed to secure Tokugawa authority over the whole country. Shimazu received the title "Lord of the Southern Islands" and in 1609 sent

¹³ From Joint Communiqués of meetings between Prime Minister Kishi and President Eisenhower (June 11, 1957), Prime Minister Ikeda and President Kennedy (June 22, 1961), and Prime Minister Satō and President Johnson (January 13, 1965).

¹⁴ From "Statement by the President of the United States" (March 19, 1962).

¹⁵ Kerr, pp. 51 and 152-156; and Higa, p. 2.

an army of samurai to assert his own authority in Okinawa. Over the next two hundred years the Satsuma government imposed harsh restrictions and heavy taxes but permitted the kingdom to continue its tributary relationship with China so that the Shimazu daimyo could reap benefits from the still-flourishing trade. With the establishment of Japan's modern state after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the kingdom was finally abolished, and Okinawa was absorbed into the Japanese body politic as a prefecture in 1879.¹⁶

During the last twenty years of Satsuma's authority, Okinawa was visited by naval vessels from England, France, and Russia seeking navigation, landing, and trade privileges. Fearing both the cost of such arrangements and Satsuma's displeasure, Okinawan officials denied these requests as courteously as possible. Then Commodore Matthew C. Perry arrived from the United States with a squadron of battleships in 1853. Perry's mission sought not only the right of "sale and barter," but also permission for "the occupation of the principal ports of those islands for the accommodation of our ships of war." Perry also saw Okinawa as a potential bargaining chip if difficulties arose in his efforts to negotiate a treaty of navigation and trade with Japan. He appealed to his superiors in Washington for approval to seize Okinawa as an American "protectorate." He warned that "I should have instructions to act promptly, for it is not impossible that some other power, less scrupulous, may slip in and seize upon the advantages which should justly belong to us." And he claimed that, in any case, such drastic action was "justified by the strictist rules of moral law" considering "the grinding oppression of their [Satsuma] rulers."¹⁷ President Franklin Pierce's advisors promptly rejected what they called Perry's "embarrassing... suggestion." He was told that the president "is disinclined... to take and retain possession of an island in that distant country" in view of "mortifying" choices the United States might face "if resistance should be offered and threatened."¹⁸ Though thwarted, Perry's plans to occupy Okinawa and build a naval base there foreshadowed what happened a century later, after World War II, not only because they were inspired by Okinawa's strategic location and a desire to

¹⁶ Kerr, pp. 157-169.

¹⁷ From letters of Commodore Perry to the Secretary of the Navy dated December 14, 1852; December 24, 1852; and January 25, 1854. Quoted in Kerr, pp. 305 and 327.

¹⁸ From letter of the Secretary of the Navy to Commodore Perry dated May 30, 1854. Quoted in Kerr, pp. 327-328.

preempt what were thought to be other powers' designs, but also because they were "justified" as beneficial to the island's residents, who had suffered under Japanese rule.

As Supreme Allied Commander during the occupation of Japan, General Douglas MacArthur emphasized that Okinawa's strategic location made it "absolutely necessary" that the United States "retain unilateral and complete control."¹⁹ However, unlike President Pierce's advisors, U.S. military and intelligence officials seemed little concerned in the late 1940s that Okinawa residents might object to such control. In a conversation reported by George Kennan in 1948, General MacArthur characterized them as "simple and good-natured people" who, having been "looked down on" by Japanese, could now "pick up a good deal of money and have a reasonably happy existence from an American base development."²⁰

MacArthur was evidently informed of the discrimination that people from Okinawa had experienced in mainland Japan. And military construction did provide spin-off income for the island's devastated economy during the early years after World War II. But his statements revealed a condescending attitude that was also expressed with unabashed candor by military commanders who later administered the occupation of Okinawa.²¹ Perhaps after seeing people in a state of destitution who thankfully accepted relief and such jobs as were offered them, U.S. officials were deluded into thinking that local residents would always be grateful for American "protection" and for the kind of livelihoods offered by a military-service economy. Widely held stereotypes of a "simple" and easily accommodated people also help explain why many in the U.S. military refused for so long to believe that growing demands for reduction of the bases and reversion to

¹⁹ "Conversation between General of the Army MacArthur and Mr. George F. Kennan, March 5, 1948," in *Foreign Relations* 6 (1948): 701. General MacArthur's remarks are recounted by Mr. Kennan.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Former commanders of the American occupation of Okinawa stated their opinions in wide-ranging interviews conducted in the 1970s by the U.S. Army Military History Institute as part of the institute's Senior Officers Debriefing Program. In the transcript of an interview on April 21, 1975, Lieutenant General Paul W. Caraway refers to people in Okinawa as "countrified" (Conversation no. 12, p. 7), "tiny little people" (p. 38), and "you boys" (p. 59). Discussing local businesses in his interview of April 29, 1975, Lieutenant General Ferdinand T. Unger said of people in Okinawa that "they just didn't know how to run things" (p. 9) and "they were like babes in the woods" (p. 10).

Japanese sovereignty represented genuine popular opinion on the island.²² Higa Mikio, a political scientist from Okinawa, wrote in 1963 about the risks of such misperceptions.

The description of Okinawans as a docile and submissive people, so frequently used by foreign observers, is not without truth. Undoubtedly it comes in part from the long history of having to interact with stronger peoples around them... But to assume that the basic interests and instincts of this "docile" people can be ignored is to court trouble, as has been discovered by the United States several times in the recent past.²³

One of the first jobs Americans offered people in Okinawa after the Japanese surrender was collecting the enormous stores of weapons and ammunition brought there for the assault on mainland Japan that never took place. Much of this matériel was then shipped to Chiang Kai-shek's forces, who were fighting the Communists in China. After Chiang's defeat, military construction in Okinawa shifted into high gear. The United States was theoretically at peace, but a major conflict of interservice rivalries broke out as units of the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marines vied to build installations outdoing one another in size and comfort on their own chosen sectors of the island.²⁴ Local environmental conditions, particularly frequent typhoons and the lack of deep-water bays, forced the scaling down of plans for a major naval base, but work went ahead on hundreds of other projects. These included installations for launching aircraft, storing weapons, gathering intelligence, and training troops as well as housing and recreation facilities. A number of people impoverished by the battle and its aftermath found employment on these projects or as maids and service workers on the expanding bases. But for many more, base construction meant the sacrifice of their lands and livelihoods to military exigencies.

The expansion of the American bases also gave birth to a sharply bifurcated society on the island. While thousands in Okinawa were still living from day to day in borrowed shelter and eating imported staples, officers clubs and mess halls on the other side of high wire fences sported tablecloths and real silverware. Meals were served there by Philippine stewards in elegant white uniforms, and premium brand Scotch sold for ten cents a glass.²⁵

²² Higa, pp. 8-9 and 91-92.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

²⁴ Morris, p. 61.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

With the massive influx of U.S. military and civilian personnel during the Korean War, American, mainland Japanese, and local contractors hired Okinawa residents to build not only headquarters buildings, ammunition depots, and hospitals, but also tennis courts, golf courses, swimming pools, baseball and football fields, bowling alleys, commissaries, schools, and thousands of family housing units in what soon became known as "permbase," the largest complex of American military facilities outside the United States. By the mid-1950s desperate post-battle conditions were a thing of the past, but poverty was still widespread among local residents living outside the American enclaves. A decade later the population of U.S. personnel and their families was approaching 80,000, and "dependent housing areas" were beginning to resemble modest suburbs in the American sunbelt. After years when Okinawa was considered a hardship assignment, these facilities made the island's old GI nickname "the rock" into an ironic anachronism.

To secure space for the bases and their surrounding enclaves, occupation authorities drafted ordinances in 1950 and 1952 that authorized the "renting" at a set rate of what were often valuable tracts of cultivated farm land. To call this "renting" was deceptive, first, because once covered with pavement, tarmac, or gravel, such land—already in short supply—could not be returned to agricultural use.²⁶ Second, no one could refuse to rent his land. Higa Mikio described the consequences of this policy.

By the very nature of its economy and due to the lack of natural resources, Okinawa is predominantly agricultural. To the Okinawans, land is the most cherished possession, as it is the sole means of livelihood to most of them. Their attachment to the land is very strong, and voluntary sales are not common. It is difficult for a dispossessed farmer to obtain substitute land or change his occupation.²⁷

Evacuation orders led to strenuous protests and to criticism in the United States from the American Civil Liberties Union.²⁸ Land seizures sparked some of the earliest mass demonstrations against U.S. authorities in Okinawa. At several sites large groups of

²⁶ Kerr, p. 6.

²⁷ Higa, p. 41.

²⁸ Higashimatsu Teruaki, *Okinawa ni kichi ga aro* (Bases in Okinawa) (Gurabia Seikō Sha, 1969), pp. 64-67; and Akio Watanabe, *The Okinawa Problem: A Chapter in Japan-U.S. Relations* (Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1970), pp. 139-140.

farmers sat down in front of bulldozers defying repeated warnings until forcibly removed by American troops carrying carbines and tear gas.²⁹ These local protests in the early 1950s were the forerunners of larger rallies in the 1960s organized to express public sentiment on a variety of issues. Occupation authorities responded to the furor over land by promising to negotiate with local residents in individual cases. But protests broke out again in 1954 when the U.S. Army publicly announced that it intended to make lump-sum payments to landowners for use of their properties into the indefinite future. After four more years of negotiations and lengthy congressional hearings, the issue was defused somewhat by the announcement of a revised policy in 1958 that increased rental payments to rates that would be reevaluated every five years.³⁰ Although the dreaded lump-sum proposal had been scrapped, the new policy offered little to small landowners who had farmed their own fields for generations. Lacking education and marketable skills, many of them turned for their livelihoods to the GI bar business or other base-town enterprises.

Land seizure was only one of many ways the prolonged American occupation and military presence impinged on the lives of Okinawa residents and became a festering sore in U.S.-Japanese relations. When the San Francisco Peace Treaty released the rest of the country from occupation rule in 1952, resentment in Okinawa was hardly assuaged by U.S. assertions that the island was better off not rejoining Japan. For people in Okinawa, September 8, 1951, the date of the treaty's signing, became known as a "day of shame."³¹ Anger was directed at both Washington and Tokyo for "selling out" Okinawa, relegating it to an indeterminate future under foreign control so that the mainland could regain its sovereignty. The agreement was seen by many as an extension of the Japanese government's discriminatory policy toward Okinawa Prefecture between 1879 and 1945, when people there paid higher taxes and received fewer social services than anywhere else in the country. Aware of this policy and of Okinawa's earlier history of harsh and exploitative control by Satsuma, American officials widely echoed General MacArthur's view that, especially in the economic sphere, Okinawa would benefit more under U.S. military occupation than it would by returning to Japanese sovereignty.

²⁹ Higashimatsu, pp. 66-67.

³⁰ Higa, pp. 40-56.

³¹ Shinzato, Taminato, and Kinjō, pp. 223-226.

And many Americans expressed the opinion that in the future, people there should seek permanent affiliation with the United States or some other political status independent of Japan. Even when opinion polls and election results later showed overwhelming sentiment favoring reversion and a reduction of the military presence, U.S. officials tended to dismiss these views and a broadly based reversion movement as the products of leftist agitation.³²

Americans could be proud of the role U.S. forces had played in Okinawa's recovery from post-battle devastation. However, those who touted the material benefits of the continuing military presence too often ignored the long-term problems it brought. They also exaggerated the role of the bases in bringing a higher standard of living to Okinawa than prevailed in most other areas of East Asia (excluding, significantly, mainland Japan). By the early 1950s the U.S. government was paying wages to some 50,000 local residents employed in construction, maintenance, and service jobs on the bases. But an economy centered on such jobs, which had little attraction for young people with education and skills, could not be called productive.³³ Nor could the "prosperity" often referred to by American officials be considered stable when it relied heavily on foreign subsidies and the daily purchases of off-duty military personnel.

It was a sad irony for people in Okinawa that the continuing occupation and vast military presence prolonged economic dependence on the projects and purchases of American forces. Considering the still-depressed conditions of mainland Japan at the time of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, it is difficult to project with

³² Higa, pp. 8-9 and 91-92. Higa cites a petition signed by 199,000 eligible voters (72.1 percent of the total) favoring reversion in mid-1951 and estimates that some 90 percent favored reversion by the early 1960s. He also concedes that "a few Okinawans (and a number of Americans) have supported the idea of independence" and that "a small number of Okinawans... have advocated United Nations Trusteeship either with the United States as sole administering authority or with the United States and Japan as joint administrators." Detailed results of opinion polls on reversion and the U.S. military presence are published in Ryūkyū Shinpō Sha, ed., *Kichi Okinawa* (Okinawa's bases) (Simul, 1968), pp. 222-276. A capsule history of the reversion movement is given in Watanabe, pp. 135-149.

³³ Mainland companies and government agencies with contracts in Okinawa faced a shortage of skilled workers after reversion because so many young people had left Okinawa to find employment on the mainland and elsewhere during the occupation years. Many firms hired workers from other prefectures despite the added expense of bringing them to the island.

precision how Okinawa would have fared economically over the next twenty years had it reverted to Japanese sovereignty with a reduced military presence in 1952. But post-treaty actions of the government in Tokyo suggest that Okinawa as a Japanese prefecture would have benefited from the country's spectacular economic growth beginning in the early 1960s. As it was, the Japanese government gave increasing financial assistance to Okinawa annually, surpassing direct American monetary aid by 1965, and granted preferential tariffs that stimulated sales on the mainland of Okinawan sugar and pineapples, produced by sectors of the local economy with little or no connection to the military.³⁴

More important, those who emphasized the material benefits of the bases too often failed to consider the quality of life in Okinawa. Few residents could escape the effects of living in a place where the activities of military forces posed frequent inconveniences and not uncommon risks, where ultimate political and judicial authority rested with the general of a foreign army, and where the economy of certain areas depended almost entirely on the leisure spending of thousands of soldiers, sailors, and marines. U.S. officials who lived in the residential enclaves as privileged members of Okinawa's bifurcated society consistently downplayed the dangers, disruptions, and injustices encountered by local residents. And Japanese or U.S. reporters who wrote about them were labeled troublemakers by the high command. Even M. D. Morris, a former army officer whose book *Okinawa: Tiger by the Tail* (1967) supported the continued military presence and opposed reversion, acknowledged the grim reality of the bases for those in Okinawa living outside the American enclaves at the height of the Vietnam War.

Throughout the island's countryside, U.S. war machines dominate the landscape. Huge aircraft, small aircraft, and helicopters fill the sky day and night, and high-tension towers transmitting megawatts of electric power via scores of cables loom overhead like puppet lines of giant skeleton scarecrows.

Mountains of systematically stacked chemical drums and wood

³⁴ Okinawan cement also sold well on the mainland. General Unger provides the aid figures in his interview of April 29, 1975 (p. 5). During the early 1960s the American military actually insisted that the Japanese government stop increasing its aid to Okinawa for fear that, if it exceeded American aid, the United States would "lose face." See Edwin O. Reischauer, *My Life between Japan and America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), p. 204. Former ambassador Reischauer notes here that "fortunately we were able in time to get rid of this ridiculous strategy."

shipping crates range over square miles of depot areas fenced in by mesh and barbed wire. Acres of new vehicles sticky with cosmoline stand ready to be put into motion in convoy caravans. Tanks and amphibious vehicles wait in port areas, where fleets of ships daily bring more military stores for stacking, then take away from those same stacks for distribution and destruction in Viet Nam. Radio antennae fields stand along the shore, while radar and missile sites mushroom in the hills.

On the ground, giant steel pipelines carry endless gallons of diesel oil, jet fuel, lube oil, gasoline, and fresh water to thousands of machines. And stored below ground in massive shockproof, radiation-proof, fireproof steel and concrete caverns, are reservoirs of petroleum products; magazines with megadeaths of munitions; and the billionth-of-a-second sensitive computerized control centers, the brain and nerve cells of this island bastion.

At many combat training areas in the north, jungle and village battle situations are simulated with deadly precision. Near the coast, periodic live-missile firing drills keep the troops alert—and their neighbors alarmed.³⁵

People living or traveling near the bases have not been the only ones with reason to feel apprehensive. Crashes of military aircraft, including a jet fighter that fell on a school in 1959 killing 17 and injuring 121, continue to take their toll more than fifteen years after reversion.³⁶ Many more civilians have died or been maimed every year in numerous traffic accidents involving both official vehicles operated by military personnel and private cars driven by U.S. forces or their dependents. Some accidents have involved tanks and trucks carrying high explosives. In July 1969 a leak of poison gas, stored in large quantities in Okinawa at the time, caused widespread alarm.³⁷ Wayward artillery and mortar shells from combat exercises still fall on the outskirts of towns, sometimes starting fires.³⁸ Leakages of gasoline and jet fuel from storage tanks on the bases have poisoned wells and polluted farm fields. Noise from the constant traffic of fighter, bomber, and

³⁵ Morris, pp. 2-3.

³⁶ Watanabe, pp. 65-66; and Shinzato, Taminato, and Kinjō, p. 241. A fully loaded B-52 bomber crashed near an ammunition depot in November 1968. The prefectural government reports 115 accidents of military aircraft between 1972 and 1995. Also see Preface, p. x.

³⁷ Ryūkyū Shinpō Sha, pp. 138-140; Shimabukuro Kazuya, *Fukki-go no Okinawa* (Okinawa after reversion) (Kyōikusha, 1979), pp. 108-110; and Shinzato, Taminato, and Kinjō, p. 242.

³⁸ Shimabukuro, p. 110.

transport planes has damaged the hearing and disrupted the lives of people living near military runways.³⁹ And ultrapowerful transmitters for the Voice of America have caused bizarre accidents in which appliances in private homes have suddenly caught fire and livestock have been felled by electric shocks. In addition, the number of crimes committed by military personnel, mostly younger enlisted men, against Okinawa residents rose sharply when the island became a base for U.S. combat operations.⁴⁰ Beyond apprehensions raised by these incidents is a more generalized fear among people all too familiar with the horrors of war that Okinawa, widely believed to be a staging area for U.S. nuclear weapons, could once again come under attack.⁴¹

Aside from physical hazards posed by the bases, Okinawa residents bore the political, social, and psychological consequences of foreign military occupation twenty years longer than mainland Japan despite occasional efforts to soften them. Higa Mikio wrote in 1963 that "one of the principal criticisms of the American administration is its continued military character."⁴² Edwin O. Reischauer, U.S. ambassador to Japan from 1961 to 1966 and an early U.S. advocate of reversion, recalled in 1977 that "American military rule" with its "alienness and arrogance... only grudgingly opened the way to local autonomy."⁴³

The various civilian offices and agencies created during the occupation could never obscure the reality of a territory controlled by military organizations, which are authoritarian by nature and have scant experience in civil management.⁴⁴ Limited efforts to restore autonomy began in 1945 when a U.S. "Military Government" (M.G.) conducted local elections and delegated authority over routine matters to community leaders. In 1950 a "U.S. Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands" (USCAR) was set up under the military command to implement American policies and programs. Two years later the United States created a "Government

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Crimes by U.S. personnel against local civilians: 973 in 1964, 1,003 in 1965, 1,407 in 1966. Atrocious and violent crimes: 265 in 1964, 275 in 1965, 466 in 1966. Figures in Watanabe, p. 65.

⁴¹ Arasaki Moriteru, *Sengo Okinawa-shi* (Postwar Okinawan history) (Nihon Hyōron Sha, 1982), pp. 300-304; Shinzato, Taminato, and Kinjō, p. 235; Watanabe, pp. 66-67; and opinion surveys in Ryūkyū Shinpō Sha, pp. 229-230.

⁴² Higa, p. 35.

⁴³ Edwin O. Reischauer, *The Japanese* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1977), p. 348.

⁴⁴ Higa, p. 35.

of the Ryukyu Islands" (G.R.I.) composed of a legislature and a "Chief Executive" who was appointed at first by the U.S. military from among local leaders and later chosen by the legislature subject to U.S. approval. For twenty years the G.R.I. operated the bus lines, postal service, certain civilian courts, and other public services. The army lieutenant general commanding the occupation, however, whose title of "High Commissioner" carried the unfortunate ring of British colonialism, retained the ultimate power.

High commissioners could and did force elected officials from office, block G.R.I. legislation, and overrule the judgments of G.R.I. courts. In practice, these men preferred the application of economic and political pressures behind the scenes to outright vetoes and firings, but the results were the same. Such pressures led to the removal in 1957 of the mayor of Naha, elected the previous year,⁴⁵ and to the defeat in 1962 of a redistricting bill passed by the G.R.I. legislature that would have created electoral districts in Okinawa with approximately equal numbers of eligible voters.⁴⁶ High commissioners also had final authority over transportation, investment, education, and such lifeline sources as water, fuel, and electric power. Interviewed in 1971, Lieutenant General Paul W. Caraway described his powers as high commissioner and his relations with USCAR and the G.R.I. during his term from 1961 to 1964.

Interviewer: What did the office of High Commissioner... equate to?

General Caraway: Well, I don't know what it equated to, but as far as what you could do, you stood about halfway between being president and the governor of a state. In other words, nobody said you "nay" on any subject. Locally, nobody said you "nay." I could veto any legislation that passed, if I couldn't block it before they passed it.... And I could—if they wouldn't pass legislation required or if I had to get legislation passed or something changed—I could issue an ordinance [*sic*] a High Commissioner's ordinance [*sic*] which was a law. It was promulgated and proclaimed, and it became the law of the Ryukyu Islands.... I could remove people from office if they gave cause for it. In the High Commissioner resided fifty percent of the stock of the Bank of the Ryukyus, which was the central bank. I could shut down an insurance business, or any other business.... I could keep people out and I could let them in.

⁴⁵ Watanabe, pp. 157-158. Mayor Senaga Kamejirō's removal from office was called colonialism in the Japanese press.

⁴⁶ Higa, p. 85.

Interviewer: Then you had practically absolute governing power?

General Caraway: Well, that's what everybody liked to say. They made a despot of you. But I had all the authority that anybody needed to operate the Ryukyu Islands, and I used it. . . .

Interviewer: What's this USCAR?

General Caraway: United States Civil Administration Ryukyu Islands, USCAR, which was my staff. They had gotten so that nobody ever remembered the High Commissioner. . . . Of course, that's the first thing I changed. I said, "I'm the locus of power, and I'm going to exercise the power. Now, you people who've been thinking you've been running an operation, and that you were the government of the Ryukyu Islands, you may as well find out that you aren't." It took quite some doing. They didn't want to bow to me, but the Ryukyuians [*sic*] convinced them. Because as soon as the Ryukyuians [*sic*] found out that I was highly visible, and what I said went, and if I said no, it stopped dead, they paid little attention to USCAR after that, except for routine stuff. The rest of the time they came to me.⁴⁷

General Caraway and the other five men who held the office of high commissioner approved funding for such worthwhile projects as building water-filtration plants and schools and purchasing athletic equipment for students. However, when deciding issues that affected both the lives of local residents and the operation of the bases, they too often opted for massive overreaction, even when the potential for inconvenience to the military mission seemed extremely remote. Particularly troubling to people in Okinawa were restrictions maintained on (1) travel to and from the mainland (investigations and passports required), (2) imports of capital (prohibited without special licenses), and (3) labor unions (no collective bargaining for base workers). Over the years a number of students who passed entrance examinations for mainland colleges lost their rights to admission because of delays in processing their passports. And there were people with critically ill family members on the mainland who were unable to secure passports when needed. Workers picketing in towns near the bases were met by lines of police or, on occasion, by MPs armed with rifles and fixed bayonets.⁴⁸ In some cases, high commissioners could probably have avoided demonstrations and bad publicity had they not insisted on enforcing such dubious occupation measures as

⁴⁷ Interview of April 21, 1975, pp. 17-21.

⁴⁸ American authorities preferred to use local police, but MPs were dispatched during a number of demonstrations in the 1960s.

those restricting the political activities of school teachers and prohibiting display of the Japanese flag except on national holidays.⁴⁹ The command also might have been more responsive to complaints about shortages of water for civilian use and traffic problems resulting from priority passage of military vehicles on the roads.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this system of dual but unequal authority concerned legal jurisdiction. A special division of courts within USCAR exercised superiority over G.R.I. courts and was empowered to try and to sentence local civilians in any case deemed appropriate by the high commissioner. Furthermore, occupation law specified punishments, including execution, for Okinawa residents convicted in these courts of crimes against U.S. military personnel or their dependents.⁵⁰ On the other hand, no civil or criminal court of the G.R.I. had the power to try as defendants or summon as witnesses U.S. military personnel in cases of crimes committed against local civilians. In practice, American defendants rarely were prosecuted vigorously in courts martial and often received comparatively light sentences even after pleading guilty to serious offenses. Many cases were simply shelved by the military, with no action taken. Such legal inequities result in the dilemma of the father who seeks to press charges against his daughter's assailant in the novella *Cocktail Party*.

Among actual cases, one that stirred bitter resentment arose in 1963 from the death of a middle school boy run over by a truck driven by a U.S. marine. Witnesses testified that the boy had been crossing the street at a designated crosswalk on a green light in the middle of the afternoon. And the defendant himself conceded that the light had been green. Yet he was acquitted of responsibility by a court martial because he testified that the reflection of the sunlight had obstructed his view of the traffic signal.⁵¹ Later cases in which American military personnel were involved in the deaths or injuries of local residents sparked large protest rallies. In May 1970 a girl on her way home from high school was knifed and seriously wounded by a U.S. soldier in an apparent rape attempt. Only after hundreds of people from her village staged demonstra-

⁴⁹ Arasaki, pp. 271-290. In mid-1968, one year before announcement of a reversion agreement, General Unger recognized Zengunrō (Union of Military Employees) as negotiating agent for workers on the bases.

⁵⁰ The vast majority of cases in which civilians were charged with crimes against the American military involved the pilfering of U.S. government property.

⁵¹ Ryūkyū Shinpō Sha, pp. 138-140.

tions in front of his army unit and sat down en masse at USCAR headquarters in Naha was the suspect placed under arrest. Later, the press reported that growing public outcry had thwarted the army's plans for his hasty reassignment off the island.⁵²

The number of robberies, assaults, and murders in which the victims were taxi drivers, waitresses, or others whose jobs brought them into contact with military personnel increased sharply during U.S. involvement in Vietnam.⁵³ Local police complained that, even in cases when evidence strongly implicated Americans, suspects would be absorbed back into their units and later transferred out of the command without any indication of their having been arrested or tried.⁵⁴ Growing frustration led to the forming of human rights advocacy groups in Okinawa within the reversion movement. Local leaders particularly noted the contradiction between American ideals of equality under the law and the disposition of criminal cases on the island. Fukuchi Hiroaki, director of one human rights organization, spoke of psychological as well as legal ramifications of the problem.

Incidents of Americans shoplifting or running off without paying restaurant bills and taxi fares are now occurring daily. To the perpetrators these may seem like trivial matters, but for those who are victimized the situation has become intolerable. Though I regret to say it, there seems to be a feeling among these Americans that, as occupiers of Okinawa, they have committed no crime. And the

⁵² Makise Tsuneji, *Okinawa no rekishi* (History of Okinawa), vol. 3 (Chōbunsha, 1971), pp. 185–195.

⁵³ Figures cited in Ryūkyū Shinpō Sha, pp. 134–138.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 139–141. Crimes committed by Americans against Americans also increased sharply during the Vietnam War. Interunit rivalries, especially among marines, led to beatings and at least one murder. And racial tensions, acutely disturbing to the military command, heightened even as the U.S. armed forces publicized their intentions to end unofficial discrimination and equalize opportunities among all personnel. Widespread fighting broke out on several occasions in the late 1960s in a section of Koza City (renamed Okinawa City after reversion) filled with GI bars. The worst incident occurred in 1968 when fist fights between white and black troops brought squads of MPs into the area who clashed sporadically with rock-throwing enlisted men for several hours. After each disturbance, the U.S. high command made strenuous efforts to defuse a situation that could have seriously disrupted military operations in Okinawa. These efforts included personal visits by the high commissioner and his senior staff officers to Koza that were intended to promote goodwill. Generals Lampert and Maples made it a special point to stop at bars in an area of Koza where the clientele were predominantly black Americans.

code and enforcement of criminal laws here only fuels this attitude.⁵⁵

Crimes against local residents, the suspected presence of nuclear weapons, and the deployment of B-52s, which began direct bombing missions to Southeast Asia in 1965, were the three issues provoking the most intense opposition to the American occupation and military presence in Okinawa. Japanese and American observers agree that, if reversion had not finally been negotiated in 1969, this opposition would have begun to jeopardize the U.S. military mission. The B-52s, called "sky murderers" and "black killer planes" in Okinawa, symbolized U.S. involvement in Vietnam that was staged in large part from bases on the island.⁵⁶ People there and on the mainland tended to sympathize with the victims of U.S. bombings and to identify American intervention in Southeast Asia with Japan's earlier acts of destruction in China.⁵⁷

Large demonstrations against the B-52s and the Vietnam War in Okinawa were disruptive, though rarely violent. However, a full-fledged riot erupted a few blocks from the largest U.S. air force base in December 1970 after a local pedestrian was injured in an accident with a car driven by an American soldier. Accounts of this incident vary. According to witnesses, the driver of the car was quickly released by the MPs, while the victim was left unattended in the street.⁵⁸ American officials maintained that the pedestrian had been intoxicated and that, in any case, his injuries turned out not to be serious.⁵⁹ But whatever the circumstances of the accident, it was followed that night by crowds of people ram-paging through the streets around the base for several hours. They threw rocks at the MPs and burned all cars in their path carrying the special "Keystone of the Pacific" license plates issued to U.S. forces for their private vehicles. Several people broke into the base and set fire to the air force personnel office and the American school. This brought five hundred armed troops firing tear gas grenades, but order was not restored until after seven o'clock the next morning.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Ryūkyū Shinpō Sha, p. 139.

⁵⁶ Shinzato, Taminato, and Kinjō, pp. 239–242.

⁵⁷ Reischauer, *The Japanese*, p. 347.

⁵⁸ Shinzato, Taminato, and Kinjō, p. 243.

⁵⁹ Colonel William Schless stated in his Senior Officers Debriefing Interview of January 7, 1975, that the "inebriated pedestrian, an Okinawan," had been "drunk, lying in the street" and "was not badly hurt" (p. 3).

⁶⁰ Gibe Keishun, Aniya Masaaki, and Kurima Yasuo, *Sengo Okinawa no rekishi*

Although sparked by one incident, the length and ferocity of this disturbance suggest that it resulted from frustrations that had been building for some time. Shortly before the riot political scientist Akio Watanabe wrote, "United States leaders probably saw a danger, from recent developments in Okinawa, that the rising dissatisfaction of the Okinawan people might jeopardize the smooth operation of the military bases unless a timely solution was made."⁶¹ And former ambassador Reischauer confirmed that the U.S. government agreed to make concessions during the reversion negotiations in part out of concern that "irredentist feelings in Okinawa would probably undermine the utility of the bases there."⁶² Thus, ironically, the prolonged occupation that was intended to ensure unrestricted use of U.S. installations had now become a liability to their continued operation.

Although far less likely to grab headlines or spark mass demonstrations, the stifling economic effects of the vast military presence in Okinawa also caused resentment. Those who praised the material benefits generated by the bases too often failed to consider the kind of enterprises commonly created in a military-service economy. The sad truth is that these businesses are frequently of a low-capital, nonproductive nature and tend to discourage the development of healthier, more productive industries. Furthermore, some among them, such as "the world's oldest profession," can actually have a negative effect on the community. What happened to sections of certain towns in postwar Okinawa, officially known as "amusement areas," is not unlike what happened to parts of Frankfurt, West Germany, and Juarez, Mexico, or to Columbia, South Carolina, San Diego, California, and other cities adjacent to large military bases in the United States. One city on the island, Koza, became so notorious for its GI bar and brothel district that its name was changed after reversion.⁶³ M. D. Morris gives a description from the mid-1960s of another such district in Naha, Okinawa's capital, better known for its many historical sites, attractive shops, and quiet residential neighborhoods.⁶⁴

(Postwar history of Okinawa) (Nihon Seinen Shuppansha, 1971), pp. 274-278.

⁶¹ Watanabe, p. 72.

⁶² Reischauer, *The Japanese*, p. 349.

⁶³ To Okinawa-shi (Okinawa City). See n. 54. Koza's "amusement area" is the setting for the novella *Child of Okinawa* (see pp. 79-117), narrated by an adolescent boy growing up there.

⁶⁴ At this time there was another brothel district in Naha catering to local clientele.

Incongruously in the area surrounding the Nami-No-Ue shrine, there abounds block after block of nothing but bar after bawdy bar. Historically, Nami-No-Ue was a shrine at which arrivals and departures of distinguished travelers were celebrated in ancient times. Also enshrined there is a sacred phosphorescent stone supposedly picked up in a fisherman's net in Naha harbor ages ago. There is a Shinto shrine building at the top of the stairs. Behind a second gate and off to the right is a Buddhist temple surrounded by bells and appropriate small shrines. The annual celebration on Adults Day, shortly before the Lunar New Year's, is held there. This is the day when people go up in fancy costumes to decorate the shrine.... Annually a hundred thousand people have to pick their way through all kinds of Americanized night clubs and whorehouses in order to get to a religious shrine celebration. This is one of the enigmas of Okinawa.... And because so much money is involved in the area, nothing is going to alter this condition.

I was amazed as I wandered through this neon-lit nirvana for Neanderthals at the number of establishments, some even boasting the "A" sign of military approval.... On any given night the routine is the same. Armed forces jeeps at the ready patrol the streets, which teem with enlisted service personnel of all branches... in and out of uniforms. Pawnshops interspersed in the blocks break the monotony of bar doors. Whenever some GI runs out of ready cash, he can always go next door and hock his watch or bracelet. Occasionally, if a boy has spent enough on drinks and pays a girl's "out fee," the two may then retire to one of the "hotels" in the area, after which he will sweat out the next two weeks hoping he hasn't gotten VD.⁶⁵

The selling of sex to American servicemen in Okinawa was actually organized and regulated by the U.S. Military Government (unofficially, of course) for a brief time in 1946. Disturbed by increasing instances of rape against civilian women, the command operated a bus service to a designated area where local prostitutes were permitted to ply their trade regulated through medical examinations, set fees, and controlled sale of alcoholic beverages. Pressure from military chaplains and the growth of unregulated prostitution outside the designated location, however, spelled an early end to this project.⁶⁶ Thereafter, prostitution became so widespread in the booming "amusement areas" of towns near the bases that, during the Vietnam build-up, it was believed to account for the largest off-base "consumer" expenditure by military personnel.

⁶⁵ Morris, p. 102.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

Far from providing a safe outlet for soldiers and marines carrying several months of combat pay on short-term leaves from Vietnam, however, unregulated prostitution is known to have resulted in sharply higher incidences of venereal disease, black marketeering, and violent crime.⁶⁷ Perhaps its saddest victims were young women, some in their teens, who undertook or prolonged careers as prostitutes after they or members of their families had incurred debts to unscrupulous moneylenders who would threaten and inflict physical harm when payments were late.⁶⁸

Considering the many destructive consequences of occupation and militarization in Okinawa, it is perhaps surprising that virulent anti-Americanism of the kind seen in parts of Latin America and the Middle East never caught on there. Ambivalent feelings expressed toward the United States seemed to derive in part from anxieties about mainland attitudes and intentions stemming from Okinawa's earlier experience as a Japanese prefecture. Polls showed that, as the U.S. occupation dragged on, more and more people became convinced of the necessity for returning to Japanese sovereignty.⁶⁹ But memories were still fresh of outrageous wartime sacrifices imposed on Okinawa residents by the Japanese army and of prewar neglect by a government that allocated meager resources to its poorest prefecture. Many could also recall suffering personal discrimination in prewar Japan, where people who gave Okinawa as their home address were sometimes refused employment and denied lodging. Then, after the war, Okinawa was barely mentioned in mainland schoolbooks, and misconceptions abounded among younger Japanese, who would ask people from Okinawa if they spoke English at home or used knives and forks for their daily meals. Even during the long campaign for reversion, local residents complained that mainland Japanese tended to think not of liberating their fellow countrymen from foreign occupation, but of regaining territory lost in war. Many were also disappointed because they felt that opposition

⁶⁷ The Army's 2nd Logistical Command reported in late 1967 that strains of venereal disease from Southeast Asia resistant to antibiotics were spreading among U.S. forces in Okinawa. Subsequently, boxes of condoms were placed next to sign-out sheets in the orderly rooms of all units. Military personnel engaged in such shady enterprises as drug dealing and the sale of military-issue handguns from post armories and meat from mess-hall kitchens to local buyers.

⁶⁸ The protagonist's father in *Child of Okinawa* explains how women working in bars were lured into debt (see p. 86).

⁶⁹ See opinion poll results in Ryūkyū Shinpō Sha, pp. 222-276.

political parties on the mainland were simply using "the Okinawa issue" as a political football to attack the conservative party that controlled the government. And there were, of course, more practical concerns because, for better or worse, much of Okinawa's economy was linked to U.S. expenditures, and people feared disruptions that might occur when it was integrated more fully into the Japanese economy. The island's special trade status—which included a tax-free port of transit and high tariffs on selected imports—protected local businesses from competition with huge and powerful conglomerates on the mainland.⁷⁰

Beyond worries over mainland attitudes and intentions, ambivalent feelings toward the United States also resulted because the effects of the U.S. presence were by no means entirely negative. Economic aid and locally contracted development projects were obvious benefits. Aside from military facilities, the United States funded the construction of many public roads and buildings, including the University of the Ryukyus, called Okinawa's first college since no institution of higher education had been established there previously by the Japanese government. But on a deeper level people who opposed U.S. occupation and military policies on the one hand could also admire aspects of American culture available to them on the island. Official efforts to promote goodwill had some effect in this regard. U.S. funds helped to build and staff "Ryūkyū-American Friendship Centers" in several towns where libraries of books and films from the United States were available. People came even from remote rural areas to attend presentations at the centers and to study English conversation. Less successful were such campaigns as the army's "people-to-people" program, in which local mayors and business leaders were invited to clubs on the bases to join army officers and their wives in celebrating such U.S. holidays as Thanksgiving and the Fourth of July. Even generous outlays of food and liquor never seemed to bring the two groups together over the language barrier and the mutual feelings of awkwardness on these occasions; in fact, such events actually heightened resentment over the comparatively opulent American lifestyle.

As one might expect, people have learned much more about the United States through the unofficial media of books,

⁷⁰ Asahi Shinbun Sha, ed., *Okinawa hōkoku* (Reports from Okinawa) (Asahi Shinbun Sha, 1969). Portions are translated in *Japan Interpreter* 6 (Autumn 1970): 294-308.

newspapers, magazines, movies, radio, and television. During the occupation there was a U.S. commercial radio station in Okinawa as well as U.S. forces radio and television channels. A daily newspaper, the *Okinawa Morning Star*, was published in English, and magazines from the United States were cheaper and more widely available than on the mainland. In addition, American performers of jazz and classical music regularly attracted larger audiences for concerts in local communities than in auditoriums on the bases.

Fears were occasionally expressed in the Japanese press that this cultural influx would cause Okinawa to become overly Americanized. Novelist Kawabata Yasunari put this false issue in perspective when, after a visit to Okinawa in 1959, he commented that the "Americanization" of Tokyo seemed far more pronounced than anything he had seen in Okinawa.⁷¹ As on the mainland, young people in Okinawa drank soda, wore blue jeans, and listened to rock music. And many studied English conversation, which was taught in several places by American military personnel or their dependents. But an interest in the English language or American arts and culture had not led in Okinawa to the wholesale adoption of American values and lifestyles, as some on the mainland had imagined.

Even popular trends in dress, hairstyles, and hobbies, to the extent that they are of American origin, usually have come to Okinawa indirectly from the mainland and not via Americans stationed on the island. Moreover, the cultural interaction that has taken place runs two ways. U.S. military and civilian personnel have attended local performances of folk music, taken lessons in the martial arts at private Okinawan academies, and studied Japanese language at the Friendship Centers. And despite resentment generated by the thoughtless acts of some Americans, a large number of close professional and personal relationships have developed over the years across the barriers of the bifurcated society.

Still, if U.S. policymakers hoped that subsidized and unsubsidized exposure to American culture would affect political opinions in Okinawa, they were sorely disappointed. A vivid illustration of ambivalent feelings toward the United States could be found during the later 1960s in coffee shops near the University of the Ryū-

⁷¹ Kawabata's remarks are cited in E. G. Seidensticker, "The View from Okinawa," *Japan Quarterly* 6:1 (January-March 1959): 38.

kyū, where posters on the walls denounced U.S. involvement in Vietnam while stereos played records of Miles Davis or Chet Atkins. During this turbulent period many students from Okinawa attending universities there and on the mainland declared an affinity with the American antiwar movement.

In more tangible expressions of sentiment through elections and opinion polls, consistent voting for reversion and military reduction culminated in November 1968 with the first popular election of a chief executive for the Government of the Ryūkyū Islands. The election of a chief executive, formerly chosen by the G.R.I. legislature subject to the high commissioner's approval, was recommended with misgivings by the then-commissioner Lieutenant General Ferdinand T. Unger. He recalled in 1975 that he "was not unmindful that such a change risked the election of a member of the opposition parties." However, considering the "political uproar" in Okinawa, he expressed the "firm belief that the alternative of denying a popular election of a Chief Executive would certainly bring the functioning of the Government of Ryūkyū Islands to a standstill, setting up conditions requiring me to exercise, perhaps, full authority in the archipelago, which in turn could provide an even greater escalation of the reversion movement." General Unger viewed the election as a "palliative [that] might momentarily satisfy Okinawan aspirations and thereby give us more time in putting off the day when our freedom of military operations would be circumscribed."⁷²

During the campaign General Unger issued a directive advising U.S. personnel of "the necessity to reduce unfavorable incidents" and "provide better U.S.-Ryūkyūan understanding."⁷³ The U.S. military also gave strong, if unofficial, support to the candidate of Okinawa's conservative party (Okinawa Liberal Democratic Party), Nishime Junji. Despite these efforts and the dire predictions of the conservatives that Nishime's defeat would lead to economic disaster, former schoolteacher Yara Chōbyō, candidate of a coalition of opposition parties, won by a comfortable margin.⁷⁴ His platform called not only for immediate reversion and military reduction, but also for an end to U.S. involvement in

⁷² From General Unger's interview of April 29, 1975, p. 28.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷⁴ Figures from Watanabe, p. 68; Yara Chōbyō (Opposition), 237,562; Nishime Junji (Conservative), 206,011.

Vietnam and the termination of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, due for renewal two years later, under which U.S. bases were permitted on the mainland.

The election did not cause fundamental changes in government policies, but it heightened pressures for reversion during negotiations leading up to a meeting between Prime Minister Satō and President Nixon scheduled for the following year. The summit conference in November 1969 produced a communiqué announcing a reversion agreement effective in 1972. Although a major goal had been achieved, the agreement met with widespread dissatisfaction in Okinawa and on the mainland. Of particular concern were vague wordings with regard to the mission and deployment of military forces remaining on the island after reversion. The agreement did not specifically prohibit bringing nuclear weapons there as many hoped it would. Nor did it place any limitations on the dispatching of troops to areas of conflict.⁷⁵ Activists in Okinawa and on the mainland organized a series of demonstrations in 1969 and 1970 over the reversion agreement and the security treaty. Public protests subsided after U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam was well under way, however, and the Japanese government arranged for the automatic renewal of the security treaty without Diet debate.

Some thorny problems cropped up when Okinawa rejoined the Japanese political and economic entity in May 1972, although the change was less disruptive than some had predicted. Prices rose sharply with the conversion of dollars to yen, and the rerouting of traffic from right side to left side became a complicated and costly undertaking. The economic benefits of reversion were soon visible with the construction of new department stores, hotels, and office buildings. Predictable strains developed, however, when mainland corporations moved into business sectors previously serviced by local enterprises and purchased large tracts of farmland for private golf courses and vacation lodges. Tourism, more than any other industry, has helped to lead Okinawa's economy away from dependence on military expenditures; but local merchants complained that "Ocean Expo," organized by the Japanese government in 1975 to commemorate reversion and bring in tourist monies, actually cost them more to put on than the income it produced. Clearing the land for Ocean Expo and other tourist facilities is said to have further harmed the natural environment already damaged

⁷⁵ Arasaki, pp. 300-350; and Shinzato, Taminato, and Kinjō, pp. 243-244.

by the bases. And recently, scientists have discovered that the enormous proliferation of construction projects throughout the island has caused a serious erosion of topsoil, destroying the coral that gives Okinawa's landscape much of the breathtaking beauty that attracts tourists.

A coherent development policy is essential to protect the environment and continue advancing the standard of living, which has risen significantly since 1972.⁷⁶ The growing economy is evident not only in the construction boom that has transformed Naha and the city of Nago to the north, but in the increasing number of luxury consumer goods in the stores and late-model cars on the roads. As part of its 2.4-trillion-yen investment between 1972 and 1987 to improve the local infrastructure, the Japanese government has financed a network of neatly paved highways, banked by attractive landscaping, that reaches even into remote rural areas previously served only by dirt roads. Monies from the national treasury have also been used to erect or refurbish public buildings and schools, including a new and vastly larger campus for the University of the Ryukyus, built originally by the United States in 1950, which now rivals in space and facilities a number of prestigious universities on the mainland. These highly visible projects and rising per capita income are often cited to explain the trend among voters in the 1980s to choose local candidates of the ruling conservative party in prefecture-wide elections. Nevertheless, opposition parties regained the governorship in the 1990s in large part because the conservatives had failed to negotiate significant reductions in the military bases.

Support for opposition parties and continuing protest demonstrations reflect the deep concern in Okinawa about what did not change after reversion. More than two decades later the number of U.S. troops and square miles occupied by bases still represent about three-quarters of the U.S. military presence in all of Japan.⁷⁷ While a few parcels of U.S. government property have been

⁷⁶ Although the per capita income of local residents rose from 60 percent of the national average at the time of reversion to 74 percent in 1987, it is still the lowest of all prefectures, and unemployment is twice the national average. From lead editorial in *Asahi Shinbun*, May 15, 1987.

⁷⁷ General Unger reported that in November 1968 there were 43,000 American forces in Okinawa (interview of April 29, 1975, p. 18). Figures supplied by the Department of Defense indicated that about 30,000 of the 45,000 U.S. troops stationed in all of Japan during 1995 were stationed in Okinawa. Okinawa represents approximately one percent of Japan's population and land area.

turned over to local authorities, a number of bases have been transferred in whole or in part to Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) despite the continuing shortage of land for civilian use. People complain that, on these bases, all that has changed is "the color of the uniforms" as military objectives continue to take precedence over the interests of local residents. Feeling against the growing number of Self-Defense Forces has been particularly intense, owing both to resentment over the problems associated with their presence and to memories of atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers against civilians in Okinawa during World War II. Protests have disrupted military parades, and some restaurant owners and innkeepers have refused to serve SDF personnel.

The focus of concern over the American military presence has shifted somewhat since reversion. The number of crimes committed annually by U.S. forces and their dependents against local residents is about one-fifth what it was in the mid-1960s.⁷⁸ Robbery, assault, and disorderly conduct are down sharply, although traffic accidents involving U.S. personnel, including a number caused by drunk driving, continue to take their toll. Observers attribute this welcome reduction in part to a greater awareness among young Americans of being in a foreign country where they are subject to local laws and to arrest by the police if they get into trouble. American commanders receive special briefings emphasizing that the U.S. military will remain in Okinawa only with the permission of the Japanese government, and they are directed to inculcate sensitivity toward the local community among their troops.⁷⁹ But perhaps the largest factor in the decline of GI crime is economic. With the improvement of the economy and the revaluation of the yen, most Americans cannot easily afford to amuse themselves in bars, more of which now cater to local clientele or visitors from the mainland. Military personnel have turned increasingly to service clubs on the bases for their leisure activities. This trend, along with official "clean-up" efforts, has led to the shrinking or disappearance of some of the more notorious

⁷⁸ Crime figures between 1972 and 1983 are 219 in 1972, 310 in 1973, 318 in 1974, 223 in 1975, 263 in 1976, 342 in 1977, 288 in 1978, 274 in 1979, 321 in 1980, 253 in 1981, 234 in 1982, and 195 in 1983. Cited in *Okinawa no kichi* (Bases in Okinawa) (Naha: Okinawa Taimusu Sha, 1984). Compare with prereversion figures in n. 40.

⁷⁹ Interviews in July 1987 with Mrs. Chisato Fanner, Office of Community Relations, U.S. Army in Okinawa, and Colonel James H. Griffin, commander of all U.S. Army forces in Okinawa.

"amusement areas," although GI bars and hotels still occupy several blocks in towns near the larger American bases.

While off-duty crime and misbehavior of U.S. forces remain a problem, people in Okinawa seem more troubled today by dangers and disruptions resulting from activities carried out by military personnel as part of their official mission. Political pressures, backed by protest demonstrations, intensify both when large-scale exercises cause increased noise, congestion, and accidents and when the United States proposes to build facilities or undertake new activities that threaten the quality of life in a particular area.⁸⁰ The enormous military presence keeps the island a center of attention for antiwar groups in Japan and elsewhere, some of which organized a peace demonstration that drew approximately 18,000 participants to Kadena Air Base on June 21, 1987, despite a steady rain throughout the day. And, as if to illustrate the continuing irony of Okinawa's economic link to the U.S. military, the base employees' labor union staged a demonstration two weeks later to protest layoffs of local workers at American service clubs.

Although protests continue in front of U.S. bases, people in Okinawa voice their grievances more often today at the various prefectural offices of the Japanese government, which now has the ultimate authority over matters military and civilian. Rejoining the Japanese political entity has given people access, through their elected representatives, to those in Tokyo whose decisions affect their lives. Yet there is a widespread feeling among local residents that, after Okinawa faded from the headlines in the early 1970s, people in other parts of Japan became insensitive to the island's continuing problems. This feeling, and some heavy-handed efforts by the Japanese Ministry of Education to promote patriotism in the local schools, have given added impetus in recent years to an ardent regionalism. People in Okinawa have always been proud of their culture and history, but while before reversion they often spoke to outside visitors of their affinity with other Japanese, they now seem more inclined to emphasize aspects

⁸⁰ In two recent cases, the building of a helicopter pad near Ginoza village led to bitter protests as did the proposed addition of a flight training facility to a marine installation near Aha village in northern Okinawa. People in and around Aha pointed out that noise of the aircraft would disrupt their lives and destroy the tranquility of one of the most beautiful rural landscapes on the island. (Interview in July 1987 with Mr. Uehara Yasunari, Kunigami village councilman.)

of their culture and outlook that distinguish them from people elsewhere in Japan. For their part, visitors from the mainland arrive to comfortable accommodations and beautiful surroundings, but many seem to remain in strangely isolated clusters as they wend their way on shopping tours through department stores or file off buses behind flag-carrying guides at World War II battle sites. Reversion was a cause for celebration, but to local residents, many of those who travel nowadays from the mainland (freely and without passports) to swim in the ocean, tour the war memorials, and buy souvenirs seem all but oblivious to what people in Okinawa have endured past and present.

Cocktail Party

Ōshiro Tatsuhiro

Child of Okinawa

Higashi Mineo

Child of Okinawa

Higashi Mineo

1.

I was asleep when Mom started shaking me. "Tsune. Tsuneyoshi, wake up!"

"Huh?"

Rubbing my eyes, I poked my head out from under the covers and looked up at her. She brought her smiling face down close and spoke coaxingly.

"Michikō and Yōko picked up a couple of soldiers, but there aren't enough beds. Won't you let them use yours, Tsuneyoshi? It will only take about fifteen minutes."

I was startled at first, then revulsion welled up inside me.

"Not *that* again!"

When Dad opened a bar for American soldiers at our place, I never thought I'd have to lend them my bed. Michikō and Yōko had made the alcove next to the bar into a bedroom. It was nearly filled with a double bed where they took turns sleeping with their customers. But if they both had customers at the same time, Mom would come into my room. This didn't happen very often, but when she woke me I was supposed to cooperate.

"Let them all use one bed together," I said, sitting up.

"Don't be silly! Now hurry or we'll lose this chance to make some money." Mom unfolded a starched sheet as she rushed me out of bed.

"This sure is a lousy business you're in."

"There's no use complaining. It's how we eat, you know."

"It's still lousy."

It made me want to cry, thinking people would probably do anything to eat. I took my school cap and satchel off my desk and pushed them under my bed out of sight.

"Excuse us," said Michikō. She came into my room leading a soldier by the hand. As she put her arm around his waist, she glanced at me with a faint smile.

2.

And now they were in my bed, doing it like a couple of dogs. If I stayed in the house, I would still hear the moans and squeaking bedsprings, so I dashed outside. Then I took off down the hill toward Koza Primary School.

"Tsuneyoshi! Where are you going at this hour?"

In my rush to get away, I had run right into Chiiko, my forehead smacking into her breasts, just as she came out of the Yamazatos' doorway.

"I'm out for some jogging."

"Your hair is an awful mess. Better get it cut tomorrow." She scolded me like a big sister as she fixed her skirt. I didn't think my hair was any of her business, and ran off without answering. But I stopped after a few steps and turned back to look at her walking along the road up the hill. In a way I was glad she had spoken kindly to me.

Above the hill I could see the whole sky, lit up by the pale glow of neon. Chiiko's skirt spread like a parachute, and her slender legs poking out under it reminded me of a hopping sparrow. Suddenly, to my surprise, a soldier standing on one side of the street stepped toward her. She grabbed his arm, and, walking together, they turned a corner out of sight.

3.

Koza Primary School is a little building crammed into a narrow valley. Beside it is a playground so small it looks more like someone's backyard. The surrounding hills are thickly overgrown with *susuki* grass, but jutting from their peaks are naked limestone rocks that seemed to pierce the night sky. Poisonous *habu* snakes thrive in those hills. The valley was so dark I could hardly make out the white lines on the hundred-meter track trampled over daily by the children. Panting and weary, I stretched out to catch my breath on the square wooden platform where the teachers led morning assembly. I seemed to be looking up at the sky from the

bottom of a well. Out here, only the stars lighted the sky overhead, and the breeze felt good as it dried my sweat.

4.

When I got back to my room, it was filled with a strong, woman's odor that made my nose feel stuffed up.

"Mom, my watch is gone!" The watch, with Popeye's picture on its face, was a present from Chiiko.

"Did you take it somewhere?"

"No. I hung it over this nail, right here on the wall."

"Well, then, it must have fallen off."

Mom came in wiping her hands on her apron. A few grains of rice tumbled from her apron. All I could see on the floor was a trickle of douche water.

"No, damn it. It didn't just fall off. I *told* you this was a lousy business."

There were white droplets at the corners of Mom's mouth, so I knew she had been chewing uncooked rice again. She told us not to eat it because we might get worms, but she munched on it herself now and then.

"What kind of a son are you—always complaining. Don't you know what Dad and I go through for you kids?"

She was always talking about how parents toil and suffer for their children. Hearing this over and over again made me want to leave home and stop being a burden to them once and for all.

"All right, then. I'll quit school and go to work."

"Sure, you just try finding a job with no education. You'll end up in the fields carrying a manure bucket."

5.

Later that night I dreamed about a typhoon. I was peeking out the front door and could see the raging wind tear the thatched roof off our goat shed. Inside, the goats bleated as the rain beat down on them. They reared against the door and yanked at the ropes that bound them by the neck, almost choking themselves.

"Tsune, shut the door right now before that wind blows in here!" Mom ordered, but I couldn't take my eyes off those goats being pelted by the rain. Their bleating sounded to me like desperate

cries for "f-e-e-d, f-e-e-d." Afraid they would starve unless I ran out to cut grass for them right away, I was in agony, like when I had to go to the bathroom real bad. And it got worse and worse until I began groaning in my sleep. At last, just when I could stand it no longer, I woke up. I was relieved to find myself lying in bed, but felt strange to discover tears around my eyes.

6.

What made me have such a dream, I wondered. More than a year had passed since we raised goats at Misato village in the nearby countryside. Besides, we would never have gone out to cut grass for them during a storm. We always prepared ahead for typhoons by cutting big piles of grass and tossing the goats an extra supply. When the winds came, they would crouch down for cover, quietly chewing their cud. Remembering them now, my relief turned to loneliness.

Two of our goats had been shipped from abroad as something called "commodities aid." One of them was a chestnut-colored female with big brown eyes. When she stood up, I could see her drooping udder that was large enough for one of the white goats born here in the islands to hide behind. Her horns grew out in coils until the tips grazed the skin behind her ears. One day Dad shortened her horns with a hacksaw, but he tried to cut one horn too low, and sliced into her flesh. I felt sorry for her as she winced in pain with the blood trickling down. Hugging her neck to keep her under control, I shut my eyes tightly as Dad began sawing on the other horn.

Soon after that, the prettiest little chestnut kid was born, though I guess all animals are cute when they're small. Then one day I went out to cut the goats some grass and found him lying dead where he had fallen into a manure pit next to a neighbor's field. For a while his mother dripped milk wherever she went. She never bore another kid.

After grandfather's death, we sold our house and moved to town. We also sold our goats to someone in the village, and since the female couldn't bear kids anymore, she was probably soon killed and eaten. But whatever became of her had nothing to do with me now that we lived in town. So why was I worried about her? Anyway, I knew I should go back to sleep because I had to get up at five in the morning for my newspaper route. I'd started

working part-time to bring in some extra money for us. Maybe the strain of my new job had caused me to have that dream.

7.

I can still remember the day we moved to town. We piled our bureau and fly curtains, blackened by kitchen smoke, onto a truck with our grimy mattresses and mosquito netting. I couldn't help feeling embarrassed as we rode along the military highway in the bright afternoon sunlight. It seemed funny, but sad too, and I'd wanted to laugh and cry at the same time.

On the military highway—so wide that everyone joked it was also built for airplanes to take off and land—passed cars driven by American women and buses packed with local people. Signs in English lined both sides of the road: SOUVENIRS, RESTAURANT, TAILOR SHOP, HOTEL; and passing soldiers danced to music drifting from bars and cabarets.

This was the city where we would make our new home. From my window I could see a loudspeaker mounted on the roof of a movie theater. American popular songs echoed all through the town, and even in the daytime women carrying their washbasins walked by on their way to the public bath.

Dad drifted quickly through a series of business ventures.

"Here in town we should be able to make a nice profit," he said. Then, after his noodle-shop and grocery store both failed, he decided to go into the bar business. He talked to Mr. Yamanouchi who managed one of the many bars on "Gate Street" which ran from the entrance to a big air force base through the center of town. Dad listened carefully as Mr. Yamanouchi taught him his trade.

"You have to choose girls with queen-bee figures, big tits and slim waists. Get three or four of them and you're in business. If you can find one like our Suzy with white skin and a nice round ass, you'll really rake it in."

People said Mr. Yamanouchi had made so much money he used a bureau for a cash box. Dad followed him everywhere. They went to hire a carpenter, to look for girls, and to get a commercial license at the town office.

Then one afternoon when I came home from school, the girls had arrived. From the sound of their laughter, I could tell they were already busy in the bar. Dad was talking to Mom with his mouth full of food.

"See, you make loans to the girls who bring in lots of money. That way they have to keep working for you to pay off their debts. Of course, nobody lends money to the girls who can't sell, so they just drift around from bar to bar."

He talked so matter-of-factly about women who are lured into debt and then held like slaves. How could he sit there and gossip about their misery while chewing his food with such pleasure? I stared at his Adam's apple bobbing up and down.

8.

"Tsune. Tsuneyoshi, get up." Mom shook me awake. That was how every day started for me.

"What, five o'clock already? Ugh, that smell again. It always stinks like perfume in here."

"Tsune! Hurry or you'll be late for your paper route."

Morning again. I sprang out of bed, remembering that Dad said I should rise like a Japanese soldier in the true samurai spirit. Dad had gotten up early himself and was reading aloud from yesterday's newspaper, beads of saliva forming at the corners of his mouth. His voice boomed out excitedly, as though he were making a rousing speech. He liked to show off to Mom, who couldn't read. Meanwhile, she hunched sleepily over a pot of miso soup that was steaming on the kitchen stove.

No one would be out this early, so without bothering to wash my face, I quickly slipped on my sandals.

"Shouldn't you take your account book?" Mom asked.

"People complain if I go around collecting bills in the morning."

"But in the evening they'll say it's a bad omen for their bars. Better take it now."

I still had unpaid bills left over from last month, and they were all from places where it was very hard to collect money. A friend had given me his paper route because I promised to take over these accounts.

9.

I felt the damp morning mist and the chill of the wind as I ran out on the street. Up ahead lay what seemed to be a brightly colored handkerchief. I didn't plan to take it, but when I stopped to

lift it with my foot for a closer look, I was startled to see it was a woman's panties. Under them, a little dry spot stood out starkly on the wet pavement.

The bookshop where I picked up my newspapers was run by a man from Hateruma, one of the smaller Ryūkyū islands. He was outside sweeping the front sidewalk, and today, as always, he had a toothbrush in his mouth.

"Good morning," I said.

"Morning."

Inside, the store was crammed with books, magazines, stationery, and notepaper. I hurried across the narrow dirt floor to the back door, where my share of newspapers had been stacked, and stuffed them under my arm.

"Has Keizō left already?"

"Yeah, he's gone. Oh, Tsuneyoshi, the Yoshidas' boy picked up their paper on his way to work and left money for the bill."

"Thanks."

10.

"Hello, I'm collecting for the newspaper."

"What newspaper? I've never seen it."

"I leave it inside your front door every day."

"Oh, we don't use that door. There's a bureau behind it."

The man facing me looked like a bartender. He went back into a room reeking with perfume and came out grasping a handful of yellowed newspapers.

"See, all you did was stuff them behind the bureau."

"I'm sorry. I didn't know it was there."

"From now on put them in through the kitchen door."

"All right, but..."

"But what?"

"Your bill..."

"I'll pay it next month."

I looked back at his house as I was leaving and stuck out my tongue. On my way to the next place I had to cross a stone bridge over a stream that had become as filthy as a sewage ditch. Broken glass was scattered all over the bridge's narrow pavement, leaving almost no place to walk. It looked as though someone had smashed a whiskey bottle in a drunken rage. If the glass hadn't sparkled in the morning sunlight, I would have stepped on it.

11.

Later, on my way to school, I saw two classmates walking just ahead of me.

"Keizō!" I was so glad to see him that I ran up to them like an eager puppy. But Keizō barely glanced at me and kept talking to Seiichi, our class monitor. It made me feel bad.

"You were late for your paper route this morning, weren't you." he said finally.

"Yeah, I overslept." I played up to him, scratching my head sheepishly as if to apologize for being late.

"Hey, there's that smell again."

"What smell?" I asked.

"Don't you recognize it? That's the smell of sperm." Seiichi laughed.

Little piles of crushed petals lay on the street. Looking up, I saw that they had fallen from white flowers growing on the branches of a tree overhead. Keizō jumped up to tear off a leaf and began chewing it, wrinkling up his nose. I jumped up too, plucked off another leaf and tried chewing it. It tasted bitter and had the smell of unripened buds.

"Smells like sperm, doesn't it," said Keizō.

"Sperm?"

"You mean you don't know about that yet? You're 'way behind. Tell you what. When you go to Hateruma's bookshop today, look up the word 'sex' in the dictionary. I bet you'll find it interesting. That's 's-e-x,' see?" Keizō traced the word in the palm of his hand.

"You're horny," I said.

"Yeah? Well, don't tell me you're not. Look!" he shouted angrily. "When you point a finger at me, your other three fingers are pointing straight back at you. That means you must be *three* times as horny!"

I'd never meant to say anything to make Keizō turn on me like that. Now I felt like crying. We both liked art and had become good friends, but these days he was always talking to Seiichi about math. That bores me, so as soon as I got to school, I went into the bathroom. I was still in there when the first bell rang for Monday morning assembly; soon I could hear the students breathing hard as they ran out to the schoolyard.

12.

Later, at the end of home-room hour, our teacher, Miss Asato, walked over to our desks on the boys' side of the class.

"Takeshi, I want you to come to the faculty room at recess. There's something I'd like to ask you. And Tsuneyoshi, you come with him."

I didn't know why she wanted to see us, but it was the first time I'd been invited to the faculty room at middle school, and I felt honored.

When we got there, Miss Asato came right over and motioned for us to follow her outside. She led us to a spot behind the school building, next to a banyan tree. Then she put her hand on my shoulder, pulling me away from Takeshi, and peered down at me earnestly.

"This morning someone stole all the class membership dues from Natsuko's school satchel. Do you know anything about this, Tsuneyoshi? You didn't come to morning assembly, did you? Were you late?"

"No, I came to school with Keizō and Seiichi. I was in the rest-room when morning assembly started. I stayed there the whole time."

"I see."

Some schoolgirls from the classroom next to ours came running toward the banyan tree. They jumped up to grab one of its branches that hung down like an elephant's trunk, worn smooth by the many young hands that had grasped it.

"Look, a gorilla!" shouted one of the girls as she pointed toward a wire fence surrounding a nearby field. Inside was an American military radio tower. The MP on guard, a black soldier, was standing with both hands clutching the wire fence. He looked at the girls and sneered.

"Tsuneyoshi," said Miss Asato. "Someone saw a boy with long hair sitting in Natsuko's seat during morning assembly. He was resting with his head down on her desk to hide his face."

"Well, if you think that was me, you're wrong."

How could she suspect me of stealing money just because I had long hair? I stamped angrily on a small shrub that grew up from the rocky soil, then smeared the ground with its green pulp.

"Natsuko's still crying about it. She's assistant class treasurer, and everyone's membership dues come to a lot of money."

"Who told you he saw me? I'd like to have a talk with him."

Miss Asato looked at me silently for a moment.

"Never mind, Tsuneyoshi. I'm sorry. You can go now."

When I got back to the classroom, Masao, the class treasurer, was reading a comic book in the seat behind me while another student peered over his shoulder. I wanted to read it too, so I tapped Masao on the arm and saw him reach up to cover his shirt pocket with his hand. There was money inside! He must have known why the teacher called me out and now he was trying to hide it. I felt trapped. It was bad enough that Miss Asato suspected me of stealing, but with Keizō being so unfriendly, I had nowhere to turn. School had become unbearable. I jumped up and fled from the room.

13.

I scrambled up a hillside grown thick with *susuki* grass and found the underbrush trampled down into a narrow, tunnel-like trail, perhaps by a stray dog. "Tsuneyoshi, come back to school! Don't play hooky again today."

I was imagining that Miss Asato had come chasing after me.

"No!" I called back, crawling up the hill through that tunnel as if to escape her. I was nearing the top when all at once from deep inside me rose a buoyant feeling so strange and powerful it brought tears to my eyes. My heart pounded as I scurried through the rustling leaves and came out suddenly into a bright clearing. I stopped here, thinking I might have to go to the bathroom, but for some reason the front of me had stiffened and nothing would come out. In the distance I could see Katsuren Peninsula reaching out into the ocean like a huge hand. Tsuken and Kudaka islands seemed to be fleeing from its clutching fingers. Standing on tiptoe, I could make out Misato village, nestled just this side of the farm fields below, and the small fishing hamlets that dotted the seashore beyond. Two of the hamlets were separated by an abandoned runway where American soldiers liked to race their motorcycles up and down.

Standing way up here, I felt as if I were floating in the sky. I reached down and began rubbing myself as children sometimes do, but this time a strange and delightful feeling welled up, like one

I'd had before in a dream. When I looked down, a juice that smelled like unripened buds was falling on the grass.

Now I knew the truth. All you had to do was rub yourself. You didn't really need a girl if you wanted to have this good feeling. And what about the soldiers? Couldn't they have it this way too? I felt as if I had just drunk my fill of water after a long thirst and lay down with a sigh to rest on the grass.

14.

Huge columns of billowing clouds rose over the Pacific horizon that stretched out in a long line dividing the sky from the ocean shimmering in the heat of the sun. Beyond that horizon lay island paradises—the riches of Australia, and Saipan where I was born. No one eats papayas in Saipan. They're for the birds to peck at. People eat bananas fried crisp and sweet. How I wanted to go back there! I shut my eyes tightly trying to bring my dim memories of Saipan into focus.

All day long I had played in the shade of big trees with the native children. We made clay models of war planes and battleships, then lined them up in rows under the house to dry. We also swam in the ocean. Mom laughed one day when I told her I had gone swimming holding sand in both hands.

Later, to escape shelling from a real warship, our family fled into the jungle. I carried a pile of blankets on my back and held chickens under both arms. Their heads bobbed worriedly as I ran along, trying to keep up with the others. After the fighting ended and we came out of the jungle, I saw skeletons that were still wearing clothes lying all over the place.

But I didn't want to think about the war now. To take my mind off it, I pulled a book of maps out of my school satchel and opened to a page where the Pacific Ocean currents are marked by red arrows. As I traced the path of the stream running up from the equator, an idea occurred to me. The current bounced off the Philippines, veered northward, and ran alongside Okinawa before flowing out to the open sea off Shikoku. Then, from Ogasawara, it plunged back down to the South Sea islands. So why couldn't it carry me there? If a boat can float downstream on a river to the ocean, surely I could sail the Japan Current to the South Sea islands.

A puppy was whining somewhere. At first I had thought the sound was coming from the village below, but now it seemed much closer. I wondered if a den of stray dogs might be nearby. From where I sat, the narrow tunnel through the underbrush continued down the other side of the hill. I began crawling through it and, all at once, came face to face with a dog that looked like a hyena, baring her teeth. Startled, I began to edge backward, but saw that she was also backing away. So I stopped in my tracks and waited until she turned and ran off. In her den close by I found plump, furry puppies lying one on top of another, and smelled a strong odor of fresh milk and afterbirth. I chose the largest of the pups and stuffed him under my shirt.

Later, the puppy and I were fast asleep when I awoke suddenly, remembering my paper route. I scrambled down the hillside and, cutting across a burdock field, noticed many strange-looking white objects stuck between the wide, green leaves. Wondering what they were, I pushed the leaves aside and was shocked at what I saw. The sewage pumped out from town must have overflowed onto the field here, and floating in the slush like huge maggots were countless used condoms swollen with air. I imagined that each one still coiled with lust and felt the front of my pants begin stretching like a tent.

15.

When I got home from playing hooky, Chiiko and Michikō were talking in the next room.

"I took off my slip, but when I turned around to look at him, he was crouched in the corner trembling. So I grabbed his cock and asked, 'WHATSA MATTER?' He said, 'I'M SCARED. MAYBE YOU HAVE V.D.'"

I'd know Chiiko's voice anywhere.

"What's V.D.?" asked Michikō.

"It's venereal disease in English. For a kid he had a lot of nerve accusing me of that. So I told him, 'LOOK, I SHOW YOU,' and opened up my legs real fast right in front of him. Ha, ha, ha!"

How exciting Chiiko's voice sounded to me! Strong and sweet.

"What happened then?"

"He got down on the floor, crawled under my legs like a snake, and ran out. He was probably still in high school. Skinny as a bean sprout."

"But most Americans have big bodies, so they reach puberty early, don't they?"

"They sure do. I used to work as a maid for a staff sergeant's family in the Zukeran Housing Area. The Muellers were nice people, but their little boy was an awful nuisance. After he turned twelve, he started opening the door when I was going to the bathroom and came in to peek at me in the shower, pretending he had to wash his hands. It got so bad that one day when his mother was away at a meeting, I grabbed him and taught him the facts of life."

"Weren't his parents mad when they found out?"

"I didn't care. Hell, I learned all about that when I was fourteen. Not from Sergeant Mueller, though. It was the old man at the house where I worked before. I kind of wanted to get back at him so I taught that kid real good." Chiiko paused to greet Mom as she came in.

"Chiiko, I thought you'd gone to the bath."

"Yeah, but I ran into Michikō there. We started talking, and before I knew it, we ended up back here. Mmmmmm, what delicious-looking sweet radishes!"

"Why don't you stay for supper. I'll make pork and radish stew," Mom said. Then she opened the door to my room.

"Tsunel! Did you forget your paper route? I just ran into the man from the bookshop. He asked if you were late getting back from school. And what is that I see under your shirt? Oh, no! Not a puppy. I thought I smelled something funny in here. You took it away before it could even open its eyes. Go put it back where you found it!"

"And if I do, what about the newspapers?"

"Hey, that's about enough out of you. What are you doing lying around in here anyway? You've got *work* to do."

I wiped my sticky hands on my pants and went out.

16.

The man from Hateruma licked his finger as he reached for a pile of department store flyers and slid one into each newspaper. He sold magazines and stationery as well as books at his store, but the money he sent to his son, a university student in Tokyo, never seemed to be enough.

"How much is this book?" I called out to him.

"Which one?" He did not bother to look up from the work that earned him some extra money.

"*The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*."

"Robin—" Just then a loud crash came from outside on the main street. "What was that? I haven't heard any typhoon warnings, but I swear that sounded like a house just collapsed. *Robinson Crusoe*? Is the price marked on the back cover?"

"Two-hundred-twenty yen."

"So divide that by four."

"Fifty-five cents. Uh oh, I'm five cents short."

"Never mind, Tsuneyoshi. You can pay me later."

"Really?"

"Sure. If it's a book you like, go ahead and take it."

Now there was more noise outside, and people went running out to see what had happened.

"Tsuneyoshi, you don't have time to go gawking. Your stack is finished now, so get started. And don't forget to say 'I'm sorry the evening paper is late.'"

As I hurried down the main street clutching the newspapers under my arm, I ducked and dodged through clusters of soldiers smelling of soap who ambled along or lingered on the sidewalk, and felt like a football player charging gamely toward the goal line. In front of one store, waitresses in shiny, starched uniforms and bar girls in dresses reeking of perfume stood pressed together with soldiers in a crowd that had gathered.

"What a goddamn mess!" I could hear someone shouting, close to tears, and decided to take a quick look. A taxi had overturned in front of a telephone pole, and bits of broken glass were scattered like diamonds on the pavement.

"Those bastards have gone too far this time!" The driver pounded his fist on the twisted front of his cab, and the siren of an MP cruiser wailed in the distance as it sped toward the scene.

17.

I came home starved and dead tired from my afternoon delivery and sat down to rest on the windowsill in my room. Under a pale sky at dusk, the town already echoed with the sounds of another night's business. Engines whined as lines of cars climbed the uphill road, and throbbing music called customers into the bars. I picked up my bamboo flute and started to play.

"Boo!"

I hadn't heard Chiiko come in, and she jumped toward the windowsill, startling me.

"Let me try that." She snatched the flute from my fingers and, not caring that the mouthpiece was damp with my saliva, began blowing it. To tell the truth, I played my flute at the window hoping Chiiko would hear me, but I thought she had already gone to the bar where she worked. Now as she sat close to me with her red-painted lips puckered around the mouthpiece, I felt uneasy. Maybe I was in love with Chiiko only in my imagination. When she gave me back the flute, I did not put it to my mouth again.

"Fish for sale." A woman peddler passed on the street below.

Chiiko placed her hands together on the windowsill beside me and nestled her chin down on top of them. She looked all around my room, moving her eyes in big circles. I hoped she had forgotten about the watch she gave me.

"Did you draw that picture over there?"

"Yeah."

"Hmm. Not bad. Why did you make the whole thing red?"

"Because that's the color of sunset."

"Oh, I see. It's the wagon driver on his way home in the evening, isn't it? So the wagon, the driver, the road, and the hills in the background are all red."

Chiiko turned toward me, tilting her face upward, and gazed at my lips. I remembered sheepishly that I had once hoped she would be the one to teach me the facts of life.

"It makes me feel like painting, too. I'm really good, you know."

"Tsunel!" I heard Mom calling from the other side of the door. "Go out and help Naoe draw the water. She already left."

Chiiko seemed to remember something, and a look of sadness passed over her face.

"Mother's calling. You better go."

18.

We get our water from a well more than a hundred feet deep. Drawing the well bucket takes strong arms, so that's my job. Then my younger sister Naoe carries the water in shoulder pails to the kitchen where we pour it into a large copper vat. Watching her stagger along under the heavy load, I wondered if the weight might stunt her growth. I felt sorry for her but didn't want to risk stunting

my own growth by carrying it, so I gazed down at the bottom of the well and pretended not to notice her.

"Hellooo!" I called down into the darkness. Far below me a circle of water about the size of the moon was shimmering.

Chiiko didn't see me leaning against the wellhead when she came out of the Yamazatos' doorway with a soldier. He was tucking his shirttails inside his pants.

I always had to draw twelve bucketfuls of water because Mom insisted that we fill the copper vat in the kitchen. Otherwise, there wouldn't be enough water to last through the next day. She helped us pour it; that way she could also make sure we finished the job. She never served us supper until the vat was full.

19.

"It's just *awful*," Mom said suddenly at supper that night. "How will Kōkichi ever cover the loss?"

Dad continued eating. He had hunched up one leg so he could lean over and rest his right elbow on his knee as he wielded his chopsticks.

"And the soldiers ran off without even paying the fare. You think they'll ever be caught?"

Dad was too busy scraping up chunks of fried miso to answer.

"What happened to him?" I asked, no longer able to hide my concern. Kōkichi is Dad's second cousin who drives his own taxi for a living.

"Some drunken soldiers were pushing him around while he was driving, and his cab crashed into a telephone pole."

So that taxi overturned on the main street had been Kōkichi's! Why hadn't I recognized it?

"The soldier sitting in front stamped on Kōkichi's foot and the car went out of control."

"On his accelerator foot?"

"Yes. They were yelling, 'Hurry hurry, hubba hubba!'"

"Kōkichi has two arms. Why didn't he push him away?"

"How could he? There were three marines, big as bulls."

Just then Dad's fist lashed out and smacked me in the forehead.

"Can't you sit up straight?" he shouted.

I'd stretched my legs out under the table and was eating comfortably.

"You've got no manners at all!" Furious, I wanted to ask Dad how he could be so picky when he ate resting his elbow on one knee, but he had already corrected his own posture.

20.

"Tsuneyoshi, wake up!"

"Huh?"

"Come on, get up. You have to go out for more water."

"Water? But I already drew it."

"I had to dump that out. Some soldier thought the cooking vat was a toilet."

"You mean he pissed in it?"

"Yeah. He was drunk."

"Aw, Mom, you should have sent him outside. What were you doing anyway?"

"Hey, don't you know how busy I am—buying beer, boiling water, and what not. I was just wiping the floor after he threw up, and he went crawling into the kitchen on his hands and knees, moaning, 'TOILET, MAMA-SAN, TOILET!'"

"Didn't you yell at him to go 'OUTSIDE'?"

"Of course. I even chased after him, but it was too late. He was already standing over the cooking vat in the kitchen."

"Pissing?"

"Yeah. It steamed up and stank like beer. I shouted, 'YOU CRAZY!' and pushed him over; but he wouldn't stop, and it ran all over the kitchen. I had to pour out the vat, so now you'll have to get up and draw more water. I'll wake Naoe, too."

"I'm not going!"

"Look, it's not even eight o'clock yet. You'll still have plenty of time later to read your book."

"Nope. I've already drawn today's load."

"Hey, you know I can't cook tomorrow without water," she warned, but I stayed where I was.

"Well, then, there'll be no breakfast in the morning. Nothing to eat."

I remained silent and in bed.

"Oh, all right. I'll have Dad go to the well. If he needs help, Kōkichi should be coming back from the fields soon."

21.

This long and skinny town was started by people who lost their land to the American bases. They came to cling along the military highway like ants swarming around a worm that had crawled out in the sunlight. I trudged through the streets sobbing until I reached the wide rows of sweet potato fields just beyond the town's outskirts. Out here dust-covered hedges surround the farmhouses with their pigpens hidden back in the fields.

The moonlight was bright enough to see the pebbles on the dirt road that was a shortcut to the sea, so I wasn't afraid. And as I ambled along the dusty path, the midday heat that still hung in the air made the night feel warm. I found myself caught up in the rhythmic sound of pebbles crunching under my feet, and my tears soon dried. But when I came to a place where the road cuts down toward Yasuda village, for some reason I felt a chill. Trees grew densely along the bluffs on both sides here, surrounding me in darkness. All at once I felt the presence of a demon.

"Guardian spirit, drive it away!" I shouted, and took off running through the darkness, my eyes focused straight ahead. Mom had often told me to chant these words if I were ever really scared; otherwise, she said, my soul would rush out of my body, leaving me senseless. I ran downhill into a small valley where Innomiyado, a refugee camp, had been set up years ago, just after the war.

22.

I remembered seeing long rows of tents in that valley. We had just returned from Saipan, and my grandfather came rushing out of his tent to greet us.

"Zenkichi, Matsukō! You made it back!"

"And you pulled through, too!"

"I heard everyone died in the fighting in the South Pacific. But now you're back! Did the whole family survive the war?"

"Yeah, I held out and didn't go into the army, and we all came through it safely."

"I'm so glad to hear it!"

I had watched the three of them hug each other and cry. I was only six at the time, but it all seemed to have happened just moments ago. Seeing adults cry for the first time had brought tears to my eyes, too. It is something I will never forget. But that

was years ago. Mom and Dad never cry or show such strong feelings anymore.

23.

Later, people from Isahama came to live in this valley after their land was taken over for a military base. Now rows of rice fields irrigated with rainwater stretch side by side, separated by ridges of stone and concrete. From the yard of a scrubby little farmhouse beyond the fields came the sound of a dog barking loudly. Even at a distance, I could picture the dog, thin and weak with nerves on edge. I tried calling out affectionately; but, unable to soothe him, I soon tired of his barking and ran on through the village. As I came to the edge of the valley, a gust of wind rose up that smelled of the sea. From here I could see the rooftops of Misato village reflecting dimly white in the moonlight. Beyond them a battleship drifted in the ocean, its patrol lights glaring for no reason.

24.

When I reached the shore, I lay down in a small *sabani* fishing boat drawn up on the beach. The wooden planks on the floor of the boat felt nice and warm under my back. From far offshore came the steady sound of the tide, and the moon seemed to get smaller and smaller as it faded into the west. Overhead, a cool breeze was blowing, but the stagnant air inside the boat attracted mosquitoes that came swooping in from the marshland behind the seawall. Their whining beside my ears sounded like frantic cries for "blood, p-l-e-a-s-e. Blood, p-l-e-a-s-e."

I swatted drowsily, trying to drive them away, when all at once I heard voices. Lifting my head cautiously, I looked out. Looming up on the seawall was the shadow of a man carrying an oar. A second shadow followed close behind of another man shouldering a mast wrapped in sailcloth. They were heading my way, and I was afraid of what would happen if they saw me here. Knowing they might easily take me for a child thief, I imagined one of them grabbing me by the scruff of the neck. Had there only been a sail or an oar left in the boat, I could have put out for the open sea. Instead, I decided to pretend I was sleeping. I lay still as a rock in the bottom of the boat, ready to cry out in feigned surprise if one of them grabbed me.

"And Hamauechi Hiroko, too."

"Yeah?"

The fishermen talked as they waded toward the boats through the shallow water.

"She says she's going to Brazil."

"To marry Seikichi?"

"That's right."

Next I heard splashing sounds as the men bailed water out of their boat.

"Well, she's probably better off. At least she didn't end up like her sister, shackled up with some GI"

"Yeah, wearing those tacky dresses."

"And all that make-up."

Just as I started to enjoy my eavesdropping, their voices faded out. I lifted my head again and saw their *sabani* boat, its little sail now swelling in the breeze, glide toward the open sea. The sky over Katsuren Peninsula had turned purple as morning approached. Out in the ocean, the glaring patrol lights of the battleship had been turned off.

25.

When I next opened my eyes, I was startled to find the sun already high in the sky, baking the skin on my neck and arms. I jumped to my feet, wiping sweat from my neck, and felt the sting of mosquito bites.

The tide had receded far offshore, leaving a dry, sandy beach all around me. For one exciting moment I thought I had drifted to the uninhabited island of my dreams; but looking around hurriedly, I was disappointed to recognize the seawall, washed white by salt spray, and the familiar range of green hills stretching beyond it.

Then I noticed that the fruit knife I kept under my belt was gone. I tended to sleep soundly with my mouth wide open, so someone would have had plenty of time to search me for valuables.

The brightness of the white sand was dazzling. Just for today, I told myself, I would try living like Robinson Crusoe. I set out toward the beach, pretending that this was a deserted island, and began to explore my surroundings.

Countless fiddler crabs seemed to chant curses, spewing tiny bubbles from their mouths while they moved their claws up and down as if to beckon the tide. I launched a surprise attack on their

compound. Unable to return to their holes, they dashed around wildly. Some became so confused they couldn't move, while others tried to burrow into holes that were too small and floundered at the openings. Catching fiddler crabs is easy. The one I picked up fit neatly into the palm of my hand and stayed there even when I opened my fingers. It had sparkling colors, with a green back and brown feet. One claw was as big as its body, and glowed with changing hues of green and orange down to a bright red tip. The other claw was yellow and drooped limply. I wanted to take this little critter home but knew that, away from a saltwater environment, it would soon die.

Here and there on the beach the tide had collected in ankle-deep puddles where blowfish foraged for food. I chased after them, determined to catch one, not caring about the water splashing all over my pants. With nowhere to escape, they darted about in quick spurts and hid in the water muddied from the sand I'd kicked up. I had to keep a sharp eye on their hiding places or I would lose track of them. Stepping carefully into their puddles, you can trap one of these slimy creatures under your foot and then grab it with your hand. When caught, a blowfish will squeal and puff out its belly, which will swell up even bigger if you try rubbing it flipped upside down. Blowfish are poisonous, so we can't eat them. Set free, they float in the water like balloons, pretending to be dead, but as soon as you start walking away, they belch out their air and dart away. There's never a dull moment on the beach.

If I turned over the stones that dotted the surface of the tide puddles, I could usually find scissor crabs hiding underneath. They are washed up on land with the high tides, but some of them spend too much time foraging for food and get caught on the beach when the water recedes. Their claws and diamond-shaped shells are covered with sharp spines. Scissor crabs can really hurt you because they will lock onto something with all their might, even if their claws are being wrenched off.

The one I went after opened its claws menacingly as soon as I took away the stone that sheltered it. Decoying those claws with one hand, I snatched its shell from behind with the other. By now I was so hungry that I peeled off the shell, washed the white meat in seawater, and ate it on the spot. But killing the crab gave me a creepy feeling.

Later, I walked out into the shallow water beyond the beach where sea urchins live, their spiny shells lodged among the jagged

rocks. I had come here once before with Mom to gather some. She had thrown them back to me on the beach. Then I halved the shells, scooped out the meat with a spoon, and stuffed it into jars. It made a thick, delicious sauce for rice. Remembering the fun I'd had that day, I tossed the one sea urchin I'd picked up back into the ocean. A sea gull glided gracefully overhead, and I was startled to see that I had come all the way to the end of the shallows. The tide can rise suddenly out here, and people playing among these rocks have been known to drown in the swirling waters. Mom told me to watch the direction objects floated on the water's surface to see whether the tide was on the rise. If nothing was floating, she said to spit on the water. I was frightened when I saw my spit bobbing toward the shore, a sure sign of rising tide, and got out of there fast.

In all the excitement I had completely forgotten about my paper route, and now I imagined the scolding I'd get from the man at the bookshop. A black sea slug crawled lazily on the sand. I ran over and trampled it, then watched as it vomited a pure white thread.

If he complains, I'll say I'm quitting. That would make it easier to leave home, I told myself. My courage renewed, I scrambled up the seawall. Yes. And then, after collecting my wages, I would buy a knife, lures and hooks for fishing, vitamins, and whatever else I'd need to live on an uninhabited island. I'd also get books about sailing techniques, nutrition, and the other things I'd have to bone up on for the journey.

26.

September 30, 1659. I, poor miserable Robinson Crusoe, being shipwrecked, during a dreadful storm, in the offing, came on shore on this dismal unfortunate island, which I call'd the Island of Despair, all the rest of the ship's company being drown'd, and myself almost dead.

All the rest of that day I spent in afflicting my self at the dismal circumstances I was brought to, viz. I had neither food, house, clothes, weapons, or place to fly to, and in despair of relief, saw nothing but death before me, either that I should be devour'd by wild beasts, murder'd by savages, or starv'd to death for want of food. At the approach of night, I slept in a tree for fear of wild creatures, but slept soundly tho' it rained all night.

"Excuse me, Tsune. Michikō needs your bed again." Mom's voice interrupted my reading.

"Not now. I'm studying." I frowned without lifting my eyes from the page.

October 1. In the morning I saw to my great surprise the ship had floated with the high tide, and was driven on shore again much nearer the island, which as it was some comfort on one hand, for seeing her sit upright, and not broken to pieces, I hop'd, if the wind abated, I might get on board, and get some food and necessaries out of her for my relief; so on the other hand, it renewe'd my grief at the loss of my comrades, who I imagin'd if we had all staid on board might have sav'd the ship, or at least that they would not have been drown'd as they were; and that had the men been sav'd, we might perhaps have built us a boat out of the ruins of the ship, to have carried us to some other part of the world. I spent a great part of this day in perplexing my self on these things; but at length seeing the ship almost dry, I went upon the sand as near as I could, and then swam on board; this day also it continu'd raining, tho' with no wind at all.

"Aren't things ready in there yet?" Michikō's voice came from the bar.

"Just a second," Mom called back, then burst into my room. "Tsuneyoshi, hurry up. This will only take about fifteen minutes. Come out of there now!"

"No! You ought to quit selling women."

"Oh, sure I'll quit. Then we'd have to go back to living from day to day. Things would be *ten* times as bad as they are now, and there'd be no money for anyone to go to school."

"So I'll quit school. Then I won't need your money."

"Hey, that's big talk. I won't let you forget it."

I stretched out full-length on my bed and clasped my hands behind my head. Gazing up at the ceiling, I let my thoughts drift back into my own private world.

Robinson Crusoe was lucky. He could take whatever he needed from his wrecked ship, but for my voyage I could bring only the barest necessities.

"Never mind. We'll use the sitting room," Michikō called from the bar.

"Fine. Just let me put away the table in there," Mom called back.

"All right, but please hurry."

"It won't take a second."

I wondered what the barest necessities for life would be. First, I'd need lures, hooks, and lines for fishing. I'd have to live on fish for my whole voyage since I wouldn't be able to bring any food with

me. I could get protein from fish meat, calcium from the bones, and vitamin A from the innards. Second, I'd need a large cask of water. Still, even that probably wouldn't last long enough. For rain, all people can do is pray to the gods, but I'd read that drinkable water can also be squeezed out of fish meat. Third, I would need vitamins. I'd read that fish doesn't provide vitamins B or C, and in the old days sailors who didn't eat fresh vegetables came down with beri-beri. Some got it so bad they couldn't walk.

Next door in the sitting room the light went out, and I could hear Michikō calling to a soldier.

"HEY. HEY, YOU. COME HERE."

The fourth thing I'd need is a knife. I'd use it for cooking and, of course, for self-defense. Number five is matches. No, flint would be better. Matches are useless if they get wet.

Deep as I was in daydreaming about my voyage, I found myself distracted now by sounds from the room next door. I heard a belt being unbuckled, loud laughter, and then, as the floorboards began to creak, there were moans and heavy breathing. I could hold back no longer.

I finished so quickly there wasn't even time for me to imagine Chiiko. And when it was over, I wiped myself off with a blanket.

"Where's the hot water for a douche?" Michikō called to Mom.

"Oh, I put it next to the family altar." Mom's voice came from the kitchen where she had been hiding. The light in the sitting room went back on again.

Now I remembered what Mom had said before about being short of money, and I began to worry because I had recently loaned her all my pay from the newspaper route. I went out to talk to her.

"Mom, I have to buy a book, so I'll need that money I loaned you."

"What money?" She busily rolled up the mattress in the sitting room and pretended not to know what I was talking about.

"The twelve dollars from my paper route you borrowed the other day."

"Oh, I thought I'd already paid you back."

I wondered how long she intended to play dumb. Spotting a wet blotch on the mattress, she fled to the kitchen for a rag.

"No, not yet. I know you haven't forgotten about it, either." I followed her angrily into the kitchen. "Well, how about it?"

"What book do you want anyway? You already have lots of school books."

"That's my business. You just pay me back."

"Dad says children shouldn't have money because they'll waste it."

"I won't waste it. Now give it to me!"

"All right. I'll pay you later. Just wait."

"No, I want it *now!*" I was so furious tears welled up in my eyes.

"Listen, I don't have it now. I'll pay you later."

"That's a lie! Pay me now. I want it now!" I ran after Mom, kicking her in the legs.

"All right. Here, take it! You're so stubborn sometimes it makes me sick."

Mom reached into her apron pocket, pulled out the money she had just gotten from Michikō, and threw it down in front of me. Snatching those dollar bills off the floor, I tore them in half. Then I ripped them to bits.

Mom let out a shriek as she reached down to gather up the torn pieces scattered on the kitchen floor.

27.

After that night I was busy every day preparing for my voyage. I went to the library at the Ryukyu-American Friendship Center to read up on sailboats. How they could travel against the wind had always been a mystery to me, but now I learned about "tacking" to windward in a zig-zag course. I also studied pottery making in the encyclopedia. I would need a hobby to relieve the monotony of my primitive existence on a small island, so I carefully memorized the whole procedure:

First, make a mold from moistened clay soil and set it out in the shade to dry for about ten days. When completely dry, bake it in a kiln at 800° or place it in the center of a fire until it turns red. This will produce a piece of unglazed pottery. To make the finish, crush some quartz into fine slivers, mix them with flakes of bone ash, and add water, stirring the mixture to a thick pulp. After applying the finish, bake the piece one more time to a smooth gloss.

I had never studied so hard before.

28.

A few days later I climbed the hill in front of Koza Primary School to find some flint. After passing a small graveyard, I came to the hilltop where a tank that serves as a makeshift waterworks is mounted inside a hollowed-out rock. I had remembered some time ago seeing glasslike stones packed in the crevice, around the base of the tank.

All around me was evidence of Okinawa's birth in a violent earthquake that had pushed the island up through a prehistoric sea. Waves once washed over the rocks jutting out of the hillside, and now long, jagged cracks remained at the ancient water level. I climbed to the top of the highest rock—battered by wind and spray so long ago—and looked far below to where the prehistoric ocean floor had been. Down there was Koza where I lived today.

From here I commanded a view of the whole town, a jumble of houses clinging along that one military highway. Facing the street were large signboards put up to decorate all the storefronts and to hide everything behind them that was now fully revealed before my eyes. Clotheslines, outhouses, chimneys, and water tanks seemed to be strewn haphazardly among rooftops of rusted tin and soot-stained tile. Piles of trash from "Summer Cleaning Week" lay here and there on the street. Looking down, I wanted to jeer at Koza's shameful side. Then, all at once, I thought I heard someone laughing at me. I looked around, but could see only one man lying face down in the little graveyard I'd passed earlier.

Hollows in the rock where I stood were filled with crumbling white seashells, and I wondered if they might have been there since prehistoric times. After stuffing my pockets with the quartz-like stones I had come for, I made my way back down the hill. I passed an American soldier who stood in the little graveyard, watching his Okinawan girl friend as she picked pieces of dead grass from her hair.

29.

"Tsuneyoshi, Dad's looking for the hammer. Have you seen it?"

I had taken the hammer with me to dig out the flint, and now I went to get it from under my bed.

"I thought you had it. Better take it to Dad. Oh, wait. Your eye looks red. Did you get some dirt in it?"

"Yeah. Feels like sand."

"Well, come put your head down here. Now look up at me." As I lay back with my head in Mom's lap, she took one withered breast in her hands and squeezed out two or three drops of white liquid that dripped into my eye.

"Now blink a few times and the dirt will wash right out."

I sat up from Mom's lap where I had noticed a peculiar smell and looked up at the ceiling. When I started blinking, milk trickled down from the corner of my eye like tears.

"Does that feel better?"

"Yeah, it's fine now."

Outside, Dad was cutting boards from a stack of wood. He wanted to build a fence for our dog Pochi who liked to fetch empty cans, old clogs, mosquito netting, and other junk and scatter it under the house.

"I'm ready to close the fence now," he said. "Go call Pochi."

"Pochi! Pochi! Here, Pochi! Come out of there."

Pochi had grown timid after being hit by a car and spent most of his time lying far back under the house. To coax him out, I poured some miso soup flavored with dried sardines over a plate of rice and brought it out to the yard.

"Pochi, here are some nice sardines for you."

When Pochi came out, his shaggy hair was caked with mud and he didn't smell so good. Now Dad was ready to nail the fence shut, but all that junk was still strewn under the house.

"Tsuneyoshi, get the rake and clean out under there."

"But the rake won't reach."

"Then you'll have to crawl underneath."

"Are you kidding? Through that shit hole?"

"Sure. You can clean that out too, while you're at it. Now get under there!"

I glared at Dad and felt anger rising inside me.

"Well, don't just stand there. Get to work!"

I thought about how the dirt under the house would be damp from all the used douche water that dripped through the floor.

"You better do what your father tells you, young man."

Now I was determined not to budge. I stood with my arms locked behind me around a fence post.

"I will not."

"Why you little smart aleck!" Dad leapt to his feet and swung the hammer he was holding right at my head. Shutting my eyes, I saw sparks fly and wondered if I would die instantly, but he checked his swing and the hammer only grazed my hair. This must be what people mean when they say "just by a hair."

"If you don't mind your parents, you'll never listen to anybody."

Dad always used to say he only hit me because he loved me, but now I knew this was a lie. He hit me when he got angry because he hated me.

"All you've done lately is cause trouble."

As I moved away from the fence post, I cried silently. How could he swing a hammer at my head? He might have killed me. I couldn't stand it anymore in this house where people are treated like parasites. I realized now that Dad was just like the soldiers. All he'd wanted was to get into a woman. Then after he climbed on, something extra had come along. Me. To him I was just a nuisance, a piece of baggage.

30.

For my voyage I wanted a gun, to kill sharks that might attack me or anyone who gave me trouble. Thinking I might like to try shooting someone, I started wanting a gun. Once, years ago, I was cutting grass for our goats in a small grove of trees near one end of the abandoned runway outside Misato village. I had come across a wooden box hidden in the weeds among some gravestones and opened it expecting to find canned goods. But inside, wrapped in oiled paper, were ten shiny rifles. I was so scared at the time that I pushed the weeds back over the box and ran away. Now I decided to go back and see if it might still be there.

31.

From a clear midsummer sky, the sun beat down on the runway. The whole strip was deserted; not even a piece of straw could be seen on the wide asphalt band, which shimmered in the heat. Far down at the other end, trees in the small grove also seemed to quiver, as in a mirage.

Nobody was working in the nearby fields, one of which used to belong to my grandfather. I had purposely come here at the

hottest hour of the day after all the farmers had left for lunch, knowing they would rest at home until it cooled off. A lone pigeon drifted overhead, peering down at the fields.

As I trudged along squinting, I could feel the heat of the asphalt even through my shoes. Granddad's field had been under this very spot. I could remember, coming back on the boat to Okinawa from Saipan just after the war, how we all looked forward to eating meat and glazed sweet potatoes when we got to Granddad's house. Then we arrived to find him living in a tent and this runway stretching through his field. Granddad told us it was built in just one week for an attack on the Japanese mainland, but Japan surrendered after the atomic bombings and the attack never took place. Later, the Americans discovered that the salt breeze from the ocean nearby rusted their airplanes, so they abandoned the runway without ever using it. After that, weapons and ammunition were collected from around the area, stacked in huge piles on the strip, and covered with tarpaulins.

Granddad had been one of the people hired by the American military to gather up the ammunition; he was paid in canned goods and cigarettes. After his job was eliminated, he tried farming the shrunken plot that was all that remained of his field. He planted sweet potatoes among the stones that poked up through the rocky soil, but nothing would grow except some shriveled bulbs covered with fuzz that looked more like carrots than potatoes. Now the sight of this field, no larger than our tiny school playground, made me want to laugh.

Mom took over working the field after Dad and Granddad got jobs on the base. My job was tending the goats, and I went out to cut grass for them every day after school. Those rifles I had seen hidden among the gravestones that day must have been stolen from the weapons and ammunition piled on the runway. Later, the piles were hauled away and dumped far out in the ocean.

When at last I found my way to the small grove of trees near the cape where the guns had been, I searched all around the gravestones in vain. I should never have expected them to be here after so many years.

Wandering out to a deserted beach, I saw plovers that tottered along chirping as they made brief stops on the sand. I remembered that, just after the war, this whole beach had been the color of rusted metal from a flotilla of landing craft packed together like flies swarming around a corpse. Then, in no time, salvage workers from Japan had cleared them all away.

From here out to the distant horizon, the ocean gleamed and sparkled with all the colors of a prism. At the White Beach Navy Pier, near the mouth of the bay, a giant aircraft carrier drifted like some huge phantom. Inside the bay, a yacht was floating so quietly I couldn't believe anyone was aboard. I sat down on the concrete seawall, feeling the gentle ocean breeze, and wondered vaguely where I should go next. Though I had no other place in mind, I didn't want to go home.

32.

Soon the heat became too much for me and I also found myself wanting to be around people again, so I left the beach and headed inland to a little fishing village. Its eight low-roofed bungalows were surrounded on all sides by clusters of pine, hibiscus, and banana plants. I trudged along the road through wide patches of shade from the trees, where the cool air revived me, and could hear pine needles rustling overhead in the ocean breeze. Thirsty, I made my way from one island of shade to the next in search of water. The sound of someone planing lumber came from a house where *sabani* boats were made. Through an opening in the hedge I could see a little old man standing under a lean-to roof busily scraping his plane. The keel and inside ribbing of a boat were mounted on the rack beside him.

Behind the house was a concrete tank set up to collect rain-water. I walked over, quickly scooped some up, and gulped it down. The water was tepid from sitting in the tank, but it tasted good to me and I drank my fill. Then, wanting to see how boats are made, I went over to the old man's yard.

"What do you want?" He glared at me in surprise. I noticed that his eyes were red and had no eyelashes. He might have picked up one of the eye diseases fishermen get from diving in the ocean.

"Uh... nothing really. I just..."

"Then you've got no business coming in here!" he roared. I slunk away like a dog hit by a stone.

Returning to the beach I saw a *sabani* boat that had just been painted with preservative and was drying upside down on the sand. I wondered if such a boat could carry me across the ocean. I tried nudging it with my foot, but it didn't move. Then I kicked it hard several times, but it still wouldn't budge. For a small boat, it was

surprisingly heavy. As I gave it one last angry boot, the smell of preservative stung my nostrils.

Inside the bay a motorboat circled, leaving a trail of white waves. Beyond it the deserted-looking yacht I had seen earlier was drifting in, perhaps returning from the open sea. Now I remembered that just beyond the fishing village was a yacht harbor used by American employees of the military.

33.

From here I could see the pier, bathed in the waning rays of late afternoon sunlight, jutting out into the harbor. Beyond the wharf, two rows of red buoys marked the channel of green seawater that had been dug through the shallows. Fourteen or fifteen sleek yachts and cabin cruisers, each polished to a sparkling sheen, were lined up like brothers and sisters along both sides of the pier. I sat down among the pine needles scattered on the cool, concrete seawall and gazed with a sigh out at the sailboats.

There was a guard shack at the entrance to the wharf, and I noticed that the Okinawan guard standing inside carried a rifle. Would he merely yell out, I wondered, if I tried to pass without permission? I put such thoughts out of my mind for the time being.

Seaweed and tiny bubbles floated in with the rising tide and swirled under my feet. The water lapped up under the boats, too, rocking them in a soft and gentle rhythm. I watched a group of children carrying fishing poles as they ran out onto the wharf. They were obviously on their way to fish from the edge of the pier and had passed right by the guard shack. I was surprised to see that the boy leading them was Shigeru, whose older sister, Sachiko, had been my classmate all through elementary school. I yelled out to him.

"Shigeru, wait!"

"Tsuneyoshi!"

I glanced over at the guard in his shack who was now reading the newspaper, his rifle propped up in the doorway. Then I ran out to join Shigeru and his friends as they walked along, munching fried sweet potatoes.

"Let me have some of those."

"Sure, but only the little pieces are left."

"That's all right. We can share them."

I was excited to be so close to the sailboats, gleaming in the sunlight as they bobbed up and down. Someday soon, I told myself. Someday soon.

At high tide the water inside the bay was so still it looked like a huge orange mirror under the setting sun. The lapping of the waves and the rustling of the wind had stopped. Everything seemed to be waiting silently as dusk fell. Then the color of the sailboats, the water, and the hills on the peninsula beyond began changing slowly from orange to a deep red that glowed brighter and brighter until they all blazed with the color of fire. Could this be some kind of omen? We glanced fearfully at one another, our faces crimson, and no one turned to look out toward the buoys again. I held my breath and took in the surroundings. It was as though the last day of the world had come, and, looking up at the sky, for some strange reason I felt like crying.

34.

"He did it because he was mad at Chiiko. He had a terrible crush on her, but she wouldn't go out with him."

"Still, who ever thought he'd toss a grenade into her bar. And now, poor Chiiko. She has burns all over her face."

"I feel awful just thinking about it. And the hot wind from that typhoon's got me down, too. Hey, after we do the wash, let's go to a movie. We haven't seen one in ages. No soldiers will be coming out in this weather."

"Are the storm warnings up?"

"Yeah, didn't you hear it on the radio this afternoon?"

Mom and Michikō were talking as they did the laundry. I tried to sneak past them from behind, but Michikō saw me and alerted Mom with her elbow.

"Ah, Tsuneyoshi! Where have you been?"

I walked into the kitchen without answering, took off my sandals, and headed straight for my room, leaving a trail of white footprints on the freshly mopped floor in the hall. Mom followed after me with soap bubbles still dripping from her hands.

"You're supposed to be in school. What are you doing home now? Did you stay over at Keizō's house last night?"

I had slept on the beach again in a *sabani* boat, and twice during the night I had gone down to look around on the yacht wharf. Now I decided to shock Mom by telling her the truth.

"I slept on the beach."

"On the beach? Oh no, Tsune, you've come under the spell!"

I had shocked her all right, and now I could tell she was really worried about me.

"Don't you know ghosts roam the beach? That's how the Odos' kid drowned out there last summer."

According to a local superstition, drowning victims turn into embittered spirits that prowl up and down the beach until they find someone else to lure into the ocean. Otherwise, they can never rest in peace. Ghosts were probably not to blame, I thought, but dead people did wash up on the beach from time to time. And maybe, in a way, I had come under a spell.

"Those horrible night crows I heard last night. They must have been an omen. I ran out and told them to go away and haunt somewhere else, but you just never know. Tsuneyoshi, please! Eat your lunch right away. I put it under the fly net. Then go straight to school. It won't be too late if you hurry."

In Mom's frantic warnings I could feel her love and concern, but I had made up my mind and nothing was going to change it. I had come home only to pick up the equipment I needed for my voyage. Mom looked at me as if she wanted to say something more.

"It's a shame," she muttered to herself, then walked away.

I hurriedly pulled open my desk drawer and took out fish hooks, string, a knife, vitamin pills, and packets of pumpkin and corn seeds. I stuffed them all into my pockets, which were soon bulging; and when I picked up my canteen, I could see it would never fit inside. The canteen was vital, not only to carry water, but because I needed the compass mounted in the cap. To make a place for it, I emptied my school satchel of books and repacked it with the canteen and all the things from my pockets. I also slipped in the booklet of maps from my social studies text that would be my marine chart. Then, from my bureau, I took out the sheets I would use for sailcloth along with blankets and clothes. And from under my bed I brought out a hatchet and an old rope used to draw water from our well. All these things were essential. Next, going into the kitchen to get an empty flour sack, I saw that Mom had set out a plate of stew and rice for me on the table in the sitting room. She was now in the backyard with Michikō hanging the wash.

"Yōko, aren't you going to the bath?" Michikō called.

"Yes, in a minute." Yōko walked through the hall, carrying a mop and pail. Spotting my white footprints, she squatted down to wipe them up. She wore a very short skirt, and her head covered

with hair curlers looked like a beehive. She glanced over at me, but I ignored her as I put my school satchel and the flour sack on my desk.

When the girls had left for the bath, I went out into the sitting room and began wolfing down the stew and rice as fast as I could.

"Tsune! You should never eat standing up. It's bad manners. Better start behaving yourself or Dad will smack you again."

Mom was glaring at me from the kitchen. Her face, bathed in sweat, looked gaunt and weary. She carried the rice pot into the sitting room and set it down beside the table.

"Should I warm up the soup?"

"No, it's fine."

"I can see that's not going to be enough for you. Just wait and I'll go buy some eggs to fry."

Mom picked up her shopping basket and hurried out. As I watched her leave, I choked back a sob. I had firmly resolved to end my dependence on Dad, but at that moment I couldn't even swallow my food. Now, at this crucial time, I felt myself wavering. I stood up and walked back to my room where I took a long look at my school satchel and the flour sack lying on my desk.

"No!" I whispered. "Not when I've got everything ready at last."

With my heart pounding, I snatched them up and ran out through the backyard to the street. But I soon realized how suspicious I must have looked, carrying a bulky flour sack over my shoulder. I couldn't risk meeting up with a policeman or someone I knew, so I doubled back and hid it under some old logs next to our outhouse. I could come back later after dark when it would be safe to carry it away.

35.

When I reached the edge of town, scattered clouds were rushing across the sky in one direction. And, tired of being a burden to my parents, I too was rushing away as fast as I could. One moment the shadow of a cloud passed overhead, making everything dark; then suddenly it would be light again as the shadow moved on, sweeping over distant fields and woods. Other clouds hovered lower, gathering to send rain down on this town where everyone's life is filled with misery, this town where women are sold night and day. I turned to stick out my tongue at Koza but was struck by a sudden gust of wind that drove me up the hill

overlooking Misato village. Here the wind hit me head-on, billowing up inside my collar and under my shorts. It felt as if my whole body were being tickled viciously until I was afraid I would be lifted off my feet and hurled up into the sky.

The ocean, seething with white wave crests, was veiled in a thick fog, and the hills on the peninsula beyond were wrapped in a swirling mist of salt spray that hid them almost completely.

As soon as I reached the shore, I ran out to check the wharf. A car was parked in front of the guard shack, and out on the pier a husky American hurried from one side to the other, tightening the ropes that bound the yachts and motor boats to their moorings. Most of the boats had already been covered and tied securely with several bands of thick rope.

I still had to go back for the flour sack, so I shoved my school satchel under a *sabani* boat that lay upside down on the beach.

36.

I ran all the way back to town through a driving rainstorm, but as I passed the store on our block, I saw something that made me stop in my tracks. Four houses down the street, Dad stood in our yard, nailing boards over the front door. He was still wearing his sweaty army fatigue cap, so he must have started preparing for the typhoon as soon as he got home from his job on the base. I also noticed he was using lumber he had taken from the woodpile beside the outhouse, and this meant he would have seen the flour sack I had hidden there. Concealing myself on one side of the store, I watched Dad pounding nails into our front door. I felt as though he were purposely shutting me out of the house, and it made me resent him all the more. Above me, the storekeeper had climbed up onto his roof and was tossing down hunks of firewood. A few feet over his head the power lines made a high screeching sound as they trembled in the wind. Now I had no reason to go back to the house, and no time to waste on regrets.

37.

Leaving town again, I had to struggle against the rising wind as if I were walking through deep water. No matter how much I wriggled and squirmed, I couldn't get my body pointed in the right

direction. And the swirling air that filled my mouth and nostrils made it hard even to breathe. The dazzling white beach and lush green island of my dreams awaited me, but try as I might, I could not seem to move forward. Finally, in frustration, I lunged out angrily at the wind, and to my surprise, it yielded. I found that by striking out shoulder first with the full weight of my body, I could thrust myself ahead one step at a time.

The wind swept up sand from the road that stung the skin on my face, arms, and legs; and I could hear the dry, crackling sound of sand smashing against the wooden walls of fishermen's houses. In one yard a man was braving the storm to do some last-minute pruning of the leaves on his banana plants. A sheet of tin roofing torn loose by the wind flew along the road, rattling noisily. I could see it would be dangerous to stay in the village, so I made several quick lunges through the wind and got out of there.

Under a darkening sky, the branches of seaside pines were shrieking in the wind. And I hollered back, on my way at last to the green island of my dreams. Struggling out to one of the pines, I clutched hold of the trunk and looked up at its branches that shook wildly, like the hair of an insane woman. I tried hard to put my arms around her, but, like all women, she was too big for me. From here I could see the guard shack. The windows on three sides were covered with shutters, but the glass door in front was lit up by a lamp inside. I waited under the pine tree, watching the door to see if the silhouette of the guard would appear. The peninsula, the water, and the wharf were now pitch dark; only a patch of ocean spray in front of the glass door shone dimly white in the lamplight. I hoped the guard would say the yacht had broken loose and floated away. That way he couldn't be blamed. And I would be sure to cut the ropes to make it look like an accident.

38.

I crawled low past the guard shack and made my way down to the wharf. I had forgotten to fill the canteen in my school satchel, but it was too late to turn back now.

Out on the pier it was still impossible to stand. Each time I tried to raise myself, the wind sent me sprawling and very nearly knocked me into the boiling ocean below. Though I wanted to make a dash for the boats, I finally had to drop down on all fours and creep forward as though climbing a ladder.

The yachts were tied down more securely than I'd expected. I grabbed the rope and yanked with all my might, but couldn't haul them in any closer to the pier. Each boat was tied in two places, from its stern to the buoy moorings and from its bow to the pier. But only about ten yards separated the boats from the pier, so I decided to scale across. I clutched the ropes of one boat with my arms and legs and, hanging over the water, pulled myself along hand over hand.

The tide rose up thundering around the boats, then crashed down over them. With the surging waves splashing my back violently, I was afraid the rope would sag too low under my weight. Just as I thought I would be swept away, the tide fell back, and half in a daze, I hauled myself along the last stretch of rope and lowered one foot onto a tire that hung from the yacht's gunwale.

Pulling out my knife, I sliced through the canvas boat cover and crawled underneath it. Someone had been careful to lock the cabin door, but nothing could stop me now. The boat cover hid me from view, and no one would be able to hear the noise of my smashing the lock.

The air inside the cabin was thick with the smell of varnish and rope. I squatted dripping wet over a pile of rope and paused to celebrate. "I made it! Aboard at last! Blow, wind, blow! The harder the better!"

The storm was still roaring in toward the shore, but I knew that once the eye of the typhoon passed, the wind would reverse direction. Then I would cut the ropes binding the yacht to its moorings and let the wind carry it out through the bay to the open sea. The stronger the wind, the faster I could get away, and when I reached open water, I would put up the sail.

I crouched down, tightly grasping my knife, and listened to the tide crashing against the hull. As each wave rocked the boat higher and higher, I knew I would soon be carried out to the open sea. Rising through my feet, a surge of violent excitement set my whole body quivering.