



# Wuhan military logistics base

## *Bukan Heitan*

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Published by Tosho Shuppansha

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## Chapter 1

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# The Road to Hankou

### *Coincidence*

In July 1944, more than two and a half years after Japan entered the Pacific War with the attack on Pearl Harbor, the war was in its crucial phase, and Japan was facing its greatest hardships. The year before, Japan had retreated from Guadalcanal Island in the South Pacific, Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet Isoroku Yamamoto had died in the skies above the Solomon Islands, the Attu Island garrison had chosen to die rather than surrendering, and the garrisons at Makin Atoll and Tarawa Atoll had been utterly annihilated. In early 1944, the Japanese garrisons at Kwajalein Atoll and Roi-Namur Island were completely destroyed. The Japanese Navy lost most of its aircraft carriers in the Battle of the Philippine Sea, while the U.S. military landed on Saipan, Guam, and other areas of the central Pacific, driving a wedge between the Japanese forces. In Japan, the Tojo Cabinet resigned, and the number of Japanese citizens who felt anxious about the prospects of the war was progressively increasing.

Despite all these developments, the Japanese Army on the Chinese mainland initiated the Continent Cross-Through Operation from Beijing to French Indochina. The advance in central China was generally proceeding smoothly. The Japanese Army occupied Changsha on June 18 and the airport at Hengyang on June 26. Hankou City, Hubei Province, in central China, which was the most important military logistics base for these operations, was bustling with military materials and army units on the way to the frontlines. Perhaps because the U.S. air force<sup>1</sup> in China was occupied with decisive battles on the frontlines, in the rear, aside from attacks on transport ships on the Yangtze River and airports, there were no signs of the Americans near the city of Hankou. The Wuhan Military Logistics Base's entertainment facilities, cafeterias, movie theaters, and special comfort facilities<sup>2</sup> were filled with officers and men of stationed troops and soldiers passing by, who had doubled in numbers, going out day after day.

At that time, I was an adjutant<sup>3</sup> at the Wuhan Military Logistics Headquarters located in Hankou, Hubei Province.

On July 13, when I returned to my room on the second floor of the headquarters after finishing lunch and was resting, a guard knocked on my door, entered the room, and said "Adjutant, Second Lieutenant Suzuki wants to see you." When I heard Suzuki's name, I could not remember his face immediately. Suzuki is a name so common that any Japanese person probably knows several individuals who have the last name Suzuki. While wondering who he was and what he wanted, I just went downstairs to see him. Then someone suddenly called me, saying "Hey, Yamada!"

When I turned and looked, it was my comrade Katashi Suzuki.<sup>4</sup> We had enlisted together nearly 20 years before, in April 1925, as one-year volunteers in the Sakura 57th Infantry Regiment. At that

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<sup>1</sup> The United States technically did not have an independent air force in World War II, hence the lower case for "air force." The U.S. Army and Navy had their own air corps.

<sup>2</sup> "Special comfort facilities" was the official designation for brothels.

<sup>3</sup> An adjutant is an officer who assists the commander of a military unit by performing administrative duties.

<sup>4</sup> In the text, names of Japanese persons are given in the Western format, with the surname following the given name. In this example, "Suzuki" is the family name.



time, anyone who had graduated from junior high school could complete his military service, which normally took two years, in just one year if he paid 240 yen in advance to cover his food expenses. One-year volunteers could become an Army second lieutenant if they served as a cadet<sup>5</sup> for four months and passed a graduation exam.

Also, regular recruits were paired with older soldiers, shined their shoes, did their laundry, and otherwise took care of their needs, while the older soldiers educated them and looked after them. In contrast, one-year volunteers were put into pairs and placed in the same team, stood one behind the other when lining up outside, had their beds next to each other inside the barracks, and lived together like brothers. Suzuki and I felt particularly close as comrades.

Suzuki, who worked at a publishing company when he was back in Japan and edited the magazines *Kagaku gaho* (Science pictorial) and *Sekai chishiki* (World affairs), was called up for service in the 72nd Infantry Regiment in Ranam, in northern Korea for special maneuvers by the Kwantung Army. (This was actually an operation to assemble a large military force at the border between the Soviet Union and Manchuria in preparation for battle against the Soviet Union). He was discharged once, and then recalled to serve in the 27th Division's 3rd Infantry Regiment (nicknamed the "Field 2906 Unit") stationed in China, and had arrived at Hankou together with his regiment on the way to the frontlines. He said when he went out that day, he had dropped by the Soldiers' Dormitory No. 1 Cafeteria on Jiangnan Road in the central business district of Hankou, saw a poster for the Soldiers' Library on the wall of the cafeteria, thought it unusual that there was a library in a war zone, entered the library, and found plenty of unexpectedly good books.

He had asked the soldier on duty, "Who is supervising this library?"

The soldier replied, "The Military Logistics Base's adjutant, First Lieutenant Yamada."

"So, that is how I found out that you are at the military logistics base and came to visit," Suzuki explained.

If his unit had not been stationed at Hankou on the way to the frontlines, and if he had not seen the poster for the Soldiers' Library when he went out and had gone in, the two of us would have parted without meeting here.

He said he had not taken a bath for a long time, so I immediately went with him to the officers' quarters and we took a bath. In the evening, we opened a can of beef we got from the base canteen, drank beer, and talked late into the night.

Suzuki's unit was scheduled to remain in Hankou for one week, and then to depart from Wuchang toward Yueyang. Making the most of our short time together, we went to see Chinese opera at a theater in the new market in the refugee district on the evening of the 15th. At that time, we still had the leeway to go out to the theater in Hankou, which was a rear echelon base. The performance that night was *Qinggog yanshi* (A pornographic history of the Qinq palaces), with an actress named Dai Qixia playing the lead role.

*A night of Chinese opera!*  
*Dai Qixia with cheeks brushed in scarlet*  
*cries for love.*<sup>6</sup>  
By Katashi Suzuki

<sup>5</sup> Cadets as referred to here were technically "officers on probation" who were learning on the job.

<sup>6</sup> Passages from poetry and songs are set off and italicized in this book.

On the 19th, when Suzuki was to leave for the frontlines, I visited the Wuchang No. 1 Junior High School where his unit, nicknamed the “Field Division,”<sup>7</sup> was stationed. There was still some time before his departure, so we visited Huachung University where the 51st Military Logistics Guard Unit<sup>8</sup> (2nd Company) that I previously belonged to was stationed, and went to the library on the university campus. The library had been closed because it was classified as an enemy asset. Part of the area downstairs was being used as a warehouse, with books belonging to individuals piled up in disarray along the edge of the corridor. Suzuki found Kyoshi Takahama’s *Haikai saijiki* (Glossary of seasonal terms for haiku) in the pile, tossed it into the map case hanging from his waist, and left for the front.

When summer passed and the rainy season arrived, a letter came from Suzuki from the frontlines. He had been stationed in Chaling, Hunan Province for a while, and was about to advance toward Suichuan, Jiangxi Province. Suichuan is 270 kilometers southeast of Hengyang and is the location of one of the U.S. air force’s bases in China. At the end of his letter, written with a brush on yellow bamboo paper, there were several haiku poems including the following.

*The bleak rain of Chaling in the autumn evening.  
At rainy midnight,  
the requisitioned old clock chimes.  
Soldiers bustling in the evening mist  
The bridge is in danger.  
The swiftly flowing muddy stream  
swallows the sandbar under the bridge - ah!  
The cock crows in the Hunan dialect in the rainy autumn.*

I thought about the irony of the fate of war in which two comrades who used to sleep next to each other and ate from the same pot are separated, with one to the frontlines and the other in a rear echelon unit. I could not help but wish for his continued luck in the fortunes of war.

“The three cities of Wuhan” refers to the metropolitan area made up of Hankou, Wuchang, and Hanyang along the banks of the Yangtze River in Hubei Province, central China, 600 nautical miles up the Yangtze from Shanghai. Their population was around 1.5 million at their peak in the 1920s and remained above 800,000 at the time of the Japanese occupation. They are also a key transportation hub because they are at the confluence of the Yangtze River and its tributary, the Han River, and near the mouth of Dongting Lake. This is a vast expanse of fertile land where the Beijing-Hankou Railway and the Guangdong-Hankou Railway, which run across China north to south, converge with the Yangtze River. Hankou is a commercial city, Wuchang is an academic center, and Hanyang is an industrial city. For these reasons, the three cities of Wuhan were important political and economic centers and were known as “the Chicago of the Orient” and “the Osaka of China.” Because there had been Japanese, German, British, French, and Russian settlements at one time, Jiangnan Street along Wuhan’s Bund<sup>9</sup> was lined with large Western-type buildings. Moreover, in the high-water season from late spring, 10,000-ton steamships could freely navigate upriver all the way to Hankou. After the fall of Nanjing, Hankou was the capital of the nationalist government, but after it was occupied by Japan’s Central China Expeditionary Army in October 1938, the nationalist government relocated its capital to

<sup>7</sup> The “Field Division” (goku-butai) was the nickname of the 27th Division.

<sup>8</sup> Guard units (keibitai) were units entrusted with the local defense of a facility or area. They should not be confused with elements of the Imperial Guards Division, which was an elite formation. Keibitai have also been called “garrison units,” “defense units,” and “security units.”

<sup>9</sup> Waterfront area. While Shanghai’s Bund is the most widely known, Wuhan also had a Bund.



Chongqing, further inland in Sichuan Province.

The 11th Army (nickname: “Backbone Army”), which was the largest Imperial Japanese Army group, had its headquarters at Hankou and was commanded by Lieutenant General Isamu Yokoyama. Under his command were the 3rd Division (“Lucky Division”) with headquarters at Yingshan, Hubei Province, the 13th Division (“Mirror Division”) with headquarters at Shashi, Hubei Province, the 34th Division (“Camellia Division”) with headquarters at Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, the 39th Division (“Wisteria Division”) with headquarters at Dangyang, Hubei Province, the 40th Division (“Whale Division”) with headquarters at Xianning, Hubei Province, the 58th Division (“Wide Division”) with headquarters at Yingcheng, Hubei Province, the 68th Division (“Cypress Division”) with headquarters at Jiujiang, Jiangxi Province, and the 17th Independent Mixed Brigade (“Summit Brigade”) with headquarters at Yuezhou, Hunan Province. After the Battle of Changde in November 1943, Yokoyama also commanded the 116th Division (“Storm Division”) based in Anqing, Anhui Province. The Battle of Changde was an operation from November 1943 through January of the following year that aimed to destroy the Nationalist Army in and around Changde. The 11th Army was deployed as the main force, with reinforcements from the 116th Division of the 13th Army. Changde is the heart of Hunan Province, and was a key strategic point for the Nationalist Army supply lines as illustrated by the saying “If the crops bear fruit in Hunan, Sichuan will not starve.” The operation’s staging area was Anqing (Anhui Province), Xinyang (Henan Province), Yichang (Hubei Province), and Yuezhou (Hunan Province). The operation to strike Chongqing was a grand plan in which five divisions were to advance north through Hankou, Changsha, Hengyang and Guiyang, two divisions were to advance west from Yichang, and three divisions of Japan’s Northern China Area Army were to advance south through Luoyang and Xian and coordinate their attack on Chongqing.

For that reason, the Wuhan region was the Imperial Japanese Army’s largest operations base, and the Wuhan Military Logistics Headquarters was extremely busy.

## ***Military Logistics Base***

Here, although it is a bit complicated, I will review what a “military logistics base” is. According to Part 3 Section 4 of the Operation Planning and Supervising Procedures Order, the duties of a “military logistics base” are explained as follows.

(No. 236) The main purposes of a military logistics base are to maintain and increase the battle strength of the Army so soldiers can exert their full abilities without feeling anxiety about their homes. Therefore, advanced delivery and supply of munitions and horses required for operations; hospitalization and return of sick and wounded soldiers and horses; processing of items that need to be arranged; examination, acquisition and strengthening of battlefield resources; lodging, supply, and medical care of personnel and horses in transit; securing rear communications lines; and administration of occupied territory, etc. are important duties of a military logistics base.

Hankou, which was the most important military logistics base in central China, was home to the Hankou city government, consulate general, the guard unit’s headquarters, and other administrative agencies as well as all types of supply depots, so army administration and procurement of military goods were divided among each agency and supply depot. Accordingly, the Military Logistics Headquarters was directly responsible for the following tasks:

Lodging section: Provision of lodging and supplies to units and individuals (officers and the enlisted).





Transportation section: Provision of passenger and cargo-carrying vehicles; issuance of military passports; operation of buses for the Army Headquarters along Zhongshan Road.

Enshrined deities section: Management and return of remains and personal effects; holding of memorial services; administration of the crematorium.

Recreation section: Arrangement of performances, movies, and entertainers; management of restaurants, cafeterias, and Army special comfort facilities.

Prisoners section: Management of prisoner-of-war camps.

Accounting division: General accounting; management of canteens, supply of fodder, and procurement of goods for units in transit.

Medical division: Medical treatment and prevention of diseases for units in transit, and for sick and wounded soldiers.

There were also the building and repairs section, the farm section, and the signals coding team. The facilities were the officers' quarters and the unit barracks (No. 1–No. 5).

Branches of the military logistics base were established near Hankou at Yangtze, Changjianbu, and Zaoshi, and sometimes at Xiaogan and Xinyang, and subsequently at Wuchang, Yueyang, and Jiujiang. In addition to lodging and supply, these branches were responsible for the guidance and supervision of committees for maintaining public order.

Work that was not assigned to any particular unit was handled by the military logistics base. For example, flood control was the responsibility of the military logistics base. This included measurement of the water level of the Yangtze River and arrangement of materials to deal with flooding. The management of all types of recreation facilities not stipulated in the Operation Planning and Supervising Procedures Order and of special comfort facilities were also, of course, among the jobs of the Military Logistics Headquarters. In short, the military logistics base was the backstage for elements of the armed forces that were not on the stage called the battlefield.

I was transferred to the Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters in March 1943 and spent two and a half years until the war ended there, doing nothing but all sorts of backstage chores. However, I did not arrive in Hankou without incident.

### ***Chichijima Fortress Infantry Unit***

I received a secret mobilization order on September 27, 1941 calling me to the Eastern 62nd Unit in Akasaka, Tokyo. I joined the unit on October 2. At the time, I was a second lieutenant in the army reserves who had been selected from the ranks of one-year volunteers. The special mobilization order, that is the draft notice, had the following slip attached.

Note the following for counterintelligence purposes.

1. Do not show this order to others except for use as a deferred payment certificate for railways and ships.
2. Even if you must wear your military uniform when reporting for duty, carry, but do not wear on your person your military equipment.
3. Report for duty alone, without people sending you off.
4. Do not speak or behave in any manner whereby others may suspect you are being called up for



duty (e.g., farewell parties, courtesy calls, etc.).

At that time, I was working at the Tokyo Railway Bureau's Operations Division in the Inspection Section. I had entered the office after working in the field for five years auditing transportation income, and was placed in charge of planning the simplification of passenger-related business forms. I was 42 years old under the traditional East Asian system of counting age,<sup>10</sup> and there were six people in my family: me, my wife, my eldest son Yasuyoshi (in 4th grade), my eldest daughter Mariko (in 2nd grade), my second son Michinari (in kindergarten), and my second daughter Yuriko (1 year, 3 months old).<sup>11</sup>

Because this was a secret mobilization order, there was no cheering or waving of flags. I just called on a few neighbors the day before I left.

I declined any going-away party at work, but I was invited by my former teacher, Cabinet Planning Board Inspector Tadao Tanabe, to the restaurant Shiobara, in Uguisudani,<sup>12</sup> on the afternoon of the 30th. When I asked him to sign my Japanese flag, he immediately took out a brush and wrote a poem from *Manyoshu* Volume 6, by Takahashi no Mushimaro:

*A man who without lifting up words  
Will conquer an enemy  
Even ten thousand strong  
And then return.*

He then signed his name. While we ate broiled sea bream fish heads from Misaki that was served on a leaf-shaped, Oribe ware plate,<sup>13</sup> Tanabe drank French Evian mineral water and I drank Kiku-Masamune sake. Outside, a soundless light rain was falling.

On the morning of October 1, I went to a barber and had my hair cut, put on the army uniform of a second lieutenant, dropped by my office, and paid my respects to my superiors and acquaintances at the Ministry of Railways and the Tokyo Railway Bureau.

That night a modest sendoff party was held for family members only, with my mother, brother and cousins coming from my hometown of Narita, in Chiba Prefecture. I did not know if I would come back alive, but I thought I must earnestly carry out the work that I had been assigned.

On October 2, I took leave of my family and departed my home. My brother and cousin from my hometown saw me off part of the way. They were carrying my sword wrapped in a cloth, and handed this over to the soldier who came to meet me 500 meters from the gate of the camp. I entered the camp by myself.

The 143rd Fortress Infantry Unit, to which I had been assigned, was comprised of five companies. The unit commander was Major Yoshikichi Mori. I was appointed the commander of the 2nd Platoon of the 1st Company. The company commander was First Lieutenant Saburo Abiru. On the evening of October 10, each company traveled along back roads so that we would not attract attention, and we assembled at Shibaura Pier. People passing by curiously watched the troops marching along. The men just marched silently. The 2,000-ton cargo-passenger ship *Shibazono Maru*, which we boarded

<sup>10</sup> Under this system, a child born on December 31 becomes two years old on January 1.

<sup>11</sup> There are multiple ways of reading the characters for personal names in Japanese. "Yasuyoshi," "Michinari," and "Yuriko" are simply the most common readings.

<sup>12</sup> Uguisudani is a neighborhood in Tokyo.

<sup>13</sup> Oribe ware is a type of Japanese pottery.





from the pier, was the ferry to Chichijima Island in the Ogasawara Islands.

We departed early in the morning on the 11th, and after some time, I noticed we had left Tokyo Bay. I could see Oshima, Miyakejima, and Mikurajima islands of the Izu Islands, and the faint white outline of Mt. Fuji far away on the northern horizon. Realizing that this might be the last time I would ever see my country, and that I might never return, I felt moved and wrote two tanka poems.

*Mt. Fuji is dimly seen  
on the horizon of the ocean,  
fainter but higher than the islands of Izu.  
This is the famed silhouette of the precious Mt. Fuji  
with faint light seen at its peak.*

When the ship was entering the Kuroshio current, it began swaying more and more, and Mars shined red above the mast. It was a dark sea. I felt unwell, perhaps from seasickness.

The next day on the 12th, at around noon, a soldier said that Chichijima Island could be seen, so I got up, went out on deck, and the shadow of the island was visible in the distance above the sea. The rocky mountains, bluffs, and bleak outline of the island gradually became more distinct. We were talking among ourselves, saying that this must be our destination. We soon entered Futami Bay. I recognized Mt. Funami, Eboshiiwa Rock, and other features of the island from a sketch sent to me by a friend in the Navy a long time ago, and saw Omura and other towns. When night fell, we saw electric lights reflected on the water, and everyone was happy to learn that there were electric lights on an island like this one.

We landed in the morning on the 13th and lined up at the edge of Omura for inspection of the troops by the fortress commander, Mamoru Kawakami. I fainted after becoming dizzy from the hot sun and seasickness, and was labeled the weakest soldier in the unit. For that reason, I did not hear the briefing from Fortress Commander Kawakami, and rested in the night watchman's room at Chichijima Elementary School.

We returned to the ship that night and came back the following day. The men of the 1st Company found their way to their quarters, with the 1st Platoon (commanded by Second Lieutenant Teruo Ono) billeted at the Omura Library, the 2nd Platoon (commanded by me) at Horenji Temple in Omura, and the 3rd Platoon (commanded by Second Lieutenant Takeo Sakuma) and the headquarters section at an industrial warehouse in Ogiura, across the bay.

Part of the 142nd Fortress Infantry Unit, which had arrived earlier and had its main force at Hahajima Island, was stationed on the northern half of Chichijima Island, from Omura toward Miyanohama Beach. The southern half of the island was under the command of the Mori Unit, that is, the 143rd Fortress Infantry Unit, with the headquarters, 3rd Company, 4th Company, and 5th Company stationed at Tatsumi Bay and the 2nd Company at Kominato.

Horenji Temple was a Nichiren sect temple, with calligraphy written by Fleet Admiral Heihachiro Togo hanging in the main hall. There was a bookshelf called the Futami Library in a corner of the main hall with books for children for the Sunday Buddhist school. Among these, to my surprise, was a copy of the last issue (large size) of the children's literary magazine *Akai tori* (Red bird) founded by Miekichi Suzuki, so I donated some money, took the magazine, and sent it to my eldest son via third class mail. It arrived without incident, and my eldest son, who was in 4th grade, saw the place names Omura and Futami on the envelope, took out a map of Ogasawara, and told his mother "Father is on

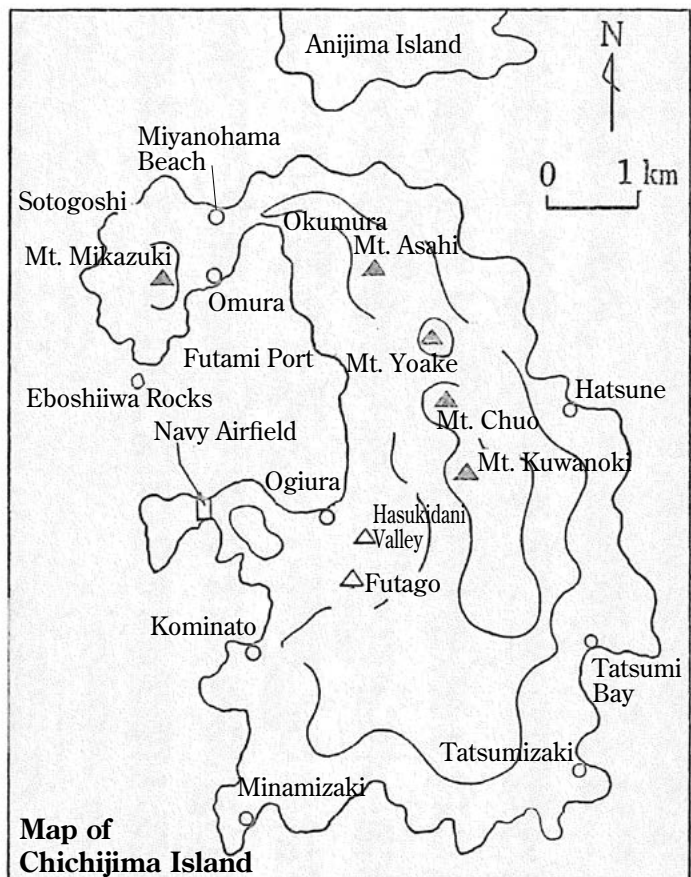
Chichijima Island.”

The 1st Company was ordered to serve as a general reserve force for the fortress, and the 2nd Platoon was assigned to assist the engineers in building a road at Mt. Mikazuki. We climbed the mountain each day wearing rubber-soled slip-toed shoes and puttees, and a soldier made me a walking stick from the umbrellata variety of Indian hawthorn which the locals call “Alexander.” The chief priest of Horenji Temple offered me an eight-tatami-mat room with an alcove, so I decided to sleep there at night. I was told that the only persons who slept on tatami mats were the unit commander and I. There was no electricity at Tatsumi Bay, so an automobile battery was used to generate power for a light only in the unit commander’s room, but it was not very bright.

On October 25, a soldier in my platoon complained of abdominal pain, and appendicitis was suspected. There was no way to send him to the infirmary at Tatsumi Bay, so I asked the infirmary at the adjacent Chichijima Heavy Artillery Regiment to treat the soldier. When I came to inquire, I found that the army surgeon in charge was Dr. Satoshi Tanami from Togane City, Chiba Prefecture, and he gladly agreed to see the sick soldier. On the top of his desk was a copy of the *Manyoshu* published by Iwanami Bunko, so we started to chat, and I subsequently visited Dr. Tanami from time to time and talked about various matters. This infirmary faced Futami Bay, and the scenery and moonlight were beautiful beyond words. Mt. Asahi, Mt. Yoake, and Mt. Kuwanoki were visible across the bay, and Dr. Tanami was pleased with the especially beautiful Mt. Kuwanoki, which he named “the Fuji of Futami.”

Dr. Tanami was a friend of Miekichi Suzuki, and his invitation to Suzuki to visit Kujukurihama Beach near his home was written about in the final issue of *Akai tori*. I also became close to Suzuki in his old age and our conversations were lively. Dr. Tanami said there were many translations of Paul Verlaine’s “Chanson d’Automne” including translations by Homei Iwano, Kafu Nagai, Daigaku Horiguchi, Bin Ueda, Ryuko Kawaji, and Mitsuharu Kaneko, but he thought the translation by Suzuki was the best.

The 1st Platoon and the 2nd Platoon were soon relocated to the remains of a farm owned by a firm called Toshin Koshi, in Futago, in the middle of the island. There was no electricity here, only kerosene lamps, so we went to bed early. Futago is located around 10 minutes from Ogiura in the highlands with a view of Mt. Futago with banana fields and Alexandrian laurel, which was called “tamana,” and it was spacious and pleasant. Between the cliffs on the eastern coast there was one sand beach called Hatsune, and it was not defended against landing by hostile forces. So I dispatched one squad from my platoon led by Lance Corporal Miwa to guard it, and we built a road from Futago to the beach. There was a place with a beautiful vista from on top of the pass, and the



Source: Seikichi Yamada, “Bukan Heitan”, *Tosho Shuppansha*, 1978.



white-eye and nightingale were singing. We named this Abiru Pass, after the name of the company commander.

I made an effort to talk with my subordinates during short breaks from the road construction work and on other occasions. The men included replacement recruits who had received no training. One soldier who formerly worked as a carpenter said he had sent his wife and three children back to the home of his wife's parents. Another soldier who had operated a dairy farm said that the women could not take care of the cows by themselves, so he had sold off all his milk cows. Because I had been a government official, I received a salary even when I was called up for service, so I was not worried about my family for the time being. However, those men who had their own businesses or were self-employed were unable to make a living because they had been called into service, and may have been forced to turn their wives and children out into the streets. I felt that the draft system, which completely ignored the livelihood of individuals and the happiness of their families, seemed just too cruel. I wanted to do my best to cooperate and create a better environment to complete our assigned duties through solidarity with my subordinates, based on the standpoint that we were all victims.

The bright red Chinese hibiscus and purple bougainvillea flowers were in bloom. At Hatsune, I taught the men that the names of the shells we collected on the beach were "limpet" and "cowrie," and at night we talked about the stars and the natural beauty of the island, which had completely different scenery from mainland Japan. My hometown friend Shoto Namekata, who likes ferns, asked me to send him pressed ferns from Chichijima Island. I collected ferns from around the barn and when I went walking in the mountains for scouting, and mailed them to him. He later asked me to send him living samples, so I sent him *marattiaceae* fern, bird's nest fern, and bat's wing fern. I also sent him the rare fern *schizaeaceae*, which I collected when I climbed Mt. Chuo, and he was delighted.

On December 7, there was a phone call from the Fortress Headquarters to the Company Headquarters, with instructions to send one officer to receive orders. I went and I learned that war had broken out between Japan and the United States. Up until that time, I would go to the Navy Signal unit, listen to news on the radio at 12:30, and convey the progress of the negotiations between Japan and the United States to the men. Our orders were to shoot down all enemy aircraft that approached the vicinity of Chichijima Island, and the platoon received live ammunition for the first time. I gathered my men to tell them of these orders, with illumination provided by a candle. On December 8, when I went to the Navy's signal unit to listen to the 12 o'clock radio news, the imperial rescript on the proclamation of war was being read. There was a statement by Prime Minister Tojo and an announcement of the results of the aerial bombing of Hawaii. In the afternoon, the platoon held combat drills to practice deployment, attack, and other maneuvers.

One platoon from a different company was stationed at Minamizaki, so I paid it a visit while bringing the soldiers of the 2nd Platoon on a tactical march. Nakayama Pass was beautiful, with white leadtree spread over the bare rock just like the Siberian dwarf pine at Yarinokama Ridge in the Japan Alps. In front of the barracks at Minamizaki, there was a grove of ironwood trees which resembled the bare larch trees seen when viewing Mt. Yakedake in the Kamikochi highlands.

On December 15, we completed building the barracks at the entrance to Hasukidani Valley, and the entire company was assembled. These barracks had electric lights. The sole university graduate in the 2nd Platoon, Private First Class Kozo Hoda, who had graduated from Kokugakuin University, lent me a copy of *Umi yama no aida* (Between the sea and the mountains) by Shinobu Orikuchi. Soon after that, Hoda was hospitalized at the Chichijima Army Hospital on suspicion of pleurisy, and while there he came to know Private First Class Tadashi Ishigure from another company, who wrote for the



tanka magazine *Kokoro no hana* (Flower of the heart). We had more soldiers than required, so both of them were sent back to the mainland. Hoda carved a seal for me from the umbrellata variety of Indian hawthorn. He told me that he carved seals as a hobby.

Dr. Tanami, who also served at the Chichijima Army Hospital, said he was not concerned about Hoda, but Ishigure required care because his condition was serious. So, I sent that news to his home, and received a reply from his wife. The two men were soon released from duty. Ishigure, his wife, and their two children, who lived in Fukagawa, perished in the conflagration from a major air raid on Tokyo in March 1945. In mourning Ishigure, his teacher Nobutsuna Sasaki wrote the following poem.

*Taking the hands of my wife and children  
to save them from moving into the raging fires.  
What a pity.*

Entrance into the Hasukidani Valley was prohibited, for conservation purposes, by the Chichijima Forest Service. There was a monument commemorating a visit by the Emperor. This was a virgin forest overgrown with tropical *marattiaceae*, *cyatheaspinulosa*, and *cyathea mertensiana* ferns. There were also clusters of large bird's-nest ferns. But engineers were going to build a dam, so the area had to be flooded.

One evening, when I was the officer of the day, I was in my office until late at night reading a book. The company commander came back drunk, saw my copy of the *Manyoshu* on top of my desk, and cursed at me, saying rather than such a book, I should be reading the *Tenpanrei* military text. I had heard he had been regularly telling Warrant Officer Ito that he didn't like the way I carried out my duties.

The night before Empire Day<sup>14</sup> in 1942, the company commander suddenly told me to travel to Hahajima Island alone by the morning ship the next day. He told me I was being transferred to the Shibuya Unit on Hahajima Island. I was surprised, so I called my predecessor Sergeant Takahashi, who explained that this was only on paper, and that the formal order would not be issued for some time. He told me that two officers had been transferred from the Shibuya Unit to the Fortress Headquarters, so there was an order to replace one of the vacancies from the Mori Unit. The Mori Unit had been allocating transferees to the 1st Company, which was a reserve force, and the company commander appointed me from among the officers because I was the least qualified. The soldiers of my platoon heard this and were reluctant to see me go. From that time, I lost interest in military exercises and operations, so we passed our time gathering in a grassy meadow with a good view and chatting. We were carrying out reconnaissance, which I felt was like going on a hike. I gathered with the soldiers of the platoon in the shade of the forest. We cooked rice with our mess kits and had a good time.

The formal order came on March 10. When I went to report my departure to unit commander Mori, he said, "It is difficult to hand you over to another unit. I will have you come back if there is an opportunity." At the platoon morning meal to send me off, there was a large lobster on my plate only. My predecessor, Sergeant Takahashi made a heartfelt farewell speech, and when I heard his words tears came to my eyes. I just said, "Take good care of yourself and do your duty," and left. All the members of the platoon had contributed to buy me coral cufflinks, which they gave me as a parting gift.

<sup>14</sup> Now called National Foundation Day, celebrated on February 11.





Commanding the 3rd Company of the Shibuya Unit, which was at Miyanohama, was First Lieutenant Senhiko Tanaka. I was appointed the commander of the 2nd Platoon and placed in the same room with Second Lieutenant Masayoshi Kobashiri and Second Lieutenant Hideo Okiyama. They were responsible for the entire area from Mikazuki to Sotogoshi. I went out with Sergeant Hata, who had been posted earlier to the unit, and looked over the area that was now my responsibility. There were the remains of a farm owned by a company called Yokohama Ueki, with trumpet lilies, freesia, amaryllis and other flowers blooming in the weeds.

The Mori Unit had many soldiers from Tokyo, while the Shibuya Unit had many soldiers from the Izu Islands. Some of the companies had soldiers who were brothers. Many of them were fishermen. When they lined up and saluted me when we were headed out to work, I saw a soldier in the rear who was carrying a harpoon and a can of kerosene. When I asked him why, he explained these were to catch and cook fish for a side dish for lunch.

Sergeant Hata told me that Private First Class Hayashi in the platoon was the son of an engineering and building contractor in Yokohama, that he had punched a guard on a ship and been placed in the stockade, and was a delinquent who was out of control. I suggested he be assigned as my orderly,<sup>15</sup> but the sergeant said that was out of the question, and that he had already assigned another soldier to that position. I was casually keeping my eyes on Hayashi, and one day I dropped by the barracks. He was in a corner of the room alone reading a movie magazine. I told him to show me the magazine and picked it up, and he asked me, "Unit commander,<sup>16</sup> have you seen this movie?" We started talking about movies, chatted for a while, and I left. Some of the soldiers from the Izu Islands had never even seen a train, so Hayashi did not have much in common with the other soldiers. When we were conducting drills, I ordered him to serve as the platoon commander's messenger and kept him close to me, and he worked really hard. I thought I had to keep such soldiers close to me.

From September, there were rumors that the Mori Unit would be relocated, and that soldiers were to be transferred from the Shibuya Unit to the Mori Unit to replace soldiers who were in the hospital. Hayashi was among those selected beforehand by the company commander and warrant officer. This was an old trick to expel undesirables. Since they were concerned about what Hayashi might do, the plan was to issue orders in the morning, send the entire company out to their duties, and have Hayashi leave in a vehicle when he returned. That was to prevent him from contacting the other soldiers. I summoned Hayashi and told him that the Mori Unit was my former unit and was comprised of men from Tokyo, so he should feel more comfortable there. I told him not to bear a grudge against the company commander, and to leave quietly. Hayashi said he understood and smiled. When the soldiers returned from their work, they were lined up and those being transferred were notified. After the company commander gave the prescribed instructions, a representative of the soldiers being transferred gave some parting words, but his speech was rather cold and formal. After this ended, Hayashi suddenly came forward, grabbed my hand, and said in a trembling voice, "Platoon commander, I will do my best." The mood suddenly turned friendly, the men gathered, exchanged words, and then those being transferred got into the vehicles and left.

The Mori Unit was relocated to Paramushir in the northern Kuril Islands. When I paid my respects to Unit Commander Mori before they left, he said he had decided not to bring me back to his unit because it would not be good for me. I later heard that the Mori Unit had remained at Paramushir until the end of the war, and that all of its members were taken to Siberia and imprisoned. I do not

<sup>15</sup> Orderlies were soldiers assigned to help officers.

<sup>16</sup> Japanese army officers were often addressed by their job responsibilities instead of their rank.

know what became of Hayashi thereafter.

On one occasion, the company commander instructed each platoon leader to plan night exercises. I gave my men the task of determining the direction by the stars and gave a class in the barracks. We went outside and I taught them how to find the North Star from the Big Dipper and Cassiopeia, and told them about the Milky Way, the Northern Cross of Cygnus, and the Great Square of Pegasus. The men were pleased and said that my nighttime exercise was easy.

In the platoon, there was an old soldier who had enlisted in 1924, Lance Corporal Taketoshi Mochimaru. Mochimaru had surveyed and cut a new road in the virgin forest, so it was named the Mochimaru New Road. For the convenience of operations, we gave names to places within the position we were responsible for: One Rock, Flat Rock, One Pine, Five Pines, Dog Rock, etc. On nights with good moonlight, I had Mochimaru sing the “Hachijo shome bushi” (Hachijo love song) and had all the men learn this song.

*I wish I were a bonito fish. I want to be caught by you in Wantone and held by you.* (Wantone refers to the strait running between Chichijima Island and Anijima Island.)

Mochimaru told me about single-hook fishing of bonito, and said he wanted to take me fishing. Second Lieutenant Kobashiri was from Ogiura on Chichijima Island, and had run a grocery store. He had a wife and children, and he would return home to spend the night on Saturdays. The soldiers drafted from Chichijima Island had to report for duty at 6:00 p.m. even when they went out on Sundays to visit their families. When I was the officer of the week, I would allow these soldiers to return late by 10:00 p.m.

There were three comfort facilities in the valley just before Ogiura, and around 20 comfort women had arrived, so I went to take a look. The comfort women were loitering in front of the small shacks. I felt somehow uncomfortable and had no desire to go again. An old warrant officer told me that there was an officer at the division administration department in charge of dividing the women who came from the mainland into those for the officers and those for the non-commissioned officers. It was also said that when there is no comfort facility, the soldiers who were vigorous become violent and fight all the time, and the soldiers who were quiet suffer nervous breakdowns, and weep. I did not know if this was true, but at any rate the comfort facility had been built, giving the soldiers one more place to pass the time when they went out, and have fun. A soldier from Chichijima Island who was a farmer was growing tomatoes, squash and other vegetables and wanted to give some to me. I received the vegetables, put them into packages, and sent them to my home, to relatives who were ill, and to my former teacher at Senshu University, Professor Tanabe. I received the following reply from Tanabe.

I apologize for not replying to you before, even though you have written many times. Congratulations on maintaining your health and working diligently at your military duties. Thank you very much for sending the rare tomatoes, squash and other vegetables. However, as you know, there is nothing much I can send you from Tokyo.

With the highly admirable results of the early stages of the Greater East Asian War, if Germany secures tens of millions of tons of oil by around this autumn, and if Japan is not wasteful as it has been in the economic administration of Manchuria and North China, Japan will certainly achieve victory. But if there are setbacks in these two areas, the U.K. and the U.S. may make a comeback. It must not be easy for the U.K. and the U.S. either, because they are carrying out operations with unexpectedly weak soldiers. National land planning is diligently underway, but it is not that welcome at present. That is because clumsy carpenters



are arrogant and are putting up poor quality buildings. No well-made buildings are being constructed. Please take good care of yourself.

Tanabe was my teacher when I was enrolled at Senshu University around 1924, and subsequently taught principles of economics classes as a professor at the University of Tokyo. He retired in the Hiraga Purge in January 1939, entered the Cabinet Planning Board, and was placed in charge of national land planning. In January 1943, he published his paper “Premises for Boosting Production Capacity” as the opening article in the magazine *Chuokoron*, and because the article declared that “if Japan continues with sloppy planning and implementation, it will certainly lose the war,” he was pushed out of the Planning Board as a defeatist. In 1944, he met with Fumimaro Konoe and Seigo Nakano and planned the overthrow of the Tojo Cabinet. He was arrested by the military police on suspicion of leaking military secrets. After the war, he had political aspirations, and ran in general elections four times as a Japan Progressive Party candidate the first time, a Democratic Liberal Party candidate the second time, a Kaishinto candidate the third time, and as an independent the fourth time, but he lost each time because he did not spend money and would not bow to others. In April 1957, he became the first president of Takasaki City University of Economics and worked to “train ambitious youth for the world,” but he retired due to ill health and passed away in March 1967, when he was 76 years old. When he was running for office, a newspaper asked him, “What is your motto?” and he replied, “To unite with heaven but not with the people, to coincide with the path, but not with the times,” and I secretly thought that he would not win with that motto. Tanabe adhered to his beliefs, without yielding to authority, and did not necessarily dread misfortune. He was a true patriot who risked his life at a time of national crisis.

I donated the copy of his 682-page (200 characters per page) position paper “New Wartime Economic System Centered on Expansion of Production Capacity” which he reportedly wrote at the request of Seigo Nakano—which I received after the war and kept with great care—to the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room at the National Diet Library as a Showa Era history document. At the end of this paper, Tanabe wrote:

Our predicament was useless and futile. They deliberately would not listen to our plain talk. We did our best to do what we had to do, and we are ashamed of not having had enough influence.

I got off subject. In Ogasawara, in August 1942, after the Mori Unit was relocated, there was a rumor that the Tanaka Company was to be disbanded and that a machine gun unit would be formed. Grenade launchers<sup>17</sup> were distributed. The number of new young cadets was increased, and the troops were scattered here and there. Second Lieutenant Kobashiri remained at Miyanohama, but Second Lieutenant Okiyama was sent to Hahajima Island, and I was provisionally assigned to the Yamana Unit at Kominato. At the coast in that area, there were many crinum flowers in bloom. There were tiny flowers blooming on the century plants, and the brown-eared bulbul birds were singing.

On October 13, I was ordered to transfer to the 51st Military Logistics Guard Unit in Hankou, in central China. Second Lieutenants Kobashiri and Okiyama were to be transferred to the 17th Independent Mixed Brigade at Yuezhou. Company Commander Abiru had told me that I may be suited for a rear echelon unit such as a military logistics base, and perhaps he wrote in my officer evaluation record that I was suited for military logistics work. That may be why I was transferred to the Military Logistics Guard Unit while the other platoon leaders were sent to the Independent Mixed

<sup>17</sup> These weapons were sometimes called “knee mortars” by the Allies.

Brigade.

On October 24, I was invited to dinner by Major General Naoki Kimura, who had replaced Colonel Kawakami at the Chichijima Fortress Headquarters, and he told me about what had happened in the invasion of Mariveles. That was nothing like our easy duty of defending the fortress. Holding our position at Chichijima Island was merely child's play. Kimura said everything here had to be completely redone.

Kimura was the detachment commander who played a prominent role in the landing, amid enemy troops, on Legazpi in the capture of the Philippines. He was the commander of the 16th Infantry Group, which struggled in the fierce fighting in the Battle of Mariveles on the Bataan Peninsula. Taking responsibility for the poor performance in the battle, he entered the reserves, but was immediately called back to active duty and was appointed commander of the Chichijima Fortress Headquarters. I do not know why he invited me, an officer being transferred to another unit, to dinner.

Before I left the island, I found some free time and visited the Chichijima Forestry Experiment Station. There, I was given a leaf from a potted *Hymenasplenium cardiophyllum* fern, which only grows on Hahajima Island in the Ogasawara Islands, for a friend from my home town, Shoto Namekata, who had requested the leaf.

On the 26th, my former subordinates, Corporal Noboru Yamamoto and Lance Corporal Mochimaru, visited me. Mochimaru cried, saying it was hard to see me go. All I could say was that we would meet again.

*Although I am insignificant and deficient,  
when I think about the soldiers who look up to me,  
I can only cry.*

On October 27, I set out from Futami Port on Chichijima Island, and I was told by the crew that enemy submarines had appeared, and that areas other than Tokyo Bay and the Seto Inland Sea were all dangerous. I arrived safely at Shibaura Pier on the 30th and reported to the Eastern District Army Headquarters. In the evening, I returned home with my children, who came to meet me at Koenji Station, and who were pulling me by the hand. It was an unexpected joy to meet my wife and children, even though I was about to set off for the Chinese mainland.

*I never thought an evening would come  
With children on both sides, pulling my hands.  
Walking in town with children with few words,  
I am really home.*

I spent one week in Tokyo. Then on November 7, I said goodbye to my wife and children on the platform at Tokyo Station late at night. I was scheduled to travel by ship from Nagasaki to Shanghai.

*Stroking the hair  
of a sleeping child on my wife's back.  
We came to part at the station late at night.*

At Nagasaki, I stayed at the Tosaya Inn, where it is said Ryoma Sakamoto<sup>18</sup> had stayed. I was to board the ship on the 9th, but the weather conditions were bad, and my departure was delayed by one day.

<sup>18</sup> Sakamoto was a samurai who worked to overthrow the Tokugawa shogunate.



## ***Drifting in the East China Sea***

On November 10, I boarded the passenger ship *Kobe Maru* at Nagasaki Port, headed for Shanghai. The *Kobe Maru* was a 7,700-ton passenger ship belonging to Toa Kaiun<sup>19</sup> that had been launched in July 1940. With a maximum speed of 22 knots, it was a state-of-the-art vessel that had been put into service just over a year ago.

I traveled together in the same second class cabin with Second Lieutenants Kobashiri and Okiyama, who were being transferred to the 17th Independent Mixed Brigade (“Summit Brigade”), which was headquartered at Yuezhou. After leaving port, we were gathered at our assigned locations on the ship for inspection of the life jackets, which we put on, and other drills. I remember finally feeling the tension of going into a war zone, and just a little more than 10 hours later, this ship received its baptism of fire and sank. At dawn on November 11, the hull of the *Kobe Maru* suddenly received an intense shock. The moment I woke from my dreams and jumped out of bed wondering what had happened, the lights on the ship went out, and we were plunged into darkness.

It was subsequently reported that the sinking of the *Kobe Maru* was caused by a collision with the freighter *Tenzan Maru*, which was accompanying us and also suffered the same fate, but in fact it was certainly because we were hit by a torpedo.

Following the captain’s instructions, we assembled on the upper deck leaving our swords, boots, and map cases in the cabins. I felt cold so I put on my gloves. Because the order to evacuation by rope ladders gave priority to women, children, and other regular passengers, we soldiers went to the rear and waited for our turn. However, because it was still very dark before the break of day, the evacuation did not proceed swiftly. At that time, I felt the deck tilting under my feet. It was already the moment of truth. We gave up on evacuating using the ship’s rope ladders, and slid down a rope into Boat No. 8.

But the rope connecting this boat with the *Kobe Maru* could not be unfastened. One officer who had his sword took it out of its scabbard and tried frantically to cut the rope, but he couldn’t. If we were pulled down by the vortex of the sinking ship, it would have been all over. Kobashiri and Okiyama sensed the danger and jumped into the dark sea, but I could not follow them because I am not a good swimmer. I had no choice but to cast my fate together with the boat, and just held on tightly to the oar.

The ship sank 17 minutes after the initial shock. Boat No. 2 moved away from the ship first, half filled with passengers, and was safe. Boat No. 4 capsized from the waves caused by the ship. The rope connecting Boat No. 6 to the *Kobe Maru* could not be unfastened, and it vanished into the sea pulled down by the ship. Blessed by some heavenly destiny, the rope connecting the ship to Boat No. 8, which we were on, came loose by luck and our boat was able to get away from the *Kobe Maru*. During that time, I held on for my life. When I realized what was happening, I had let go of the oar and was clinging to the edge of the boat and being drenched by the splashing water. I later heard that all the odd-numbered boats on the other side of the ship were safe.

Before I knew it, one of the crew members on the boat shouted, “I will take charge of this boat.” When I counted the number of people who were still on the boat, there were 34 or 35 people including women and children. We were told that the boat was carrying water, cigarettes, and food, and each of us were given one cup of water. Those who smoked got one cigarette.

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<sup>19</sup> Also known as the East Asian Shipping Company.



When our boat rose on the swell of a wave, I could see people in the sea all around us.

A short distance away, I saw one ship with smoke rising from its stern. As I was watching stunned, the ship suddenly tilted with the stern up in the air and sank from the bow. This was the freighter *Tenzan Maru*, which the later announcement said had collided with the *Kobe Maru*.

Someone cried, "Save those who are swimming," and we worked together to save them. It took all our strength to lift up even one person with the weight of the wet clothing. A girl around three years old was floating in the sea wearing an adult life jacket. That child was saved by a soldier. She kept her eyes wide open while being held without crying. Maybe she was too frightened, or perhaps the innocent little girl did not understand what was happening.

Next to me there was a young woman, 16 or 17 years old, soaked in water. She asked me to cut her long sleeves, but I had no blade. I tried to pull off the sleeves by force, but the wet kimono would not rip. I tried in vain two or three times. I thought I was calm, but I must have been panicked. The sleeves would have interfered with swimming, but there was no need to cut them off now that she was on board. The young woman clung fast to me, closing her eyes from her excessive fear. I was told, "She will die if she falls asleep, so wake her up." I said to her, "Don't sleep, you cannot sleep!" She replied, with her eyes still closed, "I understand." I pinched her thighs with all my strength, and she finally opened her eyes. Her wet body was cold like ice, no, like a dead person.

There were also several people on top of Boat No. 4, which had capsized and was drifting. Perhaps because they could not bear the cold of the dawn, they tore open their life jackets, pulled out the feathers, and attached them to their bodies. They looked just like white birds perching on a rock. I later heard from someone who was saved that he and some others had been trapped underneath this capsized Boat No. 4, and had knocked on the bottom of the boat seeking rescue. Eventually a hole was opened in the boat's bottom and they were saved. He said that when the cold sea air blew in through that hole, he never knew that air could be so sweet.

About two hours after the ship sank, an airplane flew over and began circling above us at a low altitude. The people on the boat shouted "banzai" and cheered. A while after the airplane passed, a destroyer came, picked up the people who were floating on the water, and left. Those of us on the boat were left behind. After drifting for around five hours, we were finally rescued by the *Tatsuta Maru*, which came to save us.

I climbed the ship ladder by myself, but the girl who had been clinging to me was carried to the rescue ship on the back of a crew member. We were given rice gruel and sipped it. Those who were soaked in water were each given one blanket.

The *Tatsuta Maru* picked up more than 20 of the dead. I was concerned about Second Lieutenants Kobashiri and Okiyama who had jumped into the ocean, and I looked around the morgue, but did not find their bodies. After I landed in Shanghai, I reported the details of the incident to the military logistics base, and checked into the Yamato Hotel, which was operated by Japanese. I learned that both of the second lieutenants had been saved by a freighter called the *Unzen Maru*, and had arrived in Shanghai before me. When we met, they told me they had drifted for several hours, that the lower half of their bodies had gone frigid and numb, and that they repeatedly became drowsy, but they imagined the faces of their wives and children back in Japan and desperately fought off the sleepiness.

The *Unzen Maru* had picked up 49 of the dead, and the *Tatsuta Maru* had saved more than 100 of the victims. Okiyama's hands were both covered in bandages. The skin of his fingers was torn off when



he slid down the rope holding it with his bare hands. We officers were later lodged at the Aster House Hotel near the Garden Bridge on Huangpu Road No. 17.

I think all the people on Boat No. 8 were rescued, but I do not know who they were or what became of them. I also do not know what happened to the innocent little girl with her eyes wide open, or to the young woman who clung onto me. The strange thing is that I cannot remember her face at all.

The army gave officers 300 yen as a disaster allowance, and Toa Kaiun gave us 100 yen as a solatium. I spent 40 yen to buy pajamas and other 100 percent cotton goods which could not be obtained in Japan and some hard candy, and sent these to my children in a small package. There was a drop box inside the Aster House Hotel from which they would bring the items to Nagasaki and mail them. For that purpose, they sold Japanese postcards and stamps at the hotel store.

Later, when I was hospitalized at the Hankou 1st Army Hospital because of a war wound, one day, Lance Corporal Kanda from the headquarters delivered mail to me that had arrived from Japan. This was the first letter I had received from my wife since I had boarded the *Kobe Maru* which sank, drifted in Boat No. 8, was rescued by the *Tatsuta Maru*, and landed in Shanghai. My wife gave a detailed description of everything that had happened at home since the evening when news of the sinking of the *Kobe Maru* was broadcast on the radio. Tears flowed from my eyes as I read my wife's familiar handwriting on the white letter paper while lying on my back.

When my eldest son Yasuyoshi, who was now 12 years old, was listening to the radio in the evening, he heard the news about the *Kobe Maru* disaster. He was shocked and called out to my wife who was taking a bath, "Mother, the ship going to Shanghai has sunk." She was astonished, came over to hear the radio, but the news program was already over. She waited impatiently for the 9 o'clock news and then heard a simple announcement that the *Kobe Maru*, which left Nagasaki for Shanghai, had sunk in the East China Sea.

She wondered if I had been on board. The ship had sailed one day late, but she reasoned there could not be a vessel leaving every day and thought I must have been on board. She could not sleep at all that night. She could hardly wait for the morning paper, but when it came there was no more information than the radio announcement, and there were no details.

She was at a loss, called my parents' home in Narita, and told my older brother about the sinking of the vessel on the way to Shanghai. He was shocked and said he would come to Tokyo right away. My older brother from the countryside had dark thoughts while on the train, thinking about how bad the situation had become.

When our landlord who lived next door heard about this, he said he would contact an acquaintance who worked at the head office of Toa Kaiun, and kindly visited the company to make inquiries. He was told there was only one ship headed for Shanghai, so I must have been on board, and that the officers were first-class passengers on the upper deck, so I probably had been rescued.

My wife wondered if I really had been saved. Looking at our second oldest daughter Yuriko, who was three years old and who was absorbed in play, and thinking about our three other children who were in elementary school, she was numb.

My wife felt that the postcard I had sent from Nagasaki Pier in which I, who had never said a kind word to her, rather formally asked her to look after the children, was a premonition of this disaster. She took out the postcard and read it once again, and cried at my curiously kind but distant words.





On November 10, the morning we had left Nagasaki, I was asked by Second Lieutenant Okiyama, who was traveling with me, to place a postcard in the mailbox. I read it while walking down the street, saw it was addressed to his wife, and thought, “Oh, this is how you write to your wife,” so I bought a postcard at the post office at the pier and copied his words.

“You must be working hard in Tokyo and very tired. Be sure to get enough rest. I am leaving Nagasaki at 10 o’clock this morning and traveling directly to Shanghai. I am well, so do not worry. It is getting cold, so take good care of your health and take care of the children.”

I realized that the facade of using my friend’s words did not suit me after all, wiped my teary eyes, and smiled bitterly.

I then continued reading her letter. There was no one with me in the hospital room. The faint afternoon sunlight came at an angle through the glass door on which a paper with a slanted cross was pasted.

The children came home from school one after another and my wife told them, “The ship which father was on sank, and he may not have been rescued.” It seems our second son Michinari who was in 1st grade did not really understand, was not so worried, and just became quiet.

Next, she told our eldest daughter Mariko who was in 3rd grade, “The ship which father was on sank and he may not have been rescued.” Mariko stiffened her face, did not say a word, and stared at her mother’s face silently.

Then my wife told our eldest son Yasuyoshi, who was in 5th grade, “It was the ship that father was on after all. He may not have been saved.” After a moment, Yasuyoshi replied, “Father must have been saved. I really think so.” The letter said because he was the eldest, he bravely said those words to comfort her.

In the evening my cousin, Sergeant Ogawa, who had just returned from the front in Malaysia, was concerned and paid them a visit. My brother and relatives from Narita gathered with my family and talked about various matters. My cousin spoke about the war and comforted everyone by saying, “Human beings do not die so easily. He must have been saved.” But they could not believe him. Everyone was anxious and gloomy.

Then a man arrived at the front door and called out, “Telegram.” Everyone was surprised and gathered at the entry hall. My cousin opened the telegram. It was from Shanghai.

He told them “Oh, he is OK! The telegram says “Safe. Arrived. Yamada.”

My wife suddenly lost all her strength. She realized she had not eaten anything since the morning. She ate a mandarin orange my mother had sent her from a trip, everyone smiled, and the conversation turned lively for a while.

While on the way to Shanghai, at 5:40 a.m. on the 11th, the *Kobe Maru* of Toa Kaiun collided with the *Tenzan Maru* of Nippon Yusen 90 nautical miles east of the mouth of the Yangtze River, and despite assistance from Imperial Navy aircraft, patrol boats, and vessels navigating nearby, which responded to the SOS and worked to help them, both ships sank. Most of the passengers on both ships were saved. The bodies of 46 victims were recovered. (*Asahi Shimbun* newspaper article dated November 13)

The Nippon Yusen ship *Tatsuta Maru*, which rescued us, was a 17,000-ton luxury liner launched in





March 1930, and it was sunk in February 1943 in the seas of east of Mikura-jima Island in the Izu Islands in a torpedo attack by an American submarine.

## ***Machine Gun Strafing along the Yangtze River***

On November 21, 1942, I parted from Second Lieutenants Kobashiri and Okiyama, leaving Shanghai alone on the way to my new post at Hankou, where the 51st Military Logistics Guard Unit was stationed. The *Kohei Maru*, which I happened to be on, was attacked by machine gun fire from Curtis P-40 Warhawks of the U.S. air force in China, and I was shot through my lower left leg. Here is an excerpt from a letter I wrote at that time. This letter was delivered to my home in Tokyo by registered official airmail thanks to the kindness of a postmaster who was onboard the same ship.

Toa Kaiun's *Kohei Maru*, which departed from Shanghai on the 21st, was a 3,000-ton steamship. I was allocated a first-class cabin. We arrived at Nanjing on the 22nd, at Anqing on the 23rd, and at Jiujiang on the 24th. Hankou was undergoing an air raid, so we did not navigate at night, and temporarily moored near Echeng between Jiujiang and Hankou that night. At 4:30 a.m. on the 25th, while it was still dark, we suddenly heard what sounded like fierce bombing. When I got up to put on my uniform, the lights went out, and the sound of the bombing became more intense. The moment I went downstairs to the lower cabins, the outside suddenly turned bright red. It seems we were under machine gun fire and I felt a burning sensation in my left calf, as if I had been struck by red-hot tongs. When I touched my leg, it felt like I was bleeding, and my sock became slimy. I had no bandages, so I tied it tightly with a towel, but the blood seeped through, so I borrowed a puttee from a soldier and wrapped it around my leg. After 20 minutes, the enemy aircraft left, and I was carried back to my cabin. The other men in the cabin gathered, soaked gauze in mercurochrome and tried to cut my long underwear so they could bandage the wound. Cadet Ouchi took out his sword from his waist, but Mr. Mine who was being posted to the Hankou Branch by the Ministry of Railways laughed, saying he would cut it with his knife. When he cut off my cotton knit long underwear with his little knife which was about one inch long, there were two wounds each around a square inch large swelling up. Mr. Tanaka of the postal service opened a bandage packet and applied sterilized gauze.

The ship soon got underway and arrived at Hankou at 10:00 am. I was carried to a car on a stretcher and hospitalized at the 1st Army Hospital. I had piercing wounds caused by 13-millimeter machine gun bullets.<sup>20</sup>

On the 26th, when they took an X-ray, there were no broken bones or other abnormalities, and I was told I would heal completely in around two months.

Among the passengers on the *Kohei Maru*, about six Japanese died and 15 were seriously injured. There must have been a few casualties among the Chinese as well. Fortunately, I am in no danger of losing my life, and there is no reason to worry at all. The wound hurts less than I expected, and I sleep well at night. Lieutenant Colonel Itabashi, the commander of the 51st Military Logistics Guard Unit, where I am being transferred to, kindly paid me a visit. It seems I will be traveling with the 1st Company, which is being detached to Shayangzhen on the front around 50 *li* (195 kilometers) from Hankou. That is on the frontlines, so there is some danger, but after receiving my baptism by enemy fire, I am less concerned than I

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<sup>20</sup> Presumably .50 caliber bullets.

thought I would be, and rather calm because it is the luck of the draw at work. I am sorry I must inform you that I was wounded, but I am letting you know because I thought there is no reason to hide it. I am not supposed to write about air raids, shipwrecks, or hospitalization, but a postmaster who happened to be on the same ship says he will kindly mail this for me as an official letter. Please look after your health in the cold weather. Our children are kind and good children, so there is no need to scold or discipline them. Don't worry about saving money, and please live carefree. I have not sent letters to my people in Narita or anywhere else, so please give them my regards when you meet them. Goodbye. November 28. At Hankou 1st Army Hospital.

The *Kohei Maru* had arrived at the pier in Hankou at 10:00 a.m. on November 25, 1942, but we could not disembark immediately. The time I spent waiting with the pain in my wounded left leg felt very long.

Cadet Ouchi finally came in saying "Second Lieutenant. Your car has arrived." A soldier I did not know was standing behind him. That soldier carried me on his back down the ship gangway. When I looked up, there were two seriously wounded soldiers lying wrapped in blankets right there. There were soldiers next to them who must have been comrades taking care of them.

I was carried away on a stretcher into the Bund, where a hospital car with a red cross mark arrived. I was placed into the car which drove quietly through the Bund. I saw a line of Western-style buildings in the shade of some large willow trees. It took 20 minutes to reach the hospital. It seems we had finally pulled off the paved road, and the car suddenly started to shake. I involuntarily screamed "Ouch!" and the combat medic who was in the car lifted up and held my left ankle.

I heard the sound of a bell when the car passed through the gate of the Hankou 1st Army Hospital and pulled up along the entrance. The nurses rushed out, and I was carried on the stretcher into Room No. 2 in the officers' surgery ward, which was a one-story wooden building. The hospital room was a private room with an area of around six tatami mats, and the inside of the room had been cleaned well. The nurses worked energetically under the direction of the head nurse. They replaced my clothes with a white hospital gown, and I was finally able to lie down on a bed.

It took some time until Army Surgeon Major Yonosuke Uematsu, who was the head of the ward, arrived for my medical treatment. He had been busy caring for the seriously wounded patients.

While I say medical treatment, he just disinfected the affected parts and stuffed rivanol<sup>21</sup> gauze into my two open wounds. He put several sheets of the yellow thin gauze into my wounds, using tweezers. They soon turned bright red with blood. He put a thin sheet of oil paper on top of them, bandaged the wounds, and gave me an injection to prevent tetanus.

It was already after 12:00 noon. Lieutenant Colonel Tamisuke Itabashi, the commander of the 51st Military Logistics Guard Unit, where I was being transferred, paid me a visit, along with Army Surgeon First Lieutenant Eiichi Osaki. He left me with words of reassurance and encouragement, saying that piercing bullet wounds in soft tissue should heal in just one month or so, even in the case of 13-millimeter machine gun bullets.

In the evening the attending nurse came in and let me know that one of the soldiers who had been hospitalized with me today (probably one of the soldiers I saw when I was carried off the ship) had died soon after surgery.

<sup>21</sup> Rivanol is an antiseptic.



At night, the room was dark because of a blackout that was in effect. There was a metal wire hanging on the side of a five candle-power light covered in black cloth, which you could pull to call the nurse station. I could not sleep at all that night because my wounds hurt. When I noticed, the door had opened, and a nurse was standing by my bedside. She asked, “Are you in pain?” and I answered that I was moaning because it hurt. I had unintentionally replied in an ill-tempered voice, and I drank the cold milk she brought me.

## ***The Nurses***

The next day, Superior Private Kobayashi, who was from the unit I was being assigned to, came to my room. He was a short, honest-looking man. He presented arms in salute with his knapsack on his back and said, “I am Superior Private Yasuo Kobayashi. I have been assigned to be your orderly as of November 26, so I am respectfully reporting for duty.” As soon as he reported, he put away his own gear, borrowed a rag and bucket, and began wiping the floor.

In response to my questioning, he explained that the 51st Military Logistics Guard Unit, to which I was being posted, was assigned to the 11th Army Field Freight Depot, with the 1st Company (commanded by First Lieutenant Keiji Tanaka) on the frontlines in Shayangzhen 200 kilometers from Hankou, the 2nd Company with two of its platoons in Wuchang and one platoon in Shashi, the headquarters, the 3rd Company, and the 4th Company in Hankou, and the 5th Company in Jiujiang. After my bullet wounds healed, I was to go to the 1st Company in Shayangzhen together with Kobayashi.

The nurses assigned to the officers’ surgery ward were all young and energetic. It was a mixed group, with some who had been drafted by the Gifu<sup>22</sup> Team of the Japanese Red Cross Society, and others who were army nurses.

A nursed named Sueno Kakitsubo was a young woman with a round face who was a bit playful. She said, “Second Lieutenant” and placed something into my hand. When I looked it was a caramel served as flight rations. When I asked her how she got it, she replied that she had received it from Captain Mori of the Hayabusa Unit in Room 4. I put it in my mouth and the sweet taste of caramel spread over my tongue for the first time in a long time.

There was a nurse wearing the name tag Michie Yuzuriha on her chest. She was quiet and had a freckled, sad face. Her last name was unusual and difficult to read. I asked her how to read her name, and she replied, “It is read Yuzuriha.” This young woman saw the pocket edition of the *Manyoshu* at my bedside, and said “Second Lieutenant, do you enjoy poetry? I will lend you my copy of *Shakko* (Red lights) by Mokichi Saito,” and she brought me a first edition of the book.

I asked her where she got it, and she said she had brought it from her father’s bookshelf. I imagined what this young woman’s upbringing was like. I told her, “*Shakko* is a rare book, so you should take good care of it.” She replied, “Is that a fact? Then I will try not to lend it out too much to other people.”

A nurse named Kasumi Higashiyama was a beautiful young woman with a lovely voice. From time to time, the nurses would take turns singing popular songs like “Shina no yoru” (China nights) and “Dare ka kokyo wo omowazaru” (There is no one who doesn’t think of home) on the in-hospital broadcasting system. They often sang “Kohan no yado” (The lodge on the lake) by Mieko Takamine:

*I came alone with a sad heart to the lonely lake in the mountains.*

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<sup>22</sup> Presumably a reference to Gifu prefecture.

One day, Nurse Higashiyama asked me “Second Lieutenant, have you learned the words to “The Lodge on the Lake?” I answered, “No, I do not know the lyrics very well.” “But I wrote them out for you,” she said. “Superior Private Kobayashi said you wanted me to write them, so I wrote them down for you on letter paper and gave it to him.” It seems Kobayashi had used my name for his own purposes.

A nurse brought me a bouquet of wild chrysanthemums, placed them into an empty can, and put them by my bedside. When I looked deeply at the wild chrysanthemums, which I had always overlooked as common wildflowers, they seemed indescribably beautiful. I wanted to have the heart to humbly feel close to the wildflowers, amid the busy war zone, and to feel the peace of mind that goes beyond life and death.

In the poetry collection *Sankyo* (Living in the mountains) by Hoan Kosugi, which Nurse Yuzuriha brought from the hospital library, I discovered the poem “*Overcome by the joy of being alive, it should surely be under these flowers if I were to cry.*” I copied it and pinned it to the wall of the hospital room.

I wrote Kosugi, in care of his publisher Chuo Koronsha, and told him about the poem. After around three months, when I went to the Itabashi Unit, a postcard arrived from Kosugi. He wrote that he prayed for my continued luck in the fortunes of war. In late 1946, when I returned home, I let him know that I had returned safely, and asked him if he would write two of his poems from *Sankyo* on a small bamboo paper as a memento for me. Inside an envelope with “Kosugi, Nakayama Village” written on it, there was a paper with the above poem and one more poem written on it.

*Overcome by the joy of being alive,  
it should surely be under these flowers if I were to cry.*

*Hometown in spring*

*Coming back from battle with temporal life.*

The two poems above were requested by Mr. Yamada. January, in the Year of the Boar

By Hoan

The nurses said they felt most comfortable in my room, so they gathered there and chatted. I listened while lying on my back to the young women talking like small birds chirping. I could see the blue sky through the open high window. A kite was gliding high in the sky.

Sentry Sergeant Major Ishikawa<sup>23</sup> of the 1st Tank Regiment, who was hospitalized in Room No. 1, came to visit me. The soldiers’ ward was full, so he was hospitalized in an open room in the officers’ ward. He explained that his war wound was almost completely healed and that he would be discharged from the hospital soon.

That same day, Mr. Tanaka of the military postal service, who was on board the *Kohei Maru* with me, happened to visit bringing a box of sweets. He told Ishikawa about the time we came under machine-gun fire. Tanaka is the one who bandaged my leg when I was wounded.

Tanaka explained that after bandaging my wounds, he went back to his room to wash his hands, which were covered in blood. I was calm even after suffering such wounds, and he thought I was a true soldier. I had simply told him that my leg was wounded, so he had come with a small bandage thinking it was nothing serious, but my long underwear was red with blood. When my underwear was finally cut off, he saw the swollen wounds as large as a square inch and my blood gushing out. He opened the bandage packet, took out the sterilized gauze, applied it to the wounds, and tied them with

<sup>23</sup> The rank “sentry sergeant” indicates that its holder is a member of an elite Imperial Guards unit.

a triangular bandage. He was surprised to hear me saying “Oh, these must be piercing bullet wounds, there are two,” as if I were speaking about someone else.

While listening to him talking, I remembered the frantic moment when I was wounded as if it had happened long ago.

I was soon allowed to walk in the garden with crutches. On a winter afternoon with warm sunlight, when I was walking in the hospital rear garden where there were still some cosmos flowers, I heard someone call “Second Lieutenant Yamada” from far away. When I turned around, I saw the nurses from the officers’ ward. When I smiled and raised my hand in greeting, one of them came running toward me and told me “Second Lieutenant, an entertainment troupe from Miyazaki City is coming tomorrow night.” It was the playful Nurse Kakitsubo. The entertainment troupe was a group of young women from Miyazaki City. Their performance was the first time I heard the “Hietsugi bushi” (Millet pounding song).

This is a tragic song about the Minamoto Clan General Nasu Daihachi and the Taira Clan refugee Princess Tsurutomi, set in nature deep in the mountains in Shiba Village in the distant Hyuga countryside.

*Nasu Daihachi abandoned Princess Tsurutomi  
and left Shiba with tears in his eyes.*

This melody in a minor key deeply moved not only me while I was nursing my war wounds, but also the other officers and men hospitalized at the military logistics base at the front.

I anonymously contributed seven tanka poems entitled “Welcoming the Miyazaki City Entertainment Troupe” to the monthly newspaper *Sozen’ei* (Vanguard) published by the 11th Army’s Press Section. The first poem read as follows.

*The dance of the Hyuga maidens,  
offspring of the Goddess Amaterasu!  
I never tire of watching.*

First Lieutenant Katsukuma Kurita, a company commander from the Summit Brigade, whose left hand was shattered by shrapnel from a mortar shell and who had his arm amputated from the elbow, was hospitalized in Room No. 3. He often came to visit me in my room with his remaining arm in a sling hanging from his neck, and told me various stories about the front. He was a nonchalant, interesting fellow. The day he was to be sent back home was decided, and he offered to deliver a letter to my family. I gave him a letter telling my family that I had been hospitalized, along with a 13-millimeter machine gun bullet and a fragment of the bullet jacket that a cadet had picked up on the ship, wrapped in a handkerchief stained with blood which had been used to tie my wounds. I had barely survived the sinking of the *Kobe Maru* and the machine-gun attack against the *Kohei Maru*, but I did not know if I would be safe from now on. I thought that even if I did not make it home alive, this handkerchief and bullet would serve as a memento to remember me, who had gone to the front.

Shayangzhen, the frontline base that I was headed to, is a town of mud and Chinese mat rush at the crossroads of the army logistics route to Yichang and the Han River, which is a tributary of the Yangtze River. According to Superior Private Kobayashi, everyone was waiting and wondering what sort of person was coming to fill the vacancy as commander of the 3rd Platoon. I thought I must live up to the trust of my subordinates as a good commander.





In 1943, I spent the New Year's Day of my 44th year in a hospital bed. The New Year's *mochi*<sup>24</sup> in the *zoni* soup was completely burned but undercooked. My orderly went to the Unit Headquarters, came back with some different white *mochi*, and cooked it on a hibachi in the room. At that time, I was already free from my crutches and could walk if I moved my leg slowly. When I walked in the garden behind the hospital, there was a flock of many magpies with black and white stripes flying about.

New Year's Day was also a holiday for the doctors who made their rounds. I was inside my room, reading a book on my bed. In the afternoon, Army Surgeon Major Uematsu came by, carrying his medicine box. He was accompanied by a nurse. In Room No. 3, where First Lieutenant Kurita was hospitalized, there was also a soldier whose left leg had been amputated, and who had been hospitalized since the end of December. Dr. Uematsu had come specially to care for the soldier. I was surprised, so I followed him and helped change the bandages. The other nurses were off duty in the afternoon, so I hardly saw them.

On January 12, I was permitted to go outside the hospital for the first time. I took my orderly and went to the Unit Headquarters. Because the hospital was on the outskirts of Hankou, it was four kilometers to the Unit Headquarters, which is near Pier 18. We took a rickshaw. After paying my respects to Unit Commander Itabashi, I had lunch with the headquarters officers, to whom I was introduced by Adjutant Saito.

In the afternoon, I dropped by the Shimeido Bookstore on Jiangnan Road and the Japanese club on Yangtze Street, while guided by Army Surgeon Osaki. I parted from him there and decided to take a rickshaw back to the hospital.

It was decided that I would be discharged from the hospital on January 15. The nurses came to my room one after another and said, "We will miss you when you are gone," kindly expressing their sorrow at my departure, but for some reason Nurse Yuzuriha was nowhere to be found. I asked what had happened to Nurse Yuzuriha, and they explained, "She has become sick due to tuberculosis and is confined to bed" I said, "Please give her my regards, and return this book to her," and I turned over the copy of Mokichi's *Shakko*.

Later, Nurse Higashiyama told me she had delivered the book to Nurse Yuzuriha. The nurses' ward was located behind the nurses' quarters, and visits from regular patients were prohibited. She said that Nurse Yuzuriha was lying on her bed alone and seemed lonely.

The only patients being discharged from the officers' ward on the 15th were Captain Mori of the Hayabusa Unit in Room No. 4 and me. When I went to his hospital room the previous day to pay my respects, he treated me to a cup of Hazelwood brand coffee. Mori said, "I will file a report saying that Captain Mori was with one other person, so you only have to pay attention."

When I took off my white hospital gown and put on my regular army uniform that day, I felt tense. We reported to Hospital Director Hotta and Army Surgeon Major Uematsu. At 11:00 a.m., there was a telephone call from the Unit Headquarters, saying that a motorcycle and side car would come to pick us up. While I was waiting in the hospital room, Nurse Higashiyama came in and said, "Second Lieutenant Yamada, would you go and visit Nurse Yuzuriha?" I replied, "But visits are prohibited." She said, "You have been discharged so there is no problem. I will show you the way." So, I followed her lead, walked around the garden, and entered the nurses' ward. While this was called a ward, it was connected to the nurses' quarters by a hallway. Nurse Yuzuriha was alone in the hospital room sitting

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<sup>24</sup> Rice cakes that are traditional served on New Year's Day.



on her bed. She was wearing purple Meisen silk over her white hospital gown, with her hair parted in two braids. She appeared to be a lovely young woman from the countryside who did not look at all like her when she wore her hospital whites. Her pale cheeks blushed as she was staring at me in my army uniform, as if she were surprised.

I told her, "I was discharged from the hospital today. Thank you for taking care of me. I hope you get better soon as well." She replied in a low voice, "Second Lieutenant, take good care of yourself. Please take the copy of *Shakko*, if you wish." I told her, "No, I am going to the frontlines, which is not like Hankou. If I have a chance to see you again, I will borrow it then. Be well." Nurse Yuzuriha bowed her head politely, without saying anything more.

I was sent off by Nurse Higashiyama and Nurse Kakitsubo and some other nurses and got into the motorcycle and sidecar that had arrived to pick me up at the entrance. When the sidecar left the gate, I looked back and the nurses were still at the hospital entrance waving goodbye.

In March 1943, a while after I was transferred from the Military Logistics Guard Unit in Shayangzhen to the Military Logistics Headquarters in Hankou, I brought an entertainment troupe to this hospital in my capacity as the officer in charge of entertainment at the military logistics base. At that time, I learned that Captain Masamiki Mori, who had been discharged from the hospital together with me, had participated in the aerial bombing of Chongqing as a formation leader soon after he was discharged. His plane had come under heavy fire, and he crashed his plane onto the enemy. He was a healthy young officer just 29 years old. I heard he had left behind his wife and three young children in Omura City, Nagasaki Prefecture.

When I brought the entertainment troupe, Nurse Yuzuriha had recovered from her illness and was working energetically. From time to time, when I found the word "yuzuriha" (*Daphniphyllum macropodum* shrubs) in poetry anthologies that I was reading, I would copy the poems on a military postcard and send them to her. She said she was always happily looking forward to receiving these postcards and kept them carefully.

*Leaves of yuzuriha*

*Fall one by one.*

*Red tree wet with spring rain.*

By Takashi Nagatsuka

*The buds of yuzuriha are lovely.*

*Soft green leaves lift the pink sky.*

By Rigen Kinoshita

*Yuzuriha among quiet winter trees.*

*Fragrant thick leaves with endearing scarlet.*

By Mokichi Saito

*Rain falls on broad green leaves of yuzuriha*

*Enough for a thriving green garden.*

By Sachio Ito

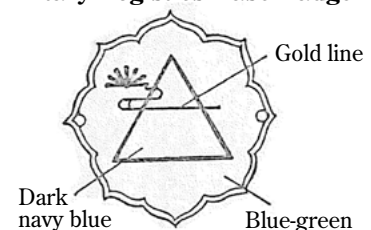
*Surrounding vermillion-colored buds*

*Yuzuriha has new leaves.*

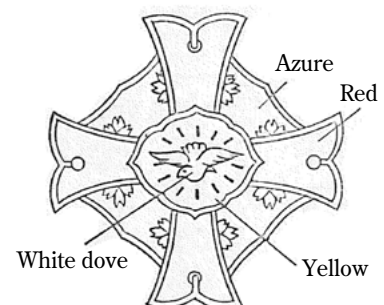
*Wet and green.*

By Yugure Maeda

**Hankou  
Military Logistics Base Badge**



**11th Army's War Wound Badge**



Source: Seikichi Yamada, "Bukan Heitan",  
*Tosho Shuppansha*, 1978.



*If the morning garden is not swept,  
Black fruit jewels lie where they fall  
Under the yuzuriha tree.  
By Fumoto Oka*

I heard that Nurse Yuzuriha was from Saga Prefecture, so I wrote the following nostalgic poem for her.

*There was a maiden  
who lent me Shakko.  
How tasteful!  
Yuzuriha is her name.*

### ***Shayangzhen Freight Depot Guard Unit***

On January 15, I was discharged from the Hankou 1st Army Hospital, arrived at the Itabashi Unit Headquarters facing the Bund near Pier 18, and reported to the unit commander. He asked me about the disasters that had occurred until I arrived at my post in Hankou, that is, the *Kobe Maru* which sank in the East China Sea, and the time when I was wounded by enemy aircraft machine gun fire while navigating up the Yangtze River. The unit commander, Lieutenant Colonel Itabashi, was from Sendai City, and had been an officer attached to the Akita Mining College before he was called up for duty. He was a cultured man with wide-ranging interests and had Chinese ceramics on top of his display cabinet. He showed me a celadon pot and an Akae flower vase. He awarded me the 11th Army's War Wound Badge when I was hospitalized.

The following day, I went with my orderly, Superior Private Kobayashi, to look at the military logistics facilities inside the city. I purchased a few paperbacks including Ogai Mori's translation of the Hans Christian Andersen book *The Improvisatore* at the Shimeido Bookstore on Jiangnan Road. Superior Private Oshima, who handled awards and decorations at unit headquarters, took me to see the French concession, the Chinese section, and the Little Thieves Market. Oshima said he had graduated from Keio University, had already spent three years in China, and would be returning to Japan soon. He had received his draft order while he was engaged, held a quick wedding ceremony, and reported for duty just three days after he was married. Oshima told me that Huachung University in Wuchang, where the 2nd Company was stationed, had a library with 200,000 books.

On the 19th, I heard that Army Surgeon Osaki was going to the 2nd Company in Wuchang to provide medical treatment, and I asked him if I could travel to Wuchang with him. The 2nd Company Headquarters was on the Huachung University campus, and they had the key to the library. I entered the library together with Dr. Osaki after he finished his rounds. Soldiers had previously come to investigate reports that encrypted signals were being sent using ultra-shortwave radio equipment hidden behind the bookcases, and they left random piles of books here and there. There were also piles of books belonging to professors and students in the hallways. These were almost all English or Chinese books, and there were only a few Japanese-language books left, perhaps because most of them had been taken away. I felt regrets because I would have come to the library again if I had remained in Hankou and were not being transferred to the front. I picked up one round bronze mirror inside the library. I asked my orderly to sew this mirror, which had a dragon carved in relief, into my jacket, in front of my heart, as a shield against bullets. The university campus was spacious, with many large Southern Magnolia trees. The professors' residences were nailed shut.

On the morning of the 20th, I rode on a freight depot truck that was headed to Shayangzhen. I rode in the cab and my orderly rode in the back, covered with a sheet, along with the soldiers who were on guard duty. The path was a long, straight military road running across the plains of Hubei Province, which I was told had been laid down for a future railway line. A cold drizzle soon began to fall. When we arrived on the outskirts of Zaozi, the truck stopped, and several female refugees came from nowhere to sell food. They were looking to barter. My orderly exchanged a pack of Kyokko brand army cigarettes for six boiled eggs. He told me that a woman had been riding with them in the back. As I was wondering who she was, suddenly a skinny 21 or 22-year-old woman wearing *mompe*<sup>25</sup> pants came out from under the sheet, jumped onto the road, and went into the grass thicket along the riverbank. She looked in my direction with downcast eyes as she returned while pulling her pants back up, and got back on the truck silently. We traveled 203 kilometers and finally arrived in the evening at the military logistics quarters at Luohan Temple, which is located at a river crossing over the Han River.

*Driven on the fields of Suizao all day long,  
crossing the Han River in rain after nightfall.  
Perchance a doll from a comfort bag  
swayed and swayed at the passenger seat window 'till evening.*

When I got up on the levee, I could see dots of light on the other side of the river, and I was told that was Shayangzhen. It was a dismal frontline base. Shayangzhen had burned down in the Battle of Zaoyang-Yichang in June 1940, and I was told there were roughly built barracks there.

In the Battle of Zaoyang-Yichang, in June 1940, the 11th Army mobilized the 3rd Division, 13th Division and 39th Division. The three divisions crossed the Han River at Dangyang, Jiukouzhen, and Shayangzhen, passed through Jingmen and Dangyang, and triumphantly entered Yichang on the 12th. This was a campaign to wipe out the National Revolutionary Army on the west side of the Han River. Yichang was strategically important as the entranceway to Chongqing. The 11th Army constructed a solid defensive position to prevent persistent counterattacks by the National Revolutionary Army.

There was a long pontoon bridge across the Han River made of boats linked sideways, with boards on top of them. We, who had ridden on the freight truck, got off the truck and crossed the bridge on foot. The woman did not get off the truck. She may have been treated as she were freight. The truck eventually rattled across the bridge, and we got back on. After a while, we arrived at the quarters of the Tanaka Company. It seems there had been a message from Hankou, and First Lieutenant Yamamuro, who was the acting company commander, and other officers had prepared dinner and were waiting for me to eat with them. After reporting, I was introduced to the company officers, First Lieutenants Yamamuro and Otani, who were both returning to Japan soon, and to Army Surgeon Cadet Sato and Warrant Officer Ishikawa. We had sukiyaki for dinner. After we finished eating, I was led down a road in the dark night to the Shayangzhen Hall. This was a military logistics facility and I heard that there were a few geisha there. On our way back, I also glanced at a roughly built comfort facility. Shayangzhen was the 11th Army's most important military logistics base, with the Transport Headquarters, three motorized regiments, a field hospital, a freight depot, an armory, and a barn to treat sick horses located there. The Tanaka Company was a guard unit entrusted with the security of the freight depot. The company commander, First Lieutenant Keiji Tanaka, was in Japan on leave. He was to return around March 10.

<sup>25</sup> Mompe are loose, baggy work trousers that were worn by Japanese women in World War II.



The company was stationed at a temple called the Zhuntisi Temple, which had been partially destroyed and repaired, and was also staying in shacks covered with bull-rush mats. The soldiers were using gravestones as stepping stones, which must have been disgusting for the Chinese to see. There was a large elm tree in the garden, with a magpie nest at the top of the tree. The tree had bullet marks from the Battle of Zaoyang-Yichang. There were decorative dragon horse tiles on the large roof.

Cold weather with freezing rain continued day after day. New conscripts soon arrived, led by Second Lieutenant Karasawa and Cadet Sakakibara. Karasawa and Sakakibara were responsible for training the conscripts. I was ordered to take charge of the guard attached to the 1st Platoon under First Lieutenant Otani. As the officer in charge of the guard, I was to appear each morning when the guards departed to stand sentry at each warehouse at the freight depot and give them their orders. I made the rounds of the sentry locations led by First Lieutenant Otani, and checked the rules for sentry duty. First Lieutenants Yamamuro and Otani were soon ordered to be attached to the headquarters, and departed for Hankou together with some veteran soldiers, and I was appointed the acting company commander, while also serving as the commander of the 1st Platoon.

One day, I was to give a lecture on morals to the men, in accordance with the company's training schedule. I gathered the soldiers inside the barracks and spoke. I was to talk about the harms of alcohol, and I quoted a poem by Bokusui Wakayama that I wrote on the blackboard: "*Sake on an autumn night should be drunk quietly, slowly sipping through white teeth.*" I told them that unlike beer, Japanese sake, of which we enjoy its sweetness, should be drunk as if to lick it slowly on the tip of the tongue. This is because the taste buds that sense sweetness are located on the tip of the tongue. On another day, I was assigned to speak about the proud history of the Japanese people. I drew a map of Japan on the blackboard, and explained that the Japanese people were formed from the southern race of Tenson Korin (a descendent of the Sun Goddess) who came on the Kuroshio Current and the northern race of (the Shinto divinity) Okuninushi who came from the continent through Korea. The men said that my talks were interesting, with many anecdotes.

One morning before the guards departed for duty, we synchronized our watches. I walked along the levee at the Han River carrying my binoculars. From a distance, I monitored the actions of the sentries who were standing guard. One sentry was just standing absentmindedly at the entrance of a warehouse, holding his rifle without inspecting entry and exit permits as required. He was not even checking people who were taking out goods freely. When the men returned, I asked who had been standing sentry at a certain time. I scolded the soldier, saying that I had been monitoring his work from the Han River levee using binoculars. When I went out on inspection at night, I found him holding his rifle with his eyes closed. He didn't even notice when I thrust my sword right in front of his eyes. When I called out "Sentry," he hurriedly saluted and said there had been nothing abnormal while he was on duty. I summoned his commander and scolded him, saying the soldier was not fit to serve as a sentry because he had not even noticed when I had approached and drawn my sword right in front of his eyes.

One day in February, I was suddenly visited by Superior Private Tadayoshi Yamada, who was a relative from my hometown. I asked him how he came to know I was there. He said he had been drafted into the Akatsuki Unit, went up the Han River as a guard on a civilian ship, was at anchor after cargo was unloaded at Shayangzhen, and heard a gunshot in the middle of the night. When he rushed out onto the riverbank, he saw a coolie who had come to steal from the open yard storage. The coolie jumped into the Han River and escaped. When he met the sentry who had fired his weapon and spoke with him, the sentry told him that his commander was Second Lieutenant Yamada from Narita, so he



learned that I was there and rushed to pay a visit. Superior Private Yamada's father was my cousin. I served him lunch right away, we spoke for three hours, and he left. I gave him four bars of yokan (sweet red-bean confectionary), which I had delivered from the canteen and 10 packs of Ruby Queen brand cigarettes as gifts to take back. He told me that when I had been wounded at Echeng, he was in Hankou. He had fired an anti-aircraft gun and received a phone call saying that the enemy aircraft were P-40 Warhawks, and that one officer on the *Kohei Maru* had been wounded. I saw him off as far as the bank of the Han River, and paid my respects to the commander there, who was a sergeant.

At the Shayangzhen freight depot, the officers gathered every Wednesday at noon to eat together and have a meeting about our duties. I attended in my capacity as the commander of the depot guard unit. During the operation to annihilate Jiangbei, I deployed one squad from the guard unit, with Sergeant Ito as the leader, to protect the supplies collection team. When the squad returned, they reported that when a ship was going upriver late at night during the operation, it came under fire from the opposite bank, and that Second Lieutenant Hirota from the freight depot, who was the head of the supplies collection team and happened to have gone out on deck to look over the situation was hit, fell into the river, and went missing. They searched for his body but could not find it in the dark of night. However, the truth was that he had been drunk, refused to listen to his orderly, was urinating off the edge of the ship, and fell into the river.

In the operation to annihilate Jiangbei, which took place from February through March 1943, the 11th Army invaded the so-called triangle region on the north bank of the Yangtze River linking Hankou, Yueyang, and Shashi, and captured Wang Jingzai, who was the head of the 128th Division of the National Revolutionary Army. Part of the 11th Army newly occupied key areas of Jiagnan including the opposite bank of Shashi, as well as Shishou and the area around Huarong.

I summoned a soldier from the 1st platoon each night and chatted with him under the *kotatsu*. I would ask the soldiers about their hometowns, their families, and their circumstances when they were drafted. I did this so I would develop personal ties with my subordinates, which I thought would be useful for harmony among the ranks. I had received a private room, which made this convenient. When I had free time, I would walk around Shayangzhen to get to know the area.

The grave of Major Yuzo Fujita, who had piloted a Gasuden Koken long-range aircraft and was killed in action, was located on the bank of the Han River. The grave marker read "This is the location where Major General Watanabe, Lieutenant Colonel Fujita, and six other officers and men were killed in action. Erected by the Oda Unit on March 10, 1941."

In May 1938, a Tokyo Imperial University Aeronautical Research Institute long-range aircraft carrying Major Yuzo Fujita, Sergeant Major Takahashi, and Flight Engineer Sekine had flown a circuit around Kisarazu, Choshi, Ota, and Hiratsuka 29 times,<sup>26</sup> spending 62 hours 23 minutes in the air, flying a distance of 11,667 kilometers and setting a new world closed circuit distance record. In February 1939, an army plane carrying Colonel Kotaro Watanabe, Major Fujita, Warrant Officer Takahashi, and three others on board crashed on the right bank of the Han River on the outskirts of Shayangzhen, and the men were killed.

There were many willows growing around the Han River. I sent a truck to dig up some willows and have them planted around the barracks. There were also many sappanwood, oleander, and other trees in the yard of the motorized regiment, so I had the men take some of these to plant around the barracks gate. The soldiers were delighted with this assignment because they preferred garden work

<sup>26</sup> Kisarazu, Choshi, Ota and Hiratsuka are cities in Japan's Kanto area (Greater Tokyo).



to drills.

In the refugee district of Shayangzhen, there were small thatched-roof houses built close together, tucked away in a hollow of the Han River. There was an elementary school at the edge of the town, and because some of children's pictures and calligraphy had arrived from Japan, I went to visit the school, bringing these with me. The elementary school principal was Ms. Li Huaniang. She had graduated from Peking University and was 44 years old, the same age as me, and she told me that she had a 19-year-old daughter. I visited some classes, and the children in the upper grades sang the 'Song of the Cold Night' and the "Song of the Fishing Lights" for me. They sang standing up while holding their songbooks, but they were all looking at me and not at their books.

The students in the lower grades were learning arts and crafts and making puzzles which are called tangrams. These are a single sheet of paper cut into seven pieces with five triangles, one square, and one rhombus which are put together to form various shapes. They made me a tangram person (arranging the shapes into the form a person) and pasted it on paper, and I brought this back to my room. The Chinese students' drawings were made with pencils because they had no paints or crayons, but their drawings were accurate and very good. It seems they drew crosses with red lines inside squares and used those as guides to copy pictures. Principal Li told me she had lost all her books in war damage, so I gave her the copy of *Hua Ying Si Shu* (The four books), which I was carrying, and she was very pleased.

The Shayangzhen Field Hospital was located two kilometers outside the city. Lance Corporal Tsukamoto from my company was hospitalized, and when I went to visit him, I met Army Surgeon Shizuo Fujikura, from my hometown of Narita. We chatted, and I borrowed his copy of *Shina shoki* (China journal) by Haruo Sato.

Superior Private Tamba, who had graduated from Hosei University, worked at the Tanaka Company Headquarters office. He was in charge of the camp logbook. He told me he had studied with Professor Kensaku Aoki while he was at university and had a copy of Aoki's *Wakaki kyoshi no nayami* (Troubles of a young teacher). This book was published by Tenyusha and it was a rare book because the publisher's presses had burned down in an earthquake. He said he would give it to me when he was discharged from the army. I had learned English and ethics from Aoki when I was a student at Narita Junior High School. Aoki later became a professor at Hosei University. Aoki's *Wakaki kyoshi no nayami* was a memoir of his time teaching at Narita Junior High School. I gave Tamba my copy of the poetry collection *Shina jihen kashu* (Second Sino-Japanese war poetry collection) published by Iwanami Shoten because I heard that he also wrote tanka poems.

There was a message from the headquarters at Hankou that Unit Commander Tanaka had returned from Japan and would arrive at Shayangzhen on the evening of March 9. I sent a messenger to the banks of the Han River and had him signal us with a flag to let us know when the unit commander had arrived. I had all the soldiers line up in the barracks yard and salute the unit commander with their swords. After hearing my report, Tanaka asked the name of the soldier who was sick-in-quarters. Without going into the officers' quarters, he entered the barracks and visited the sick soldier. I thought his behavior was an exemplary model of a military professional who had been promoted from the ranks of non-commissioned officers.

Tanaka liked sake more than anyone else, and sake was always served at the officers' dinner. The freight depot processed the sake as "miscellaneous packages." I had told him right from the start that I cannot drink alcohol. Thus every evening, I had only one small drink of sake with him and





immediately put out my rice bowl and told my orderly to serve my meal. Tanaka gave up on me and kept on drinking with Warrant Officer Ishikawa as his companion. One night, after I returned to my room and pretended to sleep on my bed, Tanaka entered my room with his shoes on and said “Hey, Second Lieutenant Yamada, let’s go to the Shayangzhen Hall.” I reluctantly put on my clothes and went out with him. Tanaka, who was drunk, grabbed my arm and said, “Yamamuro and Otani escaped halfway, and went back. They are cowards!” When we arrived at the Shayangzhen Hall, Tanaka’s favorite geisha came out to the entranceway. I quickly saluted Tanaka, who was taking off his boots, and said, “Excuse me, but I must leave you now because I have drills tomorrow.” He thanked me for my trouble and went into a room with the geisha in a good mood.

One day when Unit Commander Tanaka was out and I was inside the company office, the commander of the guard came in and said that a geisha from the Shayangzhen Hall had come to see the unit commander, but I told him to send her home right away because the unit commander was out.

On March 16, Branch Depot Commander Wada was going to make a round of inspections at the Shashi Branch Freight Depot. I was ordered to accompany him and brought one squad of armed soldiers to serve as guards. The branch depot commander was in the truck cab and we were in the back of the truck under a sheet in the rain. We had some difficulty proceeding down the muddy road. We parted from the branch depot commander in Shashi, visited the detachments in Shilipu and Hougang, and returned to Shayangzhen. After reporting to the unit commander at the office, Tanaka said, “Second Lieutenant Yamada, you are ordered to transfer to the Military Logistics Headquarters in Hankou.”

This was just two months after I arrived at the Tanaka Company in Shayangzhen on January 20. As it turned out, I had spent just 11 days together with Company Commander Tanaka, or just eight days excluding the trip to Shashi.



## Chapter 2

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# Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters

### *Transfer*

On the morning of March 26, 1943, I arrived at the Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters on Jiangnan Road in Hankou City and reported to the commander, Colonel Sadao Horie. Here is the letter which I sent to my family at that time.

On the 16th, I received an order to accompany the Branch Depot commander and travel 25 *li* to XX<sup>27</sup> (Shashi). We went by truck. It had stopped raining in the morning, but it soon started raining again, and we became soaking wet. The road was bad, and one wheel of the truck slipped into a ditch on the way. It took 40 minutes to push the truck back onto the road. We spent two nights there, and one night on the return trip. I walked around the Chinese district in Shashi in the rain. It was very calm after the campaign, and there was no need to worry. The town was lively, with some 5,000 prisoners of war. I unexpectedly ran into Cadet Ouchi, who had shared my cabin on the *Kohei Maru*. When I returned to my post on the 19th, an order had arrived by field telephone the previous day saying I was being transferred to the 4th Division, 1st Military Logistics Headquarters and was to return to XX (Hankou). As usual, my soldiers said they would miss me, which was rather troublesome. They said they would arrange farewell parties for me that night and the following night. I felt awkward since I was their platoon commander for just two months. Today, I visited Army Surgeon Fujikura at the field hospital, returned his book, and also visited Principal Li at the Chinese elementary school, where I was shown the drawing class and the arts and crafts class. Then I returned to my quarters and spoke with my men for one hour. My next posting is mostly office work and sounds interesting. I am planning to travel 50 *li* by truck to Hankou the day after tomorrow. I have spent only two months in Shayangzhen which is said to be a town of trucks, dust, and Chinese mat rush. I served there as an acting company commander, and I have some unforgettable memories.

The depot commander hosted a going-away party for me in the evening, and the company is holding another going away party on the 22nd. It started raining again late tonight, and the road between XX and XX has become muddy, so the truck cannot drive on that road and my departure has been delayed. Unless it becomes completely dry, there is no way to tell for two or three days when the truck will leave. So, I am sitting under the kotatsu and listening to the rain alone in my room, which is empty because my luggage has already been packed.

On the 25th, it was cloudy, and I was given permission to ride in Branch Depot Commander Wada's automobile. We left at 8:00 a.m. and arrived at XX at noon, where I parted from the Branch Depot commander. I got onto a truck, and because the road was muddy, we planned to go around XX and force our way through. We had to get off and push the truck three times on the way. We were helped by some Chinese coolies who were working on road construction in the cold wind. We finally arrived in XX (Hankou) at 8:00 p.m., after traveling for five hours on a route that usually takes just one hour, and I reported to Unit Commander Itabashi.

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<sup>27</sup> "XX" is in the original text. This may originally be text that was blacked out by the military censor.

According to Itabashi, my posting was changed to the Military Logistics Headquarters in an effort to place the right person in the right position. Itabashi said he did not want to inconvenience me by stationing me for a long time on the frontlines, and so he specifically told Military Logistics Headquarters Commander Horie to place me in the office of the military logistics base, in charge of rear administration, which I was very happy to hear. Itabashi gave me a bottle of his precious Kiku-Masamune brand sake. I spoke with Adjutant Saito, who is from Koenji,<sup>28</sup> and with Army Surgeon Osaki, and went to sleep at midnight. I heard the sweet sound of the clock tower bells of the Hankou Customs House on the Yangtze River for the first time in a long time.

On the 26th, I went to the Hankou Military Logistics Base in a light rain, met with Adjutant Otani, and reported to the commander. I decided to move in during the afternoon and met with my orderly, Private First Class Suzuki. Suzuki told me that he comes from Abiko in Chiba Prefecture, which is my home prefecture, and while we were talking about this and that, he mentioned that the owner of the Hasegawa Kimono Shop in Narita had been drafted. I instructed Suzuki to tell Hasegawa to come and visit me later. In the afternoon, I greeted Unit Commander Itabashi and had my luggage carried by rickshaw. Private First Class Hasegawa came to visit, and we chatted for a while. In the evening, I visited the Ministry of Railways' branch office but Mr. Mine, who was with me on the *Kohei Maru*, was out. On my way back, I bought 12 books at a used bookstore to donate to the company. The books cost around 20 yen. The military logistics base was cold with no heating. The light rain did not stop. The books I bought were as follows.

*Kyoen kashu* (Anthology of poems by Kyoen) by Azumao Sakura

*Gei to bungaku* (Art and literature) by Hanjiro Chatani

*Yurin tanka* (Stretcher with wheels) by Shoya Yoshida

*Rangaku kotohajime* (Beginning Dutch studies) by Tomio Ogata

*Tatta Hitori no Yama* (All alone on the Mountain) by Samitaro Uramatsu

*No* (Field), a novel by Akatsuki Kanbayashi

*Gakusei ni atau* (For students) by Shinzo Koizumi

*Rokugatsu* (June), a poetry collection by Zenmaro Toki

*Senyuki* (War comrades chronicle) by Sadao Yasuda

*Hamayu no uta* (Song of the crinum), a novel by Jiro Odakane

*Nagamimi koku hyoryuki* (Long-ear country castaway story), a novel by Jihei Nakamura

*Unnan shubihei* (Yunnan guards), a novel by Soju Kimura

(At the bottom of the letter I drew a picture of a Chinese drinking cup with a golden dragon and phoenix pattern, a silver tray, and a tin *chirori* (metal container for heating sake) that the unit commander had lent me.)

Yasuyoshi (my eldest son), this is a tower in XX. It appears to have six stories, but it is built on the lowland on the other side of the levee and actually has seven stories. XX is located on the bank of the Yangtze River, and up until the recent campaign, the other side of the river was all enemy territory. There is an enemy pillbox, and the soldiers here told me they could see the Chinese soldiers—who shot at them from time to time—and the replacements who relieved them. I heard that there are 5,000 Chinese prisoners of war here now.

<sup>28</sup> Koenji is a neighborhood in Tokyo.

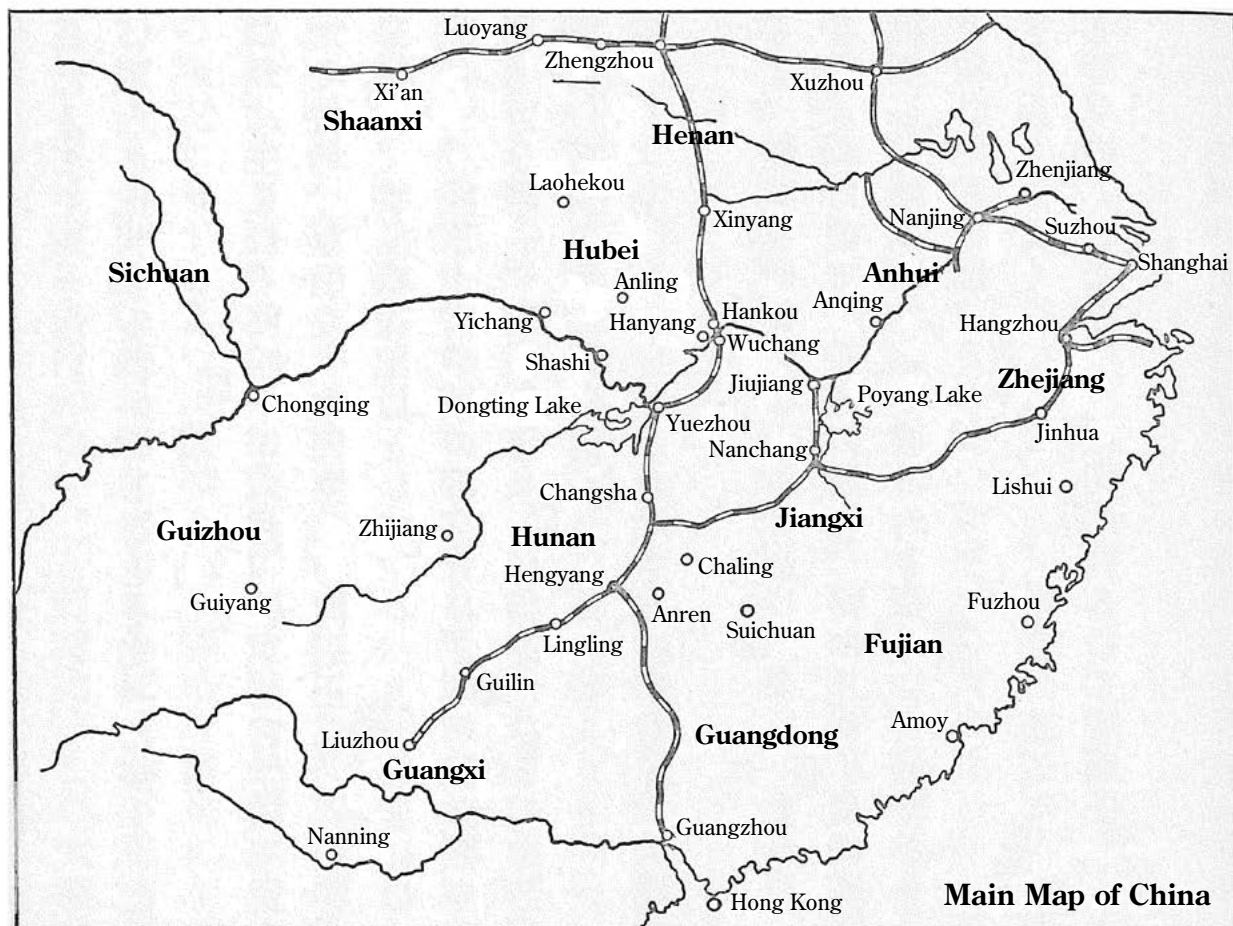
A willow tree is growing on the top of the pagoda where a bird called the magpie has made its nest. Before the campaign began, the Japanese army put a loudspeaker on top of this pagoda and broadcast to the other side of the river. I bought Chinese postal stamps at the post office in XX town. The two characters for pagoda are written by a Chinese monk. During my four-day trip it rained every day and the vehicle had difficulty proceeding. Goodbye. March 23. Father.”

(The two characters for pagoda are written next to a sketch of the pagoda in Shashi drawn in colored pencil).

While I was to learn about this later, it was Unit Commander Itabashi, the head of the 51st Military Logistics Guard Unit, who had recommended me to the military logistics commander as the appropriate person to be in charge of the recreation section. After I left the Hankou 1st Army Hospital, and before I was posted to the 1st Company at Shayangzhen, I had spoken with Itabashi in his private room for a while. That brief chance meeting greatly changed my fate in the war. Itabashi was said to be a very strict person, but he was kind to me. Beyond that, he judged my character and kindly gave me an appropriate workplace. I was most thankful.

On March 26, I went to the Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters on Jiangnan Road in Hankou, and reported to the commander, Colonel Horie. I was ordered to take charge of the recreation section, and was instructed to manage artistic performances, movies, and entertainment groups, and to bolster wholesome means of recreation.

The 143rd Fortress Infantry Unit, which I had belonged to in Chichijima, and the 51st Military



Source: Seikichi Yamada, "Bukan Heitan", *Tosho Shuppansha*, 1978.



Logistics Guard Unit in Hankou were both independent battalions made up of five companies. Each company had about 200 men, with a headquarters section of 20 men and three platoons. The platoons each had about 60 men in six squads. There were two sergeants and four corporals serving as the squad leaders. Each squad had 10 men, including the leader. So, as a platoon commander, I would be entrusted with the lives of nearly 60 men. If my tactical control were bad, I would be putting my subordinates at the risk of death, and this made me very anxious. But I was ordered to transfer to the Military Logistics Headquarters, which is a rear echelon unit, and this saved me from such a heavy responsibility. Beyond that, I was assigned the work of arranging entertainment for the officers and men, primarily wholesome recreation, which was worthwhile work that suited my abilities. I wanted to do a good job so I would not be ashamed. I felt very grateful that I would not have to kill anyone.

Soldiers are not allowed choose their job. It was also beyond human understanding that I was blessed with a good superior officer and assigned to work that suited my nature. I did not take a servile attitude of flattering my superiors and I also was not domineering toward my subordinates or the vendors. I simply dealt with everything in my own way, and I was blessed with a fortunate fate.

Colonel Horie, the Hankou Military Logistics Base commander, took over his position from his predecessor, Colonel Kosaku Matsuda, in November 1942. Under Horie's command, there were Lieutenant Colonel Uemon Araya and Lieutenant Colonel Genji Fujii as field officers, and Major Tokujiro Kogami as the senior paymaster. The duties of the senior army surgeon were performed at first by Army Surgeon First Lieutenant Kenichi Nagasawa and later by Army Surgeon Captain Kikuo Miyazaki and Army Surgeon Captain Yoshio Osawa. The unit's official name was the 1st Military Logistics Headquarters of the 4th Division, and its nickname was Backbone Unit 5,364. This was a unit directly under the command of the 11th Army. It had 40 officers, 35 non-commissioned officers, and 20 soldiers (drivers and combat medics) from Osaka and Wakayama. Backbone Unit 5,584 (the Imperial Guard Division's 10th Land Transport Auxiliary Unit), led by First Lieutenant Shigenori Kakinuma, was also attached.

Unit 5,584 had many older soldiers with families, mostly from Tokyo, Chiba, Kanagawa, Saitama, and Yamanashi. The unit had one officer, seven non-commissioned officers, and 250 soldiers. During Operation Togo of 1944, its core belonged to the 6th Area Army in Yuezhou as the Yuezhou Military Logistics Headquarters, while parts of the unit belonged to the 34th Army in Hankou as the Wuhan Military Logistics Headquarters.

When I arrived, Commander<sup>29</sup> Horie was 57 years old. Before he was called up for duty, he had served for many years as an officer assigned to schools to provide military training to students, and perhaps because of that, he was not stern at all and appeared to be friendly. Many of the military logistics base officers had started their careers as officer candidates. Adjutant Yasuhiko Otani was 28 years old, and Army Surgeon First Lieutenant Kenichi Nagasawa was 33 years old. Aside from the officers who had been promoted from the ranks, the officers were all under 30, and the others were young cadets in their twenties who had entered the army directly from school. On the other hand, I was 44 years old, an older soldier who had four children, and my comrades acknowledged my seniority.

Commander Horie was certainly no ordinary military man. I later learned that some people criticized him for being a soldier who was not militaristic.

Looking at his background, Horie was born in Yamaguchi Prefecture in September 1887. He

<sup>29</sup> "Commander" as used in this book to refer to Colonel Sadao Horie and some other officers is not a naval rank; it is a shortened form of "commanding officer."



graduated in the 19th class of the Imperial Japanese Army Academy in June 1907, the same year as Generals Hitoshi Imamura, Osamu Tsukada, Masaharu Homma, Masakazu Kawabe, and Shizu'ichi Tanaka, who were active as commanders in the Pacific War. In November 1916, after graduating from the Army War College, Horie was sent to Vladivostok in the aftermath of the Nikolayevsk incident during the Siberian Intervention as a member of the Ujina Army Transport Service. After 1920, he taught for five years as an instructor at the Imperial Japanese Army Academy. He then served as a battalion commander with the Oita 72nd Infantry Regiment and as commander of the Kokura Regiment District. In August 1935 he was placed on reserve status, and while serving as an officer attached to Yamagata High School, he was called up for duty in October 1942 and appointed commander of the Hankou Military Logistics Base.

As a poet, Horie was a member of a group that published the poetry magazine *Kanran* (Chinese olive), edited by Shoryo Yoshiue. In religion, he was a follower of the Nichiren sect. He belonged to the Kokuchukai Nichiren lay Buddhist organization, and studied under Chigaku Tanaka.

Horie did not play go, shogi, mahjong, or other games, and did not smoke. He drank only a little. He spent almost all his free time reading. Since he wrote poetry, he was interested in nature and especially in flowers and small birds. He managed his subordinates by indicating general principles and entrusting them with the details, treated them with compassion, and it was very rare for him to raise his voice or scold them.

Moreover, Horie had the common touch, was not particular about ranks, and would often chat with his soldiers. So, it is no surprise that he was merciful toward the comfort women who were at the bottom of society. He was truly the ideal person to serve as the commander of the military logistics base.

Horie passed away in December 1971, and the original manuscript of his 159-page (400 characters per page) memoir *Koenaki sensen-heitan monogatari* (The voiceless front-military logistics base story) is stored as a document of military history in the archives of the National Institute for Defense Studies in Ichigaya Honmuracho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo. Here is a passage from the preface of *The Voiceless Front*.<sup>30</sup> I quote this because it resonates with this memoir of mine.

Today, 13 years after the end of the war, where is the need to bring forth such a story of a military logistics base which lacks thrills, when it feels as if almost all the war records have already been published? This is because in the much-discussed issue of “war and peace,” it is still necessary to examine the war and look squarely at various facets from every angle in order to grasp the realities of the war. This is nothing but my assertion that the story of military logistics bases, which has not been addressed very much to date, should come on stage now as we are approaching the end of such story telling.

War is the greatest calamity for human society. Through war, the pros and cons of national characteristics are clearly shown. I believe that stark reality can conversely be understood more clearly from the military logistics bases in the rear, where things are slightly less harsh than on the tense frontlines. I also think it is because I was at a military logistics base that I had the unhurried leisure to grasp the generous nature of the Chinese people and the immeasurable vastness and ancientness of their natural surroundings. Furthermore, what I cannot help but tell the world is as follows. While it appears as if the dedicated efforts of my

<sup>30</sup> Because passages from *Koenaki sensen* are frequently cited in this book, the English translation of the title, *The Voiceless Front*, will be used in future references to Colonel Horie's work.

comrades—who believing in the holy war, silently continued the fight by sending ammunition and food supplies and carrying out other thankless tasks at the military logistics base in the rear battlefield in central China, where some died in vain—disappeared without a trace as a result of losing the war, I deeply believe without a doubt that their efforts drove a permanent wedge in the eternal flow of the life of the Japanese people. At the same time, I believe that conveying the voiceless acts of my comrades is the task I have been given, including my meager resistance against exaggerated criticism which claims there were inhuman atrocities committed wherever our army went here and there in this great war, and that this may also serve as our eternal repentance and remorse for losing the war.

### ***Appointment as the Recreation Section Chief***

On March 28, 1943, when I was posted to the Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters, the chief of the recreation section was a young officer with a good-natured character, Second Lieutenant Yoshio Nishiguchi. The duties of the recreation section were the management of restaurants, cafeterias, and comfort facilities and the organization of artistic performances, movies, and entertainment groups. The section had a total of eight men with two officers, two non-commissioned officers, and four soldiers. About one month after I arrived, at the same time the operation to annihilate Jiangnan began, there was a rotation of personnel in the headquarters. Second Lieutenant Nishiguchi was transferred to become the head of the Yangtze Military Logistics Branch, and I was appointed the chief of the recreation section. I was placed in charge of all the recreation section's duties.

The operation to annihilate Jiangnan took place from May through June 1943. To increase transportation capacity on the Yangtze River, the 11th Army directed more than 10,000 tons of shipping from near Yichang as part of an effort to annihilate the National Revolutionary Army's field army in the area on the right bank of the Yangtze, extending from Dongting Lake to the mountain district across the river from Yichang. The Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters sent help from the Shishou Military Logistics Branch that was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Araya, and they cooperated in the operation.

Yangtze is a hamlet on the left bank of the Yangtze River six kilometers east of Hankou. The army confiscated a building that was a spinning mill before the war, and used it as a barracks for military logistical purposes where a large formation could be stationed. It was also used for training first-year soldiers. For that reason, a permanent military logistics branch was established there which supervised the public order maintenance committees in nearby hamlets.

When I was appointed the head of the recreation section, the commander had me sit down on a chair and quietly spoke about its duties.

Among the duties of the recreation section, the most troublesome is the supervision and direction of the so-called special comfort facilities. There are various opinions about the army having special comfort facilities, but at present, these facilities must be accepted as a necessary evil. As a way to minimize their harm, however, it is necessary to improve the facilities that provide wholesome forms of recreation so that soldiers will stay away from brothels as much as possible. At the same time, to release the comfort women from their quagmire as quickly as possible, we want honest management of the comfort facilities, with no corruption. This is an important issue that I want to somehow resolve, in my capacity as the commander. So as the officer directly responsible, I want you to make an effort to cooperate with all the relevant officers toward achieving this goal.



That Commander Horie not only wanted to strengthen wholesome forms of recreation but also had compassion as a human being toward the *geisha* who were disdained as prostitutes at the bottom of society, or in this case the war, made me think deeply.

My immediate superior officer was Lieutenant Colonel Fujii, but because he entrusted the job entirely to me, I would receive my instructions directly from Commander Horie. Under me were the non-commissioned officers Sergeant Jitsuo Ikeshita and Sergeant Tsunaharu Inui; cadet Kenichi Nakanishi later joined us. During my posting, I was promoted to first lieutenant, and Nakanishi was commissioned a second lieutenant.

Before telling my story as the head of the recreation section, although it is slightly complicated, here I would like to quote again from Commander Horie's *The Voiceless Front*. This is from the section entitled "Comfort in the War Zone."

At the Hankou Military Logistics Base, cafeterias, restaurants, game parlors, theaters, libraries, comfort stations and other types of entertainment facilities were operated for the troops stationed at Hankou and the troops passing through. Among these, the ones that were the greatest trouble were the comfort stations.

Simply stated, the "comfort stations" were the red-light district, that is, brothels. These were openly operated by the Army, so they posed a major problem. Humanitarians and Christians might argue, "How dare the Army make such facilities and have pure unmarried young men and young and middle-aged men who left their beloved wives back home openly conduct immoral acts, and send many young women to the war zone and force them to engage in acts of prostitution? This is a sin that cannot be accepted from a humanitarian standpoint." On the other hand, the Army perspective was, "Having hot-blooded young and middle-aged men who are not saints spend years cut off from women violates human sexual instinct, so naturally they become aggressive and eventually turn violent. Past wars prove that this often leads to rape and other abominable crimes. Therefore, it is necessary and also thoughtful for the Army to provide an outlet for such sexual needs."

When I took up my post and made my initial inspection tour as the commander, I visited the various military logistics facilities which, of course, included entering these comfort stations. Because this was an inspection by the commander, at the entrance of each of the comfort stations the comfort women were lined up sitting upright, wearing their finest clothes to greet me, and when the brothel owner gave the command "Salute!" they bowed to me while sitting, placing their hands on the floor in the Japanese fashion. I saluted them with my hand in return but felt sad, and could not bring myself to directly look at the women. I think this is only natural for anyone with a sense of morality. I was then shown each room. They explained how each room was well equipped with furniture, bedding, and sanitary facilities. Because I was initially shocked, the gaudier the appearance of what I was shown, the more I was overcome by unpleasant feelings when thinking of the miserable conditions that may have been hidden in the back.

That night, the two viewpoints expressed earlier alternately came into my mind over and over again. But when I thought more deeply about this, I concluded that the poison naturally entwined with war itself, which undermines the soul of a people, just happens to appear here. I keenly felt that among the various phenomena in the world, bringing about a war—even a holy war—must depend not simply on human discretion—an abundance of caution—but

rather on the judgment of a pure heart, by lying prostrate in front of the Buddha to listen only to the voice of correct knowledge.

Of the two assertions, as an individual, it was natural that I sympathized with the humanitarian viewpoint from my belief in Nichiren Buddhism, which respects above all the Buddha nature that exists at the bottom of every human's heart. But as a party facing reality, I fell into the dilemma that I must also listen to the assertion that bluntly repressing the sexual needs of young people is at variance with reality. This must be a manifestation of the great poison that is linked to war itself.

Yet while tentatively accepting the arguments in favor of reality, I wondered if the Army did not take care of this matter, would the ill effects that resulted really be all that great, or interfere with the execution of the war? Being blinded by little evils might have inadvertently resulted in a tendency leading the Army to openly operate showy facilities. That should also be considered. Suppose that the Army did not provide an outlet for sexual desire. Just as private prostitution emerges as a result of the abolition of licensed prostitution in society, wouldn't a solution emerge in the form of the private prostitution that would naturally emerge from among the local residents in the war zone or by Japanese people residing in China? Now, if this were to occur, sexual diseases would of course spread because of insufficient sanitation at the facilities, and that might lead to harmful effects on the activities of the Army, and the Army would have to intervene.

If the issue could be resolved in that way, I would not have to be troubled in my mind with such unpleasant work. But the reality did not allow me such an easy escape. As I was given the burden of operating these facilities as a commanding officer of the Military Logistics Base, I was pushed into carrying out this work, whether I liked it or not. So, for the time being I viewed the comfort stations as an "unavoidable, necessary evil," resolved to lessen even a little the harm that was inflicted, and resolved to take a very superficial and lukewarm attitude toward the fundamental core of this problem.

As the first measure to mitigate harm, I needed to work at reducing opportunities for officers and men to access the comfort stations as much as possible. Considering the situation whereby many young men who were completely chaste before they came to war are eventually overwhelmed by the force of the environment and come to the comfort stations simply because these facilities exist in the war zone, I had to find ways to turn their attention elsewhere. The only option was to make great efforts on expanding so-called wholesome recreation. Secondly, I had to eliminate what is generally called exploitation by the brothel owners and increase the wages of the comfort women as much as possible so they could repay their loans to the brothel owners as quickly as possible, quit the life of shame, and return to Japan. Meanwhile, I worked at lowering the entertainment expenses of the officers and soldiers who were the customers.

I will write about the first item, wholesome recreation, later on. As for the second issue, while it was clear that this would be opposed by the brothel owners, Captain Y, who was the chief of the recreation section, initiated resolute efforts toward its resolution. Y was a man of extremely sober behavior. Moreover, he had an excellent character with refined taste, high culture, and broad-ranging common sense, and a rather extensive career. He was a middle-aged officer ideal for resolving this problem. The captain prepared various graphs using his strong skills and knowledge of statistics and confronted the brothel owners, showing the

income ratios of the owners versus the comfort women, and also came up with measures for lowering entertainment expenses using well-reasoned and clear assertions. The brothel owners who initially were fiercely opposed were moved by the captain's enthusiasm and logical assertions, and reluctantly agreed. With the strong support of Major O, who was responsible for the Military Logistics Base's accounting, and Army Surgeon N, who was in charge of the comfort stations' sanitation, the results of these improvement efforts gradually began to show.

Among the jobs I took over from my predecessor, Recreation Section Chief Nishiguchi, were the revision of the rules for managing the Hankou special comfort facilities and the submission of plans regarding the use of 130,000 Japanese yen in funds that had been donated by citizens for the welfare of soldiers and allocated to the Hankou Military Logistics Base. The drafts for both proposals were already virtually approved, and I was just waiting for their authorization.

When I informed the commander of my transfer, however, I was ordered to take charge of the recreation section right away and instructed to strengthen wholesome forms of recreation, so I wrote my own plans and submitted them to the commander. These included the opening of a library at the military logistics base. Out of the funds donated by citizens for the relief of soldiers which had been earmarked for cafeteria remodeling, I proposed to use 10,000 yen for the establishment of the library. So, I reported to the 11th Army Headquarters, met the staff officer for rear operations, and requested approval for amending the use of the funds. (If approval could not be obtained, Commander Horie's intention was to open the library even if the military logistics base had to pay for it.) I requested 10,000 yen to open the library, with the intent of purchasing 3,000 books at an average cost of 3 yen per book. At that time, the staff officer asked me if 10,000 yen would be sufficient. I replied, "I plan to start with this and then receive an additional 10,000 yen each year and make it into a superb library." The approval for amending the use of funds was immediately granted.

### ***The Hankou Customs House Bells***

The officers and men who went up the Yangtze River—which is called the long river of 3,000 *li*—and arrived at Hankou, deep in the continent, would be certain to hear the bells that mark time from the high tower of the Hankou Customs House (former customs house) that stands near Pier 18. The sound of these bells, which mark the time every half hour, makes one feel profoundly nostalgic. The customs house tower and the sound of its bells were like the symbols of Hankou.

In a letter I received more than 20 years after the war from Army Surgeon Kenichi Nagasawa—who formerly worked as a senior army surgeon at the military logistics base—he speaks about the sounds of the customs house bells as follows.

I still cannot forget the emotions I felt when I arrived and landed at Hankou and heard the sound of bells modeled after Big Ben up above my head, even though I came expecting a bloodthirsty war zone.

*As if I still hear them in my ears  
The beautiful bells of the Hankou Customs House.*

Also, in the poetry collection *Jyusshi* (Statement of aspirations) by Paymaster First Lieutenant Akira Masuda, who died in the war near Shihuiyao, Hubei Province in July 1943, the following words appear at the end of a poem entitled "Wuchang."



*At night when the noise dies out  
Across the river from Hankou  
I hear the sound of the bells in the bell tower  
They make me think of bells played inside a quiet cathedral.*

Moreover, in his poetry collection *Jyugun yoreki hankou fubutsushi* (Seasonal poems of remnants of military service in Hankou) published by Wuhan Senden Renmei, the poet Soji Momota writes about the Hankou Customs House bells as follows in the passage “Hankou Nichiroku” (Hankou diary).

On July XX, I entered Hankou at 9:00 a.m. There was a clock tower above the customs house building on the riverbank. It began playing mysterious music in the air. I passed through the Bund in a car, took Jiangnan Road, and entered my quarters at the Wuhan Hotel Annex on Lan Ling Road.

Poem: “Sokai fubutsu” (Scenery at the concession):  
*In mid-air at the pier  
Mysterious music played  
I said goodbye to the cocoa-colored water  
Oleander flowers were blooming on every wall in town.*

At that time, the Hankou Customs House building was occupied by the Akatsuki Unit (2nd Shipping Transportation Headquarters). The road running straight northwest from the pier was Jiangnan Road. The Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters had confiscated and was using the former Siming Bank building facing that road on the same side as the Akatsuki Unit. It was a five-story reinforced concrete building. The first floor was laid out colonnade style, with the accounting department overseeing the procurement of goods on the left as you enter, and the billeting section and transport section on the right. The recreation section was in the left-hand corner. The mezzanine floor had the commander’s office, the adjutant’s office, and the administration section, and the second floor had the private rooms of the commander, the adjutant, and offices such as the signals encryption office. The third floor housed a solemn shrine room for fallen soldiers and private rooms for non-commissioned officers. The fourth and fifth floors had private rooms for officers.

Commander Horie, who was the head of the independent unit that was the Military Logistics Headquarters, was permitted to have separate lodgings, but he preferred to be billeted together with the officers and men, so he lived in the commander’s room inside the headquarters. In the morning, he would chant the lotus sutra alone in the fallen soldiers’ shrine room. This must have been to console the spirits of the war dead and for the repose of his own soul.

Next, I will quote a passage about Horie’s appointment as commander of the Military Logistics Headquarters from the section “Classmates,” in *The Voiceless Front*.

When I finally reached Hankou and entered the Military Logistics Headquarters, my classmate, Lieutenant Colonel Genji Fujii, was the second-in-command field officer. He was a friend who graduated in the same year as I did, and came from the same town as me, so I was delighted to see him. When he was an officer on active duty in Japan, Fujii spent two years as an elective course student<sup>31</sup> and studied Indian languages at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. Furthermore, he spent a year and a half researching Japanese and Chinese literature as a retired military officer at Tokyo Higher Normal School. He then taught at a girls’ school

<sup>31</sup> An “elective course student” (senkasei) audited classes without pursuing an academic degree.

in Ube City near our hometown until he was called up this time. So, compared with the average officer, he had a wealth of common sense and was an ideal person for a senior officer of the military logistics base. He was a real gentleman. In his official duties he assisted me with true loyalty, and in his private life he was always on close terms with me as a classmate from the same hometown. By nature, Fujii had an extreme hatred of cold and in winter he always kept coals burning in the hibachi. The two of us would gather around that hibachi (portable brazier) and talk fondly about our times together at the military academy, rumors about classmates, and our hometown. Drawing from his knowledge of Japanese and Chinese literature that he had gained in his studies, he also spoke about the scenery of the Yangtze River and classical Chinese poetry, and sometimes showed me his own Chinese poems.

My predecessor, Major General Kosaku Matsuda, was also a classmate from my hometown. Even though he had tuberculosis, he served in the Zhejiang-Jiangxi Campaign of 1942 which caused his health to greatly deteriorate. He was hospitalized that autumn, and as a result I took over his position. On the day I arrived at my new post, I rushed to the hospital right away. Matsuda, who had a small frame to start with, was emaciated, with his hands as thin as fire tongs, but his mind was certainly sound. He explained the various duties required of the Military Logistics Headquarters commander to me in great detail, and said he was extremely relieved that he was passing on his position to me, who had been his friend ever since our days at the military academy. On another day, at his hospital room, he handed over his work portfolio to me. The documents were carefully categorized, covering every item without omission from A to Z. I became worried that preparing the file may have affected his health. As shown by the content of these documents, and from what I had heard from Adjutant F, his performance of duties was strict, meticulous, and truly detailed. In contrast, my own performance of duties in the past had been uneven, with many omissions because of my personality, but since I was taking over from someone who was so precise and had no omissions, I felt relieved. This led to the extremely lazy thought on my part that even with my rough approach to things, everything would be fine for the time being. While accounting tends to be practiced in an extremely loose way at military logistics bases in the war zone, I was particularly thankful that poor accounting practices had been completely eliminated under the strict management of Matsuda. Unit commanders above field-grade stationed in Hankou at that time always lived in grand mansions, away from unit barracks. Matsuda refused the fine quarters allocated by the Army as too extravagant for a Military Logistics Headquarters commander, and resided in one room at the headquarters. This reflected the virtue of ancient Japanese samurai of sharing pain and pleasure with their men. Because I followed these principles shown by Matsuda, I was able to experience what my subordinate officers and men went through in their daily lives. This made it easier beyond measure to execute my duties as a unit commander. It also made it possible for me to fully serve the spirits of the fallen soldiers as the Buddhist priest of the military logistics base temple.

The Zhejiang-Jiangxi Campaign began in April 1942 to destroy the Quzhou airfield, which was where the U.S. aircraft bombing Japan in the Doolittle Raid were to have landed. The campaign was launched with the 13th Army attacking from Hangzhou and the 11th Army from Nanchang, and they destroyed the airfields at Quzhou, Yushan, and Lishui, among others. The officers and soldiers who participated are said to have suffered from rain, muddy water, sore thighs, and athlete's foot because of torrential rains in the first half of the campaign and intense heat in the second half.

The annex to the left of the headquarters contained the medical section, where Army surgeons



were treating soldiers who were in transit, as well as the barracks of the Kakinuma Unit, which was attached to the Military Logistics Headquarters. Unit Commander Kakinuma was also simultaneously serving as the head of the officers' quarters, so he lived in the Kakinuma Unit Headquarters located near the officers' quarters.

At the military logistics base, the officers attached to the headquarters all had private rooms. The cadets and non-commissioned officers were placed two or three to a room. From my private room on the fifth floor, I could see Western-style buildings along the banks of the Yangtze River. My comrade, First Lieutenant Yoshio Tsuji, lived in the next room and he had a tea ceremony set, so he would often treat me to *matcha* tea. From the rooftop, we could clearly see the entire city of Hankou and as far as the Yellow Crane Tower of Wuchang across the muddy waters of the Yangtze River.

Jiangnan Road, which runs in front of the headquarters, intersects with Zhongshan Road ahead. Around this intersection, on the east side of Jiangnan Road toward the former British Concession, there were various Army facilities including the Military Police Headquarters, Military Police Squad Station, Military Logistics Hall, and the Guard Unit's Headquarters. On the west side, toward the Chinese sections of the city, there were Soldiers' Dormitory No.1, Soldiers' Dormitory No. 2, the soldiers' game parlor, the military logistics base canteen, the Army Club, the officers' quarters, and Unit Barracks No. 1-No. 5. There was also an amusement quarter where servicemen would gather, with establishments such as the officers' restaurants Gion and Minazuki, the Chinese Restaurants Land & Sea, Long River, and Yangtze River, and the movie theater Towa Theater. There was also a special comfort facility a little distance away in the Jiqingli area, in the city's Chinese section.

Many of the military logistics base's facilities were not burned down during the carpet bombing of Hankou mostly because of their location in the Chinese sections of the city, but the Military Logistics Hall, which was located in the former British Concession, was destroyed by fire.

## Chapter 3

# Hankou Special Comfort Facilities

## *Comfort Facilities System*

When was the special system of comfort facilities incorporated into the military?

The term “comfort facilities” is believed to have first appeared in an official military document in the Wartime Duties Summary compiled in July 1938 by the Inspectorate General of Military Training, which was designated as confidential. The paragraph about stamping out sources of infection and stopping the contagion of epidemic diseases states:

Regarding venereal diseases, it is necessary, as a matter of course, to devise active prevention methods and to also fully provide sanitary facilities at the comfort facilities, and to strictly eliminate contact with prostitutes, aside from those designated by the military, and contact with the locals.

The term “comfort facilities” does not appear in the Logistics Working Orders.

According to *Okamura Taisho shiryō* (Documents of General Okamura), published by Hara Shobo, the system of comfort facilities in the Army began in 1932, at the time of the Shanghai Incident. Colonel Yasuji Okamura, who was the deputy chief of staff of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army, asked the governor of Nagasaki Prefecture to send a group of comfort women, following the example of the Navy. Subsequently, each military unit came to maintain comfort facilities at its military logistics base.

When Okamura, who made these arrangements for the men, later served as commander of the 6th Area Army stationed at Hankou, he held the commander’s banquet at the Hankou Hotel—which was the staff quarters—rather than at the restaurant Akebono, which had recruited beautiful women. It is said that Okamura himself was a thoroughly sober and upright military leader.

In General Hitoshi Imamura’s *Shiki: Ichigunjin 60 nen no aikan* (Personal diary—Joys and sorrows of 60 years as a soldier), he writes about an occurrence that happened when he was the commander of the 5th Division. At a banquet held by the commander of the 22nd Army, Lieutenant General Seiichi Kuno, in February 1940, 150 comfort women arrived at Nanning, and the head of the administration division offered for a few of them to be sent to the Imperial Guard Mixed Brigade, which was stationed in a hamlet eight kilometers away. The head of that brigade, Major General Sakurada, said this was not necessary and declined. But when the usage of the Nanning comfort facilities was later surveyed, an Imperial Guard Division camp had the greatest number of soldiers using the facilities. The soldiers at the camp had walked more than seven kilometers round-trip to Nanning, so Sakurada then formally requested that comfort women be sent.

In Toshihiko Shimada’s *Kantogun* (Kwangtung Army), published by Chuko Shinsho, he writes about when the Kwangtung Army grew to a force of 34 divisions for the Kwangtung Army Special Maneuvers in 1940:

About 700,000 soldiers, 140,000 horses, and 600 aircraft had been transported to northern Manchuria. The campaign supplies that had been assembled in Manchuria and Korea to prepare for campaigns were so plentiful that even after some of the supplies had been diverted south and to Japan on several occasions, nearly half remained at their original locations at

the end of the war. There was an episode in which Zenshiro Hara—a staff officer who kept precise accounts regarding the level of the soldiers' desires, their spending money, and the abilities of the women—traveled to Korea by airplane, recruited about 10,000 Korean women (he had planned to recruit 20,000), sent them to the plains of northern Manchuria, built and ran special facilities.

When Military Police Colonel Kameji Fukumoto, of the Hankou Military Police headquarters, came to the Hankou Military Logistics Facilities for an inspection, he visited the comfort facilities as well. I asked him, “Do foreign countries also have systems like this?” He explained that in other countries, soldiers go to cabarets and bars, drink and dance, and then go to bedrooms on the second floor with the women they like. He said the system of Japan where prostitution is approved in military facilities with no drinking is unlike any other in the world. He also said that in Europe the frontlines and home front are nearby, and soldiers are often granted leave and return home, and it is rare to be sent to battlefields in foreign countries for overseas campaigns thousands of miles away and for years at a time, as in Japan. Regardless of the conditions, such facilities were certainly unique to the Japanese military.

In his book *The Voiceless Front*, Colonel Horie called these special facilities “a necessary evil” from his position as the military logistics base commander, but everyone may have had a different viewpoint. Also, while mentioning the level of soldiers' desires, not all the officers and soldiers fell into sexual starvation, and they must have viewed the comfort women differently, depending on the environments they were placed in, their intrinsic personality differences, and their views on life. In my case—perhaps because I had sublimated my desires for sex since I was in contact with the women all the time as part of my duties as the officer in charge of the recreation section—I never slept with such women while I was in the Army. This was also true of several people I knew.

Let us look at the accounts in a few war memoirs to see how the existence of these women was viewed. In Kazuo Nagao's *Kantogun guntai nikki* (Kwangtung Army diary), published by Keizai Oraisha, Nagao writes about the time he was serving with Unit 390 at Dongning as follows.

There were facilities with Korean women at the edge of town in Dongning, in eastern Manchuria. I did not know how many there were, but there were not only Korean women but also Japanese women who worked at restaurants for the officers. After I was promoted to private first class, I looked over these facilities on just one occasion together with one of my comrades while we were drunk. The facilities were all rough shacks with straw mats. When I saw a woman lying on her back on top of thin bedding on the wooden floor in a room about three tatami mats in size, a little humanism burned in my heart. I wondered how many soldiers she serviced each day. I felt an impulse of righteous indignation and wanted to punch each one of the soldiers who were lined up outside; I left.

Because these Korean women had been lured by respectable advertisements claiming to be hiring “war nurses,” they had no idea that they would be working at such facilities. The women were sent to locations all over Manchuria, and they ended up becoming mere tools for handling soldiers' physical needs. I may have been an indulgent sentimentalist, but I felt deeply disillusioned at how the physical discharges of animals—men who were at war—were processed.

In Hideo Fujino's *Shi no ikada* (Raft of death), published by Ryokuchisha, the author recalls that when he was stationed at Myitkyina in central Burma in the heavy luggage team of the 114th Infantry



Regiment, the soldiers would go out in groups of three, and had to stay together until they returned.

When it was the day for soldiers to go out, at the comfort facility in a wooden building that used to be a school, the sounds of soldiers' boots and swords on both the first and second floors made the atmosphere so indescribably frantic that it felt somehow threatening. The girls were given random Japanese names, and the place was a chaotic mixture of the market and the battlefield, with soldiers calling out the names of their favorite women, men butting heads over the same women, and the voices of women and soldiers reluctant to part. I waited in the hallway until the two other soldiers finished their business. Because we were in groups of three, I could not walk about town by myself as I wished or return to the base alone. This was truly ridiculous but because those were the orders it could not be helped.

I had firmly sworn to myself that I would absolutely not approach a woman while I was in military service, so while I would go to the comfort facility accompanying the two other soldiers, I never touched a woman after I went to war. If the comfort facility had been more pleasant, I might have changed my mind. Part of my state of mind in not wanting to participate, even if this were medicine, was because I had no desire to act like other men like an aggressive or hurried rooster attacking a hen in such a place with this loud noise and frenzy, and no mood or atmosphere except for the seeking of an outlet for the male physiology. I may have also thought this way because I was an older soldier, 33 years old.

In Tadashi Moriya's *Ragunako no kita* (North of Laguna de Bay), published by Rironsha, the author writes as follows, about when a ship he was on called at the port of Keelung in Taiwan in September 1944 while he was serving as an army surgeon in the Philippines Campaign.

Being on land for the first time in a long time was like a dream. I knew that not a few men visited the brothels on the night we landed, but I did not go to any impure place, fearing that if I did not keep myself especially pure while heading for the front, I would suffer divine punishment. I was said to be too serious in Manila as well, but I also felt that my body was protected by my parents' earnest prayers, and I firmly believed that maintaining such a strictly pure heart and life was the key to returning home alive.

The three men who wrote these war memoirs—Army Surgeon Moriya, who was an officer, Sergeant Nagano, who was a non-commissioned officer, and Private First Class Fujino, who was a soldier—had no ties with the comfort facilities whatsoever while serving in the war. If one then asks if the special comfort facilities were completely unnecessary, I think that this cannot be said as a general rule, because the cases of the three men were special.

In *Heitaitachi no rikugunshi* (Soldiers' army history), published by Bancho Shobo and authored by Keiichi Ito, Ito addresses the issue of "the battlefield and sex" and provides a suitable interpretation that is most interesting. As he puts it, the comfort women were flowers on the battlefield, and prostitution in the war zone was a type of deliverance in extreme situations, which transcended moral criticism. Ito writes about this as follows.

Most men who spent some of their youth in the war zone probably have some memories of dealing with those comfort women. In some cases, the memories may have the most meaning in their lives. Only those who had experienced it would understand the acute sweetness of relations sharing flesh and emotions at the edge of life and death. The prostitution in the war zone was not only bleak and inhumane sex.

From the ethical viewpoint of the war zone, the act of prostitution was a virtue, and certainly could not be called an immoral or obscene act. One might even say it was a type of ritual carried out by people in the face of death.

Soldiers are simple and common people who are unwillingly thrown into the war zone, and the women in the war zone shared that same fate. In other words, both the men and the women lived in the same dimension, and they felt mutual sympathy and understanding. Because there were so few women, they became victims who were crushed by harsh labor, in the shadow of the fires of war.

One can only say that both the soldiers and the women were pitiful. That is also why I did not want to casually take up the issue of sex in the war zone by treating it as *fuzoku*,<sup>32</sup> a peculiar custom.

It also considers the prostitutes and soldiers in his *Kusanoumi-Senryodanso* (Sea of grass—Fleeting impressions of war travels), published by Bunka Shuppansha. His conclusions are as follows.

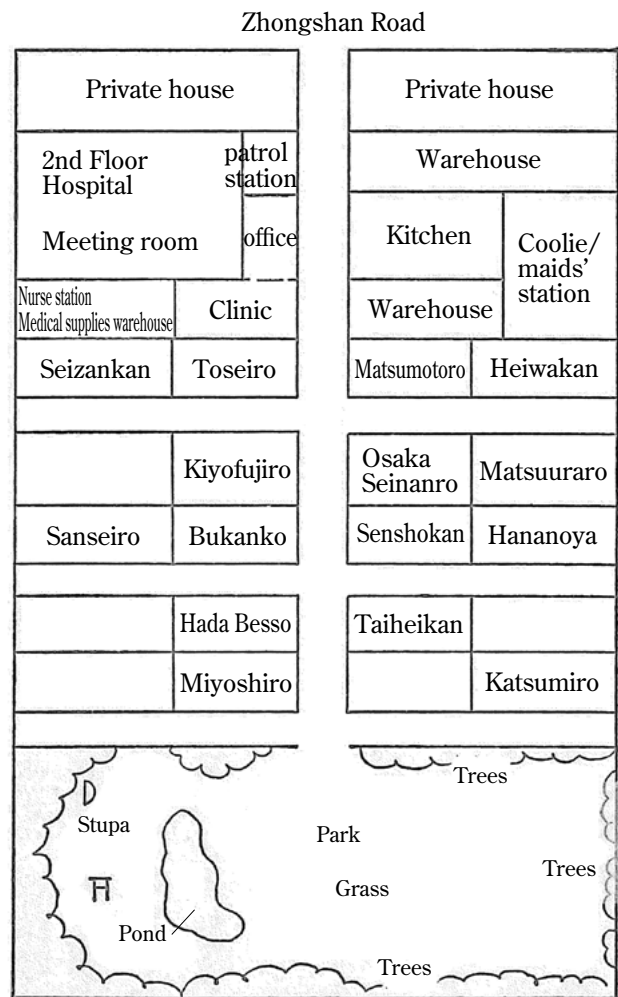
The comfort women are not mentioned in songs like nurses in war, and do not appear in war histories or war stories. At most, they remain as very powerful impressions in the hearts of a small percentage of the soldiers, and perhaps we must be content with that.

Who were the comfort women of the war zone? Some would look down on them as if they were simple creatures of promiscuity and tragedy. They could have been like mirrors that reflected the soldiers. In my opinion, in the cataclysmic defeat of Japanese Imperial Army, the only beauty in the war was the part that had something to do with the comfort women. I must sincerely salute those sweet and precious women.

In World War II, on the Western Front in Europe, Lale Andersen's song "Lili Marlene"—which was said to be sung by both the Axis and the Allies—is apparently about a fleeting rendezvous between a soldier and a prostitute<sup>33</sup> on the front.

*Outside the barracks, by the corner light.  
I'll always stand and wait for you at night... For you, Lili Marlene. For you, Lili Marlene.*

#### Hankou Special Comfort Facilities Map



Source: Seikichi Yamada, "Bukan Heitan", *Tosho Shuppansha*, 1978.

<sup>32</sup> *Fuzuoku* literally means the customs or practices of a certain place or locality.

<sup>33</sup> The author says the song is about a soldier meeting a prostitute. While that is one interpretation of "Lili Marlene" that was popularized by the Allies, it is certainly not the only one.



This song speaks of the wistful longing of a soldier who plucked a single pretty flower blooming in the field, which seems to have pulled at the hearts of soldiers.

I was always in close contact with the comfort women, but I never once felt that they were dirty or disreputable. They were not all pure-hearted, of course, and some who had a record of petty offenses in Japan were certainly cunning or greedy, but I felt grateful to the women first for their hard work in reluctantly sacrificing themselves for the needs of the military, and always thought that I wanted to help them as much as possible. This was not simply pity or sentiment, but rather my feelings for these women as human beings. In fact, I felt sorry for the comfort women, but I could not deny that for the soldiers they were one relief in the bloody war, an oasis in the desert. These were women who lived in a different dimension from those women who flattered war profiteers and merchants of death or high-ranking officers and had an easy life. I felt that in my position as the recreation section chief, I was the only one who could convey such gratitude to the women.

## *Jiqingli*

The Hankou special comfort facilities were in the refugee district south of the intersection of Jiangnan Road and Zhongshan Road, on an alley off the major street Zhongshan Road, and were part of Jiqingli. A high brick fence made it the only place cut off from the outside. Since this was a comfort facility at a rear echelon military logistics base, its appearance was different from the comfort facilities on the frontlines or near the battlefield. In Hankou, Jiqingli was another name for the special comfort facilities.

Entering the compound, there was a patrol station for the Hankou Guard Unit and the brothel owners' association office (with a clinic and sick ward on the second floor) on the right, and warehouses, a kitchen, and housing for the maids on the left. Beyond these, the brothels, which each had their own names, were lined up on both sides of the alley. Some of them were branches of brothels in Matsushima and Fukuhara that had been established by military order, and these mostly shared the names of their home establishments in Japan. There were nine of these, including Osaka Seinanro (Osaka), Toseiro (Kobe), and Hada Besso (Hiroshima), as well as Kiyofujiro, Senshokan, Matsumotoro, Katsumiro, and Matsuuraro. There were also 11 brothels operated by Koreans, including Miyoshiro, Seizankan, Sanseiro, Taiheikan, Heiwakan, Hananoya, and Bukanro. There were 280 women in all, with 130 Japanese comfort women and 150 Korean comfort women. (It seems there was no discrimination between the Japanese and the Koreans at Jiqingli.)

The buildings were all two-story brick Chinese houses that had been remodeled. The Osaka Seinanro and some of the other brothels had remodeled each of the rooms on the second floor in tea ceremony-house-style with lattice work under the eaves, making them look like rooms in a Japanese red-light district. The individual rooms were mainly tatami rooms that were six mats or four and a half mats large. They had a place to remove one's shoes before entering, and some of them had a seductive atmosphere with red long undergarments hanging on racks next to the walls. (Near the end of the war, however, both the Japanese and the Korean prostitutes wore tight-sleeved kimonos and *mompe* pants, but of course they wore nightwear while working.)

Some said that from the outside this place looked like the Sanjusangendo Temple<sup>34</sup> in Kyoto, and one book said there was a unit which called it "P33" ("P" was slang for comfort facilities). I cannot give the name of the book because I paid little attention to the book at that time.

<sup>34</sup> Sanjusangendo is a temple in Kyoto with a hall having 33 spaces between the columns.

Beyond the brothels, there was a park with a dome-shaped commemorative monument in one corner for comfort women who came to Hankou and died of illness, and a small shrine dedicated to the Shinto divinity known as Inari. Oleander and canna lilies were planted and there was a small artificial hill and a pond. The central plaza was grass. The prostitutes would do radio calisthenics in the mornings, and on their one day off each month, the movie team at the military logistics base showed them movies at night. This environment was completely different from the inhumane comfort facilities on the frontlines with straw mats. If you imagine the facilities here as extensions of brothels in Japan, you would not be mistaken.

According to Army Surgeon Nagasawa, who had been at the military logistics base for a long time, the first commander of the Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters when Hankou was conquered by the Central China Expeditionary Army in October 1938 was Colonel Ryu Ikeda. Colonel Ikeda was a firm and broad-minded man. Most of his staff were older officers who had been drafted and had extensive experience outside Japan. They ran the unit skillfully, and smoothly carried out logistical chores that they had never done before. Work on most of the military logistics facilities was completed by Adjutant Fujii and Recreation Section Chief Takahashi.

The brothel owners who entered Hankou by following the campaigning Japanese army duped the military police, occupied empty houses inside the city near Zhongshan Road, and operated covertly. These brothels were then all centralized in Jiqingli and placed under the supervision of the Hankou Military Logistics Base as military logistics facilities. From the perspectives of counterintelligence and of controlling communicable diseases, leaving the facilities as they were would have been a problem, and could not be neglected in the interest of maintaining the fighting power of the military. When the Japanese forces entered, the Korean prostitutes were exploited as slaves, but they were later switched to the same system of borrowing money used for the Japanese prostitutes.

Colonel Ikeda, who was the first commander, frequently had conflicts with the Army headquarters. He was relieved by the Army and replaced by Colonel Kosaku Matsuda. Colonel Matsuda had a gentle personality. He lacked initiative, and members of his staff were gradually replaced. His influence waned, and all he could do was to carry on the work undertaken by his predecessor. Matsuda became sick before long and was sent back to Japan, and Commander Horie took up his post at Hankou in November 1942.

The prostitutes were not lined up behind grilles to attract customers. Rather the women's professional names and photos were lined up sometimes with the designation "first timer" or "new," just like in Japan. Officially the prostitutes were not allowed to go outside the brothels and solicit customers, of course, but one could hear the voices of soldiers calling their regulars and there was a somewhat sociable mood.

There were many kinds of brothel owners, including mercurial gamblers who thought it best to go to the war zone and operate brothels ("*piya*") to make quick money, and who came to the continent with a single rucksack on their back, aiming to rake in cash. There were also established houses from Matsushima and Fukuhara that reluctantly opened branches at the order of the army. Relations between these two houses were particularly bad, and they fiercely competed even though they were both Japanese. I think the conditions in Jiqingli were somehow calm on the surface because a brothel owners' business association was formed, with Mr. Saito from Japan as the director and Mr. Kaneda from Korea as the assistant director, and the military logistics base controlled Jiqingli through the association. Saito was a simple, good-natured old man reminiscent of a village chief in the countryside. Kaneda was a Korean formerly called Kim Jung Hyun who changed his name to Kaneda

in 1939 when the policy of pressuring Koreans under Japanese rule to adopt Japanese names was implemented (*soshi kaimei*). He was tall, talented, and had a good personality, and was the type who truly wanted to cooperate with the military. At that time, however, the word “Korean” was viewed as being derogatory, so the term “person from the peninsula” was used exclusively.

Incidentally, the most troublesome work of the recreation section chief was the supervision and guidance of the special comfort facilities (for the comfort women). In the case of the Hankou Military Logistics Base, it was said that recreation section chiefs did not last for long. That was because their work was subject to a lot of slander from the outside, and it was easy to be cajoled by certain brothel owners, which in turn invited criticism for partiality from other brothel owners, who were then were liable to tell tall tales. At any rate, the conditions were rife for problems to occur.

When I was appointed recreation section chief, I resolved to refuse any side benefits that went with my position, and to not abuse my authority. I treated the prostitutes as fellow human beings. I maintained impartiality and fairness. I made up my mind to follow such a policy right from the start.

As soon as I took office as the section chief, I assembled all the brothel owners in a meeting room at the comfort facility and began with my greetings. I then presented revised new administrative rules, explained them point by point, and formally conveyed the military logistics commander’s intentions, as follows.

At this critical period when military and civilians should devote themselves to their occupations to successfully execute the holy war, the selfish pursuit of profit by people working with military facilities on the frontlines will not be permitted. Also, the comfort women who dedicate themselves to maintaining and increasing the fighting power of the officers and men should not be abused or exploited at all.

I clearly presented these two points as the will of the military logistics base commander. The brothel owners looked at each other with expressions of discomfort in response to my strict attitude.

I also wanted to speak to the comfort women directly, so I assembled all the women in one place and gave them my first lecture after being appointed section chief. That day was a public holiday, so they had all changed into their going-out clothes, and they were sitting on beautiful cushions which they each had chosen as they liked and placed on the wooden floor of the large room on the second floor. They were all dressed up, but when I thought that these were women who had come far away to the outback of the continent and had no way to earn their living except by selling their bodies, I felt pity more than anything.

Once all of them had assembled, Assistant Director Kaneda stood up and said “Attention, salute!” The women all bowed their heads at the same time while sitting. I returned their salute and said, “I am Second Lieutenant Yamada of the Hankou Military Logistics Base. I have just been appointed the recreation section chief and now I am going to give a lesson.” I told Kaneda to put them at ease, and he gave the order “At ease!” in the military fashion. I told them to listen while resting at ease and began speaking.

The war has already been going on for a year and a half, and is now finally entering a decisive stage. To win this war no matter what, the military has sent many Japanese soldiers to the front in distant central China, and to capture Chongqing they are now being sent from here to the frontlines in Yichang and Yuezhou. Many of these soldiers have left their parents, wives, and children at home. Moreover, they are risking their lives in this duty. This is truly a





hardship so the Army must reward them sufficiently. You are the only ones who can comfort them in place of the wives, children and parents they have left behind in Japan. The military fully understands your position in this important task and intends to compensate you for that hard work. We want you to kindly treat the soldiers who visit the comfort facilities seeking temporary peace of mind.

Jiqingli, where these comfort facilities are located, was named after an old Chinese saying which means “virtue brings rewards.” People who carry out kind and good deeds are always rewarded and joyful. This is just like putting your savings in heaven. Even if they cannot be seen, they never disappear. Such people will certainly receive good rewards someday. Your kind care makes a deeply impression in the hearts of the soldiers who do not know what will happen tomorrow, and becomes a beautiful memory. When they go to the front, they will remember you who were kind to them, and secretly pray for your happiness. Such prayers and hopes will certainly reach heaven and bring you happiness someday.

You must also take good care of yourselves. There is no use in doing too much and becoming ill. Be sure to carefully follow the prescribed procedures so you will not become ill. Help one another when the work is difficult. Always live a bright life. And absolutely never use narcotics, gamble, or engage in criminal acts. Thinking about the hardships and austerity endured by the soldiers at the front, you should drink sake and smoke tobacco in moderation, and not be extravagant or wasteful. You should work to pay off your debts and return home as quickly as possible so you can enter a happy family life. Prostitution is mistreatment of the body, and it is definitely not a good thing, but since you receive money for fully satisfying the customers, it is fundamentally different from fraud, extortion, or theft. So you should not feel inferior. The military logistics base intends to take responsibility for taking care of you. If you have any trouble at all, please feel free to contact me. I plan to be available for consultation at any time.

That is generally what I said in front of the women.

Most of the comfort women were raised in extremely poor households, and in extreme cases, some of the Koreans had so little education that they could not read. Others had no parents, or were abandoned by men, and many were in unfortunate circumstances. Some voluntarily sold themselves, sacrificing themselves for their families to help their parents and siblings. Moreover, the comfort women were subject to scorn and contempt from society as shameful women, and they even belittled themselves as women of the red-light district. Such women looked confused when they heard that prostitution is an important duty that helps enhance fighting power, and when the section chief—with whom they thought they could not speak on equal terms—offered to consult with them directly. The brothel owners who had regarded the prostitutes as “lice” until that time were also somewhat regretful on seeing the attitude of the section chief toward the comfort women, and I thought they might then see the women in a slightly different light.

The amount of money earned by the comfort women each day was calculated according to the number of customers served by each woman. The amount was then broken down according to the ranks of their customers (officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers), and reported by each brothel to the military logistics center every day. Efforts were made at each unit to prevent too many soldiers going out on Sundays, yet despite that, the brothels were particularly busy on Sundays and holidays.

I heard that at one time, there was a ratio of one comfort woman per 150 soldiers. Calculating in reverse from the 280 comfort women in the Hankou district, that means there would have been 42,000 soldiers stationed at Hankou. I do not know the exact figures, but there must have normally been around 50,000 soldiers there.

The hours of operation were set at 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for soldiers. The brothels were open until 8:00 p.m. for non-commissioned officers, and remained open after 8:00 p.m. for officers. Of course, civilians were prohibited from entering Jiqingli. There were officers at the patrol station near the entrance who were from the Guard Unit, and they controlled entry and exit as necessary.

The service fees were set reasonably based on the salaries of the soldiers and the working abilities of the comfort women, the repayment of advances, and the operating expenses of the brothel owners. I was told that initially the fees were 40 yuan in Central Reserve Bank of China notes (*“chobiken”*; non-convertible notes issued by China’s pro-Japanese administration during the war) for officers for overnight stays, and during the daytime 15 yuan for noncommissioned officers and 10 yuan for soldiers. Around when I was appointed in April 1943, I recall that the fees had been revised to 100 yuan for officers, 50 yuan for noncommissioned officers, and 30 yuan for soldiers. The banknotes were paper currency issued by the Central Reserve Bank of China, with 100 yuan of those notes equal to 18 yen of Japanese currency. The soldiers’ salaries and additional war zone allowances were all paid in those notes.

Some of the comfort women were simple-minded and not good at calculations. They did not even entertain questions about their financial situation, whereby their debts did not decline no matter how much they worked under the feudal employment relations in which they sold their freedom for monetary advances. They generally just remained quiet and accepted this meekly. Since I clearly stated that questionable points would be clarified and that the Army would immediately order the rectification of any errors on behalf of the comfort women who were in a weak position, the women seemed relieved, but the brothel owners were somewhat anxious.

Immediately after I took office as the recreation section chief, I launched on-site audits of each brothel, together with the noncommissioned officers in my section, based on the daily ledgers submitted to the military logistics base. These ledgers were based on the written journals (*kazancho*) kept at each brothel, but when we compared the two, there were many discrepancies. This was partially because they falsely inflated the number of customers due to ignorance about how to account for the tips received beyond the stipulated fees, but there were also errors in the balances after deductions. This caused the brothel owners, who were flustered by my audit, to review their account books and reports, and to even begin amending them retrospectively.

The individual sales books (*mizuagecho*), which were the source documents for repayment of debts, sometimes showed credits for no understandable reasons, and in extreme cases the prices of sheets and nightclothes supplied by the military logistics base at official prices were recorded in local market prices. When asked about these points, some brothel owners had no explanation whatsoever, so I decided that from that time all the sales books would have to be approved by the military logistics base’s accountants. I think the division of earnings between the brothel owners and the comfort women was stipulated so that all the meals and other operating expenses were the burden of the brothel owners, and the net proceeds divided 60-40 for those comfort women with debts and 50-50 for those without.

The brothel owners initially complained behind my back at my way of doing things. But after I had

pointed out improprieties in the sales books and sloppy accounting, and ordered that operations by noncompliant operators would be shut down, they reluctantly followed the orders of the military logistics base. I think this preemptive strike on my part turned out to be highly effective.

Ascertaining the number of customers was necessary for the military logistics base to supply condoms, so I had the brothel owners report the actual number of customers. I had the tips that the women inevitably received reported as a surplus, accumulated these as reserve funds, and used them for the comfort women's welfare. However, how accurately this was done was highly questionable, and that had to be overlooked to some extent. The women earned around 400-500 yen per month in Japanese currency if they were not wasteful, assuming that they serviced an average of six soldiers, one noncommissioned officer, and one officer per day while working 27 or 28 days per month (excluding public holidays). The women generally had borrowed about 6,000-7,000 yen before they began working. They could generally repay those debts in about one and a half years, and the intention of my instructions was that if they worked beyond that they could return to Japan with some savings. We could not grasp the small details of their income, and there were some officers who saw the comfort women for a short time, rather than spending the night. So, the women's actual income may have been higher than this. At any rate, we were not following the women all the time so we could not grasp the exact conditions in detail.

Their daily lives (aside from the time they spent seeing customers) were breakfast at 8:30 a.m., lunch at 1:00 p.m., and dinner at 6:00 p.m., but it seems they would also eat udon or ramen noodles at their own expense as late-night meals. Officers would sometimes drink sake with the women while eating sukiyaki as if they had returned to their families at home. (Of course, this was against the rules, but it was tacitly overlooked.) And I heard that some of the Japanese women said the rice supplied by the military logistics base was not tasty, so they sold it to coolies and ate rice that they bought themselves on the black market.

The women received miso, soy sauce, salt, sugar, and fuel from the freight depot with accounting vouchers from the military logistics base, and the accounts were settled at the official prices. Vegetables, meat, tofu, and other items were purchased from a government contractor named Ruan by the military logistics base and distributed at cost. Alcohol and tobacco alone were procured by the comfort facilities themselves.

The cooking of the comfort women's meals was supposed to be done by the comfort facilities together, but in fact side dishes and other items were provided as necessary by each brothel. At any rate, the comfort women were engaged in physical labor, so a certain amount of extra nutrition was necessary. Their bodies would not last with a frugal diet, and we paid attention to nutrition so that the women would not bear excess expenses or waste money.

Comfort women eating with customers inside the brothels was tacitly accepted for officers late at night, but prohibited in the daytime for noncommissioned officers and soldiers. Some soldiers would bring sake in flasks and drink with the women. This was a practice that was prohibited because customers who got drunk would fail to use condoms to prevent disease and the women would not always wash themselves properly afterwards.

There was a clinic at the comfort stations, with an army surgeon sent from the military logistics base every day. Examinations for venereal disease had generally been conducted regularly, once per week. According to the army surgeon, when venereal disease was discovered and there was fear that it would spread to others, the women would be ordered to immediately stop working or be hospitalized,



and their income would suddenly decline. So they came up with ways of evading detection, with measures such as having older comfort women first check them on examination days, covering discolored areas with lipstick, and cleaning sores with hydrogen peroxide. It therefore became necessary to call the women randomly and conduct examinations on an ad hoc basis.

I maintained an attitude of handling everything fairly and impartially, in line with my initial policy. I instructed the brothel owners not to discriminate between the Japanese and Korean women, and I advised the women to free themselves from their straits as quickly as possible.

When the brothel owners heard there was a new section chief, some came to see me right away to flatter me, and brought information from the brothel owners' association. I refused to deal with the owners in any way, and had them negotiate with the director of the association. I also maintained a policy of protecting myself, never using the comfort facilities of course, and never privately using the officers' restaurants or the military logistics base cafeteria. This is because I thought that maintaining my integrity was absolutely necessary to enforce the rules.

First Lieutenant Yoshioka, who had been promoted from the ranks, was a very fat person and served as the head of the unit barracks. He would receive gasoline from a noncommissioned officer in the air service, secretly store the fuel, get cars from soldiers in the automobile units, and take the vehicles on rides. Yoshioka would brag to the comfort women that the recreation section chief would be changed after a year at most, and that he was in line to become the next section chief. However, perhaps because I was considered well suited for the position, I remained the recreation section chief for nearly three years (excluding three months when I was sent to the frontlines in Hubei as the head of the Shayangzhen Military Logistics Branch at the beginning of Operation Togo).



## Chapter 4

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# The Prostitutes

### *Profiles of the Prostitutes*

When comfort women arrived at Hankou, they would report to the military logistics base recreation section with the necessary documents, together with the brothel owner.

The noncommissioned officer who was in charge would check each woman's photograph, family register, sworn statement, parents' written approval, police permit, and identification from the mayor of their municipality. He would prepare a personal information form, writing down the woman's work history, parents' address, occupation, family makeup, the amount of any monetary advance, and other particulars. He would make a copy of the form and send it to the military police. When a woman was suspended from work for violations of rules, that would be recorded in the rewards and punishments column, and when hospitalized for illness, the name of the disease and the hospitalization period would be recorded in the medical history column. In the reference column, the woman's habits, such as drinking or profligacy, would be recorded later.

To keep track of the conditions of the comfort women, the recreation section recorded information such as their place of birth by prefecture (by province for Korea), age, work history, academic history, medical history, family makeup, and amounts of monetary advances. The section also kept brief resumes of the brothel owners and their employees, and worked to prepare the necessary documents that would be useful for administrative purposes.

Most of the women who came from Japan were from 20 to 27 or 28 years old, and had previously worked as prostitutes, geisha, or waitresses. In contrast, those who came from Korea were mostly young women, 18 or 19 years old, with no prior work history. When we asked them, "The work is hard, can you bear it?" they all nodded and replied that they understood about the work, perhaps because they had been told to do so by the brothel owners beforehand.

The women were of various types. Some were shrewd like a sly old fox, while others were surprisingly naive amateurs. They had all different types of appearances. Some were ugly, while others were sophisticated beauties. Of course, what could not be known from the outside was what they thought about and hoped for while they were living harsh lives. After all, I lived in a different world from these women. To understand them even a little, I wanted to speak with them individually, face to face. But that was simply impossible since there were nearly 300 comfort women and I had many other duties to attend to as the recreation section chief.

Nevertheless, for some reason, I certainly felt more affinity with the comfort women working at the comfort facilities than with the hostesses (geisha) at the officers' club.

Even now, after more than 30 years, there are faces I remember, and events related to them. I will now try to write down profiles of a few of these comfort women who left an impression on me.

### *Shizuka*

A woman arrived at Hankou owing around 10,000 yen in Japanese currency and came to the military logistics base, together with the owner of the Osaka Seinanro brothel. Since that was an exceptionally





large amount of money at that time, I looked at her with special interest while reviewing her personal information form. She had a slender and gentle face. She said she was 20 years old, but looked older. The women would come wearing their best clothing for their first greetings, so they appeared particularly beautiful. Her name was Shizuka.

After four or five days I asked the brothel owner while smiling, "How is it going? Is Shizuka selling well?"

He replied proudly, "Yes, she is popular." It seems the savvy brothel owner thought that the section chief liked this woman. One day, the private first class who answered the phone said with a smirk, "First Lieutenant, you have a phone call."

"Who is it from?"

"From a woman."

"What?"

"It seems to be a woman from the comfort facility."

"Then, have her wait."

After I finished with my paperwork, I went into the phone room and picked up the receiver. She said in a cloying voice, "Section chief, I haven't seen you for a while."

"Who is this?"

"Shizuka."

"What do you want?"

"I cannot tell you over the phone. There is something I really want to talk about, so I will be waiting for you tonight."

"Don't be silly. If you have something to say, then come to the military logistics base."

"But there is no point in my coming because I cannot speak with you there."

"What do you mean? No one at Jiqingli can summon the section chief there by telephone. Even the business association director comes here when he has some business."

I slammed down the phone. The following day the brothel owner showed up rubbing his hands together in a servile manner.

I said to him, "What is your problem? You are not educating your women properly. You must have been the instigator who had her call me directly on the phone."

He pretended to be apologetic, saying, "No, I did no such thing. I wonder if someone said something uncalled for."

He later explained what happened by saying a certain first lieutenant at the military logistics base had prompted her to call, telling her that the section chief was interested in her. But I have no doubt that this was the scheme of the brothel owner himself.

I subsequently saw Shizuka several times, but she never mentioned anything about the phone call and just looked at me with a flirtatious glance. I pretended not to notice and disregarded her. Before long,



whenever she saw me, she would put on airs and not even smile, maybe because she thought her pride had been hurt.

## ***Mitsuko***

A phone call came from the 34th Army's legal department while I was away. When the noncommissioned officer on duty who answered asked why they were calling, he was told to investigate a woman working at the comfort facilities who had been kidnapped. This was because women who were rank amateurs were often deceived by being told they would be working at an army canteen.

When I called the business association director right away and had him informally investigate this, it seemed that this was about Mitsuko, who worked at the Matsuuraro brothel. I headed out to the comfort facilities with paymaster First Lieutenant Noguchi from accounting, summoned Mitsuko to the business association office, and asked some questions. She seemed to be childish, just 18 or 19 years old.

As for Mitsuko's origins, she was born in Minoo in Osaka, and was a precocious juvenile delinquent. She became intimate with a military police sergeant major in the neighborhood while she was attending a vocational girls' school and became pregnant, so she dropped out. She subsequently had a miscarriage. She did not get along with her stepmother and was therefore uncomfortable at home, so she left home and went to work at a nearby spinning factory. But she frequently skipped work, secretly smoked cigarettes, and idled about, and was constantly scolded. When she heard that one of her friends was going to Hankou as an army hostess, she promised to go together but the police would not issue a permit for her to travel to China unless she had prior work experience. So she lied, saying that she had previously worked at a cafe and received permission. She was also told she had to take on debt, so she borrowed money even though she did not need it, and entrusted it to her aunt or some other relative and had it deposited as savings.

However, the woman she was to travel with backed out because her parents would not allow her to go. Mitsuko came to Hankou without her friend, and accompanied by a brothel owner. I don't know what agreement she made with the brothel owner, but she was treated like his daughter or like a family member, ate together with the brothel owner, and was otherwise treated differently from the other women.

Mitsuko said to me, "Even the Koreans become exhausted after taking on five customers. The women told me to think about other things and not think of the customers as men, but it is not that easy. It may be because I had no experience in Japan, and I'm just not used to it."

Mitsuko would sometimes refuse customers at night, saying she objected to excessive work and covertly recorded charges for services not rendered. She had come all the way to Hankou, so she was certainly something, but she was also meek. When I went into Mitsuko's room there was a small mirror stand in one corner. A copy of Part II of the *Manyoshu* (Selected poems from the Manyoshu), published by Iwanami Shinsho, was placed on top of the stand together with her face powder and cream.

"Do you read this?"

"Yes"

"Did you bring it from Japan?"

“No, I received it from a noncommissioned officer who came to see me. If you want to read it, please take it with you.”

Seeing that she read such a book, I thought Mitsuko was a woman who was unexpectedly bookish.

Paymaster First Lieutenant Noguchi had been a one-year volunteer. He returned to Japan at the beginning of July 1945 without waiting for the end of the war and was transferred to a unit in Japan as a soldier for the final battle in the mainland. Mitsuko came to the military logistics base later and showed me a letter that Noguchi had sent her. It seems Noguchi had become intimate with Mitsuko and wrote that if she ever had any problem, she should consult with First Lieutenant Yamada.

When the women were holding an athletic meet in the park in Jiqingli, there was a competition involving some simple calculations, and I think it was Mitsuko who came in first.

## ***Fujiko***

There was a woman named Fujiko at the Matsuuraro brothel who was somehow fascinating. She had a mole on the side of her nose and large watery eyes like those of the women painted by Yumeji Takeshita. She was only 21 or 22 years old. According to her personal information form, she had previously worked as a geisha in Japan.

When I said to her, “Shouldn’t you be working at the officers’ club?” Fujiko just smiled and did not reply. She was normally quiet and modest, but this may have been a false modesty because the reference column on her form noted that she had a drinking habit.

One evening, when I was in a military logistics base’s private room for adjutants on the second floor of the headquarters, I was reading *Why France Fell* by André Maurois under a makeshift *kotatsu*. I had arranged the *kotatsu* by placing a small electric stove under the desk and covering it with a blanket, and had a lamp covered with a black cloth pulled down low. A guard knocked on the door, came in, and said, “Adjutant, someone is here to see you.”

“Who is it? At this time of night.”

“It’s a woman. A woman from the comfort facility.”

“Then have her wait downstairs.”

“Well, she is already here with me.”

When I looked, Fujiko from Matsuuraro came in from behind the guard, wearing a kimono, completely drunk.

She burst out, “Section chief, who do you think you are? You treat people like fools.”

“What on earth are you doing here?”

“I will go anywhere, even to the frontlines. I cannot bear even one more day in such a horrible place.”

In one corner of this 12-tatami size room there was a platform with three tatami mats on top of it. Fujiko took off her black crepe overgarment and threw it onto the tatami. I could see the garment’s seductive pink lining with a pattern of palace dolls (*gosho-ningyo*).

I told her, “You are drunk. I cannot speak with drunks.”

She violently pulled a chair that was in front of me toward her with one hand as she said, “How could I live without drinking?” and put her feet on top of the electric stove while still wearing her *geta* clogs.

She said with a half-crying voice, “I will stay here tonight. I won’t go back to Jiqingli, even if I am dead.”

I said laughing, “I will listen to you fully later on,” trying to calm her down, but she went on complaining insistently.

I refused to deal with her and went back to reading my book. After a while, she suddenly became quiet, perhaps because she had calmed down. When I looked up, she was staring at a photograph that was on top of my desk. It was a picture of my children who I had left behind in Japan wearing *mompe* pants and anti-air-raid hoods.

At that moment, probably because the daily roll call had been completed, I heard voices downstairs reciting the *Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors* in unison:

One. The soldier and sailor should consider loyalty their essential duty...

Fujiko suddenly became meek, and tears began streaming down her cheeks. She may have left a young child behind in her hometown and was thinking about the child. She finally became obedient and said she was going back.

That day was a public holiday. The military logistics base movie team was showing the film *Caramels and Soldiers* in the evening, in the park behind the comfort facilities. In this film, a draft notice is delivered to the home of a poor young couple who both work. The couple are speaking about their future life in detail at the side of their sleeping child while fixing a broken toy in the six-tatami-mat room on the second floor which they are renting, with the dismal sound of raindrops hitting the glass door in the background. After the husband goes to the front in northern China, his days as a railway guard are monotonous. He collects the exchange tickets that come inside boxes of caramels that are supplied by the Army from his comrades and sends them to his child back in Japan. When the child goes to exchange the tickets for a prize, the company president finds out that his father has been drafted and gives him notebooks and other school supplies along with the prize. It was a home drama about the joys and sorrows of the common people. I had sent three men, including a noncommissioned officer, and I was supposed to go there at the end of the movie, so I said to Fujiko, “I will go to the comfort facility with you,” and we stepped out together. The town was completely dark because of the blackout order. Fujiko followed me without a word firmly holding onto the edge of my cloak as her *geta* clogs clacked against the cold stone pavement of the red-light district in the wintry wind.

Her colleague Mitsuko who was standing at the entrance of the comfort facility said, “Where have you been? Section chief, I am very sorry for troubling you.”

Fujiko was later persuaded to accept a promotion and become a hostess (a geisha at the officers’ club), and she moved to the officers’ restaurant Gion. When Lieutenant Colonel Araya became the commander of the Wuhan Military Logistics Base during Operation Togo, he had dinner at Gion together with the officers from his unit. At that time, Fujiko served us together with Matsutaro, Hideya, and other geisha. Perhaps because she had been a geisha in Japan, when she was wearing her fine clothes, she looked lively, like a fish in water. She sat in front of the stern commander and I could see the grace and glamor typical of geisha in her gestures while serving the food in various ways.

I took charge of the banquet that night as the adjutant, and perhaps because I had not spoken to her, Fujiko pinched my upper arm without saying a word as I passed her in the hallway on my way home.

## ***Kojiro***

Around noon one day, a woman called Kojiro from the Matsumotoro brothel, who was around 20 years old, came to the military logistics base, saying she wanted to see the section chief. When I met her, she had a purple cloth wrapped around her forehead and looked just like the chivalrous hero Hanakawado Sukeroku in the kabuki play, *Sukeroku*. She had a cut on her lips, with white adhesive plaster in the shape of a cross on the wound.

When I asked her, “What happened?” she answered, “The brothel owner cut my forehead.” She explained that he hit her on the forehead with an ashtray and she showed me the bloodstained sleeve she had used to wipe the blood that flowed. From my experience, I knew that half of such women’s complaints and excuses were lies. I could not be naive and accept whatever she said as truth. To begin with, there had been an incident where this Kojiro had gotten onto a rickshaw without any money, gone to another house, and borrowed the fare at that house and paid it. Seeing this rough-and-tumble tomboy pouring out tears on top of my desk in broad daylight, rather than feeling sorry for her, I felt this was comical, yet on the other hand it was also oddly sexy. I listened to her going on and on with her complaints inattentively while feeling confused about whether she was really crying or just acting.

Possibly because I scolded her saying, “You should not come to the military logistics base wearing such a gaudy and flimsy kimono,” the next time Kojiro came, she was wearing a tight-sleeved kimono and black *mompe* pants, with a docile expression. A woman who called herself “auntie” who lived near Rokkakudo said she had negotiated with the brothel owner and wanted to take Kojiro. I summoned the brothel owner, asked him about the situation, and in the end, I decided to accept Kojiro’s wishes and send this tomboy of a woman to the frontlines.

After Kojiro left, I heard from someone that she had a peony tattoo on her thigh. I do not know if this is true, but she was certainly that type of woman.

## ***Miharu***

One morning, when it was drizzling and rain was quietly falling on the road, a woman named Miharu from the Miyoshiro brothel came to the military logistics base carrying a Chinese umbrella.

She said she wanted to donate money to the military logistics base for the war relief fund. When I asked about this, she said a young officer who was about to go to the front had spent the night with her two or three nights before. Miharu was a plain and unrefined woman who probably had a kind nature and said she had treated the officer kindly. She had listened to him speak about his hometown and his life story while lying down next to him. When he was about to leave the next morning, he said he would not come back alive, and that he could not use money on the frontlines, and he gave it all to her. The young officer said he wanted her to use it to pay off her monetary advances, but she told him not to say such things and to come and see her again. She held onto his knees and broke out crying. In the end, the officer left the money, said he would visit her if he had a chance to return to Hankou, smiled at her, and headed off for the front.

The money was around 2,000 yuan in Central Reserve Bank of China notes. But the comfort women were not allowed to pay off their debt using such a lump sum of money that came from the outside.



They had to repay all their advances by working with their own bodies.

Miharu said, “I will donate this money to the military logistics base, so please use it for something.”

I suggested, “Why don’t you have the brothel owner hold it for you until that officer returns,” but Miharu would not change her mind, and she said with a straight face that if the officer came again, she would entertain him at her own expense.

Under military regulations, laying down conditions on the use of money that had been donated for the welfare of servicemen was not permitted. What is more, if the donation were received by the military logistics base, it would be forwarded directly to the Army.

I said, “Well, how about donating this money to the Soldiers’ Library (the library at the military logistics base). I will take custody of the money, buy appropriate books, and write your name in the books as the donor.” I explained this and took custody of the money.

Unusual books would sometimes appear at Marugo, the only secondhand bookstore operated by a Japanese in Hankou, which was located on Liangyi Street. I sometimes wanted to buy such books right away, but the military logistics base’s accountants did not welcome that because the procedures for buying one or two books at a time were too much trouble. I entrusted all the money I had received from Miharu to Marugo’s proprietor, and when I bought one or two good books, I inscribed her real name on the books as the donor and placed them in the Soldiers’ Library. The officer from the communications unit who had given her the money was named Kitamura, and he never came to visit Miharu again.

The books I purchased using the donation from Miharu included the following.

*Ryoshu* (Melancholic journey) by Riichi Yokomitsu  
*Yukiguni* (Snow Country) by Yasunari Kawabata  
*Shinayuki* (China journey report) by Ryunosuke Akutagawa  
*Peking* (Beijing) by Tomoji Abe  
*Men to perusona* (Mask and persona) by Tetsuro Watsuji  
*Shina tenten* (Here and there in China) by Shinpei Kusano  
*Gekidansho* (Theater excerpts) by Matsutaro Ishiwari  
*Tsuru wa yamiki* (The dying crane) by Kanoko Okamoto  
*Soshu nikki* (Suzhou diary) by Shozo Takakura  
*Doino no hika* (Duino Elegies) translated by Mayumi Haga  
*Togakushi no ehon* (Picture book of Togakushi) by Nobuo Tsumura

A young cadet who came to the Soldiers’ Library later asked Superior Private Takeuchi, who was on duty, “What sort of person is the woman who donated these books?”

Takeuchi replied, “She is a military comfort woman called Miharu at the Miyoshiro brothel in Jiqingli.” The cadet was surprised that a woman reading such erudite books was working in a place like Jiqingli and went out of his way to go and visit Miharu. The cadet must have felt the sorrow of being disillusioned after meeting her and hearing her situation.

## ***Kohana***

Once, when a brothel owner came to report to the military logistics base, I asked about the conditions of each of the women who had been hospitalized for a long time.

There was a woman called Kohana from the Korean brothel Hananoya who was suffering from acute peritonitis and was seriously ill. She could no longer eat. I had two cans of mandarin oranges brought from the base store and had the brothel owner bring them to her. She was told that the recreation section chief had given them for her. Her co-worker fed her the syrup only using a spoon, and Kohana sipped it happily. But soon she could not take even that and when she was asked “Do you want to eat an orange?” she only replied “Later...” I heard that her final moments were very painful.

On the evening of Kohana’s wake, the Hananoya brothel closed for business at 10:00 p.m., and I went by myself because I heard that a monk from Higashi Honganji Temple was coming to recite sutras. There was a small photograph in front of the mortuary tablet, but I just could not remember this woman. There was a red balsam flower in a glass by the photograph, and I offered incense and put my hands together in prayer.

Kohana’s co-workers had all removed their makeup, changed into Korean clothes, and were sitting in the corner. They looked as if they were respectable women. One can of mandarin oranges that had not been eaten was offered next to the mortuary tablet. They opened this can and each ate a little bit.

According to Assistant Director Kaneda, who went to the hospital to see Kohana two days before she died, her mother had passed away early, her father was not in touch with her, and she had left one child behind in her hometown even though she was not yet 20 years old. Kaneda asked me to cremate Kohana in the military logistics base’s crematorium because the fee at the Korean Residents Union’s crematorium was too high. Those who died from illness or in battle in the Hankou region were cremated in the military logistics base’s crematorium, and their remains were enshrined in the fallen soldiers’ shrine room at the military logistics base. After a funeral service held once each month, the remains were returned to Japan on a ship traveling downstream from Hankou. There was already a shortage of wood at that time, so the soldiers’ bodies were placed in the crematorium in pairs, without caskets, in a single furnace with the head of one next to the feet of the other. I approved Kaneda’s request, but it would not be acceptable to cremate a soldier together with a prostitute, so I decided I would tell the noncommissioned officer in charge to cremate her body separately.

As the mourners were talking, it became midnight and the lights went out. The women said they would light candles and watch over the body all night, so I left them and returned to the military logistics base.

My orderly, the superior private, later told me he heard that when this woman was cremated, a soldier from the enshrined deities section watched from a peephole and saw that her thin limbs were spread out into the air.

## ***Kinta***

A woman at the Matsumoto brothel called Kinta brought in the highest earnings. She was a faded beauty 32 or 33 years old, and her figure was not very attractive. Yet this woman was a moneymaker and she was always the top prostitute. I called her to my office one day, and when I asked her “Kinta, you must have some good points that are different from the other women,” she obediently replied as follows.

I have toiled away ever since I was a novice in the Tobita red-light district in Osaka, so I am different from the rookie whores these days. If the way I filled the tobacco pipes was not just right, the senior prostitute would hit me with a pipe, but she looked after me exceptionally well. She taught me skills and tricks, how to handle customers, and how to take care of



myself. The greatest reason a woman's income declines is when she fails a venereal disease examination and is hospitalized. Most regular customers become afraid and stop coming if they hear that you have venereal disease. I have been in this business for more than 10 years, but I have never been hospitalized even once. Moreover, I do not have the customers use condoms.

When I asked her if she had some secret to this, she said, "Washing thoroughly," and I wound up listening to her speaking at length about her extensive knowledge.

Kinta said while she had said "washing," she did not mean half-hearted washing, which conversely sometimes pushes germs further inside.

The strict senior prostitute trained me very well. Looking back now, I am most grateful for her training. The women today have it easy. They are all a bunch of amateurs. To begin with, there is a method to sleeping with customers. To avoid getting injured, it is critical to hold both of their hands so that they do not touch your private parts. For this, you have to sleep on the left side of the customer, place the customer's right hand under the pillow and the left hand beneath your underarm. The other keys are what I call "preemptive strike" and "complete annihilation." Squaring your elbows to avoid contact to prevent an orgasm, pretending to have no interest, is an amateur's trick. Rather than that, the point is to have the customer fully enjoy himself and wear himself out. If the customer is exhausted, he won't care where you are. It is because they do things halfway that the women are kept awake all night long.

Also, you cannot start snapping and quarreling with a customer who does not keep his promises. Complaints should be made bit by bit, in bed. And regardless of the pretenses and how good the bedroom skills, the parting the following morning is the most important. If you get up before the customer, serve him cooked rice in green tea using delicious vegetables pickled with miso, shine his shoes and brush his clothing while he is eating, and send him off in a good mood saying, "See you again soon," the customer will certainly return. Also, because you have several regular customers, you must not greet a customer if you happen to meet him outside. If you smile at him and flatter him, someone may be watching. And if a soldier on duty comes on some sort of business, you should see him for free. If you send him off with a few peanuts, you will certainly be rewarded later on.

Kinta had been speaking with a serious expression, but then she suddenly said, "If you come and play with me, I will have you coming to see me every day."

I dodged her by saying, "Don't be ridiculous. Playing with a professional and what I do at home are completely different. No matter how much you brag, what you're saying won't fly at home." As an amateur, I was no match for this crafty old fox who was a professional sex worker.

## ***Michiko***

The owner of the Taiheikan brothel brought a girl who appeared to be 17 or 18 years old from Korea. Her family registry said she was 16 years old, so I could not give permission for her to work. The brothel owner said poor people in the countryside had the custom of registering births late, and that she was actually 18 years old.

I rebuffed him saying, "Don't talk rubbish. I cannot allow an underage girl to work."

About one month later, that girl came to the military logistics base herself and asked me to let her

work.

“Do you know what you will have to do?”

“I do.”

“The soldiers are rough, and you won’t be able to bear it. I can’t help you even if you cry.”

“I won’t cry. I will endure anything.”

“Well then OK, go ask the army surgeon to issue your certificate.”

I thought that her birth registration may have actually been filed late, so I accepted the brothel owner’s wish and decided to issue a permit after her physical examination by the army surgeon.

I named this woman “Michiko.” She may have had a natural inclination for the job. After just two or three months she completely adopted a sexy bearing and wound up becoming a competent prostitute.

One night on the way back from seeing the *Qinggog yanshi* (A pornographic history of the Qinq Palaces) at a theater in the new market with my comrade Second Lieutenant Suzuki, we entered Jiqingli late at night. It was dark because of the blackout order and the need to conserve electricity. Michiko was standing alone in the darkness in front of the Taiheikan brothel apparently waiting for a customer while holding a fan.

I asked her, “Are you free tonight?” in a quiet voice.

She said she was waiting for an officer who had an appointment. It was dark, so it seems she did not know it was me. After we peeked into two or three of the brothels, we passed in front of the Taiheikan again on our way home.

Michiko was talking with a co-worker. Michiko said, “The man who was here earlier may have been the recreation section chief.”

Her co-worker replied, “That can’t be. He would not come at this time of night.”

## ***Tamaki***

The army surgeon told me there was a woman named Tamaki from the Katsumiro brothel who had become pregnant and wanted to give birth by all means. Using condoms was the official procedure, so talk of getting pregnant was odd, but condoms were not perfect, and it seems the prostitutes sometimes slept with the men they liked without having them use condoms.

When I met Tamaki and asked her, “Can you raise the child even though you do not know who the father is?” she said, “I know who the father is. He is a civilian worker at the freight depot. We are engaged and we never use condoms,” she said happily. I heard that Tamaki had made a new yukata for this worker and also bought a pair of his-and-her teacups.

When I called the brothel owner, he looked very unhappy and criticized her lack of responsibility. But at the military logistics base, we respected her intentions and approved the birth. A boy was born several months later and blessed by her co-workers. This was unusual so the child was adored by everyone. Tamaki asked me to name the child, so I think I named him Katsuo (literally “winning man”) for Japan’s victory.

The brothel owner had been in a bad mood at first, but he was now smiling, maybe because he liked

it to be lively and a good-looking baby had been born. One of her co-workers came to the military logistics base one time holding the baby. The baby was already rather big, with two upper and two lower teeth, and he was crunching on a biscuit.

The woman said to the baby, "Have the section chief hold you." She pushed the baby to me, so I held him. He was smiling and was not shy of strangers.

They say that everyone at the Katsumiro brothel adored the child, but I did not hear much about him afterwards. He may have been sent off for adoption.

## ***Sayuri***

Many of the women who entered the world of the comfort women had not been blessed with a good family or good circumstances. One of these was Sayuri of the Sanseiro brothel. Sayuri had been born in Korea. She was a kind woman with a somewhat intelligent face.

Her biological mother had died when she was two years old. Her father had abandoned Sayuri and went off with another woman, and his whereabouts were unknown. Sayuri was raised by a woman in her neighborhood. She wanted to become independent one way or another, learned how to type in Japanese, moved to Tokyo, and became a typist at Nakano Bank. But the woman who had raised Sayuri kept asking her to send money, and when she went home to Seoul, her adopted mother was half-ill and addicted to morphine. Once, she even had her adopted mother detained by the police because she wanted to somehow cure her mother. Her home had no savings at all, so Sayuri came to Hankou to become a comfort woman. The brothel owners often advertised for women in Korea under a different pretext, but they were actually made to work as comfort women. After Sayuri endured this for two years, repaid her monetary advance, and returned to Korea, she discovered that her adopted mother had been someone's mistress, had been abandoned, and had become a bedridden invalid. So, Sayuri put her in the hospital and returned to Hankou to repay another monetary advance.

She told me while weeping that she and Mitsuda, who was the head clerk at the Seizankan brothel (another brothel in Jiqingli), wanted to get married, but she thought that might not work out, in which case she wanted to return to Korea. Sayuri was born under an unlucky star. She mocked herself, saying that no matter how hard she tried to free herself from her dire situation, in the end it was of no use. I felt pity for this weak and depressed woman.

## ***Satsuki***

Satsuki who worked at the Rijo brothel, was 25 or 26 years old. I had received an anonymous report that she habitually gambled at *hanafuda* card games, and I was informally keeping my eyes on her. By chance it was discovered that she had demanded a fee beyond the prescribed amount, so I issued an order for her to stop working.

Upon receiving the order, Satsuki came to the military logistics base with the brothel owner.

When I cautioned her saying, "Satsuki, you cannot make the soldiers spend extra money," she very meekly replied "I am sorry," perhaps thinking I suspected that she had been gambling.

Gambling with playing cards was strictly prohibited, but uncovering the practice was difficult because officers sometimes took part in the gambling at night. I suspected that rather than being her own idea, Satsuki's request for a tip had been indirectly encouraged by the brothel owner.



According to the army surgeon, among the comfort women, in addition to alcoholics, there had previously been some morphine addicts. The brothel owners may have intentionally left them as they were. The withdrawal symptoms from morphine addiction are too horrible to see. One woman was locked for treatment in a cell that had nails sticking out from the bannister, but she still tried to get out even when she became covered with blood.

I heard that some of the coolies working at the comfort facilities were addicted to opium, so I had them fired right away and issued an order preventing addicts from entering the comfort facilities.

## ***Ikuyo***

The owner of the Heiwakan brothel brought a woman called Ikuyo, who was born in Okinawa, to the military logistics base. She was 26 or 27 years old, looked pale, and seemed to be tired out.

When I asked, Ikuyo said she had been working as a special employee (comfort woman) at a comfort facility of the Imperial Japanese Navy's Landing Forces on some island in the South Pacific. But the conditions there became threatening. All the non-combatants were ordered to leave, and embarked on two military vessels. They were attacked by enemy aircraft on the way to Japan, and one of them sank. The ship Ikuyo was on could not return to Japan, and it zig-zagged its way to Shanghai.

It seems Ikuyo still had some debt remaining, so she came to Hankou as a comfort woman once again. She said that on the island, she had worked at a hut built out of nipa palms. She said that when ships would come into port, the men lined up holding tickets and she would see around 50 of them in one day. She had around 10 co-workers.

I wanted to ask about her circumstances in greater detail, but an air raid siren unexpectedly went off.

The announcement said, "Two enemy aircraft have just entered the airspace above Wuchang." I had Ikuyo evacuated to the military logistics base's air raid shelter for the time being. After that, I was occupied with reporting the conditions to the commander and answering phone calls from headquarters, and did not have time to leisurely hear Ikuyo's story. I was going to ask about her circumstances later on, and I sent her back to the comfort facilities when the alert was called off, but I was still busy with my duties and missed the chance to hear about the conditions on that island in the South Pacific in detail.

The comfort facilities I saw on the frontlines in Shayangzhen were roughly built mat rush shacks. The facilities on the island in the South Pacific must have been far worse.

## ***Miyako***

The army surgeon told me this story he had heard at the comfort facilities.

A woman called Miyako at the Katsumiro brothel said, "I have slept with the recreation section chief." Her co-worker said, "That's absurd," but Miyako replied with a straight face, "But it is I who slept with him who is saying this, so there is no mistake." Miyako was incredibly cheerful but she sometimes brazenly told obvious lies, so no one really trusted her. Yet her character was frank, she was practical about her work, and she would have sex in any position without hesitation. She also had a reputation for being good at fellatio.

Even when I heard this story, I could not immediately remember the woman's face. The next time I gave the comfort women a lecture, I asked Assistant Director Kaneda to point out Miyako. She was



sitting, with her mouth half open, in the front area of where the women had assembled. When she saw me looking at her, she grinned and stuck out her tongue. Her gesture was just like a child who had been caught in some prank. Miyako was a bit like a vagabond, yet somehow lovable.

When things took a turn for the worse, the lawn in the park at the back of Jiqingli was dug up to build an air raid shelter. While there was a secure air raid shelter at the military logistics headquarters that had been built by remodeling the basement, Jiqingli could not be left entirely undefended just because it was inside the refugee district, so we borrowed prisoners to construct a makeshift shelter.

On one evening in December 1944, there was a rare occurrence. A bomb fell in the refugee district right behind the Katsumiro brothel and started a fire. Part of the Katsumiro building was destroyed by the blast and caught fire from flying sparks. The women helped put out the fire with a bucket relay. They say that Miyako was the first to jump out of the air raid shelter and go to work putting out the fire.

At Jiqingli, the laundry and cleaning were all done by the female servants, but Miyako washed her own underwear, saying that she would take care of her own things by herself. She had such admirable aspects.

## ***Misako***

The second floor of the clinic was where the patients were hospitalized. Most of the women who were hospitalized were venereal disease patients. Visitors were prohibited in general, but I went once in my official capacity and visited the patients. The area had an unusual bad smell from the disinfectant mixed with the young women's body odor. That day was a public holiday, so the Korean women were wearing *jeogori*, the white traditional Korean clothing. They had gathered around the bed of the childish Misako from the Hananoya brothel, and were listening to records. One of them said, "Section chief, why don't you listen with us," and I went into the room. A pot of yellow chrysanthemums which one of the women had bought in town was at Misako's bedside. One woman who had come to visit Misako made a cup of precious Lipton tea only for me. She said she had received the tea from an air service officer.

Then another co-worker entered calling out Misako's name, but since I was there, she hurriedly bowed and went to the corner.

The records were all popular songs in Korean. Many of them had a piano accompaniment and sounded like familiar traditional Japanese popular songs. They did not draw my interest much. But I was attracted by one of them, a record called "Hasawol" (Summer April) by the singer Kim Gapja. This was a kind of folk song accompanied by a Korean hand drum. It seems it was a sad melody lamenting the sorrow of the nation's ruin. It must have belonged to Misako, because she said, "Section chief I will give this to you if you like it." I went back with the record.

I later had Assistant Director Kaneda write out the lyrics for me. "Hasawol" was an old folksong sung on Buddha's birthday on the 8th day of the 4th month of the lunar calendar.

When the war ended, I was suddenly transferred to the 6th Area Army's public relations office and I left the "Hasawol" record in my private room at Hankou. I don't know what happened to the record after that.

## ***Tamami***

There was an incident in which a woman from the Sanseiro brothel called Tamami, who was born in the city of Daegu in Korea and was only around 18 years old, committed suicide by jumping into the Yangtze River. Since she had been saying she wanted to die over and over for some time, the brothel owner was not very worried. But one day she left the house saying she was heading off to die and did not return even in the evening. Thinking that she may really have died, the brothel owner headed out to the Bund to look for her. He found Tamami standing aimlessly at the edge of the floating jetty at the 18th pier. At that time the Yangtze River was low, 20 meters lower than usual, so one had to walk down dozens of stone steps to get to the floating jetty.

When he said to her, “I am coming now. Don’t do anything stupid,” Tamami turned toward him and gave a big smile. The brothel owner thought then it was her usual ruse, but when he ran down the steps and was about to reach her, she quickly turned around and jumped into the muddy waters of the Yangtze River. She disappeared under the water and there was nothing he could do. The brothel owner came to the military logistics base to tell me this and he was annoyed at losing a woman to whom he had advanced money.

Tamami’s body was found much later in Yangtze.<sup>35</sup> The bodies of persons who had drowned were often found in Yangtze because it is located at a place where the river bends, six kilometers downstream from Hankou.

According to her co-workers, Tamami may have been suffering from tuberculosis. She was gradually growing thinner and finding it difficult to work. When one of her regulars saw another prostitute, Tamami became jealous and they quarreled. He never came to see her after that, and she thought she had been abandoned and was worried.

Yet I wonder if she really wanted to die at that time. I wonder if she would have turned back if a little more time had passed. But the brothel owner came running, and maybe she jumped in reflexively with no time to think, afraid she was going to be scolded if the brothel owner caught her. I could not help but have this thought.

## ***Misuzu***

In the late spring of 1945, the Wuhan Military Logistics Headquarters was relocated from Hankou to Wuchang. I moved to Wuchang following Commander Horie, and was given the positions of recreation section chief and barracks section chief. The women of Jiqingli sometimes visited me, crossing the Yangtze River. When it grew late and there were no more ferries, I would call the Hankou Military Logistics Base and ask the Kinjo Inn located nearby to let the women stay overnight.

A woman called Misuzu who was 22 or 23 years old, and who had previously worked at the Toseiro brothel, had paid off her debt, but there was no ship to take her back to Japan quickly. So she came to me, saying she wanted to work at a cafeteria or some other job. I introduced her to the military logistics base cafeteria in Wuchang. But she was a rather urbane woman, and the cafeteria owner soon became interested in her. A military police sergeant major who came to the cafeteria was also fond of her, and her situation became complicated.

<sup>35</sup> Presumably the name of a place along the Yangtze River.

One night, she was called to the table where the cafeteria owner and the sergeant major were drinking, and they gave her one or two drinks, but she said she had a headache and left the table. When she went back to her room and was about to fall asleep, the sergeant major came in, pretending to be drunk, and asked her if she had a cigarette. When she replied, "Help yourself, they are on top of the desk," he lit one up but made no move to leave. Nothing happened that night, but from that time he stalked her persistently. She couldn't put up with this anymore and consulted with the cafeteria owner, saying she wanted to move, and asked him to find her another room, but he laughed at her saying, "Can I come visit you?" maybe thinking he would take her on as his mistress.

One day, when Misuzu came into the cafeteria to work, the cafeteria owner's wife was talking to a maid who had worked there for a long time and was making insinuations about Misuzu, saying, "She had a bad upbringing, so you have to be on your guard," and she started looking at Misuzu coldly from that time.

One hot and humid night, on my way back from browsing at the bookstore in town, I passed in front of the cafeteria and saw Misuzu sitting on a bench in front cooling herself with a fan. She appeared lonely but when she looked at me, she smiled and bowed to me.

Once I returned to my room, which is a separate building, I took out my English-Chinese bilingual copy of *Toshi sambyakushu* (Three hundred Tang poems) and resumed reading it while using a dictionary. Then a guard entered, saying that someone had come to see me. I took a flashlight and returned to my office, which was pitch black because of the blackout order, but no one was there. When I sat down on my chair, thinking to take out another book from my desk drawer and return to my room, a woman came out from the dark corner of the room howling and crying and she clutched onto my knees. It was Misuzu. I could smell the captivating smell of the woman's hair. When I asked her "What happened?" she sobbed saying, "The child of a frog will always be a frog. (Like mother, like daughter.) No matter how hard we try, we can never escape from our predicament. This is how we are seen by the society."

My knees became wet from her tears. All I could do was to pacify her by putting my hand on her shoulder and saying, "You need to persevere. I will find another position for you before long." Yet she continued trembling her shoulders and crying.

Eventually she said, "I cannot return to that house no matter what. Tonight, I will stay at a friend's house. Please don't tell anyone where I have gone," and she left dejectedly.

Misuzu later moved to the military hospital cafeteria at Wuhan University in Wuchang, on top of the mountain. A short letter from her later arrived, written in poor handwriting. It said, "I am sorry for all the trouble I gave you, but I am doing well. I think I will somehow recover. Section chief, please look after your health."

One woman ran that cafeteria. When I went to report to the military headquarters, I happened to meet the proprietor. I asked her if Misuzu was all right, and she laughed saying, "There are many wolves on top of the mountain, but they restrain one another and somehow maintain peace among them."

In the war zone where men were starving for women, women were rare and precious. But beyond that. Misuzu had attractive eyes that drew attention. You might say she had *Bright Eyes and Misfortune*.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> The title of a work by the novelist Kan Kikuchi, which was also made into a movie.



## Chapter 5

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# Episodes at the Military Logistics Base

### ***First Lieutenant Koizumi Seeks Advice***

During my posting as the recreation section chief, I had to deal with various incidents that could only happen at military logistics bases. These included problems involving the comfort women or other things that occurred in the course of other duties related to military logistics. Looking back, some of these miserable stories and events seem only comical. Here are a few of these incidents just as I remember them.

One evening, First Lieutenant Koizumi, who was working as the adjutant of the arms depot, came to consult with me. He was an innocent young officer who had been a military cadet. He seemed hesitant to bring up the subject at first, but he finally began speaking as follows.

Rumiko, who works at the Toseiro brothel, is my younger sister's classmate. I met her here by chance. She is still very young, and I can't bear to see her fallen into such circumstances. Is there any way to send her back to Japan right away? She says she still owes money on her advance. Is there some way to pay that off in a lump sum? Could you please make some special arrangements?

I was moved by his youthful pure heart, but there was a restriction that the women had to pay back their advances from earnings with their own bodies. This constraint was utterly irrational, but I did not have the authority to give any special dispensations. Also, such stories were often fabrications. When I looked at her personal information form, it seems there were some discrepancies. I told him, "I understand your request," and I had him leave for the time being.

When I summoned Rumiko later on, she appeared to be a modest and naive young woman not yet 20 years old. She said First Lieutenant Koizumi had come to the brothel with his colleague on the way back from an arms depot officers' dinner party, but he was a virgin. His friend, who was a bad influence, brought him with the odd reasoning that it would be a shame for him to die without ever sleeping with a woman. But Koizumi said he did not want to have sex because he had left a fiancée in his hometown, and spent the night talking while lying down next to her. He visited several times after that, and he kissed her but never desired her body. She said that she and Koizumi came from the same hometown, so it was easy for them to talk, but she was ambiguous about his sister who was supposed to be her classmate.

I advised Rumiko, "You must fully thank the first lieutenant for his kindness," but she just made an uncertain disappointed expression. I wondered if Rumiko who was a prostitute would have preferred if the first lieutenant simply had sex with her like the regular customers. Perhaps, on the contrary, she was indignant with his attitude.

### ***Death during Sexual Intercourse***

This is an incident that occurred in the autumn of 1944. A sergeant major from the 58th Division, known as the Wide Division, which was stationed at Yingcheng, came to Hankou with a report. He spent the night at Jiqingli and died during sexual intercourse. Yingcheng is 80 kilometers west of



Hankou. It is a strategically important location in Hubei Province along the military route to Yichang, and the Wide Division's headquarters is located there.

A prostitute named Teruko at the Senshoro brothel had entertained the sergeant major. When he became ill, the brothel called the Wide Division's office and they sent a car right away and brought back the sergeant major, who had stopped moving. Because it was against the regulations for a noncommissioned officer to stay overnight, a great effort was made to hide the death from the military logistics base. But the incident was leaked by Teruko's co-workers, and rumors spread that a man had died during sexual intercourse.

When I went to the comfort facility and summoned Teruko, she said, "The sergeant major had come to visit several times before, but this time he just refused to leave, and it became nighttime. He seemed a little different than usual."

According to Teruko, the sergeant major just would not leave, and when she began to work on him with some seductive techniques, he suddenly made a strange sound like a groan. When she looked at him carefully, his eyes were dazed and unfocused. She was surprised, and when she got up, he fell forward onto her with his mouth half open. Saliva was dripping out of his mouth. Teruko carefully moved him to the side, ran to the counter, and told the head clerk what had happened.

Even though the sergeant major was still young, it seems he had a stroke. The Wide Division office brought him back right away, so she did not know what happened after that. After this incident, Teruko kept quiet and refused to ever talk about it. Teruko was a chubby woman who was born in Okayama Prefecture. She was 24 or 25 years old.

One day after a meeting of the division commanders, the Army decided to open a comfort facility in Yingcheng at the request of the Wide Division, and each of the brothels in Jiqingli sent one prostitute for two months at a time. When the prostitutes were being chosen secretly at the business association, Major Koyama of the freight depot called me on the phone. This was the first time that the major had telephoned me.

He said that the Matsumotoro brothel was planning to send the prostitute Chidori this time, but that Chidori was usually weak, and working on the frontlines would be too much for her. He asked if I could somehow have her excused, or if that were not possible, if I could have her sent much later.

Major Koyama was a very arrogant man who had a reputation for always throwing his weight around. It was rather comical that he made his request for this woman in a very humble and tearful voice. It was even more comical because Chidori, whom he said was frail, was short with dark skin and her features were contrary to her lovely name (which means plover)—she looked obviously robust. At any rate, he must have come at her request, and it seems they were very close. There are things between a man and a woman that cannot be understood from the outside.

My policy regarding the women was to never show favoritism regardless of who spoke to me, what they said, or where. If I were to misuse my authority, I would lose the trust of the brothel owners and comfort women and become unable to exercise leadership as the section chief.

I told the major that he should speak directly with the business association director about this matter and declined his request. I do not know what became of Chidori because I did not bother to ask the brothel owner.



## ***On-site Inspection***

Sergeant Sugano of the recreation section came to me and suggested we conduct a nighttime on-site inspection, since we had not done this for some time. This was on a hot and humid night.

Only commissioned officers and warrant officers were permitted to stay overnight at Jiqingli, but in rare cases, noncommissioned officers and soldiers who came to Hankou on official business spent the night against the rules. The military logistics base would occasionally conduct on-site inspections to enforce the rules. Because such inspections could not be carried out just with the noncommissioned officers in the recreation section, we would request assistance from noncommissioned officers from other sections. Many of them wanted to come along, saying that it was entertaining.

Our tactics were to go out after midnight and surround the brothels that were suspected of committing violations. We would prevent people from entering or leaving, and then inspect each of the rooms. The brothel owner or the head clerk would knock on each door and call out, "The military logistics base is conducting an on-site inspection," and the comfort women would come into the hallway with their crinkled sleeping wear on their naked bodies, clattering the floor with their sandals while holding the officers' jackets. We would confirm their ranks from the insignia on the collars and return the clothing, but there were rumors that they kept extra officers' jackets, so when necessary, we would have the women bring out the officers' swords, overcoats, or other evidence. Some officers would dejectedly yell at us, "Well done," for being interrupted in their sex acts. When a woman just wouldn't come out, the brothel owner would continue knocking and the woman might speak in a honeyed voice saying "Wait a moment. I will come now."

When we surrounded the Sanseiro brothel, which was pitch black because of the blackout order, we went up to the second floor shining our flashlights. A woman named Fumiya came out looking unkempt, wearing only a summer kimono.

I said to her, "What are you doing?"

"My customer left."

"Who was the customer?"

"He was a cadet."

I scolded her, saying "Were you sleeping even though your customer was leaving? Why didn't you see him off?" and when I turned around Fumiya followed me looking dejected.

When I asked the noncommissioned officer who was on guard, "Did a cadet just pass through here?" he answered, "No. No one has passed by."

Another noncommissioned officer said this was suspicious and entered Fumiya's room. He eventually came out carrying a soldier's sword and map case that were inside the bedding in the closet.

When I interrogated Fumiya saying, "That's strange. Where did the owner of this sword and map case go? You must have lied to me," she hung her head saying, "I don't know."

I pressed her further asking "How could you not know?" but she remained silent. When I opened up the map case, I found about 2,000 yuan in Central Reserve Bank of China notes and official documents addressed to the veterinary depot. Then another noncommissioned officer brought in a



local (a civilian) wearing Japanese clothing and the brothel owner turned pale and came in after him.

The noncommissioned officer explained, “The bathroom was pitch black and when I shined my flashlight this man was standing in the corner.”

I asked the man, “Who are you?”

“I am from the Central China Water and Power Company. I came because I had business with the brothel owner.”

“Really?”

The brothel owner nervously butted in, “It’s true. He is Mr. Mizuno from Central China Water and Power. He came because he has business with me.”

“That’s strange. Then where did the owner of this sword go?”

The noncommissioned officer who thought this was suspicious suddenly slapped the man on the cheek. He stumbled and then automatically stood at attention.

I said to him, “You bastard, you are a soldier. You must be from the veterinary depot.”

The man was silent, so the noncommissioned officer slapped him again, he stumbled, and once again snapped to attention.

I said to him “You must be the owner of this map case,” and asked him, “Why are you spending the night here?”

The soldier answered in a low voice, “I am sorry.” When I inquired, he explained that he had come to report to the main depot from the Yueyang branch of the veterinary depot, missed the evening ferry back to the office in Wuchang, and decided to spend the night at the comfort facility because he had no other choice.

Fumiya said she had the soldier spend the night in secret without telling the brothel owner, but the brothel owner also told me a boldfaced lie, so I issued work suspension orders for both of them.

Later, the brothel owner and the woman received their instructions and came to report at the military logistics base.

When I cautioned her saying, “Fumiya, you must not let soldiers go astray,” she remained silent and meekly bowed her head several times.

It was difficult for the on-site inspections to be perfect and catch every offense. I later heard that on that same night, a noncommissioned officer from the military logistics base was secretly spending the night at the brothel across the street from the Sanseiro brothel. He was surprised to learn of the inspection, escaped from the second-floor window, and jumped from the roof to the roof of the brothel next door.

Also, the business association’s assistant director, Kaneda, who was present during the on-site inspection, had a prior violation. He had hidden a man in a closet during a previous inspection. The man was a local and was thus prohibited from entering the comfort facilities. There was also an incident during the time of my predecessor, when a deserter who spent three days secretly in Jiqingli hidden by a prostitute named Katsuyo without the knowledge of the brothel owner was discovered. When the soldier was arrested, Katsuyo was also detained for several days by the military police for



having aided in the desertion.

## ***The Death of Park Kyung Do***

A simple Korean named Park Kyung Do who was around 50 years old came from Xiaogan, bought the rights to the Bukanro brothel, and began doing business.

For some reason, however, the prostitutes who had been at this brothel from before rebelled against the new owner. They all went on strike and refused to work. At the military logistics base, we asked the military police to detain them for three or four days as punishment. But the women's unity was strong, and they all went on a hunger strike. The military police were troubled by this and asked us to pick them up quickly, so I went to get them released to the military logistics base. The military police sergeant told the women, "The military logistics base section chief is worried about you, so he has gone to the trouble of coming here to get you released. You should do what he says from now on," but they did not answer. When the brothel owner hired rickshaws to bring them back, the women unsteadily ran off into the road.

I eventually found out that while Park had bought the rights to the establishment, with the women and furniture included, they had abandoned him because the previous owner was secretly manipulating them. Park had also slept with one of the women, so the others were angry and quarreled, and he lost control over the brothel. In this business, it was strictly taboo for the brothel owners and head clerks to sleep with the women.

In the end, I decided to send all these women to the front, in accordance with their requests.

Park said he wanted to return to Korea and bring back new women, so I issued a certificate for official travel and sent him back to Korea.

The following year, in January 1944, a telegram arrived at the military logistics base saying that Park was coming from Nanjing to Hankou by ship with ten other people. But we soon received another report that the ship they were on had been bombed by U.S. planes near Jiujiang and sank, and that everyone on board was missing. I asked the Akatsuki Unit (the headquarters for the anchorage) to investigate, but indeed Park's group were all lost. Later on, one local, a civilian, who happened to have been on that ship and who had been luckily saved, visited the military logistics base with information.

When he told me about the circumstances when the ship was sunk, he said that Park had yelled to him while clinging to a board that was floating away, saying, "I am from the comfort facility at Hankou. Please tell the section chief of the military logistics base about what happened," and that Park soon sank along with the board.

I also received official notification from the Akatsuki Unit, which said that Park and all the comfort women had died. The passenger list just said Park Kyung Do and 10 other people, so we never found out the names of the women he had brought.

The business association erected an altar in the comfort facility hall to mourn Park and the comfort women on January 29 and held a memorial service. The name Park Kyung Do was written on one of the plain wood mortuary tablets in the center, but we could only write "name unknown" on the 10 other tablets.

I wrote the eulogy, which was read by Lieutenant Colonel Fujii as the commander's representative, and floral wreaths were given by the military logistics base and the business association. Sutras were



chanted by the chief priest of Wuhan Temple and representatives from each of the brothels attended.

Park had a son who was around 10 years old. They said the boy went to Pier 18 at the Hankou Customs House every day, saying that his father would return. I guess he could not believe that his father had died. Even after the funeral was held, he would stand on the pier in the Bund in the cold mornings when sleet was falling, waiting for ships to come upstream. I felt gloomy when I heard about this.

Park's wife had nowhere to go, so I had her work in the comfort facilities' kitchen. I had a letter sent to Park's hometown to investigate the identities of the young women he had brought. There was no response, and we never found out who they were.

One day, when I was speaking with the business association director at his office during a daytime patrol, the owner of the Katsumiro brothel came running in with a pale face.

"A soldier has drawn his sword and is causing a disturbance," said the brothel owner.

When I went out to see what was happening, a sergeant who was drunk and staggering was holding his unsheathed sword while yelling in a loud voice.

When I yelled at him saying, "What are doing?" he saw my military logistics patrol armband and quickly sheathed his sword and saluted me.

I said to him, "You cannot come here drunk. Leave!" He said, "Yes" and obediently started to leave, but then suddenly stopped and complained. "First Lieutenant, I have come from the front lines to report, but even when I am not drunk the women will not play with me. I am not popular no matter what. Why is that?"

"You are drunk. And the women of Jiqingli are not attracted to boorish men who brandish their swords. Soldiers only take out their swords when they are charging, or to commit suicide."

He replied with a sober face, "Yes, I understand," stiffly saluted once again, and left.

The woman Mieko from the Katsumiro brothel who had received this sergeant repeatedly explained, "That man was drunk and persistent, so I didn't like him." He must have acted very vulgarly.

## **Movie *Chastity***

I heard there was a movie on the subject of preventing venereal disease called *Chastity* that was produced by the Navy, so I borrowed the five reels from the Navy Hospital. When we had good movies, the military logistics base's movie team would show them at the Navy Hospital as well, so the Hospital had goodwill toward us, and would lend us their movies when something unusual came.

After screening this movie *Chastity* at the military logistics base, we gathered the women at the park in Jiqingli and showed it to them at night. This movie showed what could be done to prevent venereal disease, starting from checking condoms for defects by blowing them full of air, and it showed a large erect penis that filled the entire screen being covered by hand with a huge condom. This stunned even the prostitutes, and they could not stop splitting their sides with laughter for some time.

The last reel presented the miserable end of people who were crippled by cerebral syphilis to let the viewers know the horrors of venereal disease, but we did not show this reel at the request of the army surgeon. He must have thought that the fear of the viewers would have been too intense. Also,





according to the army surgeon, there was a shortage of salvarsan for injections for the treatment of syphilis, and he was limiting its use at the comfort facilities as much as possible. That may be why there were rumors that the army surgeon's medicine was not effective. Some of the prostitutes requested tips because they secretly went to doctors in town for absurdly high-priced injections, and that required a lot of money.

Women who suffered from venereal disease were allowed to continue working once that disease regressed and could not be transmitted to others. This was because complete cure was difficult. If strict tests for bacteria were conducted at the epidemic prevention and water purification department, gonococci would be detected in almost all the women. Because it was difficult to replenish supplies of medicine, in practice, women who did not excrete thick pus were allowed to entertain customers provided that they used condoms and washed thoroughly.

While the use of condoms was mandatory, I later learned that a noncommissioned officer at the recreation section contracted gonorrhea and was secretly treated by the army surgeon. In the military, a bullet wound was regarded as a first class ailment, internal diseases were second class sicknesses, and venereal diseases were the most dishonorable third class illnesses.

Here is another incident about condoms. This was in the autumn of 1943.

The government-issued condoms used by the prostitutes gradually became scarce, and it was difficult to replenish them, so we were told to limit their use as much as possible. But condoms still had to be used to prevent disease, so having no other options, the used condoms were washed and then reused. The women collected them each time. The condoms were sterilized with disinfectant, dried in the shade, sprinkled with zinc powder, placed into packages, and distributed. A businessman appeared who wanted to operate this recycling plant, but in the end, it was operated directly by the comfort facilities business association. Coolies were used for the work. It was a strange sight to see the washed condoms drying in the shade held with clothespins to a net covering the entire ceiling.

Also, to ensure that all the customers at Jiqingli used condoms, in desperation, we came up with the measure of asking the women to suggest slogans that could be printed on posters. We required each of the women to submit at least two slogans, and said they were free to ask the soldiers who visited them for their ideas.

We collect 200 or 300 suggestions such as "*Wear an iron helmet when you attack.*" Military logistics base officers served as judges and selected the winners, and we awarded prizes for the 10 best slogans. These were printed on posters which were put up at the entrance of each brothel.

I also thought about seeking suggestions for a Jiqingli ballad and consulted with my superior, Lieutenant Colonel Fujii, but did not gain his consent. At the time, the following song was being sung at Jiqingli.

*You can tell when someone you like is coming.  
You can hear the sound of his shoes from three miles away.  
  
You can tell when someone you do not like is coming.  
Your head hurts from three days before.*

There were some songs about Jiqingli as well, but I have already forgotten them.

I later thought about printing a "Jiqingli newsletter" on a mimeograph with contributions from soldiers who came to the brothels and unedited comments from the women, but I became busy with



my duties as an adjutant during Operation Togo, so I was not able to do this either.

## ***Foundation Anniversary***

The anniversary of the foundation of Jiqingli was November 8, and it was a special holiday. There was an awards ceremony for outstanding comfort women in the morning, in the park at the back, and in addition to people from the military logistics base, officers from the Army General Staff office, the headquarters of the Guard Unit, and the military police squad were also invited. Army Surgeon Captain Osawa, who was in charge of medical treatment, presented the greetings as the representative of the military logistics base. Boxed lunches were served at noon, and each guest was given one decanter of sake.

This block was surrounded by a brick wall, so by closing the entrance, it became like a sealed-off compartment. In the autumn of 1944, the aerial bombing of urban districts had not yet begun.

A stage was set up on the second-floor hall of the business association building in the afternoon, and the comfort women from each brothel put on a variety show. There were many songs and dances led by women who had worked as geisha in Japan. On the Korean side as well, women who had been *kisaeng* (female entertainers) in Korea wore *jeogori*, which are traditional Korean dress, and one got down on one knee while the other stood and danced quietly. They looked very neat and clean wearing pure white jackets with a long wide strap tied on the right side of the chest hanging down. A woman playing a long hand drum sang the songs “Arirang Pass” and “Doraji Taryeong” in a low voice. The tunes were in Korean, so I did not understand their meaning, but they sounded very sad.

From around 3:00 p.m., we held something resembling an athletic meet back in the park. There was a game like watermelon splitting in which the players wore blindfolds, walked five steps forward and struck a barrel with a bamboo sword. No one else struck the barrel well, but I was able to hit it well, so everyone cheered. We then split into two teams, held relays, rolled balls with sticks, held three-legged races, etc. I was watching with the business association executives in the seats for the guests when a woman named Sakae from the Sankoro brothel suddenly came up and said, “Section chief, please run with me.” This was a candle run with a woman and a man on each team, and she said that the paper she had picked said the section chief was her partner. I reluctantly took this woman’s hand and ran with her while covering the flame of a candle with my palm to prevent it from going out, and we won third place. The mischievous person who pulled me into this even took a photograph of me running while holding the woman’s hand. I still have that time-worn photograph.

The comfort women brought various problems to the military logistics base as they sometimes disagreed, quarreled, and scuffled about competition regarding earnings among coworkers and became jealous of each other, and they would ask to be transferred to another brothel or sent to the front or to quit, but my policy was to not get very involved with the fights among the women. The women’s complaints were like “the king has donkey ears.”<sup>37</sup> It seemed they felt better just by voicing their complaints, and simply listening to them was practicing charity. To some extent, the women may have thought I just paid them lip service and could not be counted on, and they may have inwardly been resigned to this.

Sometimes women became too close, worked hard during the daytime, slept holding each other at night acting like lesbians, and paid from their own pockets without seeing any customers. The brothel owners gave up trying to interfere with this homosexuality, and when they threatened to split up

<sup>37</sup> A reference to the Greek fable about a king who tried to hide his big ears.

couples and send one of them to the front, the women would cry out, saying they would rather kill themselves, and were out of control. There were also bosses among the comfort women who behaved like mafia dons, and those who were malicious would bully the newcomers or conversely favor them excessively. These women were difficult to manage.

Nevertheless, I thought that with some of them, a path would open if I identified their vulnerabilities and treated them kindly. The women could go out on days other than public holidays with a pass from the business association director, but if they stayed out beyond the curfew, they would have to report to the military logistics base, get their pass stamped by the recreation section chief, and then return. On such occasions, rather than leaving this to the noncommissioned officers, I made an effort to ask how they were doing and otherwise talk with them in a friendly manner and learn the women's names. These women were made of flesh and blood after all and they were unexpectedly easily affected by kind words.

However, some of them were whores who had gone broke in Japan and come all the way to Hankou and thought "to hell with the section chief," and they were beyond our control. Even when we wanted to be good neighbors, I think we just could not get through to such women.

### ***Privately Established Comfort Facilities***

The comfort facilities of Hankou were viewed as extensions of brothels in Japan to some extent, but once you took even a step outside of the city of Hankou, or to the front, the conditions of the brothels also changed.

Units would advance to Hankou or pass through Hankou, and sometimes, they would temporarily remain behind, or their luggage could not all be carried with them when they advanced, so they would leave teams behind to supervise their luggage.

Handling these officers and men was a headache for the military logistics base when it came to discipline and supplying rations, and we had to supervise such units and urge them to move on as quickly as possible.

In the chapter "Hesitating to Go to the Front" of *The Voiceless Front*, Colonel Horie wrote about the conditions of such confusion in Yuezhou as follows.

When such conditions occurred, the military logistics base turned into a special command post that coerced the soldiers to continue fighting, with the threat of severe disciplinary action against those who would desert from the front. When I look back on this now, from that time the Army was already starting to degenerate... If you realize that the collapse inside the Army begins not from the front lines but rather from the rear, this observation naturally emerges.

It was around the summer of 1944. One day, when I was inspecting along the road from Wulipai to Wuchang on horseback, I saw a Japanese army sentry standing in front of the gate of a large house a bit away from the road about three kilometers from Wulipai. When I entered the gate, a first lieutenant came out and said that 40 men under him had remained as a luggage supervision team for a certain regiment of the Whale Division. When I looked inside the house, two or three rooms were filled with luggage. I cautioned him saying, "The conditions are very bad in this area so you must guard the luggage carefully. Also drill the soldiers solidly so they do not become idle." The first lieutenant replied, "I have positioned a lookout sentry as a guard on top of the mountain behind this

house, made a vegetable garden next to the house for the health and self-sufficiency of the soldiers, and I am drilling the soldiers every day.” I was relieved upon hearing this report and left. I made a point of dropping by from time to time when I patrolled this area thereafter.

One day in the autumn, when I was traveling on narrow paths in the fields and vegetable fields from around the Sanyan Bridge of the Wulipai-Changshadao area toward the Wulipai-Wuchang area, I saw one soldier standing in front of a house in a valley surrounded by hills. When I asked him what he was doing, he replied “This is a comfort facility.”

I asked him, “Which comfort facility?” He answered, “The comfort facility of the XX Unit.” When I noticed that it belonged to the luggage supervision team of the Whale Division, I got off my horse and entered the house, and a single Japanese woman came out. She was the kind of woman one often saw in this sort of business in central China and seemed to be quite shrewd. She was the madam. She said she was operating the comfort facility for the XX Unit with five or six Chinese prostitutes. I asked the madam various questions and learned that quite a few officers and men from units staying at the military logistics base came as customers and her business was prospering. As they say, “ignorance is bliss,” and I left feeling as if I had been bewitched by a fox. When I climbed up the hill, I saw the barracks of the luggage supervision team just below! While thinking they were clever to erect a comfort facility in a hidden valley just a few steps away from their barracks, I was stunned that I had been completely deceived when I questioned the first lieutenant the first time I came to their barracks. The first lieutenant hurriedly came up the hill, perhaps because of a report from the soldier. I said with disgust, “This luggage supervision team has a fine duty. This is the first time I have heard about supervising a comfort facility. Now I know why I thought your soldiers are susceptible to female charms.” The first lieutenant scratched his head and apologized, saying “I am doing this under orders from the regiment and I have no choice. The men of the supervisory team are not just spending all their time at the brothel.”

“What do you think? It is disreputable for a luggage supervision team to have a comfort facility. Why don’t you just disband it?”

“Without an order from the regiment, that cannot be done at the discretion of the team leader.”

“You must be receiving supplies from the freight depot. I trust you are not giving some of these to the comfort facility.”

“No. Absolutely not. The comfort facility is completely self-sufficient.”

Although I harshly reprimanded him saying, “If that is taking place, this supervision team will be expelled outside the military logistics base,” I could not immediately order the team’s eviction but I could not officially approve the facility either, so in the end I just showed my indecisiveness by turning a blind eye.

Several days later, when I was riding on a horse near dusk on a country road not very far from there, I met a single soldier. He had a small frame, appeared to be malnourished, and was wearing a dirty army uniform. He was unarmed and was wandering aimlessly.

I called out to him, “Hey. What are you doing?”

He answered “Yes,” but then began to mumble.

I questioned him further, “Which unit do you belong to? What are you doing here at this time of day?”

He unexpectedly replied, “I am from the XX Unit staying near the Sanyan Bridge. I am planning to go to the comfort facility over there.” The XX Unit had just arrived the day before, and I could only be amazed at his tremendous instinct in smelling out this comfort facility which was more than two kilometers away from the Sanyan Bridge, separated by hills and valleys, thickets, and difficult terrain. I sent him back towards the Sanyan Bridge screaming, “You idiot. You should not be visiting a comfort facility so close to sunset, hanging around in such a dangerous area without even wearing your sword. You will be carried away by bandits. Go back.”

## Lectures

There was a public holiday once a month at the comfort facilities. I wanted an opportunity to speak with the comfort women, and I would sometimes have them all gather and speak to them. Since moral training and serious military lectures would definitely not be favored, I spoke about the kabuki plays *Nozaki Mura no Osome Hisamatsu* (The love story of Osome and Hisamatsu of Nozaki Village) in the *Shinpan utazaimon* (The balladeer’s new tale) and *Hakata kojoro nami makura* (The pillow of waves of Hakata’s daughter).

Hisamatsu is intimate with Osome, but he wants to coolly abandon this relationship and get married with Omitsu. Hisamatsu is an egoistic man who only thinks about himself. Osome believes in love for love’s sake and wants to marry Hisamatsu, so she leaves her home, abandoning her parents and society. She has pure aspects that gain our empathy but on the other hand, she is also anti-social. Omitsu is self-sacrificing and gives up Hisamatsu to Osome, for the sake of Hisamatsu, whom she loves. But was Omitsu really unhappy? Isn’t there true human joy in Omitsu’s curtailing her love for Hisamatsu? Human joy is not found in just living a long and purposeless life. Humans cannot live alone. We seek meaning in life from the confidence and satisfaction that our acts are useful for others. There is some sort of karma among those who meet at the front, far away from our home countries, and we are certainly linked by some invisible thread. The soldiers are suffering, and I want you to be kind to the soldiers. This is what I said to them, but in the end my talk may have been a crafty way for a supervisory officer to present the logic of self-sacrifice and dedication. Yet it seems that the women listened faithfully to this deceptive story, perhaps because it seeped into the hearts of the simple women like a drug.

I actually wanted to speak in detail about the tragic loves of prostitutes in literature, such as Koharu in *Shinju ten no Amijima* (*The Love Suicides at Amijima*) by Chikamatsu Monzaemon and Marguerite in *Camille* by Alexandre Dumas fils, but I could not find the books that were necessary.

Nevertheless, these talks may have just been the product of my self-righteousness. I do not know the extent to which the message reached the women’s hearts. I feel that in the end, I was only dealing with the women at a distance. Even though I listened to their problems, I just comforted them with words and did not offer any fundamental solutions. As the war situation grew more intense, the passenger ships stopped their runs, and even when women had repaid their debts and wanted to return to Japan, I could not grant them their wishes. All I could do was to get them new jobs at the facilities’ cafeteria or persuade them to remain at their work for a while longer.

Relatively few of the women would take the step of visiting me, the section chief at the military logistics base, and that may have been because I was somehow grumpy and difficult to approach. I would not visit them as a customer because if I did that would have formed an equal relationship and too much familiarity. My thought was to remain at an arms’ length and treat all of the women equally.





After giving the women a lecture, I would usually chat with the brothel owners. I also wanted to hear the voices of the women directly, so I once chose a representative from each of the brothels and called the 20 women to the military logistics headquarters and listened to them. This is because I thought it would be easier for them to speak at the headquarters than at the comfort facilities. I did not invite the director of the business association or the brothel owners. From the military logistics base, Paymaster First Lieutenant Sakae Noguchi, two noncommissioned officers from the section, and I attended. This took place in the autumn of 1944. The women were reserved and did not speak much, but they did request that we prepare an air raid shelter for them, and I decided to do that right away. I also had accounting make arrangements with the freight depot to arrange the supply of soap, makeup, and absorbent cotton, which had become difficult to purchase. I proposed creating a reading room at Jiqingli, but the women said they did not have time to read. Rather than that, they wanted us to show one movie every month without fail. When the soldier on duty gave the women tea and sweet buns that we had sent from the canteen, they all began stirring restlessly, perhaps because this made them uncomfortable.

When I asked them, “What is wrong?” one of them answered, “Is it all right for us to smoke?” Because I do not smoke, I had not noticed their need.

Since I do not smoke, I do not really understand, but it seems that for people who do smoke, it is unbearable not to smoke for too long. In May 1946, the Army offered to supply one pack of cigarettes for each passenger on the repatriation ship returning from Shanghai to Hakata. But the prices were in Japanese yen and were not rounded. No one had Japanese yen, and at the military logistics base, the accounting office could not collect payments for cigarettes that had prices with fractional amounts and settle the transactions in the short time before disbanding, so we declined the supply of cigarettes. When we landed, the officers were paid 500 yen and the noncommissioned officers 300 yen. I received 200 yen more than the soldiers, so I asked the Army to deduct the required amount from my payment and purchased cigarettes for everyone in the 3rd company all at once, and had them distributed to all the soldiers free of charge. I think it was about 100 packs of cigarettes. The soldiers of the company said that I could use extra rice since I was returning to Tokyo, and everyone chipped in some of the rice they had been supplied and brought it to me, saying it was in exchange for the cigarettes. I benefitted from receiving the extra rice, and also from making the soldiers very happy.

I had planned to have another meeting with the women, selecting different representatives. I discussed this with First Lieutenant Noguchi and considered selecting the women who earned the most, the youngest women, or the women who always passed their health examinations and never missed work, but the aerial bombing intensified, we became busy with other tasks, and this turned out to be the only meeting. Nevertheless, I feel that this dialogue helped us understand each other's feelings and that cheerfulness returned to the women's faces.

The summer in Hankou was hot and humid, and people would joke that sparrows on the power lines would get burned and fall off, and that people from India would return to India to escape the summer heat. When I would go back to my room at night, touching the chair was like touching a heated stone, and I could not sleep at all on nights when there was no breeze. Because the comfort women had to work in closed rooms on these nights when it was difficult to sleep, despite the severe rationing of electric power, we tacitly permitted the use of one electric fan for each of them on the pretense of preventing prickly heat. This was the same level of treatment that was given to generals.

The comfort women were enrolled as a group in the Hankou National Defense Women's Association from the start, but that was only in name. In truth, they were looked down on as ladies of pleasure or



prostitutes, and almost never sat together with the other women. The military logistics base arranged separate seating, selected representatives, and had the comfort women wear *mompe* and kimono with cords to tuck up their sleeves when they attended memorial services and ceremonies for returning the war dead.

Around February 1945, the Hankou National Defense Women's Association announced a plan to assemble young Japanese women in the plaza and have them drill using bamboo spears, and there were negotiations for the comfort women of Jiqingli to also form a team. I contacted the Army General Staff office and decided to have the comfort women managed as civilian quasi-employees of the Army. In place of the bamboo spear drills, I had the army surgeon teach them skills such as how to wrap bandages, use slings, and stop bleeding, so that they would be useful as assistant nurses. I met with Chiyo Shindo, the chair of the Hankou National Defense Women's Association, to discuss and explain the Army's policy. The Chinese laughed scornfully at the National Defense Women's Association bamboo spear drills, which were held in broad daylight in the plaza.

### ***The Prostitutes of Liuheli***

There were comfort facilities (brothels) in Hankou aside from the military comfort facilities, and there were also streetwalkers.

Old Chinese financial cliques still had a presence in the French Quarter, and there were dance halls and other establishments for the wealthy, with high-class prostitutes wearing luxurious fur coats who were called "prostitutes for Westerners" loitering at the entrance of a hotel called the Zhina Fandian. Ordinary officers and soldiers had nothing to do with such facilities.

At night in the refugee quarter, which was dark because of the blackout order, young women with red lipstick would stand on the street corners calling out, "Come to my place," speaking Japanese with a Chinese accent. These were local streetwalkers called *yeji*. When the soldiers told them *buyao* (not interested), the streetwalkers would come over and hold on to their hands. There was a story about a soldier who contacted a virulent case of syphilis from a streetwalker and eventually had to have his penis cut off, so the soldiers were informed of such horrible cases and were strictly forbidden from approaching streetwalkers.

In addition to Jiqingli, there was a comfort facility with local prostitutes in Liuheli, a little further away from Jiqingli. There was also a navy comfort facility for naval personnel. I visited these comfort facilities as part of my work, and had discussions with the brothel owners about controlling communicable diseases.

The use of the comfort facility at Liuheli by soldiers was not officially approved, but the service was said to be good, so some soldiers apparently went there secretly. These were local prostitutes so there were beds in their rooms.

One day I went to Liuheli for some business and was speaking with the brothel owner, when a local prostitute who had some request for the brothel owner came out wearing a white jade orchid flower in her hair and silver earrings. I do not understand Chinese, so I just listened nearby without understanding what they were saying. She was a small beautiful woman with dark eyebrows, and she kept smiling. She seemed to be refined and gave a good impression. It was strange that such a woman was working at such a place.

I asked about her after she left, and the brothel owner explained that she had come from a wealthy

family but that the father had died suddenly, the family was ruined, her mother took ill, and her siblings were still young. She went out to work, but the income was not sufficient for the family, so she came to work here because she had no other choice.

I usually was not attracted to the feminine qualities of the women at Jiqingli, but for some reason, I felt attracted to this woman at Liuheli and thought about her from time to time. When I went to the municipal library to look up ancient Chinese documents regarding the stars, I saw two young maidens wearing black Chinese clothing looking at books about movies. When I wrote the names of Chinese movie actresses including Li Lihua, Wang Danfeng, and Chen Juanjuan on a piece of paper they were surprised and looked at me with wide sparkling eyes. I communicated with them about this and that in writing for a while and then left.

It seems that these maidens were still students. When I saw them, I thought about the young woman I had met at Liuheli. If her family circumstances had not suddenly changed, she might have been like these maidens. Perhaps her father's sudden death was also caused by the war.

Shen Fu's *Six Records of a Floating Life* was translated into Japanese by Haruo Sato and Shigeo Matsueda and published in the Iwanami Bunko series. This book depicts the author's yearning for his beloved dead wife, and the heart-rending emotions that are depicted are deeply moving. I bought the original Chinese version of this book published by Guangyi Publishing House at the used bookstore on Yangtze Street and read the Japanese and Chinese versions together, but that was difficult, so I soon gave up.

*I have been happy as your wife these twenty-three years. You have loved me and sympathized with me in everything, and never rejected me despite my faults. Having had for my husband an intimate friend like you, I have no regrets over this life. I have had warm cotton clothes, enough to eat, and a pleasant home. I have strolled among streams and rocks, at places like the Pavilion of the Waves and the Villa of Serenity. In the midst of life, I have been just like an Immortal. But a true Immortal must go through many incarnations before reaching enlightenment. Who could dare hope to become an Immortal in only one lifetime? In our eagerness for immortality, we have only incurred the wrath of the Creator, and brought on our troubles with our passion. Because you have loved me too much, I have had a short life!' Later she sobbed and spoke again.*

(The above passage is then repeated in the original Chinese).

I remembered the woman I had met at Liuheli several times and imagined what she would say if I met her again and gave her *Six Records of a Floating Life*. But I wondered what use it is to give a book to someone who is short of money, and about the sorrow of a woman who has no choice but to sell her body to men of the enemy country in order to live. Even if she smiled on the surface when facing Japanese, there must have been intense hostility deep in her heart. Hatred and regret that could not be soothed by a single book. And the miserable damage inflicted by war on the local residents.

I had the feeling that the gears of history had somehow gone off track, and were advancing the disaster of war all the way to this back region of China and wreaking havoc on the lives of innocent people, who hatefully called the Japanese "oriental devils." It made me think deeply about the cold-hearted cruelty of war itself, as the Japanese spread the disaster of war from one place to another while calling this a holy war for the peace of the East.

Yet I could not help but smile wryly at my own indulgence in secretly thinking I could be forgiven with such phony repentance. I spent busy days participating in Operation Togo and serving as an

adjutant at the Wuhan Military Logistics Base, among other things. I never had the opportunity to visit Liuheli again, but each time I looked at the Chinese original of *Six Records of a Floating Life* the image of this beautiful woman of Liuheli emerged in my mind.

I found Takeshiro Kuraishi's work, *To Young Readers*, at the Marugo used bookstore and bought it. This is a translation of Bing Xin's *Ji Xiao Du Zhe*. I then went to the Chinese used bookstore on Han Yi Street, purchased the original Chinese version, and began to read the two versions together. But *Six Records of a Floating Life* was a more appropriate book to give to the young woman from Liuheli.

## ***Officers and Restaurants***

Campaigning led to more active movements of military units, and the military logistics base had to be reorganized. While these campaigns were active offensives, at the same time they may have been a desperate struggle to escape from a bleak stalemate on the continent. At that time, the general situation of the war had already greatly turned against Japan.

The situation was that officers and soldiers could not anticipate those overall conditions, were thrown into the vortex of the campaigns, and were completely confused. At any rate, the war went on for too long, and as Commander Horie wrote, "the collapse inside the Army begins from the rear." One might say that as the human vice of war becomes chronic, the loosening of morale grows rampant inside the Army. Horie deplored officers' restaurants and the behavior of high-ranking officers at rear echelon military logistics bases, and he wrote about his concerns in his *The Voiceless Front*, as follows.

After the comfort facilities, the next problem was the restaurants. At the military logistics base, there was one officers' restaurant that was quite fine, which even had a few geisha. There were originally four officers' cafeterias at Hankou (including one serving Chinese cuisine), and I think that really should have been satisfactory for a war zone, but this restaurant was established at some point for the reason that these cafeterias were not enough for high-ranking officers, especially for the army division commanders who came to Hankou from the countryside.

While I knew it would be correct to throw the geisha out from this restaurant and turn it into an ordinary officers' cafeteria, I did not have the courage or the authority to do this, and when I think of this now, it was cowardly that all I could do was to open this restaurant to ordinary officers, instead of reserving it just for high-ranking officers. There were also two so-called luxury restaurants near the military headquarters, and these were used almost exclusively for personnel at the military headquarters. I was disgusted with how they received special treatment which was outrageous, with food supply and hygiene inspections of the female attendants that were different from those at the regular military logistics facilities. But there was nothing I could do because this was outside my jurisdiction.

Incidentally, these restaurants became a target of discontent for the regular officers, were always the source of discontent, and some army staff called for their closure. So the military headquarters finally let go of them and relocated them onto the military logistics base. While I did not refuse this, I accepted it under the conditions that they would not receive special treatment as in the past, and that they be opened to regular officers.

From time to time, I even took the senseless act of stopping by and inspecting the conditions at these restaurants when I rode on horseback through the suburbs. Before long, these restaurants were placed back under the military headquarters, perhaps because the military

headquarters felt inconvenienced, or because the restaurant owners cried and begged the headquarters for mercy. Just from looking at this one incident, one can infer the depravity of some of the high-ranking officers at that time.

Seeing the decadent behavior of such high-ranking officers, I could not help but lament the death in war of the former army commander General Osamu Tsukada, who carried on the graceful dignity of the warriors of old. Even with my lack of courage and authority, if the general, who was my classmate, were still alive, I would have been able to resolutely purge such behavior with his support.

In the chapter “Classmates” in his *The Voiceless Front*, Commander Horie wrote as follows about his encounters with 11th Army Commander Tsukada and his mournful feelings upon learning of Tsukada’s death during the war.

Classmates who ate the same food and lived together at Ichigaya-dai<sup>38</sup> for a year and a half near the end of the Russo-Japanese war, when we were so busy we barely had time to breathe, still associated without formality, addressing one another as close friends even after several years, with some promoted to general while others remained a captain or a major without any promotions. I think such closeness cannot be understood by an outsider.

Incidentally, in November 1942, on my way to taking up my post at Hankou, I stopped at Nanjing, and the first classmate I met was Lieutenant General Masakazu Kawabe, who was chief of the General Staff office of the Expeditionary Army. When I greeted him saying, “I came here with the intention that this will be my final tour of duty,” Kawabe replied with the rather instructive comment, “For us our final tour of duty is whenever and wherever.” I suppose his words were expressing the samurai spirit of being prepared to die at any place and any time, but what had come out of my mouth was very light-hearted. What I meant was that after once having entered the reserves, I had returned to the army with the outbreak of war, after fretting about forced idleness during peacetime while I served at a school in Japan for five years. I had then finally managed to serve in the war zone and had come all the way here for what I thought was my final tour of duty for the army. This difference in meaning created an odd atmosphere, and when we finished talking and I went to leave, Kawabe added, “Tsukada is in Hankou.”

The Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters was a unit directly under the command of the Army, and the day after I took up my post, I went to the military headquarters of the 11th Army (nicknamed the “Backbone Army”) to report to its commander, Lieutenant General Osamu Tsukada. Because I was in the formation next to Tsukada’s while we were at the military academy, I often saw his outspoken nature, and would laugh saying “Oh, it’s Tsukada yelping and squealing again.” I heard that thereafter he worked hard at building his character as he gained rank and gradually realized the dignity of a fine general, but this was the first time I had stood before him in many years. After he finished receiving my report in a stern and dignified manner he smiled and said, “Come over here,” and carried a chair to the window, so I followed him. Outside the window, the autumn sunlight was gently shining on the high treetops with leaves that had not yet fallen.

Tsukada said, “I came here with my mask on.”

<sup>38</sup> Ichigaya-dai was where the Japanese Army’s military academy was located.



That is the first thing he said. Thinking of how he had served in important headquarters posts since the war broke out as the chief of staff of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army, the deputy chief of staff, and the chief of staff of the Southern Expeditionary Army, and was finally facing Chongqing as the vanguard on the frontlines of the continent, I said, "You have been tasked with a heavy duty here as well! I have you covered in the rear, so do your best!"

Tsukada replied, "Yes. I am counting on you."

I told him, "Last year we had a reunion of classmates in Tokyo. N, H, and S were there. It was really fun."

"I have been away from Tokyo ever since the war began, so I have not been able to attend the reunions in recent years. A few years ago, I often saw S from your unit at the military officers' club."

In this way, the two of us went back to being classmates and spoke freely about our teachers at the military academy and rumors of old friends for a while. When we parted, he said in a very friendly tone, "Come to the officers' quarters when you have a chance. We can speak at length."

Several days later I received an order to concurrently take up the duty of providing security for Hankou, and went to the military headquarters to report to the commander. But this time, my predecessor, Major General K, was with me, so I listened to Tsukada solemnly receive my report, thank K for his service as head of security, and give encouraging instructions to me as K's successor, and we left.

But I never imagined this would be the last time we would ever meet! Two or three days later in December 1942, Tsukada went to the general headquarters in Nanjing to discuss the next campaign, and on his way back he went missing while flying over the Dabie Mountains. The Army began a search for the commander while pushing forward with the Dabie Mountains campaign. I also sent an infantry company under my command that participated in the search. A few days later, elements of a Japanese army unit discovered an aircraft and the corpses of all its passengers, which were tragically burned completely black, near a small hamlet in a valley of the Dabie Mountains near Hankou. According to the villagers, a Chinese army platoon shot at the aircraft carrying the army commander, which was flying at a low altitude. The aircraft was unfortunately hit, immediately caught fire, and tragically crashed. Because of the intense flames, the Chinese soldiers could not approach the plane and just let it burn.

The remains of Commander Tsukada, Campaign Operations Chief Takeshi Fujiwara, and an adjutant accompanying Tsukada were carried to Hankou. A few days later the remains of these three were enshrined at the plaza inside the military headquarters, and a somber memorial service was held. Each division chief, representatives of the army staff, and the units stationed in Hankou lined up in front of where the remains were enshrined. Supreme Commander Hata<sup>39</sup> also attended this ceremony, and I still clearly remember his sad face at that time. I think he must have been filled with the sense of having lost an important right-hand man.

I took command of the units, attending as the most senior unit commander in Hankou, and

<sup>39</sup> "Supreme Commander" is used here in the sense of the highest-ranking field commander of the Japanese Army in China, Field Marshal Shunroku Hata.

after the Supreme Commander offered incense and prayers, I gave the order “Present arms,” and I saluted with my sword three times. While giving this salute I prayed deep in my heart, “May the spirit of the general rest in peace forever, and may he grant divine protection to our holy war.”

When I entered the shrine room for the general’s remains inside the military headquarters two or three days after the ceremony and prayed, I saw a mourning poem from chief of the General Staff office Kawabe on the wall next to the remains. I presume Kawabe dearly wanted to attend the memorial service for his classmate Tsukada, but he was placed in charge in Nanjing to fill in for the Supreme Commander, who was attending the ceremony, so it seems Kawabe wrote and sent this poem. In this poem there was a phrase about the “death of a great star,” and I do not know what the author’s intention was, but it reminded me of the poem “Stars Fall in the Autumn Wind on Wuzhang Plain.” Of course, even seeing him in the most favorable light, I did not think that General Tsukada was such a great man as to be compared to Zhuge Liang. Yet one could imagine there was some sort of historical connection between General Tsukada and Zhuge Liang. General Tsukada, who as our vanguard, conquered the land of Jingzhou, which was the setting of the struggle for supremacy among the Three Kingdoms, and loftily looked with contempt at the nearby enemy capital of Chongqing, which is part of Sichuan. Zhuge Liang advanced up the Han River to a corner of Zhongyuan from his base in Sichuan several times and covertly watched over Luoyang, the capital of Wei in South Central China in the 3rd century. Even though the scale of events is smaller, it is not inappropriate to compare General Tsukada to Zhuge Liang in the way he was spiritually committed to carry out the holy war and his faithfulness in dying for his country. Zhuge Liang called himself self-restrained and General Tsukada was famous for being restrained in the field. It goes without saying that the meaning of self-restrained as used by Zhuge Liang was much broader, compared with General Tsukada.

It is generally acknowledged that compared with the generals during the First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War, the dignity of high-ranking military officers as commanders in this war had markedly declined, but General Tsukada was acutely aware of this point and ceaselessly worked to improve behavior and fight corrupt practices. Therefore, even at the front, the general never attended a banquet serviced by female attendants. When Tsukada was the chief of staff of the Southern Expeditionary Army, a division commander asked him, “Sir, why don’t you attend such functions once in a while.” Tsukada defiantly replied, “This is a holy war” and the division commander left silently, at a loss for words. Similarly, at Hankou as well, I heard that when a geisha unexpectedly was at a banquet that Tsukada happened to be attending, he refused to let her pour his sake. This sounds rather extreme, but the general’s real intention was just an expression of his dearest wish to put down existing abuses as I mentioned before. After the general passed away, whenever I saw the unpardonable depravity of some high-ranking officers, I was always hit with the feeling, “I wish the general was still with us.”

The officers’ restaurants that were run as Hankou Military Logistics Base facilities were Gion, Suigetsu, and Ginyoku, and the Chinese restaurant Fusokaku, and these were all located near or around the intersection of Jiangnan Road and Zhongshan Road. Gion, Suigetsu, and Ginyoku each had female attendants (there were both geisha and prostitutes), and there were 24 or 25 of them. More than half of them were at Gion. Because Fusokaku was configured exclusively as a restaurant, it had no female attendants, and it was open to noncommissioned officers during the day.

The female attendants earned less money than the comfort women, so there were few applicants for their posts. It was always difficult to replace them, and we persuaded Fujiko, Hideya, and other women from the comfort facilities who had experience as geisha in Japan to change their positions and become female attendants.

The female attendants were considered to have higher status than the comfort women, and the phrase “comfort women” had a dishonorable sound to it, so I asked the military headquarters to change the designations to “Type A female attendant” and “Type B female attendant,” but this was not approved.

Gion was near the main street, Zhongshan Road, and it had been remodeled to resemble a restaurant in Japan. If the sliding doors were removed on the second floor, it became a large hall, and this was often used for banquets and other gatherings. There were more than 10 geisha ranging from older matrons to young geisha girls. The geisha from this establishment would go to the hospital to entertain the soldiers and perform the Gion dance song and other songs, but the owner must have been close with someone high up in the military, and he was somewhat arrogant and bossy.

Suigetsu was on a back alley accessed by going down Hualou Street from Jiangnan Road. It was a cozy Japanese-style tea house restaurant, and had a small Japanese garden. There were stepping stones leading up to the entrance; the area was covered by gravel and black bamboo. The owner was apparently a politician type and one of a group of Japanese nationals who had lived in Hankou from before the Second Sino-Japanese War. A drunk officer once took out his sword and cut the black bamboo, and a member of the group cursed the young officer’s violent behavior.

The young cadets and first and second lieutenants would go to Gion, where there were many young geisha, while the higher-ranking officers would shack up at Suigetsu.

Ginyoku was an officers’ restaurant that was formerly called Seifuso, but it was not profitable and became hard up, perhaps because there were no decent geisha there. The 5th Air Army’s Hayabusa Unit wanted to have its own officers’ restaurant, and we were told by the Army General Staff office to build another restaurant in Hankou. I opposed increasing the number of officers’ restaurants and submitted my opinion that if they wanted a new restaurant, they should purchase an existing establishment and remodel it. As a result, they bought the struggling Seifuso and renamed it Ginyoku (silver wings), which was suitable for aviators. The owner went to Japan to bring back geisha, but when he returned, the 5th Air Army’s headquarters, under the command of Lieutenant General Takuma Shimoyama, had moved out of Hankou to Nanjing, so this did not work out.

Aside from the restaurants that were military logistics base facilities, the military headquarters had the luxury restaurants Akebono and Kiraku in the Japanese quarter under the direct control of the adjutant’s office. These were exclusively for field-grade officers and had excellent facilities. Akebono had a red carpet at its entrance with gold-leafed folding screens, and was so luxurious that one wondered how there was such a fine restaurant in the war zone. As one would expect, there was criticism about the existence of this restaurant, and there was once a request to transfer it to the military logistics base, possibly because it was difficult to maintain and operate. At that time, I visited Akebono in my role as the recreation section chief and held discussions with the owner, but the restaurant was returned to the direct control of the adjutant’s office, perhaps because the military logistics base maintained strict control over it; the owner was vexed and went crying to the military headquarters. The geisha here also received little income and the adjutant’s office had difficulty replacing them. The parties involved came to me for consultations. I said that without a way of supplementing their income, such as paying fixed salaries, it would be difficult to replace the geisha.

The geisha at Akebono and Kiraku worked as attendants who catered to high-ranking officers at the military headquarters and division commanders, and there were rumors that if other officers were found to have been entertained by them, those officers would be sent off to the front, so run-of-the-mill officers did not come by at all. The madam was also proud and would not associate with ordinary officers. It cannot be denied that the upper echelons of the Army had cozy relations with such restaurants.

In the Japanese quarter, near the military headquarters, there was an officers' cafeteria called Taikoen. This was a military logistics facility, but the female owner would constantly visit the military headquarters, and in practice, it was only used by people from the military headquarters. Before the war ended, this female owner transferred the rights to this restaurant to an employee and promptly returned to Japan. She must have obtained military information from the top ranks, judged that Japan would lose, and made her getaway.

At the beginning of the summer of 1944, Staff Officer Masanobu Tsuji from Section 3 of the General Headquarters came to inspect the facilities at the Hankou Military Logistics Base. He was eccentric as rumored. He did not enter the comfort facilities even once. He carefully looked around the kitchens and bathrooms of the unit barracks and officers' quarters and told us to keep them cleaner. We had arranged for him to have dinner at Gion after his inspection, but he went back without stopping there.

We then worked to improve how the barracks were cleaned, and arranged a fly-catching competition among the soldiers who lived there, offering a leave pass as bait. They said that there were a large number of flies in cool places, contrary to what they had initially expected. It was easy to catch 50 or 60 flies. Some soldiers were shrewd and had the flies caught by coolies.

The Army soon issued instructions telling people to refrain from indulging in excessive entertainment. The instructions said to "limit pleasure in order to reinforce fighting power," so at the Soldier's Cafeteria, sake was limited to one serving per soldier in the daytime, and at the officer's restaurants, sake was restricted to two servings per officer at nighttime. The geisha were prohibited from playing *shamisen*,<sup>40</sup> drums and other musical instruments. The boisterous merrymaking disappeared, and it was as if the restaurants had temporarily turned off their lights.

The women came to the military logistics base and complained, "What are geisha to do if we are prohibited from playing the *shamisen* and the drums?"

At one point, the young geisha from Gion learned to play the harmonica and played songs such as "Roei no uta" (Field encampment song) and "Gunkan koshinkyoku" ( Battleship march). But that did not last for long. The merrymaking at the restaurants returned, perhaps because Staff Officer Tsuji was transferred to 33rd Army on the frontlines of the Burma campaign.

The Hankou Military Logistics Base had the reputation of having the best military logistics facilities among the important military logistics bases that belonged to the China Expeditionary Army, including those at Nanjing, Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, Qingdao, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong. Possibly for that reason, an endless stream of military observers came to visit us, while I do not know how much of an effect the visits had, or if they were necessary. The Hankou Military Logistics Base was attached to the 11th Army; during campaigns, part of the Base was attached to the 34th Army as the Wuhan Military Logistics Base. Above the 11th Army was the 6th Area Army, and the China Expeditionary Army was at the top, serving as the General Headquarters.

<sup>40</sup> A stringed musical instrument that is plucked.

Incidentally, military logistics bases were directly supervised by the Army General Staff office, with the adjutant's office being the most frequent user of the facilities. The accounting office was responsible for the supply of goods, the army surgeons' office was in charge of maintaining hygiene and the prevention of epidemics, and the legal office worked to deter crimes. So inspectors came one after another; one day, it would be the Army General Staff office army surgeons' office, while on another day, it would be the turn of the Area Army accounting office. Moreover, before the inspections by general officers, such as the head of the army surgeons' office or the deputy chief of staff, there would be prior inspections by field-grade officers, and we had to deal with them as well. There was also a custom of providing entertainment at an officers' restaurant each time an inspection ended. This was troublesome work. I avoided attending these banquets as much as possible, but I often had to attend in my positions as the adjutant and the section chief.

Also, once or twice each month, there was a custom of holding a banquet at the Chinese restaurant Fusokaku to thank entertainment groups for their service prior to their return to Japan. Officers from the adjutant's office and the General Staff office with the ranks of second lieutenant, first lieutenant and captain were invited. The military headquarters had a large number of high-ranking officers, and the salaries of the lower ranking officers were surprisingly low in comparison, and it seems that the junior officers very much looked forward to these banquets.





## Chapter 6

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# Recreation

### ***Wholesome Recreation***

In the chapter “Recreation in the War Zone,” in his *The Voiceless Front*, Commander Horie wrote about wholesome forms of recreation as follows.

Next comes the subject of wholesome recreation. I will mostly write about the new facilities that were established after I took up my post. It goes without saying that those who were directly in charge of this were Lieutenant Colonel F, Captain M, Second Lieutenant N, and the soldiers under them.

The first facility we worked on was the Soldiers’ Amusement Park. Fortunately, there was an appropriate open plot of land in the middle of the city of Hankou near the Soldiers’ Cafeteria. We obtained this land, dug out a pond, built an artificial hill, planted plums, peaches, cherries, forsythia and other flowering trees and shrubs to make a small garden, and created an amusement park with a tea house and pachinko, stacked daruma dolls, and other amusements in buildings nearby. When I visited after it opened, the Amusement Park was bustling with soldiers, who were the customers. On the veranda overlooking the garden, there were several pairs of soldiers playing go and shogi while sipping coffee. In the garden, there were a few flowers blooming since we had planted trees that were already budding. I thought we had made a fine facility and I felt very cheerful. I wanted to eventually release fish in the pond for fishing and make use of an adjacent empty five-story concrete building for roller skating and archery, but the campaigns began, and additional construction was cancelled.

The next facility was the theater. We initially had the Military Logistics Theater, which could hold about 1,000 people. It was on the fifth floor of the Military Logistics Headquarters building, but we lost that theater because the building was transferred to the newly established Hankou Kaikosha Army Club, and the Military Logistics Headquarters was relocated. Following a difficult search for a building, we were finally able to obtain the confiscated building that formerly housed the British Club. We remodeled this as the Military Logistics Theater, capable of holding about 1,000 people, and used it every month for memorial services for fallen heroes, and for plays, movies, performances by entertainment groups from Japan, and other events. It had all the required equipment including a stage, elevated walkway, lighting equipment, and audience seats, and was fit to be the best theater in all of Hankou. Every time we obtained a good film, we showed it to the officers and soldiers, and on summer nights, the big lawn area served as a convenient outdoor movie theater where we showed movies to large numbers of men in the cool of the evening. I still remember one evening, when Second Lieutenant N—who had graduated from the university and was serving as the presenter—was giving an explanation, he suddenly began speaking on and on in fluent German, mystifying soldiers who had been assembled from the countryside.

Around this time, we also established the Soldiers’ Library. This was an excellent library with over 5,000 books which occupied part of the third floor adjacent to the Soldiers’ Cafeteria for which Major O, who was in charge of accounting, agreed to disburse a large sum of money,

moved by the zeal of Captain Y. Along with books for general readers, this library had some rather unusual books for Hankou, including a substantial number of specialized academic texts as well as rare books from the Huachung University collection, and also books donated by Japanese. I dropped by this library from time to time, but there were never more than 10 men reading the books, which was entirely unsatisfactory. When I asked some of the men reading at the library for their opinions about why so few soldiers used it, one of them said, “The books are a bit too highbrow.” Another replied, “I would like to see a few more humorous novels.” But I also heard there were one or two officers who would come to the library and arduously study technical books on industry and economics every time they went out, so I thought the library was good after all. I consulted with Captain Y about how we could somehow draw a large number of officers and soldiers to the library, but the war ended with this situation unchanged.

We also focused on organizing events and the military logistics center frequently organized kendo, sumo, baseball, and variety show competitions. We worked to provide entertainment for a large number of officers and soldiers. Among these, the most popular were baseball and variety shows. The baseball games were played with hard rubber balls. We built four baseball fields at Zhongshan Park and held a tournament over two days. Twenty-eight teams participated, and the competitions were lively, with many local Japanese residents and Chinese watching along with officers and soldiers.

There were a substantial number of former university players including pitcher M, who had attended Keio University, and many of the games were worth watching. In particular, the Military Headquarters Team had three or four university players, and they had bodies that were far better developed than those of the players on the other teams. Everyone thought they would win, but in the final game, the players of the Auxiliary Transport Unit’s team, who were all short, skillfully beat them and received thunderous applause. The awards ceremony was just like that for a regular game, but large 1.8-liter bottles of sake were given as prizes for hitting home runs. While the Military Headquarters Team lost, one of their big university players walked off carrying two bottles of sake, a rare sight one could only see at a baseball game in the war zone.

The variety show competition was splendid, and was held on the occasion of the completion of the Military Logistics Hall. The number of performers was greater than when the variety shows were held at the former Military Logistics Theater, and things were held on a grand scale. The competition was really impressive, with dozens of performances ranging from individual presentations of popular songs, folk songs, narrative songs, and magic performances, to unit theater groups. The excitement of the audience of officers and soldiers, who were so numerous that they spilled outside the hall, was really amazing. The competition was scheduled to run from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., but it ran past midnight into the early morning hours. The audience showed no signs of retiring. They cheered enthusiastically, and the show finally ended after 1:00 a.m. The performances were soldiers’ plays so they were mostly popular stories such as *Nanbuzaka yuki no wakare* (Parting in the snow at Nanbuzaka), *Shiranami gonin otoko* (Five men of the white waves), and *Yaji Kita dochu* (Travel chronicles of Yaji and Kita), and there were some professional actors, so many of the plays were not amateur productions. When a beautiful woman who was being carried along the elevated walkway swaying in a palanquin happened to fall out of the palanquin into the audience seats below because the bearers were careless, the woman kept both of her hands placed in

between her thighs without losing her composure, and the audience applauded loudly. One simple man was terribly impressed and cried out, “He is really a professional kabuki actor who plays female roles.” In the end, the performers from the automobile depot, which had two professional actors from the Shinkokugeki Theater Troupe, won the competition.

When I saw the leader of the winning group after the show ended to present their award, the beautiful actor who played Asano Naganori’s dowager in the show had become a disheveled man with thinning hair as his wig was slipping, and his face blotched with left-over white makeup. He snapped to attention and sternly gave me a military salute. I gave him the award, just barely managing to keep myself from bursting into laughter.

One year, in the spring, an exhibition of paintings by officers and soldiers of the Backbone Army was held at the Hankou Art Gallery. It was organized by an arts association of the Japanese residents of Hankou, with sponsorship from the military headquarters and the military logistics base. This exhibition was for the entire army there, which had nearly 200,000 officers and soldiers, so it was a grand show with over 100 works of art. Professional artists had also been drafted, so there was no shortage of great art works. I can still remember paintings of a horse falling on some battlefield and of the view from the opposite side of the Yangtze River looking towards Yichang. It seems there were also two special landscape paintings by Taro Okamoto, who served on the jury for the exhibition, and had been drafted into the military headquarters. After the exhibition ended, aside from those works that were hung at the military headquarters and the Kaikosha Army Club, more than 20 of the best works of art were given to the Military Logistics Headquarters. The pictures were hung in a room on the second floor of the Military Logistics Hall that became a simple art gallery, and displayed for regular officers and soldiers. When Supreme Commander Hata subsequently visited Hankou, he heard about this and asked to see these works, so I brought him to this room and the field marshal looked over each of the works with great interest. When he stood in front of the largest painting in the room, which was a work by the master artist Murota showing the China Expeditionary Army entering Hankou, he was deeply moved when he saw himself in the picture majestically taking the first steps into the Bund at that time, followed by Chief of the General Staff Office Kawabe with his rough Kaiser mustache. The field marshal remarked, “Oh, there’s Kawabe,” and was in such good spirits that he made a gesture of tightly twisting his own mustache. Upon leaving, he said, “Thank you very much” and I felt very humble at being thanked by the field marshal.

As I have just explained in detail, we went to great efforts to arrange recreation for the officers and soldiers. I am proud to say we stood out among the many Imperial Army military logistics bases. But if someone were to ask me if I were proud at having come all the way to Hankou to devote myself to such work at my advanced age, I wouldn’t know what to say.

It is not unreasonable that I, who had spent most of my time at the military academies in Ichigaya-dai and Aoyama-gahara researching military tactics such as “offense or defense,” “envelopment or breakthrough,” and “attack from the right or from the left,” and who had been an instructor overseeing such research at Ichigaya-dai, felt deeply sentimental when serving as the military logistics commander for Yuezhou.

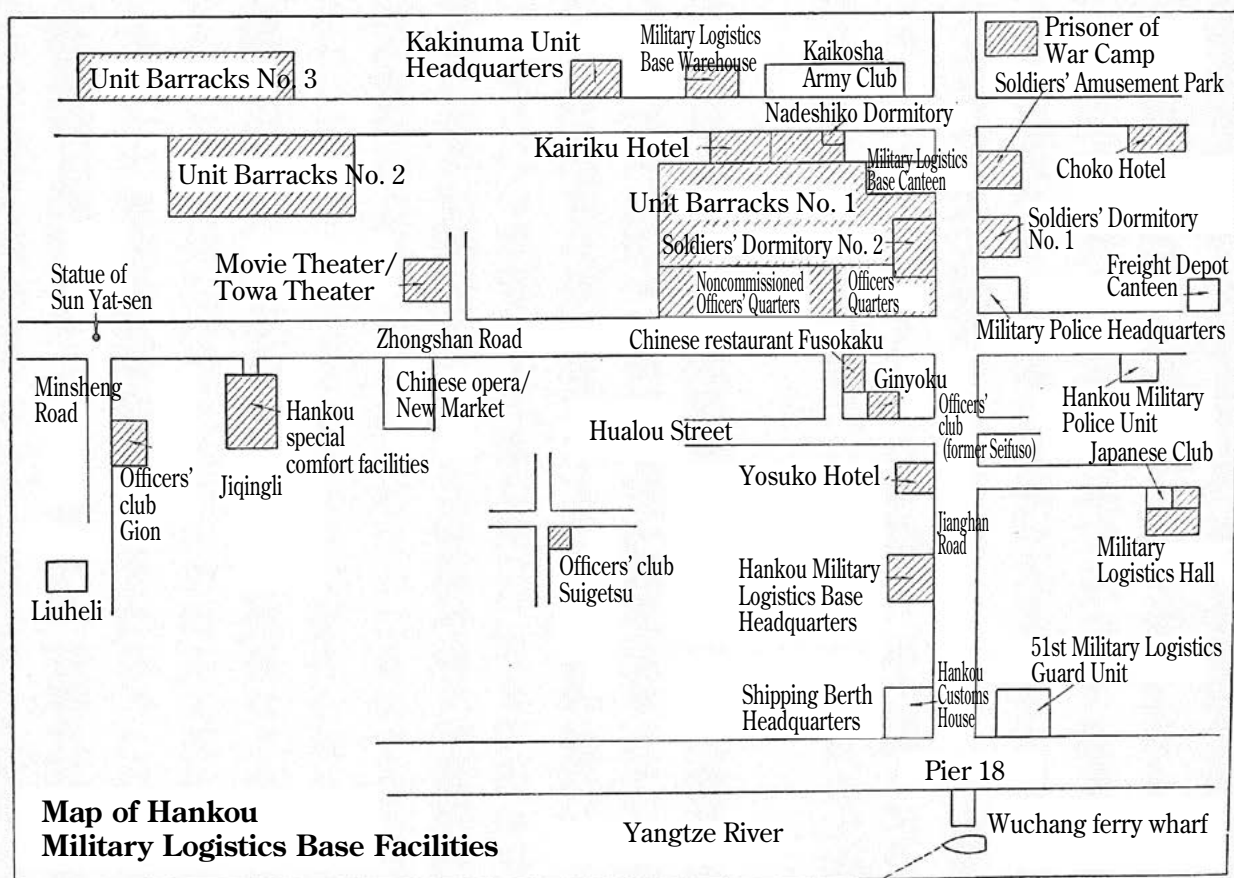
*Ah, I spend my entire days transporting food supplies and ammunition. Without even drawing my sword. On the road, warriors are said to go down.*

However, transporting food supplies and ammunition was directly linked to the movement of the Army, so I still managed to make myself content with this task. But the management of the recreational facilities was an activity that was so distant from the movement of the Army that my disappointment was understandable. Yet, when the Army was engaged in large-scale, long-term campaigns, failing to carefully manage even activities in these areas could result in unforeseen failures in the movement of the Army. Here lie the complexities and difficulties of modern long-term campaigning. That is also precisely the reason why I devoted my earnest efforts with a bit of pride to this thankless task, which warriors do not consider manly.

## ***Soldiers' Amusement Park***

The Soldiers' Amusement Park, which I worked on as part of my efforts to promote wholesome forms of recreation, was at the intersection of Zhongshan Road and Jiangnan Road. The Soldiers' Library was on the third floor of Soldiers' Dormitory No. 1, which was on the same block. (The Military Logistics Theater was started a little later.) Of course, all of these facilities and military logistics events were made possible with cooperation from the military construction team and officers at the relevant military logistics sections.

The Soldiers' Amusement Park was built on a plot of land measuring about 1,650 square meters. We dug a pond, created a circuit-style garden around the pond, built a tearoom, and arranged a stacked daruma doll game, a shooting gallery, a ring toss, and other games. The prizes were all food vouchers, but the extra prizes for the stacked daruma doll game and shooting gallery were toys such as Chinese earthenware children's dolls, and figures shaped like cocks and dogs. While these were childish prizes, they had an innocence to them and were surprisingly well liked by the soldiers.



Source: Seikichi Yamada, "Bukan Heitan", *Tosho Shuppansha*, 1978.

The tearoom served rice crackers, sweet buns, deep-fried cookies and sometimes sweet red bean soup with rice cake or red bean soup, but the servings of rice cake had only two or three rice flour dumplings, and the bean soup had only 10 or so adzuki beans.

The tea was free, and simple reading material such as the *Wuhan Continental News* and weekly magazines were available. There were also games such as go and shogi, but mahjong sets were not provided.

The garden (recreation grounds) was planted with trees in blossom and shrubs such as plum, peach, forsythia, sappanwood, southern magnolia, crepe myrtle and oleander, as well as seasonal flowers. Pigeons came to make their homes near the stone path, and pecked at breadcrumbs thrown by the soldiers.

There were also Korean birds called magpies with white at the base of their wings. The birds had been caught and were being kept there. I thought about keeping a monkey and had my interpreter try to locate one, but there were no monkeys to be found. The pond that was dug in the garden did not become a fishing pond, but it did have carp and Crucian carp that had been released there. We had plans to make an archery range and a skating rink in the future, but those plans were all abandoned as campaigns began and the situation worsened.

I think Commander Horie instructed us to keep birds and to plant flowering trees and plants in the Soldiers' Amusement Park because he liked small birds and flowers. His *The Voiceless Front* has two chapters entitled "Small Birds and the Military Logistics Base" and "Flowers and the Military Logistics Base." Horie was interested in the small birds and flowers of Hankou. After Operation Togo ended, the main force of the Hankou Military Logistics Base was withdrawn from Yueyang, and the Wuhan Military Logistics Headquarters was relocated from Hankou to Wuchang. I then went to Wuchang, as part of the headquarters. I borrowed illustrated reference books about birds and plants to learn their proper names. The following quotation is from "Small Birds and the Military Logistics Base" in Horie's *The Voiceless Front*.

Birds seek trees to live in, and flocks of birds move from forest to forest. Our Wuchang barracks were at the base of Yanzhi Mountain, and there were many trees growing densely from the slope of that mountain to its peak. Birds would constantly pass, coming from a forest around Huachung University to the north and from a small thicket remaining at Sheshan Mountain to the south. They played in our forest and entertained us beyond measure. When I woke up in the morning, I could hear small birds chirping above my head. While I listened with rapt attention while lying in my bed and hearing the beautiful sounds, a few small birds would come to the window frame and play. Every day after dinner, I would walk through the forest following small birds and their songs, and the number of different kinds of birds was countless. Just among those I still remember, I identified shrikes, Japanese blue magpies, crested myna, flycatchers, chickadees, long-tailed tits, wrens, thrushes, bulbuls, sparrow, and buntings. However, I have some doubts as to whether these birds correctly correspond to their Japanese names.

In relating his memories about birds, Commander Horie writes about an incident when he spent seven months stationed at the Yuezhou Military Logistics Base during Operation Togo. They were in need of fuel for cooking, and a logging squad went out every day to the base of the mountain at the shore of Dongting Lake. When they went to cut trees in a forest near a farmhouse and negotiated with the head of the farm, the man said he understood how they needed to cut trees, but added that



he would be sad to no longer hear the calls of the small birds. The commander was moved by the old man's regrets, stopped the cutting, and instructed the squad to fell trees deeper inside the forest. This episode was typical of the commander.

Also, in the chapter "Flowers and the Military Logistics Base," Horie describes the seasonal flowers around Hankou. He mentions plums, cherries, peaches, rape blossoms, willows, southern magnolias, lilacs, crepe myrtles, oleanders, and chrysanthemums. He also writes about creating the flower beds at the barracks as follows.

When our unit, the main force of the headquarters, moved to Yanzhi Mountain in Wuchang, there was a 660-square-meter vegetable field right there, and I had this divided into sections for each team to grow as many flowers as they liked. During their free time, the soldiers from each team planted seeds distributed by the unit, as well as seeds that they sought here and there, and they carefully cultivated and grew the flowers. From early summer this already became a wonderful flower field, with flowers of all different colors blooming including poppies, corn flowers, morning glories, canna lilies, and cosmos. The soldiers went out to their respective allotments in the mornings, evenings, and at lunch break. They gave the plants water and fertilizer, compared their flowers with those of the other teams, and enjoyed watching them grow.

As I looked over the soldiers who were enchanted by the beauty of the flowers, standing still, and forgetting that they were at war, I thought that the mental state (described in the Lotus Sutra) where "jeweled trees abound in flowers and fruit where living beings enjoy themselves at ease" must be like this. I secretly expected that if the men could diligently devote themselves to their military duties and interact with the Japanese residents and Chinese people with this pure beautiful heart—my unit had many opportunities to come into contact with Japanese residents and Chinese people—then the true meaning of the holy war that we have been calling for might finally be realized.

There was a flower shop near the military logistics base with red heart lilies, cluster amaryllis, and other wildflowers not carried by Japanese florists being sold in pots. I often visited this shop to sketch these wildflowers, using colored pencils on the postcards I sent to my children. The owner of the flower shop wrote out the Chinese names of flowers such as Hosta and red garlic on my sketches for me. There were cute twin girls at this house, around three years old. I said how cute they were, which made their mother happy, and often joked that "Both adults and children are the same." Chinese women are usually not sociable, but if you praise their children, they are very happy.

### ***The Military Logistics Hall***

The Hankou Military Logistics Base formerly had a theater with seating for around 1,000 people on the fifth floor of a building. The building was later transferred to the Kaikosha Army Club. Going up and down the stairs was inconvenient after all, and the theater was extremely dangerous, when you considering the possible damage from air raids. So the military logistics base thought about constructing a new theater. After looking at a variety of buildings, the decision was made to renovate the dance hall at the British Hankou Club in the British Concession as the theater for the Military Logistics Base. There was a large lawn next to this building, which was very convenient since it could be used as a place to assemble during air raids. Commander Horie writes about this in the chapter "My Students," in his *The Voiceless Front*.

During my long military career, I taught for four years at the military academy and for eight years at eight schools outside the military, so I had a very large number of students. I met several of them in the war zone in central China and felt nostalgic.

*Various commanders, staff officers, lower ranking officers and soldiers. Many of the students served as Imperial shields.*

I will write first about my former students from the military academy. These were from the 33rd to the 37th graduating classes, and were already active as unit commanders and division staff officers. Major H from the 33rd graduating class was a deputy adjutant at the Hankou Military Headquarters. He was an interesting officer who was rather intelligent and had some unconventional and sophisticated aspects to his personality. He also wholeheartedly agreed with the military logistic base's effort to promote wholesome forms of recreation, and spared no effort in mobilizing each office within the military headquarters to help the military logistics base. When we were constructing the Military Logistics Hall to provide recreation to the officers and soldiers, we greatly depended on H's efforts in the decision that led the former British Club building, which others also wanted, to be provided for use by the Military Logistics Headquarters. He always made arrangements to support me, an old commander, both behind the scenes and openly, and to make me look good when there were gatherings and ceremonies.

I consulted several books on the construction of theaters and also consulted with the Army Construction Team. An ideal hall with a capacity of 1,000 people was completed at the end of 1943. The renovation expenses were 40,000 yen in Japanese currency. Engineer Nagase from the military headquarters' construction team was in charge of the renovation plans, and it was a shame that he died in the war before the Military Logistics Hall was completed.

The first show took place on November 26, 1943. It featured an entertainment group from Gifu Prefecture. Shortly after that, the 11th Army Marching Band gave a performance to celebrate the opening of the hall. The marching band played the "Yangtze River Song." This was a song with lyrics by the "Yangtze General" played over the music of a Chinese folk song. The lyrics appeared in the paper *Sozen'ei* (Vanguard) published by the 11th Army Journalism Team.

*Vast and long, gentle light fills the Yangtze River. / On my green field, pleasant fragrance of rice flowers. / Since the war of Asian development was launched, lights in happy homes returned. / Comrades and my wife, flow through spring of a thousand miles.*

The "Yangtze General" was a pseudonym for the 11th Army's commander, Lieutenant General Isamu Yokoyama.

The lyrics to "Yangtze River Melody," which were also written by the "Yangtze General," were printed in *Sozen'ei* in the spring of 1943 after a campaign in Jiangbei had ended. The music was composed and performed by the 11th Army Marching Band. Since this was also attributed to the "Yangtze General," it must have been written by Yokoyama.

*We won, we won, on the north of the Yangtze River. / The time was February, rain and snow. / Stepping across muddy roads and creeks. / We annihilated the raiding army. / We won, we won, on the north of the Yangtze River. / Quick, quick, go, go, vanguard.*

The 11th Army Marching Band was said to have been formed in the middle of the Second Sino-Japanese War. They performed about once a month, and played wind instrument music. Their

repertoire included “Aikoku koshinkyoku” (Patriotic march), the Chinese songs “He ri jun zai lai” (When Will You Return?) and “Yu guang qu” (Song of the Fishermen), songs expressing nostalgia for Japan such as “Echigo jishi” (Echigo lion’s song), “Rokudan” (Six-column tune), and “Chidori no kyoku” (Song of the plover), and sometimes “Shinnai no nagashi” (Strolling musician theatrical music), as well as Bizet’s *L’Arlésienne*, Verdi’s *La Traviata*, and Chopin’s Polonaise No. 3.

The author of *Rikugun gungakutaishi* (History of the army marching band), Tsunemitsu Yamaguchi, died in May 1977. In response to my inquiries, Mr. Yamaguchi’s wife asked Yushiro Isoda, who was the leader of the 11th Army Marching Band featured in this book, and who still resides in Kyushu, about the band’s repertoire. Isoda was transferred to serve as the leader of the 16th Army Marching Band in Java in July 1942. His successor, Yosoharu Okada, died seven years ago. Isoda let me know that my passages about the band’s songs were correct and also that the song “He ri jun zai lai” (When will you return?) had not been banned. In addition to the regular performances by the Army Marching Band, there was a memorial service at the Military Logistics Theater prior to the return of the remains of fallen heroes on the 15th of each month. These services were led in turn by the chief priests of Japanese temples in Hankou. They came from the Higashi and Nishi Honganji temples, the Rinzaï Sect, the Shingon Sect, and the Nichiren Sect, and recited sutras. The ceremonies were conducted in an impressive manner and were attended by many people from units stationed in Hankou and by Japanese officials and people who lived there. The 11th Army Marching Band would sometimes appear and perform funeral marches.

The Reverend Usaburo Shimura, a pastor at the Hankou Church of the United Church of Christ in Japan, also attended these memorial services every time. As the recreation section chief, I was invited to the Christmas service at his church in December 1943. I asked Commander Horie for his permission and attended. When I was sitting in the guest seats with Navy Lieutenant Masakatsu Okada, who was a Christian, an announcement was made to the assembled children that there would later be a talk by First Lieutenant Yamada of the military logistics base late. So I had to present a version of the story in which the *qin* player Bo Ya, of Lute Platform, stops playing his instrument.<sup>41</sup> This was a tale that has nothing to do with Christianity. I was given red and white *mochi* cakes and I left. Because this service was held at a church during the war, it included the ceremonial bow toward the Imperial Palace and prayers for victory in the war.

Films were frequently shown at the Military Logistics Theater by the military logistics movie team. We also sometimes rented out the theater when it was not in use so that other units could host events.

The Military Logistics Theater had a splendid dark red curtain. This curtain was made by the local Matsukawaya Kimono Shop. There was a large Hankou Military Logistics Base emblem, which was a chrysanthemum and water pattern on an equilateral triangle, embroidered in gold and silver thread in the center of the curtain, which was really elegant. The Matsukawaya Kimono Shop apparently asked the commander for permission to include their name on the curtain as the maker, and the commander casually asked me about this, but in the end, I refused.

There was a hallway on the outside of the audience seats, which was arranged so it could also be used as a stage for performances. On hot humid summer nights, we showed movies outdoors so that people could enjoy the cool of the evening. The screen was hung from the veranda, and the lawn in the garden was used as an outside seating area. Second Lieutenant N, who served as the presenter and appears in the commander’s memoirs, was Second Lieutenant Nakanishi from the recreation

<sup>41</sup> The story about Bo Ya, a musician who played a zither-like instrument called the *qin*, dates from the Warring States Period in China. Bo Ya played his instrument in a place called Lute Platform.

section, who was in charge of the events. Nakanishi later told me it was an exaggeration that he spoke fluent German.

The oil painting *Military Commander Hata Triumphantly Entering Wuhan*, by the great painter Toyoshiro Murota, which measured 162 cm x 112 cm, hung prominently on the second floor of the Military Logistics Hall. There were many other works displayed as well, including some shown at the Backbone Army's Painting Exhibition, so it was like a small art museum. The area was opened to the public only on Sundays.

### ***The Military Logistics Base's Movie Team***

The military logistics base's movie team was under the command of the recreation section chief and went to each of the units stationed at Hankou. The team had two portable movie projectors made in Japan. Private First-Class Oda, who was a movie projectionist before he was drafted, was in charge. The team showed movies at least 10 times per month, following orders from the military.

In addition to visiting the units stationed at Hankou, the team also went out to show movies at the three Army hospitals in Hankou, the barracks for units in transit, the special comfort facilities, the prisoner of war camp, and sometimes the military police squad and the Navy hospital.

They usually showed movies about once every two months to the main units stationed at Hankou. The team showed a six-reel modern drama, a six-reel historical drama, a one-reel cultural film, and two reels of news as requested by each unit. They would generally finish around 11:30 p.m. and after they cleaned up, it would be nearly 1:00 a.m. The movie projectors were then loaded into a small truck. It felt somehow empty and eerie in the middle of the night, under the bright moonlight, to drive back through town. The municipality looked like a ruined ghost town because of the blackout order. So, sometimes, when the shows took too long, they would secretly skip one of the reels and the audience would not notice.

The movies were distributed by China Film Company. These included *Daibosatsu toge* (Daibosatsu pass), *Tasogare no machi* (Town at twilight), *Tsubasa no gaika* (The triumphant song of the wings), *Otoko no hanamichi* (A man's flower road), *Yuki no jyohenge* (An actor's revenge), *Aiki minami e tobu* (Our planes fly south), *Muhomatsu no issho* (*The Life of Matsu the Untamed*), *Sugata Sanshiro* (Sanshiro Sugata), and *Jiro monogatari* (The tale of Jiro). Particularly popular were the handsome Kazuo Hasegawa in *A Man's Flower Road*, the young man who excelled at judo in *Sanshiro Sugata*, and the deep passion demonstrated by the earnest rickshaw driver played by Tsumasaburo Bando in *The Life of Matsu the Untamed*. These films for general audiences, which were very entertaining, were especially popular among the soldiers.

When the branch for the Shayangzhen campaign withdrew, I became the Wuhan Military Logistics Base adjutant. The movie team showed *The Life of Matsu the Untamed* day after day, in the open space at the barracks compound for the soldiers headed to the front, to the units that were in transit. Some soldiers said they saw the same movie three times and that they were very happy because now they could die without any regrets.

Near the end of 1944, the "Japan News" newsreel showed images of a train station where children were leaving for evacuation to the countryside. There were mothers saying goodbye to their small children, fathers waving small Japanese flags, and the faces of children who looked like they were about to cry. A letter which happened to arrive from my wife said that my own two young children—my daughter in fifth grade and my son in third grade—were being evacuated to Shimosuwa in

Nagano Prefecture. I wondered what sort of place they were going to. So, I watched this news film with a feeling of deep sympathy.

At the next Wuhan poetry circle, I wrote the following poems about the evacuated school children.

*I heard that two of my children, went off to far away Shinano.<sup>42</sup>*

*I wonder if it is lonely at my old home.*

*May the grass and trees of the fields of Shinano, console my children who live away from home.*

However, my children did not go to Shimosuwa as originally planned. They went to Yumoto Onsen on the east coast of Fukushima Prefecture at the end of August. I received a letter from my daughter, who was settled at an inn called Yamagataya, which arrived wet in the autumn rain.

*Cold autumn, I long for Yumoto in Iwaki, where my children live away from home.*

*I long for Yumoto in a place called Iwaki, where my young children whom I have not seen for three years live.*

Later a letter arrived from my home in Tokyo which included a letter from my second son at his evacuation destination. Visits by parents were permitted sequentially, and the order of visits was determined by having the children draw lots.

He wrote:

Mother, how are you? I am fine, so do not worry. This is the order for the visits. I had bad luck in the drawing, so the order turned out this way. I am sorry. But auntie is sick, so a late visit is probably better. I hear that she is very sick. I am always praying to God that she will get better soon. Please come to visit right away after she gets better because I am eagerly looking forward to your visit. Take care of yourself. Goodbye.

The sick aunt was my wife's older sister, who lived together with us. She passed away in January 1945. When spring came my wife went to visit our children at Yumoto where they were evacuated together with our youngest daughter, who was five years old. They stayed at the Yamagataya Inn, where my daughter was staying, and met the children. It was early July when I received a letter that the four of them wrote together that night. In response, I wrote and sent them the following poems.

*My wife and children wrote me, saying they met for the first time in a while, at an inn at a hot springs in Tohoku.*

*The joy of my wife seeing her children, and of my children seeing their mother, is completely seeped into their letter.*

*The katakana letters by my youngest are misshapen. She was said to be asleep, being held by her big sister.*

My oldest son, who was in the first year of junior high school, was a student mobilized for work at the Nakajima Aircraft Factory in Ogikubo,<sup>43</sup> but he had caught a cold and his fever would not subside, so he was staying at home in bed. My wife was suffering in Japan, where there was a shortage of goods, with a sick child, fearing the air raids day after day, and our younger children had been evacuated away from their home. I was so far away and could not do anything to help them. The six members of my family were living far apart, and I did not know if the day would ever come when we would meet

<sup>42</sup> Shinano is the old name for Nagano prefecture.

<sup>43</sup> Ogikubo is a neighborhood in western Tokyo.



again. All I could do was to pray for my family's safety.

We once showed a movie at the Army hospital, which was at Wuhan University. It was a hot summer evening. When we set up the screen at an open space on campus and began playing the film, the air raid siren sounded. The patients who could walk went to the designated air raid shelter, and the patients who could not walk were carried to the shelter on stretchers by nurses. I remained outside, listening to the alerts, together with the officers from the General Affairs Section. It seems enemy aircraft were circling above the Yangtze River, and the alert was not called off for a long time. As a result, we eventually cancelled the movie showing. I felt very sorry for the patients who were looking forward to the movies, but such things are normal in the war zone. No one complained, perhaps because they were resigned to this.

Another time, when we went to the Hankou 1st Army Hospital to show a movie, I met Hospital Director Hotta and Army Surgeon Major Uematsu, who had taken care of me when I was hospitalized. When we met, they specially requested that we arrange a place inside the city for the nurses to drop by and rest when they went out. I spoke with Commander Horie as soon as I returned, received permission from the Army General Staff Office, and planned the opening of a rest station for Army nurses.

We were given a room on a lower floor of the Kairiku Hotel, which was the military logistics base officers' quarters, and named it *the Nadeshiko*<sup>44</sup> (Carnations) Dormitory. We equipped this room with newspapers, magazines, paperback books, and confiscated old records, and later placed a small organ in one corner, and we had a sofa for the drawing room, so nurses could relax at leisure here when they went out. Mr. Shichiji of the Kairiku Hotel actively cooperated. He provided coffee, black tea, cake and sometimes sweet bean soup with rice cake. When I went to look one Sunday, I saw red and white cosmos flowers in a vase. I asked the nurses who were there, and they said these were flowers that had been blooming in the rear garden of the hospital. A nurse was also using the organ to play hymns and the song "Sakura, sakura" and other children's songs. I later placed paperback books on the small bookshelf. These included:

*Manji (Quicksand)* by Junichiro Tanizaki

*Kuwa no mi* (Mulberries) by Miekichi Suzuki

*Nakamura Kenkichi kashu* (Collected poems of Kenkichi Nakamura)

*Rojin senshu* (Selected works of Lu Xun)

*Mugen hoyo* (The infinite embrace) by Kosaku Takii

*Nogiku no haka* (Grave of the wild chrysanthemum) by Sachiyo Ito

*Gan (The Wild Geese)* by Ogai Mori

*Rumania nikki (A Roumanian Diary)* by Hans Carossa

*Anderusen dowashu* (Collection of Andersen's children's stories)

*Kurisuchina Rozecchi shisho* (Christina Rossetti anthology)

## ***Hankou Prisoner of War Camp***

The Hankou Prisoner of War Camp, which was under the jurisdiction of the military logistics base, was located at the end of Jiangnan Road. It had six two-story brick buildings, and there was a sign that read "Hankou Public Security Reserve Unit" at the gate. The term "prisoner of war" was not officially used, probably from the stance that the Second Sino-Japanese War was an undeclared war. Some

<sup>44</sup> Nadeshiko, also known as carnations or pinks, is a symbolic reference to Japanese women.

of the prisoners were very young because when prisoners were being escorted from the front after campaigns ended, a few would escape, and farmers and homeless children who were not soldiers would be caught to make the numbers match. The prisoners included field-grade officers who were more than 50 years old, as well as women who were officers' wives rather than female soldiers, and even some children. They were organized into companies to form Public Security Reserve Units, given identification numbers in Japanese, and roll calls were taken. The prisoners were neatly dressed and lined up in order. They mostly went out to perform labor for the units stationed at Hankou and were used for various other tasks, such as working at the military logistics farm and making rope and chairs inside the camp. There were usually around 800 prisoners. The prisoner headcount would double immediately after campaigns, and a platoon from the 51st Military Logistics Guard Unit was assigned to watch over them.

After the Jiangbei Campaign was over, we temporarily kept Division Commander Wang Jingzai, who had been captured, in a separate building. Also, after the Battle of Changde, the number of prisoners rose to over 2,000. Cases of salmonella infections appeared one after another, and seven or eight of the prisoners died. There were signs that salmonella was becoming rampant, so many of the patients were segregated in the Yangtze district, and efforts were made to prevent an epidemic, which was avoided. Some of the prisoners sent to the Yangtze district were released there.

I was asked by the head of the prisoner of war camp, Captain Horie,<sup>45</sup> to send the military logistics base movie team from time to time to pacify the prisoners. We borrowed *Chunjian yihen* (Springtime remorse), *Eikoku Kuzururu no Hi* (The day England collapsed), *Hawai Maree oki kaisen* (The war at sea from Hawaii to Malaya) and other movies from the China Film Company. *Springtime Remorse* was a Chinese version of *Noroshi wa Shanghai ni agaru* (Signal fires of Shanghai). This was a Japanese-Chinese production with Tsumasaburo Bando and the Chinese actors Xi Mei, Li Lihua and Danfeng Wong. It was an unusual film about Shinsaku Takasugi's trip to Shanghai. *The Day England Collapsed* was about the Battle of Hong Kong and was produced by Daiei Film Company. *The War at Sea from Hawaii to Malaya* was produced by Toho Company. When we showed this film, one Chinese prisoner, who was an officer captured in the Battle of Changde, told me he was amazed again at the power of the Japanese Army that he saw with his own eyes in this documentary. He did not understand that what he saw were tricks that were made possible by the director Eiji Tsuburaya using special effects.

We also borrowed Chinese films including *Mulan Enlisted*, *New Spider Cave*, *The Famous Star*, *The Fisher Maiden*, *Autumn Song*, and *Narcissus Beauty* from the China Film Company and showed these films. *New Spider Cave* is a movie version of part of the story *Saiyuki* (Journey to the West). There is a scene where Son Goku (Sun Wukong) turns himself into a dove and peeps at witches who are bathing, which is very erotic. This was like a striptease as the witches remove their clothes one after another, become naked, and soak in the water, with a closeup of their backs. Captain Horie later told me "You should select more subdued movies because it is troublesome if the prisoners get excited and cannot sleep after the movies. *The Famous Star* and *Narcissus Beauty* were domestic tragedies like the old Shochiku films in which a maid becomes pregnant and is abandoned by her young master, falls into prostitution, and then meets the young master once again. Many of the movies were tear jerkers. These films for the masses were particularly popular among the prisoners.

We put up pillars in the middle of the 100 square meter open space inside the compound, hung the movie screen, and had the prisoners watch the films from both sides of the screen, so half of the prisoners were watching mirror images of the films. On movie days, the prisoners were released

<sup>45</sup> Presumably no relation to Colonel Horie.

from work early, spread straw mats, crouched, and waited for the military logistics truck to arrive, smiling like children. When the night wind blew, the screen would waver, and the picture would ripple. Looking up on some nights, the sky was filled with shining bright stars, and sometimes five searchlights cut across the sky.

The prisoners were made to play basketball and other sports, and on the national day of the Republic of China, October 10, the prisoners held a variety show. We sometimes invited Chinese opera actors from the New Market and had them perform.

To pacify the prisoners, we lent out local records and Chinese novels such as *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Water Margin*, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and *Journey to the West*, and allowed the prisoners to read the pro-Japanese daily Chinese newspaper *Dachubao*. Because China is a literate country, some of the educated prisoners greatly enjoyed borrowing these books and reading the newspaper. The *Catalog of Beijing Opera Stars* included color illustrations of Chinese opera makeup, and when I picked it up after it was lent to a prisoner, I was surprised to see that the prisoner had made a cover for the book and handled it with great care. This was in stark contrast to how books from the Soldiers' Library were sometimes lost or returned badly damaged when we lent them to rural branch organizations.

When we assigned prisoners to work for units stationed at Hankou, they often escaped. Because the lookouts and the guards were responsible for the escaped prisoners, the missing prisoners were generally reported as having died from illness. However, the number of prisoners escaping gradually declined as we improved their wages, showed movies, provided other entertainment, and came up with other diversions.

The prisoners were used to prepare the site for the Soldiers' Amusement Park, dig ponds, plant trees that would blossom, and to build the air raid shelter at the back of the comfort facilities. As often as possible, I went out for inspections when they finished their work. When they worked for the military logistics base, I would have one cigarette distributed to each of the prisoners, and the prisoners were very happy.

In September 1945, officers from the occupying Chinese army carried out an on-site inspection of the prisoner of war camp. They pointed out no illegalities, and conversely were almost thankful for the good management. The efforts by Captain Horie, First Lieutenant Higoshi, and the successive heads of the camp to improve the treatment of the prisoners were recognized. At the Hankou Military Logistics Base, there were no incidents of abuse of prisoners or other war crimes whatsoever.

After the war, when the tables turned and we became prisoners of war, and were held in the Yangtze district, I once walked through the city of Hankou together with my orderly to report to the military headquarters. I was instructed to salute Chinese officers of my rank or above, but I saluted sentries of course, and every Chinese soldier I met. One Chinese man on a street corner called out to me, but I did not understand Chinese, so I just smiled. That man called out to people passing by and a crowd immediately surrounded me, and I thought I was in trouble, but it would not be correct to run away either, so I just stood there. The Chinese man seemed to be making some appeal to the crowd. It seems he had no ulterior motives and I was eventually let go. I said "thank you" in Chinese and left.

My orderly later said that man may have been one of the prisoners at the camp. He appeared to be friendly, and the people who were listening to him did not show me any hostility. Perhaps he was saying that this Japanese soldier was a good man.

## *The Towa Theater*

At the Towa Theater, which was the only Japanese movie theater in Hankou, 90 percent of the customers were soldiers. After the Military Logistics Theater was completed, however, movies were sometimes shown there, so to avoid competition, the Towa Theater subsequently became a facility that was under the management of the military logistics base. On January 10, 1945, from the morning, the sky was covered with clouds. The sky was like lead, and fine snow soon started to fall. There was little concern about an air raid, so we decided to show all six reels of Japan News No. 230 to No. 235, which had just arrived together. We showed repeatedly images of the nighttime attack on Surigao Strait in the Philippines, a kamikaze special attack unit beginning a mission from a base in Kyushu, the activities of women on the home front drafted to the Navy Uniform Production Depot in Hiratsuka, the ceremony marking the departure of students to the front in the rain at Meiji Jingu Stadium on October 21, and kamikaze pilots crashing into the enemy warship *Hornet*. We invited 3,000 officers and soldiers from all the units stationed at Hankou, as well as those that were in transit, to watch the reels free of charge. The fixed projectors at the Towa Theater unquestionably had better images than the portable projectors at the Military Logistics Hall.

When entertainment groups would come to the military logistics base in Hankou, they would also perform at the Military Logistics Theater and subsequently at the Military Logistics Hall. The audience for each performance was announced in the military logistics base bulletin and the members of each unit would come, led by the person in charge. The entertainment groups would also go directly to the hospitals and perform there. On average, two entertainment groups would come to Hankou from the various prefectures each month, and they usually had 12 or 13 performers. Furthermore, aside from the entertainment groups from each prefecture, performers such as Torazo Hirokawa, Hamako Watanabe, and Shimeka Asakusa were sent by the Military Relief Department. They performed numbers such as the ballad “Mori no Ishimatsu” (Ishimatsu of the Forest) and the popular song “Shina no yoru” (China night) and entertained the officers and soldiers. The original Military Logistics Theater had broadcasting facilities, so the performances were broadcast to the front.

The Hankou Women’s Association offered to invite the soldiers to a koto-and-dance recital as entertainment, although this was not by an entertainment group from Japan. We invited those who were interested from each unit. We used the Military Logistics Theater, which had broadcasting facilities, and broadcast a 30-minute koto performance to the front. They played the three songs “Chidori no kyoku” (Song of the plover), “Tsuru no koe” (Voice of the crane), and “Roei no uta” (Field encampment song). The rest of the show was mostly a performance of the koto songs “Kurokami” (Black hair) and “Rokudan” (Six-column tune) and children dancing. The dressing room was full of young women with their hair put up in the Shimada style and children wearing long-sleeved kimono, and I was surprised there were such people in Hankou. This gathering took place on the night of April 3, 1943.

Kikuyo Kajimoto, the head of the Kiku School of Japanese Dance, came to Hankou together with the Osaka City entertainment group. Kajimoto danced like a puppet to a recording of the puppet theater piece “Shirokiya no dan” (Scene of Shirokiya) in *Koi musume mukashi hachijo* (The love-inspired murder), and one of her students played the role of the puppeteer for Okoma dressed in black. Another one of her students performed the country song dance “Yuki” (Snow). All the performances gave a taste of the beauty of Japanese dance. After the show, Kajimoto asked us to write something in

her autograph book. I think Commander Horie wrote a passage from the Lotus Sutra, and I wrote the following poem.

*Dancing like a puppet, wearing a dapple-patterned dyed kimono with long sleeves, the beautiful thin fingers of Kikuyo.*

Kajimoto said she wanted a red Chinese umbrella to use in her performances. The next day I went out with Kajimoto, brought an interpreter, and looked for a Chinese umbrella while walking from Hualou Street to Ma Li Road in the refugee district.

*Going together through morning crowds on Hualou Street, trying to buy a red Chinese umbrella.*

The entertainment groups often asked us to help them shop for shoes and bags because the leather goods in Hankou were said to be inexpensive, but we refused all those requests because the performers were shameless in coming to buy items in large quantities. I accompanied Kajimoto, however, because I thought it was interesting that she wanted a Chinese umbrella.

After she returned to Osaka, Kajimoto sent me a long letter written on rolled letter paper with Japanese ink. She wrote in a beautiful hand. According to her letter, Kajimoto had created a dance based on Princess Nukata, who appears in the *Manyoshu*, under the direction of Nobutsuna Sasaki. Kajimoto had danced the piece *Yagura no Oshichi* (Greengrocer Oshichi) under the direction of Bungoro Yoshida. She was an unusual and cultured woman who had included the country dance song “Snow” and dance from the puppet theater, which were rare for a performance group.

The entertainment group from Chiba Prefecture was led by a civil servant from the prefectural government office and was comprised of five young dancers and three persons in support to accompany them. These were mostly geisha from Hasuike in Chiba City. They entertained the Summit Brigade (the 17th Independent Mixed Brigade), which was from their home prefecture, and had a difficult time as they were bombed several times at the front during their tour before returning to Hankou. A geisha named Tamayu was injured when the truck in which she was riding had an accident and rolled over, and she was struck on the forehead by the stock of a light machine gun and required three stitches. She danced the *Kuroda bushi* (Song of Kuroda) wearing a headband. This was not a handkerchief, but rather a bandage. Also, at one frontline unit, the platoon leader had died in an attack to subjugate bandits two nights before, and they danced the *Tairyobushi* (Fishermen’s folk song) while drumming on oil cans in front of his remains.

Near the end of 1943, I recommended that this troupe spend the New Year’s in Hankou, but they wanted to return to Nanjing, where it was safe, as soon as possible. So, they took a ship down the Yangtze River two days after performing at the Military Logistics Hall. They were bombed by the U.S. air force while in transit, their ship sank, and all the members of the troupe went missing and were presumed dead. I expressed my condolences by submitting the following poems to the *Wuhan Continental News*:

*The arrow-patterned sleeves of dancers, are still in my eyes, every one of them has died.  
How could I have thought, that this was the last night, for them to dance under the bright lights?*

Toyoshiro Murota, who was a member of the artists’ group Shinseisakuha Kyokai (New Works Association), painted a picture of the Hankou night performance by the Chiba Prefecture entertainment group, as seen from the mezzanine of the Military Logistics Hall, on a 33 cm x 21 cm canvas. It showed the green glass of the footlights and the geisha from Hasuike, Chiba City dancing. This oil painting ended up being burned at the end of the war. If it had remained intact, it would have



been a rare work showing the final performance by the members of this entertainment group, who all perished.

The Okinawa Prefecture entertainment group was a group of young women. The *Amakawa* dance they performed to the music of the *sanshin*<sup>46</sup> is a dance of a young man and a young woman who are in love. The gesture of the man pouring water on the woman washing her hair was so artless that it was heartwarming. Commander Horie had previously served in the Okinawa Regimental District Headquarters, and told me that Okinawan dance incorporated karate moves.

The members of the Ehime Prefecture entertainment group were all dashing, wearing military-style uniforms with rucksacks. I thought they were a young women's group, but they were a combined group of geisha from Iyo Matsuyama and Uwajima. They performed the *Iyo Manzai* and *Uwajima Sansa* dances.

The Saga Prefecture entertainment group was a young women's group that came all the way to Hankou after performing in northern China. The young woman who danced the *Suehirogari* epic song was from Karatsu City. First Lieutenant Shizuo Hirata, my instructor when I entered the Sakura 57th Infantry Regiment as a one-year volunteer, was from Karatsu. He died during the battle at Yangwushan in Daye County in central China while commanding a unit in October 1938. This woman knew Hirata's wife, so I asked her to deliver a letter from me when she returned home.

According to Shohei Ooka's *Reite senki* (A record of the Battle of Leyte), Colonel Tatsunosuke Suzuki, the commander of the 33rd Regiment serving with the 16th Division, died in the Tacloban area of Leyte Island in October 1944. Some say he committed suicide with his handgun, but others say he died while on a raid. Colonel Suzuki had been the leader of the 3rd Company of the Sakura 57th Infantry Regiment, which I had belonged to. He was an intellectual and cultured officer who was soon transferred to the inspectorate general of military training.

His successor, Captain Takeshi Miyazaki, who was later promoted to major general, was transferred from his post as the head of the Army school in Toyohashi to Ishigaki Island in Okinawa to serve as the commander of the 45th Independent Mixed Brigade. The enemy never landed, so the brigade must have been unscathed through to the end of the war. Also, First Lieutenant Kiyonao Kato, who instructed noncommissioned officer candidates attached to the 3rd company, became Colonel Kiyonao Ichiki, the commander of the Ichiki Detachment, who committed suicide at Guadalcanal after ritually burning the unit's colors. When I think about it, many men who looked after me when I was a one-year volunteer died in the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War, and I cannot help but think of these as great scars from the war, which was like a nightmare.

The highlight of the entertainment groups was certainly the Toho Dance Troupe, which came to Hankou on December 4, 1944. It was comprised of members from the Nichigeki Dancing Team. This group had 20 members under their leader Hiratsuka, with 14 dancers and singers, three musicians, and one director. When they came to Hankou, they were surprised at the luxurious Military Logistics Hall and said it was just as if they had returned home to the Toho Theater. All the members were enthusiastic. When I asked Director Hiranobu for his opinion regarding the Military Logistics Theater, he gave us professional advice to the effect that the theater should have a black split curtain, that the number of footlights should be increased, that there should be seven hanging lights in front and five in back, and that there should be a white backdrop with red and blue lighting.

<sup>46</sup> An Okinawan shamisen, also known as a jabisen.

The Toho Dance Troupe performed three times at the Military Logistics Base Hall. The show began with *Sannin sanbaso* (Traditional prelude by three dancers) and included *Maiko* (Apprentice geisha), *Echigo jishi* (Echigo lion), *Kuroda bushi* (Song of Kuroda), *Mansaku odori* (Bumper crop dance), *Otemoyan*, *Yuki* (Snow), *Boshibari* (Tied to a pole), as well as *Jawa no mango uri* (Javanese mango sellers), *Indo no genso* (India fantasy), *Toyo no maihime* (Oriental dancer), *Mitsumen komori* (Three masked nursemaid), and *Sora no shinpei* (Divine soldiers of the sky), in addition to the vocal solos “Aoi bokujo” (Blue pasture) and “Sayon no uta” (Sayon’s song). The dancer Takashi Masuda who joined the troupe as the assistant leader danced the Argentine tango *La Cumparsita* and the Spanish dance *España Cañi*, which had been banned in Japan.

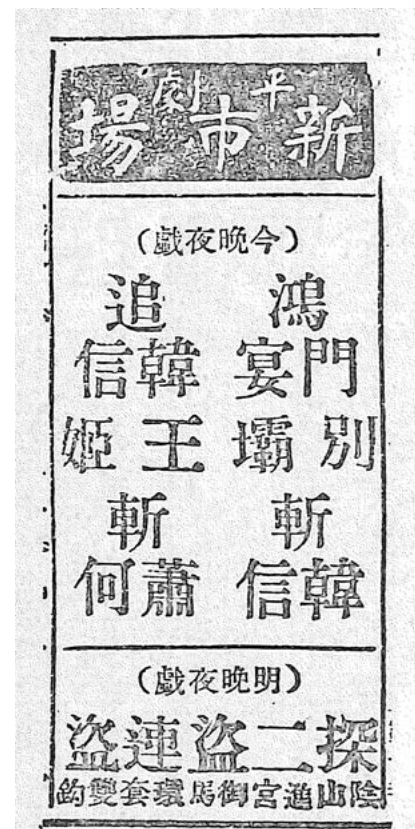
Masuda entered the Takata Dance Troupe in 1925 and studied under Masao Takata. He entered the Toho Company in 1935 and trained the Nichigeki Dancing Team under the direction of Toyokichi Hata. For that reason, as the assistant leader of the Toho Dance Troupe, Masuda participated in performances to entertain Japanese Imperial Army troops stationed all over Manchuria and China.

The Hankou Japanese Residents Association also wanted them to give one performance for the Japanese residents, so we consulted with the military headquarters and specially arranged two performances for civilians. The Association donated 35,000 yen to defray the costs for maintaining the Military Logistics Hall. The Association also invited the Toho Dance Troupe to a meal of Chinese cuisine at the Shinjinkai Society. There was some discussion about Chinese opera at the table there.

Before the war, I had seen a performance of Ryunosuke Akutagawa’s *Toshishun* (*Tu Tze-Chun*), with the title changed to *Tokashun* (Peach flower spring), at the Toho Theater. This was the final appearance by Kuniko Ashihara. Reiko Hatsune skillfully played the comic role, but the show did not feel Chinese at all. When I said it would definitely be interesting for the dance troupe to incorporate some more Chinese opera techniques, they said that they would really like to go see some Chinese opera. The first opera I wanted to show them was staged at the New Market theater on December 8, 1944. It was a performance of “Farewell My Concubine” from *War Stories of Han-Chu*. The Army was opposed to this plan and it was postponed by one day, but permission was granted on the following day, December 9. I wanted them to see Xiang Yu played by Pan Dingxin and Consort Yu played by Dong Mingyan but the performance on the 9th was a different show, with *Stealing the Royal Horse and Chained Traps*.

On the 9th, after a performance at the 2nd Army Hospital, before the Chinese Opera began in the evening, at the Kairiku Hotel, I gave a simple explanation of our schedule for the Chinese Opera and the evening’s performance. It was pitch black because of the blackout order. Since it would be a great problem if anyone got lost, we all went there holding hands. Kimiko Minowa, who danced *Mitsumen komori* (Three masked nursemaid), Momoko Tani, who danced *Toyo no maihime* (Oriental dancer) and Chizuko Sanada, who sang solo with a beautiful voice like a bell, gathered around me.

On the stage at the New Market theater, the fighting scenes



Newspaper advertisement for the Chinese opera performance.

Source: Seikichi Yamada, “Bukan Heitan”, *Tosho Shuppansha*, 1978.



of the youth Huang Tianba that were energetically performed by the actress Dong Mingya were splendid. After the performance, we were shown into the dressing room. The actresses from Japan and China all shook hands one after another and parted.

On the next day, December 10, after finishing their afternoon performance at the Navy Guard Unit, the Toho Dance Troupe left on a Navy ship to Jiujiang downriver at 6:00 p.m. I visited the troupe's leader Hiratsuka at the Kairiku Hotel and gave him a copy of the Yuan Qu Opera Qu play *The Young Lady Died for Love* in memory of their visit. Incidentally, later that night, bombs fell near the Japanese Club, a fire broke out, and at the same time some of the windows at the Military Logistics Hall Theater were shattered by the blast.

On January 15, 1978, I visited Takashi Masuda in Kitazawa, Tokyo. I listened to him speak about the time he came to Hankou as the assistant leader of the Imperial Army Entertainment Troupe. Then he took out a rare photograph from an album and lent it to me. This photograph showed dancers dressed as Javanese mango sellers holding parrots in their hands. He said that after the Toho Dance Troupe had finished their performance for the Navy Guard Unit and boarded their ship at 6:00 p.m., they were filled with emotion when they saw Hankou—where they had just performed—catch fire as they traveled down the Yangtze River. On January 31, I visited the former leader of the dance troupe, Hiroo Hiratsuka, in Kugenuma and asked him about the members of the Toho Dance Troupe and their performance record. At that time, we talked about the bombing of Hankou, and he explained that because the enemy aircraft were circling overhead, the captain had anchored their ship in shallow waters near the bank of the river so that it would only be grounded and not sink if it were bombed. They were told that if they jumped into the river and swam to the riverbank, they might encounter guerillas, and that would be more dangerous.

After the splendid performance by the Toho Dance Troupe, the Chiba Prefecture entertainment group was the last one to perform at the Military Logistics Theater. The Theater burned down in a large daytime air raid the next day, January 14, 1945. I received a report from Private First-Class Oda, who was the lookout, that the Military Logistics Theater was in danger, so I sent 20 soldiers to prevent the fire from spreading. There was a shortage of fire extinguishers, and the fire eventually spread to the ceiling and there was nothing they could do. Everything burned to ashes, including the luxurious dark red curtain, the altar, and the ritual utensils prepared for the memorial ceremony scheduled for the next day, which was the 15th.

## ***Chinese Opera***

I liked Chinese opera, so I read *Shinageki gohyakuban* (500 Chinese operas) by Kenichi Hatano and *Shina Shibai no Hanashi* (Stories of Chinese plays) by Kazue Hama, and went to see performances at the Hankou Daibutai, Tensei, and New Market theaters from time to time. The commander told me to always take someone with me when I went to performances at the New Market theater because it was located in the refugee district, and going there alone would be dangerous. But most of the soldiers I took gave up after seeing just one performance. The Hankou radio station broadcast performances twice a week on Wednesdays and Sundays, so I later decided to go together with someone working for the broadcasting station. I once invited the writer Einosuke Ito, who wrote for the army and was visiting Hankou, and we went together. It was a performance of *Chain Stratagems*, with Lu Bu played by the actor Pan Dingxin and Diao Chan played by Dong Mingyan.

I came to know the actors Pan Dingxin, Zhang Mingsheng, and Zhu Genshou, and the actresses Dong Mingyan, Dai Qixia, and Xue Yanxiang employed by the New Market theater. That is because I

would enter the dressing room, meet the actors, show them the colored pencil sketches of the stage which I had drawn, ask for their autographs, and offer each of them one imported cigarette that we had confiscated. The actress Dong Mingyan skillfully signed her name in a mirror image using a pencil (see the illustration). The makeup for the white rabbit who appears in the mid-autumn festival play was very interesting, so I asked the actor Zhu Genshou if I could draw his picture in the dressing room, and he posed, holding up his rabbit ears with both hands.

When I asked the son of Wen Ming Wong, who was the proprietor of the New Market theater, to allow the Toho Dance Troupe to attend a Chinese opera, he agreed right away, but he said that in exchange they would like to see the Toho Dance Troupe perform. So, I invited a few of the main actors to attend the performance at the 2nd Army Hospital. Wen Ming Wong's son exhibited filial piety, saying that rather than inviting him, I should invite his father. When we drove to pick him up on the day of the show, Wen Ming Wong had two of his young granddaughters with him. The actress Dong Mingyang could not come because she was not available, so Xue Yanxiang came in her place. The actors who attended were Pan Dignxin and Zhang Mingsheng. They were delighted to see an excellent traditional Japanese *kyogen boshibari* comic theater, and said that the fighting scenes and action scenes were similar to those which they performed, and praised them.

The stage for Chinese opera at the New Market theater was dim, with just three gas lamps hanging from the ceiling. The stage scenery was never changed, and the props were simple. The performance had certain conventions, such as running around swinging a whip with tassels to show horse riding. Also, it was noisy, with accompaniment by gongs and Chinese fiddles, and vendors would come by with tea and watermelon seeds. They also brought wet hand towels, but these seemed to be a bit dirty, so I did not touch them. The *renpu* makeup which turned the human face into a mask was very striking with vivid red and black. The expression of the leading actress playing the role of the beautiful coquettish woman had points in common with Japanese drama, noh, kabuki, and bunraku.

I became acquainted with the Chinese opera researcher Hekisui Ito, the owner of the Sanki Company, who showed me around and let me listen to his prized Chinese opera records.

The New Market was an amusement park like the Korakuen in Tokyo. In addition to the theater for Chinese opera, there were also small theaters for Han opera and Chu opera. The New Market was confiscated by the Army and used as a prisoner of war camp under the management of the military logistics base at one time, but it was returned to the proprietor at the request of the Chinese. The proprietor, Wen Ming Wong, appreciated this and invited key personnel at the military logistics base to events such as the chrysanthemum festival. We saw a performance after dinner. The show that night was *Emperor Ming of Tang Visits the Moon Palace*. Emperor Xuanzong (commonly known as Emperor Ming) furtively glanced at the silhouette of Yang Guifei who was played by Dong Mingyan while she was taking off her clothes one layer at a time in the bathroom, which was a bit erotic, and the audience enthusiastically stamped their feet.

In March 1945, at the recommendation of Mr. Ito, I submitted an article "Chinese Plays and Bunraku" to the *Wuhan Continental News* using the pseudonym Yoshiya Oka. I thought that there were some commonalities between Chinese opera and Japanese bunraku puppet theater as oriental theater. This is what I wrote.

While watching Chinese plays, I am always reminded of the bunraku puppet theater plays in Osaka. Chinese plays are to be heard with the ears more than seen, as evidenced by the term *ting xi* (literally "listen play"), and long ago, the bunraku of Osaka was supposed to be



something to listen to rather than to watch. The intense sounds of Chinese plays may be similar to the *shamisen*, which continuously accompanies the subtle intonations of recitations of bunraku chanters, but while the shamisen has a sorrowful, mournful melody which tears at the heart, we find it difficult to grasp the pathos in the sounds of the gong and Chinese fiddles, which we are not accustomed to hearing. This must be because of the differences in long traditions with different customs.

The other day, I went to see Chinese opera at the New Market theater, but it was extremely dark, with just three gas lamps hanging from the ceiling, and it felt like there was some classic shadow cast over the entire stage. The vivid makeup called *renpu* transforms the human face into a mask, and this was very symbolic and not realistic. Kunio Kishida wrote in a book that the sexual appeal of young men and women who appear in Chinese opera is successfully expressed very directly and subtly, and closely resembles the methods used in Japanese kabuki. The movement of the lines forming an actor's silhouette that are part of the behavior of a flirting young woman oddly matches the traditional standards of Japanese female beauty, and the movements of men and women in love in *Yu tang chun* (Spring in the Jade Chamber) and other works is just like those of bunraku puppets. However, deep sadness cannot be felt as much as in bunraku because the pace is faster, and the plot proceeds rather dispassionately. At any rate, just as the bunraku puppets for a beautiful woman, a princess, a young warrior, an elder civil servant, a good guy, a bad guy, a clown, or whatever role appears as stereotypical types, the characters in Chinese plays are also categorized according to set roles.

Therefore, just as the dolls for minor roles seen in bunraku are crude, in Chinese opera the minor characters are very crude and simple. Just as the dolls for minor roles in bunraku have a blank look regardless of the action on the stage, the child actors in the Chinese plays who hold flags look away carelessly with open mouths. Also, the beauty of the so-called "conventions" in opera is completely the same as in bunraku puppets.

Whenever I see Chinese plays, I remember the puppets of Bungoro Yoshida and Eiza Yoshida which are now sadly in the past. The other evening, they performed "Chained Traps" at the New Market theater with Huang Tianba played by Dong Mingyan and Dou Erdun played by Zhang Mingsheng. They performed *Bai-shang* (Worship the mountain) and the scary makeup made the character played by Zhang Mingsheng seem even larger, just as when the puppet of Mitsuhide handled by Eiza in Act 10 of the play *Taikoki* confidently overpowers the stage.

Huang Tianba, played by Hankou's superb actress Dong Mingyan, was young, flamboyant and also beautiful. The elegant exchange of lines, which unfortunately I could not understand, were beautiful to see just through the performers' movements alone. The vivid shine of Dong Mingyan's eyes in the blueish-white gas light and her somehow oriental movements and lines may be linked in some way to bunraku puppets. Yet, what about the indifference and noise of the audience? They are just like the audience watching *Awaji* puppet theater in the book *Tade kuu mushi* (Some Prefer Nettles) by Junichiro Tanizaki.

I heard that in a corner of the bunraku dressing room, puppets not being used sit with their necks bent and their hollow eyes open. They look like faces of the dead and give a weird feeling. The dressing room for a Chinese opera troupe is entirely peaceful. The room is rather lively, with people putting on makeup with oil lamps in one dark corner, others putting on wigs, and others arranging costumes. Even the lead actors Zhang Mingsheng and Dong Mingyan are just given corners in the split room. The makeup I saw there was vivid and



shining with sweat. While Zhang Mingsheng was putting on his wig, the person who was helping him wrap his head with pieces of cloth one after another was his 12-year-old daughter. And when the father finished dressing, she fanned him with a folding fan and had him drink warm water from a teapot. It was a poignant scene of care between the father and the daughter.

Also, his six-year-old son was just walking around playing, sometimes touching face powder and the dish for blush, and he was not scolded. I wondered if these children would also perform Chinese plays on stage someday.

The other day, I borrowed Hekisui Ito's prized record of the Chinese play "Farewell My Concubine" and listened to it. Consort Yu who is leaving Xiang Yu, who is prepared to die, dances a sword dance to a passionate melody. This melody had such a brilliant harmony to the point that I could not help but be ashamed because I had previously perceived it as simply noise as the result of complete ignorance. Similar to the Chinese opera song "Susan Under Police Escort," from beginning to end, this is a sad song in a minor key accompanied by a gong and Chinese fiddle, which tears at the heart, and which is a lament about the forlorn fate of an unhappy woman falsely accused of things who is leaving the man she loves and becoming the wife of a man who has deceived her.

The fact that Chinese plays are entertainment that has entered the lives of the common people of China lies in the traditional oriental beauty that charms people and completely forget the fate of the nation where an air raid is occurring, or that there is a war going on. They say that the bunraku theater in Osaka burned down in the war, and the heads of the puppets and costumes were all lost. However, the spirit of the people of Osaka to protect their folk entertainment, which is said to be a national treasure, did not succumb to the war damage, and they are working to immediately begin new performances of bunraku using the few puppets that remain with collectors. Osaka is rising up, and this must be greatly raising the spirits of the people of Osaka who are working for recovery. Perhaps I find myself yearning for bunraku, which is trying to rise again amid the devastation of war, because of the Chinese plays, and I visit the stage in the New Market.

Sawakichi Uchida, a member of a senior group of Japanese in Wuhan who served as the editorial advisor of the *Wuhan Continental News*, heard from Mr. Ito that the article contributed under a pseudonym was written by the military logistics base's Adjutant Yamada, so he came to see me at the base. Uchida had lived in Hankou for 20 years and was said to be a living dictionary of the Yangtze. He wrote *Shin Bukan fubutsushi* (New introduction to Wuhan), published by Shinbukansha, in February 1941. He wrote in detail about the customs, practices, festivals, and annual events in the Wuhan district.

In April 1945, I went to see Chinese drama at the recommendation of someone from the Wuhan Broadcasting Station. It was an evening performance at the Chinese Grand Theater which was an adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*. The young actors spoke quickly so I did not understand their words, but it reminded me of a performance at the Tsukiji Little Theater. But when the curtain opened, there were none of the gongs or other types of stage effects that one sees at Tsukiji. I saw Chinese drama just this one time and never went again.

## ***Sumo, Kendo, Variety Shows, and Baseball Tournaments***

Events organized by the military logistics base took place one after another from the autumn of 1943 through the spring of 1944. Around this time, in the Pacific, the U.S. military's island-hopping campaign had already begun, and U.S. forces landed on Bougainville Island in October 1943. In November, there were reports that the garrisons at Makin Island and Tarawa Island had fought to the death rather than surrender. But on the Chinese mainland, the China Expeditionary Army was ordered to prepare for Operation Togo in January 1944, and the 11th Army Headquarters was busy making preparations. The *War History Series* at the Japanese Defense Agency's Office of War History notes that events by the military logistics base were especially encouraged as camouflage to hide preparations for the campaign, but that was not known at all at the time.

A sumo tournament took place in September 1943 at a sumo ring prepared on the grounds of the barracks for units in transit. Twenty groups of three men from each unit competed as representatives, and there was also a tournament for individuals. The unit competition was won by men from the Yangtze River Area Naval Base Force,<sup>47</sup> which happened to be invited. The referees came from the Navy and the Japanese Residents Association. A soldier from the military logistics base who was formerly a scaffolding worker lost in the second round of the individual tournament.

A kendo tournament was held in February 1944 on the Empire Day holiday on the same grounds of the barracks for the units in transit. Two hundred men participated. There were two-handed fencing competitions for officers and warrant officers, and competitions using bayonets for noncommissioned officers organized in a tournament fashion. The winner of the two-handed fencing matches was given a Japanese sword by the Military Logistics Headquarters commander. From the military logistics base, Sergeant Numata of the Kakinuma Unit participated in the bayonet competitions. He put shoulder pads on his kendo protective gear, saying that they were light, but he did not win.

On March 10, which was Army Anniversary Day, we held a long-distance relay race with one officer, one noncommissioned officer, and three soldiers on each team. The course was four kilometers, and stretched from the 18th Pier along Zhongshan Road through the Japanese Concession to the 11th Army Headquarters. In this race, the runners had to carry their weapons when running. A unit from the Navy base participated again, and ironically, it came in first, beating all the Army teams. The Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters came in second, and saved some face.

A variety show was held at the Military Logistics Hall on January 10, 1944, after the end of the Battle of Changde, to wish for a victorious new year. The master of ceremonies was Cadet Nakanishi, who was in charge of variety shows. The presentations were divided into individual performances and group performances. The individual performances included *rokyoku* narrative singing, *rakugo* comic storytelling, *manzai* comedy, *shigin* poetry recital, magic acts, dancing, singing popular songs, and playing the harmonica. The group performances were plays for the stage. There were a large number of entries, and we had difficulties arranging the schedule. Accordingly, we decided not to allow anyone to go over their time limit, and deducted points for those who did.

The daytime performance ran from 11:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A different audience was then invited, and the evening performance ran from 5:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. The awards ceremony was from 11:00 p.m., but it took a long time to change the stage sets, so the show finally ended after 1:00 a.m.

<sup>47</sup> Naval base forces (*konkyochitai*) were forward bases for overseas elements of Japan's navy.

From the military logistics base, Sergeant Major Senda, from the General Affairs Section, performed rokyoku narrative singing in the individual competition. He recited “Chichi kaeru” (Father returns) by Kan Kikuchi. He wore a formal kimono with a family crest and a *hakama* skirt which he must have borrowed somewhere, and was accompanied by a civilian professional *shamisen* player. He narrated normally, but at the end he said, “*wan le*” (“the end” in Chinese), which made everyone laugh, and he won a prize. Paymaster First Lieutenant Takagi from accounting performed “Kojono tsuki” (The moon over the ruined castle) and the tango “Ame ni saku hana” (Flowers blooming in the rain) on the harmonica, and received thunderous applause calling for an encore, which he could not perform because of the time limit. A soldier from one unit who was said to have been an *enka* singer in Japan played the accordion and sang “Beatori neechan” (Beatrice), “Koi wa yasashii nobe no hana yo” (Love is a kind wildflower) and other songs from the Asakusa Opera when it was at its peak, mimicking the opera singers Kenichi Enomoto and Rikizo Taya. He was applauded for being a versatile entertainer.

In the group performances, the stage play competition was won by the 11th Army’s Field Motorized Depot performing *Nanbuzaka yuki no wakare* (Parting in the snow at Nanbuzaka). Before entering the army, the men who played the roles of the dowager Yosen’in and Kuranosuke Oishi were professional kabuki actors, even though they may have been utility actors. The exchange of lines between these two had some tense scenes. The ladies’ maids of the lord were poor amateur actresses who were just leisurely sitting. Yet the stage setting was exciting, with snow scenery painted on the seats of a large automobile. When it was delivered the day before, I was surprised to see this imposing scenery. I asked who had painted the stage setting, and I was told the painter was Private First Class Iwami Furusawa, from our unit. Furusawa was a famous Western surrealist painter who belonged to the Bijutsu Bunka Kyokai school and he excelled at painting large murals. I had heard of him before, so I later had him come to the military logistics base regarding the administration of the military logistics gallery, and we spoke about various matters.

This play probably won first prize because of the professional performances by the two lead actors and the splendid stage setting by Private First Class Furusawa. The scenery and lighting were arranged by Private First Class Furusawa and the music by Superior Private Nagashima.

One act of the play *Ishin yawa* (Meiji Restoration evening stories) performed by the Tone Unit from the Epidemic Prevention and Water Purification Department won second place. This was a rather novel skit-type play. The beautiful lady who was thrown out of the palanquin mentioned in Commander Horie’s memoirs was the soldier who played the geisha Hinagiku of Gion, who tries to shield the character Hanpeita Tsukigata with an umbrella from behind.

*Tsukigata, it is raining.*

*It’s only a gentle spring rain. Let’s go on and get wet.*

When he fell out of the palanquin, he held the bottom of his kimono with both hands, smiled and got back up, and the house roared with laughter.

The third prize was awarded for two scenes from the first act of *Tenpo suikoden*, *Otone tsukiya* (The water margin of the Tenpo Era, Moon night at Otone), performed by the Hankou 2nd Army Hospital’s Fukami Unit. The master swordsman Miki Hirate was performed by an actor from the Shinkokugeki Theater Troupe, and included a dreadful scene where he hears about an emergency, suddenly gets up from his sick bed using his sword as a staff, coughs up blood, and red blood flows, staining his white underwear. The second scene was an energetic sword fight on the dry riverbed of the Tone River, with white pampas grass under the bright full moon, with a picture of a bridge with a handrail in the

distance. It was very impressive.

The 51st Military Logistics Guard Unit, where I used to be stationed, performed a modern drama of some sort with a passionate love scene acted out enthusiastically, but the lights went out at a critical moment, probably because a fuse was blown. The audience jeered in the dark saying, the light had “popped like a poppy.” I thought this was part of the performance, but Cadet Nakanishi announced from under the stage, “A fuse has blown, and it is being fixed so please wait a moment.” When the fuse was replaced, and the bright lights went on, the actors were all in the corner of the stage and not in their positions. Things did not proceed smoothly as the actors lost their sense of timing and missed their lines, and so unfortunately this play was not selected and was eliminated.

A baseball tournament was held on April 2 and 3, with seven-inning games played with hard rubber balls. There were 28 teams participating, including the units that were stationed, and also a unit from the Navy base. The 300 players all wore their service caps, white shirts, rubber-soled socks, and puttees. It took place at Zhongshan Park in the northwest outskirts of Hankou, where we arranged four baseball fields.

When the events at the military logistics base had come to an end, I went to the Army General Staff Office to deliver a report. A lieutenant colonel who was a rear echelon staff official asked me, “What will the military logistics base do next?” I told him, “We plan to hold a baseball tournament,” and left. I then met with Adjutant Otani and we decided to examine the specifics for holding the tournament.

Army Surgeon Captain Osawa and First Lieutenant Paymaster Noguchi, who loved baseball, agreed right away and they immediately prepared a plan. We received approval from the commander and notified each unit through the military logistics base bulletin. We held a preparation meeting with representatives from all the units attending. At the time, using the words “strike,” “safe,” and other words from the enemy language was prohibited in Japan, but we decided to openly use words such as “strike” and “ball” without concern here on the front, after someone suggested that the men would not be enthusiastic without the use of such terms.

The umpires from the second round of the games were chosen from the losing teams, and no extra innings were allowed because of time constraints. The winners of tied games were decided by lot.

On the first day, all the players assembled at Baseball Field No.1 at 8:00 a.m., and the tournament began with greetings from tournament committee chairman Fujii and with the opening pitch thrown by Hankou Military Logistics Base Commander Horie. Twenty games were played on the four baseball fields. On the second day, the quarterfinals, semi-finals, and finals were played on two baseball fields. We were blessed with fine weather with blue skies on both days, and Zhongshan Park was lively all day long with the men from the participating units, Japanese civilian residents, and Chinese cheering.

First Lieutenant Keiichi Teru'uchi, the small-built leader of the 2nd Company at the 51st Military Logistics Guard Unit where I was formerly stationed, took the mound in their game against the Abura Unit from the Shipping Transportation Headquarters in the semifinals, and skillfully kept the batters in check with his curve balls. But the score was tied 3-3 at the end of the seventh inning. So, the game was decided by lottery, in accordance with the rules, and they unfortunately lost with the lot I was holding. Their commander, Itabashi, who had come to support them, said to me, “Yamada, you ruined it.”

The final was held between the 11th Army Headquarters and the Abura Unit, which is a marine

transportation auxiliary unit. The Army Headquarters team, which had the college baseball player Ogawa from Nihon University and had a reputation for winning, went to bat first. Their team captain Asahina hit a home run at the start, raising their spirits, but this was not followed up. The Abura Unit players were all short, but their batters kept hitting the fastballs thrown by the Army Headquarters' pitcher and scored four runs. In the second inning, Hiroe from the Army Headquarters hit a homer, but that was their only run that inning. The Abura Unit scored another run in the third inning and two more in the fifth. The Army Headquarters scored their final run in the top of the seventh inning, and so the Abura Unit won the game with a score of 7 to 3 (according to the *Wuhan Continental News*, a copy of which First Lieutenant Teru'uchi sent to his home).

The Abura Unit belonged to the Anchorage's Headquarters, and was in charge of the regularly scheduled ferry service between Hankou and Wuchang. The Abura Unit was awarded a pennant as the winner. This pennant was a confiscated Freemasonry ritual flag that had been remade with the chrysanthemum and water emblem of the military logistics base embroidered onto it. I remember that the original Freemasonry flag had the horrible pattern of a skull and crossbones. Twenty cases of sake were awarded as supplementary prizes. Each case had six 1.8-liter bottles of sake.

The same prizes were awarded to the Army Headquarters and the 51st Military Logistics Guard Unit as second place prizes. In addition, as prizes for individuals, home run prizes were awarded to several players including First Lieutenant Otsuka, and these were bottles of sake. The strong player who went home carrying two bottles was First Lieutenant Ogawa from the military headquarters. For the final game, the head umpire was First Lieutenant Paymaster Noguchi from the Military Logistics Headquarters, and the base umpires were selected from the units that had participated in the semi-finals.

At the military logistics base, a mixed team was formed together with the Kakinuma Unit, which was attached to the military logistics base, with Army Surgeon Captain Osawa as the manager. In the first game, we played against a team fielded by the 11th Army Field Freight Depot. At the start, Paymaster Sergeant Shoji from accounting got on the mound. First Lieutenant Otsuka, who had played baseball in college, hit a home run, and Shoji was taken out of the game. His relief pitcher, Lance Corporal Hasegawa of the Kakinuma Unit, held on, together with the catcher Superior Private Aihara and headed into the final inning leading by a run. Unfortunately, the Army Field Freight Depot team got a hit with a runner on second base and we lost the game, with the score 6 to 5. The commander of the Kakinuma Unit, First Lieutenant Kakinuma, played first base.

Army Surgeon Captain Osawa said that he had played in the national junior high school baseball tournament at Koshien Stadium when he attended Toyonaka Junior High School in Osaka, and that they had played against Hokkai Junior High School and lost.

The military logistics base operated a canteen for units in transit. This canteen had substantial reserves because of the sound policies of Paymaster Major Ogami. Ogami was subsequently transferred to Japan and Paymaster First Lieutenant Takagi became the senior paymaster. As inflation gradually increased, however, we thought it was foolish to pointlessly accumulate reserves, and that it was more appropriate at this time to give goods to the regular officers and soldiers, so with the approval of the commander, we decided to give expensive prizes at these events. That was also another reason why these events organized by military logistics were overwhelmingly popular. For that reason, Paymaster First Lieutenant Takagi was summoned to the military headquarters and was sarcastically told that things at the military logistics base were too gaudy.





## ***The Backbone Army's Painting Exhibition***

The Backbone Army's Painting Exhibition was organized by the Wuhan Arts Federation, a civilian organization, to celebrate the anniversary of the army on March 10, 1944, with support from the 11th Army Headquarters and the Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters. The exhibition took place at the Hankou Gallery on 9 Luqinshi Street in the French Concession for one week with more than 90 works of art. I submitted two pastel paintings, including a scene of the pier.

The Wuhan Arts Federation was led by Toyoshiro Murota of the artists' group known as the New Works Association. After completing his military service and being discharged from the Army, Murota taught oil painting to local young women. The judges included Murota, as well as Sergeant Taro Okamoto from the 11th Army Headquarters Adjutant's Office and Private First Class Iwami Furusawa of the 11th Army's Motorized Field Depot. Paintings judged to be superior were awarded the Hanko Japanese Residents Association Prize, the Wuhan Arts Federation Prize, the *Wuhan Continental News* Company Prize, and the Hankou Consulate General Prize, in addition to prizes from the Army Headquarters and the Hankou Military Logistics Base.

The works included paintings made with oils, watercolors, and sketches made with pastels, crayons, conté sticks, and charcoal, as well as paintings in India ink on Chinese paper or Xuan paper sent from the front. There were also works from guest artists including the local artists Toyoshiro Murota, Wataru Suzuki, Shoun Komata, and Hiroshi Natsushima. Sergeant Okamoto submitted two works: a size 30 oil painting of the Battle of Chongde and a size 4 oil painting of the 11th Army Combat Headquarters. Private First Class Furusawa submitted three works: one war painting entitled "Charge" and two landscape oil paintings showing the Yangtze River and Hanyang. Many of the submitted works were later used to decorate military related government offices, and the others were handed over to the Military Logistics Headquarters and kept in the art exhibition room on the second floor of the Military Logistics Hall.

Superior Private Kiyoshi Tajima of the 3rd Division's ("Lucky Division") 3rd Field Artillery Regiment stationed at Yingshan, heard that the Backbone Army's Painting Exhibition was being held in Hankou and submitted a watercolor entitled *Receiving Ammunition*. Because he was far away, he could not come to see the exhibition, but he read a review in the *Wuhan Continental News* which called his painting a great work, and I hear that he received an 11th Army Painting Exhibition memorial notebook as a prize for participating. In August 1977, I met Tajima at his exhibition "Notes from the Battlefield" at the Habataki Gallery in Ginza, Tokyo, and heard this story about his painting.

The size 100 oil painting *Military Commander Hata Triumphantly Entering Wuhan* by master painter Toyoshiro Murota was displayed in the art exhibition room at the Military Logistics Hall. This painting was planned by the military logistics base and depicted the scene of Hata first landing at the pier in Hankou and inspecting the troops of the 6th Division to celebrate the occupation of the three cities of Wuhan in October 1938, as well as the commemoration of the Meiji Emperor's birthday on November 3. The draft was drawn from a photograph and reviewed by Field Marshal Hata who was in Nanjing, and to make clear that this was at the Hankou pier, the Yellow Crane Tower in Wuchang on the opposite bank that was not in the photograph was added in the distance. Murota traveled to Tokyo to purchase paints for this painting. The military logistics base issued a war supplies certificate for the oil paints.

The original picture was a photograph entitled *Supreme Commander Hata Landing at Hankou*

in Volume 4 of the Second Sino-Japanese War Photograph Collection, “Invasion of Wuhan and Guangdong,” published by *Asahi Shimbun*.

A meeting of division commanders was held in Hankou with the launch of Operation Togo. On April 9, 1944, Field Marshal Hata, accompanied by Generals Okamura and Okabe, came to visit the Military Logistics art exhibition room to see the paintings displayed there. Hata looked somewhat exhausted at that time, and that may have been because he was working night and day not only for a breakthrough at the Chinese front, which had turned into a stalemate, but to also resolve the critical state of the war.

When I went to the 11th Army General Staff Office to explain the plan for this painting, I spoke with a lieutenant colonel who was a rear-echelon staff officer. I told him that we should leave a portrait at the military headquarters of former Army Commander Tsukada, who died when his plane crashed in the Dabie Mountains in December 1942. The lieutenant colonel agreed and said this should be painted by Okamoto, and with that I found out that Taro Okamoto was assigned to the Military Headquarters Adjutant’s Office. However, it seems that Okamoto declined, so a portrait of Tsukada was never painted.

I wanted to collect rough sketches and documents of the various campaigns and create a type of military museum in the art exhibition room on the second floor of the Military Logistics Hall in the future. For that purpose, I was slowly collecting sketch maps and other items from the topography team of the military headquarters and other sources, and I displayed them together with works exhibited in the painting exhibition, size 20 oil paintings by members of the Wuhan Arts Federation, landscapes of ships landing at the pier, a painting of the Hankou Army Office, and the oil painting *Military Commander Hata Triumphantly Entering Wuhan* by Toyoshiro Murota. The bombing became intense at the end of 1944, so these were all placed in a warehouse at the Military Logistics Headquarters and they were fortunately saved from fire.

With the end of the war, however, these works of art and documentation were all set on fire, out of concern that they would be confiscated by the Chinese. Incidentally, the military logistics base paid 1,000 yen in Japanese currency for the size-100 oil painting by master artist Murota and the frames were made by the Building and Repairs Section at the military logistics base.

## ***The Wuhan Poetry Circle***

Before I was drafted, I joined a gathering of poets hosted by Yoshu Mizuno and sometimes composed tanka poems and contributed them to the bi-monthly members’ magazine *Sasori* (Scorpion). Mizuno was active in literary circles in the late Meiji era as a rising author, and he published various works including the long works *Omiyo* and *Bion* (Lukewarm) and the collections of literary sketches *Hibiki* (Echo) and *Mori* (Forest). Mizuno also published works as a naturalist author in the magazine *Chuokoron* (Central review). After the Great Kanto Earthquake, he moved to reclaimed land in Komaino near Sanrizuka, Chiba Prefecture and conducted surveys of folklore with local youth. He led a life of working in the fields in good weather and reading at home when it rained, and taught young people poetry, tanka, and literary composition. The poems that I composed that are quoted in this book are poems I wrote on various occasions and jotted down.

While I was posted to Chichijima Island, I appended tanka poems that I wrote on the island to the letters I sent to Mizuno. It seems he selected some of these and contributed them to the *Daitoa senso kashu* (Great East Asia War poetry collection) by Nihon Bungaku Hokokukai (Japan Literary

Patriotic Association), and one of my tanka poems was included. *Daitoa senso kashu* was published in September 1943 by Kyoei Shuppansha and included 3,400 poems by over 2,000 officers and soldiers. These included poems by me and by Takashi Oshio, who were members from the Sasori group. Oshio took part in battles in Thailand and Malaysia.

*Out of duty as one of the Emperor's subjects, I crossed an ocean to be posted as a guard for island mountains.* By Seikichi Yamada

*The eyes of a strong man trying not to cry are hot. My wife's letter written in blood to encourage me.* By Takashi Oshio

*My wife's letter in blood which she stashed casually in my soldier's good luck belt stitched by a thousand women makes me cry.* By Takashi Oshio

I was merely a contributor of tanka poems to the magazine Sasori, and was not a member of the organization. I never had had poems published. Also, as for Mizuno providing guidance on tanka, he advocated “tanka with no schools and no leaders,” so he just gave critiques but did not make any revisions to poems. Within our group, there were some who belonged to Yugure Maeda's poetry society Shiika, and some who composed poems in the style of Akiko Yosano. I mostly preferred and read poems by Mokichi Saito and Kenkichi Nakamura of the Araragi school. Mizuno died of illness in February 1947 when he was 65 years old. To honor his memory, we formed a group named after him and published the posthumous poetry collection *Tekireki* (Teardrops) and the collection of literary sketches *Kusa to hito* (Grass and people).

I also talked about poetry with Sergeant Major Senda from the General Affairs Section. We both agreed that in the end poems must be devoted to expressing feelings, and we loved reading Momoko Nishikawa's *Fujoshin* (Women) and Katsuhiko Nakai's *Chijitsu* (Long spring day).

*Hearing the dialect of Izumo after a long time makes me cry, thinking my dead wife spoke this dialect.* By Momoko Nishikawa

*Late night train going over slopes and valleys, the red half-moon falls over it.*  
By Katsuhiko Nakai

The Japanese residents of Hankou who enjoyed tanka poetry gathered once a month at the Tokyo-ya tea house on Sanjiao Street and at the Japanese club in the former British Concession and met in a tanka circle. The members included Yoshio Shiki, Kazu Hayashi, and Masafumi Seko from the Hankou Japanese Residents Association, Lieutenant Tashichi Mishima from the Naval Base Force, and Nurses Irisawa and Sekiguchi from the Dojinkai Hospital. I sometimes attended with Commander Horie, together with Army Surgeon First Lieutenant Nagasawa and Sergeant Major Senda. After joint critiques and mutual selections of works at the meetings, the poems were published in the *Wuhan Continental News* or the poetry magazine *Bukan kajin* (Wuhan poets).

In June 1943, when the Araragi school poet Furumi Fujisawa came to Hankou, a welcoming tanka party was held at the Tokyo-ya tea house sponsored by the Wuhan Poetry Circle. Fujisawa composed the following poem at the table.

*In the middle of the night, the sound of troops leaving from this base at the front does not stop.*

Fujisawa said he wanted to visit the Army hospital at Wuhan University in Wuchang the following day, so I took him there using a car from the military logistics base. On the way back, we visited the Baotong Zen Temple at Mount Hong and rested briefly in a forest. A turtle dove was cooing in the

forest. We could see the clear water of Shahu Lake under the eight-story stupa. Afterwards, Fujisawa wrote the following poem for me on Chinese paper as a memento.

*I land by the great Yangtze River with its abundant muddy flow in a whirl.  
The grand flow of the Yangtze River runs east toward the waters of Japan my country.*

In April 1943, when I went to the front in Hubei as the commander of the Shayangzhen Military Logistics Branch, Commander Horie wrote the following poem to mourn his subordinate, Superior Private Kawaguchi, who died in battle.

*I said look after yourself. He said he would. A soldier left and bravely fought and died.  
A soldier cried "light machine gun, light machine gun" and died. I remember his features when he left like a man.*

Commander Horie was a member of the poetry circle Kanran led by Shoryo Yoshiue. At the recommendation of Kanran, the following three poems by Horie were printed in the July 1944 edition of *Bungei shunju* (Literary arts spring and autumn).

*Sitting hard on the cargo of a freight car. Thrusting my sword. Regrettably leaving my fate up to the enemy's bullets.*

*The train slows down. The roar of guns stops. Slipped through under enemy fire.*

*Imperial soldiers' blood stains garden soil red outside the stretcher.*

In May 1943, during the Battle of West Hubei, the Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters established a military logistics branch led by Lieutenant Colonel Araya at Shishou, downstream from Shashi on the Yangtze River. When Commander Horie went to inspect this branch, accompanied by Adjutant Otani, they made their way through heavy fire from the advancing army of Xue Yue in the mountainous area between the train stations at Chang'an and Yangousi on the Yuehan railway line, and lost three men to shelling by mortars while they stopped at the Yangousi train station. This is the poem that he wrote about the attack. He said that during the shelling, there was a bird called the crested myna that was chirping on top of the roof of the railway station.

*The crested myna is a sad bird that does not stop chirping on top of the roof of the railway station where soldiers' blood flows.*

In March 1945, when I went to the Wuchang Branch's office for liaison purposes, the mail for the units in transit was piled up on top of Lieutenant Colonel Tokuyama's desk to be censored. I inadvertently picked up a postcard, and saw it was addressed from Major General Jitsuo Tani, who was the commander of the 17th Independent Mixed Brigade (Summit Brigade), to his wife Kimi, who lived in Yoyogi Nishihara,<sup>48</sup> and included the following poems.

*March 24, Mourning the land where Hayao died in war.*

*Today I mourn the site where he perished with eternal feelings lingering from last autumn.*

*I wonder if the Emperor sends this old body to mourn the site of my late child.*

*The place where he perished in the middle of a lake is covered with green spring grass, and fog hovers over it.*

<sup>48</sup> Yoyogi Nishihara is a neighborhood in Tokyo.

*A collar cloth is left behind to show father the place where the body has been buried in a makeshift grave.*

Staff Officer Hayao Tani died in the war in an airplane accident together with Staff Officer Yajima. It was reported that their plane crashed in a nearby lake just after taking off from Hankou Airfield. When his father, Major General Tani, visited the site of the crash, the lake had dried up, and the area had become a field of grass. Hayao Tani was a young major on the general staff who had graduated from the Army War College, and was only around 30 years old when he died.

According to Commander Horie, the head of the 11th Army, Lieutenant General Isamu Yokoyama, also wrote tanka poetry. Here are two poems from Yokoyama's *Choko Bunso* (Yangtze River Literary Talent).

*Famous view from ancient time—snowy daybreak of the Yellow Crane Tower.*

*The dawn after victory, stepping into the garden to find large southern magnolia flowers blooming.*

In June 1945, a soldier who had escorted the remains of fallen heroes that were being sent home came back from Japan. This soldier was from Koto Ward in Tokyo, and his entire family had perished in an air raid on March 10. Horie tersely described the pitiful conditions in Japan.

*A soldier who escorted the remains come back. He said his entire family died in his hometown.*

*The austere soldier, thinking someday to take revenge, remains silent.*

Starting in August and through the end of 1944, Jun Takami, Kazuo Dan, Einosuke Ito, Hiroshi Ueda, Soji Momota, and Shin Kurihara came to Hankou as writers for the army. They made things lively. Momota wrote the following poem at the welcoming poetry gathering held at the Japanese Club, with the “coolness of autumn” as the subject for impromptu poems.

*Autumn cicadas, red bricks wet in the sunset.*

After Momota returned from Yuezhou, a small collection of his poems entitled *Jyugun yoteki Hanko fubutsushi* (Remnants of military service; Hankou natural scenery poems) was published by the Wuhan Publicity Federation.

*Elementary school. / Hankou Municipal No. 1 Elementary School. / Echoing on the sunny cobblestones of Sanjiao Street. / Coming from several windows this morning as well. / Spirited voices of children reading aloud.*

Next, I quote a passage from the chapter “Wuhan Poetry Circle” in Commander Horie's *The Voiceless Front*. He describes the scene of this poetry circle in Hankou very well.

I have written poor poetry for over 20 years. I am a member of the Kanran poetry circle led by Shoryo Yoshiue, but I have never attended any of their gatherings for poets. However, when I came to Hankou, I found that there was a group called the Wuhan Poetry Circle among the Japanese residents, and even though I was encouraged by Army Surgeon N who was a member of this group from time to time, I never participated because I believed that “poetry is a path to be walked alone.”

Early in the summer of 1943, however, I finally agreed to go out and attend when I was urged to attend the gathering for poets, which was preparing to welcome the poet Furumi Fujisawa



of the Araragi school when he came to Hankou. When I did, I greatly enjoyed the genial atmosphere of the gathering and soon joined the group. From that time, I attended their monthly gatherings every time whenever possible. There were more than 10 members who were local Japanese residents, five or six members from the Army, and one or two members from the Navy, and we used the Tokyo-ya tea house as a meeting place. Mr. S, who is a student of Bokusui Wakayama,<sup>49</sup> made arrangements for the meeting place, the membership fees, and anything else that was necessary, and we sometimes met at his home in the former Japanese Concession. Each member prepared two draft poems which were critiqued in order, starting from those with the highest ratings, just like at a regular poetry party. The criticisms were extremely harsh, but there was an indescribably genial atmosphere running through the group, and I still fondly remember the unparalleled feeling of intimacy among the members.

Eventually attacks by enemy aircraft became frequent, and on one evening, for example, we continued our gathering intermittently in the blackout while hearing explosions from enemy planes. Tokyo-ya became dangerous, so we decided to hold our meetings at the Military Logistics Headquarters, which had comparatively better air raid facilities. With that, the number of members from the military logistics base, which was already the largest group, increased further, and three or four soldiers also joined the circle.

In the summer of 1944, after the Hankou Military Logistics Base moved to Yuezhou, the poetry circle was suspended for a time, as the most enthusiastic members from the military logistics base were absent. At that time, the number of officers and soldiers within the military logistics base who were writing poetry had reached more than 10, and while they all wanted to continue with poetry even after the relocation to Yuezhou, it was not possible to have a poetry circle at the headquarters on the desolate plain of Wulipai, where we were busily engaged in military logistics work. We ended up collecting everyone's draft poems once each week, added my clumsy criticism, and had Sergeant Major S, who was the senior clerk of the General Affairs Section at the military headquarters, print them on a mimeograph and distribute them to each member, and this continued until we retreated to Wuchang. These included many poems that described the feelings at the front very well, including a poem about a soldier in his cot in a thatched barracks with many cracks dreaming of his mother back home, one about a soldier running to roll call exhaling white breath on a morning with severe frost, and another about sending off a file of men marching to the front lines through a valley in a hurry on a morning with unusually heavy snow. But it is most regrettable that the printed copies were all lost, so I cannot present them here.

The poetry circle gatherings resumed after the military logistics base withdrew to Wuchang, and I continued to schedule my weekly trips to Hankou on the days when the circle met. The circle once met at the officers' quarters at the Wuchang Headquarters. A few members crossed the Yangtze River to participate, and they all enjoyed seeing the nice view of the green Sheshan Mountain and the white and blue Wuhan University buildings that I liked to brag about.

The poetry circle that painstakingly continued ended with the conclusion of the war, but even today, I am deeply grateful at how this poetry circle gave great richness to my life and to the lives of my subordinate officers and soldiers at the front.

<sup>49</sup> A tanka poet.

Superior Private Takeuchi from the Kakinuma Unit actually brought home copies of the “Bapo Poetry Circle Draft Poems.” (Bapo is another name for Yuezhou). While he did not have the inaugural issue, he had a total of seven editions. There was one poem signed by Commander Horie using his pen name at the top of each edition, along with his brief comments on each of the poems.

*The clouds are low, the color of the grass slope faded, the encampment in the canyon is lonely in winter.*

*Green bamboo grass of the encampment of soldiers. Smoke from cooking streams in the morning light over a withered and lonely hill.*

*After the emergency assembly, before dawn on a winter field, the frigid three stars of Orion in the west.*

*Lucky to see the splendid sunrise over mountains in Hunan. We are Imperial shields.*

*A soldier who died in a car is already a god. We braked hard to stay on the slope. (In honor of the heroic war death of Lance Corporal Minamiya).*

*Round hills line up in the wintry desolate canyon. The color of the blue bamboo grass sinks into my eyes.*

*White deep frost fell in the canyon. The grass underneath grows reddish.*

In the final edition, Commander Horie selected an excellent tanka poem from each poet, starting from the inaugural issue, and I want to introduce some of the poems here.

*Standing night guard. Listening to the quiet breathing of a comrade who talked about his wife joyfully. By Kazuo Takeuchi*

*The wildfire is quiet when night falls, burning the distant sky red. By Kenichi Nagasawa*

*I woke up hearing my mother's words in a dream. A flock of geese cry as they fly in the night sky. By Masao Kobe*

*The white silk with stitches of a thousand women is tinted by the water of a creek. By Masao Katsumata*

*Waking up to see sunrise. I hear the Kimigayo (Japanese national anthem) sung by the soldiers encamped in the canyon at dawn. By Tanekazu Senda*

*Feeling the streaming fog at dawn on my cheeks. Walking quickly to roll call on a red dirt slope. By Akisaburo Obata*

*In the midst of an intense battle in the Philippines. Grasping a telegraph key. Thinking of my still young sister. By Shigeo Shinagawa*

*A friend who reached here clinging onto another friend's back. Bearing the pain with his teeth biting hard. By Hideo Morita*

*The troops proceed in the winter night. Mixed with the squeaking sounds of transport wagons on the Sanyan Bridge. By Nobuharu Ebana*



## ***Soldiers' Library***

The Soldiers' Library, which provided the opportunity for my chance meeting with Second Lieutenant Katashi Suzuki, was opened in May 1943. We received bookshelves from the library at the Japanese Club, and initially lined up books using four racks (sufficient for 800 books).

I bought books at the Shimeido Bookstore on Jiangnan Road, the Hankou Bookstore on Zhongshan Road, and at other bookstores in town that I visited. In Hankou, new books were sold at 20 percent above the list price, and that soon increased to 40 percent. At first, Paymaster Major Tokujiro Ogami of the accounting office interfered, saying that the purchase of goods was the work of accounting officers, but he later gave me special dispensation when I told him that the Soldiers' Library Management Regulations state, "The selection of books will be made by the recreation section chief."

I selected Superior Private Kazuo Takeuchi, who had graduated from Keio University, to manage the borrowing and returning of the books. To organize this, I had him get white cards from the Japanese Club and catalog the books as in a regular library. I thought we would use an open stack system for all of the books, but Paymaster Major Ogami objected, so we had no choice but to keep the books behind wire mesh. To get a book, the soldier or officer had to check in his service cap, which was given back in exchange for the book when the soldier or officer left the library. There weren't many users when the library opened, so we added five persons to each report. If the daily record was five, then we recorded 10, and if it showed 10, we recorded 15. But when Paymaster Major Ogami from accounting came, unfortunately, there were only two or three people there reading. He reportedly snapped at Superior Private Takeuchi, saying "The soldiers do not come because the collection has nothing but dense books." But the library did have popular novels such as *Miyamoto Musashi* and *Shinsho Taikoki* (A new account of Hideyoshi) by Eiji Yoshikawa, *Daibosatsu toge* (Daibosatsu pass) by Kaizan Nakazato, and *Fuji ni tatsu kage* (A shadow standing on Mt. Fuji) by Kyoji Shirai.

The policy for selecting books for the library came up for discussion at the officers' meeting. I thought that I had been given full authority for selection by the management regulations, but there was substantial criticism from Major Ogami and from several other officers that overall, the books were too highbrow. Nevertheless, there were sufficient historical narratives and humorous books in the library rooms of each unit, and my policy was that since we published bulletins in the name of the military logistics base library, I wanted to have a solid collection of books for a central library organized by the Army. It was Army Surgeon First Lieutenant Nagasawa who first agreed with this policy and strongly backed me. Perhaps this was because Army Surgeon Nagasawa was an avid reader. He insisted that it was absolutely necessary to offer a collection of basic literature for those seeking knowledge to prepare for the future development of Japan.

While I said that I would include as many entertaining books as possible, I believed my ideas were in line with the commander's intentions, so I did not change my initial policy. I wanted the men to use the Soldiers' Library to improve their education and enhance their knowledge during their tours of duty, and I felt it was fine even if there were only a few users.

I included notes on some of the books I purchased for the Soldiers' Library in a letter I sent home August 21, as follows.

*Konanshun* (Spring in Jiangnan) by Masaru Aoki

*Toshi oyobi toshijin* (Tang poetry and poets) by Hoan Kosugi

*Konsai zuihitsu* (Essays by Konsai) by Yaichi Aizu



*Kurara Shuman* (Clara Schumann) by Mitsuko Harada  
*Nihon no minka* (Japanese houses) by Wajiro Kon  
*Kashu chijitsu* (Poetry collection—Long spring day) by Katsuhiko Nakai  
*Musashino* (Musashino) by Tamura and Honda  
*Tochinoki no kage* (Shade of the sawtooth oak) by Annu Kobori  
*Manyoshu josei no uta* (Poems by women in the Manyoshu) by Japan Women's University  
*Koji junrei* (Pilgrimage to ancient temples) by Tetsuro Watsuji  
*Nihon bijutsu no kansho* (Appreciation of Japanese art) by Kitagawa and Okudaira  
*Nihon shokubutsu bunruigaku* (Taxonomy of Japanese plants) by Honda and Sakisaka  
*Shakaigaku gairon* (Introduction to sociology) by Yasuma Takada  
*Wagakuni kempo no dokujisei* (Originality of the Japanese constitution) by Soichi Sasaki  
*Kakinomoto no Hitomaro* (Hitomaro Kakinomoto) by Mokichi Saito  
*Nihon bijutsu no tokushitsu* (Characteristics of Japanese Art) by Yukio Yashiro  
*Sugaku gairon* (Introduction to mathematics) by Suetsuna and Aramata  
*Kamera Zuiso Musashino no Seitai* (Camera essays—Ecology in Musashino) by Kunizo Kato  
*Shina jihen kashu* (Second Sino-Japanese War poetry collection) by the magazine Araragi  
*Nihon zakki* (Miscellaneous notes on Japan) by Bruno Taut  
*Taiheiyō chiseigaku* (Geopolitics of the Pacific Ocean) by Karl Haushofer

The proprietor of the Shimeido Bookstore, Mr. Tsutsumi, said he would donate copies of 10 magazines each month to support the Soldiers' Library, so I selected *Kaizo* (Reform), *Chuokoron* (Central review), *Bungei shunju* (Literary arts spring and autumn), *Tanka kenkyū* (Tanka poetry Research), *Hototogisu* (Little cuckoo), *Eiga hyoron* (Movie review), *Kagaku gaho* (Science pictorial), *Hoso bungei* (Broadcasting art), *Bijutsu hyoron* (Art review), and one other magazine. I also received copies of newspapers air mailed from Japan that had been donated by the Hankou branches of the *Asahi Shimbun* and *Mainichi Shimbun* newspaper companies. Each time they arrived, I posted notices on the bulletin board of the cafeteria on the first floor of the Soldiers' Dormitory which read, "Japanese newspapers through (date) sent by airmail have arrived." I was told that as a result soldiers who came to receive their orders would sometimes remove their "official business" armbands, drop by to read the newspapers, and then return. I also negotiated with the movie theater—the Towa Theater—to show advertisements for the Soldiers' Library during intermission. In addition, the monthly tabloid newspaper *Sozen'ei* published by the 11th Army Journalism Team printed "News from the Soldiers' Library" each month.

I sent an official request directly to Nihon Shoseki Haikyu Kabushikigaisha (Japan Book Distribution Company) asking for priority distribution of good books for the library, and we were able to receive special deliveries of books. Mr. Tsutsumi also called the military logistics base first when new books arrived by ship, and arranged for us to purchase them before they were sold to the general public. Accordingly, I called the army surgeon in charge of the library at the 1st Army Hospital, and he came and selected books to buy. On the way back, he complained about the extra work, asked me to have the military logistics base buy appropriate books for them, and did not come again. So, the military logistics base became responsible for buying the books for the hospital as well. When I had spare time, I also went to the Marugo used bookstore on Yangtze Street and when I found good books, I bought them even though they were used. And when the proprietor of Marugo found suitable books, he would set them aside for me.

Mr. Tsutsumi offered to mail books to Tokyo for me, so I asked him to send some books right away. I had him deliver the *Eiwa chujiten* (Standard English-Japanese dictionary), edited by Hidesaburo

Saito and published by Iwanami Shoten, to my eldest son Yasuyoshi, who had entered junior high school; *Pari yori aisuru haha e* (From Paris to my beloved mother) by Namiko Imanishi to my eldest daughter Mariko; *Kimitachi wa dou ikiru ka* (How do you live?) by Yuzo Yamamoto and Genzaburo Yoshino to my second son Michinari; and the picture book *Usagi no tegami* (The rabbit's letter) by Ryu Osanai to my second daughter Yuriko. These books arrived safely. I subsequently had books mailed on several occasions.

At the proposal of the Hankou National Defense Women's Association, we once organized a campaign to send publications to officers and soldiers at the front, and we collected many books. We were told to keep any of the publications that we needed. Most of the publications collected were magazines, including many bundled issues of *Chuokoron* (Central review), *Shiso* (Ideas), and *Bungakukai* (Literary world). I thought these publications would wind up being burned as kindling to cook rice if we sent them to the front, so I received them and put them in a corner of the Soldiers' Library. When a young staff officer from the Unity Army<sup>50</sup> came for an inspection and saw the bundles of *Chuokoron* and *Shiso*, he asked, "Who is responsible for getting soldiers to read these magazines?" as if reprimanding us, and I responded, "The Soldiers' Library is a facility of the military logistics base, so the military logistics base commander is responsible." He then went off with the parting remarks, "The reading of such items must have been prohibited! It's disgraceful."

I knew that when Colonel Okada, a senior staff officer of the Unity Army, was at the military academy, he had studied under Commander Horie. When Colonel Okada came for an inspection just the other day, he returned feeling happy that we had good books, so I was not concerned. In fact, Colonel Okada was surprised to find that we had copies of *Nichiro rikusen shinshi* (New history of Japanese-Russian land battles) by Takazo Numata, *Nihon kosenshi no shinka* (The true value of ancient Japanese war history) by Ryotaro Nakai, and *Sensoshi gaisetsu* (Outline of war history) by Tsunamasa Shidei. At the end of 1943, the commander of the 11th Army, Lieutenant General Isamu Yokoyama, also visited the Soldiers' Library when he inspected the military logistics base facilities.

From the autumn of 1944, the U.S. air force in China became active, and it became difficult for large vessels to navigate west of Jiujiang. Because the transportation of military supplies was given priority, the shipment of books and other general freight completely ceased. I heard that there were crates of books stockpiled in Nanjing, and I asked the Akatsuki Unit (anchorage headquarters) for help, but this did not work out as I had hoped. For that reason, it became impossible to obtain new publications.

I then thought about transferring the confiscated books that were stored at Warehouse No. 102 and visited Major Furumai of the freight depot to discuss this, but he said he would not bring out even one book without an order from the Army. To resolve this, I visited Staff Officer Tabata at the Army General Staff Office and explained the situation, and he issued a routine order, as follows.

The head of the 11th Army Field Freight Depot is to turn over some of the confiscated books to the commander of the Wuhan Military Logistics Base, and to follow the instructions of First Lieutenant Yamada regarding the types, quantity, and other details of the books to be turned over.

I asked for volunteers from among the cadets who had graduated from the reserve officers' cadet school and were staying in the unit barracks while waiting for their orders to be transferred to units at the front, and asked them to sort the books. The confiscated books included Western language books and Chinese classics, but there were no Japanese books whatsoever. In the end, two cadets who liked

<sup>50</sup> Unity Army was the nickname of the Japanese Sixth Area Army.



books cooperated with the Soldiers' Library in sorting the books and preparing an inventory until the work was completed. These cadets were Shin'ichiro Sumino and Yasunosuke Miwa, and we ate dinner together each night and talked about various books. When they were drafted, Sumino was studying economics at the University of Tokyo, and Miwa was majoring in physics at Hokkaido University.

These two cadets left for the front around the time the cold winds blew from the north. I wrote letters to their parents in Japan and informed them that I had met their sons at a military logistics base in central China and that they had left for the front in good health. I received postcards in reply from Sumino's father who lived in Shirokane Sankochō in Tokyo and from Miwa's father who lived in Yokkaichi, Mie Prefecture.

One day in the late spring of 1945, Cadet Sumino came to visit me at the Wuchang Military Logistics Headquarters. He explained that he had returned to Hankou, and I gave him a postcard that had arrived from his home. Sumino had not received any mail from his family while he was at the front, so he was delighted to find out that his parents were in good health when the postcard was written. Cadet Sumino safely returned home after the war, but I heard that Cadet Miwa died at a field hospital in Ronghuowan, 40 kilometers south of Yuezhou in November 1945. Miwa had become sick at the front. The picture of ancient Chinese constellations that I sent to Hoei Nojiri was copied in detail by Miwa at the city government library with a sharpened H pencil<sup>51</sup> on thin Japanese tissue paper. Miwa was a short young man who wore glasses and spoke few words.

We selected about 300 volumes for transfer to the Soldiers' Library. They were from the confiscated books that had been stored in the warehouse at the freight depot, Western language books from the former Hankou British Club library that were held at the chapel on Hanjing Street, and Western language books that were at the library of Huachung University in Wuchang.

Those that I remember include *Genji Monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*) translated by Kencho Suematsu, *Cha no Hon* (*The Book of Tea*) by Tenshin Okakura, *Bushido* (*Bushido, The Soul of Japan*) by Inazo Nitobe, and *Nihon Shukyoshi* (*History of Japanese Religion*) by Masaharu Anesaki, as well as books by Yakumo Koizumi (also known as Lafcadio Hearn), books about ukiyo-e art, Chinese opera and Chinese ceramics, English translations of *Sangokushi* (*Records of the Three Kingdoms*), *Suikoden* (*Water Margin*), *Koromu* (*Dream of the Red Chamber*), *Jin Ping Mei* (*The Plum in the Golden Vase*), *Toshisen* (*Selected Tang poetry*), and *Shiki* (*Records of the Grand Historian*), books about mountains including *Nihon arupusu no tozan to yanken* (*Mountaineering and Exploration in the Japanese Alps*) and *Kyokuto no yuhojo* (*The Playground of the Far East*) by Walter Weston, and *Eburesuto 1933 nen* (*Everest 1933*) by the Alpine Club, *Arabian Naito* (*The Arabian Nights*), which had beautiful copper-plate prints, *Anderusen Dowashu* (*Collection of Andersen's Children's Stories*), which had interesting lithograph illustrations, modern Chinese literature including works by Xiao Jun, Ba Jin, Lu Xun, Xie Bingxin, Chinese classics including Ci poetry of the Song dynasty and Qu poetry of the Yuan dynasty, together with dictionaries, illustrated references, topographies, art books, and other publications that might be useful later, even if not read now.

In March 1945, Staff Officer Akira Takahashi of the 6th Area Army came to visit, having heard of the reputation of the Soldiers' Library. From among the confiscated books, he asked to borrow Leo Tolstoy's *Sevastopol Sketches*, John Ruskin's *Giotto and His Works in Padua*, Inazo Nitobe's *Bushido*, and H.G. Wells' *A Short History of the World*, and took them away. Ruskin's *Giotto* included collotypes of beautiful Christian religious paintings. At that time, the library had around 5,000 books, and the

<sup>51</sup> A hard pencil.

proprietor of the Inatomi Company, who was a member of the Japanese Residents Association, once donated 200 books.

The soldiers who used the Soldiers' Library were almost all regulars. Some asked to take books out, but we refused the requests for the time being. The regular users were the same. Superior Private Takeuchi kept statistics on the users, and he once invited those who came frequently and called a meeting. We reported in the military logistics base bulletin that the Soldiers' Library was holding a meeting because we wanted to hear what users wanted concerning the operation of the library. We designated about 20 men and sent requests in the name of the commander to the head of each soldier's unit, asking them to give special consideration to our requests. We gathered that day at 11:00 a.m. and spoke freely about various topics without attention to rank, and had lunch and sweets for tea, which were sweet buns from the military logistics base canteen. One soldier said he had a great time and was very happy because it was the first such get-together that he had attended after joining the Army. The soldiers wanted to continue holding the meetings, but we became busy thereafter and so this was the only meeting that was held.

The Soldiers' Library had a variety of books. I was reading the poetry collection *Kokyo* (Hometown) by Minoru Ooki, which I brought to my room. The cadet on duty suddenly got sick, so I took the daily roll call in his place. I left it up to the young cadets to foster spirit among the soldiers, and I brought the book *Kokyo* from my room and read a few poems out loud to the men.

I read them a series of poems from when the author was first drafted: "On the Way Home 1," "On the Way Home 2," "The Night Before," "The Morning of Parting," and "Parting." Ooki receives his draft notice while his wife is in the hospital, goes to the hospital, explains the situation to the doctor in charge, and has his wife discharged. He tells his wife who is happily returning home without knowing why that his draft notice has come. The two of them then live together quietly for the next five days. He describes the night before he enters the Army and the morning of his departure.

*The Night Before*

*People busily came and went, / The days allowed passed busily. / The departure tomorrow morning draws close. / When I came back from the barber, / My wife was checking my army uniform and other belongings under a lamp alone. / I gave her a tuft of my hair that I brought home. / She apologized for her illness and gave me an amulet.*

Many of the men of the Kakinuma Unit, which had been assigned to the military logistics base, were generally old soldiers nearly 40 years old or physically unfit soldiers who were categorized as grade B-2. On cold winter nights when the biting wind blew, I quietly read a few poems out loud to the drafted soldiers who had left their wives and children behind in their hometowns. I then explained that this book was in the Soldiers' Library and recommended that they should read it themselves when they had some free time.

Commander Horie liked to read, so he often visited the Soldiers' Library and would take away newly arrived books to read in his room. At the military logistics base the officers would regularly eat lunch together. They could not pick up their chopsticks until the commander arrived, so the officer on duty would often come to tell Horie, "All the officers have assembled."

After the meal was over, there were reports from the adjutant and the section chiefs about their assigned duties, and then a general discussion. The commander liked to talk and would make small talk, and the young cadets always became impatient. The adjutant would respond to the commander's comments and I also often joined the conversation. Adjutant Otani told me he was pleased saying, "It

has become easier since you came.”

During lunch, the commander spoke about the *Zohyo monogatari* (Common soldiers’ story) from the Iwanami Bunko series. He said this was an old battlefield story about tactics on the battlefield and the mental state of foot soldiers, attendants, and others at the front with low status. According to the story, if you become thirsty, you should sip the blood of the dead. It also seems the commander read Shigezane Okanoya’s *Meisho genkoroku* (Records of the words and deeds of famous Shoguns) and he spoke about Takakage Kobayakawa. The commander talked about the passage where Kobayakawa points out to the magistrate Mitsunari Ishida that in the Japanese invasion of Korea, they have only made battle preparations to be the winning army but have not made any preparations for losing, and how Kobayakawa—instead of following the tactics of dying to avoid surrendering in the capital Gyeongseong<sup>52</sup>—emphasized the tactics of a fighting retreat and fought a rear-guard action by themselves, counterattacked the large Ming army, fought bravely, and destroyed the Ming army. The commander may have shared this story because he already had a premonition of the results of the Pacific War, but we had no way of knowing this at that time. When the commander talked about such matters, the young cadets listened in boredom staring at the ceiling thinking, “Oh, there he goes again.” Books in the Soldiers’ Library were the source of information for all of these talks.

At the military logistics base, the rules called for field officers to take their baths from 4:00 p.m., officers from 5:00 p.m., noncommissioned officers from 6:00 p.m., and soldiers from 7:00 p.m. There were times when the commander was late and did not come out by 5:00 p.m., and the officers promoted from the ranks and officers who graduated from the Officer Candidate School wouldn’t dare take a bath with the commander. I had been a one-year volunteer, and I entered the bath when the time came without restraint. I would call out “Excuse me,” salute the commander while I was naked, and then we would chat in the hot bath. This was a little impudent, but I could do this because the commander himself was a bit democratic in that he was not a stickler about ranks.

One day a letter arrived from Commander Horie, who had gone to Yuezhou, asking me to deliver the book *Shina bukkyo no kenkyu* (Research on Chinese Buddhism) by Daijo Tokiwa, which was in the Soldiers’ Library. I had this book carried to him by a messenger, together with *Sanjusannen no yume* (*My Thirty-Three Year’s Dream*) by Toten Miyazaki that had newly arrived. Horie later said that Miyazaki’s book was very interesting. *My Thirty-Three Year’s Dream* was an autobiography by Miyazaki that described his dramatic life. Miyazaki, who spent his life earnestly wishing to build a new China, was misunderstood by his colleagues and became cynical. He became a disciple of Kumoemon Tochuken, and traveled about reciting *naniwabushi* Japanese narrative songs. Miyazaki was an activist who worked for the development of Asia.

Lieutenant Colonel Fujii of the Military Logistics Base taught Japanese and Chinese literature at a girls’ high school in Ube before he was drafted. He borrowed *Chikamatsu jorurishu* (Collection of Japanese ballad dramas by Chikamatsu) from the *Collection of Japanese Masterpieces* as well as *Suikoden* (*Water Margin*) and *Toshisen* (Selected Tang poetry) from the *Japanese Translation of Classic Chinese Literature* series from the Soldiers’ Library and read them. Even Paymaster Major Ogami from accounting, who complained that the books at the Soldiers’ Library were too abstruse, borrowed *Sangokushi* (*Records of the Three Kingdoms*), which had been adapted into a Japanese novel by Eiji Yoshikawa, and took it to his room. Army Surgeon Nagasawa, who strongly supported the establishment of the library, also borrowed a wide variety of literature. He read many poetry collections, including those of the Araragi school, got along well with the commander, and asked me

<sup>52</sup> Another name for Seoul.

to give him a poem written by Yoshu Mizuno that I had received some time before, which was written in *sumi* ink on hand-made paper.

*Japanese mothers are strong. Sending their children to the wide world to live.* By Yoshu

He brought the poem to his room, framed it, and hung it on his wall. Officers at the military logistics base also took out books occasionally, and soldiers sometimes spoke secretly with Superior Private Takeuchi and took out books.

The writers Einosuke Ito, Kazuo Dan, and Hiroshi Ueda, who were working with the army, were impressed that the Soldiers' Library was collecting books that could no longer be obtained in Japan. I wanted the writers to compose articles about the Soldiers' Library in the *Wuhan Continental News* but Major Fujii said that it was not desirable to use the regular press to promote the Army, so I gave up on this plan. We also received donations of books from civilians who were repatriating to Japan, and the library had around 5,000 books at the end of the war.

Among the confiscated books, Chinese classics were collected in the hall of the girls' school in the Japanese Concession and sorted by a single clerk named Fukuchi from the Japanese consulate in Hankou, but they caught fire in an air raid on December 18, 1944. Most of the Western-language books which had been at Huachung University and the Hankou Club were collected at the church on Hanjing Street, but these were also reduced to ashes in an air raid on January 14. When I went to look the following day, I saw the books turned into white ash retaining their original shape amid a mountain of rubble, and I felt anew the horrors of war. I had a hard time leaving that place, thinking of how pointless it was for me to lament the fate of books even when human lives were being lost in vain.

However, the books at the Soldiers' Library were fortunately saved from damage in the air raid. After the war ended, I had some of the books including paperbacks, light novels, and poetry collections transported to the Yangtze district—which was the Army assembly point—to ease the boredom of the prisoners of war, but all the rest were handed over to the Chinese. After the timing of our repatriation was determined, as mementos of the Soldiers' Library, the commander took home the photograph collection *Musashino fubutsu* (Scenery of Musashino) edited by Shinzo Fukuhara, and I took home *Bunraku ningyo zufu* (Encyclopedia of Bunraku puppets) by Shigewo Miyao, which was published by Jidaisha in January 1944. I cut out color photographs of the dolls for a maiden, an old samurai, a strong male character, and a young man from *Bunraku kashira no kenkyu* (Bunraku puppet heads research) by Seijiro Saito, pasted them into *Bunraku ningyo zufu* (Encyclopedia of Bunraku puppets), and brought it home. The book was marked with the stamp of the Hankou Military Logistics Base Soldiers' Library and had been donated by Kaneji Ito of the Japanese Residents Association on October 4, 1944.

The books purchased for the Soldiers' Library included *Shina gakugei daijiten* (Unabridged dictionary of Chinese arts) published by Ritsumeikan University. From this book I found out that the Chinese classic books on sex *Su Nu Ching* (*Canon of the Immaculate Girl*), *Yu Fang Pi Chueh* (*Secret Instructions Concerning the Jade Chamber*), *Yu Fang Chih Yao* (*Important Matters of the Jade Chamber*) and *Tung Hsuan Tzu* (*Book of the Mystery-Penetrating Master*) were included in the *Double Plum Tree Collection* edited by Te-hui Yeh. In particular, *Canon of the Immaculate Girl*, which had disappeared in China because of the book burning by Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of the Qin dynasty, had been transcribed and restored from the *Ishinpo*—the oldest surviving medical text in Japan, edited by Yasuyori Tamba. I discovered the *Canon* in the Huachung University Library and kept it as a reference at the Soldiers' Library. I also collected and archived Burton's *Arabian Nights*,

the foreign settlement version of *Jin Ping Mei* (*The Plum in the Golden Vase*), and *Sui Yangdi Yanshi* (The romantic history of Emperor Yang of the Sui).

The Soldiers' Library had a copy of *Zoku taishi kaikoroku* (Sequel: Reminiscences about China) published by Toa Dobun Shoin, and this included accounts about Buntaro Kashiwabara. When I read this, I learned that Kashiwabara founded the Kokan Junior High School in the suburbs of Hankou. Kashiwabara was born in my hometown of Narita in Chiba Prefecture. He was a great man who was active in political circles together with Tsuyoshi Inukai as a lawmaker for the National Party. I wrote a short essay entitled "Hankou and Buntaro Kashiwabara" and sent it to a friend in my hometown. This was printed in the *Narita choho* (Narita town news) in February 1944.

When I visited the Shimeido Bookstore on Jiangnan Road in Hankou to look for books for the Soldiers' Library, I discovered a book entitled *Zoku taishi kaikoroku* (Sequel: Reminiscences about China). This book included a detailed account of the great man Buntaro Kashiwabara from our hometown. His contributions regarding the China problem are so well known they require no further mention, but the fact that he founded Kokan Junior High School in Hankou is virtually unknown, so I decided to visit this junior high school in the suburbs of Hankou and seek some traces of his presence there.

One day, I turned in front of the Hankou Shrine from the Japanese Concession and visited Kokan Junior High School, which is located in the suburbs one kilometer away. I listened to stories about Kashiwabara from the teacher Toyonori Matsuo, who was the acting general affairs director, who spoke as follows:

"The Toa Dobunkai Association,<sup>53</sup> which was located in Shanghai, planned to construct Kokan Junior High School in Hankou and the Chunichi Gakuin in Tianjin for the education of Chinese students. They chose Chairman Kashiwabara and he came to Hankou in 1919, selected the plot of land, and worked on the construction of the buildings. Kashiwabara worked in both Tianjin and Hankou at the same time. In the spring of 1922, his wife Akiko came as well. They stayed at an inn at first and later moved to the school. The opening ceremony was held in March and they went back to Japan for the time being in May. I graduated from Toa-Dobun Shoin University<sup>54</sup> and was working at the Abe Corporation in Hankou, but that company went bankrupt in the recession after World War I, so I returned to Japan and was asked by Kashiwabara to work for Kokan Junior High School. The first class had around 50 students, and Xiao, who is now the director of the city education bureau, was a member of the first graduating class. Shigeyasu Saito later resigned as principal of Kiryu Junior High School, came to Hankou, and took charge of the school's affairs. When there was strong anti-Japanese sentiment, the school staff suffered persecution and the school was eventually forced to separate from the Toa Dobunkai. The core of the school's management then came from the China-Japan governing board."

Matsuo then showed me a memorial photograph from the school's opening ceremony. There were 21 people in the photo, with Hankou Consul General Asanoshin Segawa in the center, together with the commander of the Central China Garrison Army, Major General Okudaira, and Hubei Province Governor He Peirong. It showed Kashiwabara on the far left of the front row and his wife, who was wearing a formal kimono with a pattern on the bottom, second

<sup>53</sup> The association has also been called the East Asia One Culture Society in English.

<sup>54</sup> The school was called the Tun Wen College in English.



from the right. Matsuo was 31 years old at that time and Kashiwabara, who used the pen name Toho, was around 54 years old.

When I entered the auditorium (lecture hall) on the second floor, there was a photograph of Kashiwabara with a kindly face as one of the members of the committee that founded the school. He is wearing the 3rd class medal of the Order of the Golden Grain, presented by the Chinese government, and had the look of a loving father's eyes. He must have watched over the education of several hundred young Chinese men for over 20 years after that time. At the entrance, there is a framed inscription which reads "Kokan Junior High School" signed by Vice President Li Yuanhong. In front of that is a sundial that was erected in October last year in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the school's founding. The following words are written on its granite pedestal.

"In the autumn of 1919, 10 years after the Toa Dobunkai first made the proposal for a school, Buntaro Kashiwabara came to Hankou and began preparing for its construction. The school was completed a year later."

I was told that the four acacias on the right-hand side of the school gate that did not die in the great flood in Hankou during the 20th year of the Republic of China (1931) and still grow were planted 20 years earlier, when the school had just been built.

I then visited Jusaku Hozuma, who founded Hankou Bank, and was an eminent figure in Hankou who worked as a temporary employee of the Japanese consulate, and I listened to his memories of Kashiwabara. This is what Hozuma had to say:

"Building a school in Hankou from 1920 through 1923 was difficult because this was during the height of anti-Japanese sentiment in Hankou following Japan's Twenty-One Demands on the Chinese government, and people would not sell land in their own name. Kashiwabara supervised the construction himself. He gave up on layering Chinese bricks with mud in the Chinese style, and decided to cover the surface of each brick with mortar and stack them, and to pour water on the bricks beforehand to increase their adhesion. He visited the construction site himself every day, and had no compunction about knocking bricks down with the end of his cane if they were not done right. His wife frequently gave money to the beggars who came to the nearby *Gude* Zen temple and kindly looked after Chinese students, perhaps because she had no children."

Zenzaburo Abe, of the Taifu company in the Japanese Concession, also graduated from Toa-Dobun Shoin University, so I went to visit him at night and listened to him talk. This is what Abe had to say:

"Kashiwabara was the comptroller of the accounts of the Toa Dobunkai Association and supervised the editing bureau. He was mostly involved with editing a collection on Chinese economics. In September 1920, he suddenly came to Hankou and said he was going to look for land to build a school. Yokohama Specie Bank had some land given as collateral, so the land was bought from the bank, but it was in a thicket far from town, and it was necessary to build a road there and to lay water and electric lines. It was a grandiose plan to the extent that I thought, "What will they do in the future after building a school in such a place?" Kashiwabara advised Saito—who lacked the political skills to negotiate with Chinese VIPs and recruit new students—and managed almost everything by himself. He collected books from a variety of sources, including ancient Chinese

literature such as county annals and provincial chronicles and archived them at the school library, but these were all scattered and lost in the Second Sino-Japanese War. One of the rooms in the housing for teachers where Kashiwabara lived was a Japanese-style room, which became the headquarters of the 6th Division after the conquest of Wuhan, and the division commander lived there. I told the adjutant that a Japanese person had come more than 10 years before and built a junior high school, and he was surprised. Kashiwabara had no dignified appearance like the patriots of the Orient. He was a genial person who was skillful in finance. While living alongside the larger-than-life Japanese who roamed about China and bragged about their exploits, Kashiwabara administered the accounts of the Toa Dobunkai by himself. He was the most important, and also the most necessary individual. It was not easy for him to manage accounting for the Toa Dobunkai, which would receive money from the Army General Staff Office and use it right away, or rather receive money so they could spend it, while being greatly criticized by Japanese roaming about in China. Even if Chinese defectors went to Japan, no one could care for them because everyone was broke. So, in the end, Kashiwabara took them all in and took care of them. There are many prominent Chinese today who received help from Kashiwabara. It is also well known that Kashiwabara built Mejiro Junior High School and worked to develop education. Kashiwabara did not try to gain approval or seek applause from spectators, and he was not particularly eccentric. But the passing of Kashiwabara with his deep knowledge regarding the China problem was a great loss to the nation.”

Hidesuke Sako, who had won a contract for some of the construction work on Kokan Junior High School, returned to Japan, but his son Nagahide had received help from Kashiwabara in the past, so I visited him at the Anchang Company. However, what he told me were not memories of Kashiwabara during his residence in Hankou.

In February 1944, my friend Shoto Namekata, from my hometown of Narita, met Kashiwabara’s widow Akiko, who lived in the Teradai district in the same town, and asked her about their time in Hankou. She said that the proprietor of the Shimeido Bookstore, Yasuyuki Uematsu, knew about their time in Hankou very well. I tried to visit Uematsu, but he was away in Nanjing so I could not ask him about those times. I also read Toten Miyazaki’s autobiography *My Thirty-Three Year’s Dream*. Miyazaki writes that when Kang Youwei<sup>55</sup> fell out of favor and was exiled to Japan, his colleagues in Japan initially welcomed him as an unexpected visitor. When a new Cabinet was formed and government policy changed, they shunned him, and no one would visit him. In that book, Miyazaki wrote: “During this time, the only one who showed him respect at all times was the great man Tsuyoshi Inukai, and the only one who showed him kindness was Kashiwabara, and this was enough for him to be grateful.” This book is also another means to honor the memory of Kashiwabara’s great legacy.

Buntaro Kashiwabara was born in Teradai, Narita Machi, in January 1870. He graduated from Tokyo College (currently Waseda University) in July 1893, and opened the Toa Dobun Shoin University in Shanghai together with Atsumaru Konoe, Liu Shenyi and others in November 1898. It was a four-year boarding school that taught both Chinese and Japanese students and had three departments: politics, commerce, and industry. In May 1912, Kashiwabara ran for a seat in Japan’s parliament as a candidate of the National Party and was elected. From September 1920, he spent three years in China with his wife to build junior high schools in Tianjin and Hankou under orders from the Toa Dobunkai, and founded Chunichi Gakuin and Kokan Junior High School as institutions for the education of Chinese

<sup>55</sup> Kang was a Chinese scholar and political reformer.

youth. Kashiwabara opened Mejiro Technical School in 1922. He became sick the following year, in October 1923. He resigned from all of his official duties and worked at regaining his health, but died in August 1936 when he was 68 years old. His wife Akiko died in January 1967 at the age of 85.

In the autumn of 1943, I found the book *Nihon bijutsushi zuroku* (Illustrated history of Japanese art), written by Toyomune Minamoto and published by Hoshino Shoten of Kyoto, at the Hankou Bookstore on Zhongshan Road and purchased it for the Soldiers' Library. I also bought a copy for myself, kept it on hand, and browsed through it from time to time. I later mailed this copy to my home in Japan. I had completely forgotten that I had sent a letter to the author, Minamoto, at that time. After I returned home when the war ended, I picked up a copy of *Kobijutsu kengaku* (Study of antique art) by the same author at a second-hand bookstore in Tokyo's Kanda district one day, and was surprised when I flipped through the introduction and saw the following quotation from my letter, which I had forgotten about.

I recently received the following postcard from an unknown army officer stationed in central China:

"When I was reading your *Nihon bijutsushi zuroku* (Illustrated history of Japanese art), which I discovered at a bookstore in a town far up the Yangtze River at the front at night by dark candlelight my heart became clear... Being allowed to briefly be away from my military duties to feel deep longing for such antique art is the greatest pleasure for me right now. The cold winter has arrived, and the biting winds are blowing hard, but I will push forward with my service, devoting my life, while thinking of the beauty and nobility of the fatherland."

This single army postcard, with a picture of a Chinese street snack seller on the front, written with a fountain pen, moved me deeply. I could not help but feel joyful to know that my poor single-volume illustrated history of art was serving in an unexpected way on a battlefield far away. And I could not help but recognize anew that the antique art, which harbors our ancestors' beautiful souls and remains everywhere in Japan, has such a great significance for the Japanese people.

I remember days when I was exposed to bombing attacks on the desolate battlefield of Shayangzhen in Hubei and devoured such illustrated art histories at night. And I secretly prayed in my heart that the day would come when I would survive and return to come into contact with such works of art once again.

I let Minamoto, who lived in Kyoto, know that I had safely returned to Japan and expressed my deep gratitude. The following is a letter from him.

As I began reading your postcard, which had a familiar handwriting, it reminded me of the military postcard that arrived in early spring the year before last. You have no idea how much it moved me to know that you found my *Nihon bijutsushi zuroku* in a town along the Yangtze River and read it to pass the time at the front and felt yearning for the past beauty of old Japan. I meant to reply right away, but I am lazy by nature, so I failed to pick up my brush and write. With the passing of time, the confusing developments of the war situation on the continent became so intense that I could not imagine the conditions there without feeling concern about the fate of the person who sent the postcard to me.

The war ended in vain, and those who had to return to Japan all returned but what happened

to the man who sent that postcard was one of the concerns that sometimes came to my mind. In the summer the year before last, I collected several of my essays on old temples and had the collection published by the same company that published *Nihon bijutsushi zuroku* under the title *Kobijutsu kengaku* (Study of antique art). In the introduction to that book, I quoted your postcard to illustrate how much love of antique art can prompt love for the fatherland. That may also be the reason why I have an unforgettable impression about you.

It is truly happy news for me that you happened to have returned home safely and that as a result of your special efforts, my *Nihon bijutsushi zuroku*, of which I have profound memories, was waiting for you at your home safe and sound. I feel as if some sort of beautiful episode has been completed with a happy ending. Let me offer my congratulations on your safe return from the bottom of my heart. As I imagine from your postcard, it seems that your house managed to escape war damage. If that is so, it is truly wonderful news.

Since you live in Tokyo, perhaps we can meet some day, and perhaps you will have some opportunity to come to Kyoto. That would truly be a romantic incident in life.

They printed 7,000 copies of *Kobijutsu kengaku*, but they all sold out right away. I have one last extra copy remaining and I am sending it to you. I trust you will enjoy it.

*I prayed that one day you would return safely. And a letter from you came to me.*

*After waiting for you in sorrow, my family and I celebrate your return.*

November 26, 1946

Toyomune Minamoto

In closing, I would like to present part of the memoir written at the time by Superior Private Takeuchi, who was in charge of managing the books at the Soldiers' Library.

Looking back now at my one year of life at the Soldiers' Library, it was like the *guten alten Zeiten* (the good old times) with my heart full of joy. When I finished my breakfast and went off to the library carrying a newspaper, there was a bounce in my step.

This library was one of the army facilities planned to promote wholesome forms of recreation, and I was assigned to this work under the supervision of First Lieutenant Yamada.

We had to begin from collecting books, but that was not easy because of the gradually worsening transportation problem and the decline in the number of copies of books published at that time, and because only five or six copies of each type of book came to Hankou. As recreation was the primary purpose of the library, we decided to mostly collect novels, but because each unit already had a substantial number of historical narratives and collections of humorous books, we decided to omit these types of books and collect slightly more highbrow works.

In this way we obtained a collection of 500 books and put up our sign, which was written with good penmanship by Master Sergeant Senda, and had the smell of fresh wood, as the 'Soldiers' Library' on July 25, 1943. The library was on the third floor of the Soldiers' Dormitory building, which also housed the Soldiers' Cafeteria. With a book vault, a place to browse newspapers and magazines, and a reading room for around 50 people, the library was complete, for the time being. The room, which we were concerned at first would be too dark, had a very bright feeling to it because we had large windows, two or three paintings on the wall, and flowerpots on the tables. It did have the fault that we could hear the noise of the cafeteria on the second floor, but it was quite fine overall.

While we did not expect that a throng of users would come, we thought we could attract around 20 eager readers. However, only three came on the first day. The number of readers did gradually increase, but in the first month, we ended with an average of 13 visitors per day (excluding those who came to browse newspapers and magazines). With this, we received complaints that the usage did not justify the expense, including complaints from Major Ogami from accounting, who would come together with noncommissioned officers and make snide comments, which was unpleasant. Given this, First Lieutenant Yamada's decision to hold fast to his original position, while natural, was also greatly worthy of respect:

“Amid this war, as many as 13 soldiers come to read quietly each day. The statement that the number of users is small is a subjective opinion. Even if just one person carries forward the torch of Japanese culture, that is enough. For that purpose, this library must continue.”

I was so happy to hear Yamada's words I could have cried. And I thought that we needed to collect good books.

About half a year after the library opened, there was a group of what you might call regulars who came to the library to read. There were about 20 enthusiastic readers who would always come to the library when they went out. We held a meeting to ask their preferences for the library and their opinions. On that day, 12 or 13 of them were in attendance, and First Lieutenant Yamada and I also attended. This was an informal gathering, people spoke freely, and lively topics emerged, but no decisively good ideas came forth. And we could not accommodate many of their requests. The general opinion was that it was impossible to expect common soldiers to come to the library when they had a day off once every week or two weeks.

Given their living environment, the soldiers sought immediate forms of entertainment: just alcohol, women, and food. The men said that after soldiers go out and take care of their immediate needs, they have no desire to read books. Also, when the soldiers went out, they would move about in groups of two or three, so even if they might agree on drinking, they would hardly ever agree on reading books. Given these conditions, there was really nothing we could do, and so we were left with this issue outstanding. As for other areas such as problems with facilities, we decided to work on further improvements in the future.

The best story above all was about a certain private first class who feared he would be yelled at just for taking out or returning a book and had second thoughts. When he came to the library, he was surprised at my attitude, which never became soldier-like and was conversely effective. I could not help but smile wryly imagining this shy raw recruit addressing me in a formal military manner saying, “I have come to borrow a book, sir.”

No opinions were voiced regarding what kind of books we should collect, even though this was the subject that I was the most interested in. The men did say they were not very interested in reading war novels. Among the authors they liked, Yuzo Yamamoto was the most popular by far, followed by Ton Satomi, Kan Kikuchi, and Jiro Osaragi, and surprisingly Saneatsu Mushanokoji, Naoya Shiga, and Kyoka Izumi were a little less popular.

At that time the collection expanded to around 2,300 books. We were able to acquire almost complete collections of essays regarding China and tanka poetry collections, aside from old versions. Personally, I was happy we were able to collect a series of works by Kensaku



Shimaki, starting with *Unmei no hito* (Man of destiny), which I was reading when I was drafted, and *Seikatsu no tankyu* (Quest for life), as well as *Shi, tomo, shoseki* (Teachers, friends, books) by Shinzo Koizumi. I enjoyed reading *Anyu koro* (A dark night's passing) and *Nomin* (The peasants), and it was a joy to read *Nihon kenseishi* (History of Japanese constitutionalism) by Takeki Osatake and *Ho to toseikeizi* (Law and command economy) by Teruo Minemura; they brought back a lot of memories. When I read *Nihon bunka no shinrinen* (New doctrine of Japanese culture) by Yasuzo Suzuki, I was filled with nostalgia and deep emotions. I was also happy that we were able to get many books by Ogai Mori, even though these were paperbacks, since these were difficult to obtain in Japan.

Even though I was surrounded by books, I felt increasingly lonely as the number of books increased. My personal collection of books was very small, but I had put my heart into each one of them. There were some that I had bought with my meager allowance when I was student, and others that I had long searched for but could not find and stumbled on while walking at night after I had given up. When I open these volumes, there are words underlined in red pencil from the period when I earnestly sought truth, the marked-up words became a whip for my laziness. I had left some books on top of my desk for days, without unwrapping them even though I bought them with such enthusiasm. There was not a single one I did not fondly remember. I longed for the comfort of my study, where I sat on a wicker chair with my back to the bookshelf, which had only a small number of books. I do not know who said that 'libraries are graveyards for books,' but that is well stated.

The readers were all enthusiastic. A third of them borrowed works of popular fiction. Such books were in high demand, so they were hard to obtain, which was unfortunate, and detective stories were particularly popular. I wanted to let the readers—who looked through different books murmuring how they could not read them in such a short period of time and left after just reading an essay—take the books out. Around one-fifth of the men read rather intellectual works such as Tari Moriguchi's books on art and works by Shinobu Orikuchi. Quite a few of the men requested poetry collections.

Also, surprisingly, there were many requests for introductory books on subjects such as electricity, mathematics and astronomy. At first, I did not take any notice of these types of books, but in fact such books were not available at all. There were two or three such books among the books that had been donated, and I had to have the men make do with this. I could not help but be moved by the pureness of their desire to pursue studies concerning their work back home even while they were at the front so they would not forget what they knew, even though their situation was different from mine.

I have fond memories of chatting around the embers of the *hibachi* heater with the men when they grew tired of reading. Small talk about Japan, their own units, impressions of the books they had read, and the apathy of soldiers became a diversion on their days off. The articles in the *Asahi*, *Mainichi*, and *Yomiuri* dailies donated by each of the newspaper companies (although these were local editions) always served as sources for topics of conversation. There was also a local newspaper called the *Continental News*, but it was not interesting at all. Its articles were all in the style of an official gazette, and even though a lot of space was given to the literary column, the content was empty, while the newspapers from Japan were lively and provided things to talk about. We would comment on these articles with our personal opinions and talk on endlessly.

The soldier over in that corner must be a candidate for superior private. He is earnestly studying military manuals. Even here, I cannot help but wonder about the diverse nature of human beings.

## ***Military Logistics Base Cultural Lectures***

The military logistics base's lectures on cultural subjects were actually the first thing I started working on in response to Commander Horie's intentions to expand wholesome forms of recreation. These lectures were held on June 5, 1943 in the Military Logistics Hall on the fifth floor of the building that subsequently became the Kaikosha Army Club.

Lecture: "The Life and Works of Beethoven," Yoshio Kimura, Wuhan Music Association (20 minutes).

Recorded music: Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 "Fate" (40 minutes).

Lecture: "Regarding the Noh Movie *Aoinoue* (Lady Aoi)," presented by Hajime Takimoto of the Wuhan Noh Association (20 minutes).

Film: Noh movie *Aoinoue*, featuring Kintaro Sakurama, produced by the Board of Tourist Industry Japan (40 minutes).

Newsreels: Ceremony commemorating 2,600 years since the foundation of Japan; Nippon News, three reels, including one which was the most recent edition.

I remembered watching the newsreel of the ceremony commemorating the 2,600th anniversary of the foundation of Japan in the plaza in front of Nijubashi Bridge, so I specially asked the China Film Company for it, and they had it sent from their head office in Shanghai. Prince Takamatsu's congratulatory address in the ceremony was majestic. However, the military logistics base's project for cultural lectures was said to be too difficult and received poor reviews, so it ended with just this one event. Mr. Tsutsumi, the proprietor of the Shimeido Bookstore, who led us the record, and Mr. Hirota of the Hankou Branch of the China Film Company, which had the movie *Aoinoue*, laughed wryly when they heard that the cultural lectures had been cancelled. Mr. Tsutsumi, who assisted with the establishment of the Soldiers' Library, had been in favor of my plan for the cultural lectures, lent us his cherished records, and helped with arranging for the guest speakers.

Even after the military logistics base's cultural lectures were cancelled, we held concerts of recorded music a few times at the officers' quarters. We used confiscated records from the freight depot and records borrowed from the broadcasting station. In addition to such Western music as Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker" and Beethoven's "Eroica," we presented a variety of types of music including *naniwabushi* narrative ballads, *biwa* (Japanese lute) music, *gidayu* puppet theater recitals, and popular songs.

What could we do to beef up wholesome forms of recreation? Aside from building an amusement park without alcohol or women and creating a library, what else could we do? Holding cultural lectures to enhance education, holding tanka and haiku poetry gatherings... Would there be leeway for such events amid busy military schedules, and would superior officers allow the soldiers to participate? I worried about such issues since this was during a war, when enhancing the strength of the military was the overwhelming concern, and we were at a military logistics base at the front.

I also wanted the military logistics base to solicit contributions from the various units stationed in



Hankou and publish a tabloid-type newspaper once a month with short stories, poems, tanka, haiku, comic tanka, and comic haiku. I asked my direct superior, Lieutenant Colonel Fujii for permission, but he opposed my request on grounds that the tabloid would compete with *Sozen'ei*, which was published once a month by the 11th Army's Journalism Team. So printing the tabloid was not possible. But *Sozen'ei* rarely printed such literary contributions. And, of course, they did not print the seven tanka poems on welcoming the entertainment troupe from Miyazaki City that I submitted while I was hospitalized for war injuries. *Sozen'ei* only printed harmless remarks that seemed to be forced submissions. When I asked them to print "News from the Soldiers' Library," it seems they were initially hesitant, since they feared that it might prompt complaints from the front by making soldiers think Hankou was the only place where everything was going well.



## Chapter 7

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### Operation Togo

#### *Diary of the Commander of the Shayangzhen Military Logistics Branch*

In April 1944, the China Expeditionary Army initiated Operation Togo (Operation Ichi-Go) to open a railway route that would cross the continent and connect Busan, Mukden, Beijing, Hankou, Guilin, Nanning, Bangkok, and Singapore. The operation also aimed to secure strategic positions along the Hunan-Guangxi railway, the Guangzhou-Hankou railway, and the southern part of the Beijing-Hankou Railway, and to destroy the main bases of the U.S. air force in China. This campaign was fought in northern, central, and southern China, and a total force of about 500,000 Japanese military personnel are said to have been involved.

The 12th Army, under the command of Lieutenant General Eitaro Uchiyama, began the campaign and occupied strategic positions along the southern part of the Beijing-Hankou Railway south of the Yellow River. The entire 11th Army participated in this campaign under the command of Lieutenant General Isamu Yokoyama. To disguise the plan to advance into Changsha and Hengyang, which were the main objectives of the attack, the 11th Army employed diversionary tactics, pretending to advance towards Yichang and Changde. Divisions were intentionally being shifted around before converging on certain locations.

Each time there was a campaign, the Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters took part by forming campaign branch offices. Officers were assigned to the branches in turns, following the movements of the divisions that were on the frontlines. The recreation section was no exception. I was ordered to the Shayangzhen Branch. I had previously been posted there during my assignment with the 11th Army's Field Freight Depot. At that time, my fellow officer, First Lieutenant Tsuji, was traveling toward Li County, crossing the Yangtze River with 40 men and draft horses. They were moving over hilly terrain where trucks could not travel, and Tsuji complained about his bad luck in drawing that assignment. Beyond that, they were attacked by the enemy and encountered various other difficulties. However, it was at the Shayangzhen Branch, where I went, that soldiers died from bombings. At the Li County Branch, which was led by Tsuji, all of the men returned safely.

The following excerpts are from a diary, which I wrote in from time to time in place of taking notes, and which I later revised slightly.

#### **April 12, 1944**

At 9:00 a.m., we departed for Shayangzhen after being seen off by Commander Horie and his subordinates in front of the headquarters. We moved in five trucks. There were 35 of us under the branch commander, Lieutenant Colonel Fujii. The only officers were Army Surgeon Second Lieutenant Norikazu Kuroda and me. There was so much luggage on board that there was almost no room for the soldiers to ride. Men were calling out, "Be careful not to fall."

We drove through a farm belt in central China in light rain, with nothing to obstruct the view. We arrived at Zaoshi at 2:30 p.m., and spent the night at the facilities of the local military logistics branch. The New Fourth Army was nearby, and frequently entered urban areas to loot. There were no electric lights, so at nighttime it was pitch black.



### April 13

We left Zaoshi at 8:00 a.m. There were infantrymen taking a break on both sides of the road, avoiding the trucks that sped along. They were all exhausted and lying down, covered with dust. Driving around the soldiers was not easy. We soon entered hill country. We heard members of the New Fourth Army would sometimes carry out attacks along the narrow path of Yanmenkou, at the foot of a denuded mountain. We arrived at the Luohan Temple by the Han River at noon. It took time to go across the river. We got across by putting the trucks onto two connected motorized watercraft. We finally arrived at our destination, Shayangzhen, at 2:00 p.m.

### April 14

I assumed the duties of my new position. In the evening, I found some time to go to the freight depot's guard unit, where I was formerly stationed. (The Tanaka Company had become the Takayama Company, under First Lieutenant Shigeru Takayama.) The soldiers who had entered as new recruits the year before had grown strong, and had been promoted to private first class or superior private. They were all happy to see me and came to greet me. The willow tree that I had my men dig up by the Han River and plant in the barracks courtyard when I was the acting company commander had firmly taken root. Its leaves were rustling in the breeze. We ate together in the officers' room. Then I took a bath and went back.

### April 15

Because soldiers had been deployed to Luohan Temple on the other side of the river and to the unit barracks on the outskirts of the city, there are only 13 men left at headquarters. We draw up water from the Han River, purified it, put it into drums, and supply the water to each unit by truck. This is also part of the work of the military logistics base. The illumination is a bit weak, but it is good enough for night work.

Because I was formerly assigned to the freight depot's guard unit here, I have many acquaintances among the depot officers. The 11th Army was headed towards Changsha and Hengyang, with the freight depot to follow, so the depot generously transferred to the military logistics extra base provisions and fodder that they could not carry with them. Although firewood was in short supply, there was a surplus of miso in particular and we received plenty. Because the freight depot had no documents to verify the headcount of the units in transit—whose soldiers were paid by the military logistics base—the wages could be inflated.

As for the divisions passing through Shayangzhen, during the night the 13th Division ("Mirror Division") and the 58th Division ("Wide Division") secretly advanced east, and during the day the 116th Division ("Storm Division") advanced west as a diversionary tactic, while maneuvering day and night near the crossing point of the Han River. The divisions continued moving at night to avoid air attacks. Because it took time to cross the Han River, Shayangzhen became a hangout for soldiers. Superior Private Kojima came with a request to hire coolies to clean the unit barracks. When I went there, because of the frequent turnover of the units that were stationed there, the barracks were in shambles, and the latrines were dirty, with filth spread everywhere, leaving no place to stand. This mess was beyond the ability of coolies or military logistics to deal with. We thought of having the units in transit provide the labor, and adopted what we called "feast tactics." We used coolies to make pork miso soup from early in the morning, when it was still dark. While we called this "pork miso soup," it almost never contained any pork. We usually used *youtiao* Chinese deep-fried bread stick instead, together with tofu and vegetables thrown into a large pot and cooked into miso soup.



This soup was provided to the men as rations, and it was very popular. We finished cleaning up the barracks right away, with labor from the units that were stationed. The distribution of miso soup by the military logistics base apparently calmed the soldiers and their subsequent management became easy. It is simply common courtesy to clean up after yourself.

### April 23

The commander of the 13th Division (“Mirror Division”), Lieutenant General Tadashi Akashika, spent two nights in a free-standing house at the military logistics base. I heard he was taking his meals alone, so I had the freight depot make a kind of sponge cake and I brought it to him. At the same time, I lent him a copy of Maurice Dekobra’s *A Frenchman in Japan: Travels* (an English translation of *Samourai 8 cylindres*), which I brought from the Soldiers’ Library. That book includes the story of Dekobra going to Mount Mihara and speaking with someone who wants to commit suicide, and his survey of the income of apprentice geisha in the Gion district of Kyoto.

Akashika told me:

My division is comprised of men from Sendai, Wakamatsu, and Shibata, and we are said to be used to mountain warfare. We are always used for turning movements,<sup>56</sup> so we have it harder than the other divisions. My men have the strength to endure hardships and privations, but they are obstinate and not flexible. For example, when I, the division commander, got out of the vehicle to urinate, I ordered the guard riding with me to watch for enemies from on top of a nearby rock. The guard was still standing there after I had finished and was ready to depart. Similarly, when soldiers manning machine guns get shot, the officers replace them with other soldiers, who also get shot. The platoon leaders think only about finding new machine gunners, without even thinking about changing positions.

Akashika then laughed wryly.

Because of the campaign, the movement of divisions became intense. The commander of the 116th Division (“Storm Division”), Lieutenant General Ou Iwanaga, stayed at the barracks of this military logistics base. I heard from a construction officer that Iwanaga was difficult to deal with and hardly spoke, so I greeted him at the gate wearing new white gloves and led him about the place, but he just glanced at me and said nothing. The next morning, however, when I joined the line of division officers to see him off, the commander himself stopped in front of me and greeted me saying, “Many soldiers from my division will pass through here and trouble you in many ways, so please take good care of them.” The construction officer was surprised because it was the first time he had heard the head of a division speak to a person in such a way.

One day in June, the commander of the 58th Division (“Wide Division”), Lieutenant General Suehiro Mori, who had round eyeglasses with thick plastic rims and a Kaiser moustache, was staying at the barracks on the outskirts of town. I approached him in the evening while he was stretching outside by himself and explained that there was a grave of fallen soldiers from the Wide Division nearby. He said, “Take me there,” and came out in his long boots, wearing his sword. I also put on my sword, and joined him. Four soldiers from the Wide Division who had died in a recent air raid while working at the crossing point at the Han River were buried under a grave mound below the banks of the Han River. The grave marker was still fresh. The commander took off his hat, and politely prayed. On the way back, he silently walked on the banks of the Han River, which were illuminated red by the setting

<sup>56</sup> Turning movements are also known as wide envelopments.

sun. The remains of these soldiers were still being held at the military logistics base. I knew the addresses of their bereaved families, so I sent military postcards informing them that General Mori had prayed for the fallen soldiers' souls.

### **April 27**

Lieutenant Colonel Fujii suddenly returned to Hankou, and I was appointed in his place as the branch commander. According to some soldiers who had been left behind and were catching up to their units on the frontlines, even more than cigarettes, small arms ammunition and hand grenades commanded the highest prices when bartering for goods.

### **April 29**

The soldiers at the headquarters gathered to hold prayer services on the birthday of the reigning Emperor.

With the words, "On the auspicious occasion of the birthday of the reigning Emperor, we humbly pray to offer congratulations on the Emperor's long life," we solemnly saluted with our swords. In response to requests from the men, I granted permission for everyone to have dinner together that night since there had been no holidays amid the busy work each day. Some wanted to invite women from the Shayangzhen Hall, which is managed by the military logistics base, but I scolded them saying, "It is out of the question to call women to a military logistics barracks in the middle of a campaign."

I heard what sounded like an air raid alarm at 4:48 p.m., while I was working in the office, but I did not do anything. At the barracks, soldiers had started drinking sake and were making a racket. The freight depot's canteen was selling sake because it was the Emperor's birthday. All of a sudden, we heard sounds of explosions from enemy planes attacking, and when I ran out from the office, three U.S. military planes were coming at us in formation. The motorized regiment's anti-aircraft gun began shooting back.

I yelled, "Air raid!" and just as I rushed into a nearby air raid shelter, there was a thundering sound. A 500-kilogram bomb had fallen on the military logistics base. When I jumped out, part of the barracks had collapsed. I could not see through the thick cloud of dust. A bomb crater had been gouged out in the rear garden. Injured soldiers covered with blood were moving about in confusion asking, "Where is the infirmary?" and "Are there any medical orderlies?" Many were seriously wounded. A single Army surgeon was not sufficient, so we decided to immediately send the injured to the hospital by truck and put them onto trucks.

Somebody said, "Kawaguchi was hit," and I went to see. Superior Private Shigeo Kawaguchi had been hit in the hips by bomb fragments and he was covered with blood. His face was turning pale. I thought his face looked different because his eyeglasses had been blown off. I had a medical orderly give him first aid, and told him to get treated at a hospital and hang in there. Kawaguchi spiritedly responded "Yes, sir." Before leaving Hankou, I had ordered Kawaguchi to be a gunner because he said he knew how to operate a light machine gun. He had jumped out of the air raid shelter, attempting to bring into action a light machine gun, and was hit. Private First Class Noriyasu Masaoka of the district's motorized regiment, which was assigned to supply water, was also seriously injured, and there were still some seriously injured soldiers buried under the barracks, which had collapsed from the blast of the explosion. It was a hideous sight, with severed limbs scattered about.

I directed the soldiers at the military logistics base to gather the dead and the wounded. We brought a desk out to the yard and tried to find out whether the soldiers in the barracks were safe. The district



commander (the commander of the 31st Motorized Regiment), Colonel Kosuke Ota, came for an inspection, and told us to immediately submit a damage report. The registry for the garrison had entries which simply read “officer’s name and XX men,” so we did not make much progress. Adding the officers staying in their own quarters to the soldiers working for the military logistics base, there were a total of nine men dead and 34 hospitalized. Additional medical orderlies arrived from the arms depot, and relief cars came from the administrative division, the district regiment, and the hospital. The fact that I did not have the alarm rung and immediately evacuate the men who were at the barracks there is the regret of my life as a branch commander. Some of the coolies who worked for the military logistics base also suffered serious injuries in the bombing. I ordered the medical orderlies to give them first aid treatment. At night, I sent an emergency telegram to the Hankou Military Logistics Base.

### **April 30**

At daybreak, Army Surgeon Kuroda returned from the hospital and said that Kawaguchi’s condition was critical. I rushed to the hospital by truck. The army surgeon in charge said that there was nothing they could do because Kawaguchi had injuries from bomb fragments from the hips to the abdomen. Kawaguchi asked for water, and the army surgeon said at this point it was all right to give him water, so I gave him some saying he should only gargle, but he choked and could not swallow. Kawaguchi was given a blood transfusion, but in vain, and died at 11:00 a.m. The medical orderly had him changed into a new white gown and put his hands together in prayer. Meanwhile, Private First Class Masaoka passed away when he arrived at the hospital. I put the two soldiers’ remains in the vehicle and returned, planning to hold a wake at the military logistics base that night. The moon was pale and cold as ice. As I sat next to the soldiers, who spoke few words, I continued writing a detailed report to the military logistics headquarters to be sent by the freight depot shuttle departing for Hankou the next morning. I was wracked by feelings of guilt by the many casualties that had resulted because my actions were not appropriate.

*Having many soldiers die, not feeling at peace, I face the pale moon in the watches of the night.*

### **May 1**

At night, we cremated the bodies of the war dead on the banks of the Han River. We piled up the firewood, poured on kerosene, lined up the dead bodies, and lit the fire. Dense white smoke filled the air. I ordered the sentries to take turns guarding the corpses.

### **May 2**

We left to gather the ashes of the deceased early in the morning.

*The reed flowers on the hill are white. Morning dawns as the smoke from burning corpses’ fades.*

### **May 3**

In the afternoon, Lieutenant Colonel Araya came from the Hankou Military Logistics Base to inspect the damage. I had dinner with him that night. I picked up the sake carafe on my tray and poured him a cup, and he served me from his carafe, but then I realized that my carafe was actually filled with geranium herb tea. I had been suffering from diarrhea, so I had ordered my orderly to brew me geranium herb tea instead of sake.



## May 5

The military logistics base went through the motions of holding a memorial service for the two fallen soldiers, Kawaguchi and Masaoka, before sending back their remains.

I am overwhelmed with emotion as I read the memorial address, “On this occasion, May 5, 1944, establishing an altar at the encampment of Shayangzhen, we reverently bid farewell to the spirits of the late Army Superior Private Shigeo Kawaguchi and the late Army Private First Class Noriyasu Masaoka...”

## May 6

Lieutenant Colonel Araya is returning to Hankou in the morning, so I have two soldiers accompany him with the remains of the dead men.

*The sunlight over the Han River is dim in the morning mist. A boat carrying the remains departs.*

## May 10

For the first time, I granted permission for the soldiers to go out in turns.

## May 13

The second aerial bombing of the city took place.

I was working in the office before the bombing began when I heard a “pop” sound like a rifle being fired nearby. I came out thinking that some soldier might have fired his weapon accidentally, but was told that a soldier waiting for a ride had committed suicide.

Three soldiers who had been left behind because they were ill had arrived at the military logistics base in the morning, and I specially asked the freight depot vehicle departing at 11:30 to give them a ride so they could catch up to their assigned units. The suicide happened while they were waiting for the vehicle. The soldier who killed himself took off his shoe, put the muzzle of his rifle into his mouth, and pulled the trigger using the big toe of his right foot, so blood gushed out from the back of his head and he died instantly. I checked the dead man’s knapsack while his fellow soldiers looked on as eyewitnesses. There were two letters, apparently from his mother in his hometown and from his wife. The letter from his wife read, “Your mother is too strict, and I cannot take it, so when this letter reaches you, I will have returned to live at my parents’ home.” The letter from his mother said, “Your wife is mean, and I cannot possibly live with her.”

When I asked the accompanying soldiers, “Didn’t you notice anything even though you were right next to him?” They said they were tired, had inadvertently dozed off, and did not notice anything. They said the dead soldier was concerned he would be scolded by his commander when they caught up for being sickly and falling behind. But perhaps it was the two letters complaining of domestic troubles from his mother and his wife back home that had got to him.

A military policeman arrived, and while he was sketching the layout of the area for recording the incident as a possible unnatural death, three enemy aircraft carried out a dive bombing attack. One bomb fell on the empty land next to the military police building. The building was half destroyed, so the military policeman said he had to return quickly.

One of the soldiers said to the military policeman in a crying voice, “I cannot report that my comrade



who was with me committed suicide. Is there no other way?"

I consulted with the military policeman and he responded, "If the military logistics base issues an eyewitness war death certificate, we will not question it." So, I asked him to pretend the suicide never happened. I prepared the eyewitness certificate, which said the soldier had died "in war from head injuries caused by bomb fragments," using the air attack that had just happened as an explanation, and handed the certificate to the soldiers. They said the soldier who died was the son of a farmer in Utsunomiya. What an unfortunate death of one soldier! Issuing the eyewitness certificate was the least I could do. With it, he will be enshrined at Yasukuni Shrine, and his bereaved family in Japan will receive a small allowance.

### **May 15**

Most of the buildings inside the city have been destroyed by bombing, so the military logistics base moved to the unit barracks in the suburbs and is working from there.

### **May 18**

The third aerial bombing of the city took place. The enemy aircraft came in a formation of seven planes. The Takayama Unit's barracks suffered considerable damage. Fires broke out in the city. A bomb that fell near the former military logistics base failed to detonate, so there were no casualties.

### **May 20**

Because many buildings were destroyed in the bombing, and we have obtained a lot of firewood, every day, starting in the morning, we heat up outdoor baths in drums. We let the soldiers who have marched through the night and have spent the night here take baths. It seems there was a professional carpenter among the soldiers who immediately made a footboard for use in the bathtubs and washing area.

Around this time, the mornings at the unit barracks by the river began with the chirping of little cuckoos and reed warblers. In the evenings, the movement of the units on top of the Han River embankment looked like black silhouettes against the sky.

*On the bank across the river, silhouettes of draft horses and transport corps in a row, far away against the evening sky.*

There are many fires every night in the surrounding hamlets. The fires may have been set by local bandits.

*Could it be a fire at a hamlet burned by local rebels? Burning faintly red in the sky, where the Big Dipper tilts.*

### **June 10**

The movement of units finally ended, and we have some free time. I just go to the district's freight depot guard unit to gather information, or take a dog for a walk nearby. At night, I light a candle and read passages from *Sokkyo shijin* (*The Improvisatore*) translated by Ogai Mori, or *Nihon bijutsushi zuroku* (Illustrated history of Japanese art) by Toyomune Minamoto, which I brought from Hankou.

### **June 12**

The conditions in the surrounding areas have worsened, so nighttime travel and travel by single vehicles have been banned. A soldier who went to Hankou for liaison purposes did not return, even



though it was already night. We received a call from the Luohan Temple, late at night, saying that a vehicle had arrived, but it had been attacked on the way, and that there were a few wounded among the soldiers who were riding as guards. I went in a truck to the banks of the Han River to pick them up and to bring the wounded to the hospital. On the way there, the light of fireflies moved in front of the truck like flowing water. The road was bright with the light of the fireflies, even when the headlights were turned off.

## June 21

A soldier came from Hankou to report, bringing letters from Japan. Among the mail addressed to me, there was a letter from Hoei Nojiri. I had heard that Nojiri was seeking ancient Chinese documents regarding the stars when I was at the Hankou Military Logistics Base, and I had found a few books and sent them to him.

*Orion is unusually bright tonight. I wonder if my children in my hometown are looking up at it too.*

In the letter, Nojiri said that in a radio program called “*Dai Toa no Sora o Aogite*” (Looking up at the Great Asian sky) on April 17, he had quoted from the humble tanka poem I had written on the margins of a letter I sent him with those Chinese books.

## June 27

While working on site to prepare for the relocation of the military logistics branch to the former location of the Arai Unit's Materials Depot, we were attacked by seven bombers and eight fighter aircraft. Part of the building was destroyed by the bombing and strafing. The soldiers who were working half-naked jumped into a thicket by the river, and were covered with cuts and scratches from the thorns of wild roses and bush killer vines, but there were no other casualties.

## July 6

A coded telegram arrived, and I had it decoded by the district's signals team. The telegram said, “Return to Hankou immediately and have your military logistics duties taken over by the 39th Division's Outlying Station.” I reported to the District Unit Commander, Colonel Ota, and it was decided that I would leave the next day, on the 7th. Unit Commander Ota had dinner with me that night and said he regretted to see me go. First Lieutenants Adjutant Mori and Paymaster Hirayama attended, along with Takawaki from awards, and Yasukawa from transportation.

## July 7

I completed the handover of duties to Second Lieutenant Kimura at the outlying station of the 39th Division's Fuji Unit at noon. Kimura was the head of the station. A young boy, who was a war orphan we had adopted from the previous military logistics base, had become attached to us. He cut the hair of soldiers and ran errands for the military logistics base. He was crying, and asked us to take him with us to Hankou. Sergeant Major Igame calmed him down, and he was handed over to the new military logistics base, together with the dog that was kept at the base. The coolie who was in charge of cooking had graduated from school, and he was delighted when I gave him a Chinese dictionary as a parting gift.

In the afternoon, we crossed the Han River and assembled at Luohan Temple. We completed loading the five trucks and had supper by candlelight in the middle of the night. The red star Antares shined mysteriously in the night sky. The great sorrow at having lost two subordinates in this campaign



stabbed my heart.

## July 8

We were scheduled to leave at 7:00 a.m. We were waiting for one officer from the freight depot who wanted to ride along with us. The soldiers were already in the trucks. While Sergeant Major Igame was telling them from below that they cannot get on and off the trucks as they pleased, and to do so only after getting permission, in the distance six or seven airplanes came flying low, out of formation. It was early in the morning, so I thought they were friendly forces, but then I noticed their engine sounds were metallic, so I loudly yelled right away “Enemy aircraft! Evacuate!” Just then, the airplanes circled and dove, aiming at our five trucks which had gathered, and began strafing us with intense machine gun fire. We were showered with dirt, but most of the soldiers had jumped into a nearby ditch and were fortunately safe. One soldier staying at the Luohan Temple who was hiding in the barracks was shot through the chest. I had a medical orderly treat him and called the hospital right away.

One of the trucks had its radiator damaged and could not be driven. We decided to leave some of the luggage we were carrying at the Luohan Temple barracks and depart with four trucks, but Paymaster Sergeant Ito said he wanted to leave one soldier behind to supervise the luggage. As usual, I ordered Sergeant Major Igame to designate someone, but Igame said “Unit commander, please designate someone yourself.”

Having someone left alone at such an unsafe place was certainly unbearable for both the person designating and the person being designated. So, I said, “Then, let’s all return together. We will not leave anyone to guard the luggage, and I will take responsibility,” and we departed. (We went back to get the luggage on a later date).

There were many bullet holes in the drums loaded on the trucks. The boxes containing the remains of the dead soldiers were also shot up. I contacted the Hankou Military Logistics Base by field telegraph from Yingcheng at 3:00 p.m. We had a flat tire on the way, and also difficulties proceeding because of bad roads. One Nissan truck that was near the end of its service life would not move with any speed. I then ordered Sergeant Major Igame to take charge and follow with three trucks, and I took off with just the lead truck, a Ford, and arrived at the Hankou Unit Barracks 30 minutes after midnight. I went to report to the headquarters. When I asked the guard, “Where is the adjutant?” he replied, “The adjutant has not yet returned from Shayangzhen.”

I asked, “Shayangzhen?” and he said, “The adjutant is First Lieutenant Yamada.”

I told him, “I am First Lieutenant Yamada, what about Adjutant Otani?”

He said, “First Lieutenant Otani went to Wuchang today together with Commander Horie.”

When I went up to the second floor and contacted the commander’s orderly, he said that Lieutenant Colonel Uemon Araya had seen my telegram from Yingcheng and was still awake and waiting. He said that Commander Horie had left today to participate in Operation Togo as a military logistics base commander in Yuezhou because the 11th Army Combat Headquarters had advanced there.

While I was engaged in the operations at the branch at Shayangzhen, the main force of the Hankou Military Logistics Base had advanced to Yuezhou, and the Wuhan Military Logistics Headquarters had been formed in its place under the command of the 34th Army, with Lieutenant Colonel Araya appointed as the commander, First Lieutenant Yamada as adjutant, and First Lieutenant Tsuji as



Wuchang Branch commander.

## July 9

Three trucks under the supervision of Sergeant Major Igame arrived at 4:00 a.m. I reported this to Commander Araya and disbanded the Shayangzhen Branch.

On the afternoon of the following day, two-thirds of the Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters had gone to Yuezhou. All of the rest of military logistics duties for Hankou and the Wuchang district were to be performed by the remaining soldiers and a few assigned units. (The Wuchang Military Logistics Headquarters led by Colonel Ohara, which was stationed in Wuchang, advanced to Changsha.)

The members of the military logistics headquarters at Yuezhou and Wuhan were as follows.

Yuezhou Military Logistics Headquarters: Commander Sadao Horie, Adjutant Yasuhiko Otani, Lieutenant Colonel Genji Fujii, Major Mitsuyuki Mori, Army Surgeon Captain Kikuo Miyazaki, Army Surgeon First Lieutenant Kenichi Nagasawa, Paymaster First Lieutenant Tokujiro Takagi, and others.

Wuhan Military Logistics Headquarters: Commander Uemon Araya, Adjutant Seikichi Yamada, Army Surgeon Captain Yoshio Osawa, First Lieutenant Yaichi Kawazoe, First Lieutenant Yoshio Tsuji, Paymaster First Lieutenant Sakae Noguchi, and others.

In June 1964, I went to the parental home of the late Lance Corporal Kawaguchi to visit his grave at Jikkoku, Gokai Village, in Yamanashi Prefecture. He was the only one of my subordinates who died during the war, and I had been meaning to go. I stayed at the Jikkoku hot springs the night before, and went to visit his parental home the following day, but his parents had passed away five years earlier, and unfortunately his brother, who took over the house, was not at home because he was away on business. I met his wife, and along with his belongings I found the eulogy delivered by Commander Horie at his funeral, and a letter from Unit Commander Kakinuma. I had thought he had died from injuries caused by bomb shrapnel, but “piercing bullet wound” was written in his soldier’s pocket ledger.

*A photograph of the late lance corporal on the transom. It looks just like when he was alive. I miss him.*

*An image of a soldier who died in war, at Shayangzhen in Hubei Province. Twenty years has passed since then.*

*In the soldier’s pocket ledger in the casket is written, “piercing bullet wounds through right femur, soft part.”*

*Parents have already passed away. Brother’s wife alone welcomes me in a large house.*

At the Shayangzhen Military Logistics Base, Private First Class Masaoka had also died in the war, but he belonged to a motorized regiment which was temporarily assigned there for supplying water, so he was not a soldier who had accompanied me directly from Hankou. Masaoka was originally from Kochi Prefecture, and they say he was the son of a farmer from near Cape Ashizuri.

## Chapter 8

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# Wuhan Military Logistics Base

### *Wuhan Military Logistics Base Commander*

Here, I would like to introduce a few people who were at the Wuhan Military Logistics Base and write about some episodes that occurred at the base.

In his memoir, *The Voiceless Front*, Commander Horie described Lieutenant Colonel Uuemon Araya, the Wuhan Military Logistics Base commander under whom I served as adjutant, as follows.

Here, I am going to write a bit about Colonel Araya. Araya had been a senior officer at the Military Logistics Headquarters before I took up my post. While he lacked the ability to adapt strategically to circumstances, he had an earnest and sincere character, and his fair and impartial work attitude gained my absolute trust. Araya served as the most important department head within the headquarters, as an important campaign branch office commander, and as acting commander when the main force of the military logistics base was mobilized. After the Wuchang Military Logistics Base had been absorbed into Hankou, Araya would be in Wuchang when I was in Hankou and in Hankou when I was in Wuchang, serving as my right hand. He never gave me any reason for concern. In March of the year the war ended, even after being promoted to colonel, he would not move from his post at the Military Logistics Base Headquarters. While Araya really should have been transferred to serve as the commander of a suitable unit, he continued working at his duties with no hint of complaint, and I bow my head to his superb character.

Lieutenant Colonel Araya, the commander of the Wuhan Military Logistics Base, was born in Saga Prefecture. He graduated in the 22nd class of the military academy, served as a cadet in the Fukuoka 24th Infantry Regiment, and was transferred to the Oita 72nd Infantry Regiment upon being promoted to second lieutenant. Araya returned to the Fukuoka 24th Infantry Regiment in 1925, and was placed on inactive duty as an Army infantry lieutenant colonel in 1932. He then served at Kashima Middle School in Saga Prefecture, and was called up for duty in April 1939. Araya was appointed commander of the Kokura 14th Infantry Battalion, but in April of the following year, in 1940, he was placed in charge of military logistics duties as a staff officer at the Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters, assisting the former commander, Colonel Matsuda.

I served as adjutant to Lieutenant Colonel Araya for just 8 months, but he was truly a man of absolute integrity, as rarely seen. There were some secret service funds for the military logistics base commander. Even though I told him that these funds were for him to use freely, the upright Araya absolutely would not spend them for his private use. He had me take charge of the funds and use them to entertain commanders of units visiting Hankou, to purchase cigarettes, goods in kind, and other expenses for the prisoner of war camp, to pay dining expenses for gatherings of the officers of the units attached to the military logistics base, to cover expenses for the celebratory toast for everyone following the New Year's ceremonial bow toward the Imperial Palace, and so forth. The secret service funds were ostensibly to pay for obtaining information from Chinese spies, and false receipts were issued for accounting purposes stamped with seals with names such as "Li" and "Jin."

I was also concurrently serving as the recreation section chief in addition to my duties as the military

logistics base adjutant. I continued to entrust performances, movies, and the handling of visiting entertainment troupes to Cadet Nakanishi, and I remained in charge of the cafeterias and comfort facilities. I thought these tasks would be a bit too much responsibility for the young Cadet Nakanishi.

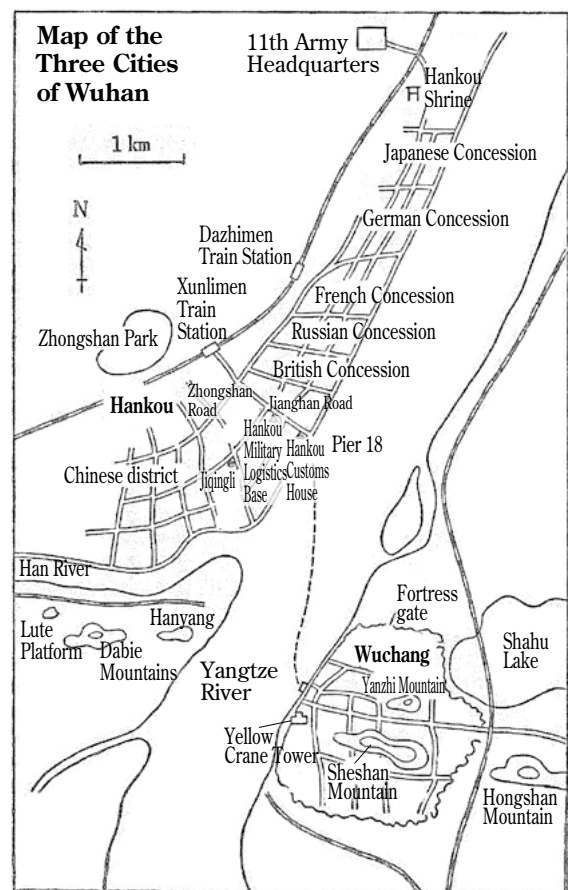
I believe Army Surgeon Captain Osawa, who became the senior army surgeon at the Wuhan Military Logistics Headquarters, was transferred from the unit in charge of guarding the areas along the Tianjin-Pukao railway line. Compared with guard units on the front lines, at rear echelon units like at the military logistics base, military discipline inevitably seemed loose, by nature. There were many aspects that were not orderly, as at regular units. For example, some of the men worked outside the barracks, and the men had different working arrangements and hours. Captain Osawa—who had an earnest character—wanted to change this somehow, and he apparently decided to retrain the men to enforce military discipline, starting from the young cadets.

Cadet Ishida visited me in my room one evening while I was the adjutant. He told me Captain Osawa had summoned Cadet Nakanishi, told him he was slacking off, ordered him to remove his eyeglasses, and slapped him on the cheek the moment he took them off. Osawa then said that Ishida was next, and Ishida came to ask me what to do. I told him he did not have to remove his eyeglasses. I said breaking a pair of glasses or two does not matter. I told him to stare back at Osawa with full force in both eyes, as if to say I do not allow you to slap me. I said if his determination won, he definitely would not be slapped. When Ishida visited later, he told me it was just as I had said. Ishida said he stared at Osawa without removing his eyeglasses, and Osawa did not slap him after all.

Several days later, Captain Osawa visited my room in the evening and told me that Commander Horie in Yuezhou had given him various warnings about his behavior. Osawa said I was the only one who would notify the commander about him. I replied that I am responsible for military discipline at the Wuhan Military Logistics Base as the adjutant, and I report what is necessary as part of my duties when asked by the commander. When I then told him I had not done anything mean, such as slandering people, he left while “complimenting” me on my high spirits.

One time later, Osawa returned late at night drunk on sake, and hit the guard on night watch because the sentry’s attitude was bad. I complained to Osawa, telling him that when he has some issue with the duties of the night watch, he should speak with the officer on duty or the adjutant, and that he was not permitted to act violently to a soldier on duty, even if he was a superior officer. Osawa responded that he understood.

Osawa had been transferred to the military logistics base thinking he would be the senior army surgeon, but he was disappointed because Army Surgeon Captain Miyazaki, who took up his post just before Osawa, had seniority. When the main part of the military logistics base advanced to Yuezhou, Army Surgeons Miyazaki and Nagasawa both participated



Source: Seikichi Yamada, “Bukan Heitan”,  
Tosho Shuppansha, 1978.



in the move, and Osawa remained in Hankou as the senior army surgeon at the Wuhan Military Logistics Base. He also continued to be in charge of medical treatment at the special comfort facilities, for which he had been responsible since he took up his post.

According to Nurse Sekiguchi, who worked at the special comfort facilities, Osawa specialized in surgery, so while he was zealous about the treatment of external wounds and tumors, he viewed internal disorders such as pains in the chest or fevers as feigned illnesses, and did not take up such cases, and he frequently would not provide treatment to the women from Korea.

When Commander Araya invited all the officers to dinner at the officers' club Suigetsu, I pretended to be drunk and teased Osawa, saying that he looks at women's private parts every day for free as a perquisite, and asked him if it wouldn't be charitable to give that fortunate duty to some younger doctor. As the senior army surgeon, Osawa may have felt shame for being at the comfort facility infirmary and neglecting the treatment of units in transit because he subsequently exchanged duties with Cadet Nohara, and returned to the military logistics base infirmary.

I once heard from talk among the men on duty that a young cadet from accounting was going out at night without eating his dinner. I summoned him and told him to eat dinner properly before going out or there could be a misunderstanding that he was always being entertained by vendors.

In December 1944, an entertainment troupe from Chiba Prefecture performed at the Military Logistics Hall in the evening, and Superior Private Ichikawa—who was born in Chiba City—visited the performers in their dressing room. There was a sign posted on the dressing room door saying that entry without permission was prohibited, but Ichikawa apparently ignored this and entered. Cadet Nakanishi, who was in charge of the performances, happened to stop this soldier. He asked him who gave him permission to enter, and wound up hitting him suddenly. The leader of the entertainment troupe said he could not bear to watch what was going on. I heard about this afterward from the troupe leader, and so I called Cadet Nakanishi to my private room and asked him why he had hit a soldier in front of people from the soldier's prefecture, and told Nakanishi that if he had issues with a soldier, he should call him to his own room later on and then hit him. That superior private came from a distinguished family in his region, and when he lived there, he served as a director of the Greater Japan Imperial Rule Assistance Youth Corps. I admonished Nakanishi, saying that it is absolutely unacceptable to hit a soldier in front of a civilian. I also knew this soldier's family well because I came from the same region. Nakanishi may have wanted to show off in front of the people from this region because he was young. Ichikawa should have told him he had received permission from me, but he had an honest character and could not lie.

First Lieutenant Kawazoe, who was the barracks section chief, was an officer promoted from the ranks with a dignified character. During Operation Togo, units advancing from northern China stored transported luggage at the barracks in Hankou, and left behind soldiers to supervise the luggage. Many of those soldiers were leading an idle life, on pretenses that they belonged to organizations such as the "Hankou Liaison Station." There were also soldiers who would not advance to the front lines after being discharged from hospital treatment and stayed at the military logistics base's quarters for individual servicemen, as well as soldiers who shirked their duties by feigning illness to avoid going to the front. Near the end of the war, the reservists in the lowest category of physical fitness included many who were sick and weak, and lacked fighting spirit. Kawazoe thoroughly investigated small units and lone soldiers, formed them into new units with the highest-ranking senior soldiers as their leaders, and sent them off to the front. The teams supervising luggage included soldiers who were investigated by the military police for reselling government property and lavishly

spending the proceeds. In addition to urging soldiers to fight more vigorously, an effort was made to exercise supervision over small units such as luggage supervision teams and liaison stations. These units were placed under the command of the military logistics base and their personnel came under the base's control. Because all of their provisions and fodder were supplied by the military logistics base, it became impossible for black market elements to get involved. The requests for provisions and fodder from each subordinate unit were complex, so the Freight Depot was happy with the lump-sum orders that were compiled at the military logistics base instead. First Lieutenant Kawazoe single-handedly accepted all of these thankless jobs.

### ***One Military Police Major***

Major K of the Military Police Headquarters was an older officer who had been called to duty. He was a short man with salt-and-pepper hair who had participated in the Siberian Intervention. He came to me, saying he wanted to inspect the comfort facilities because he had been newly placed in charge of military logistics base affairs. I told him that was no problem at all, but he also said that at the end of the inspection he wanted to watch the physical examination of the comfort women, so I told him, "Please ask the army surgeon in charge directly when you go to the comfort facility tomorrow." The army surgeon in charge then was Cadet Nohara, who was young but good-natured. After Major K was shown through the guest rooms of each brothel, the cafeteria, and the clinic, he was rejected offhand by Nohara who said, "I have never let anyone watch the physical examinations," and K returned dejectedly. Because Major K may have been offended because we had denied his request to watch the physical examinations, we subsequently had an incident that may have been a case of harassment by the military police.

A bag of sugar was discovered when luggage being carried in a rickshaw was inspected, and it was determined that this had been diverted from the Soldiers' Amusement Park, which was a military logistics facility. For that reason, the manager of that facility was charged with violating the Economic Control Order, and as the adjutant of the military logistics base, I was summoned to the court martial as a witness. As it happened, there was a trial for rape by a soldier from the Akatsuki Unit scheduled just before this trial, so I wound up unexpectedly attending that trial, which was closed to the public.

In September 1944, when General Yasuji Okamura was directing Operation Togo as the commander of the 6th Area Army, he issued the "Five Precepts of the Unified Army Commander," telling soldiers to completely observe the spirit of the slogan "Attack the U.S. and honor the people," and proclaiming that soldiers should not burn, kill, or rape. These ideas were proclaimed up as slogans of the holy war. For that reason, crimes such as arson, murder, and sexual assault were prosecuted especially harshly, and military discipline was strictly enforced.

From what I heard, in this rape case, the defendant was hiding a motorized sailboat in the reeds by the riverbank and would take shelter there during daytime air raids. When he went to the nearby hamlet to procure goods, he dragged out a young girl who was hiding in a house after she had failed to run away in time, and he raped her. The defendant responded to the questioning by the legal officer and justified his acts by saying that the woman who failed to escape quietly took off her pants, lay down on the dirt floor herself, wrapped her arms around him and moved her hips, and received money afterward, so the intercourse was consensual. But the legal officer rejected this flat-out and admonished him severely, saying that violently raping a young woman who was frightened and facing death is absolutely inexcusable. The Army was strict and had abandoned the past practice of overlooking infractions when the accused had a record of meritorious service, and would not pardon

such acts even when committed by veteran soldiers.

The Military Police Headquarters' discovery that sugar from the Soldiers' Amusement Park was being sold on the black market was a great shock to everyone connected with the facility. On the other hand, this was a stroke of good luck for management purposes. We had frequently received anonymous information that some of the managers of the inns, restaurants, and cafeterias inflated the numbers of customers in their reports to the military logistics base and received supplies of extra goods. It should have been possible to realize a huge profit by not selling the prescribed quantities, and holding some back and selling them on the black market. Looking at my memo from January 1945, the market price of a 1.8-liter bottle of sake, which sold for 40 yen at the base canteen, was 850 yen.<sup>57</sup> To obtain vegetables and other items, it was necessary to carry out a bit of black-market activity, including barter with salt, and we were ready to treat such activity as an inevitable part of goods procurement. Nothing could be done when the military police officially took up a case. In such cases, the vendors were fined.

The military police had special powers, and it became very difficult if you not on their side, so we always made efforts to maintain friendly relations with them. The official stance was that the military logistics base was responsible for maintaining order at the comfort facility. As excuses to seek cooperation, we would go to the Military Police Squad for discussions, send the movie team to the Military Police Squad, and otherwise worked at being conciliatory at all times. Several troublesome incidents occurred, but because of such efforts at conciliation, the incidents were all resolved smoothly. I will now write down the main incidents that took place while I was the military logistics base adjutant.

One incident was when Sergeant Kawamoto of the military logistics base was arrested by the military police when he was caught in the act of stealing. Kawamoto was visiting his regular prostitute in Jiqingli, and when she got up to wash, he went out with her long undergarment hidden wrapped around his waist. Kawamoto ran right into a military policeman. He was reprimanded because a red undergarment was showing under his military uniform. Kawamoto was drunk so he defied the military policeman, and was immediately hauled off to the Military Police Squad.

When I received a phone call about Kawamoto's arrest and went to get him released, there was an air raid. Having no choice, I wound up speaking with the sergeant major in charge inside an air raid shelter. Kawamoto had completely sobered up and was meek. He had been reprimanded severely and kept overnight. This was not a case of undermining discipline, but rather a case of theft.

In the embezzlement case of Private First Class Oda, Oda had been asked by the female proprietor of the Katsuya cafeteria in the city to sell her camera, and he was suspected of embezzling the money after he took the camera home. Oda's explanation was vague, and it seems that the female proprietor had spoken with the military police. When I summoned Oda and asked him about this, he explained that the man who was buying the camera had gone to Daye and not yet returned, but that he was a reliable man so it would be all right. Oda was a soldier in the Kakinuma Unit attached to the military logistics base, and Unit Commander Kakinuma offered to have everyone pay for the camera, but that could mean recognizing Oda's embezzlement. So I met with the female proprietor of the Katsuya cafeteria, asked her to wait until the man who was buying her camera returned, and she agreed. I had this conveyed to the Military Police as well, and gained their approval. The case was settled when the man returned and paid the money for the camera.

<sup>57</sup> While the same character is used to write "yen" and "yuan" in the original text, since the author is referring to the street price of sake off base, the market price may be 850 yuan, not 850 yen.

The case of Cadet Matsuda losing a patrol map was as follows.

Many cadets who had graduated from the reserve officers' cadet school were staying at the Hankou unit barracks and were standing by, to be sent to the front. Until their departure, they were left with nothing to do, so they were lazing about idly, and perhaps because he found this to be an eyesore, Army Surgeon Osawa ordered several of them out on patrol to inspect the state of hygiene at the Army-designated restaurants. When those inspections were finished and mimeographed maps of Hankou City showing the locations of the army offices were to be collected, however, Cadet Matsuda said he had thrown his map away, thinking it was no longer necessary. This somehow reached the ears of the military police. They threatened to punish the loss of the military map as a violation of the Military Secrets Act, and a medical orderly came running to my office with a pale face. I immediately went to the unit barracks, and when I called for Cadet Matsuda, he explained he had lost the map after he returned to the barracks. I ordered him to immediately search for it. I then went to the Military Police Squad, told them that the map would certainly be found, and asked them to overlook the incident once it was located. Now the order issued by Army Surgeon Osawa to carry out hygiene inspections was not an official order of the military logistics base, since no prior notification had been given to the base. Regardless, it was not permissible for soldiers of other units to be punished for carrying out duties of the military logistics base, so Commander Araya was also concerned, and he wound up visiting Military Police Squad Leader Hattori. I thought that if worst came to worst, we could create a new map, submit it as the map that was lost, and settle the incident that way. Even though this was a secret map for military use, it was simply a sketch of Hankou City with the military logistics facilities, the Guard Unit's Headquarters, Military Logistics Headquarters, Freight Depot, Military Police Squad and other military offices that were well known among the locals marked, and its loss would not cause any harm to the military. Nevertheless, once the military police became serious, the incident took on an extra dimension.

In the end, the map was found, and the incident was resolved. This is an example of the ridiculous and martinet-like attitude to the enforcement of rules that is particular to the Army.

### ***The Double Suicide at Suigetsu***

From the end of September through November 1944, autumn rains continued like the rainy season in Japan. Possibly for that reason there were no air raids, as if they had been forgotten, and we enjoyed a stretch of carefree days. It was around that time that a double suicide occurred at the officers' restaurant Suigetsu.

One day in September, there was a phone call at the military logistics base from the restaurant Suigetsu, saying that the hostess Takane had drunk poison. I immediately set off to investigate together with Army Surgeon Captain Yoshio Osawa, and we found that the woman named Takane had attempted suicide together with an Army surgeon who was a captain from the Hayabusa Unit. Takane was a small-framed but rather sophisticated and stylish woman.

They told us that the army surgeon who had spent the night did not wake up and come out, even when it became nearly 10:00 a.m. When the madam knocked on the door, no one answered. She thought something was wrong, forced the door open, and found the two on the verge of death from having taken poison. She immediately called the Hayabusa Unit, which sent a car to pick up the captain, and he was no longer there when we arrived.

Takane, who had been left behind, was in a coma, and in the room alone. But she was still alive, so for

the time being Army Surgeon Osawa injected a cardiac stimulant, pumped out her stomach, lifted her tongue with disposable chopsticks so she could breathe, and tried to nurse her back to health, but she could not be saved. A woman who had been in the next room said, “They were up talking until late at night, and I heard them speaking quietly until after midnight. I also heard something like sobbing.”

When we looked, we found a pocket-sized volume of *The Complete Works of Soseki Natsume* in a red binding by Takane’s pillow. When I picked it up, it was *Volume 13: Collection of Literary Sketches*. Inside, there was an opened white envelope with a letter presumably written by the captain. I thought this might be his will, but when I checked it was a love letter addressed to Takane, with the following message in small, carefully written characters.

I was looking forward to going to your place early tonight, but I suddenly had to operate on a patient with appendicitis. I was thinking only about you during the operation. My unit will be transferred far away soon. Even though there are only a few days left for me to see you, the patient’s condition is poor, and I cannot leave him alone. I am looking at the stars in the sky right now and thinking only about you. I would be so happy if we could be together always like the stars Altair and Vega. I am thinking about this keenly...

Two birds in cages without freedom. Maybe they hoped to realize their love—which could not be attained in this world—in the next.

The adjutant of the Hayabusa Unit soon came to see me at the military logistics base. He said they wanted to somehow keep this incident secret. I replied that rather than coming to the military logistics base, it would be better for him to first make that request to the Military Police Squad, and I silently handed him the letter written by the captain. I heard that the captain also died eventually, but I never found out how this incident was handled by the military police.

At Suigetsu, Takane’s room was left empty and not used after this incident. There were rumors of whispering voices in the middle of the night, and it seems the women were afraid and would not go near the room. As a last resort, the proprietor asked the priest of Higashi Honganji Temple to come and recite sutras for the repose of the dead. Workers from Suigetsu and those concerned from the military logistics base gathered in Takane’s room that evening, had a drink, sang war songs that were becoming popular at the time including one that went “So long, Hankou, until we meet again,” and drove away the ghosts who were haunting the room. On their urging, I also sang the “Hakutosan bushi” (Paektu mountain song), which is one of my favorites.

*Do not cry, do not lament, and come meet me at Kudanzaka. I will return without fail, with a small box made of paulownia wood covered with brocade cloth.*

## ***Days at the Military Logistics Base***

Around the middle of October 1944, Tosuke Yoshida, who was a commentator on China and the head of the editorial board of the *Shanghai News*, came to Hankou from Shanghai. With permission from Commander Araya, I went to pick up Yoshida one evening at the Chuo Hotel to come to the military logistics base and give a lecture. After Yoshida spoke about the future of the Second World War, there was an interesting question and answer session at a discussion session for officers only. Yoshida’s view was that Chiang Kai-shek was not pro-British and pro-American as reported since he was Oriental after all, and that he seemed to be thinking deeply about China’s independence. Yoshida said Chiang believed that if the great war ended in the victory of the anti-Axis powers, Chinese cities would fall to Anglo-American capitalism, while rural farm villages would be invaded by Soviet communism,



and China's independence would be more uncertain. Yoshida said that the death of Wang Jingwei<sup>58</sup> was not necessarily disadvantageous for Japan, and conversely, that the consequent rise of a third force could be expected to move forward an alliance between Japan and China in the future.

The proprietor of the Shimeido Bookstore, Yasuyuki Uematsu, held a banquet for Yoshida at the Ginsetsu restaurant which was attended by *Shanghai Daily* Bureau Chief Sakata, Sawakichi Ichida of the Wuhan Patriotic Association, and other notables. I was the only person from the military who had been invited. At the table, Yoshida spoke about the fish of Yangtze River while we all enjoyed authentic Chinese cuisine.

After his speech, however, a man came from the consulate police and asked various questions about Yoshida's remarks. Reluctantly, I dealt with him appropriately and sent him off. I did not hear anything from the Military Police Squad. (Please refer to *Shanghai muhen* (Infinite Shanghai) that was published by Chuo Koronsha in March 1949 regarding Yoshida's plans to make peace between Japan and China during the war.)

While this happened earlier, I was asked by the Yangtze Military Logistics Branch commander, Sergeant Major Mizuochi, to attend a public order maintenance meeting on October 9, 1944, so I attended. The representatives from all the hamlets in the pacification district gathered, including a 71-year-old man with a long beard like Ma Zhanshan<sup>59</sup> and dark skin, a man with red eyes who may have been suffering from trachoma, a man with a shiny shaved head, a man with long hair neatly parted down the middle who said he was attending as proxy for his father, and a man wearing black eyeglasses. I spent one night, returned by the regularly scheduled shuttle the following morning, and reported to Commander Araya.

I then received a message from First Lieutenant Yasukawa, from the Ota Unit's Liaison Station. He reported that Commander Ota had gone to Linxiang, which was a strategic point on the Guangzhou-Hankou Railway, by airplane and spent the night. On the return flight, the plane went missing near Puqi, and a search was taking place from the sky and from the land. The plane may have made an emergency landing. The unit's Presentation Day<sup>60</sup> celebration was postponed indefinitely, and Yasukawa returned a *shamisen*. The day after the meeting of unit commanders, I had told Commander Araya how I received various courtesies from Commander Ota when I was serving as the Shayangzhen Branch commander, and Commander Araya proposed inviting him to dinner. Araya invited Ota to the Fusokaku restaurant two days later. That dinner party was attended by Commander Ota, his adjutant, Paymaster Hiyama, and First Lieutenant Yasukawa from their side, and by Commander Araya and me from our side. At the dinner, Paymaster Hiyama mentioned that the Presentation Day celebrations at their unit were to be held soon, and he wanted to borrow a *shamisen* if there was one available for the soldiers' entertainment. We had one sent from the officers' restaurant Gion and handed it to him. That evening the adjutant said he was not feeling well and hardly ate at all, so Paymaster Hiyama accompanied Commander Ota to Linxiang in place of the adjutant, and ended up in this aerial accident. Commander Ota was the leader of the 31st Motorized Regiment, and he was promoted posthumously to major general.

I received a phone call from Sergeant Major Mizuochi in Yangtze, who said that the chairman of the Public Order Maintenance Committee in Wu Tong Kou—who had attended the meeting the day before—had been murdered that morning. Mizuochi said Wang Jingwei's guards had come to

<sup>58</sup> Wang was the president of the Japanese-backed Reorganized National Government of the Republic of China.

<sup>59</sup> Ma was a Chinese general who fought the Japanese.

<sup>60</sup> Presentation Days were festivals when military bases would be opened to the general public.

requisition coolies, and when the chairman refused, saying that was not possible without a certificate from the military logistics base, he was abruptly shot and died immediately. Mizuochi said the chairman's daughter came to inform the military logistics branch, and he was about to go investigate. I told him to exercise caution, and he said he would bring a squad of armed men. The elderly man who was killed had a kind and gentle face. When I had asked how many children he had, he told me he had five grandchildren and smiled. He had left the meeting early saying he was ill, and went home alone in the wind. I could see the smiling face of this old man, who didn't even drink, in my mind's eye.

One afternoon, I received a letter saying that the treatment of guests by the military logistics base was poor, so I went to the officers' restaurant Gion to investigate. I summoned the young geisha called Kimitatsu and said to her, "We received a complaint from Adjutant Izumi, from the Guard Unit's Headquarters, that the treatment of customers here is bad. What happened?" She crossly replied, "When he came and spent the night, a waitress told me a customer I know had just returned from the front, and when I got up and instructed her to carry bedding to the parlor downstairs, he became jealous and complained all night. He finally said he was going to report me to the adjutant at the military logistics base. Ridiculous!" Then a geisha named Inafuku, who had long eyelashes and a jaw that stuck out appeared.

I asked her, "Aren't you cold dressed like that?"

"I have my underwear on, so I am not cold. More than clothing, what I want is a pair of socks. Even with a lined kimono, a geisha cannot work without socks."

I told her, "Ok. I will speak with the Freight Depot for you."

Then an older geisha named Kosuzu, who had recently recited the *Gidayu sanjusangendo* to her own accompaniment when the geisha from Gion visited the hospital to entertain the soldiers, came out and offered to perform the climax of *Ninokuchi mura*, but I declined saying I would listen to it on another occasion when I had more time. Kosuzu was delighted that I understood *Gidayu*, because I told her I liked the blind performer Koma-tayu from the Osaka Bunraku Theater.

We sent off the spirits of the war dead at 6:00 p.m. The remains of soldiers from the 11th Army who died in combat or from disease have been enshrined at the military logistics base, but they were to leave Hankou on the *Koyo Maru* at midnight and were to be ferried down the Yangtze River, so we saw them off at Pier 22. I rode in a Plymouth together with the commander, and we went to the pier. The remains, which were then enshrined at the front of the first-class dining hall at the direction of the captain, were in 23 large boxes wrapped in white cloth. We offered incense and returned.

At night, Paymaster First Lieutenant Noguchi came to say he had been invited by Wang Wenming of the New Market Theater to celebrate the National Day of the Republic of China, and asked me to join him. At the dinner, when we spit out the chicken bones, a large dog walked around under the table and ate them. The Chinese opera performance that night was *Er Jin Gong*.

We came back part way through the performance at 11:00 p.m. Paymaster Noguchi suggested we drop by Jiqingli, so we did. When we checked the register at Hananoya, we found that a lot of self-restraint was being practiced. The head clerk must have called because the proprietor of Hananoya and Business Association Assistant Director Kaneda soon came. We chatted, and went back at midnight when the lights were turned off. There had not been any air raids for around one week. Large, three-story buildings were lined up along the dark main street with no traffic, like stage

scenery. The vermilion moon rose in between the buildings. It was a strangely cold and eerie night.

While I was serving as the Wuhan Military Logistics Base adjutant, when I had free time, I would walk about, searching for Chinese bookstores and visiting libraries. I will now write about when I was asked by Yoshu Mizuno to send a book about stars to Hoei Nojiri, my meeting with Army writers, and two or three other odd incidents.

Hoei Nojiri graduated from Waseda University one year after Yoshu Mizuno. Nojiri worked as the editor in chief of Kenkyusha, and then served in various posts as a lecturer at Waseda University, but he is better known as an astronomy researcher than as an English literature scholar. Nojiri wrote many educational books including *Seiza junrei* (Pilgrimage of the constellations) and *Hoshi to tozai bungaku* (Stars and Eastern and Western literature), and he was close friends with Mizuno. In May 1943, I received a letter from Mizuno, saying that Nojiri was looking for ancient Chinese literature, so I wanted to find something unusual and send it to him. I found a book called *Chinese Literature* at the library of Huachung University, and when I looked at the section about astronomy, there were the names of astronomy books written in Chinese characters along with explanations in English written underneath. Using this information, I found *Jingtian Gai* by Matteo Ricci, *Star Catalog* by Shi Shen, and other books, and sent them to him.

I wrote in a letter to Nojiri that to teach my men the locations of the stars when I was posted to Chichijima Island in the Ogasawara Islands, I used concepts such as the “number of hours” and “fractionation” from the North Star. The “number of hours” refers to the face of a clock indicating up, down, left and right, and “fractionation” refers to the distance between the three fingers from the index finger to the ring finger used to show a shooting target. Nojiri later asked me about fractionation.

I do not remember why I sent that letter to Japan. Anyway, I mailed a book about seals called the *Book of Ancient Seals* to Kozo Hoda, who was in my platoon at Chichijima Island, thinking it might be useful for his seal engraving. Along with the book, I enclosed the *Ming Dynasty Star Map*, which I had found for Nojiri, in the same package. I believe Hoda handed the map over to Nojiri when he visited him at Kenkyusha.

The letter from Nojiri read:

Mr. Hoda, whom you mentioned in your letter, visited me yesterday and I received the copy of *Ming Dynasty Star Map*. It is a reproduction of this rare work. I had heard of its name, but I never thought I would find a copy. The work resembles the original, and I was very happy to receive it. I will cherish it for a long time together with the star map I received as a gift from a second lieutenant while he was stationed in central China like yourself, who returned. Mr. Hoda talked about you fondly. He said, “There was no superior officer who could talk about the stars so well in other units.” He himself is also a likeable man with a gentle appearance. Hoda is presently working as a teacher at a high school for girls, and his health has completely recovered. I am planning to get your home address from him and to send your children a copy of the new children’s book *Nihon no hoshi no hon* (Japanese book of stars). At any rate, I repeatedly pray for your good health and look forward to warmly welcoming you and celebrating when you return. (Beer should become plentiful by then.)

When I went over to Wuchang together with Commander Araya for the appointment of a new commander of the prisoner of war camp, I went off by myself to a Chinese library in Hubei Province, looked for books about astronomy, and found an ancient star chart, so I decided to go one more time



and copy it. This chart had a Chinese-Western constellation comparison table, and I copied part of it before returning. I subsequently found that book at a street stall, and sent it to Nojiri. The chart's table:

Aldebaran (Taurus) 畢宿

Canopus (Carina) 老人

Rigel (Orion) 參宿

Algol (Perseus) 大陵

Capella (Auriga) 五車

Vega (Lyra) 織女

Altair (Aquila) 河鼓

Castor (Gemini) 北河

Sirius (Canis Major) 天狼

Antares (Scorpius) 心宿

Deneb (Cygnus) 天洋

Mizar (Ursa Major) 開陽

Nojiri had a section called “A Random Selection of Star Books” in a book he later wrote, which said:

Regarding Chinese star books, I have added a few books including *Jing tian gai* (經天該) which were gifts from Seikichi Kimura (my name was given incorrectly), who was at the front during the war. In my diary, however, the title of that book was *Jing tian yi* (經天議), so I asked Nojiri about this discrepancy. He explained, “It is the *Jing tian gai*, which, in contrast to the famous *Butiange*<sup>61</sup> by Dan Yuanzi in the Sui dynasty, is a book that was edited by the Christian missionary Matteo Ricci, and while both books have the same verse form, the *Jing tian gai* adopts the Western constellations, so it is very interesting to compare them. The date I received the book from you was August 10, 1944, and I wrote that down together with your name.

I found a celestial globe at a second-hand store on Huang Pi Road. While I had a terrestrial globe, a celestial globe is unusual, so I bought it right away and put it on my desk. This was not Chinese, but rather appeared to be foreign, and the constellations were engraved in the Western style. I kept it carefully because I wanted to deliver it to Nojiri. It was tiny, with a diameter of just around five centimeters.

In the summer of 1944, a large number of writers came to Hankou at the invitation of the journalism team. Jun Takami also must have come, but I did not meet him. Einosuke Ito said he wanted to tour agricultural villages, and one evening I accompanied him to the New Market Theater to watch Chinese opera. With Hiroshi Ueda, I stopped by a certain tea house on Jiang Han Road, handed him a concession edition of *Chin P'ing Mei* (*The Plum in the Golden Vase*), and had him bring it back to Japan. That book was lost during an air raid on Chiba. I met Kazuo Dan at the Yosuko Hotel and asked him to deliver a book on stars to Nojiri, but he left that book in the barracks when he escaped

<sup>61</sup> Butiange is sometimes translated as Pacing the Heavens.

during an air raid. Keishichi Ishiguro came to my room one evening, saying he wanted to change hotels. He saw the slender-necked vase on top of my desk and praised it. The characters, reading “Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal” were written on the bottom rim, so it had once belonged to the court, and accordingly it had paintings of the dragon and phoenix. Commander Itabashi had given it to me as a memento when he departed for the front, and there was another small vase with a painting of a flower basket with autumn flowers on a white background which had “Made during the reign of the Qing Dynasty Qianlong Emperor” written on its bottom rim. Ishiguro also noticed a pile of English books on ukiyoe paintings, and he told me he had found an original self-portrait by Hokusai in Paris. Ishiguro moved to the Kairiku Hotel, if I am not mistaken.

My eldest son, Yasuyoshi, once asked me to send him some Chinese postage stamps. I had him send me some commemorative stamps recently issued in Japan to trade them with a Chinese collector. I took these and visited Ren Futian, who was the director of the Zhongjiang Industrial Bank.<sup>62</sup> While conversing using writing,<sup>63</sup> he showed me a variety of Chinese stamps. He said these were leftovers and that I should feel free to take as many of them as I liked, so I shamelessly took many and returned to the base. I gave him stamps issued in Japan commemorating the first anniversary of the Greater East Asia War, the fall of Singapore, the 50th anniversary of the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education, and the 2,600th anniversary of the founding of Japan,<sup>64</sup> and he was delighted. He thanked me politely. In his albums with stamps from each country, which he showed me later, I was surprised to see that the commemorative stamps from Japan that I had given him were already mounted. He was generous, as one would expect of a great man of China.

I somehow got along well with Army Surgeon Eiichi Osaki, of the Itabashi Unit Headquarters, and I would often visit him and chat late into the night. However, he hardly ever came to visit me at the military logistics base. I was usually the one who went. I would go in the evening, get a haircut, take a bath, and have dinner and talk without drinking very much. Osaki had graduated from Kanazawa Medical University, and he came from Uozu City in Toyama Prefecture. Perhaps because Commander Itabashi was strict, the food at the Itabashi Unit was much better than that at the Military Logistics Headquarters, and that was one more attraction. On top of Osaki’s desk was a picture of his young and beautiful wife. He had some good quality Chinese ink and he said he would give me a block, but I didn’t take one. We went our separate ways when he was sent to Changsha during Operation Togo. After the war, I spent one night in Uozu when I went to Kanazawa around 1948, and Osaki was operating a clinic. He had patients who were in urgent need of treatment, so we hardly had any time to talk. Osaki passed away in December 1966 when he was 48 years old.

## ***The Prisoners of War Who Were Dragged Through Town***

Around the middle of November 1944, when I went to report to the 34th Army Headquarters, I happened to run into Second Lieutenant Ishii, who was the leader of the journalism team. Ishii had been a reporter for the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper before he was drafted. A ceremony commemorating the third anniversary of the Greater East Asia War was to take place on December 8, 1944, and a conference of meeting of media managers was being held. Ishii asked me if I wanted to attend as an observer. I declined because whipping up war sentiment among civilians was not one of my duties at the military logistics base. Incidentally, at this conference, they discussed a plan to parade American

<sup>62</sup> Also known as the Middle Yangtze Industrial Bank.

<sup>63</sup> Japanese and Chinese who were unable to speak each other’s languages could sometimes communicate using messages written in Chinese characters.

<sup>64</sup> Legend says that the Emperor Jimmu, the first Emperor of Japan, ascended to the throne in 660 B.C.



aviators who were prisoners of war through Hankou City. The plan was to turn over the prisoners who were under investigation by the Hankou Military Police Squad to the Wuhan Propaganda Association, and to have the Association parade the prisoners around the city and encourage hostile feelings against the evil British and Americans.

I did not see this parade, but according to Hamada, the Manager of the Soldiers' Dormitory No. 2, an American serviceman covered with blood helped a comrade who was collapsing get up onto the platform at the Zhongshan Road traffic circle. Hamada knitted his brow, saying it was horrible. It was the Chinese people, of course, who threw stones and beat the airmen's faces. He said that plainclothes military police escorted the parade.

The two American pilots who had been dragged around were returned to the Military Police Squad on the verge of death, and they died without receiving medical attention. There was also a rumor that they may have secretly been strangled.

Possibly as retaliation, Hankou was carpet bombed by 150 B-29s from noon on December 18. A ferocious air raid with bombs and incendiary bombs continued until evening, and the attack targeted the military facilities on the banks of the Yangtze River, the Japanese concession, and the German concession. The elementary schools, girls' schools, consulates and other buildings in the area were reduced to ashes.

Then on January 14, 1945, Hankou was raided by 80 B-29s, and the former Russian concession, the entire French concession, the city government, Nishi Honganji Temple, the Military Logistics Hall, and the Anglican Church on Hanjing Street were destroyed by fire. Our fire-fighting preparations were insufficient to deal with the repeated dropping of incendiary bombs, and there was nothing we could do. In the evening I heard that the Military Logistics Hall was in danger, so I passed under the falling sparks to go nearby and have a look, but the hall had already burned down, and a large beam was vigorously burning underneath. Yet, aside from the Military Logistics Hall, which was inside the former British concession, the other military facilities (Soldiers' Dormitory No. 1, Soldiers' Dormitory No. 2, the quarters for individual soldiers, the unit barracks, the officers' clubs, the special comfort facilities, etc.) were all in the Chinese district, and remained unharmed.

After the war, an advance party from the U.S. occupation forces came to investigate the dragging incident and demanded that the remains of the two men be turned over. The 6th Area Army Headquarters was in a difficult position. They unofficially begged the military logistics base to share some remains of dead Japanese soldiers which were kept at the military logistics base. Preparations were made at the Enshrined Deities Section to secretly put remains into wooden boxes and writing name tags in English. When I heard about this, I asserted that we should clearly reject that request because I was the military logistics base adjutant at that time, and I knew that the prisoners had not been cremated at the military base crematorium. The military police and crematorium workers soon confirmed that the prisoners had been cremated at the private crematorium, proving that the military logistics base had nothing to do with the matter.

(This case was tried by the U.S. Military Tribunal in Shanghai after the war, and five defendants were executed, including Masataka Kaburagi, who was the Chief of the 34th Army General Staff Office, and some of the military police who were involved. Hankou Military Police Commander Kameji Fukumoto was sentenced to life in prison, and Hankou Consul Manabe was sentenced to three years imprisonment. Because the head of the 34th Army, Lieutenant General Tadayoshi Sano died from illness, and the head of the Hankou Military Police, Lieutenant Colonel Moritsugu Hattori committed



suicide, their indictments were dismissed. The 34th Army Headquarters was relocated to northern Korea before the war ended, so Second Lieutenant Ishii, who was the head of the Journalism Team, was detained in Siberia after the war and tried in absentia.)

## ***The Deaths of Two American Aviators***

Speaking of American aviators, we once detained two American airmen at the Hankou Military Logistics Base's prisoner of war camp. These prisoners were on a reconnaissance plane that crash landed near Changsha.

We received a phone call from the Army in October 1944, and it was decided that the Military Logistics Base would take custody of these prisoners. Japan's war on the continent was an extension of the Second Sino-Japanese War, for which no declaration of war was made, so Chinese prisoners were not officially treated as prisoners of war. Americans prisoners were made captives after a declaration of war, so I thought they had to be treated as official prisoners of war pursuant to the laws of war, and when I asked the Army about this, they said that was correct.

After I checked the relevant laws and issued orders based on the laws, I went to the prisoner of war camp and met directly with the two American airmen. I told them I would offer them every amenity as far as the rules allowed, and asked them if they wanted anything. One was a major and the other was a sergeant. The tall major was a professor at some university. He said he was a Christian and asked me to lend him a Bible. When I asked him why a great power like the United States would attack a weak and small country like Japan, he said that Japan is small but strong. I asked him how the war would end, and he said with a laugh that it would end with a U.S. victory. I later had an English language copy of the Old and New Testaments that I owned delivered to him.

A few days later, I found the familiar leather-bound Bible placed on top of my desk. I was told it had come from the prisoner of war camp. When I called the camp to inquire, there had been a sudden direct order from the Army, and they were turning over the American prisoners to men from the Hayabusa Unit who came to get them. There was a message from the American major sending his regards to me, and saying he had returned my Bible.

I immediately issued orders to turn over the prisoners, and later had these printed and distributed to the concerned parties. While the American prisoners were being escorted to Nanjing, the ship they were on was bombed and sank in the Yangtze River, and they went missing.

After the war, when I was assigned to the 6th Area Army Public Relations Office in Wuchang, I was called to the Military Headquarters to deal with questions about these prisoners. They said that the two prisoners who had entered the Hankou prisoner of war camp had never left. Of course, this was only on paper. Perhaps the orders to turn over the prisoners which I had sent to the authorities in question never arrived, or were not included in the Military Headquarters records. If the fact that the prisoners left the Hankou prisoner of war camp could not be proven, then the military logistics base commander and adjutant at that time would be held responsible. That is what the Army had to say.

The binder holding the orders and the staff diary from the military logistics base had already been burned and thrown away. I thought it was a waste of time, but I went to the Military Logistics Headquarters and looked through documents. Of course, there was no reason to expect that the written order would be there, but I found a copy of a receipt written in pen on military lined paper inside a binder of miscellaneous documents which had remained without being burnt. This receipt was written as follows, and had a thumbprint.



“1. American prisoner Craig Wick,<sup>65</sup> and one other prisoner.

Have duly received the above.

\_\_ Year \_\_ Month \_\_ Day, Army Second Lieutenant \_\_\_\_, Hayabusa Unit No. \_\_\_\_.”

I brought this to the Military Headquarters right away and fulfilled the responsibilities of the military logistics base. It is not my concern how the Army settled this matter afterward.

## ***Murder at the Kaikosha Army Club***

Mr. Ishida, the proprietor of Officers Quarters Choko Hotel, which was a Military Logistics facility, also operated a cafeteria at the Kaikosha Army Club in Hankou. Around the summer of 1944, a veteran who came from Japan was employed as the manager of club.

However, he and Ishida did not get along, and at the end of the year, Ishida was suddenly forced to quit. I do not know the details, but Ishida said he would return to Japan after the New Year, and he came to pay his respects to me, who was the military logistics base adjutant at the time. I told Ishida he should return to Japan as quickly as possible since the conditions were getting worse and it would become difficult to return, and we parted. But he could not book passage on a ship, and he apparently remained in Hankou for about a month.

One evening in February, when I was reading a book I had borrowed from the Soldiers' Library in my room, a medical orderly entered and said, “We just received a phone call saying that someone has been shot with a pistol at the Kaikosha Army Club. They want us to send an army surgeon right away. Army Surgeon Osawa is ready to leave, and he says he wants you to go with him.” Osawa and I rushed off to the Kaikosha Army Club in an automobile, taking along the medical orderly.

Two military policemen had already arrived. The retired lieutenant colonel, who was the club manager, and the driver had died immediately. Apparently, the pistol had been fired by Ishida. Ishida had been assigned a room at the Kaikosha Army Club and was living together with his wife and children. He may have gone mad. He went to the managers' room alone, and suddenly shot the manager with his gun. The driver, who was surprised by the sound of gunfire, came running from the next room and was also shot the moment they met. Ishida disappeared, and they said it seemed he was still hiding somewhere inside the building.

Ishida's wife had fainted when she heard this news, and Army Surgeon Osawa went off to take care of her.

The medical orderly suggested “Adjutant, let's go look at the scene,” and we went into a pitch-black hallway using flashlights to find our way. It felt creepy knowing that Ishida, who had gone berserk, was hiding somewhere in the darkness. When we entered the manager's room, the lights were shining brightly. The manager was dead, sitting face down in front of his dinner. It seems he was shot through the forehead, and a line of blood was flowing out like a red thread. I was also surprised at the sumptuous nature of his dinner, which was still untouched. While such meals were a part of his job, I could not believe my eyes, seeing how he was having such luxurious meals while our forces were fighting critical battles. In the hallway, the driver who had been shot through the heart and died instantly was lying face up, in a pool of blood.

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<sup>65</sup> The name has been rendered phonetically.

The army surgeon finished his autopsy in the presence of the military police, and we returned to the bedside of Ishida's wife, who had fainted. The military police were quietly questioning the cafeteria women and office clerks, taking notes. There was no sign they had made any effort to search for the perpetrator. A heavy silence ruled, and it felt as time was passing very slowly.

Then we suddenly heard a bang, which sounded like a gunshot, from a room on the third floor. The military police and clerks ran up, and said that Ishida had committed suicide. When I followed them upstairs, Ishida was leaning on a desk face down, dead. He had placed the gun in his mouth and pulled the trigger, and the bullet had pierced his skull and lodged in the ceiling.

There was a suicide note scribbled in pencil on small letter paper on top of the desk addressed to no one, which read: "I am terribly sorry it came to this. I will take responsibility and die. Please look after my wife and children."

As soon as the autopsy was completed, the staff at the Kaikosha Army Club brought coffins from somewhere right away, put in the bodies of the manger and driver, called the Buddhist priest Taizen Nakanishi from Minobusan Betsuin Temple, and had him recite sutras.

Meanwhile, dealing with the remains of Ishida, who had committed suicide, was a hopeless task. His wife was sick in bed, and his frightened little children crouched by her side. Having no other choice, I decided to deal with the aftermath of the suicide at the military logistics base. We finally put Ishida into a coffin late at night and had the same Buddhist priest recite sutras.

The priest said, "People who are shot and those who do the shooting all become Buddhas once they are dead," and politely recited the sutras. The priest had a goatee on his chin, and wore a short-hemmed clerical garment and shoes suitable for a battlefield priest. He was a man with strong moral character.

While the priest said they had all become Buddhas, funerals were conducted separately at two locations: Nishi Honganji Temple and Wuhan Temple. As the military logistics base adjutant, I had to attend both funerals.

Why did Ishida commit violence in this way? Even looking at his scribbled suicide note, there is no way to tell whether the act was premeditated or impulsive. In any event, he must have had some extreme discord or grudge. I did not know those details, and I did not inquire.

I had visited Ishida in his room at the Choko Hotel on an errand in the past. He had a copy of *Genkai* (Sea of words) by Fumihiko Otsuki on top of his desk. I thought that was unusual and when I picked up the book and looked at it, Ishida said, "Section Chief, I will give it to you if you want it. Please take it with you," and I accepted the book saying, "Then please donate it to the Soldiers' Library. We will keep it there," and I brought it back.

The retired lieutenant colonel who had been murdered had come to the military logistics base on one occasion. He had an extremely arrogant attitude and demanded, "Turn over some of the books from the Soldiers' Library to the Kaikosha Army Club. Such highbrow books are inappropriate for soldiers." I refused his request. Perhaps for that reason, after that he would look the other way and say nothing whenever I greeted him in the street.

## ***Inflation and Signs of Defeat***

The navigation of large ships on the Yangtze River was suspended because of persistent attacks by

U.S. planes, and only small vessels that were transporting military supplies were allowed to make emergency trips. Electricity was restricted because of a shortage of coal, and with a shortage of table salt, there was also a lack of commodities that were necessary to sustain daily life. Symptoms of inflation emerged, and the value of Central Reserve Bank of China notes fell further and further. To buy the women's affections, soldiers going to the comfort station gave generous tips in addition to the fixed fees, as well as soap, cigarettes and other rationed goods more frequently than in the past. The women also became greedy, and some of them even started to openly demand goods. Rather than the money required to pay off their debts, goods became more important to live.

The comfort women could quickly identify the units the men came from by looking at the insignia on their chests. Soldiers from the Freight Depot, who wore a cherry blossom insignia, were the most popular because they had soap, cigarettes, and other goods which they obtained as perquisites or from outside their allotted rations through friendship with comrades. Only soldiers from the military logistics base and the Guard Unit's headquarters were entertained at Jiqingli at the official prices. That was not possible for regular soldiers. I worked to eliminate this unfairness by guiding and supervising the brothel owners and women, but I could not possibly prevent the invisible wave of great inflation. There were countless complaints that men who had come from the front were being asked to pay outrageous prices.

The Military Logistics canteen was established for soldiers staying at the quarters for individual soldiers, and it sold sake, cigarettes, sweets, towels, tissue paper, soap and other sundries, but the Kyokko cigarettes and other prized bartering items were seldom sold to military personnel who were not officers.

The monthly salary of a superior private at that time was around 24 Japanese yen, including the war zone allowance, or around 133 yuan in Central Reserve Bank of China notes. The prices at the canteen were kept low enough so that a soldier could go out around twice a month, drink a glass of sake, eat lunch, and watch a movie or be entertained at the comfort facility on the way back, but with the sudden depreciation of Central Reserve Bank of China notes, such activities became impossible. Yet the soldiers had quite a lot of money from activities such as selling rations. At the end of 1944, my orderly bought a 1.8-liter bottle of sake and two packs of Kyokko cigarettes as rations for the officers. The proprietor of the Toseiro brothel in Jiqingli happened to be visiting the military logistics base just then, and he complained that he could not even drink sake for the New Year, so I gave him the bottle that I had.

I could not drink much sake, and I did not smoke, but I was sometimes asked by officers from units that were in transit to buy high-quality sake, confiscated foreign cigarettes, and other goods at the Freight Depot canteen for their superior officers. But that was also troublesome, so I purchased these items in advance and kept them in my office cabinet. I always kept Fukumusume top-quality sake, as well as Three Castles, Ruby Queen, and other foreign cigarettes on hand. These cigarettes and other items were almost all for me to give to others.

Prices began to surge at a feverish pace after the New Year, once 1945 began. I have the results of a survey on market prices for the procurement of supplementary provisions and fodder in March of that year. The survey, which was conducted by Superior Private Takeuchi from the accounting office of the Yuezhou Military Logistics Headquarters, reads as follows.

I investigated the market prices of supplementary provisions and fodder in the Yuezhou District the other day. When I say I investigated the prices, there were no accurate statistics,





and I just asked the Cooperative Society and the consulate police for the prices of certain goods. Moreover, there were substantial discrepancies among the prices that were reported. The prices were roughly as follows. (The prices are expressed in Central Reserve Bank of China yuan notes).

Beef: 320 yuan

Pork: 360 yuan

Table salt: 1,400 yuan

Sugar: 300 yuan

Chinese cabbage: 120 yuan

Leafy green vegetables: 100 yuan

Fish: 480 yuan

Prawns: 360 yuan (The above prices are per kilogram.)

White rice: 20,000 yuan (per 150 kg.)

Chicken eggs: 30 yuan each

Tofu: 20 yuan each

These prices are 4 to 10 times higher than they were in the same month of the previous year (March 1944).

Purchases by units were normally calculated based on a fixed amount per soldier. Of course, that was no longer sufficient to cover the costs, so the shortage was paid for with table salt, which was used for barter. The price of table salt also varied from region to region. In this region, where units that advanced south and returned were garrisoned, the market price of table salt rose because too much salt was paid by units that were not familiar with the local prices, which also pushed up the price of agricultural goods. Therefore, centralized purchasing by the Cooperative Society, which is responsible for procuring supplies, is one way to solve this problem. Yet, no measures have been taken regarding this matter.

The survey also said the price of a pack of Kyokko cigarettes, which sold for 0.8 yen at the canteen, had a market price of 1,000 yen.<sup>66</sup> Both the units and the soldiers, as individuals, were placed at the mercy of these skyrocketing prices and this madness. Of course, the military had no effective means to counter this invisible, powerful enemy either.

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<sup>66</sup> This may be 1,000 yuan, since the same character is used to write “yen” and “yuan.”

## Chapter 9

# Military Logistics Base Adjutant's Diary

### 1944-1945

When I was looking at books at the Hankou Bookstore, I found Kyoshi Takahama's haiku collection *Gohyakku* (500 poems). This was a 436-page octavo-sized edition published by Kaizosha in June 1937. It had about one poem per page with a lot of blank space, so I bought it and used it in place of a notebook. I purchased an extra copy and gave it to Commander Horie, and it seems he used it to write down his poetry.

I used it to jot down my personal history and memories from when my children were born, and later for miscellaneous notes.

After I was appointed the adjutant at the Wuhan Military Logistics Base, I used the book in place of a diary and wrote in it, on and off. Here, I present excerpts from the diary entries when I was the military logistics base adjutant from the end of 1944 through the spring of 1945, with the hope of conveying a bit of the frantic atmosphere at the Wuhan Military Logistics Base, which was subject to air raids.

When I read this now, although the writing is rather detailed in some places, on the whole—like the entry “Kojiro (the woman from the comfort facility) came and cried,” which does not say why she cried—it is senseless because it lacks context. I meant to write about both public and personal matters, but the diary is mostly about private matters, which is embarrassing.

#### December 16, 1944

There was a car going to the 34th Army's headquarters, so I got a ride. I had them let me off near the Hankou Japanese Residents Association and proceeded to the girls' high school. The daughter of Mr. Yoshioka, the Assistant Director of the Young Women's Association, was there. I asked her to show me some Chinese books downstairs which had not been burned, but she could not open the door because the key did not fit the yale lock. I met the newly appointed principal, and he spoke about various matters. The principal told me that Mr. Yoshioka used to go to the Hubei Province municipal government offices in Wuchang from time to time, but that he had suffered a minor case of cerebral thrombosis in September and was now resting at his home next to the former French consulate, and that I should pay him a visit.

I visited Mr. Fukuchi, a clerk at the Japanese consulate general. The Chinese books that Fukuchi had spent several months painstakingly sorting through had nearly all been reduced to ashes. The loss of the *Collection of 60 Yuan Dynasty Musical Dramas and Lyric Poems*, which I fondly remember, and other Song dynasty books, was very regrettable. We went to the girls' high school together and looked through various books that had escaped the fire, and parted, promising to meet at Hanjing Street at 10:00 a.m. the next day.

#### December 17

I went to the church on Hanjing Street at 10:00 a.m. and looked through a wide range of books in English into the afternoon. I selected Inazo Nitobe's *Bushido, The Soul of Japan*, Dr. Masaharu Anesaki's *History of Japanese Religion*, a book about rock gardens, a book about urban planning,



Richard Burton's *Arabian Nights*, a collection of all of Shakespeare's works, *The Outline of History* by H.G. Wells, essays by Charles Lamb, a collection of poetry by John Keats, a book about Chinese plays, and a book about ukiyoe painting from a pile of Western-language books.

### December 18

I went out to look for books again in the morning and finished checking through the books that had been privately owned by foreigners. I finally found *Wayside and Woodland Ferns* by Edward Step, which is a book about ferns and had beautiful heliotype pictures. From this book, I found out that English ferns and Japanese ferns are quite different. The English have ferns similar to bracken and fiddle-head fern, but nothing like Old World forked fern or northern maidenhair.

It was close to noon when I returned, and the air raid alarm soon sounded. Thinking that the bombs would eventually fall here as well, I was reminded of the cruelty of war. As part of work to protect items at the military logistics base from bombs, I am thinking about moving 300 valuable volumes from the Soldiers' Library to the Headquarters. Commander Horie, in Yuezhou, said the library was a creation of my heart and soul, and I want to somehow save even a small part of this collection. I also want to take down the picture of Commander Hata entering Wuhan from the gallery and bring it to the Military Logistics Headquarters.

(On this day, Hankou was attacked and suffered catastrophic damage. The Japanese concession was hard hit and was reduced to ashes. There was heavy bombing for five hours starting from noon by 150 bombers including U.S. air force B-29s.)

### December 23

I accompanied Commander Araya to the Wuchang Military Logistics Branch for the appointment of a new director of the Wuchang Prisoner-of-War Camp. I met First Lieutenant Tsuji. From among the letters of soldiers in transit which First Lieutenant Tokuyama inspected, I read a postcard from Second Lieutenant Masao Matsumoto. He sounds like a book lover. In the postcard, he said he was tired of the silly talk about drinking and women ever since he was drafted, and that given his character he would rather read books, even if he had to eat sardines. Apparently, Matsumoto was a teacher at some commercial college, and in the postcard, he mentioned a book of his that was going to be published. On the way back, I found an ancient Chinese star chart at a library in Hubei Province.

At night, we had dinner at the Kinjo Inn and crossed the Yangtze River on the last ferry. We could not contact the car that was to pick us up, so I walked back to the headquarters along Jiangnan Road under a wintry sky together with the commander. When we met Sergeant Major Takaya from transportation at the entrance, he apologized and made excuses.

### December 24

Adjutant Shindo of the Itabashi Unit, who is returning to Hengyang by airplane, came to pay his respects. I bundled a letter addressed to Second Lieutenant Kon Suzuki with a letter from his wife enclosed, volumes 1 and 2 of the pocket edition of *Sakushabetsu Manyoshu* (Manyoshu classified by author), *Nagatsuka Takashi kashu* (Collection of poems by Takashi Nagatsuka), and the four volumes of the Banyu Bunko Chinese edition of the *Dao De Jing* (Way power book) by Lao-zi, and I asked Shindo to deliver these to Suzuki. Shindo said he would send these as official mail from Hengyang to the Field Division.<sup>67</sup> I have heard that Chaling is a land of scenic beauty surrounded by rivers in three

<sup>67</sup> This is a reference to the 27th Division, which was nicknamed the Field Division.

directions. A posting there may be easier than in Hankou, which is being bombed indiscriminately. I sincerely prayed for Shindo's continued good luck in war.

### December 25

I left for Yangtze together with Commander Araya at 9:00 a.m. The commander rode in the passenger seat, while Sergeant Hayakawa and I were in the back exposed to the wind. At Yangtze, members of the Railway Unit were training in a desolate winter field. In the afternoon, we visited Farm No. 1 and Farm No. 2, and returned by the 5:00 p.m. military shuttle. Sergeant Koyama from general affairs called and told me about what happened at the Battle of Leyte Gulf. I found an old copy of *Bungei shunju* magazine. It included "Kiseki" (Miracle) by Kojiro Serizawa and "Jinkichi Monogatari" ("Story of Jinkichi") by Hiroshi Ueda.

There were long-tailed birds with black heads and blue backs flying about on the Yangtze plain. When I checked in *Shanghai Birds*, I found out that these were azure-winged magpies. It seems they are the same as the Japanese blue magpie.

### December 26

When I went out to patrol the military logistics base facilities, I ran into First Lieutenant Horikoshi from the 5th Field Replacement Unit<sup>68</sup> on Hualou Street. When I was stationed in the Ogasawara Islands, Horikoshi once came to the Tanaka Unit at Miyanohama Beach on Chichijima Island as an education section officer attached to the battalion headquarters of the Shibuya Unit. Horikoshi said he had been drafted again eight months after he was discharged, and that Unit Commander Tanaka was still on Chichijima as the fortress adjutant. He said he would drop by some night, and we parted. At night, Cadet Matsuda visited me.

### December 27

I went over to Wuchang with Commander Araya, and the air raid alarm sounded when we were inspecting the Daitoa Dormitory. Air raids are taking place every single day. We quickly evacuated to the suburbs by car. We went to a small farmhouse in the suburbs of Wuchang. It was a peaceful sunny spot on a winter's day. It turned out there were friendly aircraft flying at a high altitude, so there was nothing to worry about. We inspected the Shimbu and Hakko Dormitories. The alert was lifted while we were at the Hakko Dormitory. We inspected the prisoner of war camp in the afternoon, and went back by the 3:30 p.m. ferry. At night, I went to visit the teacher Yoshioka, but he had been evacuated and was not there.

### December 28

I patrolled Soldiers Dormitories No. 1 and No. 2 in the morning, and I hung the 41 cm x 27 cm oil painting *Jingzhou Castle Gate*, which I had received from Toyoshiro Murota, in my room in the afternoon. A second lieutenant from the Field Division came by, saying he would be joining that unit at New Year's, so I gave him a letter addressed to Second Lieutenant Suzuki. He told me there were many war dead among the older officers during the Anren Campaign, so I asked about Suzuki, but he said Suzuki's name was not among the dead. It pains me to hear about the casualties, thinking about the invasion of Suichuan that is about to begin. Sergeant Major Igame returned to the unit, and I gave new assignments to the sergeant majors. At night, it became quite cold. Mitsuko from the Matsuuraro brothel brought me the 2nd volume of *Manyoshuka* (Gems of the Manyoshu).

<sup>68</sup> Field replacement units were manned by soldiers who were temporarily not assigned to a permanent formation. They included new arrivals and transfers, as well as servicemen discharged from hospitals.

## December 29

A letter arrived from my wife for the first time in a long time. I am glad to hear that our children are all well. She wrote that many bombs or incendiaries fell near the house of Mr. Ogida (my supervisor at the National Railways) in Ogikubo. I think it is not easy to be in Japan either. There were no air raid warnings yesterday or today, which is unusual.

## December 30

There was an internal affairs inspection in the morning. Mr. Arai, the proprietor of the Toseiro brothel, came and complained, so I gave the director of the comfort facilities business association a bottle of sake for the New Year's toast for the brothel owners. The official price of sake is 850 yen.<sup>69</sup> I am finding the sexually explicit Burton's *Arabian Nights* to be boring, perhaps because I do not understand it well.

This will be my fourth New Year's in the Army. I spent the first as a fortress infantry platoon leader at the Hasukidani Valley Barracks on Chichijima Island in the Ogasawara Islands, the second as a patient with a war injury at the Hankou No. 1 Army Hospital, the third as the recreation section chief of the Hankou Military Logistics Base, and this time as the adjutant of an empty military logistics base. We must make next year the year for final victory in this horrible war.

## December 31

I went out to patrol the facilities. There was an air raid alarm for the first time in a while. They said there were four aircraft circling above, but the types were unknown. A letter from my children at their evacuation location dated November 13 arrived via Tokyo. Michinari (my 2nd son) wrote about catching grasshoppers and Mariko (my eldest daughter) wrote about participating in an athletic meet. I was happy to hear that my children are healthy. A letter also arrived from Hoei Nojiri. He wrote that he had sent *Zenten seizucho* (Complete star chart) to my home, and asked about fractionation. At night, Sergeant Hikosaka came to visit, and we talked.

## January 1, 1945

The weather is fine. The air raid alarm sounded at 5:30 a.m. Last night the electricity came back, which is unusual, and we could pump the water all the way to up the 5th floor, so I heated the officers' bath on the 4th floor and took a morning bath. By chance, the New Year's sunrise came up between Hankou Bank on the left and the Hankou Customs House on the right. I prayed that this year will be the year we achieve victory. At 9:00 a.m., we enjoyed the New Year's soup with mochi. At 9:30 a.m., we conducted the ceremonial bow toward the Imperial Palace and gave three cheers on the rooftop. We had the New Year's toast at 10:00 a.m. and the officers' meal at 12:30 p.m. At night, I had sukiyaki in First Lieutenant Paymaster Noguchi's room. The electricity went out, so we talked after lighting a tung oil lamp, and went to bed late at night.

## January 2

The skies are cloudy. I spent the entire day flipping through Western-language books in my room. *Outline of Town and City Planning* has Heian period (794-1185) city plans with beautiful illustrations. At night, Cadet Mikoshi came, and I grilled some *mochi* rice cakes and served them to him.

<sup>69</sup> This may be 850 yuan; the same character is used to write "yen" and "yuan" in this book.



## January 8

On this Day to Reverently Accept the Imperial Edict, I woke up at 6:00 a.m. planning to visit Hankou Shrine, but light snow kept falling in the morning, so I didn't go. At 10:30 a.m. a car was leaving for the Military Headquarters, and I went out. I had been asked by Commander Horie in Yuezhou to deliver a 1,000 yen solatium to Mr. Yamazaki, the head of the Hankou Japanese Residents Association, so I paid him a visit. He was speaking with a correspondent named Kasari from the *Wuhan Continental News*. Yamazaki put on his glasses, read the letter from the commander, told me he would send a thank-you note later on, and asked me to convey his gratitude to the commander. He had a clerk write out a receipt. The fires set by the incendiary bombs that hit the residents' association were all put out, since they had enough hands there at lunchtime, but their homes were all burned. When I dropped by the girls' school, the third floor and above were burned, but part of the first floor remained. I met Mr. Fukuchi, who said that all the good books had been burned and only worthless books remained. Fukuchi said he had nothing left but the clothes on his back. I walked back through the snow. I visited Mr. Shiki, who was made homeless even though his residence at the On Lee Building had escaped the bombing, and I gave his wife a letter from the commander. The Navy Guard Unit had also been burned down and destroyed. I visited Mr. Murota, who had lost his home, and so his family was living together with another family. He showed me several paintings by Chinese young women that he had saved from the fire. He told me he had saved paintings in the style of Ryusei Kishida depicting autumn flowers and others showing the scenery of the Bund. I am thinking about asking Commander Araya to buy a few of these for the military logistics base. More than Central Reserve Bank of China Notes, Murota said he wanted matches, so I am going to give him matches in addition to money.

## January 11

I went to the New Market, and the proprietor Wang Wenming had also been evacuated, and was not there. (The New Market was an amusement park like Korakuen. It was initially confiscated and used as a prisoner of war camp, but it was returned to the owner Wang at the request of the Chinese government, and reopened as a private-sector amusement park.)

## January 13

Kiyoshi Ogawa (a resident of Hankou from my hometown of Narita) visited me at the military logistics base. He brought a letter from Akiko Kashiwabara. She is the wife of Buntaro Kashiwabara. Ogawa said that the large acacia tree in front of Kokan Junior High School was planted by her from a cutting. I visited Mr. Kimura at the Wuhan Propaganda Association. Then I visited Chiyo Manabe at the Chamber of Commerce. I had a meeting with her about comfort women entering the Young Women's Association. My orderly bought me a lamp. It cost 250 yuan, which is 45 yen in Japanese currency. The official price of a 1.8-liter bottle of sake, which costs 40 yen at the canteen, is 850 yen.<sup>70</sup> One decanter of sake costs 150 yen<sup>71</sup> at Army-designated restaurants. Commodity prices are skyrocketing. Central Reserve Bank of China banknotes may eventually become wastepaper.

## January 14

The air raid alarm sounded in the afternoon, and when I went downstairs, they said that fighter aircraft had arrived, and planes were battling in the sky. I went up on the roof to take a look, and I

<sup>70</sup> While the same character is used to write "yen" and "yuan," since the author is referring to the street price of sake off base, this may be 850 yuan.

<sup>71</sup> Again, since this is a reference to the street price, the currency unit is most likely "yuan," even though it is written using the same character as "yen."

could see them flying toward the air field. When I went into the underground air raid shelter, I was told that B-29s had come. After a while, I heard the sound of bombs exploding. I went out to look right away and saw that many incendiary bombs had fallen on Jiangnan Road and were burning furiously like candles in a row. Fires broke out in three directions around the Military Logistics Base.

Civil Air Defense personnel did not come out, perhaps because they had also taken shelter. Many of the Chinese houses had locked front doors, and if they caught fire, there was no way to put out the fires. A west wind picked up, and so I assigned men to the west side of each floor of the military logistics base. Sparks were falling down intensely. Private First Class Oda, who was on lookout, came to tell me that fires had spread to the vicinity of the Military Logistics Hall, so I sent 20 men. I also asked the commander to immediately return, and I sent his car from Unit Barracks No. 3 to Army Hospital No. 2 to pick him up.

In the evening, a messenger came, saying that fire had spread to the ceiling of the Military Logistics Hall and nothing more could be done. I felt sad knowing that the elegant dark red curtain embroidered with the chrysanthemum and water pattern, which is the emblem of the Hankou Military Logistics Base, would also burn. The altar and the ritual utensils prepared for the memorial ceremony scheduled for the next day would also be burned as they are. When I rushed to the Military Logistics Hall under the falling sparks, the hall had already burned down. One large beam was vigorously burning underneath.

The fires upwind were finally brought under control at night. The cadets made an admirable effort to put out the fires. While he was eating rice balls distributed as emergency rations, one young cadet said his watch had gotten wet and stopped working. There was no way for me to compensate him, so I gave him a pack of Kyokko cigarettes.

I went up on top of the roof to take a look, and the fires were still burning brightly. The constellation Orion was sparkling in the light indigo sky. When I put my hand up between Rigel and Betelgeuse, the distance was exactly three fractions between the thumb and the little finger. In the sky due south there was a bluish-white celestial body shining brighter than the others, which may have been Jupiter. I ordered Sergeant Baba to lend blankets to the extra guards and to the soldiers who were watching over the houses. I went to bed at 11:00 p.m.

## January 15

In the morning, I had some free time, so I walked down the alley in front, and visited Mr. Hino of the Asia Development Culture Research Society. Hino, who was wearing the national uniform,<sup>72</sup> said to me, "I was just about to come thank you. Thank you so much for yesterday. We were having a regular meeting at the neighborhood association right over there, and an incendiary bomb fell nearby. I checked around here briefly, but everything was OK, so I went to put out the fire." I came here with 10 men yesterday, but Hino was out, so I left a note on his door in chalk saying, please contact the military logistics base adjutant about sending soldiers to carry out books. I returned the Iwanami Bunko editions of *Kurisuchina Rosecchi shisho* (Christina Rossetti anthology) and *Ryokan shishu* (Ryokan poetry collection) which I had borrowed two or three days before, when I came over with Mr. Tsutsumi from the Shimeido Bookstore.

Hino suggested we move the books to the mausoleum on the north side of Zhongshan Park, and I suggested having some of them kept at the Military Logistics Base, if he did not mind.

<sup>72</sup> The so-called national uniform was a drab Mao-style jacket worn by Japanese civilians in World War II.

Lately, I feel that old editions of *Kaizo* and *Chuokoron* are more valuable than recently published books. I picked up one of the magazines. I don't know when it was published. It had a poem about Nara by Yaichi Aizu.

*All through the Night. A maiden in a village in Ikaruga weaves cloth. Since autumn is approaching.*

Hino told me, "The church on Hanjing Street burned down." I was surprised and asked if that was really true. It was a pity. I should have borrowed the key and looked more carefully. It's unfortunate that I had hesitated because I didn't want them to think I would take away the good books. I really can't believe that they all were all burned. When I consider how tens of thousands of books at Huachung University and the Hankou Club were burned to ashes, I just can't get over it.

It was nearly 2:00 p.m. when the alert was lifted. I went to the officers' cafeteria. They were serving bean paste rice dumplings, which were a rare treat and delicious, even though the dumplings had gone hard. I said to the commander, "I have to patrol the Army-designated restaurants this afternoon," and I went out with Sergeant Ikeshita. We dropped by the Matsukawaya Kimono Shop. I told the proprietor Umemura, "I'm glad your place was unharmed. The Military Logistics Hall was destroyed. That curtain was also burned. But let's rebuild it." Umemura said, "It was very lucky that the victims' futons were saved." An incendiary bomb fell on the Chobei Takeda Pharmacy next door, but they all put out the fire. When I went in front of the Marugo used bookstore, the proprietor was there.

I said, "Sir, your store was hit." He replied, "We got it this time. I have taken out some books, but I can no longer run the business, so I will donate them to the Soldiers' Library." I told him, "No, we have a budget, so I will buy them from you." He then added, "The books I was storing on the second floor to put out later were also burned." On the street outside, his wife was bundling books with a baby on her back covered with a nursery coat. There were still a few Iwanami Bunko editions.

I went to see the ruins of the city government, turned around, and dropped by the Chinese restaurant called Dong Lai Shun, which is an Army-designated restaurant on Hualou Street. The proprietor asked, "Why don't you carry out your inspection?" Sake, which cost 8 yen at the canteen, sold for 150 yuan in Central Reserve Bank of China banknotes. Cooked rice, which cost 2 yen on base, sold for 50 yuan. Mongolian mutton barbeque cost 1,000 yuan and sautéed sliced meat, which cost 20 yen on base, sold for 240 yuan. They must have been making quite a profit! If two or three people ate sukiyaki, drank two or three decanters of sake, and were not careful, the bill could easily come to 10,000 yuan.<sup>73</sup>

When I went to the special comfort facilities, the commander was there. A 50-kilogram bomb had fallen near the Katsumiro brothel and destroyed part of the brothel, which needs to be fixed. I checked the air raid shelter in the park, and then went out.

I parted from the commander in front of the Towa Theater and also parted from Sergeant Ikeshita, who said he was going to the goods warehouse. I was walking alone along Zhongshan Road when I heard what sounded like an anti-aircraft gun. Just then, there was a deafening explosion. I thought we had been hit, and when I looked up, black smoke was rising high. At the same time, the air raid alarm sounded. A while later, the enemy aircraft had apparently left, and there were no more sounds of explosions. I dropped by the Hankou Post Office on Zhongshan Road. The postmaster was there. I greeted him saying, "We got hit without warning." I then went from Zhongshan Road to Jiangnan Road,

<sup>73</sup> All of the street prices for products sold outside the army base cited in this paragraph are assumed to be in yuan.

and the people at the cigarette shops and confectionary stores were sitting with carefree faces, and had made no efforts to run. I thought that indeed this is the great nation of China!

When I returned to headquarters, everyone was saying we had been lied to. I learned that First Lieutenant Kawazoe had gone to the Military Headquarters, Army Surgeon Osawa had gone to the restaurant Gion to prepare for the inspection by the director of the Military Medicine Department the next day, and Paymaster Noguchi had been in discussions at the goods warehouse, so only the officer of the day on duty was at the headquarters. At night, there was no electricity as usual, and I skimmed through *Eburesuto 1933 nen* (Everest 1933) by lamplight. I wrote official and private letters to Adjutant Otani and Army Surgeon Nagasawa in Yuezhou, and went to bed late. The fire at Warehouse No. 102 at the Freight Depot brightly colored the night sky.

### January 16

Mr. Hino from the Asia Development Culture Research Society came in the morning, so I spoke with the commander about keeping some of their books at the military logistics base. Hino told him he can entrust the books without concern because First Lieutenant Yamada takes care of books so well. Hino said he is prepared for the worst if something should happen and if the books are to burn together with the Army he would understand. Hino was a reserve first lieutenant who was a propaganda team leader at the Special Duties Department. He had studied psychology at Nihon University.

Lieutenant General Momoi, the head of the army's medical department for the entire theater, arrived at 11:50 a.m. We arranged for lunch at the Kairiku Hotel. He arrived with one extra man in his entourage, so I left it up to Army Surgeon Osawa and ate my lunch at the military logistics base. I returned to the Kairiku Hotel at 1:20 p.m. and waited outside. The driver came holding a baby boy who was not yet a year old, and everyone caressed the baby. The baby's father was 37 years old. A female clerk at the Kaikosha Army Club said the father was a private who had been drafted. It was peaceful in the soft sunlight. But the air raid alarm sounded once again. We returned to the Military Logistics Headquarters by car. The general was wearing a steel helmet, and I guided him to the air raid shelter, which was lit with Chinese candles.

A long time has passed, and the alarm still has not been lifted. The air surveillance sentry on the roof told us through a speaking tube that he was hearing strange aircraft engine sounds east of Wuchang. The general laughed, saying it was interesting that the sentry said "strange" but did not clearly say whether they were enemy or allied forces. I said, "Sir, a total of more than 100,000 books confiscated from the enemy—both Chinese books and Western-language books—have been lost to fire. The Chinese books were burned on the 18th of last month, and the Western-language books were all burned two days ago on the 14th. It is most regrettable." He replied, "There was a plan in Nanjing to disperse the 10,000 books of the Army Hospital, since we can no longer collect books."

Once the alert was lifted, we went from the quarters for individual officers to Unit Barracks No. 4, and then to the special comfort facilities. After that, Lieutenant General Momoi went to the freight depot, and we returned by the commander's car.

When I took Sergeant Ikeshita and went to look at the church on Hanjing Street, the burned books had turned to ash but retained their original shape. It was depressing. We met Sawakichi Uchida on the way. When I asked him, "Is the library at the China-Japan Culture Association OK?" he replied, "The roof caught fire and soldiers put it out, but I'm afraid it will leak when it rains if it is not repaired." I said to him, "Maybe we should keep the books at the military logistics base. In times like these, books are also valuable items. The military logistics base will also be bombed sooner or later but we have

manpower, so we should be able to put out any fires on the first or second floors. You should discuss this carefully,” and we parted. When I entered Sanjiao Street in the French concession, the Tokyo-ya tea house was also burned and gone. The Russian Association was gone as well.

The sky-blue glass of the Tokyo-ya sign strangely remained unbroken. A soldier was standing in front of the library. When I asked him his unit, he replied “Whale,” and when I looked more carefully, I saw he was a second lieutenant. It was hard to tell because he was wearing his military overcoat. I asked him if they were the ones who had put out the fire, and he replied, “Yes. In the evening, the fire spread to the roof, so we climbed up and put it out. We did this twice around 7 o’clock and around 9 o’clock.” I said to him, “This is the China-Japan Culture Association Library. It contains precious books. It would be a shame if they were burned. Thanks to your efforts, they did not burn. I am very grateful,” and left. When I then went to Nishi Honganji Temple, it had burned completely with nothing left behind. I went home at 5:00 p.m. At night, when I got into bed and was glancing through *Rinjin* (Neighbor) by Yoshu Mizuno, there was a knock at my door. It was First Lieutenant Horikoshi, who had been in the Shibuya Unit on Chichijima. He said he had been called up again, assigned to be the leader of the Hankou Guard Unit’s Communications Squad, and was just dropping by. I got up and we spoke about various things. He explained that there were many casualties in the bombing at Warehouse No. 102 on the 15th because the enemy aircraft had threaded their way through our planes and the men could not tell which planes were which, and the enemy aircraft apparently had some accurate sighting device. We agreed to meet at 10:00 a.m. tomorrow to get new boots, and he left.

### January 17

It is the second day of mid-winter training. We are practicing using a sword with both hands. First Lieutenant Horikoshi arrived early. I had him wait a moment, and we then went to the goods warehouse together and exchanged boots. I received one pair of rubber-soled socks for mid-winter training. The air raid alarm sounded when I was sitting by the stove after lunch. I heard we shot down one P-50<sup>74</sup> in Wuchang. The alert was lifted, but then the alarm was soon sounded again. Considering what happened the other day, I decided to be careful and went downstairs. I visited Postmaster Koide at the post office. Koide said he was getting on a ship today—with little warning. The proprietor of Ginyoku came by, and said they were having dinner the next day and asked me to come, so I accepted. We are going to keep the books from the Asia Development Culture Research Society in the former field officers’ room, and plan to move the books using empty boxes for Kyokko cigarettes. I visited Hino after dinner. He said that if you spend time with the Chinese, they are very warm-hearted. Hino told me he wants to establish a Japanese university in Hankou, and that he was leading the Asia Development Culture Research Society in preparation for that.

### January 19

Five cadets staying at the quarters for individual officers came to help. We went to the China-Japan Culture Association and received the books from Sawakichi Uchida. We loaded an encyclopedia published by Heibonsha and many dictionaries into the car, and took them away. I was surprised at how the star charts and other Chinese publications were so solid. At night, Hino came by, and we had dinner together. There was also an air raid alarm today as usual. We joked, calling this “the regular flight from Kunming.” The alert was finally lifted after two hours.

<sup>74</sup> The author probably meant to write “P-51.” The P-51 Mustang was an American fighter plane.



## January 21

Four cadets came. I had them tag numbers onto 300 magazines. Sayuri from the Sanseiro brothel and Chiyomi from the Matsuuraro brothel came to report that they had been suspended from business. The “regular flight” came today as well. At night, there was no electricity.

## January 22

I went to the Military Police Squad to meet with the chief of the Special Higher Police Section regarding the loss of a patrol map by Cadet Matsuda. I won four out of four matches at the year-end military sword skills competition in the morning, but my right hand got hit, and it hurt so much that I could hardly lift my hand. The commander went to the Military Police Squad. In the afternoon, the map was found, so I visited the Military Police Squad once again and had the handling of the incident entrusted to the Military Logistics Base commander. Hino came by, and I gave him *Romantic History of Zhao Yang* and *Romantic History of Emperor Yang of Sui*. At night, I chatted with Paymaster Noguchi in his room until the lights went out.

## January 23

There was a light snow in the morning, but it soon stopped. I heard that former prisoner of war camp director Second Lieutenant Yamamoto had died in action. I was surprised, since only a little more than a month had passed since he left. I had Cadet Miwa copy the Chinese ancient star map. I went out to Zhongshan Road on some business, and then visited Hekisui Ito of the Sanki Company and listened to the Chinese opera records, the third and fourth acts of “Farewell My Concubine.” It was fun to listen while reading the plot. I wrote a letter asking for the return of *Complete Collection of Great Chinese Opera Actors*, which I lent to the prisoner of war camp some time back, and gave the letter to the officer of the guard for delivery.

## January 25

We held a memorial service from 11:00 a.m. There was an air raid alarm in the afternoon. My former orderly, Superior Private Tajima, came to report, and returned *Sachio kashu gappyo* (Sachio Ito poetry collection review) and *Shina tenten* (Here and there in China) from Army Surgeon Nagasawa. Wulipai, where the Yuezhou Military Logistics Base is located, is a mountainous area, and I would like to go there in early spring. When I went to Shayangzhen for communications, there were fields of yellow rapeseed flowers blossoming on the way there, and when I went for the campaign, the red plums blossoms were blooming in all the villages. Also, on my way back, the lotus flowers were beautiful. At night, I picked up Riichi Yokomitsu’s *Shin’en* (Sleep garden).

## January 26

I went to the freight depot and asked where the Chinese records were kept. They told me that the warehouse for confiscated goods is Warehouse No. 102. I stopped by the Hankou Broadcasting Station, and we spoke about holding a record concert at the quarters for individual soldiers. Then I met Mr. Murota at the Hankou Gallery. He was in bed with hemorrhoids. I visited Ren Futian, who was the director of the Zhongjiang Industrial Bank, and exchanged some postage stamps. I went to the consulate general, but the clerk, Mr. Fukuchi, was out. I met the teacher Yoshioka at the girls’ school. When I went to Warehouse No. 102, I was told that the Chinese records had all been sold off last March, but that there were still a few Western-language books, so I went up to have a look. I took home the *Complete Collection of Chinese Opera Records*. The book from the prisoner of war camp was returned. I was surprised to find that the prisoners had put a cover on the book and had handled it with care.

## January 29

In the morning, I went to the broadcasting station to pick up records in preparation for the record concert at the quarters for individual soldiers. They did not have the Chinese opera *Farewell My Concubine*. I borrowed Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*, Beethoven's *Eroica*, Chinese popular songs, and a few other records. There was a phone call from the Army. I went to the Military Headquarters Accounting Department in a motorcycle with a sidecar with Paymaster First Lieutenant Noguchi to discuss the increase in the Military Logistics Base Facilities fees from the following month. I asked Second Lieutenant Nakanishi to take care of the preparations for the concert. The air raid alarm sounded after we finished our discussions. Japanese aircraft were patrolling the skies, so I walked along the Bund and returned. The Toho Dance Troupe was unharmed. A while after I got back, the air raid alarm sounded again, but the alert was soon lifted. In the evening I heard that Yangtze had suffered a sudden aerial attack, with three dead and over a dozen injured at the field railway. I was also told that during the concert at the quarters for individual soldiers, the 200 cadets, who were demoralized because of poor pay, had remained lazily inside their rooms and would not even come out to listen to the records.

## February 3

It is snowing. Staff Officer Tabata came to inspect the military logistics base's facilities, so I waited until nearly 5:00 p.m. He inspected the Soldiers' Library, Kaikosha Army Club, Kairiku Hotel, the quarters for individual soldiers, Ginyoku restaurant, Towa Theater, Jiqingli, Gion restaurant, and Suigetsu restaurant, and then left. We face the issues of making the Towa Theater a military logistics base facility and of running a military telephone line to Jiqingli. At night, Hino came, and we spoke until around 11:00 p.m. I heard that the U.S. military had advanced to around 40 kilometers from the city of Manila. I flipped through Koshiro Onchi's *Hakubutsushi* (Natural history).

## February 5

We held a funeral service for Second Lieutenant Yamamoto. Because this was held at the Wuchang Guard Unit, I attended on behalf of the commander. Powder snow fell lightly on the barracks compound at around 1:00 p.m. I went to visit Wuchang Postmaster Iwashiro, but he was not there because he had been transferred to Hankou. I took the 3:00 p.m. ferry. I dropped by Warehouse No. 105, but First Lieutenant Okuda was not there. I went to the comfort facilities, but the air raid alarm sounded, so I returned. In the evening, I found out that someone had taken Seitaro Atsumi's *Kabuki nyumon* (Introduction to kabuki), and Volume 1 of Utsubo Kubota's *Manyoshu hyosyaku* (Commentary on the Manyoshu) from among the books belonging to the Asia Development Culture Research Society, which is a problem. At night, Sutezo Hiroki from China Film came to visit. We talked about the reopening of the Towa Theater. He left after 11:00 p.m.

## February 6

Cadet Sumino came, and I asked what happened to the missing books, but he did not know. Kojiro from the Matsuuraro brothel came and spoke while crying. Sayuri from the Sanseiro brothel wants to return to Korea because her mother is in critical condition. There was an air raid alarm at night.

## February 7

Staff Officer Takahashi from the Unity Army arrived at 10:00 a.m. and inspected the Soldier's Library. A phone call came, saying the main force was to withdraw from Yuezhou. There were air raid alarms twice in the afternoon. I was told that the U.S. military had made their way into part of the city of

Manila. It was quite cold at night. I borrowed Kyoka Izumi's *Shakuyaku no uta* (Song of the peony) from the Soldiers' Library and read it.

### February 8

I visited Hankou Shrine at 6:00 a.m. At 9:30 a.m., we conducted the ceremonial bow toward the Imperial Palace on the rooftop. At 1:00 p.m., because the repair work on the air raid shelter at the comfort facility had been completed, I went to join a celebratory toast. An air raid alarm sounded before the mess preparations were made, so I went back together with Army Surgeon Nohara. At night, when I was reading a book with my legs under the foot warmer after eating dinner, Fujiko from the Matsuuraro brothel came in drunk and crying. I took her back to Jiqingli, and visited Mr. Hekisui Ito of the Sanki Company on my way back. The lunar New Year is approaching on the 13th and we want to somehow reopen the theaters, but with the air raid alarms every day and Japanese planes not even flying, the citizens are restless. The two lost books were both found.

### February 10

I was going to accompany Commander Araya to the Military Headquarters, but Noji<sup>75</sup> came, so we cancelled our plans because we had to call for the Plymouth. We visited the remains of the Jean-Martin Moyë Hospital in a motorcycle with a sidecar, and toured Zhongshan Park. It was cold. We cannot find appropriate land for relocating the military logistics base. It is noisy, with air raid sirens and other sounds. I spoke with First Lieutenant Okuda regarding the books in Freight Depot Warehouse No. 102, and plan to go and get them tomorrow. Powdery snow fell at night. The commander held a banquet for the officers of the attached units at the restaurant Ginyoku. It was lively, with 15 people attending. The group included five of us who had been one-year volunteers: Second Lieutenant Nashimoto, First Lieutenant Army Veterinarian Miyai, First Lieutenant Paymaster Noguchi, Second Lieutenant Tanaka, and me. The sky is snowy today so we can eat without concern.

### February 11

Today is Empire Day. We perform the ceremonial bow toward the Imperial Palace on the rooftop. I went to look at the confiscated books at Warehouse No. 102 just after 10:00 a.m. with Cadet Sumino and one other soldier. We chose to take 50 books. There was a star chart published in 1870, a book by Lafcadio Hearn, a copy of Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth*, and a book by Pierre Loti. We were invited to lunch. The air raid alarm sounded in the afternoon. We took shelter at the riverbank. The alarm was soon lifted. We went back at 3:00 p.m., and there was another air raid alarm. Fighter aircraft came. I skimmed through the Iwanami Shinsho edition of *Bara* (Rose) by Riichi Yokomitsu. A ship arrived, and there were rumors it was carrying 700 sacks of mail.

### February 12

I was invited to a preview of the Chinese version of the joint Japanese-Chinese film *Springtime Remorse* (Japanese name: *Noroshi wa Shanghai ni agaru* (Signal Fires of Shanghai)) at the Chinese Majestic Theater. Wang Wenming of the New Market was there with his small grandchild. He said tomorrow is New Year's Day, so he wanted me to come and see the Chinese opera. Even though she was only around eight years old, the small girl knew her Chinese characters well. I folded a paper crane from a plot outline and gave it to her. The Chinese performers Mei Xi, Li Lihua and Wang Danfeng seemed finer than Tsumasaburo Bando. In the afternoon, I visited Hino briefly. Cadets Sumino and Miwa came and joined me for dinner. We chatted, and they left at 9:30 p.m. There were

<sup>75</sup> This may be a reference to Kahei Noji, who was a major general as of the date of the diary's entry.

no air raid alarms today, which is unusual.

### February 16

Staff Officer Takahashi from the Unity Army came in the afternoon to greet the commander. Takahashi said he was being transferred to the General Army (China Expeditionary Army). Takahashi told me he wanted to keep the books he had borrowed from the Soldiers' Library the other day for a little while longer. I saw him off at the entrance. In the evening, Commander Araya invited all the cadets to Soldiers' Dormitory No. 2 for dinner on the occasion of the reorganization of the Wuhan Military Logistics Base. Twenty cadets attended. I also got a little drunk and sang the "Hachijo shome bushi" (Hachijo love song) which I learned on Chichijima Island. "*When I saw it from offshore, it looked like a devil's island, but when I came, Hachijo was an island of love...*" No mail arrived from Tokyo. When I went out, thankfully, the sky was cloudy, and I was glad I did not have to worry about air raids.

### February 17

I accompanied Commander Araya to Wuchang at 9:30 a.m. Commander Horie returned from Yuezhou. I returned at noon before Commander Araya. On the way, the air raid alarm sounded while I was on the ferry boat, and I felt anxious. Fortunately, no enemy aircraft came. At night, I had dinner with Commander Horie, and I sent Sergeant Ikeshita in my place to Wang Wenming, who had originally invited me. Adjutant Otani stayed in my room overnight and we spoke until late at night. With the withdrawal of the Yuezhou Military Logistics Headquarters, a new Yuezhou Branch was formed, led by Lieutenant Colonel Fujii. First Lieutenant Tsuji, the commander of the Wuchang Branch, left to take up a new post at the Yuezhou Branch.

### February 19

At 9:00 a.m., I gathered the comfort women at the special comfort facilities and gave a lecture on customer service and other matters. I gave the copy of *The Plum in the Golden Vase Illustrated*, which I had received from Keishichi Ishiguro, to Hekisui Ito, the owner of the Sanki Company. Cadet Sumino and another soldier came to let me know they were going to Wuchang.

### February 20

At 10:00 a.m., I went to Barracks No. 3 for units in transit for an inspection by Staff Officer Yasuzaki. In the afternoon, First Lieutenant Horikoshi, who was my comrade when I was in the Ogasawara Islands, came to visit. Cadet Kokubo came, and we went together to the Asia Development Culture Research Society.

### February 22

Commander Horie came to Hankou. I met at the consulate Mr. Fukuchi, the clerk. Among the books which escaped fire at the Japanese girls' high school, I found a Chinese version of *Zen no kenkyu* (An inquiry into the good) by Kitaro Nishida and *Destruction* by Ba Jin. I also took back the pornographic *What the Master Would Not Discuss* and around a dozen other books and loaded the onto the motorcycle sidecar. In the evening, Cadet Watanabe dropped by. He said that I had taken good care of him while he was in Hankou and that he had had a good time. I promised him that I would write a letter to his home. At night, I read Yasunari Kawabata's *Yukiguni* (Snow Country) and Ba Jin's *New Life*.

### February 23

Cadet Kokubo came to pay his respects because he was leaving for the front, and he gave me the middle volume of *Rinrigaku (Ethics in Japan)* by Tetsuro Watsuji. The weather is cloudy. There was an air raid in the morning, which is unusual. Mr. Shiki (of the Wuhan Poetry Circle) returned to Hankou and dropped by.

### February 24

The transfer notice for the books from Warehouse No. 102 arrived. I went to the Japanese girls' high school, sorted through miscellaneous Chinese books, and found *Above the River* by Xiao Jun, and other books. I skipped lunch and stayed until 2:30 p.m., dropped by to visit Murota, and came back at 3:00 p.m. There was a letter from my wife dated January 6. At night, there was a meeting of the Wuhan Poetry Circle at the new Tokyo-ya restaurant that was attended by Shiki, Irisawa, Nagasawa, Sekiguchi, Senda, Hayashi, Furuya, and me. The light rain stopped, and I returned through the dark streets.

### February 25

Tatsumi from the Army Liaison Office, who was drafted locally, had his family living at the house of Mr. Hayashi, who was a regular member of the Wuhan Poetry Circle. There were many literary books in the collection there. Tatsumi's wife told me to feel free to take any books I wanted. I went to the Kaikosha Army Club in the evening, and tried the 50 yen dinner. I chatted with Hamada at Soldiers' Dormitory No. 2. When I got back at 9:00 p.m., they were showing the movie *Yuki no jo henge* (An actor's revenge) on the 2nd floor, but they had to stop part way because the air raid alarm sounded. After that, we could not use the electricity. There was no kerosene either, so I could not use the lamp, and went to bed.

### February 28

The head of the Unity Army's Accounting Department came at 11:00 a.m. and inspected the comfort facilities and the officers' clubs. We had lunch at the restaurant Gion and then discussed tomorrow's initial patrol. In the afternoon, I borrowed Riichi Yokomitsu's *Hanabana* (Flowers) and *Oshu Kiko* (Europe travel diary) from Mr. Tatsumi.

### March 2

We picked up books from the girls' high school. The master painter Murota delivered three paintings by Chinese young women depicting things such as the scenery of the Bund and flowers. They were purchased by the Military Logistics Base.

### March 3

The commander went to a ceremony where Imperial Commands were being conveyed. I went to Freight Depot Warehouse No. 102 in the afternoon to get some Western-language books. At night, I was invited to a ceremony to mark the completion of the remodeling of the Taikoen restaurant. Ten of us attended, including high-ranking adjutants and high-ranking staff. There was a light rain. I read *Hanabana* by Riichi Yokomitsu by lamplight.

### March 5

There have been changes of command for posts including the director of the prisoner of war camp. The Unity Army's Deputy Chief of Staff, Major General Amano, came for an inspection at 2:00 p.m.



Lieutenant Colonel Araya and I took him around. The inspection finished at 4:00 p.m. We took a break at the Kaikosha Army Club and the air raid alarm sounded. The wind was cold. The cold returned. Members of the Deshan Branch were departing for Jiujiang. I went to Pier 17 to see them off, but they had already left.

### March 9

At 9:30 a.m., I went out with the commander to accompany Unity Army Deputy Chief of Staff Amano on his inspection of Wuchang. We left from Pier 18 at the base of the Hankou Customs House at 9:40 a.m. We walked around the facilities. The Koa Inn is at the foot of Sheshan Mountain up against a gentle slope, and it feels different from Hankou. Red plum flowers are blooming near the air raid shelter of the nationalist government's provincial party headquarters at the foot of Yanzhi Mountain, where the new military logistics base is to be constructed. Below them, yellow dandelions are already in bloom. I met with Adjutant Otani on an issue related to personnel. At night, I gave Tatsumi's young daughter a paper balloon and a doll that were inside a comfort bag for soldiers. I returned the book I had borrowed to Tatsumi's wife, and borrowed Riichi Yokomichi's *Mi imada jyukusezu* (The fruit is not yet ripe) and Fumoto Oka's *Ozasau* (Switchcane).

There were two young sisters sitting in a field at the base of Sheshan Mountain. They said they had come to gather grass to feed their rabbits. The younger girl was six. My daughter Yuriko at home must now be five. So, I wrote some poems.

*On a beautiful spring day, sisters sit on grass. Thinking of my daughter, I talk to them.*

*A little girl with double eyelids and adorable red cheeks. I pick her up saying, "Oh, you are so heavy."*

### March 10

Today is Army Memorial Day. I can hear the sound of a unit firing blanks on exercises from early in the morning. I woke up twice during the night from air raid sirens.

### March 13

I attended a meeting about rear duties for Staff Officer Yasuzaki of the Unity Army. I received a letter from my wife dated January 13. She wrote that my sister-in-law is very sick. My son Michinari became the president of his class. My daughter Mariko became the vice president of her class. I wrote letters to my children.

### March 14

There is a light rain. People who have entered Jiqingli using official identification are investigated. I met with Rumiko from the Toseiro brothel. In the afternoon, Hankou Mayor Shi Xingchuan came by. He graduated from the Military Academy in the same year as the commander. A letter arrived from Second Lieutenant Suzuki's wife.

### March 15

We held a funeral for fallen war heroes in Wuchang. Smallpox vaccinations were carried out in the afternoon. In the evening, I invited Kazuo Dan to the Yosuko Hotel and asked him to hand over copies of *How Are the Stars* to Hoei Nojiri and *Kiitsu shisho* (Keats poetry anthology) to Yoshu Mizuno. I heard that the novelist Kinzo Satomura died in the war in Lingayen, in the Philippines.

## March 18

It is raining. At noon, I had the comfort facilities' brothel owners assemble, and gave a lecture. I spoke about the prohibitions against luxuries and gambling with Japanese playing cards. In the afternoon, I went to the Katsuya cafeteria regarding the resale of a camera by Private First Class Oda. At night, I questioned Oda.

My daughter Yuriko came to me in a dream, and asked for white chopsticks to play house. My wife was outside. I told Yuriko I was busy just then and did not have any chopsticks, and sent her away. Then I woke from the dream.

*Strangely Yuriko came to my side and said she wanted white chopsticks. My wife was outside.*

*Yuriko came and said she wanted white chopsticks, but I spoke to her coldly. I woke up feeling regretful.*

*Wistful eyes of a dear child who wants to use white chopsticks for a playhouse.*

*I failed to speak to my wife who was outside the window. I woke up from the dream feeling dreary.*

## March 26

Captain Iwasaki came from Shayangzhen. I read a mimeographed copy of an article by the Domei News Agency, which said the U.S. military was planning to land on Okinawa. In the afternoon, I went to the Katsuya cafeteria regarding the camera resale incident involving Private First Class Oda.

## March 28

In the morning, a few books arrived at the Shimeido bookstore for the first time in eight months. I bought Yaichi Aizu's *Sankokushu* (Mountains and Valleys). I went to Wuchang at 10:30 a.m., accompanying Lieutenant Colonel Araya. At the invitation of the businessman Tian, we went to the Tianfu Temple and were then treated to vegetarian Chinese cuisine. At night, there was a farewell tea party for Navy Paymaster Captain Mishima in Hankou. The air raid alarm sounded after 9:00 p.m., so the party ended. Mr. Shiki remained. Just when I sat down on a chair in the second-floor reception room after lighting a candle, a bomb fell right behind the Military Logistics Headquarters. I jumped up and ran to the corner of the room without thinking. Most of the windows of my room were broken, and it was a horrible sight. Two soldiers were injured by glass fragments and carried to the infirmary. All the glass windows of the general affairs office and the commander's office on the south side were shattered. They said a single B-29 had dropped four 50-kilogram bombs.

## March 29

We picked things up and did some cleaning. Kazuo Dan came by to pay his respects before returning to Japan.

## April 1

There is a report that Japanese forces have occupied Laohekou. Another report says 90 enemy ships have been sunk in battles around Okinawa. I wrote letters to Hisako Matsumoto and Kunikatsu Shimazu, who are the teachers of my children in Yumoto, where they have been evacuated.

## April 4

There is a light rain. I dropped by the consulate police. They said the dining expenses for soldiers at

the Army-designated restaurants were as much as 15 million yuan.<sup>76</sup> The value of the Central Reserve Bank of China banknotes has crashed. Measures to deal with the situation will be difficult.

#### April 5

The commander came. I visited Hino. I spoke with the assistant director of the Japanese Residents Association. He said he was astonished at the defeatist and decadent morality of people.

#### April 6

The news says the Koiso Cabinet had resigned. As of today, the decision was made that I will be assigned to the Headquarters at Wuchang. Second Lieutenant Masuda is being appointed the Recreation Section Chief for the Hankou District. I returned “Farewell My Concubine” and other records to Hekisui Ito. I visited Business Association Assistant Director Kaneda in Jiqingli.

#### April 7

I went to the business association at 9:20 a.m., had all of the comfort women gather, and gave a farewell speech in a casual manner. I told them to be ready for death depending on the war situation, to simplify their private lives in line with the demands of the state, and that even though I am the recreation section chief for the military logistics base, I could no longer look after them directly because I was being assigned to the Wuchang Headquarters. I became a bit sentimental. I hope for strong policies by the Suzuki Administration. At night, I got my luggage ready.

#### April 8

There is a light rain. I went to Wuchang at 11:30 a.m. and reported to Commander Horie. I returned at 4:00 p.m. The Suzuki Cabinet took office.

#### April 9

It is cloudy. I left Hankou on the 10:00 a.m. ferry to cross the river, which had me feeling nostalgic. In the afternoon, I visited Second Lieutenant Koizumi at what used to be Huachung University. Nearly the entire campus had been devastated. Koizumi gave me an English translation of *Three Hundred Tang Dynasty Poems*. The officers’ quarters are in a separate building up on a hill. The view of the setting sun is beautiful. There is a calmness that is different from Hankou. White wisteria flowers are blooming outside my room. At night, I chatted with Army Surgeon Nagasawa in his room. We spoke until late at night about the co-existence and opposition of two strands of thought: defeatism that has lost its morality, and the spirit of the suicide attack, in which a person dies a hero’s death rather than surrendering. In the middle of the night, stars were radiant in the night sky, which made me think air raids would certainly come. Even after I got into bed, I could not sleep, thinking about the future of Japan’s monarchy and my country. I dozed off for a while near dawn.

#### April 15

I headed off to Dai Jia Mountain on the outskirts of Hankou together with Hisashi Suzuki (an employee of the Rihua Bast Fiber Industry) to gather plants for famine relief. I brought *Makino shokubutsuzukan* (Makino’s illustrated flora) from the Soldiers’ Library, and I took Lance Corporal Inoue with us. At night, I went to the New Market together with Inoue, and watched the Chinese Operas *Ganlu Temple*, *Capturing Sanglang*, and *Spinning the New Cotton*. How Xue Yanxiang depicted

<sup>76</sup> While written with the same currency as “yen,” it is assumed the currency cited here is the Chinese yuan, since it is followed by a reference to Central Bank of China banknotes.

dead people using disguises was interesting. I spent the night in Hankou.

#### **April 20**

In the afternoon, I accompanied the commander to the Catholic orphanage and nunnery. The Chinese nuns were graceful. They were caring for a large number of abandoned infants. They begged for milk rations.

#### **April 23**

I visited Staff Officer Higashi at the Unity Army Headquarters. In the evening, I went with Hekisui Ito to see Stone Statue that featured Dong Mingyan. I spent the night in Hankou.

#### **April 30**

I crossed the river and reported to the Military Headquarters. I borrowed Matsutaro Ishiwari's *Ningyo shibai no hanashi* (Puppet theater) from Hino of the Asia Development Culture Research Society. At night, I was invited by someone from the Hankou Broadcasting Station to the Chinese Majestic Theater to see an adaptation of Oscar Wilde's drama, *Lady Windermere's Fan*. It reminded me of the production at the Tsukiji Little Theater.

#### **May 1**

I accompanied Colonel Araya to attend a ceremony for lighting a fire at the Wuchang Military Logistics Headquarters crematorium. At night, I read Tomiko Hayashi's *Warushawa hika* (Warsaw elegy). I was deeply moved by the misery of the defeated nation.

#### **May 3**

It is reported that that Hitler died in the war.

#### **May 6**

I went to Hankou at noon. I went to see *The Death of Zhou Yu* at the New Market. I met Zhang Mingsheng in the dressing room. He remembered me and happily shook my hand. I dropped by the comfort facilities office on my way back. I spent the night in Hankou.

#### **May 10**

Unconditional surrender by Germany.<sup>77</sup>

#### **May 15**

I returned to Wuchang. There was a letter from my wife dated February 23. I was surprised to learn that her sister had died on February 14. Two hundred airplanes from aircraft carriers had attacked on the day of her funeral. The air raid alarm sounded while they were pulling the coffin on a cart to the Horinouchi crematorium, so they took shelter. Conditions in Japan are not easy either.

#### **May 16**

The Battle of Okinawa is not going well. In the evening, I saw an enemy plane suddenly carry out a dive-bombing attack on the top of Sheshan Mountain.

<sup>77</sup> Germany signed instruments of surrender ending World War II in Europe on May 7 and 8.

## May 17

I was told Unit Commander Itabashi has returned from the front. Sergeant Haruyama came. When I checked in the illustrated reference book, it seems the two large trees on Yanzhi Mountain are paper mulberry and Jesso hackberry. At night, the radio broadcast Act 10 of the ballad drama *Taikoki*. The air raid alarm sounded. I picked up a letter from my sister-in-law and read it. Several things went through my mind. I felt it was a shame she had passed away. I want us to somehow win this war.

## May 18

I received a letter from my wife dated April 3. I wrote a reply. I enclosed 90 yen as condolence money for my sister-in-law. My wife wrote about the soldiers around the time of the February 26 incident.<sup>78</sup> I visited Priest Nakanishi at the Wuhan Temple, and had him recite sutras. From the letter:

On the morning of February 26, 1936, when I stood on the veranda and looked out, I saw about 10 soldiers walking across the bridge over the Myoshoji River. I thought the soldiers were strange because they were not wearing their knapsacks, and they were carrying guns, and had only their ammunition pouches in the front. This was the group that attacked Inspector General of Military Education Watanabe.

## June 6

It seems supplies for the Battle of Okinawa have been cut off completely, and the Japanese forces are being slowly crushed. Army units in Central Southern China will probably be redeployed. There will be some transfers of men to units in Japan as soldiers for decisive battles on the mainland. I do not regret for my life, but if I am to die, I would rather become a part of Imperial soil. I secretly pray that if my bones are to be buried anyway, I would rather they be buried in my own country and not on the continent.

*I pray that my grave where I throw away this life will be in Japan.*

<sup>78</sup> The February 26 incident in 1936 was an attempt by the army to overthrow the Japanese government.



## Chapter 10

### Defeat in War

#### ***Withdrawal of the Yuezhou Military Logistics Headquarters***

According to *Taiheiyo senso rikusen gaishi* (Historical overview of land combat in the Pacific War) by former Army Colonel Saburo Hayashi, there were great changes in Japan's China area strategy from the beginning of 1945. First, preparations for operations against the U.S. became the greatest duty of the China Expeditionary Army, and the focus of military preparations shifted to the coastal areas. Second, several divisions were chosen to be redeployed from the Chinese theater to Manchuria and Korea. The divisions were to prepare for operations to deal with the U.S.S.R., which had entered the war against Japan. Specifically, at the end of April, the 3rd, 13th, 27th, and 34th Divisions were relocated from the front in central China to coastal areas, and at the end of May, the headquarters of the 34th Army was relocated from Hankou to northern Korea. Hayashi wrote that, for that reason, the 6th Area Army withdrew its forces from areas along the Hunan-Guangxi railway and the Guangzhou-Hankou railway, which it had occupied with great efforts, and assembled in the Wuhan District. In the worst case, the 6th Area Army was prepared to stand alone in the Wuhan District, hold its ground, and fight.

On February 13, 1945, there was a phone call from Yuezhou regarding a meeting concerning the relocation of the Military Logistics Headquarters. On February 14, it was decided that the Hankou Military Logistics Base was to be evacuated to the nationalist government's provincial party headquarters in Wuchang. On February 17, Commander Horie returned. At night, after dinner, I heard about the struggles of the military logistics bases on the front from Adjutant Otani and Army Surgeon Nagasawa. One motorized regiment was attached to the Yuezhou Military Logistics Base, and they suffered air attacks almost every day as they were frantically transporting ammunition, provisions and fodder. When they were being bombed and came under machine gun attack, they would immediately light smoke bombs and avoid additional enemy aircraft attacks by pretending to be on fire. At this time, one adjutant, who was merely a first lieutenant, was managing the activities of a motorized regiment.

Shortly before Yuezhou was reduced to ashes by aerial attack, the military logistics base was carrying out administrative duties from a bull-rush mat shack that had been hurriedly constructed in a hamlet called Wulipai, which is in a basin surrounded by hills a little over three kilometers south of Yuezhou. We stationed a sentry on the top of a hill. He would sound the alarm right away when he heard explosions or saw aircraft, and the alert was conveyed to each barracks. But the enemy planes came faster. The men would hurriedly take cover, jumping into roughly dug air raid shelters. A work unit of 250 soldiers from the Field Division was assigned to the military logistics base here.

Superior Private Takeuchi, who had been at the Soldiers' Library, was ordered to work at the accounting office, and he followed us to Yuezhou a little later. Here is something he wrote in his memoirs at that time.

Four of us transporting a safe containing money left Hankou and arrived at Yueyang at 11:00 p.m. on July 19, 1944. There was an intense air attack on the way. We heard that the railway bridge had been bombed, so the train stopped, and we spent four nights at Lukou Station, which was unmanned.

At Yuezhou Station in the middle of the night, the surrounding area was pitch black. I could vaguely make out the tents of the units that had been billeted scattered here and there. The private homes were almost all completely blown up, without leaving a trace. The damaged station building stood alone, black and cold. I went through town, which was under strict blackout regulations, to the military logistics branch. I could hear Chinese being spoken from inside the destroyed buildings. My boots clacked as I walked on the stone pavement, while carefully paying attention to the surroundings. The hobnails on my boots sent off blue sparks from the friction, and this was strangely impressive.

I finally arrived at the military logistics base. The buildings all around had been bombed, and K was inside the one building that remained standing. While unshaven, he was in good spirits under candlelight, and was carrying out reception work for quartering officers. T took my hand. He was happy to see me. They told me the bombing had been horrendous, and that this was like the Rabaul of Central China.

Three kilometers along the Changsha highway from Yuezhou, there is an intersection with the road from Changan. This is Wulipai, which is a low-lying basin surrounded by terraced hills. It is dotted with quickly constructed bull-rush mat barracks and Chinese houses. This is where the Yueyang Military Logistics Headquarters is located. They say the fields of Hunan resemble home. The hills have trees, and the face of the mountain reminds me of those in Japan. This is not like the vast scenery of Hubei, which I am used to. Dongting Lake is located just two kilometers ahead. Its water is absolutely blue. It reminds me of Lake Yamanaka. Recalling my homeland, I get to work.

The fourth day after I arrived, Yuezhou was bombed once again. It was a formation of more than 20 Consolidated B-24s. I could see the fighter aircraft escorting the bombers. The formation flew over us, heading for Yuezhou. The planes were flying at an altitude of around 4,000 meters. Our anti-aircraft guns could not hit them. Our few interceptors that came to attack could not break up the formation. After a while, I saw horrible smoke from the bombs, immediately followed by the sound of explosions. We watched the aircraft leisurely returning over Dongting Lake with their shining silver wings, and someone commented, "Those are really fine aircraft."

There were five or six air raids, but the military logistics base was never targeted. As the days went on, the soldiers became slack about taking shelter in foxholes, and it was funny to see them stick their heads out from the holes.

In the city of Yuezhou, almost all the buildings were completely destroyed by the air raids, but there was no damage at all to the block around Yueyang Tower.

I soon learned that the only radar squad of the Area Army, which was led by a first lieutenant, was on top of the hill on the other side of Wulipai valley. They had dug a tunnel inside that hill, where they hid their equipment. However, the devices were primitive. The parabolic antenna was simply a wooden frame with wires that were spun around. This squad had no Army surgeon, so the infirmary at the military logistics base was responsible for their treatment. Army Surgeon Nagasawa, who was in charge, specially negotiated to get a phone line to the military logistics base installed so we could receive information first. At that time, the radars were called "radio locators," and the images of enemy airplanes were called "reflections," with "a small reflection" meaning a small number of aircraft and "a large reflection" meaning a formation. Images of the enemy planes were captured as soon

as they took off from the airfield, and the squad was also decoding wireless communications above enemy territory and inside enemy aircraft. Because of these measures, the military logistics base was never bombed by surprise. During the retaliation bombing of Hankou, they reported the largest “reflection” ever seen. That was the formation of B-29s.

Along the route for sending additional supplies, the Yuezhou Military Logistics Headquarters, which was located at the starting point of the Guangzhou-Hankou line, and the Itabashi Unit (of the 51st Military Logistics Guard Unit), which protected the area from Military Logistics Line “A” to Changsha, were troubled by the endless precipitation.

Rain fell every day from September through October 1944, like the rainy season in Japan. In the chapter “Hesitating to Go to the Front” of his *The Voiceless Front*, Commander Horie wrote about the units proceeding to the front lines struggling through the mud, the military logistics base trying to move them forward, and the thankless tasks of the military logistics base.

Because it rained continuously for almost a month around this time, the roads turned into fields of mud, and transportation for military logistics was suspended once again. If we were to try and move trucks just because it did not rain for one day, the road surface would be torn up, so the only option was to close the road as an emergency measure until the road surface became sufficiently dry and hard. Around this time, the locations of each unit remained the same day after day on the display board which showed the locations of transportation units on top of the desk at the military logistics base’s transportation section. The duties of the transportation section were pitiful: just putting up “road closed” signs every day on the road by the Military Logistics Headquarters at the three-way junction with the roads from Yuezhou and from Wuchang.

The last time when transportation was suspended because of the destruction of the bridge in Xinshi, the invasion of Henyang was approaching. This time, the invasion of Guilin is approaching. At the military logistics base, we are impatient and eager to do something. Adjutant O is the man who feels this restlessness as much as I do. O has been the military logistics base adjutant since spring of last year. With his clear mind, meticulous thinking, and great sense of responsibility, he has handled a variety of matters and clerical work while stationed here and during military operations. Even though O had been a cadet, he is a superb young officer in no way inferior to the capable active duty officers who graduated from the Military Academy, and I cannot say how much his assistance in perfect harmony with my work has helped me.

In the next campaign, in addition to his main duties as adjutant, O also served as chief of the transportation section. He took great pains in getting transportation for military logistics, which tends to get interrupted, on track. He was also strongly supportive of the frontline divisions that had advanced as far as Guilin. Under bad road conditions, even the motorized units attached to the military logistics base and the motorized units that shared duties with the military logistics base could not move as they desired. The negotiations with motorized units that were passing through the military logistics base to have them take care of transportation duties that were outside their usual mandate were difficult beyond words. Not only did Adjutant O brilliantly complete these difficult negotiations, but he also succeeded in sometimes persuading the Railway Unit to carry out some transportation duties associated with military logistics. O ensured that transportation was achieved using every means available. Despite all that, there were inevitably times in China, where the roads are poor,



that the natural phenomenon of prolonged rainfall could not be overcome. I think you can get some sense of the situation at that time from the following poems.

*Although I resigned myself to a long spell of rain, there are officers and soldiers at the front.  
Let the rain stop.*

*With continuous rain, provisions do not follow. Rice in the husk is hulled, so the soldiers may  
advance in the field where people have disappeared.*

*Watching the rain flood the ruts on the military road where not one automobile moves. There  
is nothing that can be done.*

Then there was the time when a long rain of one month finally stopped. The joy at the military logistics base when the rain stopped was incomparable. The light of Venus which had not been seen for a long time shined gently in the evening sky in the west. It made me feel extremely refreshed.

Transportation recovered! Guilin captured! We were honored with an Imperial message! When I conveyed these messages to the unit, while having a guilty conscience, I was overwhelmed with gratitude and joy, thinking of the hardships of the Military Logistics Headquarters, motorized regiments, and the other officers and soldiers of units under my command who had worked hard under these bad conditions.

Adjutant O in this passage is Adjutant Otani. Otani was a young officer who had graduated from Keio University and had been a cadet. The positions of military logistics commander and adjutant were filled based on appointments. The most important duty of the military logistics base adjutant was not personnel, and neither was it awards. It was vital to get wind of the planning of operations beforehand and based on their scale and concept, to have the military logistics base branch offices collaborate with those operations, calculate the ordnance and other material required, and accurately submit a request to the Army for manpower for the attached units as soon as possible. It would be too late to make such a request after the operations orders were issued. It was necessary to make a thorough proposal beforehand so that the orders would clearly specify the military strength for the motorized units and other formations that had to be attached to the military logistics base, which did not have organic manpower of its own. This required maintaining close relations with the Army General Staff Office, especially the rear staff officers, at all times, and constantly checking on their movements. Officers promoted from the ranks and young cadets almost never directly went to the Military Headquarters. Rather, all orders were handed down via Adjutant Otani. This naturally resulted in a system with a powerful adjutant.

The comfort system at the Hankou Military Logistics Base had its facilities expanded by successive recreation section chiefs, and its basic principles had already been established. I could not overlook the achievements of my predecessors. But based on the intentions of newly appointed Commander Horie, I reported to the Military Headquarters as often as possible, offered my opinions, and received instructions for transforming entertainment for the officers and men so that they could enjoy wholesome forms of recreation. For those reasons, I negotiated directly with the rear staff officers regarding entertainment activities, without going through the adjutant.

## ***Wuhan Military Logistics Headquarters***

Among the three cities of Wuhan, if Hankou was the commercial district, Wuchang was the education

district, and Hanyang the industrial district along the riverbank. Unlike the flat, congested Hankou District, Wuchang was a calm and quiet Chinese-style town that has undulating terrain, with Sheshan Mountain cutting across the middle and the famous Yellow Crane Tower on top of a hill overlooking the Yangtze River at its western edge. The ancient lofty hexagonal structure was no longer there, and all that remained was a square red brick Western building, but the legend of a yellow crane that flew up in the sky is still told.

*Once upon a time, an immortal flew away on the back of a yellow crane.*

*What remains of the tale here is the name Yellow Crane Tower.*

*The yellow crane, once gone, has never returned.*

*Leaving the white clouds drifting in vain for thousands of years.*

A picture showing the mobilization of the entire nation with Chiang Kai-shek on a white horse commanding the army and the slogan of “resistance to the end” was drawn on the cliffside a few years ago, but it has been scraped away and the color has faded, with just traces remaining.

Hongshan Mountain is on the eastern outskirts of Wuchang. Baotong Temple is in the forest here. Baotong is the family temple of Zhang Zhidong, who built Zhang Gong Di. Shahu Lake, which is filled with cool and clear water, is located far to the north of the temple. Lotus leaves thickly cover the surface of the lake near the shore. National Wuhan University is located further to the east, with its series of fine buildings with blue Chinese roof tiles. The university has been taken over by the Army and is being used as an Army hospital.

It seems Commander Horie located the Wuhan Military Logistics Headquarters on February 25, 1945 at the Hubei provincial party headquarters on Yangtze Mountain, which is a small hill facing Sheshan Mountain, based on his judgment regarding the outlook for the war. I wanted to remain at the Hankou Branch together with Lieutenant Colonel Araya, but the commander did not permit this. First Lieutenant Paymaster Noguchi told me later he had suggested that I be left in Hankou to negotiate with the Army. However, I was resigned to the fact that soldiers must do their best at whatever duties they are assigned. It was difficult for me to part from the women at Jiqingli. The young and serious Second Lieutenant Masuda was left as the chief of the recreation section for the Hankou Branch, while I remained as the chief of the recreation section for the entire Headquarters, as in the past. I was also given concurrent duties as the chief of the Barracks Section for the Wuchang District.

At the Wuchang District, we dug an air raid shelter into the side of Yanzhi Mountain and enshrined the spirits of the fallen war heroes. It seemed like a different world from the past when I was at Hankou, where we had a dignified shrine room with a fine black lacquer mortuary tablet with gold letters which read “Officers and Soldiers of the ‘Backbone Army’ who Died in Battle or from Illness,” and where the commander would chant the lotus sutra each morning.

The former Siming Bank building on Jiangnan Road, where the Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters was located, was said to have been designed by a German. The basement, which had been remodeled into an air raid shelter, had a narrow entrance, and left no way to escape if the entrance were blocked by bombing. Once, when an air raid alarm sounded, I had just gone up the stairs to the fourth floor with my orderly to inspect the air surveillance lookout and heavy machine gun positions (two heavy machine guns under the command of Second Lieutenant Masuda). A bomb was dropped and exploded outside a nearby window with a deafening roar. There was a bright flash, and a pillar of flame rose up into the sky. I was stunned and hurriedly clung to a wall. Wuchang had plenty of land and a strong air raid shelter, and it felt somehow unhurried and relaxed.



Commander Horie may have ordered me to concurrently serve as the Barracks Section chief and conduct a survey of the Wuchang District's military logistics barracks because he expected that various supply depots and garrisons would be relocated to Wuchang, along with the future relocation of the 6th Area Army Headquarters to Wuhan University. He may have wanted me to check if the facilities had adequate space.

The Wuhan District was bustling with units in transit that were returning. The units stationed at Wuhan were busy digging air raid shelters into the hillside of Wuchang to store ammunition, fuel, and weapons, and were also training to learn new ambush tactics.

When I went to the Area Army's General Staff Office at the end of July, Second Lieutenant Katayama, whom I was close to, secretly showed me a file of mimeographed copies of transcripts of intercepted shortwave radio messages. Airplanes from U.S. aircraft carrier task forces were bombing mid-sized and small cities all over the Kanto Region, and carrying out strafing with machine guns. Coastal areas of Muroran, Kamaishi, and Mito<sup>79</sup> were being shelled by ships. Reading this, I realized that the war was finally entering its last stages. According to Katayama, the 6th Area Army had assembled sufficient military supplies, ammunition, provisions and fodder to supply itself for two years.

Each unit that had gone south to participate in Hunan-Guangxi Operation (Operation Togo) reappeared in Wuhan, and several of my acquaintances visited me at the military logistics base. My comrade Second Lieutenant Suzuki, who was assigned to the Field Division, was nowhere to be seen. He certainly would have dropped by if he were alive and had come back to the Wuhan District. I casually asked Katayama, and he said that the 27th Division was headed toward a new decisive battle. I could not help but feel concern for Suzuki's fate, which was seemingly fraught with difficulties.

## August 15

The Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the War was issued on August 15, 1945, just as the construction plan for relocating the 6th Area Army to Wuhan University Hospital was nearly finished. We were told there would be a meeting regarding rear echelon duties at the Military Headquarters that afternoon, so I went to Hankou together with Commander Horie. We arrived at the Military Headquarters, and the commander said he would send for a service ribbon. When I asked him what was happening, he said the Emperor was going to speak in a radio broadcast. We gathered together in the meeting room. Chief of the General Staff Office Nakayama stood up and told us we must not say anything critical no matter what sort of commands were given. I thought that was a strange thing to say. The broadcast was full of static, and we could not understand a word. We retired to another room and started a meeting, thinking that the Emperor had spoken words of encouragement. After a while, an Army General Staff officer entered and said, "The war has ended. From tomorrow, everyone is prohibited from going out, except on official business." We looked at each other, and were silent. Eventually the rear echelon staff officer stood up and said, "This meeting is adjourned." I immediately received permission from the Army to order the closure of all military base facilities, and I called the military logistics bases in Hankou and Wuchang.

Commander Horie did not say a word on the ferry boat back to Wuchang. I also remained silent. When I looked at the commander after a while, his eyes were filled with tears. Seeing that, I was suddenly overcome with sadness. I muffled my voice and cried, biting my lip.

In *Yoryu no me* (Willow bud), Commander Horie wrote about this time as follows.

<sup>79</sup> Muroran is a city in Hokkaido. Kamaishi is in the Tohoku area and Mito is in the northern Kanto region of Japan.



*I know that a soldier does not cry, but this Imperial Rescript is intolerable.*

After returning to the Wuchang Headquarters, Commander Horie shut himself up inside his room that evening and did not come out. Adjutant Otani, Army Surgeon Nagasawa and the rest of us gathered in one room and spoke late into the night. There was a sense of relief that the war was over, and I was not particularly sad anymore. A slight hope that I would return to Japan one day emerged. But we might be ordered to repair roads, railways, ports, cities and so forth by the Chinese, and we had to assume that would take about five years. Given its nature, the military logistics unit was likely to remain in place until the very last. If that happened, decreasing supplies, insufficient hygiene and other problems could cause around half of the men to die. So perhaps only those of us who could somehow survive for five years would be able to set foot on Japanese soil. We talked about such matters until late into the night.

### ***Japanese Prisoner of War Camp Yangtze District Unit***

Upon Japan's defeat, I was immediately assigned to the Wuchang team of the 6th Area Army's public relations office. I left for my new post that day together with First Lieutenant Tsuji, who had returned from Yuezhou. While I was away, on the order of the Army, the Military Logistics Headquarters had burned the staff diary. Other files of orders and reference materials, scrapbooks, survey materials and items concerning the recreation section had also all been burned at that time. I had left my personal belongings, thinking my assignment would be brief, but they were lost with the repeated relocations of the headquarters. By the time I returned to my original unit after my assignment was over six months later, everything had been lost.

The Chinese had us report the provisions and fodder held by each unit beforehand, and only provided the number of train cars required to carry the reported supplies. In order to secretly transport black market sugar and cigarettes hidden under the floorboards, it was necessary to bribe the Chinese officers in charge to increase the number of cars, or leave those goods behind. The unit's provisions and fodder dwindled each time we were ordered to relocate.

When turning over armaments, the Chinese detested units that presented accurate numbers. But the Chinese were delighted with those units that showed them numbers privately and let them know there were extras aside from what was written on the lists, and delivery was easy in such cases. Such corruption on the Chinese must have been one of the causes of the annihilation of the National Revolutionary Army.

The public relations office's Wuchang team had two officers: Major Ogawa, who had arrived from the Military Headquarters with his brand-new general staff officer's epaulettes, and me, under his command. Aside from us, the office had interpreters and a few soldiers. Our main work was to carry out negotiations in making arrangements with the occupying Chinese forces. On August 20, all personnel with ranks of First Lieutenant and below were promoted a single grade. The promotions were announced, along with the end of the war.

There was a phone call from the military police squad in Wuchang on October 4. Lieutenant Colonel Masatsugu Nakamura, who was the military police unit commander in Liuzhou, had committed suicide. An autopsy was being conducted by the Chinese side, but they wanted someone from the public relations office to be present, so I was designated by Major Ogawa and went in a motorcycle and side car. I was told that Nakamura had committed suicide, fearing that his subordinates would be made responsible for the killing of the U.S. pilots. He left two farewell poems and I copied them down,



but they were later stolen, which was truly regrettable. I felt respect on seeing how he had poisoned himself with composure.

There were 15,000 Japanese soldiers in the Hankou District at the end of 1945. Of these, 8,000 were evacuated downstream the Yangtze River, with 2,000 evacuees each in the Gedian, Echeng, Huanggang, and Tuanfeng districts.

In February 1946, when First Lieutenant Tsuji and I were ordered to return to our original units, the Wuhan Military Logistics Headquarters had been relocated to the Dai Toa Dormitory on the outskirts of Wuchang. Each unit was soon moved to the Yangtze District on the opposite side of the river. We were assembled in the unit barracks and at the site of the open yard warehouse in an area running 1.5 kilometers along the bank of the river. We were called the Japanese Prisoner of War Camp Yangtze District Unit. There were a total of 7,000 men, divided into Formation 1 through Formation 5. Commander Horie was ordered to serve as the leader of the District Unit. I was made the chief of the General Affairs Section and I assisted Adjutant Otani, mostly by taking charge of general affairs work. Soldiers discharged from the hospital who could not work were placed in Training Units No. 1 and No. 2 under the command of First Lieutenants Higoshi and Yoshioka, and underwent training.

Right after the end of the war, based on Chiang Kai-shek's generous victory message about "repaying grudge with virtue," life inside the prisoner of war camp for Japanese officers and soldiers was relatively good, compared with other districts. Military discipline had not waned, the old order was maintained, and officers were given orderlies. Salutes were given as usual, and it was just like barracks life during ordinary times.

The Chinese supervisor for the Japanese prisoner of war camp was a colonel named Huang Chuan Tian, and he ordered back-to-back investigations of personnel and of the provisions and fodder on hand. We were required to provide nearly 4,000 men as workers at all times to dismantle and fill air raid shelters, level the ground in areas that had suffered war damage, repair buildings, clean up roads, and undertake other tasks in the Hankou District. The troublesome tasks related to labor, such as assigning work to each unit, were mostly the responsibility of First Lieutenant Kawazoe. From the military logistics base as well, work squads led by First Lieutenant Tsuji, First Lieutenant Kakinuma, and Second Lieutenant Kusakawa went to the Hankou and Wuchang Districts, and the squads were used to unload cargo from ships. Fortunately, our men were not persecuted much by Chinese citizens while they worked. However, new military uniforms and boots had been issued at the freight depot immediately after the end of the war, and soldiers wearing brand new items sometimes had them confiscated by Chinese military police who said they were too extravagant for defeated soldiers, so we were instructed to make our shoes and uniforms look dirty, if possible.

With the end of the war, Central Reserve Bank of China bank notes could no longer be used, and the soldiers had no choice but to barter, using items such as officially supplied soap and socks. One pack of Kyokko cigarettes could be exchanged for a garrison cap full of peanuts.

Women and children from farms would gather in the area around the barracks bringing Chinese sweet buns and eggs, and these could easily be obtained by bartering. Around that time, each unit devised ways of making tofu, *natto* fermented soybeans and other foods in their kitchens.

At the military logistics base, various activities were planned to cheer up the soldiers, who had become apathetic with no idea when they would return home. We held a baseball tournament among the units using rubber balls, and a variety show with volunteer performers. We also exchanged pocket-sized books brought from the Soldiers' Library and other books owned by individual soldiers

and read them. This was the first time I read *Nihon gaishi* (History of Japan) in its entirety. There was a Christian officer in another unit who lectured on the Bible, but there was no anti-war movement. There were rumors that the communist New Fourth Army was frequently appearing around Wuhan seeking surrendering Japanese soldiers, and the National Revolutionary Army became very nervous and cracked down harshly on communism. The volunteers from Korea were assembled together into one unit, with about 500 men. They wore insignia with a swirl crest. They said they were citizens of an independent nation and too proud to be under the command of the defeated nation of Japan, and would not work or follow commands. So we asked the Chinese to supervise the soldiers from Taiwan and Korea separately, and delivered them to a new prisoner of war camp at the south foot of Gui Shan mountain in Hanyang. The Taiwanese soldiers included indigenous peoples and others who were actually friendly to Japan, and some were sad to leave us.

As the willows on the riverbank started to sprout a faint green, the waters of the Yangtze River were warming up, and the water rose. The soldiers were looking forward to the ships coming to get them.

A few cases of typhus later broke among the units in the district, and the patients were promptly hospitalized and quarantined. Out of concern over additional cases emerging, we made a plan to completely exterminate lice. We cut dried reeds from the riverbank and used these as fuel to disinfect clothing with hot air. Because we sterilized everything down to the men's boxers and loin cloths, this resulted in the strange scene of groups of soldiers standing around drums completely naked, one after another, until the sterilization of their clothing was finished.

From around the spring of 1946, when the first stage of work was completed, the poetry circle was revived under the auspices of the military logistics base and met frequently. While we were enduring a hard life inside the barracks and camps and looked forward to the arrival of the repatriation ships, the poetry circle met, and baseball games, variety shows, and other activities were organized to relieve the soldiers' boredom. Our poetry group, which was organized around the commander, enjoyed talking about poetry in the cold office while snacking on peanuts obtained in exchange for cigarettes. Seven or eight or sometimes 10 poetry lovers from each unit would gather around a candle until past 1:00 a.m.

On one occasion, Superior Private Tetsutaro Tokizawa, who taught music at a girls' school in his hometown, sang the lyrics of a song he had written.

*I cannot forget the day when I linked little fingers, to make a promise with my child, who was about to cross the Tsugaru Strait in late autumn.*

This song was about the sad memory of the day when a superior private sent off his son, who was evacuating to his grandparents' home in Hokkaido, at a pier in Aomori. They linked fingers to make a promise, and parted.

The accompaniment was like listening to the waves of the dark and lonely Tsugaru Strait, and the refrain was unforgettable. I still have the musical score, which I asked Tokizawa to write out on music paper.

On the wooden floor of the officers' quarters in Yangtze I put on a thin blanket, lit a mosquito coil, and read pocket editions of *Nakamura Kenkichi kashu* (Kenkichi Nakamura poetry collection) and *Kinoshita Rigen kashu* (Rigen Kinoshita poetry collection). Around that time, we picked Chinese celery around the barracks each morning and ate it in miso soup, and we mixed millet into rice for our staple food. It was still early spring. The Yangtze River was low and cold. I submitted the following



poems to the Yangtze Poetry Circle.

*Every morning the scent of Chinese celery that I eat is subtle. I am used to the taste of millet. Spring is in full swing.*

*I will return to my home in my country where my children live simply with only me as a souvenir.*

*Let me go back to my home. My heart trembles with my ultimate longing to see my children.*

In March 1946, when repatriation transportation began, we printed a mimeographed 16-page poetry collection called *Yoryu no me* (Willow buds) on newsprint and distributed it to those who wanted a copy. Commander Horie wrote the following postscript:

The birth of the Yangtze Poetry Circle occurred around the time when the upper branches of the willows along the Yangtze River started to show hints of green in early February, just as the spring was beginning and our poetic sentiment, which had once subsided after the war, somehow came back to life. We gathered seven times in a very genial atmosphere and had written a total of 180 poems, and we decided to compile a poetry collection as the repatriation transportation was about to begin. While the poetry was simple, it was precious beyond anything in speaking plainly about the diligence of officers and soldiers working silently every day while holding dismal feelings inside, about the natural transition of the Yangtze District along the river from winter to spring, about the mountains and rivers of our defeated homeland, and about the sentiment of yearning for home. So, let us depart for our country soon with this humble poetry collection *Yoryu no me* as the best souvenir. Etched deeply in the heart are the fresh willow buds that appear dim in the spring rain at Yangtze just now, as a symbol for the future reconstruction of our homeland.

*Yoryu no me*, which was mimeographed by Sergeant Major Senda from general affairs, included 188 poems by 27 poets. The following poem was written in *sumi* ink and signed with Commander Horie's pen name in the margin of the copy of *Yoryu no Me* brought home by Superior Private Takeuchi, who was in charge of the work at the Soldiers' Library in Hankou.

*Even though it is early evening, in the sky over the hill behind where a sentry stands, Orion shines bright in deep winter. By Horie*

Because it says, "in deep winter," this poem must be from the time of the Yuezhou Military Logistics Base.

The following is a passage from the chapter "Yosu no kohoku geki" (Hubei drama in Yangtze) in Commander Horie's *The Voiceless Front* about the time he watched Chinese opera while he was in detention after defeat in the war.

Just around this time, a performance was being held in a hamlet in Yangtze. They had invited a Hubei drama (village theater) troupe of rather skillful actors. This was taking place for the first time in more than 10 years, so it was extremely popular. A stage was erected in the hamlet's open space next to the ferry dock. The audience seating was, of course, the ground under the open sky, and while the better seating had chairs or stools, for the most part this was open air theater with the audience standing. I received an invitation from Director Huang to go and see this together on the afternoon of the first day, and I also received an invitation from Assistant Director Wu to join them for lunch. I went to visit just before noon. Wu's wife's home cooking was soon brought to the round table, and we began an exchange of toasts.



We Japanese, plus a few others, were the guests. On the Chinese side, there were also one or two others in addition to Director Huang. The Assistant Director drank quickly, as was his nature, and he would cry out in a loud voice when he got a little drunk. They told me the performance was going to begin soon, so we headed off in that direction. We watched together with Director Huang, placing our chairs at the best location right in front of the stage. We had asked for Japanese officers and soldiers to also freely attend, and there were about 20 Japanese mixed in the crowd of Chinese, which filled up the entire area.

I had seen Chinese opera once or twice before. Listening to the explanation of Captain Yamada, who was an enthusiastic researcher, all I grasped was that it was something like Japanese Noh theater, so you might say I was at least not completely uninformed. They always put on *Records of the Three Kingdoms* as the main performance. This day was no exception. I think they were showing the assassination of Dong Zhuo, and Lu Bu and Diao Chan played active roles. With their grand gestures mixed with high-pitched songs and dialog, as well as their loud elocution and the Chinese fiddle and gong music, watching the opera while I was a little drunk was really pleasant, even though I did not understand it. It kept reminding me of the village plays I would see as a child on autumn festival days in the mountains in my hometown.

The Assistant Director yelled out in a horrible voice whenever villagers moved in front of him and blocked his view. Director Huang explained various aspects of the opera to us, speaking quickly with pouted lips as usual. The performances were originally scheduled to last for three days, but they were so popular that the run was extended to one week. There were signs of peace everywhere in the countryside of China in the spring the year after the war ended.

I also went to see the Chinese opera being presented in that village at that time. The soldiers in my poetry circle included a stand-up comedian from Osaka who performed under the stage name Saraku Akiyama. I asked his commander for permission and brought him along. Unlike the stage at the New Market, this show indeed had a primitive feeling just like a village play. Saraku Akiyama, (the stage name of Private First Class Shoichi Hiroi) composed the following poem, which is included in *Yoryu no me*.

*The rain does not stop. A soldier guarding bedding reads a book, straddling the roof of the camp.*

## ***Demobilization***

From March, we were permitted to send letters to our families in Japan. Each soldier was allowed two postcards. We were ordered to stamp these “prisoner of war personal affairs.” At general affairs, they quickly looked for a soldier who could carve, and had him make the designated stamp. We asked the Chinese to mail the stamped postcards all at once.

The military logistics base’s officers were living together inside the barracks. I placed a map case by my bed when I went to sleep and when I woke up, it was gone. I asked the night duty guard, but he had no idea what had happened. I did not mind losing the Three Castles cigarettes that were in the case, but I was heartbroken to lose my children’s photographs and a notebook of poems that I had jotted down. It was at this time that I lost my war wound certificate, savings deposit book, and the farewell poems left by Military Police Lieutenant Colonel Nakamura, who committed suicide in Wuchang. My orderly said it must have been thrown out somewhere, and he searched everywhere, but it did not turn up. It was deplorable to think that the thief had lost the decency to return the items

other than the cigarettes.

Upon repatriation to Japan, confiscated goods of course, as well as diaries, letters, and other documents all became prohibited items, so I had no other choice but to burn and throw them away. If any prohibited items were found, the repatriation not only of the individual but of the entire unit was to be canceled, and we were ordered to make sure that all the soldiers thoroughly followed that directive.

One soldier came to me saying he had a diamond, and asked if he could take it back to Japan. When I asked him where he got it, he told me he had removed it from a ritual implement of the Freemasons, who were said to be a secret society of Jews. When I placed it on my palm, I saw that indeed, it sparkled in the light. He said he had been hiding it sewn into his good luck belt while worried about the horrible trouble that would occur if it were found. I called the senior noncommissioned officer to discuss this, and he said he would check to confirm if it was really a diamond. He placed it on top of a stone, crushed it with the heel of his lace-up boots, and it immediately crumbled. It was just a piece of glass. The soldier said he felt relieved and glad that a heavy burden had been lifted from his mind.

There were swords among the belongings of officers who died in the war, and these were to be turned over to the Chinese side as weapons. One of the officers who knew a lot about swords removed some of the grip guards and hilt ornaments and kept them. I also received two hilt ornaments and brought them home as ornaments for the map case and military cap.

When I was at Yangtze, Captain Mitsuo Sakurai, who was the commander of the 57th Independent Logistics Company, which was under the direct command of the military logistics base, composed the “Yangtze Song.” At night, soldiers who enjoyed this would gather in a circle to sing and dance.

*Yangtze dawned sunny again today, like the fair weather in Japan.*

*And the rising sun shines over our homeland in Japan.*

*Japanese cherry blossoms do not bloom in Yangtze.*

*But the flower of friendship among war comrades blooms.*

*In Yangtze, crows make their nests and willows sprout.*

*They say the ships will eventually come.*

*When we leave our hearts in Yangtze and depart by ship,*

*the ship will sail to Kagoshima with a tailwind.*

*While there are many famous things to be proud of in Yangtze,*

*none compares to the Yangtze song.*

A rumor spread that the ships returning to Japan would head first to Kagoshima.

Company Commander Sakurai promptly wrote lyrics to a “Song of Landing at Kagoshima,” and he had Corporal Ikunoshin Koyama, a soldier in his unit, compose the melody. Corporal Koyama used to be an assistant professor at Musashino Academia Musicae.<sup>80</sup>

*Oh, we can see the mountains and rivers of Japan in the distance.*

<sup>80</sup> A music conservatory in Tokyo.



*The bombing, gunfire, and fires of war that raged here are no more.*

*The spring sun shines cheerfully. Signs of construction*

*rise up high over the fields.*

*We are returning to the mountains*

*and rivers of Japan on a spring day.*

In this way, we sang about the joy of the day when we would land in Japan, directing our longing to Sakurajima, in Kagoshima. The first order for the repatriation of 2,400 soldiers was issued on March 25, 1946. We, of the Military Logistics Unit, departed from Pier 18 in Hankou a bit later on April 28, and went down the Yangtze River. It was a pitiful sight. We were ferried out on two small private ships that were lined up side by side, towed by a steamship.

When we left Hankou, the soldiers stood on the deck, looked at the Hankou Customs House tower feeling nostalgia, and listened to the sound of its bell.

Someone began singing, “*Farewell Hankou, until I return,*” and a chorus of deep voices responded, “*Tears of our brief separation blur my eyes.*”

*Hankou Customs House is half visible. Over the shoulders of a full load of soldiers on deck.*

Prior to demobilization, the military logistics base had taken in those soldiers who were discharged from the hospital and were in training units and could not move with their original formations, as well as soldiers from small units. As a result, our unit came to have 34 officers and 526 non-commissioned officers and soldiers in a headquarters section and five companies. I was placed in charge of the 3rd Company. Incidentally, as part of our original duties, the military logistics base had the heavy responsibility of escorting the remains of 25,000 soldiers which we had enshrined earlier because transportation had been disrupted. So, in addition to their own luggage, the soldiers had to bring back more than 300 wooden boxes, each of which measured sixty cubic meters.

The morning after we arrived and spent the night at the barracks in Nanjing, I noticed some dirty water on the mud corridor when I returned from roll call, as if someone had washed their mess kit there. When I asked a soldier what had happened, he said Sergeant Yosaburo Fujiwara had suffered abdominal pains and thrown up that morning, and they had not yet cleaned up. He said he would clean it up right away, and went to get a dustpan with sand in it, and swept it clean.

Fujiwara was hospitalized immediately, but he died at 11:00 a.m. It was cholera. He came from Kemuyama Village in Morioka, Iwate Prefecture. A fecal examination of all members of the unit was carried out in the afternoon. This was by direct sampling. We got down on all fours and a glass rod was inserted into the anus. A soldier from the Infectious Diseases Prevention Section told me, laughing, that the nurses and other women hated the direct sampling. Because of this cholera outbreak, we were not allowed to stay at the barracks even after we arrived in Shanghai. We were ordered to put up tents and to camp in the open space outside the barracks, and we were placed under strict quarantine. Because of this unexpected incident, we were separated from the Kakinuma Unit, which had been traveling with us. Our departure from the port of Shanghai was delayed, and it was May 24 when we landed at the port of Hakata in Kyushu. There were no scandalous incidents on the repatriation ship such as mock trials of senior officers. When I dropped by the repatriation office and looked through the list of repatriated soldiers, I found the name of my comrade, Second Lieutenant Suzuki, whose whereabouts were unknown to me since we parted in Hankou. Suzuki was in the Field



Division assembled near Jiujiang, Jiangxi Province when the war ended, and had returned to Japan two months before I arrived.

The Japanese civilians living in the Wuhan District were assembled at the end of September 1945 and numbered 14,000. Their repatriation took place in parallel with the repatriation of military personnel. The last repatriation ship for Japanese civilians was the *Kaigen*, which sailed in June 1946 and carried 357 passengers. These were both civilians and soldiers from the Unity Area Army Headquarters, which had been winding up the work that remained. The employees of the military hotels, cafeterias, and comfort facilities were initially assembled at the Military Headquarters army barracks, and the Japanese civilians were assembled in the Japanese concession, but they were later all treated as Japanese civilians. I wonder when the women of Jiqingli returned to their countries, and how they lived after the war. I wonder what happened to the women from the Korean peninsula, which was divided at the 38th parallel. I pray from the bottom of my heart that they all somehow lived happily in their later years.

## Afterword

The painting exhibition *A Mournful Private–War Experiences Exhibition* was held at the Chikyudo Gallery in Tokyo’s Ginza, in August 1972. This was an exceptional exhibit which featured the works of Japanese-style painter Masao Yamamoto and other artists who served in the Pacific War, and presented sketches and caricatures from that time, as well as new works painted in recollection.

When I was serving at the Wuhan Military Logistics Headquarters, Yamamoto was a superior private who had been called up to Unit 2904 of the 27th Division (“Field Division”), which was attached to the headquarters. Later on, Yamamoto visited me at my home, and he suggested that I should write a memoir of my time as the recreation section chief at the Hankou Military Logistics Headquarters as a unique testimony of war. Without some explanation, people who did not experience life under the former Japanese military would probably not immediately understand the words “military logistics base” or “recreation section.” While those contents are described in the text, my duties at that time included the particular work of supervising and guiding the comfort women (special comfort facilities), which had nothing to do with the dust of battle or the smell of gunpowder smoke.

Young people today probably have no idea what the term “comfort woman” means. And I think most people who were adults on the home front during the great war did not know or were not informed about the conditions of the Japanese military on the battlefield, and only came to learn about what things were like from reading battle tales published after the war.

In short, comfort units were prostitution units of women sent to handle the sexual needs of soldiers in the war zone. This system whereby the brothel owners were under the direct supervision of the military was probably unique to the Japanese military and did not exist in the military forces of other countries. Even though this was military policy, it was still prostitution of course, and—needless to say—ignored the human rights of the women. I, who was ordered to serve as the recreation section chief, could only follow the view of the military logistics base commander that this was a necessary evil during wartime. All I could do was to create a better environment within that system, hope the comfort women could gain their freedom as soon as possible, and seek some small redemption through those efforts. But if I were accused of being an accomplice who closed my eyes to exploitation by the villainous brothel owners and abetted human trafficking in the name of the holy war, I would have to resignedly accept that blame.

Compared with the records of officers and soldiers on the front who faced horrible death amid gunfire, famine, disease, and putrid smells, my war experience may seem far too leisurely. But I think it is all right for each of us to give testimony about how we lived and what we experienced in the situations we were placed in, amid the all-out warfare of the Pacific War, including those on the home front. In that sense, I thought a record of the experiences of one drafted officer more than 40 years old at a military logistics base in the rear is not entirely meaningless, and decided to write this memoir.

At that time, the military logistics base in Hankou in central China was a relay point for receiving military supplies and mail from Japan, and for transporting military mail from men at the front, officers and soldiers who were sick or wounded, and the remains of the dead to Japan. It was also a key point for the passage of units from Japan to the battlefield, or from one battlefield to another.

Hundreds of thousands of officers and soldiers must have either been stationed or passed through this base during the great war. They must have all heard the bell of the Hankou Customs House clock



tower. Some of them must have visited the comfort facilities in Jiqingli. Others may have dropped by the Soldiers' Amusement Park or the military logistics base library that was called the Soldiers' Library to spend some time relaxing. Among the soldiers who took part in the sumo, kendo, baseball, variety shows, and other military logistics base events which were held before the Hunan-Guangxi Operation (Operation Togo) in 1944, or who submitted works to the art show, there must be some who died glorious deaths at the front. The comfort women I met were at the bottom of the war machine hierarchy, and they suffered all types of hardships together with the soldiers. Some went to the front and died along with the men, while others lost their young lives from illness at comfort facilities that were like prisons without bars. I also wanted to write this memoir in tribute to those many men and women who suffered an untimely death.

I served at the Military Logistics Headquarters from March 1943. In June 1945, I was able to entrust a notebook in which I had written my diary and some notes to my comrade Paymaster First Lieutenant Sakae Noguchi, who was returning to Japan while being transferred to a unit for the final battle on the mainland, and have him deliver this to my home. It would have been impossible to trace my life at that time in detail from just my memories of 30 years before. Fortunately this notebook, which was delivered to Japan, and the military mail I sent to my family, survived. So, I was able to write this memoir based on these records.

Of course, this memoir contains no fictions or exaggerations. It is a collection of notes just as they were written. To be sure, the rear echelon units had an aspect of laxity often seen in rear area duties. Beyond that, my thoughts may have been simple and superficial, and I may not have been able to see through to the truth of the facts, and there may be regrets that I did not address many things here. Looking back now, I can see I was an unsoldierly soldier, and that there may have been better ways of doing things. Even within the same military logistics base, the experiences of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men must have all been different, depending on rank and individual character. For that reason, this is not a record of a military logistics base but rather my own record as an individual who was stationed at a military logistics base.

Some of the names in the main text may be mistaken, and I hope I have not given any offense.

I sketched maps of the military logistics base facilities and the Hankou Special Comfort Facilities from memory, so they may not be accurate. The sketches inserted in the text are from letters I sent to my children as military mail.

In the memoir, I have quoted at great length from Commander Horie's *The Voiceless Front*. Horie passed away at the age of 85 in December 1971. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to him and earnestly pray for the repose of his soul. I also quoted from books by Kazuo Nagao, Hideo Fujino, Tadashi Moriya, and Keiichi Ito, and I would like to express my sincere thanks to them. Finally, I should like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the many people who provided advice and assistance with this work, especially Kazuo Takeuchi, who lent me his diary and notes, Kenichi Nagasawa, Keiichi Teru'uchi, and Takashi Masuda, who lent me precious photographs and other materials, Toshio Shuppansha President Saburo Yamashita, who kindly took on my crude manuscript, and Junzo Shimizu, who gave me useful advice regarding the organization of my story.

October 1978

Seikichi Yamada