

The Interpreter

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arv@colorado.edu

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Our Mission

In the Spring of 2000, the Archives continued the original efforts of Captain Roger Pineau and William Hudson, and the Archives first attempts in 1992, to gather the papers, letters, photographs, and records of graduates of the US Navy Japanese/Oriental Language School, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1942-1946. We assemble these papers in recognition of the contributions made by JLS/OLS instructors and graduates to the War effort in the Pacific and the Cold War, to the creation of East Asian language programs across the country, and to the development of Japanese-American cultural reconciliation programs after World War II.

Henry C. Leitzel 1920-2003 BIC

ORRVILLE -- Henry C. Leitzel, 83, of Jerome Drive, died Tuesday morning, Feb. 18, 2003, at Wooster Community Hospital, following a ten-day illness.

Services will be Friday at 11 a.m. at the Trinity United Methodist Church in Orrville with the Rev. Dennis Rinehart officiating.

He was born on Jan. 1, 1920 in China to Henry Samuel Howard Leitzel and Ruth (Rossiter) Leitzel Firestone. He married Charlotte Zema on June 26, 1943 in Boulder, Colo. She survives.

He lived in China until the age of 19, graduated from Allegheny College and served in the US Navy during World War II. He entered the US Navy Japanese Language School in December 1942.

He worked for the Westinghouse Electrical Corporation in Pittsburgh and Orrville for 41 years, retiring in 1985 as an electrical engineer.

He was a member of Trinity United Methodist Church, Cedar Lodge No. 430 F&AM, Exchange Club and the Zoning Board, all in Orrville. He was also a member of the Al Koran Shrine and the Delta Tau Delta Fraternity.

Surviving in addition to his wife are a son, H. Calvin (Diane) Leitzel Jr. of Middleburg Heights; a daughter, Cynthia (David) Withrow of North Lawrence, two grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

A brother, Richard Leitzel, died previously.

The Daily Record (Wooster)
Obituaries, February 20, 2003

INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR JAMES W. MORLEY COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY (RET.)

Angel: Welcome to *Japan Considered*, Professor Morley. How did you first become involved with Japan?

Introduction to Japan and the War Years

Morley: December 7, 1941 when the radio blared into my college room that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. Before that I had had no contact with Japan and I'm not sure I could have located it on a map.

Angel: Where were you and what year were you in college?

Morley: I was just finishing the first semester of my junior year at Harvard College; and while I had become alarmed by the trends in world politics, I was deeply immersed in the study of American history and literature and inclined toward pacifism.

Pearl Harbor changed all that. Once our country was attacked, I felt instinctively that we had to fight and that I had to get ready. I quickly piled on courses so as to graduate that summer, and in December 1942, after putting in a few months at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy—where I had the good fortune to meet my wife—I volunteered in the Navy.

Angel: What did you volunteer for?

Morley: Naval Intelligence. I was looking around to see where I might fit when a classmate, Bob Schwantes, who later became important in the Asia Foundation, told me that the Navy was recruiting people for a Japanese Language School that had been set up in Boulder, Colorado. [Webpage of U.S. Navy Japanese/Oriental Language Archive Project (JSLP)] I didn't know anything about the Japanese language—I don't believe that I had ever seen it written or heard it spoken—but learning something new appealed to me, so I applied, was accepted, and headed West.

Angel: What was the Navy Japanese Language School like?

Morley: 15 months of intensive study, all day and sometimes, all night. The texts were the Naganuma Readers, written originally for the instruction of missionaries. The teachers were mostly Japanese drawn from the Relocation Camps. They were a dedicated group and made up in enthusiasm for what they lacked in teaching experience. Grammar, of course, went by the boards. Why is the language constructed this way? we'd ask, and the answer was always given, "Because that's the way we say it!"

Angel: And after graduating....

Morley: I was sent to Washington to work in the Communication Annex, where I was assigned to a section working round the clock to break the codes used in Japanese capital ship transmissions.

Angel: Can you talk about that or is it a quiet subject?

Morley: It was quiet then—top secret, but now? So much has changed. The Japanese capital ships—the carriers, battleships, and cruisers—transmitted their messages in an enciphered code. For our Navy to engage the Japanese Navy successfully, the location of the Japanese ships had to be pinpointed, and the best way to do that was to read their electronic transmissions.

The assignment of my section was to break through the numerical ciphers. We were not consistently successful, but on many occasions we were. Then, crucial messages were read, the Fleet was informed,

and, when no more transmissions were picked up from that ship, we knew we had played a vital part in its sinking. For us at the Annex it was an antiseptic business....but deadly for all that. (to be cont'd)

Robert Angel

Japan Considered

March 21, 2005

University of South Carolina
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Political Science

Chronicles of My Life in the 20th Century

7. Enamored by 'The Tale of Genji' Autobiographical essays by Donald Keene

At first there was so little fighting between France and Germany that people laughed at the "phoney war," but in 1940, the most depressing year of my life, the German army suddenly struck, first at Denmark and Norway, then at Holland and Belgium. The Maginot Line, which was supposed to protect France against German invasions, was easily bypassed by the Germans, and half of France was soon occupied.

Later that year the aerial bombing of Britain began. It seemed almost impossible for the British to resist the Germans. I could hardly bear to read the newspapers, dreading the latest news of Nazi conquests. I spent more and more time trying to memorize Chinese characters, though I realized that this study without aims was an unreal pursuit. But in the autumn of 1940, most unexpectedly, at the worst point of the conflict within me between hatred of war and hatred of the Nazis, a kind of deliverance came my way.

At that time there was in Times Square, the center of New York, a bookshop that specialized in remainders, and I would look in every time I was in the area. One day I saw a stack of books called "The Tale of Genji." I had never heard of this work before, but I examined a volume out of curiosity. I could

tell from the illustrations that the book must be about Japan. The book, in two volumes, was priced at forty-nine cents. This seemed a bargain, and I bought it.

I soon became engrossed in "The Tale of Genji." The translation (by Arthur Waley) was magical, evoking a distant and beautiful world. I could not stop reading, sometimes going back to savor again details. I contrasted the world of "The Tale of Genji" with my own. In the book antagonism never degenerated into violence, and there were no wars. The hero, Hikaru Genji, unlike the heroes of European epics was not described as a man of muscles, capable of lifting a boulder that not ten men could lift, nor as a warrior who could single-handedly slay masses of the enemy. Nor, though he had many love affairs, was Genji interested (like Don Juan) merely in adding names to the list of women he had conquered. He knew grief, not because he has failed to seize the government but because he was a human being and life in this world is inevitably sad.

Until this time I had thought of Japan mainly as a menacing militaristic country. I had been charmed by Hiroshige, but Japan was for me not the land of beauty but the invader of China. Lee was bitterly anti-Japanese. When we went to the New York World's Fair we visited the various foreign pavilions, but he absolutely refused to enter the Japanese pavilion. I sympathized with him and his country, but this did not prevent me from enjoying "The Tale of Genji." No, "enjoy" is not the right word; I turned to it as a refuge from all I hated in the world around me.

One day in the spring of 1941 I was studying in the East Asian Library at Columbia University when a man I did not know came up to me and said, "I have seen you eating at the Chinese restaurant every day. Would you have dinner with me there tonight?"

Naturally, I was surprised by this invitation. My first reaction was fear that I might not have enough money to pay my share of the bill. But, intrigued by the unexpected invitation, I soon agreed. The man, whose name

was Jack Kerr, had lived several years in Japan and taught English in Taiwan. He had some command of spoken Japanese, but had never learned to read the language. One of his students from Taiwan, of Japanese ancestry, had been born in America and had recently returned. Kerr intended to spend the summer at his house in the North Carolina mountains studying Japanese with his former student. He feared, however, that if he was the only one studying he would not be very diligent. Competition would help, and he was therefore trying to find three or four others who wished to learn Japanese during the summer. That was why he had invited me to dinner.

Despite my love of "The Tale of Genji," I had not considered studying Japanese because I feared it might hurt the feelings of my friend Lee. But the chance to get out of hot New York in the summer and spend it in the mountains was too tempting to resist.

There were three pupils--Jack Kerr, myself, and Paul Blum. I did not know it, but Blum had recently escaped from France. He was considerably older than myself--about 45 to my 19--but we easily became friends. He had been born in Yokohama where his father, a Frenchman, was in business. About the time he graduated from Yale his father died, leaving him a considerable income. Blum decided to use his inheritance in travel, hoping to record his experiences in books that he would write. I was fascinated by his conversations, especially his accounts of the distant places he had visited. He described so well that I could all but see the red city of Tananarive in Madagascar and the lonely town in Brazil where he had once spent New Year. The one place he had never gone was the Seychelles Islands in the Indian Ocean. He felt he should leave one place unvisited.

Paul Blum had learned Japanese as a boy, but like many foreigners who spent their lives in Japan, he could not read the language and his vocabulary was limited to what a boy would know. That was why he had joined us.

Our tutor, Inomata Tadashi, taught us from the elementary reader that began *saita*, *saita*, *sakura ga sait*a. Unlike the other two students, I could not say even the simplest thing in Japanese, but I recognized kanji I had learned in Chinese. I was excited at the thought of learning another language, but the other two gradually lost interest in memorizing kanji. For me, the complicated way that Japanese is written was one of its attractions. If Japanese were written in romaji, I might not have felt the desire to conquer its difficulties.

Kerr later taught Japanese history at various American universities and wrote excellent books on Taiwan and Okinawa, relying mainly on materials in Western languages. It was normal at that time for professors of Chinese or Japanese history or art at American universities not to be able to read the languages.

I did not see Kerr much after I returned to Columbia to begin my fourth year, but I saw Blum fairly often. At a time when I still had not made up my mind whether to continue my study of Chinese and Japanese or devote myself to my first love, French literature, Blum (although originally a French citizen) urged me to study Japanese. He pointed out that many Americans had grown up in France and spoke perfect French, but few knew Japanese. (to be cont'd)

Donald L. Keene
JLS 1943

Daily Yomiuri Online
February 27, 2006

Ridge L. Harlan 1917-2006

Ridge Latimer Harlan, February 25, 1917 – January 2, 2006, passed away in Vacaville following a long illness. He was 88.

Ridge was born in Pilot Grove, MO. Ridge graduated from the University of Missouri, Columbia in 1939 with a bachelor's of journalism degree. He did post graduate work at Harvard, the University of Colorado and Stanford. He attended the US Navy Oriental Language School and served in the Navy during World War II.

After the War, Ridge was creative director for the advertising firm of BBDO, then had his own agency, Harris, Harlan and Wood. He left advertising to become assistant dean

and director of publications for Stanford University Graduate School of Business where he was for five years. He was then a turn-around manager and was president /CEO of numerous companies including Barnes-Hind Pharmaceuticals and Velo Bind, Inc. Most recently, Ridge was chairman of LandRay Technology, Inc. principal of Harlan Communications, founding investor and principal of ComputerEyes Corporation and a private investor.

Ridge belonged to the Olympic Club and the Family Club.

He is survived by his wife Marjorie of 30 years; son Ridge Harlan of Yuba City, CA and wife Robyn; two daughters, Brooke Williams of Petaluma, CA, and Holly Harlan of Granite City, CA; four grandsons; and two great-granddaughters; sister-in-law, Dorothy Harlan of Columbia, MO; and many nieces and nephews. Ridge was preceded in death by his parents, George and Dale Harlan; and a brother, Dale Harlan.

He was interred in the National Memorial Cemetery in Phoenix, AZ on January 9, 2006.

San Francisco Chronicle
January 7, 2006

[Ed. Note: We caught up with Mr. Harlan a year before his passing, during 2004's run through Google™. Mr. Harlan was one of the late entries to the OLS, who were transferred to Stillwater and were given those choices when the War came to an end. Nevertheless, when Marjorie Harlan called to inform us of his passing, she told me that he enjoyed reading the newsletter. He was reading the Slesnick's Kanji & Codes at the time of his death.]

The Diplomatic Contribution of the USN JLS/OLS

Much has been made by Roger Dingman and Pedro Loureiro regarding the academic contribution of JLS/OLS graduates, and rightly so. In 2006, Katie Cumpsten completed a paper, quantifying the roles played by JLS/OLS academics after the War. I have also, in my editorial notes briefly discussed the role played by USN JLS/OLS graduates in the fields of diplomacy and intelligence. At this time, I would like to recognize the influence that these graduates had on US/Asia/Soviet diplomacy and to call for research on this topic. I think the best way to do this would be to sketch the lives of JLS/OLS graduates who went into careers in the US Foreign Service.

Richard Boswell Finn, JLS 1943, was a former naval intelligence

officer, diplomat and scholar of Japanese affairs.

Mr. Finn was the author of "Winners in Peace: MacArthur, Yoshida and Postwar Japan" (University of California Press, 1992), and edited a "U.S.-Japan Relations" series issued by Transaction Publications.

Mr. Finn was born in Niagara Falls, N.Y., and graduated from Harvard College in 1939 and from Harvard Law School in 1942. He attended the Navy's Japanese language school in Boulder, Colo., entered Naval Intelligence, then became a Foreign Service Officer and remained in Japan until 1954.

Later he was an adjunct professor at American University and administered Harvard's United States-Japan Program from 1983 to 1987. The Japanese Government awarded him an imperial decoration in 1987.

Philip Manhard (1921-1998), JLS 1944, was featured in Issue #5. BA USC, Phi Beta Kappa, 1943, he was a Marine officer from 1944-1946. He later joined the Foreign Service and was Vice Consul at Tianjin, 1949-50; and had assignments in Korea, 1951-1953; Tokyo, 1953-1958; the East Asian Bureau, in Washington, DC, 1959-62 and 1964-67; and Vietnam. Always on the front-line of diplomacy, he was placed under house arrest by the Red Chinese and the North Koreans, and was the highest US Civilian to be captured in Vietnam. After his repatriation he was appointed Ambassador to Mauritius, 1974-1976. In 1976, Manhard was designated Deputy Representative for Micronesia Status Negotiations. (to be cont'd)

David M. Hays
Archivist and Editor



Tanforan Race Track

RELOCATION (1)

Student By-Lines

At the movies this summer (2003), everyone was reacquainted with *Seabiscuit* and reminded of life in the 1930s, the Depression and of the American character of that time. This week, *Student By-Lines*, begins an equally compelling story that looks back at another significant moment in our nation's past and the character of the its people.

"Relocation" by Fromm Institute student Kaya Sugiyama portrays her family's epic journey to maintain their dignity in the face of prejudice and the misguided policies of a nation at war. "Relocation," which will be serialized in the next four issues, now takes you back to the 1940's and a surprising connection to this summer's cinematic blockbuster.

(Cont'd) Father was furious at Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor and became indignant when he learned that the United States was incarcerating every one of Japanese descent to relocation camps. He immediately decided that my brother, George, and I were to continue with our education, and not become pawns to the war hysteria.



Arriving at the Tanforan Assembly Area

Those were, indeed, difficult times; nothing seemed logical. The only university west of Chicago which accepted us was the University of Colorado at Boulder. \$5000 was to be in each of our bank accounts, so that we would not become wards of the state nor of the University of Colorado.

When our acceptance to the University of Colorado was verified, the federal government informed us to leave the West Coast immediately before any changes of policy occurred. George and I were reluctant to become separated from the family during this crisis, but father was determined that his two college bound teen-agers were to be spared any mental and emotional trauma which could develop from the incarcerated camp experiences. He was thinking ahead about our adult lives, and wished to protect us from any possible negative effects which might occur from the wartime edict.

Shortly after the decision was made to leave for the university, we boarded the "Eureka" from the Ferry Building to Oakland,

and began our forced move inland for the duration of the war. Since curfew was strictly enforced, no one from the family saw us off; a social worker from the Y.M.C.A. escorted us to the Ferry

Building, and without uttering a word, he gripped and shook our hands good-bye. The short ride on the ferryboat gave us enough time to adjust our thoughts, for the long journey on the "Zephyr" to Denver was ahead of us. With feelings of bewilderment, frustration and uncertainty we watched from the top deck of the ferry boat the fog-shrouded skyline of San Francisco slowly disappear. The fog drew together a natural curtain, for by this time there was no time to reflect; we could only forge ahead to the waiting train.

The two nights and days spent on the "Zephyr" from Oakland to Denver, Colorado, were a harrowing experience. We imagined ourselves being intercepted at each stop, for stories of shootings and lynchings in Wyoming and other states had filtered into the Japanese community before we left San Francisco. In mortal fear for our lives, George and I huddled together, not even attempting to go to the dining car during the entire trip. As the "Zephyr" finally pulled into the Denver Station, our exhaustion immediately changed to that of exhilaration, for a placard with our names was held high by three students from the university. Dottie, Muggie, and Pris were our welcoming committee. When we spotted the placard and "the three", the relief from our imagined fears brought on a flood of tears. Undoubtedly, the passengers on the train were not even aware of our presence, for it was our personal tragedy which gripped and haunted us into this sensitive and releasing scene. George and I, two sobbing, Asians alighted from the train. (To Be Continued
Next - A New Life in Boulder)

By Kaya Kitagawa Sugiyama
From the Rooftop
The Newsletter of The Fromm
Institute for Lifelong Learning
Vol. 84, Issue #3
September 22, 2003

INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR JAMES W. MORLEY COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY (RET.)

(cont'd) *End of the War and Early Study of Japan*

Angel: And did you go to Japan in the Occupation?

Morley: No, I could have, but I decided against it. By the end of the war I was burdened with the thought of all the deaths my country—and I—had contributed to, and the idea of participating in the Occupation when I knew so little about Japan, seemed to me absurd. What I really felt I had to do was to learn more about Japan, how we became involved in this war and how we could make sure that it would never be repeated. I had completed an MA in international relations at the School of Advanced International Studies while serving in Washington, but Japan was on my mind—and so was the USSR, which was looming up as another formidable adversary. So, thanks to the GI Bill, I headed for Columbia University in New York and entered the History Department.

Angel: Whom did you work with at Columbia?

Morley: I had hoped to work with Hugh Borton, who had begun a course at Columbia on modern Japanese history just before the war and who was then in the State Department helping to plan and monitor the Occupation. Unfortunately, he did not return before I completed my course work. Sir George Sansom gave a rather formal reading of his lectures, but somehow in person conveyed none of the excitement I had felt when first reading his *Short Cultural History*. I was left primarily on my own devices on modern Japan, so I plunged into Russian studies with the guidance of Philip Mosely, and especially into Japanese cultural history, taught then and for many years after by Tsunoda Ryusaku. Tsunoda or "Sensei" as we always called him, was a Zen Buddhist, who brought the Japanese library to Columbia and for many years taught an extremely influential course on Japanese thought. He not only enriched my Columbia years, but has remained an inspiration throughout my life. I must mention also my fellow students, especially Ted deBary, Donald Keene, Ed Seidensticker, Arthur Tiedemann, and Phil Yampolsky, who provided comradeship then and later and more than enough challenge!

Angel: How did the dissertation come about? You published it later, I believe as *The Japanese Thrust Into Siberia*, 1918.

Morley: I wanted to do something in recent history, something that brought my two interests together, Japan and Russia. Japan's Siberian Expedition seemed like a natural since so little was known about it. The problem, of course, was that none of my sponsors could suggest how to go about it. At that time there had been no real research in Japanese archives, and in any event, no one knew what the archives might hold.

So my first move was to go to Washington to examine the archives of the Japanese Army, which had been seized and transported to the Library of Congress. To my disappointment, they were locked up and without any guide. I was, however, permitted to have them withdrawn in sequence, and after several months, during which I compiled a guide, I did find some useful material. I then turned to Japan. (to be cont'd)

Robert Angel

Japan Considered

University of South Carolina

College of Arts and Sciences

Department of Political Science

The Diplomatic Contribution of the USN JLS/OLS

(Cont'd) I continue the list of those USN JLS/OLS graduates who contributed to diplomacy.

Joseph Owen Zuhellen Jr. in New York City on July 8, 1920. He graduated from Columbia University in 1943. He entered the Japanese Language School in Boulder, Colorado in 1942, and graduated the following year. He served as 2nd and 1st Lt. in the US Marine Corps from 1943-1946, remaining on the Marine Corps reserve until his retirement at the rank of Captain. He returned to Japan in 1947 as a Foreign Service Officer, and served as in a sequence of Diplomatic/ Consular posts beginning with a position in Yokohama from 1948-50. He served as Consul to Fukuoka from 1950-53 and returned to Yokohama for one year in 1954. He held the post of Second Secretary, American Embassy in Tokyo from 1948-56, then served as staff assistant to Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. He was assigned to the National War College from 1959-60, and was the Deputy Principal Officer American Consulate in Munich, Germany from 1960-62. He returned to Japan as Department Secretary at the American Embassy in Tokyo, Japan from 1962-63. The

following year, he was appointed American Consul General in Kobe and Osaka, Japan from 1963-64, which was followed by service as the Counselor of Embassy at the American Embassy in Tokyo from 1964-66. In 1968 he served as Department Chief Mission Embassy to Tel Aviv, Israel, a post which he held until 1973. After which time he was stationed in Washington, D.C. as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs, from 1974-1976. Capt. Zuhellen was then the first United States Ambassador to Surinam (formerly Dutch Guiana), and served there from 1976 until his retirement from government service in 1978. Following this retirement, he became a director of the Foreign Policy Association and taught political science at Manhattanville College in New York until his death on November 5, 1990. [We have a small collection of the Zuhellen Papers]. (to be cont'd)

David M. Hays
Archivist & Editor

Chronicles of My Life in the 20th Century

8. Pearl Harbor & language school
Autobiographical essays by Donald Keene

We all left North Carolina after about two months in the mountains. Inomata and I went by train to New York. My recollection is that the train was dismal, both because of the clouds of cigarette smoke and the hard seats. The worst moment was when the conductor approached us and, looking at Inomata's face, asked if he were a white man. This was my first visit to the South, and I had been appalled when I went into the towns by the open and intense discrimination against black people. I had even, in a tiny show of defiance, drunk water from a fountain marked "colored." The conductor seemed never to have encountered an Asian before. I hastened to say that Inomata was undoubtedly white, and the conductor went away, not forcing Inomata to ride in a carriage for blacks only. It was a relief when the train reached Washington and left behind the segregation laws of the South.

Inomata and I became friends. I helped to find him a room in Greenwich Village and a job with a bookshop that specialized in books on Asia. At Columbia, on Kerr's recommendation, I registered for Tsunoda Ryusaku sensei's class in the history of Japanese thought. The study of Japan was not popular at the time, but it was nevertheless a shock to discover that I was the only

student who had registered. I thought it would be a waste of Tsunoda sensei's time to teach one student, a student who knew virtually nothing about Japan, but when I offered to withdraw, he answered, "One is enough."

For the next few weeks, until two Japanese-American students joined the class, Tsunoda sensei prepared the lectures for me alone. When I arrived in the classroom the blackboard would be covered with inscriptions, mainly in classical Chinese, which I could not understand but which I laboriously copied. He also would have a stack of books relating to the Japanese thinkers of the period he was planning to discuss that day, just in case I had a question that he could not answer from memory.

I also took lessons in Japanese language from an American, a man of great kindness and sensitivity to Japanese art and poetry but who unfortunately knew little Japanese. A new textbook had been issued that (unlike the *saita*, *saita* text) was intended to teach foreign adults to read Japanese; but the professor, who rarely prepared the lessons, was obliged to look up words he did not know in his dictionary while the students were translating. The contrast with Tsunoda sensei could not have been greater.

On December 7, 1941 I went hiking with Inomata on Staten Island. When the ferry returned to the southern tip of Manhattan Island, a man was selling newspapers with the headline "Japs Attack U.S. Hawaii, Philippines bombed by Airmen." I laughed at the headline. The newspaper, the only one published on Sunday afternoon, often had sensational headlines in order to attract customers. Inomata and I separated, he for Greenwich Village, I for Brooklyn. When I got back home I discovered that the newspaper, for once, had not exaggerated. Realizing how upset Inomata would be by the news, I wanted to find and reassure him. I searched everywhere in Greenwich Village without success. He later told me that, fearing violence against Japanese, he had spent the night in an all-night cinema where he remained undetected.

The next day at the university students formed little clusters exchanging rumors on how many ships had been sunk in Pearl Harbor or what the American strategy would be. At noon, eating with Lee in the Chinese restaurant, we heard President Roosevelt announce that war had been declared. My longtime nightmare had become reality.

I went as usual to Tsunoda sensei's classroom, but he did not appear. He had been interned as an enemy alien. At his trial, some weeks

later, he was accused of taking long walks without a dog, proof that he was a spy. The judge dismissed the case and Tsunoda sensei returned to Columbia where he spent the war teaching as usual.

The empty classroom, more than the newspapers or the gossip of my classmates, made me aware that my student days would soon end. I probably would have to join the military. I could not imagine myself charging with a bayonet or dropping bombs from an airplane, but I learned of another possibility: the Navy had a Japanese language school where it trained men to be translators and interpreters.

Not long after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor I heard a radio commentator declare that only 50 Americans knew Japanese. I wondered if, on the basis of my summer in the mountains, I was one of the 50. The commentator was misinformed. Not fifty but hundreds of thousands of Japanese-Americans knew Japanese and some had been educated in Japan. The best I could do, with the help of two dictionaries, was to read a simple newspaper article. I could not utter one sentence in Japanese, and did not understand Japanese when it was spoken.

I was painfully aware, of course, of these limitations. That is why, when I learned of the Navy Japanese Language School, I wrote to the Navy Department asking to be admitted. A letter came from Washington soon afterwards requesting me to appear for an interview. I don't recall what I was asked during the interview, but a few weeks later I received a notice stating that I should report to the University of California for induction into the language school.

A train journey from New York to San Francisco at that time took about four days by the direct route across the middle of the United States. I had never travelled in America before, so I chose a more circuitous route that took five days. On the day of my departure my mother and several aunts saw me off at the station. My mother wept, perhaps fearing for my safety, but I felt happy. At last I was leaving New York. I did not feel any contradiction between the prospect of joining the Navy and my pacifism. I was going to learn Japanese.

Donald L. Keene

JLS 1943

Daily Yomiuri Online

March 6, 2006

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