The US Navy Japanese/Oriental Language School Archival Project

The Interpreter

Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

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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.

A Sensei

My mother saw an article in the Japanese *Nichi Bei Times* requesting information about JLS Sensei at the University of Colorado during WWII. She taught Navy officers during 1945 and 1946. She came from Salt Lake City, Utah along with Mr. Hayakawa who also taught. Mr. Tatsumi was the principal. Mr. Shin Nakamura also taught from San Francisco.

My mother is 88 years old and her name is Miyuki Sakano. My mother presently lives with us now . My uncle was in the US Army, Shigeru Kushi, who taught Japanese in Minnesota. I was a one-year-old baby then and had also accompanied my mother. We stayed at housing with other teachers and my mother ate lunch with the soldiers. I was watched by the second principa;'s wife during the time my mother taught.

(to be continued)

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Red Flags and Christian Soldiers

(Part VI)

By Tim Shorrock

WORK CAMPS AMIDST THE RUINS

At the dock in Yokohama, my parents were met by a U.S. Army chaplain, who drove them in a jeep through the bombed-out city to Seigakuin, the junior high school in Northeast Tokyo where they made their home for the next three years. On their second day in Japan, they took a circular train ride around Tokyo. Most of the city west of the busy railroad center of Shinjuku was a wasteland, flattened by the American firebombing in the spring of 1945. Although roads had been cleared, rubble from the bombing was still piled neatly between lanes and along the street. Except for the few ferro-concrete banks, insurance companies and department stories that withstood the incendiary bombs, the only buildings in Tokyo were shacks. Children begged from the roadside, asking in broken English for "chocorato," the Hershey chocolate bars carried by every GI. At my parents' first welcome party, at a Japanese church outside of the city, they were served tea and boiled sweet potatoes, a sign of the poverty that still gripped most of the country.

In 1948, my father was asked by the World Council of Churches and the Congregational Services Committee to set up a network of international work camps in Japan and South Korea. That experience, which brought together students from North America and Asia, was the high point of their early days in Japan and, until my mother's untimely death in August, 2001, remained the subject of their fondest memories of missionary work. Working through the summer, the young people under my parents' care built a nursery school in Hokkaido for the children of Japanese soldiers returning from the war, a youth center in downtown Tokyo and an elementary school in Nagasaki that replaced a structure destroyed by the atomic bomb dropped on August 9, 1945. Ray Downs, a lifelong friend of my family's whose father was one of the six prewar missionaries chosen to work with SCAP, fondly remembers his experiences in the work camps. "They were an optimistic, bouncy group of characters who just worked like maniacs," he says of his fellow volunteers.

My father was visibly proud two years ago when I showed him a report I found in the National Archives on the religious situation in Japan, written by Luman Shafer of the Horton delegation in January 1950. "Under the leadership of Hal Shorrock, a number of important projects have been carried out," Shafer wrote after a four-month visit to Japan. "The youth camps of last summer [have] attracted more attention to the Christian movement than any other one thing" except a Christian college in Tokyo. But the hard work and discipline of the young people apparently surprised other missionaries from prewar days, who spent the sweltering Japanese summers in Karuizawa, the drowsy summer resort high in the mountains of Nagano Prefecture. "No one had ever heard of missionaries working all summer," my father laughs. "Some of the old missionaries were kind of in shock."

In 1950, my parents returned to America for a two-year furlough so my father could complete his degree at Yale. I was born in New Haven on May 5, 1951. A year later, my parents took my older sister and me back to Japan, where we lived for most of the next 18 years. For the rest of the 1950s, as my mother raised the family, my father directed relief work in Japan for Church World Service, the relief arm of the Federal (now National) Council of Churches. It was an enormous job: By 1955, American churches had distributed two million pounds of U.S. government agricultural commodities, 3,000 bales of clothing, and 10,000 pounds of food to two million Japanese. The position gave my father an opportunity to travel all over Japan and, later, Korea and the rest of Asia.

Some of my first memories of Japan are of going with my father to the Port of Yokohama to meet freighters loaded with dairy cows donated to Japanese farmers by American churches. We woke at dawn and drove to the port in our tiny Ford Counsel (imported, amazingly, from England). From there we'd take a little launch to the ships, where the black and white Jersey and brown Guernsey cows were packed into stalls that smelled of hay and manure. Sometimes the Japanese stevedores would lift me on their shoulders as they worked the machinery to unload the cows on their way to dairy farms in Hokkaido in the faraway north. Once, during a big flood on the southern island of Kyushu, my father took me to the old U.S. Air Force Base at Tachikawa in western Tokyo, where we met a fleet of military transport planes that had donated their services to carry goats donated by the churches to help people recover from the disaster. [End of our part VI]

Ed. Note: This ends the portion of the article printed in the newsletter. For the entire article, write us or to see it on the Web, see the site: http://www.killingthebuddha.com/dogma/red_flags.htm.]

The Wartime Experience of Theodore H. Harbaugh

I entered the Navy Japanese Language School in Boulder, Colorado after reading an ad in the bulletin of Phi Beta Kappa Magazine, in April, 1942.

They were recruiting men whom they considered capable of learning the enemy's language. I was accepted for a 14 month military course, which I began in July that year. Kathleen, my wife, joined me when I found an apartment, and our 1st son, Bryce, was born in June of '43, in Boulder.

The U.S. Marines needed a few good men who could read and speak Japanese, also. I chose this special way to help win the war, and took basic combat training with the Marines at Quantico, Virginia. In June, 1944, I joined the 1st Marine Division in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.

In December of '44, I landed in Peleliu, in the Palau Island group, on D-Day, with the 5th Marines. A fierce battle took place for control of the airfield. The night of D Day, I translated Japanese documents, helping identify enemy unit locations, including numbers of troops and the names of leaders. Later I was liaison officer, as Marine officer, with an Army regiment.

Their colonel ordered me to use my knowledge of the Japanese language to demand the surrender of a Japanese force facing us. I shouted at them, "Kofuku!!" from about 50 yards away from the enemy troop positions. I got rifle fire in reply. I believe that the Japanese could have killed me—the bullets were close, but they did not.

About 10 days later, 103 Japanese did surrender, and eventually, I accompanied these prisoners on the Coast Guard ship "Centaurus," back to San Francisco.

My next duty was in the Battle of Okinawa, landing on the NW beach, April 1 (Easter Sunday), 1945. Our patrol with a war dog and 6 Marines, I learned from native Okinawans who spoke Japanese that our enemy forces had moved south to strong fortifications. For 5 months the fighting continued.

In May, during a lull in the battle, a friendly Okinawan man with a canoe welcomed me for a trip along a reef just off the coast, catching fish and lobsters. My men were about to cook and eat some of these first, when a native boy yelled "Abunai!!" and explained that some of the fish were dangerous (poisonous) to eat.

When the atomic bombs convinced the Emperor of Japan that he'd better give up, I found a way to reach Capt. Masao Honda in the northern mountains of Okinawa, convincing him by letter that the war would soon be over. His unit surrender took place Sept. 3, 1945. I have official photos of this first handover of a Samurai Sword.

While on a business trip to Tokyo, Japan, in 1970, I managed to find Capt. Honda (renamed Kimura, because there were no male heirs in his wife's family). He later visited us in Toledo. We stayed in close touch until he died in 1998.

Other notes about the Okinawan experience.

When the fighting stopped, to celebrate PEACE, the Okinawans built a stage in the forest where they presented an opera based on folklore of the natives. I was amazed to see that the stage reminded me of a Shakespearean stage—it stood at about eye level with the audience. We watched two ladies who, in unison with native guitar-like instruments, sang songs related to Okinawa's history. Actors and actresses on stage put on a great show. Children in the "pit," shouted an laughed as they were entertained.

Theodore H. Harbaugh
JLS 1944

Senjinkun:
The Army Field Service Code

Army MIS graduate, Ulrich Straus's book *The Anguish of Surrender: Japanese POWs of World War Two* is now available in bookstores. The book deals with POW and Japanese relations, views on POWs by the Japanese, the role the Army and Navy Language Schools played, group suicides, and stories of POWs. For those interested the book can be purchased for $27.50 at any local bookstore.

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