EDOKKO
A NARRATIVE OF JAPANESE PRISONERS-OF-WAR
IN RUSSIA
by Edward Norbeck*

Foreword

The narrative which follows is fact rather than fiction; that is, the account is based upon information related to me as fact by Japanese citizens who were prisoners-of-war in Russia after World War II. With the few exceptions noted below, I believe the pages that follow are a fairly accurate description of the main events in the wartime and postwar experiences of one group of Japanese. Judging from accounts published in Japan of the experiences of prisoners-of-war in other camps and in other parts of Russia, I have no reason to think that my narrative represents typical experiences.

I have used a fictitious name to conceal the identity of the principal informant, at his request. The name Makoto is made up, as are all other names of persons. Some of the circumstances of the childhood and early life in Tokyo of "Makoto" are also fictitious, but they are nevertheless close to actuality. I suspect that another somewhat fictitious element is also included. The roles played by Makoto, as depicted to me, are probably in some degree retrospective enlargements. One additional element is possibly fictitious. As an afterthought, my principal informant stated that one of the Japanese songs which I have translated may have been published after the end of World War II. He stated that the theatrical performances in the camp were so common that he could not remember which were the songs he sang at that time and which he learned later in life.

Information used in this account was gathered in Tokyo in 1959 over a period of several months. One person served as the principal informant, but I was fortunately able to talk with two other former prisoners-of-war from the same camp and was thereby able to verify the main events of the period of imprisonment as well as some events before and after that time.

Far more than being an account of life in Russia or of Russians, the narrative I have written appears to me to be an account of the thinking, social relations, and ways of acting of Japanese men.

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Prone on his wooden bunk, Mokoto peered intently through the small windows a few inches from his nose. His eyes throbbed from the glare outside and his back ached, but still he lay flat on his stomach with chin in cupped palms, entranced by the landscape before him.

Beyond the windows of the train stretched the winter steppes of Siberia, a great sea of white. The wind had sculptured patterns in the dry snow like wavelets in a bay, and occasional powdery flurries completed the illusion of spumy ocean. Three days earlier he had awakened to his first view of this expanse of white, and it had since held him in fascination. Never in his native land had he seen anything like this. Even Fuji in its heaviest winter mantle seemed in comparison a minor work of art.

Here and there as the train threaded its way onward, clumps and small forests of birches broke the illusion of the sea. Now the tiny puffs of snow were not whitecaps. He had seen them before, in Tokyo. These puffs of thistledown were the skirts of the corps de ballet of Les Sylphides, dancing, twirling, motionless for a moment, then twirling again.

He fished about in his knapsack for paper and pencil, to write and rewrite until he found words to express his feelings, sparing words of the classical haiku that suggested rather than spoke in vulgar openness.

The white sea is a phantasy
A bewitchment of spirits of snow
But yet, in bewitchment, but yet . . . .

The hour’s work was done. He read the lines again, savoring them and wondering what they might mean, and then added the poem to the swelling number he had composed on the journey.

It was December, 1945. The war had ended and the company of Japanese soldiers rode on a Russian train bound for the Pacific, where a ship for home awaited them. It was not easy to tell the direction of travel from behind locked doors with only narrow windows above eye-level to give a view of the terrain. Doubts about their direction had crept into the minds of the more observant soldiers, but had been quickly dispelled and had now gone unvoiced for several days. Of course they were bound for home. Their officers, riding on the same train, had told them so.

The interior of the remodeled freight car in which Makoto and twenty-nine men of his company rode was fitted with six large bunks, in tiers of three at each end. In the center of the car, flanked on both sides by doors, stood a metal stove which the men stoked with coal day and night. Light entered from a series of windows at the four corners of the car, tiny windows placed near the ceiling so that one could look outside only from the uppermost bunks.

During the first several days of the journey the men had been very curious about the countryside through which they passed. Like other oc-
cupants of the high bunks near the window, Makoto had a constant succession of visitors. The space between bunk and ceiling was so small that it was impossible to sit fully upright, but eight men, four at each set of windows, could squeeze into the bed and, by turning on their sides in a half-reclining position, could look outside. Others stood on the edge of the bottom bunk, supporting themselves as best they could, and peered over and around the heads and shoulders of the reclining men. The positions were uncomfortable for everyone and few cared to maintain them for more than short intervals. After several days of intermittent peering the men became bored with the unchanging vista of snow and amused themselves with the game of go, with cards, and with talk of what they would first do when they reached home. Only Makoto, happy to be left alone, continued to look through the windows.

Makoto had been a private in the Japanese army for a year. Drafted at the age of twenty, he had been shipped to Manchuria, with no military training whatever, on the day following his induction. Most of his fellows were like himself, men for one reason or another physically below par. Some had incurable infirmities but most had only temporary disabilities that rest, nutritious diet, and medical care might repair in a few months. There had been no time for rehabilitation when they entered the army. Men, men of any kind, were needed at once. Makoto and his comrades were to be sent to depots in Manchuria from which, as the military strategists saw fit, they would be dispatched to other areas to bear the shock of initial attacks upon the enemy. Following them in attacks as second and third waves would come the strong and healthy soldiers, better assured of success through the sacrifice of men like Makoto. This information came to the recruits by rumor on the troop ship bound for Dairen, and it seemed to be amply confirmed by additional rumor when they reached their station in Manchuria.

The idea of dying a sacrificial death struck no terror in Makoto's heart. There was nothing he could do about that. Of course, he wanted to live, but not as a soldier. He wanted only to be what he had always been, a student of music, art, and literature. If he had to be a soldier, he much preferred the role of a martyr to that of a warrior who must kill others.

Makoto was a conscientious objector, but he had remained silent. Not even his mother and his younger brother, the two people closest to him, knew of his sentiments. In wartime Japan there was no talk of conscientious objection, and Makoto thought of himself as unique and felt very lonesome. He knew that he should feel remorse for his failure to conform, but even when he tried to do so he could not. Keeping his sentiments to himself protected his parents and his brothers and sisters from the shame they would surely suffer if they knew his true feelings.

Makoto had lived in a childish world, indulged by his parents, his brothers
and sisters and by his teachers. He had a sweet nature combined with a childlike directness that endeared him to even casual acquaintances and inspired everyone with a desire to protect him from life's evils and trials, of which he patently knew nothing. His physical appearance was appealing. He was small, frail, and looked several years younger than his age. His skin was clear and fair, and his neat black hair was a pleasant contrast. With a military haircut, he looked even more the trusting child. Large eyes, oriental in cast but entirely lacking the epicanthic fold, looked candidly at a world that had always been hospitable. A high forehead, a long, high-bridged nose, and a profile free from the jutting teeth so disliked but so common among his countrymen gave him an appearance that fitted the Japanese stereotype of the intellectual. People had often told him this, but he did not want to look like an interi. When comments on his intellectual appearance were still fresh in his mind, he sometimes combed his hair forward to reduce the height of his brow.

Makoto viewed himself as a true Edokko, a dyed-in-the-wool son of Tokyo. This identification made him Shitamachi, one of the Downtowners, as opposed to Yamanote, the Uptowners, who lived around the heart of the city but were not Edokko. All his life he had heard talk of the differences between the Downtowners like himself and the Uptowners, and his preference was wholly and heartily Downtown. Intellectual was a name applied to certain Uptowners. Some Edokko were, of course, intellectuals, but to call them this term smelled of Uptown and was somehow affected. Like other Edokko, he was happy at any time to discuss the distinctions between Uptowners and Downtowners even though these distinctions had long been blurred. It was not that Uptowners were held in contempt. On the contrary, Uptowners tended to look down on Downtowners as being commercial, gay, over-friendly, and raffish. But Downtown had its own traditions, dear to the heart of Edokko, and foreign to Uptown. Relations among the Edokko were warm, not cool and distant as among the Uptowners. Among themselves, they had their own manner of speaking, direct and sometimes gamy. Most important to Makoto was the traditional association of the Edokko with the theater, music, arts, and all other forms of entertainment. As an Edokko of a well-to-do family, he had been immersed from childhood in the noncommercial aspects of music and the arts, and this was where his natural inclinations best fitted him.

Makoto's life had been unmarred by any kind of suffering. Until his induction into the army, the golden period of indulgence of Japanese childhood had continued for him long past the time when other children ordinarily assumed responsibilities and were forced to meet the buffets of the world. To his parents and to everyone else he was still an endearing, well-behaved child whose future lay in his talents in the arts. These were given every encouragement.
Makoto's father was the artist Mihachiro, a maker of modern woodblock prints and a dealer in antique objects of art. In the fashion common to Japanese artists and entertainers, Mihachiro was a professional name by which he was known to customers and many other people. He was the descendant, through six long-lived generations, of a famous woodblock artist of the late eighteenth century, and he took pride in his ancestry. His shop in the Ginza was famous and prosperous. When the war began, twelve apprentices and two shop assistants lived with him, his wife, and their five children in rooms behind and above the display and work rooms.

Mihachiro was a happy man who sought moderation in all things and strove for smooth relations with his fellow men. His family held no exceptional place in his heart. He had married mother, as he came to address his wife after the birth of their first child, because he needed a wife and she had seemed well-suited. He had never felt any romantic attraction toward her, but she was an entirely satisfactory wife. Fond of all of his children, he was prepared to do much to ensure their well-being and success in life, but his feeling toward them was one of casual affection. The good things in life for him were a combination of his family, his friends, his work, the theater, arts, and music. He had no passionate devotion to any single one of these things, but the sum of all, of the Downtown way of life, was very important.

Makoto's mother, Shizue, sprang from a different tradition. The daughter of an impoverished samurai family of Kyoto, she had spent her early childhood in want and bitter discomfort. Seeking such solace as they could from the past glories of their ancestors, her parents had hugged their high birth to their ill-nourished bosoms and relied for a livelihood upon the kindness of more fortunate relatives. As time passed, life grew increasingly perilous and at last Shizue was forced to enter domestic service in Tokyo with the family of a wealthy distant cousin of her father. This was not the position of an ordinary servant. She was provided with an elegant wardrobe, addressed politely, given training in flower arranging, the tea ceremony, and all refined pursuits of a Japanese gentlewoman, and served as companion to the childless mistress of the household.

When Shizue reached marriageable age, she was a pleasant, well-bred girl with refined but ordinary features. Without beauty and without money, she was not an attractive wife for the social equals of her mistress. Mihachiro came to the attention of Shizue's guardians through the brother-in-law of her benefactress, an Uptowner of wealth and position whose interest in antiques had brought him into frequent contact with Mihachiro. He had at first mentioned the possibility of a match only in jest, and his sister-in-law had taken it as such. But as Shizue grew older it became clear that her guardians must spend much money to ensure a marriage among their social peers or else they must search at a lower level. The
subject of Mihachiro was brought up again, and after months of indirect preliminaries, a meeting was arranged between the prospective bride and groom. Both expressed satisfaction, and the union was quickly arranged. Provided with a handsome traditional dowry of clothing, bedding, and household goods, Shizue was off their hands, and after a few years they ceased altogether to have any contact with her except the exchange of greetings at New Year's, when Shizue and Mihachiro made brief, formal calls.

Shizue was an efficient and thrifty wife, but she did not allow thrift to stand in the way of the desires of her children. They were given many luxuries and encouraged in every way to pursue their own interests. All were sent to the best of private schools and encouraged to take additional training in arts and music. All were intelligent children, interested in school, and as they matured they found no difficulty in passing the dreaded entrance exams to the famous universities.

Makoto, the middle son, had spent nearly all his life in school. Instruction had begun when he was two, with private lessons in water-color painting. When the conventional school day was over, by his own preference he attended special schools where he studied piano, singing, and the drama. Private tutors taught him Japanese and Western painting, traditional Japanese poetry, and the English language. Summer and winter vacations were heightened periods of tutoring in music and the arts, both Japanese and Western. When the conscription notice came, he was in his second year at the Imperial University.

Wartime stringency and rules against unpatriotic indulgence in pleasure had curtailed Makoto's activities somewhat. He was urged to play the piano at home only very softly, to avoid speaking English, and to forget the Western music he had learned. Food had been getting more and more restricted in variety and quantity, but his parents had long-established lines of supply and the family had as yet suffered little. Most of the apprentices had been drafted, and his father's shop had been closed for a year and a half. But Mihachiro was not concerned about a livelihood. He had ample money and many valuable antiques which could be turned into money if necessary. He kept himself and his remaining apprentices busy making new woodblocks, and waited patiently for the irritation of the war to end.

For years the schools, the radio, and the press had talked of *Yamato damashii*, the fighting spirit of the true Japanese. Like every other Japanese citizen Makoto had heard and read oceans of words on the subject. He must fight the enemy to the bitter end, gladly giving his life for the honor of the Emperor, the nation, his family, and his ancestors. Makoto could repeat this gospel by heart, but it stirred no emotions within him. He had taken much time for introspection during the past two years and he knew himself to be utterly lacking in the fighting spirit.
Makoto returned from school to find a letter instructing him to appear the following day for medical examination and induction into the army. His elder brother had entered the army three years earlier and was now a lieutenant, somewhere in the Pacific they thought, although they had received no letter from him for several months. The meal passed in silence, for which Makoto was thankful, as it gave him time to plan for tomorrow. Somehow, he thought, he must make himself sick, and perhaps they would put him to work as a medical corpsman where he would not have to fight and kill the enemy. He had always been delicate and, even when he felt entirely well, his pulse and blood pressure were curiously below normal. He was also subject to protracted headaches that took away his appetite and left him pale and exhausted. Repeated physical examinations had never revealed any organic or psychological cause for the ailments. His own doctor had dismissed the low pulse and blood pressure as exceptions within the range of normalcy, and Makoto himself knew from experiences in mountain climbing that he was in fact tougher than many of his sturdy-looking friends.

Perhaps he could take advantage of his apparent ill health at the army physical examination. One of the headaches which left him so pale and trembling was coming on now, and that was all to the good. He would try to help it along by drinking as much black tea and coffee as he could force into himself, as overindulgence in either seemed to bring on a headache.

Both coffee and black tea had disappeared from the market long ago, but his mother had some hidden away. The coffee beans were ancient, he knew, but their flavor had no bearing on his plans. At Makoto’s request, his mother prepared a pot of each, intending them for the whole family as luxuries for the special occasion. To the mild astonishment of the others, Makoto appropriated both pots and gulped their entire contents. His headache was progressing satisfactorily. Excusing himself from the table, he went to the medicine cabinet in the kitchen and methodically pulled out every bottle, box, and paper. Putting aside the lone bottle labeled poison, he drank or swallowed a part of the contents of every container, and went to the Western sitting room where a piano had been installed for him. Tonight there need be no restrictions. He played for an hour with as much force as he could muster. His throat and stomach felt horrible, and his head echoed with every note. Beads of sweat sprang up beneath the hairline of his high forehead and trickled down his temples as he gritted his teeth to keep pounding out the notes of compositions he did not consciously recognize.

He ran to the toilet to vomit, and then he could remember nothing until morning, when his mother awakened him. By now he was truly sick, pale, and hardly able to walk. His brother Yoshio, two years his junior, accompanied him to the army office, supporting him when he seemed in
danger of falling. When Makoto's turn came after two hours of misery in waiting, the army physician looked thoughtful as he took his pulse and blood pressure and took both again. The doctor called for a thermometer and took his temperature, which Makoto noted was 40 degrees Centigrade, indicating a raging fever. When all questions had been asked and answered and the examination blanks completed, the physician gave him a piece of paper bearing a printed address and instructions to appear there the following day for induction into the army. All stratagems had failed. He was male; he was alive; and he could walk. These, he was told by a fellow draftee as he left the building, had become the necessary qualifications.

The following day Makoto was issued army clothing and equipment and left Tokyo in the afternoon on a troop train. His headache grew steadily worse. He lost his appetite, which would in any case hardly have been stimulated by the coarse army fare. The only food he could choke down was rice and a little tea. After a week of half-delirium during which he could remember vaguely the hold of a ship, standing huddled in a cold rain on the docks at a port near Dairen, Manchuria, and another troop train, he awakened one day entirely free of headache. As he took stock now, he saw that he was part of a company of men, all somehow ailing, who were receiving such military training as they might absorb before trans-shipment to a battle zone. "To the south" was all that rumor had of their destination. One company with three weeks' training had left the day before, and their own departure, it was said, might be tomorrow.

But Makoto's company did not actually leave for eight weeks, and in the meantime Makoto was taken from the group. The recruits learned to fold their blankets, arrange their shoes on the earthen floor in front of the raised wooden platforms that served as their beds, to march and respond to commands, and all the other minutiae of the dull routine of the barracks soldier.

Every morning they chanted in unison the injunctions of the Imperial Rescript: "It is the duty of the soldier to be faithful, to be obedient." In all activities except this recitation, Makoto was a dismal failure. As it turned out, he seemed to be an expert marksman, but little time was spent in the rifle training of troops of the quality of his company. His worst failing, revealed in every act, was a lack of soldierliness. He could not salute smartly or look stern and soldierly as he marched and stood at inspection.

Worst of all and resulting in the most terrible consequences was his inability to remember to use the proper personal pronoun for himself as decreed by military custom. Try as he would to remember to say jibun, he usually wound up in moments of stress using the less humble watakushi or boku of civilian life. Then there was the day when the headache returned with unusual force. In a state of half-consciousness, he slipped back to his earliest childhood, referring to himself by the pronoun used by his
mother and elder sister, from whom he had first learned to talk. “Watashi,” he said, and the squat corporal from a farm village in Yamaguchi Prefecture looked thunderstruck at this spectacle of an effete Odokko so lacking in the Yamato spirit that he referred to himself by a term used only by women.

Punishment was swift, as it usually was when he was remiss before noncommissioned officers. As the only Edokko of the company, Makoto was a curiosity to everyone and a subject of resentment among the noncommissioned officers from the country. The recruits of his company, whether rural or urban, responded to him just as people always had. He was popular, and there was always someone ready to give him a hand with his rifle or to help him finish preparations for inspection of quarters. The commissioned officers were distant, but they too seemed well-enough disposed toward him, although despairing of ever turning him into a soldier. It was the first-class privates, the corporals, and occasionally the sergeants who caused him trouble. They were the men who most fiercely expounded the idea of the Yamato spirit, and they were the men whose duties brought them into closest contacts with this spiritless company of recruits. If they were from the country, as most of them seemed to be, they were all the more difficult. Other men of the company had their share of punishment, but Makoto was singled out as a particular target.

The kinder men merely hit him in the face or on the side of the head with fist or open palm. Either way, slap or blow, the objective was to knock him down. This he learned quickly, and even a moderate blow could knock him two meters. He then sprang quickly to his feet and stood rigidly at attention to receive a sulphurous dressing down. Sometimes the whole procedure was repeated twice, and even three times.

Meaner men made him take off his belt and, using it as a whip, would beat his face and head, leaving red welts and occasionally open cuts. Meanest of all was the corporal from Yamaguchi, who, bawling insults at luckless recruits, gave the most severe punishment without inflicting any physical pain. As punctuation for his verbal abuse, he pulled off buttons one by one from tunic and fly, private's stripes, and all other detachable parts of the uniform. These he placed in his own pocket, never to be returned. Before inspection the following day every missing button and insignia had to be replaced to avoid more serious punishment. Makoto had already been subjected to the whole procedure four times, but after exhausting his own supply of spares he had managed to make the replacements easily enough from contributions by his fellow recruits. Almost any Japanese soldier could do simple sewing and mending, but Makoto had had no experience. This task was done by cheerful volunteers, who masked their kindness by claiming indebtedness to Makoto. When the corporal chose Makoto for his attentions, they said, he tended to leave the rest of them alone.
Makoto’s use of the word “watashti” set Corporal Goto into a state that no mere button pulling could satisfy. He knocked Makoto down three times in a calculating manner, as if he were in control of his emotions. Then rage seized him and he struck with all his might. When Makoto failed to rise, he kicked his inert body and, grasping his tunic, pulled him upright. Then he tried to remove Makoto’s belt, but found it too difficult to support the unconscious body at the same time. Holding Makoto with one hand, he struck again and again with the other, indiscriminately striking eyes, nose, mouth, skull, wherever the uncontrolled blows happened to fall. Finally, knowing that he had gone too far, he dropped the bloody bundle and, glaring about him, entered the nearest barracks.

They transported the unconscious Makoto to the hospital, where the medical officer in charge asked what had happened. The men who had brought him made no reply, and the officer did not repeat his question. The following day, when Makoto had recovered sufficiently to think clearly, he was relieved to find himself at rest in a hospital bed. He felt no personal resentment against Corporal Goto or against any of the others who had beaten him. These were things that happened to almost anyone in the army. “Shikata ga nai,” he said to himself; there was nothing to be done but to accept what came and try to avoid its recurrence.

After Makoto had spent a week in the hospital bed, the bruises and cuts had almost disappeared, but when he tried to rise from his bed to go to the toilet he collapsed on the floor. A physical examination resulted in a diagnosis of beriberi complicated by a high fever of unknown cause. This was the eighth week of his army career and during the whole period he had never once eaten a solid meal. Despite the strenuous training of the past weeks, he lacked appetite and, giving the balance of his food to hungrier men, he had subsisted on small portions of rice and tea. The genuine illnesses were made to look all the more serious by his low blood pressure, and he was judged entirely unfit for service.

The morning that his company was shipped to the south, never to be heard from again, Makoto was transferred to a large hospital in Ryujiton, across the bay from Dairen. Neither the beriberi nor the mysterious fever responded readily to treatment. Weeks stretched into a month, two months, and finally four months before he was taken from the hospital. In the meantime, life had become for him much as it had been in Tokyo. Despite the apparent seriousness of his illness, he felt well. He had become everyone’s favorite again, and received much attention from nurses, fellow patients, and medical officers, none of whom seemed imbued with the Yamato spirit. For his own amusement he wrote Japanese poems and recited Shakespeare to himself. For reasons he couldn’t explain, Hamlet was his favorite, and knew by heart long passages that grew dearer to him with every repetition. For the amusement of himself, his wardmates, and soon
the entire staff of the hospital, he sang songs in his light baritone. Trained in both Japanese and Western singing, popular and classical, he could please every taste, although the Western songs were limited to German tunes by rules against singing English and French airs.

Amusements were few in the hospital for both staff and patients. The radio reported principally war news; phonographs and records were few and worn out from constant use, and games had grown stale. With an eye to the future, when Makoto would no longer be a patient, one of the medical officers asked him to teach songs and singing to the nurses. Makoto readily agreed, and his popularity grew.

The news came to the ears of Colonel Namba, the head medical officer and director of the hospital, that one of the patients was trained in music and drama. Namba was a fat caricature of a man whose sagging jowls, narrow slits of eyes, and bristly hair made him look remarkably like a pig. All of this he knew very well, but he had managed to triumph over it. He was utterly indifferent to the problems of hospital administration so long as things went along with no serious hitches, and he good-naturedly allowed both staff and patients much freedom. He had received a broad education and he talked with enthusiasm and charm on many non-medical subjects. His passions in life were two, women and the Japanese theater. Despite his appearance, indulgence in the first of these was no problem. His position as a colonel masked his physical features with a dusting of beauty, and his personal charm had the same effect.

After a long period of plucking willing professional blossoms where he found them in Dairen, he had settled on an aging geisha. No great beauty even in her prime, Kiku (Chrysanthemum, as she was known professionally), was an intelligent woman who had achieved fame as a provincial geisha for her skill in dancing and singing. Since age does not quickly put an end to the career of an accomplished geisha, at thirty-five she had many years of professional work before her if she chose to continue. Colonel Namba had asked her to come and live with him in the hospital in Ryujiton, and she had accepted in part because she much preferred association with one man to the discomforts, at her age, of adjustment to a changing succession, and in part because she genuinely liked his company. It was a comfort, too, to be with a man who seemed oblivious of her coarse skin and bad teeth. Only now and then did it come to her how ugly he was. Like her patron, Kiku had a deep interest in music and the theater and kept her hand in her old profession by serving as an entertainer in Dairen on special occasions.

The hospital would have its own theater, Namba decided, after conferring with Kiku. She had pointed out that soldiers’ theatricals were an accepted and common part of army life and said that no censure was likely to be directed against him if the proceedings did not disrupt the hospital routine.
Makoto was called to the director's office and questioned for some time regarding his training. He was then asked to produce and direct a theatrical performance of Japanese style, with singing, dancing, serious drama, and comic interludes. Pleased and flattered, he willingly consented. Combining their knowledge, the three devised a program emphasizing heavily the *naniwa-bushi* form of chanting recital—tales of historic events and famous persons, of common people, gamblers, criminals, all of the traditional subjects. Makoto recruited the performers. His own enthusiasm and the knowledge that the affair had the hearty support of the director of the hospital made this an easy task. Many of the patients had previous experience in amateur theatricals and most of the inexperienced were accustomed to performing at country parties. All were delighted to become a part of the project. Men with the fairest skins and most delicate features were given the roles of women, assignments which no one regarded as demeaning. Kiku and Makoto wrote the sketches, combinations of half-remembered professional performances and original creations, and selected the songs. Namba made trips to the Mitsukoshi Department Store in Dairen to purchase musical scores. Costumes, make-up, and theatrical properties appeared like magic through the good offices of Kiku, who herself consented to sing offstage when a difficult song in a female voice was required. Actual teaching and direction of the performers was left entirely to Makoto.

In the excitement of these weeks, Makoto's health improved. Days of feverish activity made him forget his bodily condition entirely, and, as ever, he was in better health than any physical examination might suggest.

After eight weeks of preparation and rehearsal, the show was produced. A great success, it was given again a week later, and, by popular request, a third and fourth time. Emboldened by his success, Makoto then suggested that they produce *Origi*, a patriotic play by Miyoshi Jirō that enjoyed great popularity in Tokyo. Namba and Kiku fell in heartily with the plan and, since the play was famous throughout the entire Japanese Empire, they were able to buy a large supply of copies at Mitsukoshi in Dairen. Casting and rehearsals began at once, but at this time a great change came over Colonel Namba. Almost overnight his behavior changed from a good-natured benevolence to ill-tempered tyranny. He quarreled bitterly with his staff physicians and sent the nurses scuttling with his gruff commands. To the end, no one knew the cause of the abrupt transformation. Only when he talked of the forthcoming play did he seem his former self. His behavior soon proved too difficult for Kiku to endure and she left for Dairen. Following her departure, Namba became completely unreasonable in his demands upon the staff and indulged in unprovoked verbal attacks upon any underling he encountered. The normal and moderately efficient operation of the hospital was replaced by chaos. Meals were late; necessary
medications came late or never at all, and some of the seriously sick grew sicker. Only rehearsal of the play proceeded on schedule.

How news of Namba's breakdown reached higher authority, the patients never knew. What Makoto and the other patients could see with their own eyes was that Namba disappeared and a new director, quiet and deadly serious, took his place. Order was quickly restored. Five days after the arrival of the new director, Makoto and all other participants in the earlier theatrical production and the play now in rehearsal were pronounced fit for limited service and received orders transferring them to an antiaircraft unit assigned to protect a foundry at Anzan, to the north.

After one look at his new men, the commanding officer at Anzan ordered close order drill and conventional rookie training for all. Captain Sakurada was a professional soldier, thoroughly indoctrinated in the Japanese military ethic and firmly determined that every man under his command should share it. He talked often and with fervor of *Yamato damashii*. Unlike the sergeants of Makoto's earlier acquaintance, he did not think that physical punishment of the spiritless was an effective way of instilling it. *Yamato damashii*, he held, was a psychological quality, something of the spirit, and it was best gained intuitively. When one had it he felt ennobled, confident, resolute as a steel bar, and secure in the knowledge that he followed the true and traditional path, the path that had made the Japanese the noblest and most powerful of men. Discipline and bodily deprivation were helpful in nurturing and preserving the spirit, but they were only mechanical expedients, grossly physical.

Makoto was instantly recognized by Captain Sakurada as being totally unacquainted with the benefits of this spirit. He could be singled out from a distance merely by observing his posture and his walk, the captain noted. Himself full of the spirit, Sakurada was determined to communicate it, and Makoto became a fixation with him. From the start he had never allowed Makoto any assignment directly connected with the antiaircraft guns, reasoning that a man so deficient in the Yamato spirit could not possibly qualify for such a soldierly act as manning a gun. Instead, he put Makoto on light duty as a kitchen gardener, cultivating and weeding the radishes, Chinese cabbage, and tomatoes he had ordered the unit to raise to augment their rations.

The mere presence of Makoto became a growing challenge, and the captain took to calling him to the headquarters office to talk of the soldierly heart. When several weeks had passed with no visible change in Makoto, the captain grew impatient and hit upon a plan of more concentrated exposure. Reflecting that an assignment as gardener was a poor way to instill the spirit, he took Makoto off this duty. Still unwilling to have him on the guns, he could find no other post which seemed suitable, and so he relieved Makoto entirely of any kind of productive work. Instead, Makoto
was to spend every waking moment in the company of Sergeant Komai, a man whom the captain regarded as having the spirit to a near-perfect degree. Born and raised in Kyoto, Captain Sakurada viewed himself as sophisticated, and he shared the common attitude of urban Japanese that country people are so uncouth as to represent beings of a different order. It would not do, he thought, to choose one of the country corporals or sergeants as a companion and model for Makoto. Fortunately, the noncommissioned officers of his unit included a number of students and recent graduates of Tokyo universities. Komai was a graduate of the greatest of the schools, the Imperial University, and, at twenty-nine, he was the oldest of the group. His education, his manner, and his age made him the best possible choice.

The captain remembered that Komai had a degree in law, but, if he had ever known, he had entirely forgotten another part of the sergeant’s history. Komai had studied law to please his father, but his interests lay elsewhere. His father had died during his final year at the university, and, with mingled feelings of relief and guilt, Komai had made no attempt to find a position as a lawyer. Instead, he took employment as assistant cameraman for a Tokyo film company, a position which his mother found far below his dignity but which precisely suited Komai. He had spent three happy years at this work before he was drafted, and his most cherished wish was to return to the theatrical world.

Makoto was ordered to accompany the sergeant in the normal round of his duties, which consisted principally of daily checks of antiaircraft equipment and occasional instruction in and supervision of mathematical calculations necessary for aiming the guns at imaginary aircraft. The duties were not heavy. No enemy aircraft appeared and they seemed hardly to be expected. Much time was left for conversation.

In obedience to the captain’s orders, Sergeant Komai made an honest attempt to teach his pupil the meaning of the Yamato spirit, but it soon became clear to him that from an intellectual standpoint Makoto understood at least as well as he. Komai was no dissembler. For him Yamato damashii was something tangible, something he could feel inside himself, strengthening him. When, after a few days of awkwardness in each other’s company, the sergeant became carried away by his assignment and began speaking with deep sincerity, he was stopped short by his pupil’s habit of completing sentences for him. Komai used the standard clichés. When he hesitated in an excess of emotion or for any other reason, Makoto helpfully carried on, speaking the precise words which the sergeant had intended to follow. After several abortive attempts, Komai gave up in defeat.

But the sergeant liked his pupil and was fond of talking. His personal interests soon led the conversation to the theater, where it stayed. Komai had had no training in theatricals except the considerable he had gained
through his employment. The films on which he had worked had always been costume pictures of the lords and samurai of the ancient feudal periods. Like movies of the Wild West, their counterparts in America, they had an assured audience among the Japanese population and were constantly in production. He was acquainted with other forms of the drama only as spectator in public performances, but he wanted to know much more. Shakespearean drama had taken a hold on his fancy, and it was this subject that became the center of the conversations of the two.

Makoto knew most of the plays of Shakespeare, in Japanese translation and in the original English. Possessing a retentive memory, he could recite lines in English for long periods without pause. Komai was far less proficient in English, but once the meaning of passages had been translated into Japanese he too revealed himself a quick student. Over and over again Makoto related the events of each play, and over and over again he recited the more famous lines in English while Komai repeated them after him.

Hamlet became the sergeant’s favorite. He demanded endless repetition of every English line Makoto could remember and painstakingly learned to render them in the foreign language. His English was atrocious. In the customary Japanese fashion, he was unable to master the English “I” and short “a”; he added vowels where no vowels belonged, and he demolished the pattern of English intonation. But he became nonetheless fluent in the lines he memorized and, immersed in the spirit of the play, he imparted a bizarre authority to them.

It was full Manchurian summer and, for the two soldiers, a golden summer. Rising was a pleasure, and evening, when they parted, a regret. Seeking shelter where they could find it apart from the other men, they developed an itinerary which suited the sergeant’s daily routine, a tree here, a storehouse there, and the barracks at hours when all men were away. Best of all were the edges of the fields of kaoling and maize which lay between the gun emplacements. There, when the sun was right, they lay happily in the shade of the tall grains, savoring the smell of growing plants and cultivated soil. Despite attempts at secrecy, some of the men knew what went on between Makoto and Komai, but only one found their activities objectionable. In civilian life a village office clerk, Sergeant Ogawa was humorless, singleminded in his devotion to duty, and desperately lonesome among his sophisticated fellow sergeants. Stopping abruptly in front of Makoto one day and glaring in anger, he had said, “Your eyes are made of glass.” The sentence was completely unconventional but Makoto at once understood that it meant censure for beguiling Komai from the good soldier’s path. There had been no other unpleasant events.

Life was also not unpleasant for other men of the antiaircraft unit. Most of them were on limited duty because of physical handicaps, and the work of even the ablebodied was not especially trying. As a whole, the officers
and noncommissioned officers were a decent lot, and everyone had almost enough food to eat. Now and then some of the enlisted men raided neighboring cornfields as the ears became mature, but most men were not fond of corn, a food ordinarily regarded as animal fodder. Some made a regular practice of commandeering fruits and vegetables—sweet melons, tomatoes, cucumbers—from Manchurian farmers on their way to market. These were principally first-class privates who for lack of competence never expected to receive promotions in rank.

These men also found it a pleasure to go to the nearby communities of mud-walled huts of Manchurian farmers of Chinese descent, where they could strut about as superior beings before such luckless farmers as were unable to avoid being on the roads at the same time. "Mei fahz," most of the Manchurians said in fatalistic resignation when the soldiers took their property, and they were careful to be polite. When, as occasionally happened, a farmer resisted the theft of his property, a kick, a blow with the hand, or even an angry shout changed resistance to abject entreaty. The farmer cringed, fell on his knees to the ground, and implored his masters in the most humble Japanese to spare him and return the goods for his hungry children. A first-class private with little hope of honor among his fellow soldiers could then laugh and call the farmer a fool. He could also contemptuously kick the farmer's empty burden basket if other receptacles for transporting the stolen goods back to the barracks were available or unnecessary.

Daily the radio told the soldiers of great Japanese successes on every front, and they had little reason to disbelieve these reports. Their rations were normal, and they had heard by repeated rumor that a year's supply of food, clothing, and all the necessities of life, constantly replenished, was stored in caves in the nearby mountains. The daily round conveyed no hint of impending disaster. It was true that letters from home had been reduced to an irregular trickle, but this was a circumstance to be expected in war. No enemy planes came to offer themselves as targets, and among this small group of soldiers an air of serenity prevailed. It could not be long, they thought, until the war ended with victory for Japan, and they bore the tiresome routine with patience.

Makoto's only letter from home, arriving in a thin spate of mail early in August, bore curious news. He had written letters frequently to his family in which he incorporated poems of his own composition. He wrote of things that pleased him, the cloudless blue sky of Manchuria, and the feeling of openness and freedom in this land less cramped than Japan. Sometimes he wrote of loneliness and his longing to see his parents' faces again, as thinking of these sad things also gave him pleasure. His mother's letter—for it was always she who wrote and it was she to whom his thoughts of home were most frequently directed—told him with a note of puzzlement that,
as before, nearly all of his last letter had been blotted out by wide brush strokes of ink.

Makoto recognized at once the hand and mentality of Captain Sakurada, and wondered that nothing had ever been said to him of the censorship. Anyone could easily understand, he reflected, that his poems lacked the Yamato spirit, but it was certain that other men of the company and probably the captain himself held poetry in high esteem. Others—and perhaps the captain—also longed for home, and he knew that the Manchurian sky was splendidly blue for many other men. The two Japanese traditions of aesthetic appreciation and stern-willed soldierliness were both undoubtedly shared by the captain, and they were not wholly incompatible, but it was clear that the martinet triumphed. Searching for some sort of simile, Makoto ended his musing with the thought that he had been graced with a commanding officer so singleminded that he would place in military order the stones of a river beach.

Makoto’s education in the martial spirit had continued for two months before it came to an unplanned end by way of a drinking party for the sergeants of the unit. Sitting inside their barracks in a relaxed circle with towels tied about their heads in festival fashion, the men took turns in displaying their talents in singing and dancing. As the spirit moved those who were not performing, they joined the refrains and danced individually or in groups. Free from the restraints of sober conduct, they clapped arms about each other, and, when necessary, gave each other drunken support to rise or return to their seats.

All was in order. All acts followed the traditional ethic of male drinking parties, and all was in keeping with the participants’ positions as sergeants in the Emperor’s army.

The party had waxed to a height of conviviality when the order of seating made it Sergeant Komai’s turn to perform. Sodden, weaving, but able to stand, he took a position in the middle of the ring and looked about him. Dissatisfied with the stage provided by the barracks, he lurched outside, shouting to the others to follow him. A raucous procession stumbled after him into the brilliant moonlight and wandered about the encampment. In its wake, curious heads appeared at windows in the barracks of the common soldiers. Finding at last a stage to suit his needs, Komai stood in the assembly area in the center of the camp. Stripping off his army shirt, he stood in trousers and underwear, drew himself to full height, and commanded the others to move back so that his stage might be large and clear.

A few of the corporals and privates, emboldened by the obvious fact that the sergeants were drunk, hurriedly drew on clothing and moved quietly to the edge of the grounds. Following their lead, Makoto and a growing
number of men arose and huddled in the shadows of the barracks nearest the knot of partying sergeants.

Komai began his performance, and Makoto listened in a horror that soon turned to admiration. The sergeant’s performance was magnificent. The faulty phonemes of his English dwindled into insignificance beside the power and sincerity of his emotions. He was no longer a sergeant in the Japanese army. He was Hamlet, an international figure, speaking with deep emotion of things of the heart. His voice was clear, firm, and very, very loud. The most drunken of his comrades was compelled to silence, and the words rode on the moonlight to every corner of the small encampment.

The sergeant paused, and the silence was complete. He continued:

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.

The flow of words stopped. Komai’s shoulders sagged, and he became a drunken sergeant standing shirtless on an August-dry soldiers’ assembly ground hours after he should have been in bed. For his audience, the spell was unbroken. After a moment of silence, the university students among the sergeants took the lead. They shouted “Banzai!”; they clapped and cried for more. From the shadows the corporals and privates, lacking comprehension of spoken English but carried away by the enthusiasm of their noncommissioned officers, joined in the applause.

A lone figure, arrested in movement just behind the small knot of sergeants, stood soundless at the billowing applause. Captain Sakurada had been awakened with the rest of the camp, and in silent anger at hearing words of the forbidden English, had hurried to the source of the disturbance. As he drew nearer, the identity of the speaker and the nature of the oration as some sort of English theatrical performance became clear, and his anger grew. He had approached unnoticed by anyone until the applause had frozen him into shocked immobility. Coming out of the trance, his clouded mind could understand only that his campaign of spiritual reform for Makoto had met crushing defeat through the acts of a traitor and that his shame had been witnessed by most of the company.

Losing all ability to speak or to think rationally, the captain charged through the men with a roar and seized Komai. Felled with the first blow, the limp figure on the ground offered no resistance. As abruptly as he had begun the assault, the captain left and strode back to his quarters.

Even Captain Sakurada could recognize devastating defeat. The following day Makoto returned to the vegetable patch, and no word was ever said
to him about the events of the preceding night or of the Yamato spirit. Now and then he caught a glimpse of Sergeant Komai in the distance, but they had no direct contact until several months had passed. After a few days of fearfulness Makoto resigned himself to his lot as a gardener, and resumed his usual pleasures of admiring the blue Manchurian skies and the flaming sunsets, composing poetry about them when he felt especially moved.

A week passed in this way when an emergency order came for the entire unit to proceed in dress uniform to the city of Mukden. The date was August fifteenth. Arriving by train, they were placed in inspection alignment with thousands of other soldiers on a great parade ground. Once in formation, they waited in the blazing sun in silence for an hour, and here and there their ranks were depleted as men standing at attention fainted and tumbled to the ground. At noon the unfamiliar strains of the ancient gagaku music of the Japanese imperial household came to their ears from a radio loudspeaker. A voice followed, speaking for some minutes, but they could understand nothing except the startling fact that the voice was that of the emperor. When the voice stopped, the soldiers were dismissed, reformed into individual units, and Makoto’s company at once entrained to return to camp. No soldier of Makoto’s group had understood the broadcast but all were aware of the seriousness of the occasion. Their officers said no word except the necessary commands, and the men, in wonder and fear, were silent.

When the company reached its camp, Captain Sakurada ordered the men into formation on the parade ground, and, calling his officers to accompany him, entered the nearest barracks. The group of officers soon returned and the captain explained to his men that the words of the emperor had been a speech of surrender. The report could be nothing but false, he said, and the unit would fight to the bitter end.

The reaction of the assembled men was silent shock. Only yesterday the radio had told them of great victories. As they returned to their quarters, shock was gradually tempered by another emotion. No one spoke. Each was busy with his own thoughts, thoughts better left secret for fear others might not share them.

With mingled emotions the men puttered for hours about their barracks, saying only the most commonplace words to each other. In each heart a candleflame of happiness burned fitfully, tiny at first but growing larger and stronger. Guilty efforts to extinguish it were only temporarily successful. Some men tried to play go, mah jong, or cards, but the games could not hold their attention. The restlessness continued until after nightfall, when the greatest of wonders occurred. For the first time since entering the army, they saw lights outside at night. Their hilly position commanded a full view of the surrounding terrain and had, of course, been chosen for that
purpose. The highway stretching for miles below them had suddenly become a dazzling necklace formed by the headlights of motor vehicles in unusually abundant numbers. Everyone poured from the barracks to look in wonder at the spectacle below. The emotional impact was the hardest for the men from Tokyo, Osaka, and the other large cities of Japan. For them the lights were symbols of the city, of home, of the past and of the future, and, most poignantly, of the secret joy that had grown within them. Watching eyes burned with welling moisture, and, soon, overcoming all resistance, tears rolled down sunburned cheeks.

Now they understood each other, and they could express their thoughts aloud. Captain Sakurada might doubt the authenticity of the speech of surrender, but, to a man, the enlisted soldiers of Makoto’s barracks accepted it as true fact. They would soon cease to be soldiers. They would soon be home. They would soon—and this subject became the center of light-hearted conversation. Phantasy ruled. They turned over in their minds and told each other what they would first do when they reached home. Conversation dwelt mostly on food, delicious food, holiday food, rare and expensive food, food such as they had not eaten for years.

Women were second in popularity as a topic of conversation, and here the young single men from the most remote country hamlets shone. They talked of neighborhood girls they had known, and of yobai, night visiting, the backwoods custom which gave young unmarried men tacit sanction to creep quietly into the rooms of maidens of their choice to spend the night. They must take care, they said, to be silent so that members of the households of girls of their fancy would not be awakened. To insure secrecy, so that the girls themselves might not know the identities of their nocturnal lovers, they must disguise their faces by tying cloths about their heads. But this was only custom, they explained, and the girls always knew. It was sometimes possible to convey a message beforehand, spoken or unspoken, and the disguise did provide a means of escaping embarrassment if, by some mistake, a young man were unwelcome and consequently repulsed. When he encountered the girl in public again, she would, of course, fail to recognize him as the unwanted visitor and no face was lost.

City men talked of city girls, and answered the questions of the country men regarding the erotic pleasures of the Asakusa district in Tokyo and similar areas of the other large cities.

The youngest men, who, like Makoto, had come to maturity during the war, had little to contribute to the conversation on sex but were interested listeners. Never before had it been a topic of general conversation among the men, and never, in fact, had sexual drives seemed much of a problem. The vitality of most of the men was sapped by illness, and, in any case, they could from time to time get passes to Mukden, where women were
readily available. Sexual expression had always been regarded by Japanese army tradition in the same light as food and clothing, a necessity which should be satisfied whenever possible. Prostitutes under army supervision followed the troops, and soldiers' rations included contraceptives. But tonight was special. Hereafter the men need no longer depend on army whores whose abundant clients made contact with them a bio-economic transaction, brief, brusque, and unsatisfactory. Talk continued until far into the night, and dawn found many men in the trance-like sleeplessness of phantasy.

Captain Sakurada mustered the men at the usual time, and sent them off to their usual duties. Now conversation revolved on many subjects: how the war could have been lost; how the false reports of success in battle could have deceived them so completely; how soon they might expect to return home and what they might find upon their return. A few, whose homes were in Manchuria, talked of deserting, and the newest recruit among them put thought into action the following day. The feeling of freedom and happiness remained, only somewhat diminished by more sober thoughts of problems once they returned to Japan and their families. No one talked of suicide and no officer or man of their company seemed to entertain the thought. But Mukden, they heard, saw many suicides the day of surrender among the young officers of the air force, who brought in their planes to a flaming crash at the airport.

Captain Sakurada continued to hold firm control over his company. His presence and the maintenance of the normal working routine reinforced the soldierly habits they had acquired. They continued each morning to read the Imperial Rescript, and were reminded of their duty to emperor and country. They continued to maintain their clothes and equipment in soldierly fashion and gave their superiors unquestioning obedience. A full week had passed before they learned that conditions in other army units of the Mukden area were not always the same. A few men had received passes to go into the city, and returned with tales of chaos. The rumors of caches of supplies in the mountains were true, they said. They had seen with their own eyes supplies taken from the caches. Discipline had broken down in some installations, and the men had been allowed to roam freely. Locating the depots of food and clothing, these men had taken as much as they wished or could carry, selling or giving away the surplus. As proof of their statements, the men who had just returned from Mukden showed canned goods and clothing which they had purchased, been given, or themselves had taken from the stores. As they could, other men went to raid the caches, and a comfortable surplus of clothing and food was distributed about the camp. Makoto had no need to go foraging. Popular as ever, he received gifts of clothing, blankets, and food for which he felt no particular need but accepted out of politeness.

Soon after the surrender, an innovation in the form of a nightly discourse
by one of the corporals was added to the barracks routine. Quite as undistinguished in appearance as in name, Corporal Suzuki had no physical feature to set himself apart from others. Small, with slightly shriveled features, and wearing thick-lensed glasses on myopic eyes, he had many counterparts. Previously he had kept to himself and his presence had hardly entered the consciousness of the other men. Once emerging from obscurity, however, Suzuki revealed unusual qualities and soon became the best-known man of the company. He was a remarkable speaker, an orator whose hoarse tones conveyed an impression of utmost sincerity and urgency, compelling others to listen. His reputation grew quickly and continued to mount. Everyone soon heard that he was one of the few men in the unit capable of swiftly and accurately completing the mathematical calculations necessary for operating antiaircraft guns. It was clear, too, that he was a man of great learning, and he was so skillful with words that he could make the most difficult subject comprehensible to the dullest intellect of the company.

Joining a small group of men one night, Suzuki began to talk of a subject quite unlike any heard in the barracks before. It was not a topic that would ordinarily attract a large group of soldiers, but something about his voice and manner held them. He talked of the prehistory of man and, because of his eloquence, no one thought the subject strange. Daily his audience grew as the men came eagerly to hear the new developments unfolding like the plot of an interesting novel. The corporal's discourse began in great antiquity. He told his audience of primitive man of ancient time, who lived much as the lower animals live, in large groups, without marriage or any other sexual regulation beyond strength and animal desire, without the family, and without private ownership of any kind of property. The family, he said, was a relatively recent development in the history of man. Since man had long lived without family organization, it was obvious that he could do so. He talked of men of the Old Stone Age, of Peking Man, Neanderthal Man, Cro-Magnon Man, and he told of the gradual formation of the family. First large and composed of a number of cohabiting adult males and females, it had gradually grown smaller until it became a unit of man, wife, and children. He told of the formation of clans and tribes, of the growth of the idea of individual property replacing communality of ownership, and finally of the formation of the state.

Suzuki's discussion became a part of the daily routine, and enlisted men from other barracks came to hear and to ask questions, which were always answered in careful detail. His talks went on to the governments of Western countries. He spoke of France, Germany, the British Empire, and the United States and the political organization of these nations. A subject of which he never talked was himself. Questions of this kind he brushed aside politely as being unimportant, and his personal history remained unknown.

After a few weeks had passed, Captain Sakurada accepted the idea of
defeat and relieved the men of work on the antiaircraft guns. Maintenance of uniforms, quarters, and rifles was still required, and procuring supplies now became a major task. Foodstuffs were available at a depot near Mukden, but an unexpected hazard in the form of the formerly docile Manchurian farmers made a large armed escort necessary. The day of the emperor's speech of surrender, the red and white flag of China had flown from the houses in the native villages. A soldier alone or with only a few companions was no longer safe there, as they quickly found out when one of their number was shot through the head by a hidden marksman. The supply of gasoline for trucks was quickly exhausted, and it became necessary to transport food in small wagons pulled by horses or by human hands, a dangerous undertaking unless a large body of armed men accompanied the porters. Even then, a few defiant bullets whistling about the heads of the armed guards was a common event as they trekked the many miles between their camp and the food depot.

Life continued in this way until early October. Resigned to their lot, as ever, the men expressed little impatience. Then followed a period of confusion. For reasons which were never explained to the men, the company was broken up. Makoto and fifty other men under two lieutenants packed all their equipment and moved by foot to a small unoccupied camp a week's journey away. The packs were heavy and the road very bad. Makoto's head began to ache and he lost his appetite. Daily he felt worse, and the trip became for him a period of dazed stumbling, of wading knee-deep through swamps for most of three days, and of falling down at nightfall into feverish slumber. When they reached their objective, a small cluster of barracks surrounded by a deep forest, Makoto and several other men were too ill to walk further. After the sick men had spent three days in bed, orders came for them to march back. Makoto had walked all the way himself, his companions told him later, but others had carried his rifle and belongings. He remembered nothing of the events that followed for the next two weeks, when he found himself in a tent shared by twenty other soldiers. They had come by train from Mukden, he was told, and they were now encamped just within the northern border of Manchuria waiting for a Russian train to take them to Vladivostok.

Long lines of tents occupied by Japanese troops stretched up and down the shores of what seemed to him a lake but which he was told was the Amur River. At intervals of a few days trains took as many men as they could carry to the north, into Siberia, and other trains discharged additional Japanese troops from more southerly parts of Manchuria to await their turn in boarding homeward bound trains. It was late October and the approaching winter made the extra blankets Makoto's friends had brought along for him a necessity. He was given an examination by a Japanese medical officer and ordered to remain in his tent in bed. After a week
of confinement, he was allowed to take brief walks daily along the shore. Later, he could remember clearly very little of these days in the tent camp. The vast expanse of the sky and the water; the far shore of the river, dim in the distance; the passage, one day, of a stern-wheeled steamer such as he had seen in pictures of America, and a scattering of Russian soldiers and officers with whom he had no direct contact—these were the things he remembered.

In mid-November Makoto’s unit, 13 officers and 250 men drawn from several antiaircraft companies, entrained in a biting cold wind. By this time Makoto felt reasonably well, and, in his customary way, gave little thought to his health. The train crossed the river and stopped at dusk for a time at a town which the Manchurian-born soldiers in the group called Blagoveshchensk. From his vantage point by the windows Makoto studied the town, a wide unpaved street flanked by a row of grim, rectangular houses, the whole surrounded by unrelievedly flat land. Everything was gray, the skies, the streets, the houses; and nowhere were any human beings visible. A town suitable for ghosts, Makoto thought, and noticed that the windows of the houses all had lace curtains, of large mesh, gray in color like the town. Other men also noticed the lace curtains, and wondered aloud why every house should have the same hangings and why they should have been left behind. The houses were probably occupied, somebody said, and the inhabitants were merely keeping out of sight. This was a disquieting thought to soldiers happy with thoughts of returning home, and it was quickly dropped from mind.

Leaving the ghost town, the train moved slowly, but almost immediately they encountered snow, then snowy mountains, and great snow-covered plains. By the end of the third day, every man knew they were not bound for Vladivostok, but most of them clung to the thought that they were somehow, by some route, bound for home. Three times daily the train stopped to allow the passengers to take care of their bodily needs. The food was Russian and it was adequate, cereals cooked with oil from sunflower seeds, brown bread, cabbage, potatoes, onions, and stews with unidentified pieces of meat. Each car had an armed guard in Russian soldier’s uniform who appeared to open the door when the train stopped and stayed beside the car until the train began to move again. Most of the guards were Asiatics, and none of them spoke Japanese. Now and then the occupants of Makoto’s car caught a glimpse of a Russian of Caucasian race, but these seemed to be very few. Rumor said that one of these men spoke Japanese, but Makoto and the men in his car communicated in their own language with no one except fellow countrymen.

Their own guard, they learned later, was from Kazakstan. An Oriental whose physical features would have aroused little comment in Tokyo, he was in other respects at first an object of curiosity. He wore his Russian
soldier's uniform casually, as if it were a way of keeping warm, a substitute for felt or animal skins. The pockets of his overcoat gaped open and sagged from the weight of their bulky contents. An unwashed face with a film of grease on both sides of the nose and a thin sprinkling of scraggly hair on his chin completed the illusion of a steppe tribesman dressed by mistake in a soldier's uniform. "Banjin," wild savage, someone had said when they first saw him, but his behavior toward them was not savage. After opening the car door, he stood completely at ease, legs spread, and rested the butt of his rifle on the ground. As the Japanese soldiers ate their food and voided themselves, he stood with nonchalant patience, popping sunflower seeds into his mouth with his free hand, cracking them with his teeth and spitting the empty shells on the ground, and now and then reaching into his pockets for a new supply. The soldiers soon grew accustomed to him and were hardly conscious of his presence. But he remained clear in their memories for another reason. Somewhere he had learned one Japanese word, and this was his only utterance. Three times daily, as he opened the door of the car, he shouted the word "anata," "you," and a strange shiver ran up the spines of the men at hearing this intimate word, used by women in addressing their lovers and husbands.

Day succeeded day in peaceful monotony. Everyone now knew that they were bound inland, but there was no immediate cause for alarm. The war was over; they were together; they had not been mistreated. Supplies of coal for the cast iron stove were replenished as they were needed, and they suffered from neither cold nor hunger. "Shikata ga nai," they said, "Nothing can be done about it," and they resigned themselves to see what might come. A few men still spoke of those things, wonderful things, they would do on reaching home, but when three weeks had passed even the most obstinately hopeful abandoned this talk.

The only serious discomfort came from lice. Every man in the car was infested within a week of entrainment. After ten days the train had stopped at a station where everyone was instructed by motions of the arms to alight and stand in alignment. From the head of the train to the rear, the message was conveyed in Japanese. Every man who had lice was to raise his hand. Now, for the first time, they were fearful. Most men arrived instantly at the same idea. Those who were infested would be shot. Only three men of Makoto's car raised their hands, and Makoto was among them. Taken by two armed guards to buildings near the station, they were instructed by signs to undress and to bathe themselves in the showers provided by long pipes stretched across the ceiling of the room. As soon as they disrobed, their clothes were taken from them. This worried the men a little, but the water of the shower was warm and the attitude of their guards was not unkindly. Soon they understood the disposition of their clothes. They were placed in a room adjoining the shower where intense, dry heat killed
the insects. Men who had declared themselves free of lice had showers without the heat treatment for their clothes, and the journey continued. Ten days later, when the train stopped again at a station, hands rose eagerly at the question, and to the last man the Japanese passengers had their uniforms treated in the hot room.

Makoto had enjoyed the trip. He lay on the wooden pallet by the window reviewing things he had learned at school, writing poetry, devouring the scenery, and feeling strength return to him. In three weeks of devoted peering through the windows, he had seen no human being, only wild plains, mountains, and rivers. Even at their two stops for delousing, he had seen no one except their escorts on the train.

Twenty-four days after its departure, the train came to a final halt in a blinding snowstorm. By means of gestures their guard instructed the men to take all their possessions and assemble beside the car. Dimly, through flurries of snow, they could make out the outlines of a few buildings, but these conveyed no notion of their whereabouts. Assembled into a unit, the antiaircraft officers and men were instructed to set off, the officers on horseback, the men on foot, carrying their own belongings and an apportionment of the abundant baggage of the officers. An hour's blind march in the snow brought them to their destination, a group of five large buildings surrounded by a high board fence.

During the next few days their position was made clear. They were in Karaganda, Kazakstan, and they were prisoners-of-war. The principal industry of the area was coal mining, and many other prisoners-of-war, Japanese, German, and Rumanian, were in camps in the area. Most prisoners worked in the open-pit coal mines, but their unit was to build houses. They would be treated well if they worked satisfactorily and caused no trouble. Officers were to be exempt from all labor, but they were to continue controlling the men of the unit.

Some of this information they learned from talking to fellow countrymen through cracks in the board fence separating their camp from an adjoining one, but the cracks were soon sealed and the men forbidden to loiter near the fence. Other information came by way of the officers, who had received minimal instruction from the interpreter on the train. No one among the small group of twenty Russian officers and men assigned to the camp spoke any European language except his own, and no one spoke Japanese. For several days after the arrival of Makoto's group no verbal communication between the Russians and the Japanese had been possible. A Japanese soldier in the adjoining camp who served as its interpreter was borrowed briefly, but he could not serve both camps. Makoto's camp still harbored a handful of Germans and Rumanians, the remnants of a larger group that had just left. One of these men, a German named Bocklitz, served
as the interpreter between the Russians and the German and Rumanian prisoners.

Bocklitz broke the impasse in communication by the use of English as a lingua franca. Inquiring among the Japanese for a man who could speak English, he quickly decided upon Makoto as the most promising of the several who had some competence in spoken English. Bocklitz and Makoto then served jointly as interpreters, Bocklitz translating Russian into English and Makoto rendering the English into Japanese.

Domestic life for the Japanese prisoners was simple and imposed no conditions beyond imprisonment itself which the Japanese soldiers viewed as hardships. The men lived in large barracks of brick and mortar, each of which housed a maximum of approximately 140 persons. A large central room equipped with wooden tables and benches served as a recreation room. Flanking it on both sides were two identical dormitories in which wooden beds with straw mattresses were aligned against the walls. Two large stoves in the center of each dormitory and four wall stoves, designed so that the heat circulated in the walls before escaping through chimneys, served to warm the large rooms. Adequate blankets were provided, and, as various articles of the prisoners' clothing wore out, they were replaced by Russian counterparts.

Meals, prepared by cooks selected from among the prisoners, were taken in a separate mess hall, and were much like the food the Russians had served on the train. With the exception of boiled rice, none of the dishes fell within the tradition of Japanese cookery. The nature of the foods themselves and, especially, the lack of Japanese condiments, made it impossible to impart a Japanese flavor to the meals. Foodstuffs were received in large quantities at fixed intervals, and their use was left entirely to the prisoners. Supplies were adequate but strictly limited in variety. Cereals, potatoes, cabbages, beets, carrots, onions, sunflower seed oil, and loaves of brown bread were the invariable winter foods. When summer came, green tomatoes and cucumbers were brief additions. Carcasses of cows and pigs were delivered skinned but containing all the organs. Salted fish, disliked by the prisoners as being of the poorest quality, formed the last of the staples. Small rations of tobacco and sometimes of sugar were also provided.

To the Japanese prisoners the meals seemed fully satisfactory in nutrition and quantity if strange and monotonous. Meal followed meal throughout the week with tiresome uniformity; cooked millet for breakfast on Monday, barley on Tuesday, rice on Wednesday, wheat flour cereal on Thursday, and then the cycle began again. Vegetable soups, stews of meat and vegetables, and the despised salted fish followed each other with equal monotony. The sunflower oil which the cooks, in Russian fashion, added lavishly to the breakfast cereals seemed a luxury to these men coming from a land
where oils of any kind were scarce and costly. Meat, too, was a luxury. Most men had eaten little in their lives because of its high cost, but all liked it, and they made a kind of game of the order in which the cows and pigs were to be eaten. The cooks first used the finest cuts and, day by day, as an animal was consumed, they served parts that were increasingly less desirable. Last were the tripe, entrails, and lungs. But a man could keep record of the progress and the least desirable parts could be endured with good grace because they signalled the imminence of a return to the finest cuts.

Bathing was done in communal showers like those in the delousing stations en route. A hot room for treating infested clothing adjoined the shower. Water came from a well ten minutes by foot from the gates of the camp, and with the aid of a horse and wagon was transported daily by the prisoners under the guard of armed Russian soldiers. The camp lacked plumbing except tanks for storage of water and the shower pipes leading from the tank in which bathing water was heated.

In contrast with conditions in the Japanese army, the prisoners found life comfortable. The lone cause for serious dissatisfaction was the toilet. The conventional outdoor toilet of the Western world, this consisted of a building containing a series of round openings in a bench-like seat placed over a trench in the ground. To the Japanese soldiers, who had no hesitation in urinating almost anywhere, excreting in full view of others was excruciatingly embarrassing. At first they tried to find times when they might be alone, but this was impossible. After three weeks of discomfort, the matter remained serious enough to warrant complaint to the Russians. Through Makoto and Bocklitz, the message was conveyed to the Russians, who received it without apparent surprise. Providing lumber and other building supplies a few days afterwards, they gave permission to build a toilet of Japanese style with partitions extending completely to the ground so that the individual might be in unembarrassing seclusion.

Baths and delousing were the first activities of the new prisoners-of-war. This was followed by a physical examination by the Russian medical officer, who maintained an office, dispensary, and emergency hospital near the entrance of the camp. Each man was assigned to one of seven categories of physical fitness, which in turn determined the amount of work he must do. The fully able-bodied worked eight hours daily six days each week; Class 2 worked five hours; and Class 3, three hours daily. No work was required of Classes 4 to 7, which were composed of individuals suffering from serious illnesses or physical handicaps. Thereafter the men were examined weekly and reclassified according to the doctor’s opinion of their condition.

Rations also accorded with one’s classification. The able-bodied received the largest quantity of food, but regulations provided that the sick and
the convalescing receive adequate to provide full nourishment. Actual dispensing of food was left entirely to the prisoners-of-war themselves, who handled matters with no disputes. Cooks dispensed food from a central point in the mess. The individual announced his classification and was served accordingly. One's assignment was always well known to his companions and any attempt to deceive would meet instant detection.

The first work assignment was shoveling snow. And such snow! Two days after their arrival it measured eight feet. Immediately after they had finished clearing lanes in the camp, and, outside, to the commander's office and the well, a warm wind in one day reduced the snow to mere patches here and there. The following day saw intense cold, so great that they kept all stoves at full heat and wore their heaviest clothing even inside the buildings. Extremes and changeableness were characteristic of Karaganda weather, they soon learned, but these the Japanese endured with better grace than their Russian keepers.

At first the prisoners talked sometimes of escaping. The camp was guarded day and night by armed soldiers in lookout towers at each corner of the fence surrounding the camp, but it would not have been difficult to slip away when on the water detail. The important question was where to go. The geography of inner Asia was unknown to them and the winter climate less than inviting. Remaining with the group and meeting jointly whatever fate might befall was the more sensible course. Then, a week after their arrival, one of the privates attempted to escape, and his fate quenched all hopes. The Russians found him unconscious somewhere in the snow two days later and it had been necessary to amputate both of his legs.

When the prisoners first arrived, they had felt fearful about their future treatment. The armed guards in the lookouts were frightening, and the initial treatment given them by Russian soldiers in off-duty hours had hardly been reassuring. The Russians had been fiercely eager to have their watches, and they also coveted fountain pens, pencils, writing paper, pocket knives, and almost any possession except clothing and blankets which the Japanese had managed to bring with them. Some Russian soldiers had commandeered their possessions. Others had given them silver kopeks in exchange, but this had been little different from forcible seizure since the coins were useless to the prisoners. After a few weeks had passed with no other harsh treatment, the prisoners believed the reassuring words they had heard through the fence from their countrymen, and quickly adjusted to the routine of the camp.

At the first physical examination Makoto had been placed in Class 4, the ill who had good prospects for recovery. Because of his low blood pressure and pulse and apparent delicacy, this remained his classification for the 26 months he remained in Karaganda. Since he was valuable as an interpreter, however, he was set to this work permanently.
All of the European prisoners-of-war soon left the camp except Bocklitz, who was kept behind as the only available interpreter. The other men had been sent home, he told Makoto, and he too wanted to go. To speed matters up, he spent as much time as possible teaching Makoto the Russian language, and Makoto was a willing pupil. Six months after the arrival of the Japanese, Bocklitz had convinced the camp commandant that Makoto could carry on alone, and he soon left the camp, presumably bound for Germany.

In the meantime, Bocklitz told Makoto what he knew of each of the Russian administrators of the camp. They were nearly all reasonable men and women, he said, and Makoto need have few fears if he did what was expected of him. The small size of the camp was an advantage, he said, because it meant that relations between the Russians and the prisoners would after a time become personal, and therefore less harsh than in the big camps. “You Japanese,” he said, “should have it easy because the standard of living in your country is low. We Germans suffer when we have to live even like ordinary Russians.”

Titiev, the lieutenant in charge of the administrative office, was a good-natured simpleton. Plotnicov, the supply officer, was dishonest but otherwise harmless. Halpern, the Jew, was ill-tempered and Makoto should be very careful in his presence. The commanding officer kept to himself, and Makoto would see little of him. Karaganda, Bocklitz explained, was a prison for some of the Russians, too. Whenever the name was mentioned among them they made wry faces. It was a place where political enemies, the blunderers, the incompetent, and the hard-to-place might be sent to teach them lessons, to render them harmless, or merely to dispose of them. Life inside the stockade, he added, was easier than it was for some of the Russians outside.

Makoto and Bocklitz reported daily to the camp administrative office, five minutes’ walk from the prison gate, where the two were on call for use whenever necessary. Titiev, who had charge of camp records, threw up his hands when confronted with the unintelligible names of the Japanese prisoners-of-war. He turned all medical records over to Makoto, whose duty it now became to keep the file on the medical classifications from which the rations were computed. Soon he was given an additional duty, of which the camp commandant knew nothing. Titiev, a tall, handsome man of fifty, had attended school, but he could write little more than his own name. Written words confused him and the mere idea of putting thoughts into writing terrified him. When it was necessary to reply to letters, he searched his files until he found old letters with suitable sentences and paragraphs. Even copying these was a project beyond his capabilities. He omitted words, phrases, whole lines. He had no trouble in recognizing the errors; the difficulty was to correct them. A kind of terror seized him so
that no matter how many times he tried, he could not produce a coherent message.

As one of the first steps in teaching Russian to Makoto, Bocklitz had him learn to write the Russian alphabet in both cursive and printed styles. Mastering this was the simplest of feats for a Japanese trained in memorizing the several thousand symbols of Japanese writing, and Makoto could read aloud and reproduce written Russian long before he had any inkling of the meaning of the words. This capability came to Titiev’s notice and it offered an escape from the torture he faced daily in preparing reports and letters. Without any real knowledge of what he wrote, Makoto became Titiev’s secretary. He copied letters, reports, manuscripts in his neat handwriting. Titiev gratefully signed them and daily grew more dependent on his secret helper.

As the only Japanese in sustained direct contact with the Russians, Makoto became much more than the interpreter. In the daytime his associates were the Russian officers, and, increasingly, the Russians responded to him quite as had his countrymen in Japan. Here was someone who needed kind and gentle treatment, someone unworldly and inoffensive, a little boy in a dangerous world. They brought him holiday cakes and white bread, and took him to their homes to meet their wives and children. They came to rely on him for advice on all matters relating to the prisoners, and did not seem to mind his presence even when serious matters of business were discussed. It was thus Makoto who could explain the otherwise inexplicable to his fellow prisoners, and it was he who came to set policy. With little knowledge of Russian, he could explain to his comrades such mystifying things as the sudden increase in their already adequate rations during the third month of their imprisonment.

A strange Russian major had suddenly appeared at the camp a few days before this event and had remained closeted for a long time with Plotnicov, the supply officer. From the door of the administrative office Bocklitz and he had seen the two enter the commandant’s office, and Bocklitz, recognizing something in the wind, had drifted down the hall as often as he dared. He could hear loud tones of anger but was unable to distinguish a single word, he reported. The strange officer finally emerged, and Plotnicov, ashen and trembling, followed him out the door, never to be seen again by the two interpreters. In the supply office, Vera, the apple-cheeked country girl who served as Plotnicov’s clerk and, so Bocklitz said, also as his mistress sat at her desk and sobbed.

Bocklitz was well-liked by the Russians, who recognized him for what he was, a shrewd and good-natured man whose only wish was to return to his country and his family. As a Westerner, a German who spoke Russian and understood Russian ways, he was far less endearing than Makoto, the neutral outlander. With Makoto it was a pleasure to explain the unfa-
miliar little things of everyday life, to tell him of Russian foods and customs and, since he was so interested in everything, to bring him into their homes. Golovnin, the medical officer, and Titiev were his first hosts, but he soon came to know well most of the eight officers and civilian clerks who staffed the camp, and their apartment-like quarters by the communal well all became familiar to him. There he understood the lace curtains he had seen and wondered about months earlier in Blagovoschensk. Each of these dwellings had them too, newspapers folded and cut with scissors into intricate patterns.

Best of all Makoto liked Titiev’s wife and she, in turn, seemed particularly anxious to have his company. Gisele was a fair-skinned, pretty blond of thirty. An animated conversationalist, she spoke English and German as well as Russian, but she had no friends among the Russian wives and seemed to be something of an outcast. This, Makoto reasoned, was because she was the issue of a miscegenative marriage, an ainoko, “love child,” whose father was Russian and mother German. Gisele sometimes came to the office to talk with Makoto, and, because she was pregnant and found it difficult to move about, she had Titiev invite him to their quarters in a building occupied by three other families in similar apartments. She worked problems in algebra, she said, when she felt tense or worried, and judging from the sheafs of computations on the table in their joint living-dining room, this must have been frequent.

Best of all, Gisele like to talk of Russian and German literature. She was happy to relate plots of novels for hours at a time, modulating her voice like an actress to convey the mood of the scene. She talked often of Schiller and Goethe, and, to Makoto’s delight, she taught him Edgar Mörke’s poem, “Frühling,” first in her own English translation and then in the original German. Graham Greene was the only modern English writer whose works she knew, but these she seemed to know by heart, as if she had memorized long passages.

As Gisele’s pregnancy advanced, she demanded more and more of Makoto’s time. His duties were light, leaving him much time free, and Titiev was happy to send him off to their apartment in the afternoon to entertain his lonesome, housebound wife. What had brought the simple Titiev and his lively wife together Makoto never understood, but much about their relationship became clear three months later.

At Titiev’s order he had hurried to the apartment one afternoon to find a strange woman and three half-grown children. The stranger, a thick-waist ed woman of fifty with stringy, graying hair and querulous face, lay sobbing on the couch. Through the open door of the adjoining bedroom he could see Gisele supine on the bed, her distended abdomen forming a great mound. Over her face was spread a steaming towel, and she too was crying noisily. Titiev stood between them, alternately looking at each and going
to neither. Finally, he pointed to the walls and the floor, and brought bucket, mop, and broom for Makoto. The room was spattered with the remains of cooked barley cereal and the pot from which it had came lay on its side on the floor. Pots, pans, and raw, peeled potatoes, some whole and some in broken pieces turning black, lay scattered about and a large puddle of water inched its way toward the bedroom.

Titiev left, and no word was spoken to Makoto by the sobbing women as he restored order to the room. He returned to the office an hour later to find Titiev staring out the window, and at once was invited to sit in a chair beside the distraught man's desk. Gisele was not his wife, Titiev said, but his mistress, and this was common knowledge. The strange woman was his wife, and the children were his legal children. He had not seen any of them for four years, and Gisele had lived with him for two of those years. He had never been happy with his wife but had married her in accordance with the custom of the region of his birth, where childhood betrothals arranged by parents had been the practice at the time of his youth. She was an unsatisfactory wife, he continued, selfish, shrewish, and extravagant. Gisele was none of these things. It was a pleasure to live with the charming Gisele, who was always ready to smile and laugh, and who knew how to manage a household. Searching about for an example of her wisdom in domestic economy, he said that Gisele saved old cooking oil and added new to the old rather than wastefully starting afresh each time. As he talked, tears ran down his cheeks and, breaking off his narrative, he laid his head on his arms on the desk and cried.

The following day Titiev did not appear at the office, but a child of one of Titiev's neighbors summoned Makoto in haste to the apartment at midmorning. There Makoto found Gisele in labor but there was no sign of the strange woman and her children. Medical care of the Russian staff was not a responsibility of the physician for the prisoners-of-war; therefore another doctor had been summoned from the nearby town of Maikdok but he had not yet arrived. Under the direction of Titiev, who for once appeared to know what he was doing, Makoto boiled water, sterilized cloths, and aided in the delivery. A healthy, squalling boy was born just before the doctor arrived. A week later, Titiev, Gisele, and their baby were gone, and a plump lieutenant of forty, a widow with a daughter of ten, replaced Titiev. Makoto heard from her that Titiev had been arraigned for trial in Novgorod but he was told neither the charge nor the outcome.

Lieutenant Ignatieva was a cheerful, motherly robin who took to Makoto at once. Each morning she brought a glass of water to his desk as a gesture of friendship, and soon she had her small daughter bring crescents and other pastries. She made it a practice to shake his hand as he came into the office in the morning, and this practice spread to the other officers.
Each morning became a session of hearty handshakes. Even Halpern, the ill-tempered, took to shaking his hand and dryly going through the motions of attempting to smile. Makoto came to look forward to these gestures of good will. One morning, Halpern extended his hand only to withdraw it with a malicious smile just as Makoto started to complete the greeting. Makoto was shocked and, to his own horror, he found himself noiselessly weeping. It was not Halpern’s action but a year’s accumulation of emotions, all the things he had experienced that were sad and beautiful, the blue skies of Manchuria, the snowy steppes of Siberia, the lights at Anzan when the war had ended, his longing for Tokyo and his family. Tears continued to roll from his eyes as Halpern departed, leaving him alone in the room with Lieutenant Ignatieva. She, too, cried a little, then pulled at her uniform like a broody hen fluffing its feathers and brought Makoto an unneeded glass of water.

“You need your mother,” she said, and tears wet her eyes again.

“You must not be offended by Halpern,” she consoled him. “It is because he is a Jew.”

She left the office and, returning composed after a few minutes, did not mention the incident again. During the following two days, as opportunities to speak to Makoto alone presented themselves, each of the officers except the commandant explained carefully to him that Halpern’s behavior was not to be taken seriously for Halpern was a Jew.

Makoto was a full participant in neither the Russian world of his work nor the Japanese surroundings of his evenings and holidays, but he thoroughly enjoyed both. His Japanese companions looked upon him fondly as something apart, a gifted child, and he became the mascot of the camp. Even the country corporals had forgotten their resentment of him as an Edokko. Some of the men of Makoto’s old unit had been lost in the reshuffle of troops in Manchuria, but the prisoners-of-war included Sergeant Komai and Corporal Suzuki. Also included was Captain Sakurada, the senior officer of the group. Whatever his feeling toward Makoto, he appeared to accept him with silent equanimity, and only once, some months after their arrival in Karaganda, did he give any evidence of animosity.

A few days after the company had reached the camp, the able-bodied men were organized into small work groups and daily set off in trucks under the armed guard of Russian soldiers to their work of building houses. The Japanese officers, who lived and ate apart from their men in separate buildings, accompanied them to work but did no actual labor. By Japanese standards, work hours were short, and time hung heavily on everyone’s hands. The men settled down quickly to the routine of labor, and found other activities to consume their spare time. At first they occupied themselves with cards and other Japanese games and idle talk, much of it revolving about the Japanese foods for which they yearned.
Under Captain Sakurada’s orders they daily recited the Imperial Rescript aloud, and they maintained the custom of saluting their superiors in rank. Each officer had a bantō, a batman, selected from among the privates, who took care of his officer’s quarters, laundry, and other domestic needs in addition to working in a construction crew. Russian orders were relayed by Makoto to the commissioned officers, who remained nominally in charge of the men. After several weeks—and no one gave it special thought at the time or even clearly remembered when it occurred—the morning recitation of the Imperial Rescript stopped. There had been no notice; it merely came to an end. Gradually the idea grew among the men that they were no longer soldiers, and gradually, almost imperceptibly, the camp divided itself into two factions.

Slowly it became clear to everyone that the camp had become a battleground of two ideologies. Corporal Suzuki formed the spearhead of one faction and Captain Sakurada the other. Shortly after their imprisonment in Karaganda, Suzuki had resumed his evening orations. Night after night he talked seriously, compellingly, the edges of his thick-lensed glasses turning to milky opaqueness as he turned his head from side to side to include all members of his growing audience. He talked of Japan, giving its history from the most ancient times to the modern. The emperor system was outdated, he said, as was military control, and he explained why. He talked of democracy, and pointed out its advantages to common people in England and the United States. As his orations proceeded, they came increasingly to focus on the weaknesses of Japanese government and the Japanese social order and to exalt the virtues of democracy.

Without knowing how these circumstances came about, the men came to view themselves as being on Suzuki’s side or as opposed to him. As the schism became more distinct, names for the two parties emerged. Those who leaned toward Suzuki called the opposing side Militarists and themselves Democrats. The Militarists also called their opponents Democrats, but since they regarded themselves as following the proper and traditional path, they had no name for themselves. This group, large at first, included all the professional soldiers among the enlisted men and also the commissioned officers, who, although they would never demean themselves by coming to hear Suzuki’s addresses, soon became aware of their contents.

No one interfered with Suzuki’s speeches. They were interesting and until recently they had borne no apparent, direct relationship to Japanese politics and had never condemned the Japanese way. There was no orator among the Militarists. They listened, and when they felt their ideas and ideals were endangered, they were polite and said nothing. On the surface no sign of strife was evident. No harsh words were spoken and no blows were struck.

Gradually discontent with circumstances in the camp came to be voiced
aloud by the Democrats, quite independently of Suzuki, who had never talked of such trifling, immediate matters. The Democrats had meanwhile grown in number until they included the majority of the enlisted men, who now complained among themselves of many things. They were no longer soldiers, they said, and they could see no reason why their officers should have preferential treatment.

Discontent grew to continued grumbling that reached the ears of the officers, who at first took no action. Then rivalry took the form of contests in producing theatrical entertainments. Following the custom of Japanese soldiers, they had early begun to amuse themselves by amateur theatricals, brief bits of singing and dancing by individual volunteer performers. Entertainment of this kind became a regular feature of the camp, held at least once weekly. As time passed, the commissioned officers first joined the men as spectators and then themselves became performers. Gradually the talent contests, for this is the way in which they were viewed, became more elaborate and began to reflect the division of the camp. Individual performances grew into skits involving several men and finally came to a climax in a grand revue in which Makoto had the largest hand.

Now that the old barriers had been removed, Makoto and Komai had become friends as before and spent much time in each other's company. Leaning strongly at first toward the Militarists, Komai had slowly changed and within six months became identified with the Democrats. For his own part, Makoto was politically neutral and felt little interest in these matters that seemed so absorbing to everyone else. He saw fairness in the ideas of the Democrats but he did not feel entirely comfortable with the idea of disparaging the emperor and the traditional Japanese social scheme. While the others listened to Suzuki, he often retired to unused corners of the barracks to draw sketches and write poems on paper which he had taken from work. As the lone neutral in the camp, he was accepted by the members of both sides, who viewed his position as appropriate to his character.

Despite his apathy, Makoto became identified with the Democratic faction by association. His most frequent companion was Komai, increasingly an outspoken Democrat, and, together with Komai, he had become the guiding genius behind the theatrical performances of the Democrats. The talent contests were one-sided from the start. Only Komai and Makoto had any theatrical experience, and the Militarists were further weakened by split residence. The officers soon began to attempt to direct the efforts of their party, but because they were diffident about association with enlisted men and too proud to give time to rehearsals, they planned only sketchily and rarely rehearsed their productions.

Shows produced by the Militarists emphasized patriotism; death for emperor and country was a tiresomely recurrent theme. Productions of
the Democrats were much broader, including bits of traditional Kabuki, historical sketches, tales and skits of events in the lives of common people; traditional songs; modern songs; and plays of modern style. These last were composed by Makoto and Komai, and were generally much shortened versions of plays which they had actually seen performed in Tokyo. No one doubted which side took the day, and relations between officers and men daily grew more strained.

Makoto talked to the Russian officers freely about the theatricals of the camp and they, starved for entertainment, began to attend the performances of the prisoners-of-war. Impelled by mixed motives of a love of theatricals and a desire to please the Russians and the Democrats, both of whom urged him, Makoto then planned a grand revue.

With the permission of the Russian commandant, a stage complete with a hanamichi, the runway of the Japanese theater, was built in one of the barracks. Komai was given equipment and tools to improvise theatrical lighting. Wives of the Russian officers, who had begun to attend the shows with their children, contributed talcum powder and odd bits of materials for costumes. Makoto and Komai planned a two-hour revue, sweeping as much of the traditional Japanese theater as they could manage and including the modern and Western. For lack of musical instruments they trained a chorus of twelve to produce background vocal tones. The play became the thing to the extent that a few of the Militarists with especially fervent interest in theatricals joined the troupe. During the weeks that went into the planning and rehearsals, Suzuki kept in the background and Komai became the gladiator, fighting for the Democrats to make a sweeping victory. Claiming that he knew his audience, he insisted as the crowning stratagem upon the inclusion of Japanese songs steeped in sentiment, songs which Makoto had at first brushed aside as lacking quality.

Before the uncritical audience of bored prisoners-of-war, any show, even the worst of the performances of the Militarists, was in some measure a success. Every show had full attendance and held the attention of the spectators. But the revue produced by Komai and Makoto was a smashing success with a professional touch which might have stood on its own feet before an audience in Japan. For the first time, songs in English and French were included, and no taste was overlooked in the selection of scenes. The finale brought all thirty-seven performers on the stage in the manner of Tokyo revues while Makoto himself sang the sentimental songs. At Komai’s insistence, he had written both the music and the lyrics of the first song. Neither was truly original and the song bore no relation whatever to the preceding elements of the revue. These, Komai had insisted, were matters of no concern. Standing at the mouth of the hanamichi, with the cast arranged behind him on the stage proper and the chorus providing vocal tones, Makoto sang:
The blue sky gleams for the two of us.
The white snow drifts for the two of us.
At my window a soft breeze stirs,
And whispers of things gone by.
Happiness is here and it is there,
Hither and thither and yonder,
In many places.

He finished the last note, and the audience was immobile, wooden. He began the second song, *Kono Michi*, "This Road," a popular tune known to everyone:

This is the road of sometime,
Sometime long ago.
The lilacs are blooming now as then,
Sometime long ago.
The hill beyond I have seen before;
The tower strikes memory's chords.
This is the road the carriage took
With mother, long ago.
The cloud by the hill was there before
And the hawthorne branches hung low.

When Makoto finished, he saw that most of his countrymen were crying or sitting as if transfixed. The Russians, too, looked curiously stiff and uncomfortable. He began the third and most sentimental selection, *Kojo no Tsuki*, "A Ruined Castle in the Moonlight," a song that was even more familiar and over which rivers of tears had flowed in Japan.

Like a winecup passing from hand to hand
At a flower viewing in spring,
The rays of the moon fill the shadows
And shine through the ageless pines.
But where is the moon of yesterday?
Like the color of frost when autumn comes
And wild geese cry in their flight,
The rays of the moon bathe the castle ruins
And glimmer like living swords.
But where is the moon of yesterday?

He brought the song to a temporary halt. The mood had communicated itself to everyone. The performers on the stage were crying; the chorus had choked and trailed off into silence, and the eyes of the audience streamed tears. Captain Sakurada wept with head and body rigidly erect and did not bother to wipe away the tears. Unable to understand the Japanese lyrics but moved by the tones and tempo of the music and infected by the reaction of the Japanese men around them, the Russian men and women cried also. Their children looked at them wonderfully, then moved
EDOKKO

closer and hid their faces against their mothers. Even Komai, the author of the whole affair, sat bathed in tears. Makoto, strongly moved when his trained aesthetic sensibilities were touched but much less sentimental than the others, moved far out on the hanamichi and continued his song alone after a pause of a few moments. His small, clear voice carried softly everywhere in the silence.

For whom does the moon on the castle now shine,
Ageless, unchanged in its beams?
The song in the pines is only the wind;
A lone vine clings to the wall.

The moon from above is eternal,
But mortal man rises and falls.
The moon on the ruined castle
Mirrors the fortunes below.

When the last lugubrious tone ended, there was no applause.

Makoto had become famous, and the fruits of fame were rich and satisfying. Among his fellow prisoners he was everybody's favorite, and the Russians looked on him with increased fondness. Moved by parental emotions, they gave him handsome Russian clothes to replace the tired hybrid of Japanese and Russian uniforms that he wore, and they looked with proud affection at their little boy in his high Russian boots and white blouse with green embroidery.

Makoto's Japanese comrades greeted his new appearance with admiration and delight. Easily stirred to envy, the men did not feel this emotion toward Makoto. He was the pet, the person to whom everyone could be kind. Only Captain Sakurada begrudged Makoto his fame and popularity, and the captain's emotions were not truly envy.

It was now unequivocally clear that the Democrats had been victorious in the talent contest, and the Militarists were forced to find some other way to promote their cause. Captain Sakurada took matters into his own hands. A few days after the great revue, when Makoto came to relay a message from the Russian commandant's office, the captain looked at his green and white blouse pointedly and said, "They give you delicious things to eat, don't they?" Turning his back, the captain refused to acknowledge that he had heard the Russian message. For several days his behavior followed the same line, a silent refusal to acknowledge even the presence of Makoto. Since Makoto was the only channel of communication, he soon saw the futility of this action and commanded Makoto to ask the Russian commandant for a personal appointment.

Taking with him the two next of rank among the Japanese officers, Sakurada talked with the Commander and two of his staff while Makoto served as interpreter. The enlisted men were planning insurrection against
their officers and against the Russians, Sakurada said, and the ringleader was a Corporal Suzuki who held mass meetings of the men nightly, urging them to a rebellious strike. These words were all news to the Russians, who as yet had no inkling of the growing fission of the camp, but they had no reason to doubt Captain Sakurada’s words.

As a result of this interview, the evening addresses by Suzuki were forbidden. The Democrats were not, however, to be so easily taken in defeat. Relations between the prisoners and the ten Russian soldiers of the camp had become very friendly. The Russian officers, too, were lenient with their well-behaved prisoners, and never had there been a single instance of cruelty or physical violence at the hands of either Russian officers or men. Russian soldiers on guard in the lookout towers sometimes abandoned their posts to play cards with the prisoners, and when off duty, they taught Russian songs in exchange for Japanese tunes. Russian songs could be heard in the Japanese showers, and Japanese tunes emanated daily from the Turkish bath in the compound, a structure used by the earlier European prisoners-of-war and now by the Russian soldiers but never by the Japanese, for whom the hot steam had no appeal. Sitting in the bath on the heated staircase of bricks on which water was poured to form steam, the Russians sang lustily, and their faulty pronunciation of Japanese was disguised by the musical tones of the songs.

Taking advantage of the friendliness of the Russian soldiers, Suzuki did not give up his orations. He met the men in small groups, in the shower, in the laundry, at the shoe repair shop, and the teaching continued. The Russian soldiers knew of these meetings and knew their general import, but if anything they appeared to approve, as they would sometimes join the men for a few minutes until boredom at failure to understand the speech drove them away.

The Democrats also published what they called a newspaper, a series of pine boards, some two feet long and eight inches wide, which they hung from the walls of the barracks. From time to time, as new boards were needed, the old were planed and the clean surfaces used again. Anyone who chose might write poems of his own composition in the newspaper. Others wrote in Japanese phonetic symbols newly-learned Russian words and gave their meaning. Most important to the Democrats’ cause was the disguised inclusion of abstracts of Suzuki’s speeches, written for the benefit of persons unable to hear them in person.

As feeling between the two factions grew more intense, the Democrats began calling their opponents the Fascists and themselves the Anti-Fascists. The men continued to salute their officers, but the gestures had become surly. Dissension came to a head when the Anti-Fascists learned that the officers were receiving a newspaper printed in Japanese. This discovery was made by one of the batmen, who stole one of the papers from the
officers' quarters because paper of any kind was very scarce and especially needed to roll cigarettes. The paper was obviously written by a Japanese, and its contents were much like the speeches of Suzuki. The first issue dealt with the history of Japan and the emperor system.

Discreet inquiry through Makoto revealed that the papers were intended for the whole camp, but that the officers were suppressing them. On this provocation the Anti-Fascists, at Suzuki's recommendation, began loitering at work. The Fascist soldiers, seeing their compatriots loaf, followed suit. It was this development that brought the intra-Japanese strife to the attention of the Russians again. Progress in house building fell off sharply, and they inquired why. Sakurada explained that the men were rebellious and incited by Suzuki. At last a delegation of three men from each side was selected to present the cases of the two factions to the Russians.

Suzuki, as head of the Anti-Fascist delegation, complained of unfair treatment. The war had ended, he said, and they were no longer soldiers. They saw no reason to serve under officers whom they did not like, officers who did no work but had better quarters and food and demanded service of them as batmen. Captain Sakurada said that he and his fellow officers were loyal soldiers of Japan and among the enlisted men were also some loyal soldiers of Japan, but those who clung to Suzuki were insubordinate troublemakers.

Russian action was swift. Three days later six of the younger commissioned officers, of their own choice, joined the enlisted men in their barracks and became working leaders of house-building crews. Captain Sakurada and the remaining six professional officers disappeared, transferred to another camp, rumor said.

Discord in the camp was relieved but did not entirely end with this action. Suzuki's evening addresses were resumed openly, with the approval of the Russian officers. The addition of the six officers to the Anti-Fascist group made it the dominant group. As before, there was no outward expression of antagonism between the two factions.

Following Suzuki's urging, the Anti-Fascists began to exert themselves at work, accomplishing more than was expected or required of them. The Fascists, now in separate work groups under leaders of the same sympathies, were unaware of this new development and continued at their normal work pace. The difference in the amount of work accomplished by the two factions was puzzling to the Russians, who thought that the intra-Japanese strife had ended with the departure of Sakurada. Interpreting the unevenness in production as reflecting individual differences in ability and incentive, and pressed by the urgent need for additional housing for civilian countrymen in the area, the Russians initiated an incentive plan. Through Suzuki, whom they now regarded as the leader of the camp, they offered to give small amounts of money to the crews with records of continued high
production and to allow these crews to go back and forth to work without the armed guards that had always accompanied them.

The proposal required much deliberation among the Japanese. There was factionalism, but the bonds of common nationality and long association were strong. As spokesman for the camp, Suzuki finally accepted the Russian offer. With the full approval of all members of the Anti-Fascist group, it was decided that the money be pooled for the common good of all prisoners whether Fascist or Anti-Fascist. The money would be used for buying fruit, which was never included among the rations, and to amplify the small ration of tobacco. The Fascists accepted their share of the fruit and tobacco and said nothing, but slowly some of them drifted toward the Anti-Fascist pole. When a year of imprisonment had passed, the Anti-Fascists included nearly three-fourths of the camp, and their opponents continued silent.

Morale in the camp was high. Most men sang as they rode in the trucks to and from work, and they happily saluted their work leaders as they lined up in the morning to board the vehicles and as they separated at night upon returning to the camp. The salutes were no longer surly obeisances; they were willing acknowledgments of respect to leaders whom the men themselves had chosen. Economic conditions among the Russians had apparently improved greatly, and the prisoners’ lot also improved. The shops in nearby Maikdok and Novgorod, the Russian soldiers told them, now had many things to sell at prices much reduced over former times. The silver kopeks which the men had received a year earlier were now valued by the Russians, and a brisk trade was carried on between the Russian soldiers and the prisoners. Tobacco, butter, black tea, fruit, pastries and confections were exchanged for coins, and as the seasons changed the prison camp had temporary gluts of watermelons and little sour crabapples.

The Russian officers did not trade with the prisoners, but it seemed clear to the Japanese that they wished to be kind to their wards. They obviously had no objection to fraternization on the part of their own enlisted men; they themselves attended the camp shows and had allowed the prisoners to build a stage, and they had shown other evidence of interest in the well-being of their prisoners. Hearing of the nostalgia of the Japanese for the foods of their own country, the supply officer had inquired about the raw materials necessary. Informed that soy sauce and the bean paste miso were indispensable, he had quickly abandoned the idea of soy sauce as being impossibly complex but had managed to produce a half-ton of soy beans for the miso. Trying as best they could to remember the recipe for manufacture of bean paste, the inexperienced Japanese cooks filled the cookhouse with the foul smell of fermenting beans for several days.
The venture ended in complete failure, but the feeling of goodwill between the prisoners and their keepers grew stronger.

Relations between the prisoners and the Russian soldiers who guarded them became increasingly intimate. Bored with their own small circle and lacking other diversions, the Russian soldiers spent much of their free time with their charges, sometimes indulging in rough-and-tumble horseplay with them. The encampment was often unguarded during the daylight hours, and the prisoners had complete freedom within the camp. Now and then prisoners of the Fascist group who consistently lagged at work were called before the Russian officers for questioning, but feigned illness passed as an excuse and there was no punishment. Here, too, the divisive unity of the prisoners displayed itself. In his role as interpreter, Makoto had been instructed by Suzuki to make excuses of illness for these men when they failed to do so themselves. The instructions were unnecessary, as Makoto would in any case have protected his countrymen without urging.

By now the Russian officers were well aware of Suzuki's activities and knew also that many of his fellows clung to him devotedly. His speeches had become openly critical of the Japanese government and full of praise of the Russian. The Japanese newspaper, which they now received in many copies once a week, followed precisely the same line. From it they read of the good life in collective farms, the advantages of true democracy, the benighted politics of Japan, the evils of its landowner-tenant relations, and the human fallibility of their emperor. The Russians then offered special training in political ideology to those who wished it. Applicants must, they stipulated, write personal histories containing detailed information on their families, education and experiences, and vocational aspirations. Suzuki and three other men were accepted at once and left the camp to attend a school “somewhere else in Russia.” After an absence of three months they returned, and others, a few at a time, went off to receive training. Suzuki went twice and, the second time, served as teacher to Japanese soldiers drawn from many other camps.

Slowly, and at first never outspokenly, Suzuki's group underwent another change of name and became known as the Communists. Makoto, as before, remained an outsider. As interpreter, he was fully conscious of the events in the camp, but he was totally unable to feel any of the passion which apparently inspired most of the other men to align themselves firmly to one cause or the other. When the question of Russian schooling arose, he was apathetic, and Suzuki told him pointedly that he was unsuitable material. No amount of training or education, Suzuki said, would make him into a Communist, just as no amount of training had made him a soldier. “You are a consumer,” he said, “not a producer,” and with those decisive words the question of training for Makoto was never brought up again.
When the privileges of the good workers among the Japanese prisoners were increased, Makoto also was given greater freedom. In the afternoons after his duties had been performed, he could now wander freely about the Russian encampment and go to the neighboring Kazakistani town of Maikdok. Time hung heavily on his hands. Most of his countrymen were away at work, and the Russian officers had little leisure. Sometimes he talked with the Russian soldiers, but they were ignorant men who were not very satisfying companions. He often talked with the doctor about Russian opera, and he watched the Japanese cooks make pickles of cucumbers and green tomatoes. Placing basketfuls of the vegetables into large holes in the ground that had been lined with concrete, they covered the whole with layers of salt, and, surprisingly, arrived at a finished product that seemed indeed vinegary.

In the early summer Makoto roamed alone through the rolling hills, admiring their endless blanket of tiny purple and yellow flowers and wondering at this vast country in which the tallest tree reached a height of no more than two feet. Here and there he saw camels pulling wagons, and he felt a little thrill to be in such an exotic land. Now and then he was allowed to go to Novgorod, sometimes with the children of the Russian officers, where they might walk around and buy chocolate and small, hard candies. In cold weather he wrote poetry, and sometimes walked in the deep snows, warm in his heavy Russian clothes and felt boots.

Bored with repetition of these diversions, he asked the commandant if there were a piano he might be allowed to play. A few days later he was given permission to go to the day nursery for the children of working Russian women, which housed the only piano in the area. There he played for himself and for the children, whom he thought beautiful with their fresh skins set off by pale blue uniforms over which white aprons were drawn. The children, he noted, governed themselves. When one was remiss in washing hands and face, the others chided him into doing so with no instigation from the busy women in charge. And their toys were quite unlike the toys of Japan. There were no dolls, no pointless games or puzzles, no ornaments. All were instructive, teaching things of everyday, practical life.

Makoto and Komai continued to plan and produce shows. Since the Fascists had been soundly defeated in the theatrical competition, these were no longer contests, and the Fascists participated as both performers and spectators. Russian attendance at the shows grew, and Makoto, as the star performer and coproducer, was known and loved by everyone. The Russian children brought him gifts of pastry as before, and now added pictures of their favorite Russian movie actors and actresses, large photographs surrounded by borders of small photographs showing them in their most famous roles. At work he sang, first in a small voice and, later,
when it was clear that Lieutenant Ignatieva had no objection, with greater volume. "The Singing Soldier," the Russians all called him, and he alone of the Japanese was known to every Russian man, woman, and child of the prison community.

A year and a half had passed when the camp rose to a fever of excitement. First they received news that they would soon be repatriated. Then construction crews were set to work building an additional barracks to house a new contingent of prisoners. Two hundred new men joined them as soon as the buildings were completed, swelling the camp to almost twice its former size. The new arrivals, all Japanese civilians from Manchuria, had come from Tashkent and other southerly areas where most of them had worked as cotton pickers. Settling down to the routine of the camp, they too took sides, identifying themselves with either the Communists or the Fascists. At the same time they retained a group feeling among themselves. Soldier stuck with soldier and civilian with civilian, but Communist felt closer to Communist than to Fascist, and the camp was torn by these ties into a ragged four-part division.

None of the participants could clearly explain the riot that followed. Alone, no individual felt strongly enough moved to commit violence, but as a group this is the course the civilians initiated. In addition to the strain of loyalties over the issues of civilian versus soldier and Communist versus Fascist, another cause for dissension arose. As cotton pickers, the civilians were accustomed to setting their own working speeds, resting and smoking individually when they wished. These were the rules by which they had formerly worked without complaint from the Russians, and these were the rules they tried to follow as construction workers. The soldiers, following rules which had become equally fixed by habit, rested and smoked together at set intervals. Seeing the behavior of the former cotton pickers, they complained bitterly that the civilians failed to do their share of the work.

Eight weeks after the arrival of the newcomers, the camp erupted in violence. Carrying sticks, clubs, and iron stove pokers, the civilians poured into the soldiers' barracks after the men had gone to bed. Chaos followed. Seizing wooden slats from their beds, the soldiers defended themselves, and soon the distinction between offense and defense was lost. Friend struck friend as often as he struck enemy.

Makoto, roused from sleep, was felled with a single blow from a bed slat and lay unconscious in bed in the position he had held in sleeping until he recovered some minutes later to find the barracks deserted except for himself and two Russian officers. Running to the source of noise and disturbance, they had entered Makoto's barracks, the closer of the two occupied by soldiers and the building from which the greater volume of cries arose. Unidentified in the melee, they were struck repeatedly by members of both sides until the fact that they were Russian officers finally
penetrated the consciousness of the fighting men. Then all, soldier and civilian alike, took to their heels, leaving Makoto and the two officers, and, behind the stove, a Japanese soldier lying in a pool of blood. The wounded soldier, his lungs pierced by an iron stove poker, died the following day in a hospital cot in the camp dispensary, and his assailant could never be identified. Two days later, the civilians were taken to another camp, and life among the soldiers returned to its old channels.

Repatriation began soon afterwards, late in 1946, but only a trickle of men, in groups of twos and threes spread at intervals of several weeks, were to leave until the winter of 1947. Decision as to whom to send home first was left to the Russian medical officer, who instructed Makoto to provide the commanding officer with a graded list, giving first preference to the chronically ill. Makoto took matters into his own hands. Since the Russian officers found the Japanese names impossible to remember, and with the exception of Suzuki, Komai, Makoto, and a few others, could still not distinguish one Japanese prisoner-of-war from another, he was safe in manipulating the order of priority. He had done very little for his country as a soldier, Makoto reasoned, and here at last was a chance to do something for his countrymen if not for his country. He rearranged the lists to conform with his knowledge of the circumstances of the men, and never once doubted his own judgment. Out of pure favoritism, his name had been put at the head of the list, but he persuaded the doctor to allow him a lower position. Among the sick within any classification, Makoto placed first the married men with families and those whom he knew to have the most urgent problems at home. Occasionally he sent a man home far ahead of his medical classification. The order of departure evoked no comment from his fellow prisoners, who thought it fair and proper, and the Russians were never the wiser.

By February, 1947, forty men had been sent home, and then, in one group, Makoto and his companions all entrained with two hours' advance notice. There were no tearful farewells for Makoto. He had time to say goodbye only to the medical officer before leaving on a train of the kind which had brought them there. The days of travel on the train were remarkably silent. Few games were played and few men talked. No one looked at the scenery. During the last months of their imprisonment in Karaganda, a half-dozen men had received letters from home, and everyone knew what to expect. Homelessness and poverty seemed certain for most of the men, and—a far more frightening thing—few men knew whether their relatives were alive or dead.

By the time the train reached Vladivostok, the men had revived a little. They boarded the ship waiting for them and were informed that a full meal would soon be ready, their first Japanese meal in over two years. The meal was never eaten. Twenty minutes after they entered the ship,
a riot broke out, and this time everyone knew his enemy. The Anti-Communists took the offensive, and their number had unaccountably grown to form a large majority. Suzuki and the twelve other men who had attended the Russian school became the chief targets of assault. Seized by groups of men, they were beaten with fists and thrown down a flight of stairs to the deck below. Then, seized and beaten again, they were thrown to the bottommost deck, where additional beating followed. Makoto was the only man who neither struck nor received a blow.

No attempts were made to quell the disturbance. The officers and men of the ship's crew stood by and laughed. They had seen things of this kind before. When the riot ended and the injured had been cared for, no one wanted food of any kind.

They landed at Maizuru in depressed silence, and the first sight of their native land was a shock to them. The mountains were close, jammed upon one another, the valleys small and cramped, the houses tiny, the streets narrow, dirty, and smelly. Over everything lay a feeling of oppression, as if the mountains and the constricted dwelling areas were closing in upon them, flattening their chests and pressing the life from them. They stopped in at the port town long enough to allow the men to send telegrams to their families, but few did so. They were not victorious returning soldiers; they were freed prisoners-of-war and, they now knew, suspected Communists.

Coming to them first on the ship, and growing after they had reached Maizuru, was a feeling that they were unwanted. The reception at the port had not been warm, but they had at first thought this was to be expected for former soldiers returning to a country defeated and shattered in war. Those bound for the north were placed on a dirty, cold train, its windows broken and boarded over. As the train pulled through the numerous stations on the route to Tokyo, they felt cold unfriendliness in the glances of everyone they saw. Bearing its cargo of heartsick men, bruised and haggard from the riot on the ship, the train pulled into the station at Tokyo. They saw the signs saying “Welcome” and “You have worked hard,” but there was no welcome in the eyes of the people on the platforms. Shamefaced and heavy-hearted, the men left as quickly as they could, avoiding the eyes of everyone they encountered.

Makoto picked his way through streets filled with the rubble of reconstruction and stared at the destruction which lay around him. He had been warned on the ship what to expect in downtown Tokyo, but now he was faced with the horror of actuality. Here and there, familiar buildings had escaped destruction, and he felt relief and warmth at seeing them. Fearfully, he went on to the Ginza, where he found a high fence of rough boards surrounding the block where his home had been. Peering through the cracks he saw only rubble and a rough board lean-to under which two tattered
beggars with feet bound in rags lay sleeping. With fear constricting his lungs he went on up the street, searching for someone, an old neighbor, anyone, whom he might know. His step quickened as he saw a sign “Yama-

zaki—Tailor” in front of a hastily-built wooden structure at the end of the block, and he entered its door. He was greeted by Mr. Yamazaki himself, a former neighbor and an old friend of his father. Makoto’s family was safe, he was told, all except his elder brother, who had died in battle. The words were cordial but cool, not the kind of greeting one gave the son of a dear friend, and Makoto was offered no tea. He left the rude shop with a feeling of relief at departure. Following the directions given him by Yamazaki, he boarded an electric car for his parents’ new home in the Shibuya area.

His mother opened the door, and after a few moments of flurry while she found slippers for him, burst into tears. His father, brother, and sisters greeted him more coolly and had little to say. They soon left him alone with his mother, who tried to explain. Repatriated prisoners-of-war were everywhere feared and shunned, she said, because people were afraid of Communism. According to rumors in Tokyo, many had become Communists and on their return they had endangered the positions and very livelihood of their families. One group, gossip said, had marched en masse from the train directly to the Communist Party office in Tokyo to register as members. As for Makoto’s father, he was not afraid of Communism. He feared nothing and welcomed nothing. The last months of the war had left him a changed and broken man. The loss of his shop, the death of many of his friends, and the loss of the old way of Downtown life had sapped him of all life. He did nothing day after day, month after month, but sit silently brooding as if only partly alive. His apathy had spread to the others. No one worked, and the house was a place of quiet gloom. Makoto’s brother and younger sister disinterestedly attended college, but his elder sister and father could hardly be induced to leave the house.

They lived the life of the bamboo shoot, his mother continued, selling one by one, as a bamboo shoot is peeled, the valuable antiques which father had collected. These, at her insistence, had been sent to the home of a friend at the outskirts of the city as soon as the bombing of Tokyo had begun. For two years now their sale had been used to purchase the necessities of daily life. The antiques would continue to support them for an unlimited time. Makoto’s brother and sisters, his mother prophesied, would recover from their apathy toward life and lose their coolness toward him as a possible Communist, but she had great fear about his father. He, she said, would never recover.

His mother broke off her narrative with apologies for talking of such things when he was so fatigued, and urged that he retire early. After the luxury of a hot bath in a tub for the first time in over two years, Makoto
crawled into his bed in the room that he was to share with his younger brother. He was not sleepy and he lay awake awaiting his brother. Surely they would talk until late, he thought, and Yoshio would ask many questions. When he heard the sound of opening shoji, he turned expectantly on his side so that he faced his brother's bed, but Yoshio came in silently, entered his bed, and wordlessly turned his back to Makoto.

Makoto's mother had been right. After a few days Makoto's sisters and his brother lost their reserve, and his relations with them returned to their former warmth. They told Makoto of life in Tokyo during his absence and asked him of his experiences in Russia. He was ashamed to lie and ashamed to tell them that rather than suffering he had enjoyed his imprisonment. It was they and their neighbors in Tokyo who had suffered, he knew. It was they who had lived with horror at their doorsteps; they who had endured the bombings, heard the cries of the wounded and dying, and seen their friends disappear; and they who had subsisted on sweet potatoes and such scraps of other foods as they could find. He told them only of the magnificent scenery he had seen from the train in Siberia.