From Tokyo to Jerusalem

ABRAHAM KOTSUJI

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The Autobiography of a Japanese Convert to Judaism

$4.95

A Spiritual Journey From Tokyo to Jerusalem

It was September 20, 1959. Abraham Kotsuji lay on the operating table of the Shar'ei Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem. Dr. Nahum Cook stood at his side, a scalpel in his hand, prepared to perform the ritual of circumcision.

What has brought this man—a sixty-year-old Japanese, a descendant of a line of Shinto lords, priests of the Imperial Household of Japan—to this place? Why had he come to this one spot in the world, surmounting such odds as few men have surmounted in a lifetime?

From Tokyo to Jerusalem tells the story of this journey—a story that began many years ago on the other side of the earth, in a Japan of another age.

It is the story of a Japanese who gave up the ancient religion of his Shinto ancestors to adopt the faith of Abraham and Jacob . . . a Japanese who risked death to smuggle his fellow religionists out of his country during the Hitler terror.

(Continued on back flap)

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FROM TOKYO TO JERUSALEM

To the memory of my parents

My Spiritual Journey

IT was September 20, 1959. I lay on the operating table of the Sha'rei Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem. Dr. Nahum Cook stood at my side, a scalpel in his hand, prepared to perform the ritual of circumcision.

"What am I doing here?" I asked myself. "I am sixty years old, a Japanese, the descendant of a long line of Shinto lords, priests of the Imperial Household of Japan. What brought me to this place? Why did I come to this one spot in the world, surmounting such odds as few men have surmounted in a lifetime?"

This book was written to answer these questions for myself as well as for those who have wondered at how a Japanese found and took to his heart the God of the Old Testament.

It was Bernard Geis, my publisher, who urged me to write my story. To him I shall be forever grateful. I would like to express my deepest gratitude, too, to James Collier for his invaluable assistance in the preparation of this book. And to Mineko, my wife, and Mary and Julie, my children, who provided for my spiritual journey their patience, warmth, and understanding.

—ABRAHAM KOTSUJI

FROM TOKYO TO JERUSALEM

Chapter One

THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD JAPANESE BOY AND HIS FATHER STAND before a shrine in Kyoto, an important town in central Japan, about two hundred fifty miles from Tokyo. It is one of the hundreds of top-ranking shrines in Kyoto. It is May 15, the festival of the Kamo Shrine. The boy is excited. He has seen the steady parade of relatives in and out of the house all day, eating and drinking lavishly. He has seen the fire-red carpets spread over the *tatami* sleeping mats, and the *manmaku* curtain with the family crest gracefully dyed on it stretched across the latticed front of the house. He has walked out with his father, partly to exercise their taut stomachs but mainly to visit the Kamo Shrine. They clap hands and bow reverentially before the shrine. The boy is moved by the solemnity of the occasion. The father takes advantage of the moment.

"Setschan," he says quietly, "it is time that you knew of

our ancestors who served here for one thousand and four hundred years."

The boy is puzzled. "Served? Served how?"

"They were chief priests of this temple."

The boy is astonished. "Priests?"

"Yes."

"But why are we no longer priests, father?"

It is difficult to explain to an eight-year-old. "We did not give up our priesthood, precisely. Neither I, nor Grandfather. In ancient days we, the Kotsuji family, were a celebrated priest-clan. But then . . . times changed."

The boy is serious, only half comprehending. "Where did the ancient days go, father?"

The father smiles. "The old days can never come back, except in the mind."

"How, father?"

"Look up and close your eyes," the father says.

And so the father and son stand together in the ancient shrine, eyes closed, concentrating solely on the eternal silence and tranquillity prevailing in the sanctuary. The noisy festival crowd, the present day is gone. They contemplate the glory of ancient days. Then, together, they open their eyes, and Setschan turns a shy face to his father. The father's face is dignified, but affectionate.

Then the moment was over. Yet it was never over, for it remained with the boy for almost sixty years. In one sense, the father was wrong. True, the ancient days cannot return; yet in a way the boy, after the pilgrimage of a lifetime, has gone back to the ancient days.

I was that boy. I was raised in the ancient religion of Shinto, a religion existing already at the dawn of the history

of Japan. Over the fifty-odd years of my life from my early adolescence, as scholar, as teacher, but mostly as seeker, I groped my way through Shinto, searching, always searching, for a religious resting place. I found it on the twentieth of September, 1959, when I entered the covenant of Abraham through the solemn rite of circumcision in Jerusalem, to become, to my knowledge, the first Japanese convert to Judaism. This is the story of that search.

I was born on February 3, 1899. By the old calendar of feudal Japan, February 3 was New Year's Eve. It is called Setsu-bun, a word meaning "the season," the opening of spring. Accordingly, I was named Setsuzo—the third day of the season. Affectionately, my parents called me Setschan. To some who are close to me I have been Setschan ever since.

My mother, whom I resemble, stood five feet five inches, tall for a Japanese woman. Her name was Fukuko. Her eyes were deep set, which annoyed her vanity, for most Japanese women have relatively flat eye sockets. Like Japanese women of her time, she was not highly educated. She made up for her poor education with a stubborn intelligence. She would argue her points against anyone. Once she even did battle with a Doctor of Law, who finally had to confess he was wrong.

My father, Kisabro, was stout, of medium height, and both strong and healthy. He never once visited a doctor throughout his entire life. His nose was large for a Japanese, and his lips had a Caucasian thickness. A reserved man, he felt that it was the mother's business to distribute affection, the father's to demonstrate dignity and present an example

for the children to emulate. I was close to him only on a few occasions in my life, and as a child I regretted his reserve, what seemed to me then a lack of love.

I should not have complained, perhaps. My brothers insisted that I was my mother's pet, and in truth she was always proud of me, always boasting of me.

My father did not have to earn a living. We were upper-class people. In the Japan of that time class was established by family lineage, not by property, or money. As members of an old family descending fourteen hundred years through a line of Shinto priests, we stood high in the social hierarchy. My father lived from his inheritance. He spent his time in horticulture, practicing the traditional and difficult Japanese art of growing dwarf plants. (In Japan horticulture of this sort is not mere gardening but is virtually considered on a level with music and painting.) He was, moreover, a scholar of Classic Chinese, and of course he worshiped often at the Shinto shrines which dotted the city of Kyoto.

I was the baby of the family. There were, besides me, my eldest brother, Genjiro, ten years older than I, who became a brilliant mathematics student; my second brother, Kiknoske, who survived a series of misfortunes to become a self-taught genius at the classic art of the Japanese No-play; my older sister, Mitsu, who died in a street-car accident; and a second sister, Hisako, who married into a wealthy Tokyo family.

I recall the dawn of my life not as a consecutive sequence of events, but as a series of isolated pictures or images, like magic-lantern slides projected onto the wall of a darkened room. I can hardly call them memories. At my age it seems as if the events they picture happened not to me, but to

somebody else. Thus, it is more fitting for me to tell the early part of my story in the third person.

The first of these images is symbolic and prophetic. The baby Setschan is perhaps four. He sees two flickering lights —whether they are oil lamps or candles he cannot tell. He hears a voice reciting words unintelligible to his small mind, but recognizable as the voice of his father. The image is of the pair of oil lamps, wavering on the Shinto altar, and the voice is the short prayer of evening. The image will haunt Setschan for the rest of his life. He need merely recall it to invoke a mood of solemnity, of awe, a deep religious feeling which neither teacher nor preacher could ever have taught him.

The lantern projects another image. The custom then was for the mother to carry the child on her back, his legs spread as if he were riding a horse. Setschan remembers one woman whose back meant something special to him. Once he found himself being carried on a different back. He grew enormously unhappy and wept. No matter what divertisement the poor, harassed woman offered him, he wept for many hours. Finally she grew angry and demanded, "What is making you so unhappy?" He simply cried harder, for Setschan was a stubborn and moody boy. At last, the woman whose back he loved and so yearned for ran to rescue the wretched child. The woman could only have been his mother. The compassion she poured on the forlorn little soul made up for his distress. The emotions born from this incident have had an unfathomable influence on the man Setschan grew to be. The longing for a religious home and the inexorable search for it which shaped the whole of Setschan's life is paralleled by the passionate yearning for the comfort of the familiar back.

It also reveals the stubborn set of Setschan's mind. His mother held to the notion that the child should not be corrected away from home, especially when he was on an outing. Scolding could wait; during the expedition the chance for a moment of pleasure should not be denied the child. Even for rude behavior she admonished softly and moderately.

One day, when Setschan was three or four, she took him downtown. They were happily walking along, hand in hand, when Setschan was suddenly attracted by a window full of display ornaments. The centerpiece was a mammoth model steamship, perhaps three feet long, and perfect in all details. Setschan stopped dead on the sidewalk, absorbed and enchanted by the wondrous object.

"Mama, I want that ship."

She tugged his hand to make him move along. "This ship is not to be sold. It is only for display."

"I want it."

"Perhaps we can find another ship to buy sometime." She tugged at his hand again. "Come with me now."

"No. No, this ship, this ship, only this ship."

She gave in, beaten by his implacable will. They entered the shop, and she asked the price. The salesman explained that the ship was not for sale but meant only for display. However, he said he would be glad to let it go for fifty yen.

The mother was astonished and dismayed by the price. Fifty yen was equal to several hundred American dollars. It was impossible for her to buy the ship, and she told the boy so. The boy stood firm. "See the dancing doll," she said. "Look, over here, Setschan." But he would not be diverted. Crying and howling, he was dragged from the

store. He clutched at an iron rail running along the window where the beautiful ship was displayed, continuing to scream as his mother attempted to drag him away. A crowd collected; the mother was embarrassed and abashed. Finally she broke his grip on the pipe and, half in tears herself, carried him still struggling down the street to a toy shop, where numberless small boats lay on their sides on the shelves. None of them would do. His mother despaired. Then all at once, the boy's eye lit on a monkey doll. "I want that," he said.

Weak with relief, the mother bought it for him immediately. The price—roughly equivalent to fifteen dollars—was not insignificant. The doll was cheaper than the ship, however, and it taught the mother a lesson which she later repeated to the child: "To be a captain or a monkey-keeper is all the same to a child."

At the age of five Setschan was prepared for kindergarten. This posed a problem, for, incredibly, the boy had not yet been weaned from his mother's breast. Japanese children at that time were usually suckled for two years—a system that still exists in many parts of the world. Long breast feeding has the advantage of nurturing a natural affection between mother and child; at the same time it hinders the growth of an independent child. In any case, Setschan's mother had nursed him far too long. He had to be weaned before he could enter kindergarten. Even today he remembers this. Although he cannot recall the precise taste of the milk, he remembers the sweet pleasure of the suckling and his assumption that somehow life would go on this way forever.

It did not. One day as his mother sat on her folded knees, as Japanese do, Setschan climbed up to ride her legs as a

horse, and then, as was his habit, he opened her kimono to suck. A hard, bitter taste flooded his mouth. Shocked, surprised, and hurt, he burst into tears.

He was tasting dried carp's liver, an old-fashioned medicine used in Japan at the time, which his mother had made into a paste and smeared on her nipples. As he stared up at her, his small face contorted with unhappiness, she said gently, "From now on Mamma's milk will be bitter, Setschan. Instead, you will get cow's milk, and I shall give you candies. It is time to go to kindergarten. The other children will laugh at you if you are still sucking at your mother's breast."

There is a saying, "A good medicine tastes bitter." Perhaps in this case it was true. Nonetheless, the shock of the experience, and the consequent lesson that happiness does not last forever, remained with Setschan for the rest of his life.

But Setschan was not finished with pre-kindergarten surprises. He needed various things for his first trip out into the world: new kimonos, woolen European-style shorts, sandals, shoes, and a small leather bag for his books and paper.

His father took him to a large leather shop to purchase the bag. The brutish smell of leather assailed his nostrils, and he knew for the first time the primitive raising of the hackles, the instinctive signal to beware. Setschan had never played with other children; the rude smell of leather—which even today he can remember—raised his fear of facing for the first time a band of other children.

But he went to kindergarten, and not only survived, but grew to enjoy it. He sang, studied, and during lunch hour he played games. The favorite game among the kinder-

garten children was "Genji and Heike," Japanese "Cowboys and Indians." The Genji were the "good ones." This game tells us something about the meaning of shame among the Japanese. The power struggle between the Genji and Heike families, both descended from emperors, which erupted into war for control of Japan in the twelfth century provides the historical background of the game. It was a period when warriors wore highly colored armor, swords and sheaths of splendid workmanship inlaid with gold and silver, and bows made by great artists. The war has always captured the imagination of the Japanese, much as the battles of King Arthur have fascinated the West, and it particularly enticed the boys in Setschan's kindergarten, for Kyoto had been the country's capital at the time of the struggle.

At the beginning of the game several white Genji flags and several red Heike flags were placed in a basket. The white flags of the Genji were of course most desirable, since by the rules of the game the Genji must win. Thus when the boys were released for lunch, there was a wild scramble for the white flags. Psychologically, the red flag holders were beaten before they started. As play continued from day to day it began to take on a realistic tone, as if the emotions of the original struggle had come to life again. The whites grew unruly, and began to oppress the losers. They began to punish the reds, to badger them physically, to make them cry. It was, however, not so much the physical damage as the shame of defeat that made the losers weep. Ultimately, when the schoolteachers realized what was happening, the game was stopped, and the flag basket was taken away. But this did not happen before Setschan took his turn with the red flags. The bitterness of this

experience impressed his malleable mind with the conviction that sympathy must be extended to the less favored. His later learning made this ideal a permanent part of his view of life.

Setschan was beginning to know life: victory and defeat, happiness and despair. He was now to learn the harder lessons of love and death.

There lived, in his neighborhood, an unforgettably beautiful girl with soft hair and an exquisite voice. Her name was Ren, and Setschan called her O-Renchan. It became O-Renchan's custom to visit Setschan at his house every Sunday, arriving early in the morning and staying until noon, when someone came to take her home for lunch. One Sunday, when she had come as usual, nobody came for her at noontime. The two children, overjoyed, ate lunch together, and played nearly until dusk before O-Renchan had to go. She promised to come again the following Sunday. She failed to appear—not that Sunday, nor any Sunday after. Then Setschan overheard his father and mother whispering in their bedroom. They were saying that O-Renchan was dead; they were saying that Setschan should not be told, for he was a sensitive child.

Setschan did not quite understand death. He knew, though, that it was a very serious matter, for it had prevented O-Renchan from visiting him. Feeling as though he had been put under a taboo, he slipped away to another room, where he collapsed, curiously exhausted, on a *tatami* mat. After a while he heard his mother, aware of his sudden silence, looking for him. When she came upon him, she ran to him crying, "What is the matter, my son?"

He said nothing. She took him up on her knees and gave

him a compassionate embrace. Slowly, the love flowing from her warmed the coldness in his soul and brought him back from his anguish. But the pain long remained, for he had poured all his love and affection on the beautiful O-Renchan.

Life for the small boy was not, however, all sorrow and tragedy. Japan is a nation given to festive and traditional holidays. Kyoto, with its enormous number of Buddhist and Shinto shrines, is particularly rich in traditional gaiety. In the Japan of the time, a religious holiday was usually the signal for a joyous, happy occasion. The solemnity which accompanies Christian holidays such as Good Friday or even Easter, is largely absent from Shinto ceremony. Parishioners of a Shinto shrine usually live nearby. On a festival day, long curtains or cloths bearing the family crest were stretched across the front of the home. Sometimes the lattice-work face of the house was removed, opening the rooms directly onto the street. The children dressed up. The parents tried to keep from scolding them, at least for that day; usually the children got a bit of pocket money—the boys for tops, the girls for paper balloons. Vast quantities of festival foods, usually various kinds of dried fish and special vegetables, were prepared and served to the friends and relatives who dropped in, with unlimited quantities of the beery rice wine, sake.

Then, when all were thoroughly full, they dressed in costumes of ancient tradition, and paraded through the streets carrying the gilded and decorated portable shrine which had been removed from the main shrine altar. Before them went the musicians dressed in the costumes of old-time noblemen, playing ancient music on reed pipes, small drums, and cymbals. Ultimately the long, colorful

procession arrived at the shrine just as the sun dropped behind its ancient roof, and the music rose to a crescendo.

Such a festival could hardly avoid leaving a mark on the young boy's mind. Setschan was fascinated by the color, the noise, the ancient grace, caught up with a feeling that somehow he was reliving an experience out of the great past.

Another traditional event which Setschan experienced for the first time in the autumn of his fifth year was what the Japanese called the mushroom hunt. The town of Kyoto is surrounded by low hills. In October a kind of mushroom called *matsutake*, or pine mushroom, can be gathered on certain of the hills which are thickly covered with red pine trees. Customarily a group rents one of the hills and hunts mushrooms for an entire festival day. The person who collects the most mushrooms is awarded a mock prize. He is allowed to sit next to the prettiest girl, or perhaps choose the prettiest of the group. Amid laughter and merriment, volunteers slip down the hillside and scoop up the water which flows under the layer of decayed pine needles blanketing the slope. Boiled in this water, rice and the meat of chicken they have brought along has a heart-soothing, exotic taste. Then, as the sun goes down, the whole group troops in single file slowly down the narrow hillside path heading for home. Setschan's first mushroom hunt took place in beautiful autumn weather; Setschan remembers with happiness the softness of the air and the bright blue of the sky.

Another pleasant memory of that autumn was the annual athletic meet of Setschan's school—a kind of kindergarten Olympics. The boys race fifteen or twenty feet only, and

all get a paper flag of the rising sun as a prize, regardless of how fast they run. What Setschan remembers is that he did a great deal of running.

These events in the life of one small child were being played out against a far larger event—one of tremendous importance to Japan. Forty years later, it was to have considerable effect on Setschan's life. Russia had been moving into Korea and Manchuria, territory the Japanese considered under their sphere of influence. The Japanese offered to negotiate, but Russia, already a major world power, was confident that she could defeat so small a country as Japan and therefore refused to negotiate. On February 6, 1904, the Japanese broke off diplomatic relations with Russia. Two days later, without prior declaration of war, Russia attacked the Chinese fortress Port Arthur, the terminus of the Manchurian railroad. It was an ancient town strategically located at the tip of the Liaotung Peninsula, a finger which sticks down between Korea and the north coast of China.

Belated declarations of war appeared on February 10. The whole country boiled with anger. Caught up in the excitement, children ceased their normal play, and turned to games of war. On hillsides, in and out of bushes, they charged across their battlefields. Casting lots by the old Japanese method of scissors, paper, and stone, the children picked one lucky boy to be a gallant and isolated Japanese soldier. The rest were "Roskies." Over the long afternoon the Roskies would fall on the slopes one by one, until the gallant, isolated, and finally victorious Japanese soldier was the only one left.

But the real war was not so simple. Bottling up the Russian fleet, the Japanese gained a few quick victories, broke into Port Arthur, and then settled down to a siege of the fortified high point, Height 203, named after the meter markings on the military maps. These battles brought the Japanese face to face with machine guns for the first time. They did not understand them; they thought that the Russians were using some kind of magic, for every time they heard the ferocious sound of rolling drums, soldiers died where they stood. Nonetheless, they did not panic, determined to die bravely. The fighting was bloody and exhausting. On July 6, 1904, a special suicide unit flung itself three times against Height 203, suffering enormous losses in vain; among the dead were two sons of the Japanese General Nogi.

For the people of Japan, the month of November was very dark. The people gave up the luxury of pleasure, bending their whole spirit toward the fighting at Port Arthur. Finally, after great losses, the southwestern portion of the height was taken. Then boredom and exhaustion set in on both sides. Russian and Japanese soldiers were often separated only by the thin iron wall of the stronghold which the Russians were defending. One day some Russians pushed a bottle of transparent liquid through a gap in the iron of the stronghold. Startled Japanese soldiers handled it warily, fearful that it might be explosive. Veteran soldiers, however, realized that it was vodka. Thereafter men of both armies exchanged food and drink. It became clear to General Nogi that his troops had lost their fighting spirit, and he called for a new army, which arrived in December. The mood of the people was heavy, and even

little Setschan, listening to the adults talk, became aware of an atmosphere of foreboding. Luxuries were curtailed, and daily another man from the neighborhood was conscripted.

The Japanese attack on Height 203 began on December 5, 1904. Early in the morning thousands of soldiers observed the last sake-drinking rite, a tradition dating back to knightly days. Then they rose, charging to the high wall which divided them from the Russians and leaping over it. The Russian machine guns began to explode, but from the Japanese who leapt over the wall there was an odd silence. As more and more men poured over the wall, the terrible machine guns roared, and the odd silence of the Japanese continued. It was the silence of death. On the other side of the wall the Russians had driven swords and spears into the ground. As the Japanese soldiers streamed over the wall, they were skewered like fish on the sharp spears, and machine-gunned where they fell. It was only when the mound of corpses reached a height of six feet that the remaining troops could tramp over the backs of their dead comrades, and sweep the Russians out of the fortress.

With the fall of Height 203, Port Arthur was doomed, and on the third of February—little Setschan's birthday—the Russian commanding officer, Stessel, handed over to General Nogi the guns, warships, arms, ammunition, horses —the whole of the military force of Port Arthur. The Emperor, hearing from General Nogi how gallantly the Russians had fought, allowed Russian officers to keep their swords and soldier straps. This was a typical example of Japanese war etiquette, a remnant of the feudal code of samurai chivalry. In the traditional samurai code, no enemy

leader would be beheaded; but he would be permitted to undergo the rite of seppuku, the self-immolation called hara-kiri in the West.

Important as the victory of Port Arthur was, it was taken soberly by the people at home, for it had cost the lives of ten thousand veteran troops. Conscription age was raised, and raised again, until it reached the age of forty-five. Setschan saw the father of a kindergarten playmate disappear into the army, and never return. He grew uneasy for his own father. He saw two of his uncles called to the battlefield. His uneasiness increased. One day he timidly approached his father.

"Father, will they make you a soldier?"

"Perhaps. Perhaps not. You see, I am the first son. The first-born son need not go, so that the family lineage can remain continuous. (The Japanese of that time believed that lineage was transferred through the first-born son; for that reason, first-born sons were especially valued in the family and the community.) Do you understand, Setschan?"

Setschan felt relieved.

"But if there is another big battle like Height 203, even first-born sons may have to be soldiers."

Setschan's face grew anxious.

"Setschan," the father said softly, touched by the boy's concern, "if I must go to war, you will offer the holy fire in my place. Will you be sure to remember, Setschan?"

The boy nodded.

"As long as you do it, God is with you."

"Father—"

"And God will be with me also, and support me . . . in Manchuria."

Setschan began to weep silently, tears pouring from his eyes, as he struggled not to cry out. The father's eyes moistened. Then suddenly Setschan could stand it no longer. Crying "No, no, no, no," he burst into full tears, and charged into his father's belly, his face contorted with the expression of a raging beast, the sobs choking his breath away. Even when O-Renchan had died, he had not felt this anguish.

His father comforted him. Then he led him to the altar and showed him how to kindle the oil lamp.

This was a significant event in Setschan's religious life. The offering of the sacred fire is one of the major rites in Shinto. The lamp is a simple, shallow dish about three inches in diameter. It is made of unglazed pottery, which means that the tradition dates to the period before ceramic art was well developed. It is filled with oil, and the pith of a kind of rush, weighted to keep it upright, is floated on the oil. Several ritual methods are used for lighting the lamp. The simplest and most common method is to place a bit of cattail or rush on a flint, and strike it with steel. The sparks ignite the bit of rush, which is then used to light a sulfur stick, which in turn is used to light the sacred fire in the lamp. The method is not easy, but it is considered sacrilegious to use matches to light the sacred fire. The technique, of course, was too difficult for the six-year-old Setschan; it was years before he mastered it. Fortunately, his father was not conscripted, and there was no need for him to learn to light the fire in a hurry.

Setschan's father remained fearful that he would be called up, and for the next several months he made special efforts to indoctrinate Setschan in the Shinto heritage, helping him to learn the prayers by rote. He took the boy

to various shrines after sunset to pray at the altar in the darkness. Setschan stood a few feet behind his father, watching two dim lights flicker from afar at the inner altar. Setschan was mature enough to realize that in the event of his father's death, he would be expected to carry on the ancestral tradition. Yet fear for his father's life cast a shadow over his understanding of the Shinto religion and planted the doubts that were to cause him so much distress in later years.

After the fall of Port Arthur, Japan moved rapidly from victory to victory. On March 10, 1905, General Oyama captured Mukden, the ancient capital city of Manchuria, along with five hundred cannon and two hundred thousand Russian troops. The people of Kyoto normally celebrate the blossoming of the plum trees with sake parties in March. Overjoyed by the coincidence of the coming of spring and the great victory, they paraded through the streets night after night shouting, singing, and carrying paper lanterns. On May 27 and 28, Admiral Togo destroyed the Russian Baltic fleet in the Tsushima Straits, which run between Japan and Korea. The tide of victory ran with the Japanese, but the country's forces were nearly exhausted, and when President Theodore Roosevelt offered to negotiate a peace settlement, the Japanese were glad to accept. Diplomats from Russia and Japan met at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The Japanese demanded a huge indemnity for the losses they had suffered, together with the Russian island of Sakhalin. The Russians balked, and eventually Roosevelt persuaded the Japanese—who were not in condition to continue the struggle in any case —to settle for half of Sakhalin, and no indemnity. But when the treaty was signed on September 5, the people,

who had hoped for reparations to relieve them of the ponderous tax burden the war had imposed on them, grew violently angry. In Tokyo, mass meetings took place in front of Hibiya Park and Shintomi Theater. The mobs went on to burn some official buildings and a few street cars. Unappeased, they vented their hatred of President Roosevelt on Christians in general, destroying a number of Christian churches. Setschan's older brother, now sixteen, read this news to the young boy. He decided that the people of Tokyo must have lost their minds, since the people of Kyoto found the incident unbelieveable.

In the long run, the reparations were of little moment, for the effects of the Russo-Japanese war on Setschan, Japan, and indeed the world at large were enormous. Russia, its morale broken, moved directly from war to the 1905 revolution, a preview of the Communist revolution in 1917. Japan emerged from the war a world power. Unfortunately, the grasp of the militarist clique over the country had been very much strengthened.

A prophetic incident occurred to Setschan during the war. A household servant—a young girl of thirteen named O-Yoshi, whom he liked very much—had taken him out for a walk, when suddenly they came upon twenty red-bearded Russian prisoners of war in nondescript uniforms. The Russians were in the care of a young Japanese officer.

"Are they Roskies?" the boy called in a loud voice.

"Shush," hushed the girl, frightened that a Rosky might hear him and become angry. "It is not good manners to ask questions like that so loud," she whispered in his ear.

The Japanese officer began calling the prisoners' roll. One of the names called was "Kagan." It was Kagan who, a few moments later, when the line broke up, approached

the pretty maidservant and the small boy with a smile and handed Setschan a bit of pound cake and patted him on his head. Then, as they marched away again, looking sad and disgraced, Setschan watched them, feeling sorry for the soldier named Kagan who had been kind to him.

Kagan is the Russian word for Cohen. Unknowing, Setschan had made his first, prophetic contact with the Jewish people.

Chapter Two

UNTIL THE END OF WORLD WAR II, JAPAN WAS A NATION with a distinct class system, more defined than that of England, where the tradition of lords and ladies still lingers. At the time of Setschan's youth, despite the fact that Japan was rapidly modernizing, a man's lineage was almost the most important fact about him. The upper class which existed then was composed mainly of families descended from the nobility of the feudal days. The aristocracy at the top had descended from ruling families.

The author is not inclined to place much credence in the mystique of "family." Nonetheless, the science of eugenics has shown that a family which makes careful choices in its marriages will improve its stock, and that a family which does not choose carefully will rapidly lose its position in society. The Japanese aristocracy, which because of its wealth and privilege became self-indulgent, corrupted its

bloodlines with consanguineous marriages, or marriages to inferior stock which produced physically weak offspring.

Old families develop a rich cultural life to hand down to succeeding generations. A sound physical heritage cannot be created in one generation, and it takes at least three generations to form a good cultural heritage. These theories have been borne out in practice. Despite the fact that the aristocracy was officially dissolved after World War II, families of good lineage continue to comprise the core of the social structure. An old family does not gain respect by right of birth; it gains it from its cultural record.

The Kotsuji family, according to tradition, dates back to 678 A.D., when the Kamo Shrine in the Kamo section of Kyoto was dedicated. The Kotsujis were attached to it as priests and given a piece of land near it to hold in perpetuity. How the first Kotsuji came into this living is a little difficult to discover. At one time, however, a Kotsuji served at Ise, the Grand Imperial Shrine. It seems likely that he was a descendant of emperors: second or third princes were often appointed to the priesthood, partly to honor them and partly to keep them in a position where ambition could not drive them to foment rebellion.

It seems likely then, that when Emperor Kammu moved the imperial capital to Kyoto in 794—about the time Charlemagne was being crowned in France—he brought a Kotsuji with him, and established him at the Kamo Shrine. According to family tradition, the imperial household observed about seventy rituals at the Kamo Shrine every year. For eleven hundred years the Kotsuji family remained attached to that shrine. They were not rich people, but they were accorded enormous respect. They absorbed the music, ritual, and religious feeling of Shinto.

The fate of Setschan the man is curiously interwoven with foreigners—especially Americans and European Jews. In 1853 an American, Commodore Matthew Perry, sailed his frigates into the fortified harbor of Araga with the express intention of opening the country to world-wide trade. Impressed by his armaments, the Japanese permitted America to send an ambassador, Townsend Harris, to the country to negotiate a trade treaty. Treaties with Holland, Russia, England, and France were signed shortly afterward. In the people's eyes, this influx of foreigners was a disgrace. The stock of the militarist government fell; morale collapsed, confusion spread, and the government tried one desperate expedient after another to bring order to the country. The government failed, and in 1867, after seven hundred years of rule, the military turned the real power of the government back to the Emperor, who had been for many centuries nothing more than a highly revered figurehead. The emperor's name was Meiji, and this crucial event in Japanese history is called the Meiji Restoration.

Emperor Meiji was a dynamic man. He moved the capital to Tokyo and set about breaking up the feudal system under which Japan had lived for over a thousand years. The rapidity with which Japan flung off the cloak of the past and entered the modern world has always been a historical wonder. Among other acts, Emperor Meiji tossed the two-thousand-year-old system of hereditary priesthood out on the tide of the age. Priests were henceforth to be appointed in rotation by the government. Thus due to a turn of history, there is no longer a Kotsuji at the Kamo Shrine.

Traditions die hard, and a thousand-year-old tradition dies very hard indeed. Setschan's father had been born in the year 1864, during a period of confusion when great

changes were sweeping the country. His grandparents had grown up under the old regime, when the country was closed to foreigners, and the Kotsujis were priests at Kamo Shrine. It will be understood, then, how powerful the influence of traditional Shinto must have been around the young boy Setschan, and with what emotional struggle on his part, and pain on his father's part, a breaking away would occasion. This was no ordinary boy in rebellion against his father. This was a man flinging off a thousand-year tradition to take up the religion of the people who had brought his own family low.

Shinto is not a system of ancestor worship, as the shallow observations of some Western writers maintain. There does exist excessive reverence for ancestors in Shinto but much more than mere ancestor worship is involved. What makes Shinto sometimes difficult for Westerners to understand is that, unlike many religions, especially Christianity, Shinto is not concerned with doctrine or ethics. Its ethics are very simple: obey the father. Shinto has almost no doctrine. The key to Shinto is *ritual.* Shinto is an animistic religion, which uses ritual and symbol to give life meaning and direction.

This becomes clearer when we see how Shinto must have been created. Life, not philosophy, creates religion. In the ancient days, when man first came to Japan, the threat of disaster existed everywhere. Typhoons produced enormous rains and jungle humidity. Mosquitoes, insects, and wild beasts preyed on the people from without; germs and virus from within. The first concern of the early inhabitants was survival. First, to overcome the outbreak of disease, they turned to "purification." Japan is a country of running water, and so they learned to bathe constantly. The cleansing rituals and the exaggerated emphasis put on bathing and

purification in Shinto may have sprung from just such a circumstance. (The public bathing house, where people of both sexes wash in the nude, is part of this same tradition.)

There was also the need for salt, the most basic of foods. In man's primitive stage, salt must have been one of his major medicines. Even today, salt-prepared plum is used in many places in Japan as a medicine to prevent cholera, typhus, constipation, and various skin diseases. In Shinto, although the medical usages have been forgotten, salt occupies an important place in the purification rituals.

The third means of purification in ancient days must have been the waving of branches to drive off insects, noxious spirits, and perhaps smaller wild animals. In Shinto, twigs from a *sakaki* plant—a member of the camellia family—are used in purification rituals. Bells may have entered the ritual for the same reasons. And of course fire, as in the sacred lamps lit each evening in good Shinto homes, is an important means of purification. If primitive women went out at night, they had to try to look like goblins by carrying a comb in their teeth. A woman was also expected to hold a torch with a mirror behind it to magnify the light.

All of these things remain in the Shinto religion in symbolic form. Thus, Shinto is a symbolic recreation of the life-and-death struggle for survival of the ancestors of Japan. The ancestors have become gods. Shinto is therefore known as "the way of the gods." It is easy to see how ancestor worship could become part of this religion; yet it is equally easy to see that reverence for the ancient way, not the ancestor, is the key to it. When a Japanese comes to the shrine he is not thinking of a specific ancestor, but of something more vague and amorphous—the spirit of his ancestors. Yet it must be remembered that the Japanese are not inclined to

analyze. They regard analysis shallow in the face of deep feelings. Most Japanese do not think of all these things when they worship; they simply partake solemnly of the religious feeling and the sense of deep peace the Shinto ritual creates.

This was the tradition in which Setschan grew. Every opportunity was taken to indoctrinate the boy with Shinto thought. Often, for example, his father told him stories at bed time. These stories, which he told in simple language, were about the people and customs of ancient Japan.

Meanwhile, Setschan advanced from kindergarten to the primary grades. During these years he was a somewhat sickly child, and sometimes it was difficult for him to fall asleep at night. He was often kept home from school; his memories of those early primary school classes are vague. He remembers coming back to school after long absences. What he recalls most about the early years of school is the burgeoning of an interest in music and an aptitude for it. In his kindergarten year, for example, the class joined the other grades in a traditional song for the New Year's ceremony. It was a solemn song, ending with the cadence mi-so-fa-re-do, which the children almost always sang incorrectly. The error stung Setschan's ear. After the ceremony he innocently went to his female teacher, and announced that his school-fellows were singing the song incorrectly. Her face was warm and smiling as she patted him on the head. "You are right, dear boy. You are very nice." Then she turned aside to a neighbor and said, "Isn't it wonderful to see so small a child with so good an ear for music." For Setschan, it was like being approved by the Muse.

Here again the Shinto influence is felt. One of the most important elements in the Shinto rite is music. Shinto music

is called *gagaku.* It was introduced, like much else of Japanese culture, from China, and is characterized by harps, reed pipes of various sorts, an elaborate harmony called *Shō*, small drums, and high-pitched gongs. It is based on a series of dissonants, usually five, which to Western ears sound queerly off-pitch, and it is usually played in legato fashion. It produces in the listener a feeling of pathos, an exquisite antique mood. As he awakened to life, the young Setschan came to enjoy the music of the shrine with deep feeling. Its influence in forming his artistic taste was enormous.

Perhaps even more important than school or music was the feeling he developed for horticulture. His father leased a patch of land on which he practiced horticulture for his own amusement. Besides general flower gardening, he kept about five hundred potted dwarf plants, a collection which included virtually every variety of plant which can be successfully dwarfed. As Setschan followed his father through the garden, the man continually murmured softly, almost as if to himself, a flow of explanations for everything he did. Only occasionally did the son raise a question, and the answer always came in the same low murmuring voice. It was a masterful method of teaching. The boy learned how to transplant, how to produce bigger flowers, why certain trees hate to grow under others, how to plant a cutting—in sum, most of the basic knowledge of Japanese gardening, except for stock-grafting, which requires a difficult technique. While giving his son pointers on nature, Setschan's father interspersed bits of Confucian wisdom, or commentary on life. On rare occasions, a plant revealed a sudden mutation. "See the ghost," the father would marvel.

Inevitably Setschan wanted plants of his own. Sympa-

thizing with his son's obviously deep affection for natural life, the father set aside a tiny patch of land about two feet square for the ambitious boy. Setschan managed to grow a few cuttings in his patch. He was overjoyed. With visions of himself as a little landowner, he decided to enlarge the garden. Rushing to a nearby hill, he spent half a day pulling from the earth trees as large as he could manage. He planted them in his garden, watered them thoroughly; for three days he watched them with vast impatience. Then they began to wither away one by one. Painfully Setschan watched them die.

Stubborn and determined, after further instructions from his father, he set out again, this time heading for the hills which surround Kyoto like the edge of a basin. It was a fine, clear, mid-autumn day. As he got up into the hills, he had to pass through what in those days was called an "Eta" village.

Scattered across Japan, but mostly on the outskirts of the large towns, Eta villages have their roots a thousand years deep in Japanese history. Near the beginning of the Heian Period (the time when the capital was first transferred to Kyoto), Koreans began immigrating to Japan in great masses. Their culture was derived from the Chinese and was further advanced than Japanese culture. They brought with them techniques for making hide and leather from animal skins, needed not only for implements of warfare, but for the instruments of the rapidly developing shrine *gagaku* music.

At the same time, however, the extreme compassion of the Buddhists for animals, which led them to abhor slaughtering them, was growing. The Buddhists also believed in

transmigration of souls or *samsara*. Since this meant a human soul might inhabit the body of an animal, slaughter was regarded as obnoxious. If a man killed a dog, he might be killing his grandfather or even his father. The Japanese, in order to find their way out of this dilemma, drove the leather makers out of the cities, into little villages of their own in the hills. Gradually the leather makers became untouchables, the meanest caste. They were not allowed to have social intercourse with normal people. They were not even allowed into the towns except to beg for alms on New Year's Eve.

After the Meiji Restoration, these laws were revoked. Yet legislation could not sweep away the inferior feelings of the people of the Eta villages, nor could it remedy their physical breakdown due to intermarriage, lack of sanitation, and decent medical care. (It wasn't until after World War II that the Eta people began to melt into the general population.)

Setschan went through such a village and on into the forests where he spent the day digging up a few trees according to the new lessons his father had taught him. On the way home, in the Eta village, he encountered the dirtiest boy he had ever seen. The boy had just come out of a house. His clothing was filthy, his face looked as if it had not been washed for a hundred days, and his eyes were bleared from trachoma. Setschan was shocked by the sight, and he stood staring at the filthy boy.

The urchin recognized Setschan immediately as a town boy. "Hey," he shouted, "what do you think's so funny?"

Setschan stared blankly back.

"What're you staring at, boy?"

Setschan could think of no answer.

"Come on, answer. I'm not going to let you pass until you do."

Setschan suddenly realized that he was in grave trouble. He was in the hills alone. There was nothing to prevent the Eta boy from beating him seriously and perhaps sending him home naked. He was frightened. But then he remembered his samurai teaching. A true samurai will not be dismayed even when he is surrounded by a million devils. If he must die he will die proudly and serenely. He saw in his mind his family crest, and he was strengthened. Pulling himself up straight, he stared directly into the eyes of the snarling Eta boy. The effect surprised even Setschan. The boy continued to shout at him, but he kept his distance.

For what seemed an eternity, Setschan held his ground. The Eta boy, vexed by his inability to overcome his sense of inferiority in the presence of the well-dressed town boy, suddenly raised a cry. "Hey, Kuma . . . Tora . . . Genko . . . come on out and help me give this town boy a licking."

At that point Setschan realized that only a miracle could save him. He remembered the story of Inokuma Nyudo. Inokuma Nyudo is a mystery man who serves a young master as vassal but remains invisible until needed—somewhat like the jinni Aladdin rubbed from his lamp. What Setschan needed was Inokuma Nyudo, and he wanted to cry out for him.

Eta boys began to appear at the doors of the houses. And then Inokuma Nyudo appeared, in the form of a dozen men of Kyoto returning through the village from a picnic. Setschan knew some of them well. He raised his hand to wave to them. They returned the gesture, and the Eta boy fled,

as did his cohorts who drew themselves back like leeches into the mud. Setschan made his way safely home.

Nothing is without its lessons, and in the end the incident proved valuable. Years later, when the grown Setschan had to face torture at the hands of the secret police, or the invading armies of the Russians, who threatened to shoot him down in the street, he was able to face them with a quiet, confident manner and even maintain a serene mind. This was in part, the result of his samurai training. For Japanese boys of the day, *Bushido*—or the "way of the samurai"— was perhaps an even profounder influence than Shinto. Often regarded by Westerners, who associate it with the huge swords of the samurai, as a bellicose tradition, *Bushido* is actually an Eastern version of the chivalric code. Originally the code of the ancient Yamato tribe, whose descendants ultimately became emperors of Japan, the *Bushido* tradition gradually spread through the populace at large. Like knightly chivalry, *Bushido* is a code of behavior, stressing the virtues of courage in battle and serenity in the face of death. Like chivalry, it clung to exaggerated ideals of personal honor and prestige—so exaggerated in fact, that the proper response to dishonor was suicide. (Self-immolation—seppuku or hara-kiri as it is usually termed in the West—was traditionally done by making two straight slashes across the belly, so that the dying man disemboweled himself. Later, however, the slash was reduced to a small ritual cut, and a kind friend would end the pain by stabbing the neck.) In addition to these soldierly ideals, the true samurai possessed gentler qualities: courtesy, honor, and fidelity. The Western idea that the *Bushido* ideal was responsible for Japanese militarism is incorrect. It is true, of

course, that the militarists capitalized on some of the *Bushido* notions. The belief that a man who died for the Emperor went immediately to heaven as a god, helped to create the suicidal kamikaze pilots of World War II. But true *Bushido* is far more than a code of war. It is difficult not to love and respect the man who adheres to the genuine *Bushido* code.

The young Setschan was strongly influenced by the *Bushido* code, especially through the man who taught him in second and third grades. Yamamoto-*sensei* (the word "*sensei*" is a suffix of honor, something akin to the English "sir") was a teacher with a wonderful sense of narrative as well as a sense of humor. He illustrated the ideal of *Bushido* by announcing that he would cure a stomach-ache by hitting his belly with his fist. The personality and teaching of this good man had a powerful effect on Setschan, an effect which not only supported him during the incident in the Eta village, but many other times throughout his life.

The plants Setschan brought home through the Eta village were successfully transplanted. Setschan learned how to treat the roots and how to cut back the little branches; he learned how to expose the plants to sunlight only a little bit at a time. He was able to sense when a plant was feeling strong or weak—or even when it was happy or unhappy. His love for gardening was obvious, and he was eager to continue to penetrate deeper and deeper into the mysteries of the natural world.

His father recognized the strong pull horticulture had for the boy and one day said to him, "Setschan, how would you like to go to agricultural school when you are bigger?"

Setschan was curious. "What do you do there?"

"Learn. Learn to grow all sorts of plants."

"Even fruit trees?"

"Of course. Apple trees, pear trees, peach trees—whatever you want."

"And can I eat the fruit?"

The father smiled. "Certainly you can."

The decision was not yet sealed, however. Setschan's oldest brother, Genjiro, was nineteen at the time. To the nine-year-old boy, Genjiro seemed to be an old, advanced, and inaccessible person. Because he was the first son, and therefore the bearer of the family bloodline, his opinion was respected by his parents, and often his word was final. Inevitably, the father asked Genjiro what he thought of the idea of raising Setschan for agriculture.

Said Genjiro, "Setschan is not strongly built. Botanical study will inevitably demand a good deal of physical labor, and Setschan won't be able to stand it. Better to prepare him for a more sedentary life."

Genjiro was a mathematician and had the mathematician's love of precision and accuracy. He did not like making mistakes, and as a result he was inclined to be cautious and sometimes negative in his thinking. But Genjiro's views sounded sensible, and they influenced his father. The idea of agricultural school for Setschan was dropped. Ironically, Genjiro, for all his caution, was grievously in error. It was the terrible grind of study and the speculative life which virtually destroyed Setschan's health later on. It is a curious thing that the life of study requires a considerable degree of physical health to sustain the intensity of concentration and the long hours the student's work requires. Perhaps if Setschan had gone into botanical work,

the physical labor out-of-doors would have strengthened him.

It seems a sad and almost tragic thing that the offhand opinion of a nineteen-year-old boy should have so deeply affected the course of a man's life. If Genjiro had spoken one positive word, Setschan would have become a botanist. His life, in the ordinary sense, might have been far happier, for he might have avoided the zigzag path of theological doubts, the endless pilgrimage in search of religion, and the mental anguish which is the invariable lot of the doubter. For Genjiro, the incident was a trifle, easily forgotten. For Setschan the incident involved his entire life.

It seems, however, that God provides alternative paths in life. One need not earn his bread with his highest talent. It is often the case that a man can shine brightest, can enrich his life and make a larger contribution to the world through a talent which he does not use in his daily work. One should not abuse Providence, for only the Almighty One can ultimately decide the worth of one's life.

It may seem a little curious to the modern reader that Setschan abandoned an ambition which meant so much to him simply because of a word from his father. In the Japan of Setschan's boyhood his reaction was perfectly normal. Japanese children were brought up under a system far more authoritarian than anything we can imagine today. Not only was the child constantly faced with figures of authority—parents, schoolteachers, priests, and government officials—but he was expected to conform to countless, extremely minor rules. His comings and goings were regulated, the forms his spare time pleasures took were limited, his behavior in the home and at the dining table were forced

into ritual patterns. There was, among Japanese boys, always the undercurrent of rebellion, but it rarely broke into the open. It would have been extraordinary if Setschan had taken sharp issue with the decision about his career made for him by his father. Rebellion was to come, but not yet.

In point of fact, Setschan's rebellious feelings took a rather curious form of expression, an expression which was to have a considerable effect on him later. At ten he began to study English. His textbook was illustrated with pictures of American life—of boys and girls playing together freely, of games, and good times. Setschan was struck by the contrast of what seemed like so lively and gay a childhood compared with the controlled one he was living. Immediately he thought that sometime, somehow, he must run away and go to America. He did not; but the result was an absorbing interest in the West. A few years later, he built a Western-style desk and chair for his study; and in time his absorption in Western culture was to lead him to much much more.

Although Setschan did not show it, the loss of his horticultural career was painful to him; he was aware that his poor health had been exaggerated. His father, for example, thought that the boy probably had a cardiac weakness—a supposition which had no evidence to support it. By the time he was in fourth grade he had become a brisk and active boy, always eager to be out and doing something. He was a boy who desired to please, true enough, but that did not mean that he would be happy without expressing his own personality. Boylike, he simply could not sit still for five minutes at a time. This need for activity led him,

during the summer vacation at the end of the fourth grade, to his first real accomplishment. For the first time he learned a skill without adult help.

Kyoto sits in a basin, surrounded by high hills. It is about twenty miles from the Pacific Ocean at Osaka, too far for boys to go to the ocean beach. Behind the town lies the huge Lake Biwa. At the time, it was under the control of the Butoku-kai, or Martial Arts Association, which used it to teach the complexities of the art of classical Japanese swimming. The Kamo and other rivers near Kyoto are icy cold, sufficiently so to induce cyanotic symptoms within a few minutes in those foolish enough to swim there. For boys who want to swim, there are only a handful of small ponds—virtually marshes—spotted around the town at the base of the hills. The still water in these ponds is warm. Most of them are from three to six feet deep, shallow enough for safety, although occasionally boys who braved deeper areas were drowned.

That summer Setschan decided he must learn to swim. He did not tell his parents, who would surely forbid him, but walked instead to a pond called Komatsu-ike along with a group of other boys. Once they stripped, it was simple to tell the veterans of the pond from the novices: the veterans were burned dark by the sun, while the skin of the others was pale and white.

Feeling somewhat ashamed of his pallid skin, Setschan stood on the bank of the pond, wondering exactly how to begin. He was musing thus, when suddenly he felt a thrust from behind, and then he was in the water, arched like a bow with the sudden shock. He could neither shout, nor cry for help, but began thrashing wildly, gulping water every time he opened his mouth. On the bank the fifteen-

year-old who had pushed him in stood watching nervously, and other spectators ran frantically up and down the bank shouting, "Help him out, somebody help him out."

But while they were shouting, Setschan struggled the five feet to the bank by himself, and climbed up onto the bank, his chest heaving from the effort. He was vastly astonished to realize that he had become a swimmer.

So was the somewhat relieved boy who had pushed him in the water. "Bravo, very good," he shouted. Setschan, still struggling for breath, could not answer. He stared at the boy, caught between elation from his accomplishment and indignation for its cause.

"What's your name?" the dark-brown boy asked.

"He's the youngest brother of Kotsuji," somebody told him.

"Kotsuji's brother?" His attitude changed rapidly. Genjiro had a considerable reputation as a scholar among the boys of the neighborhood, for he had won a prize scholarship in a contest with hundreds of other boys. "I'm sorry," the boy said, somewhat alarmed. "I didn't know you were Kotsuji's brother. I—ah—was just trying to teach you how to swim."

"It's all right," Setschan said. "I swam all right."

"Yes, yes," the boy replied. "Someday you'll be a great swimmer."

Later on, Setschan, feeling warm and glorious, walked home with the boy who had pushed him, stopping together in a rice field to skewer dozens of locusts on a wire. At home Setschan toasted the locusts over a fire in the charcoal brazier which always burned in Japanese homes of the day, and when the little creatures turned from green to dark brown, he ate them with soy sauce. He did not, how-

ever, tell his parents what he had done, for he was afraid they would forbid further swimming. Thereafter, every afternoon all through the long summer vacation, he went to the pond and practiced swimming. On the way home he would catch more locusts. He still lacked the courage to tell his parents the truth; they simply believed he went locust hunting every afternoon.

The summer gradually slipped away. Then one day Setschan accidentally overheard his parents talking. He heard his mother say, "Have you noticed how brown Setschan is getting? He's beginning to look like an Indian."

The father shrugged. "He's getting sunburned from hunting locusts in the fields."

"No," his mother said, "the color is a little different from an ordinary sunburn."

"Perhaps we'd better keep a watch on him."

Suddenly Setschan wanted to pull back the whole vacation to its beginning. His dishonesty made his mind uneasy. How was he going to cover it up? Sooner or later they would discover the established fact that he could swim ten or twenty feet. He meditated: we can return stolen things, we can go back to the place we have come from; why can't we return to an early point in time? But the paradox in the reasoning was too deep for the boy, and he stopped pondering it.

Shortly thereafter he stopped swimming, too. He was sitting in the house when his father approached him, with a grave face.

"Setschan," he said solemnly, "I've discovered that some bad boys in the neighborhood have been going to the marsh every day to swim. One of them was finally drowned. I'm going to find out who they are."

Setschan sat straight and still, staring at his father like a mouse facing a cat. But his father said nothing more; he turned and walked away. Setschan stopped paying homage to the marsh from that moment on. His intense love for the sport remained, and until the clear sun signaling the approach of autumn began to shine in the old town, he continued to wish for his daily swim.

Hazardous as the adventure had been, the daily exercise, both swimming and locust catching, did wonders for his body. Setschan was no longer a weak, sickly boy.

This almost immediately had a happy result. On the third of November the school traditionally held an athletic contest, involving running, jumping, and other typical schoolboy games. During the preliminary practice sessions, Setschan discovered to his great delight and amazement that he was the fastest runner in his class. To his happy wonder, the discovery made him a small hero; the boys started to respect him, and the girls cheered him on in shrill voices. Setschan was at the age when the girls' opinion mattered very little. Holding honors among the boys, however, was an important thing. And when the athletic meet was finally held, Setschan took first prize in his class, and became the object of flattery and attention from his classmates. Finally, Setschan was rid of the feeling that he couldn't compete physically with the boys around him.

Important as his athletic successes were in the making of this Japanese boy, far more significant was the presence of a teacher named Tomosaburo Nakajima who took over his class that same autumn. Looking back on him from the age of sixty, the author is certain that Nakajima-*sensei* was a great teacher. He was unquestionably the man with the finest personal qualities Setschan met during his entire edu-

cation. His effect on Setschan's development is incalculable. He maintained his dignity always. He neither scolded nor was mean; he was never harsh; nonetheless, his pupils always obeyed him. For example, if a boy were joking and chattering with his friends around him, Nakajima-*sensei* would simply stop talking, until the queer silence alarmed the noisy boy. When the startled student came to himself, Nakajima-*sensei* would cast a silent benevolent look over him for a few moments, before he continued his teaching. Within a few months the entire class was completely under the spell of his serene and virtuous teaching. Nakajima-*sensei* always tried to find the very best in his students. He found something to appreciate in even the worst pupil; gradually, he raised the level of the pride of the class in its work. Before, Setschan had never bothered to do any homework but had slipped by on natural talent. Under Nakajima-*sensei*, he began to do a little extra work from time to time, in order to get top grades consistently.

In the fifth and sixth grades, Nakajima concentrated on indoctrinating his pupils with the value of virtue. He was always careful to give his students detailed reasons for man's need for virtue. He explained that animals do not have virtue; only man has cultivated it. Virtue, he taught, will be counted virtuous even when hidden. Advertising it —if people fail to acknowledge it—will cause it to lose its value. Unacknowledged virtue will make your face shine, he taught; hypocrisy will not. The good act need not be deliberately hidden; to display it, however, is a step on the road to hypocrisy.

Before the year was out Setschan had a chance to put this teaching to practice. Nakajima made it a rule to take his class on a monthly picnic as a reward for diligence in its

work. They usually went to Mount Hiei, which rose 2,800 feet from the northeast corner of the city, overlooking the beautiful Lake Biwa. Setschan was asked to bring up the rear, to see that there were no stragglers. As they came up to a steep place called Kirara Pass, the fastest boys pushed on a considerable way ahead, and the slower boys dropped further and further behind. Finally one of these—a smaller boy—simply stopped and dropped to the ground.

"Hey, what's the matter?" Setschan asked.

"I'm hungry, and I'm too tired to walk any more," he gasped.

"Where's your lunch?" Setschan asked.

"Tsutsumi's got it. He carried it for me. He's way up ahead."

Setschan had nothing to offer the boy. He had already eaten his lunch. Yet he had to do something.

"All right, you can make it," he said cheerfully, in an attempt to rouse the boy's flagging spirits.

"No I can't. I'm dying," the boy moaned.

Suddenly Setschan decided to carry the boy the rest of the way up the mountain. Bending, he raised him up over his back, and began to drag doggedly up the slope. His legs grew heavy, his pulse began to hammer, and despite frequent rest stops, his breath rasped in his throat. Grim and determined, he pushed on, staggering under the heavy burden. Finally he came to the rest point where the others were waiting and let the boy down. As the boy hungrily gulped his lunch, Setschan felt like a soldier who had taken a stronghold; victorious, but exhausted. The beating of his heart slowed after a few moments, but his legs continued to feel odd. There were still six more miles of walking to do, and by the time the party broke up at dark, his leg muscles

stung with needle pricks and jumped with mild spasms. Once home, he ate in utter silence and slept like the dead.

The next morning at school, the boy he had carried greeted him with, "*Kino wa ohkini*," which in Kyoto dialect means "Thank you for yesterday."

"Do you feel all right now?" Setschan asked.

"Yes, I'm all right. How strong you are, Setschan."

"No, not so strong. . . ." He couldn't find the words; but the boy's thanks were reward enough, and he was happy. It wasn't for a month that the teacher discovered what he had done and added his praise to the reward.

Of all the influences on the boy Setschan the most subtle and perhaps the deepest was the city of Kyoto itself, which he took in with his every breath. Consider: the city has been breeding history for twelve hundred years and longer, since it first began as the capital of Japan. When London and Paris were only collections of rude houses, Kyoto was the seat of a court rich in literature, painting, and architecture, and it was the capital of a populous country. Everything the boy Setschan saw as he moved through his home town was touched by tradition, history, ancient lore. It was a day's trip to the oldest wooden building existing in the world, the Horyuji Temple. The sound of the ancient city was with him always. His eye constantly fell on something touched by myth or legend. For example, the city is famous for stone lanterns, large and small, which sit around the shrines. Some of the shrines have hundreds of them. When all of them are lighted in the evening of a high holiday one feels as if he were in the middle of the home of the soul. (There are, remember, 899 Buddhist temples in Kyoto, and hundreds of Shinto shrines. All of this still remains; the United States Air Force was under strict orders

not to bomb Kyoto, out of respect for its antiquity.) One of these lanterns, which stands in the inner court of the Kitamo Shrine, is so old the granite has become rotten. It is called Toro, after the myth of Watanabe-no-Tsuna-Toro. Back in the old days, the legend goes, white fiends made raids on the town each evening to eat the men and steal away the women. Wanatabe-no-Tsuna was chief of the city's guard. He was patrolling one midnight across the Modoribashi Bridge on Ichijo Avenue, when he came upon a woman of incredibly radiant beauty. His heart was struck; but then he began to wonder why a woman so beautiful would risk exposing herself to the fiends at night. Quickly Tsuna looked down at her reflection in the water, and there he saw her as the devil. He whipped out his sword. The graceful lady turned suddenly into his true form, snatched Tsuna up by the back of his neck and flew with him into the air.

He flew from the north of town to the south. As he crossed over Rashomon Gate, Tsuna summoned his courage, and with his huge sword slashed off one of the arms of the fiend as it clung to his neck. Roaring, the fiend flung him down beside the gate, where he lay unconscious. When he came to himself he rose and looked about for the arm of the devil. It was missing; he couldn't find it. He began walking north looking for it, and then on the grounds of the Kitamo Shrine he saw it. It was a sign that Divine Providence had saved him, he decided; and he dedicated the lantern in commemoration of the event.

As a boy, Setschan once came upon the lantern. He tapped it lightly with his fist, and some of the bits of sand in the rotten granite fell away. "Look," he called to his friend, "the lantern is made of sand. It is no good." Several

years later he came upon it again. Now a brand new tablet of white wood inscribed in superb calligraphy announced that it was the "Lantern of Watanabe-no-Tsuna—a National Treasure." Remembering his disrespectful gesture, Setschan blushed hotly. Then he made a respectful bow, and vowed he would become a second Tsuna to rid the country of any fiends which remained.

So Setschan grew. Maturer emotions quickened in him. He began dimly to realize that there was, besides the visible world, another world in which resided grace and glory. Poems became vaguely intelligible. Words to songs began to have special meanings. Then, as if precisely on cue, his boyish romantic proclivities ignited.

The date was March 24, 1911; the occasion, most fittingly, the ceremony marking his graduation from primary school. Toward the end of the observances the entire class joined in a song, which celebrated the end of the early school years and the joys that nature held in store for them.

The singing of the song filled him with strong feeling, and it was still with him as he walked through the gate of the school for the last time, carrying the Chinese dictionary he had won as a prize for good conduct and assiduity. He did not want to go home, fearful that the old familiar objects would bring him down to earth. Filled with a deep, inexpressible, almost unbearable feeling of pathos, he wandered through Kyoto. Suddenly, as dusk began to descend, he found himself in front of the Kitamo Shrine, where he had once insulted the ancient lanterns. Plum blossoms scented the dusk air, and a soft breeze sighed in the trees. Around him the ancient lanterns were being lit, their points of light ripening all around. Now and then he

could hear the clapping of hands inside the shrine as men began to pray. Swept with a sense of tenderness and beauty, he desired only to be where he was forever. His soul sighed; he felt that he had reached his eternal home.

Years later, when for the first time he opened the Bible to Psalm 84 and read it, the memory of that moment at dusk flooded over him again.

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!
My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. . . .

This, then, was how a Japanese was made. There was nothing about Setschan that marked him as different from his school fellows or that set him apart from thousands of other bright Japanese boys of good family. Raised in an ancient town replete with historical significance, he had been indoctrinated with a Shinto reverence for the Japanese past and a strong feeling for the virtuous way of the samurai. He was, like most good Japanese boys, eager to do right, to obey his father and his masters, to conduct himself always with honor and courage. And yet, within three years, this well-trained Japanese boy was to reject this training, cast it to the winds, and enter upon a long, arduous search through bitter doubt and anguished despair—a search which was to take him fifty years to complete.

Chapter Three

IT IS NOW TIME FOR THE AUTHOR TO DROP THE THIRD PERSON in speaking of himself. At the point in his life this story has reached, a change begins to take place in his mind and in his emotions. The psychology of a child begins to fade. Boyish sentimentality becomes true emotional response to the world of grace and glory around about.

I want to remind the reader that I was not a boy gifted with a strong religious inclination, nor was I a religious genius. I was a simple, inexperienced boy, and that is all. However, I was stubborn and single-minded when I chose to be, capable of strong emotional responses to events and people, and both blessed and victimized by a strong sense of justice.

Yet although I was not especially religious in my attitudes, I was interested—sometimes deeply so—in the aesthetic virtues of the Shinto rites. From the fourth grade on

I assiduously kept up the rite of kindling the sacred fire as my father had taught me. I rarely missed an evening. As the result of this love of the beauty of the old rites, and my parents' subtle education, I was being prepared for the religious experiences I was later to have. Even though I lived as a gentile, a passage was being opened inside me. Ironically, the efforts my parents bent toward making me susceptible to the call of Shinto had the effect of preparing my mind for the spark struck in it by my first look into the Bible. My parents were most cautious in their teaching. They managed to bring me to religion without creating in me any resistance to it. When the rites or observances are too complicated for children to grasp, they back away. When it is taught merely as an ethical code, without the appeal of color and sound to the senses, children find it dull. Furthermore, the reduction of religion to a mere ethical system can create a kind of religious anarchy, especially when the moral code changes with each succeeding era. But my parents avoided over-dosing me with ethical teaching and complicated ritual; they adhered to the simple symbolic rites, and thanks to their wisdom, religious feeling blossomed in me and grew strong. Although they created in their son the feeling for religion, in the end Shinto did not satisfy that feeling.

Two important things happened to me in the years after my graduation from primary school. First was an injury which was to teach me considerably of bodily pain. The second was the awakening of my scholastic ambition. Both are important to my story.

In the Japan of my youth, students went from primary school to five years of the middle school. I elected to take the commercial course, principally because it offered more

English than the regular course. School started in the spring. The cherry trees blossomed, the migratory birds flew back from India, from Australia, from the South Seas and began to nest. The hills above the town burst into green; a mist blanketed their tops.

One Saturday morning during this lovely spring, I went to a nearby playground, where they had a piece of equipment called the *judo-enboku.* The *judo-enboku* is a heavy log about a foot in diameter which hangs two or three inches off the ground from heavy chains. It can swing back and forth, and the trick is to perform acrobatics on it. Some boys were riding it when I came in, and I decided that it looked like an easy and pleasant exercise. I got on, and we managed to get it swinging three feet high. Then one of the boys riding it slipped. He grabbed out instinctively to save himself and caught hold of me. The sudden jerk cost me my balance, and I tried to jump clear, but I didn't make it. The heavy log ground over my foot, crushing it against the ground. I touched my foot; it felt numb. Fortunately I was wearing heavy shoes; otherwise my foot could easily have been completely crushed, leaving me a cripple. With the help of a friend I dragged myself off to a corner and took off my shoe. My foot felt a little better; but then as the numbness began to wear off, an intense pain developed. I continued to sit on the ground, hoping that the pain would ease up. Instead, it grew worse. At the end of two hours I was groaning aloud; at the end of three, as night began to fall, I was in anguish. The boys had left the playground one by one, leaving only me and an old friend. Now, as I had carried the boy up the mountainside, so my friend lifted me onto his back and, struggling with my weight, carried me home.

It turned out that a cartilage had been damaged. Proper ministration returned it to its place, but the deep, stubborn pain persisted. For five years following the accident the pain would leave in the spring, only to recur each winter. One never gets used to a pain like that. Winter after winter it clung to me, troubling me, and leaving me to wonder whether it would stay with me for the rest of my life. Without the encouragements of religion, as I developed them over this period, I could not have stood the pain.

Overshadowing this unhappy accident was a sudden surge of interest in my studies. For the first term in the middle school I followed my usual course, I skipped homework and slid by on natural ability. At the end of the term I ranked seventh in the class. I was reasonably satisfied with myself.

My older brother Genjiro, however, was not. He ridiculed my complacency. "You only managed to be seventh because nobody else in the class is any good," he jeered. "If you don't work harder you'll drop even lower. You seem to be pretty satisfied with yourself, Setschan. Well let me assure you that saying you are fairly good is just another way of saying you are fairly bad. It's time you stopped being lazy and learned to study."

Genjiro was ten years my senior; he stood almost as a teacher to me, and his words had a strong effect on me. Besides, he was a brilliant student and a hard worker. His attitude toward his studies began to fill me also. I decided that I would learn to work as hard as my brother, and he in turn said that he would coach me in my studies. I did work hard. During the entire fall term, as the persimmons reddened and the fragrant scent of pine mushrooms filled the

air, I put aside all desire to play and sat in my room with a charcoal-filled *hibachi* beside me, grinding away at my studies, ignoring the lovely weather out-of-doors. My efforts were rewarded. In December, at the end of the term, I was named an honor student.

Spoiling some of the new pleasure I took in my studies was the revival of the stubborn, dull pain in my left foot. Feeling on the one hand an awakened confidence in my mental resources and on the other the drag of this annoying pain was a complicated emotional condition for a twelve-year-old boy. It is difficult to trace its effect precisely, yet I am inclined to believe that the pain I suffered for so long a period did subtle work in undermining the religious education I had gotten from my parents, for it was at about this time that I first became conscious of religious doubts. I continued faithfully to light the fire at the Shinto altar each evening, and I gave no indication aloud to anyone that I was beginning to have reservations about Shinto. As my mother, with great pleasure, watched me kindle the little fires each evening, she no longer saw a child but a modest and well-mannered youth. She had no inkling of what was going on in my mind. There was, I recognized, great religio-aesthetic value in the elegant simplicity of the Shinto rites. And yet, somehow they seemed hollow. There was nothing behind them, no value underlying and supporting them, and I began to wonder in the privacy of my mind whether they could be worth anything at all. The lack of didactic elements in Shinto, the lack of emotional substance, worried me. Perhaps if somebody had shown me the relation between the rituals and the ancient life-and-death struggles of the forefathers I might have found the value I was looking for in Shinto. Nobody did, and my hunger, a

hunger I did not precisely understand, for something deeper, something more significant in my religion, grew.

Yet I could think of no good reason for stopping my observances, especially the ritual of lighting the sacred fire every evening. There was nothing wrong or evil in Shinto, certainly, and there was always the aesthetic pleasure it offered. And so I went on, the sense that there was something meaningless about my observances nagging at the back of my mind.

Spring came. I was thirteen, and with the blooming of the cherry blossoms the ache in my foot died away. My mind grew more cheerful, and my emotions deepened. Kyoto in the spring has the softest, calmest climate anywhere in Japan. There is virtually no breeze, and the air is balmy and sweet. That year, out of my growing emotional responsiveness, I experienced the city's bells for the first time.

There are hundreds of bells in Kyoto, mostly attached to the Buddhist temples. They are rung twice a day: once just before dawn and again in the evening. They are of all sizes and types, and they are perhaps the most famous in Japan. Some of them like the ones in such temples as Chion-in, Kurodani and Komyoji Zenrinji are extraordinarily large; the one at Chion-in Temple weighs 74 tons; it is the largest in Japan. The bells of Kyoto were cast by master founders, and according to the legend, gold was mixed into the bronze to give purity to the tone. They sound with deep, slow vibrations, and when they shake the tranquil morning air, their echos ever widening like the spreading of a circle in a pool, the people wake from their dreams with a sense of the Infinite around them. Half an hour later, as the Buddhist monks begin their prayers, the red, beamless sun ap-

pears suddenly to jump up from behind the eastern hill. The effect, due to refraction of the light, is quite real. It was during the spring of my fourteenth year that I began for the first time to feel the magic beauty in the bells and to take pleasure in identifying them by their various pitches.

That summer, too, I finally satisfied an old ambition. I joined Butoku-kai, the famous classic Martial Arts Association, to learn the fascinating and difficult art of classical swimming. The Butoku-kai course did not teach the standard strokes like the crawl or the breast stroke. All the strokes are ancient ones and used basically for display. For example, during the feudal age in Japan, it was customary for a lord's soldiers to parade before him occasionally. For their part of the military display, the swimming unit actually swam in a special style with a special stroke, wearing full armor. At the Butoku-kai this same stroke was taught, and the swimmers wore replicas of the ancient helmet and armor. Learning this art may seem like a useless, not to say silly, accomplishment. However, it takes a good deal of athletic skill and conditioning to achieve it; no weak city boy or sissy could manage the course.

To begin, the trainee spends his first summer passing through two preparatory courses. As the residue of a feudal military system, army notions of rank and obedience were insisted upon. Boys in the preparatory classes were required to wear humiliating red caps and were allowed to swim only under orders. I didn't like the humiliation of the red cap, and I didn't like behaving like a dog on a leash. As the reader will remember, I already could swim to some extent. Between this experience and some determined practice, I was able to pass the examination to move into the second of the preparatory classes. Two weeks later I passed

a harder examination and putting off the humiliating red cap, moved into the regular course.

Now I began to learn the traditional swimming strokes, and by the end of the summer I was ready for the long distance swim on Lake Biwa, spending three hours and forty-five minutes in the water. The following year I swam for five hours and fifty-six minutes, and in the third year I managed over six hours—but not without trouble. About three in the afternoon, when I had already been in the water for several hours, some bread was thrown in to us. I was asked to distribute it, and I began to tread water as I collected it. Suddenly my leg cramped painfully. From the boat which accompanied us, the officials urged me to climb out of the water. My old stubbornness took hold of me, and I asked for first aid. The cramp left, only to return again a few minutes later. Again they urged me to get out of the water, and again I refused. This time a judo expert dove in and gave me first aid. The cramp left but some pain persisted. When I finally climbed out in the evening, having swum ten miles in six hours and five minutes, I was exhausted. For the first and only time in my life I ate five bowlfuls of rice along with the rest of my regular meal.

My stubbornness was rewarded, however, for I was nominated an honor student and exempted from the regular tuition fee. More important, the rigid training of the Butoku-kai taught me how to discipline myself, an asset of great value later on when I had to drive myself through books of Hebrew studies; and it helped me bear up under the torture of the *Kenpei-tai*—the Japanese Gestapo—during World War II.

In any case, both physically and mentally I was stronger and more confident, a boy my parents could certainly be

proud of. There was only one flaw in my life: the dimly-heard cry of hunger coming from the bottom of my soul. Thus I stood in the autumn of 1912.

In the early fall, the great Emperor Meiji died. His body was brought back to Kyoto and buried with enormous pomp and splendor. On the day of September 13, the day the body left the imperial palace in Tokyo, General Count Nogi immolated both himself and his wife as tokens of love and respect for the dead emperor. The country as a whole greatly admired his act, and the suggestion implied in it of the great virtue of the man who inspired it. As a well-brought-up Japanese, I at first gave the matter little thought. The action was completely in accord with tradition. But then I began to wonder if I could undergo the ceremonial death with a calm and composed mind, and I could not but feel a flutter of the heart. And this led me to begin asking myself some questions. What was the meaning of life? What was it all about? Should one kill oneself, and if so, in what circumstances? I was in this mental state when I wandered into a secondhand book shop looking for something to read. It was late autumn; the country was still in mourning for Emperor Meiji, and the quiet hills around Kyoto were showing a red heart as if in lamentation.

I had become something of a book hunter. I liked browsing in secondhand stores examining the books, wondering when I would be old enough to read the ones which were too difficult for me. On this day, most of the books I picked up were too difficult. I examined book after book on shelf after shelf, but could find nothing I wanted to read within range of my limited allowance. Then I noticed on the shelf where the larger books like dictionaries were kept, a thick, leather-bound book covered with dust, through which

shone gilt letters. I was curious. Its queer title attracted my mind. I reached up and took it down from its shelf, and through that gesture Providence led me to the first step along a path which would take forty-seven years to traverse, until the mighty hand of the Lord completely grasped me in both mind and body.

The book, of course, was a Japanese translation of the Bible, and why such a thing existed at all deserves a little explanation.

Japan is a country with a relatively good record of religious tolerance. The average Japanese has no set prejudice against religions, and it is this tolerance which has mistakenly led proselytizers to believe that the Japanese can be easily converted. The truth is that the Japanese, while allowing you to follow your own religion, expect that you will let them follow theirs.

Both Confucianism and Buddhism were introduced into Japan in the sixth century, shipped from China along with other parts of the mainland's superior culture. Both religions became influential. Confucianism was not so much a religion as an ethical philosophy, which many Japanese used to supplement the generally ethicless Shinto. Buddhism became the country's second religion. There are, for example, over eight hundred Buddhist temples in Kyoto alone.

For about a thousand years the three—Confucianism, Buddhism and Shinto—existed side by side in relative peace. The arrival of Christianity sounded a discordant note. The first Christians to touch Japanese shores were a handful of Portuguese traders, who drifted there in a junk from China, where they had begun to carry on a trade. The year was 1543. Only six years later the new and energetic Society of Jesus sent Francis Xavier into the country to preach

the Gospel. Other Jesuits followed, and their success in converting the Japanese was considerable. They were helped partly by the fact that the Buddhist priesthood had become lax and corrupt and by the fact that the famous ruler Lord Oda Nobunaga threw his support behind Christianity, largely for political reasons, in the late 1500's. His successor, Lord Hideyoshi, continued the policy of tolerance for Christianity for a number of years. Then, suddenly fearful that the Christians, specifically the Jesuits, were getting too much power, he reversed the policy in 1587. For a while, the ban against Christians was not completely enforced, and the religion continued to exist in underground fashion. In 1612, however, after the death of Hideyoshi, the powers in charge razed all Christian churches. Two years later they expelled all Christians—Japanese-born and otherwise—from the country. Those who remained were summarily executed. Not only was the country closed to Christians, it was closed to all Westerners. The Catholic Portuguese were forbidden to enter the country at all. The only contact with the West was through the Protestant Dutch, and they were confined to a small section of the port city of Nagasaki. They were not even allowed to talk with Japanese, except through officials. Japan was tightly closed against the West, and Christianity remained only as a tiny, hidden seed.

It was reintroduced after the Meiji Restoration, when the country was again thrown open to the West. Nineteenth-century Christians were enormously aggressive missionaries. Hardly had the first treaty with the United States been signed when Protestant and Catholic missionaries swarmed onto the island. Curiously, when the first Roman Catholic church was built in Nagasaki, several thousand Christians

appeared as if by magic. For ten generations the faith had been secretly nurtured in Japanese homes, mainly around Nagasaki.

Yet despite this ardent proselytizing, only a very small percentage of the population has ever been Christian. The peak was reached during the sixteenth century, under Nobunaga, when some two hundred thousand Japanese were Christians. Today, about eight-tenths of one percent of the population is Christian; but since many of them are business and social leaders, Christian influence is stronger than the numbers suggest. It is growing currently at a rapid pace.

The Jewish religion in Japan has been virtually nonexistent. Although a few Jews came to Japan through China in the ninth century, and a few more with the Portuguese traders in the sixteenth, it wasn't until the nineteenth century that there was anything like Jewish religion in the country. After the Meiji Restoration some Jews from the Western nations settled in the country as businessmen and traders. By the time I first came across the Bible there were perhaps one hundred Jewish families in the country, mainly in Nagasaki and Yokohama.

The Bible I found in the secondhand store was a translation made by a Japanese-American missionary group nearly a hundred years before. How it came to be there I do not know; perhaps a back-sliding convert to Christianity sold it. What matters is that I opened it, and standing there in the dusty book shop, began to read.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." What God? I asked myself. What does the combination Lord God (Adonai Elohim) mean in the second chapter? Puzzled but gripped, I read on through the third and fourth

chapters. Chapter 5 confused me again. What was the point of this repetitive listing of the names and ages of strange people? I skipped a few pages, turning at random, and stopped without plan or design at Chapter 12. There my eyes fell upon the words, "Now the Lord said unto Abram: Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

At that moment something great and deep took hold of my empty mind. I knew almost nothing about Israel and her destiny, nothing of the history of the Jewish people. Yet the pages of the book I had read to that point seemed to culminate in this great call. The real story, I felt, began at this point, with the call of the Lord to Abraham. I did not understand it exactly, and I was not sure precisely what was meant by the blessing. Yet the notion of Abraham breaking away from his home to go on a journey from which he could not return, as the chosen instrument of the Lord, inspired me and moved me deeply. Reading the verse as a whole, it seemed to me that I could "feel" without needing to understand exactly what the blessing was and what the word expressed. My Shinto training, which had prepared my mind to understand the spiritual content of a word such as "blessing," helped me to grasp what I was reading. Religion, I saw for the first time, was not merely a matter of blind observance of traditional ritual, but primarily a vital response to the divine voice.

As I stood there in the shop, carried away by my feelings, the shopkeeper approached me. "Say there, young fel-

low, are you interested in that book? I'll make a good price for you. How about twenty sen?"

I had twenty sen, it is true; however, it was all I had, and in those days twenty sen was a fair amount of money—perhaps ten dollars in modern American terms. In any case, as the shop was about to be closed I left a five-sen deposit to hold the book until I could collect enough to pay for it. It took several impatient days to save enough out of my pocket money, but I managed to contain myself. Finally, the money collected, I brought the book home. Evening after evening I did nothing but pore over its pages, slowly working my way through to the end. The experience absorbed me completely. It didn't take me long to get through Genesis. I took it in one breath, so to speak. This first reading of the Old Testament, though not as deep as later ones would be, gave me my basic understanding of the history of Israel and a general sense of its religion. No longer were such curious names as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others strange to me. I came to know them, to be familiar with their personalities, with their ways. And it was Abraham, whose name I was forty-seven years later to take, who impressed me in that first reading as the greatest and most inspiring figure in the book.

It is interesting for me to look back on that first reading of the Bible. Some of the books etched themselves deeply on my mind; others did not. Fortunately for me—and other young readers of the Bible—Genesis stands at the beginning, for it combines with its spirituality an exciting story, which can hold that elusive thing known as a boy's attention. The general tone of the book is Oriental, through and through. There was something familiar about it to my young Japanese mind. For example, courteous and hospitable greeting

to a stranger which the Japanese practice is well-represented in Chapter 18: "My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant. Let little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your heart; after that ye shall pass on; for therefore are ye come to your servant." Such courtesy, with its overtones of noble humiliation, is truly Oriental.

So too is the piety of Abraham, his attitude toward the Lord in his many communications with him, embedded in a similarly Oriental courtesy and hospitality. I loved and revered Genesis, reading it over and over time and time again.

Exodus moved me with its tales of the suffering of the Hebrews in Egypt and the ultimate creation of the nation of Israel. Leviticus reminded me of Shinto, except for its burnt offerings. In the Shinto rites there are no animal or fish offerings, though some of the ancient stories suggest that there may have been burnt offerings in ancient times; modern Shinto has only vegetable offerings, like *minchah*. There is also a distinction made between holy and unclean, equivalent to the Hebraic *kodesh* and *tame*. It is not an exaggeration to say that the religion of Leviticus is a kind of Hebrew Shinto.

I found Numbers and Deuteronomy heavy reading, especially the latter with its teaching of the laws and customs. Yet I recognized even then the importance of these two books, because they tell us of the laws and regulations of the new religious nation.

In my first perusal of the Bible, it was these books—the

Pentateuch—which had the greatest impact on me. Later on, I was attracted to the prophets, especially First Isaiah, a book I came to appreciate only after I was able to read it in Hebrew. The language—graceful, grand, and yet direct—is a brilliant example of classical Hebrew style, in some respects reminiscent of classical Chinese. Isaiah does not attempt to teach holiness, yet he teaches it in a few lines, where Ezekiel would use a hundred for the same effect.

Before I came to understand the prophets, however, I developed a fondness for the Psalms. Some of them touched my heart intensely, and not surprisingly, I later discovered that my favorites—the ones I found most moving—were the ones generally acknowledged as the greatest of them. I took courage from Psalm 23, which begins "The Lord is my shepherd." Psalm 42 ("As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God") touched me with the mysterious sorrow behind it. Psalm 84 ("How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!") reminded me of Shinto, with its pleasant shrines and aesthetic sense. Psalm 51 which opens, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions," although striking me as a remarkable Psalm, worried me with its emphasis on the consciousness of sin.

Another one I loved was Psalm 46, each verse of which is a gem in itself. ("God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.") Late one evening, while I was rehearsing this Psalm over and over, I was led into a state of religious rapture and felt myself really at the City of God. While I was in this mood, my father happened by my private study and noticed that I was still up. He opened

the door and told me I ought to go to bed. The mood broken, I felt something like righteous indignation, although of course I obeyed.

It should be clear, then, that even from my first reading of the Bible I was shaken deep to the bottom of my soul. My life was forever changed. Despite the similarities to Oriental thought and the Shinto religion I found in the Bible, my acceptance of it involved a great revolution, not only in the mind of one Japanese boy, but more especially in the Kotsuji family. For a millennium the Kotsujis were priests and good Shintoists. Now I was changing, and I was seriously troubled in mind by what was happening to me. It made me sad to think I was tending away from the ancient religion, and I lamented that Shinto had no great book to support it. The two religions are similar in that just as Israel and the Jewish religion grew into life together, so did Japan and Shinto. Yet Shinto is a religion basically lacking in documents. There are books of myths and legends, of course, but there are no religious books in the sense of the Bible. This lack of documents is one of Shinto's great weaknesses; it has nothing to offer which has the power to inspire like the Bible. Thus, I breathed in the great religious feeling of the Bible, for which Shinto could not provide a substitute.

Inevitably, the awful day finally came when I could no longer bring myself to perform the ancient duty of lighting the sacred fire at the revered altar. One evening—an evening I will never forget—I simply lost my courage. I could not perform the act. Folding up my knees decently before the dark altar, I was suddenly overwhelmed with tears. In the dark I wept bitterly.

My mother found me thus. "What is the trouble?" she asked tenderly.

I could not answer.

"Do you have a stomach-ache, or a headache?"

I seized on the lie and nodded feebly. I could not respond to her great affection with the truth. I was tormented by the knowledge of the grief my parents would feel when they learned of the family-shaking revolt occurring in my mind. How could I possibly manage to explain what had affected me so? How could I explain Abraham? How could I explain Moses, Pharaoh, Passover? Even the vocabulary would be meaningless to my family.

"Of course, you have a headache," she murmured. "So faithful, to continue your sacred observance even when you are sick." And to an oppressed and unhappy boy who could not manage to say that he was far from faithful, she offered affection and praise. "Don't worry about the fire. I'll do it for you today. God understands that your mind is sincere."

So she made me an herb tea and lit the fire.

On the following evening I was almost exhausted by my inner mental struggle, and I had little difficulty looking feeble and ill. On the third day my excuses were harder to accept. Yet patiently my mother went on lighting the fire, growing increasingly puzzled and unhappy over my defection. Finally, at the end of the week, she could no longer avoid facing the truth, and she reported to my father that I had given up lighting the fire.

My parents had made it a principle not to involve themselves too deeply in the lives of their children. They felt that if the child were constantly faced with approval or disapproval, he would never become an independent being.

It is one thing, however, to take a child's success in stride; it is another to stand by and watch him rebel against the family religion. It is always a most painful experience for parents to feel betrayed by a child whom they love and cherish. My parents' desire to avoid meddling in my life was put to a difficult test.

Of course, they had many consolations in me. I was an honor student, I was an honor member of the classic Martial Arts Association, and I was a generally well-behaved boy. Despite this, noninterference must have been a hard policy. Yet it was the policy they followed. Whatever emotions of grief, anger, disappointment, or sorrow they may have felt, I never knew them.

It was undoubtedly especially hard on my mother. There is a Japanese axiom which says, "The youngest son will not be at the parents' deathbed." In her later years, my mother was sick much of the time; she felt she would die early, and she believed that according to the proverb I would not be with her. Considering all of this, her willingness to let me go out of the ancient religion is all the more remarkable.

Not long after this crisis broke in the family, she called me to her. Her voice was gentle, and I knew she was not angry.

"I'm not pressing you to resume the fire service," she said quietly. "I know the importance to you of sincere feeling, not empty following of ritual. Only for our ancestors' sake, tell me why you have stopped."

"I have found a higher way of worship in the thick book I bought called the Bible," I answered. "It is something like our worship, but I think it is a higher Shinto." Then I burst into tears, unable to find an explanation to relieve her mind.

"Don't worry about it any more," she said quietly. "I know you aren't bad. Just tell me what we should call your higher Shinto."

I calmed my tears. "It's . . . it's the Shinto of Israel."

"Israel?" She looked blank and uncomprehending. "Well," she said finally, "whatever the name and whatever the religion, I have faith in your good nature. You cannot grow up to be a bad man."

She did not understand; but she forgave. My mother was an intelligent, broad-minded woman. She was not highly educated, but her understanding of human life was often brilliant.

My father, in his own way, forgave me too. He never spoke to me directly on the matter, but my mother spoke for him.

"Your father admits that you are doing well these days. He thinks it may be due to the book you are so eagerly reading. He says that if this is so, it must be an excellent book and the religion in it good. And if God is only One, he would have it only that way. You may go ahead with your new faith. Only remember your ancestors, to honor them, and be proud of your great heritage."

I nodded sincerely to show her that I agreed, for I hardly could have expected such gracious and loving treatment at her hands. My parting from the Shinto ritual was a grave loss for both her and my father; yet out of love for me they found the goodness to make it a peaceful one, one which did not rupture our relationship. Their intelligent attitude left me forever with a good feeling about Shinto. Even now I feel that I have not rebelled against the way of the ancestors but have only been carrying to a logical conclusion the ideas implicit in Shinto.

Chapter Four

I HAD BROKEN FROM THE RELIGION OF MY FATHERS AND taken up a new one. The new religion was, in some respects, a kind of religion of my own invention. It was not Christianity, for I had not yet reached the New Testament nor come across the name Jesus Christ. In fact, I didn't understand the words "Old Testament" at the head of the book I was reading and was completely unaware that the Bible is divided into two parts.

Yet if I was not studying Christianity, I was not studying Judaism, either, except in a vague way. My reading to this point had been confined largely to the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, and even here I had inevitably missed a good deal of the meaning. Furthermore, although I assumed that the Israelite nation existed, I had no real idea of what it was. I knew no Jews, no synagogue, nothing of

the Talmud. My whole notion of the Western religion was hazy in the extreme.

I was, however, soon to find out what it was all about. And at the same time I was to begin a long, arduous internal battle with myself—and Christianity. For the next several decades I spent enormously of my spiritual strength straining to swallow portions of Christian doctrine I was never really able to digest. There were many parts of Christianity I was to love: the gentleness of spirit, the serenity, the peace it sometimes offers. But there was also too much doctrine I could not truly accept: Original Sin, Predestination, the Protestant insistence on salvation through faith. I had made my bed; but my long attempts to lie in it were to keep me in spiritual misery for half of my life. It was the Pentateuch —the Torah, the Law of Moses—which had brought me to this religion in the first place; it took me forty-seven years to return to it.

I had, even by the time I had given up the Shinto fire-ritual, come to realize that teaching myself the Bible was an inadequate method. I missed too much, and today it is surprising to me that I had the patience to work my way through the entire first five books without giving up. Undoubtedly it was the inherent religious value of the Pentateuch that held me so long. In any case, I was groping about for some means of furthering my study of the great book when an old friend, Eitaro Ogawa—the boy who had carried me home the time I had injured my foot—told me that there was in Kyoto a place where the Bible was taught. It was, he explained, a Christian Extension Lecture House. The news astonished me, and on a cold Sunday evening

Eitaro Ogawa and I joined an audience of perhaps thirty for a lecture on the Bible.

The lecture house was run by the American Presbyterian Mission, but the lecture that evening was hardly typical of Presbyterianism. The speaker was the Reverend Shimagoro Chira, a soft-spoken, quiet man with a pale face set off by a beautiful long black beard. His attitudes, as I reflected on them later, were more Confucian than Presbyterian. He was not doctrinaire, but serene. I discovered later that he was not an ordained minister, but merely a licensed preacher.

It is a curious thing that my first experience with organized Christianity should be at the hands of so atypical a speaker. Had he pressed on his listeners some of the doctrine—predestination or the divinity of Jesus, say—which a more standard preacher would have concentrated on, I might have walked out of the lecture hall, finished with Christianity forever. But instead of presenting the doctrine which I was never able to accept, he talked in a Confucian spirit of supreme ethics, and I was entranced, utterly absorbed. He spoke mostly of the story of Moses leading the Jews out of the wilderness, a story with which I was familiar, and he used the name of Jesus Christ only in the prayer at the end of the sermon. I was carried along with him.

When the sermon was over, an American missionary jumped into the pulpit. He had a foxy face, and he was showing a broad smile. "My name is Gorbold, now let's all sing a happy song." And he taught us the simple song, which seemed to be his main accomplishment.

I'm so happy,
I'm so happy,
I'm so happy,
Happy all the time.

He sang this refrain three times, and then asked us all to join in. Coming immediately after the meditative sermon, this obvious little song had a blatantly disruptive, almost hysterical effect. Then, when the song was finished, he distributed cards on which we were to write our names and addresses and followed this with an announcement that he would supply a bibliography for Bible study to anyone who wanted it. The whole thing was done so quickly and in such a businesslike fashion that there was hardly a chance to say no.

I was beginning to feel sorry that I had come to this odd gathering, and as I wandered toward the door I was having second thoughts about Christianity. Then, at the door, Shimagoro Chira, the Japanese preacher, approached me, full of grace, and kindly spoke to me for a few minutes. He was glad I had come, he said, and asked me what school I went to and inquired a little bit of my background. I was caught by his magnetic personality, and that was enough to hold me. And so, the next Sunday I returned to the lecture house.

For the three weeks following I took great inspiration from the sermon of this wonderful speaker. He spoke calmly but convincingly, usually basing his sermons on Old Testament stories with which I was already familiar. Then this happy experience ended. Shimagoro Chira was replaced by a younger, tougher preacher. His name was

Senji Hashimoto, and he had been a policeman on Formosa. Changing his course in life, he had studied at Tokyo Shingaksha Theological Seminary and been sent to our chapel as preacher. His old policeman's instincts stuck, apparently, for he was one of the most argumentative men I have ever met. His sermons bristled with theological arguments, and they usually lasted nearly two hours. (With the two-hour sermon, singing, reading of the text, and the informal prayer Protestants like, the service often took three hours; the unfortunate women present were often late getting home to cook the midday meal for their equally unfortunate husbands.) He also liked to shake his fist or pound his hand on the lectern to reinforce his arguments, and the noise he created was frightening. Once he slammed his fist so hard that the huge pulpit Bible fell off onto the floor, breaking its spine. Obviously somewhat ashamed of himself, he stood silent, expecting one of his audience to pick up the book and return it to the pulpit. We were all too awed by the fury of his manner, and none of us dared dash forward to replace the heavy book. In the end he came down rather sheepishly himself and picked it up. The incident was typical of the man.

It seems to me that it was typical of early Christian missionaries, too. Mission societies preferred to send tough, aggressive preachers into Japan, rather than more meditative, religious people. These missionaries were inclined to attract Japanese converts of the same type, and the Christian religion, as it developed in Japan, had a driving, propulsive quality, which was undoubtedly effective in some way. On the other hand, it had a tendency to call forth a stubborn resistance in Japanese who valued the traditional culture. Curiously, after World War II, when the traditional cul-

ture broke up, taking with it the resistance to Christianity of the population at large, Japanese Christianity itself became soft. The old zeal died. Apparently it needed the pressures from outside to keep its driving force alive.

Senji Hashimoto had an enormous influence on my development. He was the man who taught me Bible and Christian doctrine. Though he had many virtues, I regret having come under the hand of so tough and argumentative a man at such a crucial age in my life. I was in middle adolescence. During this period boys are naturally disposed to rebellion. Although there had been always an element of stubbornness in my character, I had been fundamentally gentle and obedient. Experiencing the argumentative character of Senji Hashimoto at this time served to turn my stubbornness into argumentativeness, my adolescent demand for independence into outright revolt.

For all his shortcomings, Senji Hashimoto had his good points. For one thing, he spoke often on the Old Testament, which he knew well, and which was familiar to me and easier for me to grasp. Many Christian ministers do not know the Old Testament very well. Once I met a full-fledged minister who could not find the Book of Nahum for several minutes. But the Reverend Hashimoto knew the Old Testament, and I benefited from his teachings.

Secondly, Hashimoto was always ready to serve his parishioners. He willingly performed all his ministerial duties, including tending the death-bed and washing the body, even when the deceased had died of tuberculosis or typhus. He was also good at making marriages. (At that period in Japan, a man did not court a woman; he, or his family, arranged for a go-between, who presented the man's case and arranged questions of dowry and the like.)

When Senji Hashimoto decided on a match, a wedding march was inevitable. He liked to bring complementary people together. Once, for example, he married a middle-aged midwife to a widower physician. Another time he picked a servant girl for a Nishijin weaver. Nishijin weaving is considered very beautiful, and the weaver presumably had a well-developed aesthetic sense. Unfortunately, the girl was short and dumpy. But when the weaver balked at the match, Senji Hashimoto lectured to him for hours on the meaning of marriage as put forth in the Bible, pointing out that what counted was not beauty or the lack of it, but the fulfillment of the Divine Will, until he finally convinced the poor weaver.

He had, furthermore, a good grasp of the young mind. A bachelor, he made it a practice to invite young men from his congregation to his house after Sunday morning worship. He would cook sukiyaki for them, a great favorite among Japanese, and see to it that everybody had a lively time. Between these tactics and his good services during times of sorrow he continuously added new members to his congregation. Yet as quickly as new people came, he drove the older members out by roaring theological arguments at them during the sermons. In sum, he failed to understand the Japanese. The long schooling Japanese of the day received in exaggerated courtesy and the masking of feelings led him to believe that his fierce sermonizing was being accepted. The reverse was true; his audience was merely covering its resentment of his high-handed approach. They dropped out as soon as they politely could.

Yet I remained, constantly torn between those frightful sermons and the goodness he often displayed out of the pulpit. Two things kept me going. One was the knowledge

that I would lose face with my parents if I gave up my new faith so soon after espousing it. A second was the kindness and decency of a woman named Mrs. Hideko Yamamoto, who worked part-time for the congregation. She lived in an apartment above the meeting hall, and she took a motherly interest in me. She often took me up to her rooms after meetings and found books for me to read, especially pamphlets on the Old Testament, which she knew was my special interest. She cheered me up when I became downcast because of the difficulties of the road I had chosen, and she warned me against falling into the minister's tough-mindedness.

"You're a good Kyoto boy," she said to me. "Don't grow up to be an argumentative man."

So I drove myself on with my studies. There is a Japanese saying which goes, "A hundred readings will make it clear," and that was my method. Working without commentaries, I read the verses over and over. I wondered at the contrasting pessimism and burning patriotism of Jeremiah, and felt an inward cry that I was the same; I found Ezekiel difficult, but full of matter similar to Shinto; I was shaken and elevated by Isaiah. And I came finally to the New Testament, which created mixed feelings in me. The Gospel According to St. Matthew struck me as most familiar because it was the most Hebraistic of the four gospels. But aside from the Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—the New Testament did not interest me much, except as a history of the Jews during the period of the Roman rule of Palestine. I was convinced Jesus intended only to be a reformer, and he died as Jesus, the Jew. I felt that to be a Christ was far from his intention.

Thus I made my studies. By the time I was nearing

fifteen I had covered the entire Bible and felt that I had come to a thorough understanding of God. I was beginning to develop the rudiments of a philosophy, a manner of thinking about God and life. In those two years, from thirteen to fifteen, my life received its profoundest influences. I was changed forever, and my way was fixed.

It shouldn't be thought, however, that I was concerned only with my religious experiences. I was still an adolescent and, like most young people, needed physical activity. I had begun to study fencing. Classic Japanese fencing is nothing like the European type. It was developed by the samurai nobility during the Tokugawa feudal period in the 1600's. For sport, a long, heavy rod of bamboo is used as a substitute for the broad samurai sword. The swordsman attempts to attack the forehead, throat, trunk, and hand. As practiced in my youth, it was intended mainly as a character-builder, rather than for the development of any physical skills. With eight other boys I would line up at seven o'clock in the morning in an unheated hall, where temperatures often went below zero. We fought for an hour on the freezing floor in bare feet. Three of us survived the two-week ordeal and were cited by the schoolmaster. Then one day he brought in an assistant teacher to duel with us as part of our advanced training.

He was a tall man in his twenties, tough-looking and eager to show off. I was merely a boy of sixteen, not yet fully grown. We started dueling, and then suddenly he took a position called *dai johdan-no-kamae*—the "great upper hand" position. It is one of the boldest and riskiest of positions in Japanese dueling. The fencer raises the *shinai*—the bamboo sword—as high over his head as possible, leaving his waist open and unguarded. If his opponent

doesn't react quickly enough to strike at the unguarded midsection, he will be pounded hard on the top of his head. Fencers as a rule wear strong face guards made of steel, but the tops of their heads are covered only with a thin pad. This man had no business presenting such a position to a novice, but there was nothing I could do about that, and, in desperation combined with indignation, I dashed myself forward, aiming for his neck. My sword struck; and at the same moment he backed up a step and slammed his *shinai* onto the top of my head. Ashes filled my skull, and I felt the shock to the soles of my feet. Then I collapsed.

When I came to fifteen minutes later, my comrades were bent over me anxiously, and the fencing master was checking my pulse.

"Are you all right? Are you all right?"

"Yes, I'm all right," I said. I wasn't, however. I had suffered a slight cerebral concussion. Had my opponent been a few pounds heavier, I would have been the beneficiary of a beautiful school funeral, complete with speeches by the schoolmaster and the mayor. Fortunately, the Almighty did not allow me this honor.

Still alive, I walked up to Mount Hiei above the town, and sat down on a rock overlooking both Lake Biwa and the city of Kyoto, and contemplated my fencing future. I understood now how people had been killed in the sport. (A prince was one of them.) Sitting there I remembered a maxim of Confucius: "A wise man does not approach danger," or, to give the English version, "Discretion is the better part of valor." Thinking this, I began to feel dimly that yet hidden out of sight, life held out a purpose for me. In my ear I suddenly heard one of the phrases I had rehearsed so often: "The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade

upon thy right hand." Someday I would hear a clear call from the Lord; until then I must cherish my life with a little more care than I had heretofore. I decided not to continue at the fencing school.

I was now approaching sixteen, and my mentors in Christianity were urging me to join the church formally. The status of the lecture hall had been raised; it was now known as the Juraku Church. Even now I doubt that I was really ready to join. My knowledge of the New Testament was extremely weak. I knew the Gospels fairly well, but the Pauline Epistles, which comprise the real heart of New Testament doctrine, I had not read. Nor was I emotionally any better prepared. My feelings about Christianity were in conflict. There was much that bothered me, much I had not settled in my thinking about doctrine—such as the Divinity of Christ—which were to plague me for years afterwards.

In the hope that I might come to a better understanding of Jesus, I asked my Japanese minister to tell me something about Israel and the modern Jewish nation. He told me that the nation no longer existed, that the Jewish people had been dispersed and had melted into other nations as a stream of water disappears into the desert sand.

The answer surprised me; moreover, it struck me as somehow odd, so I asked Mr. Gorbold, the American missionary, for a better explanation. He gave me roughly the same answer: the Jewish nation was dead. This, he explained, followed the prophecy of Jesus, who had said, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt. 23:38, 39.)

I still found the story hard to believe. Israel, as a nation, was so vivid and alive in my mind I could not accept the fact that it had died.

Eventually, because the Old Testament, which I loved, was one of the two wings of the Scriptures, I was led to Christianity. I was baptized, and I answered the ritual questions. My head was sprinkled three times, and I became a Christian.

As a new, young member of the church, I was rejoiced in by the elders. They put me to teaching Sunday school. As part of this task I had to instruct the younger children in hymn singing; and out of that job, so carelessly taken on, sprung not only my first real understanding of music, but a chain of events which lead ultimately to an irreparable rupture with my family.

Using the church hymnal as a text, I began working out for myself the meanings of the black lines and dots on the pages. I was too shy to ask the organist for help. Struggling painfully by myself, I gradually mastered the notes. Then I turned my mind to the organ, a small portable one the missionaries had shipped from America. This was more difficult; but we now had a new organist, a woman only a few years older than myself, and I had the courage to ask for help from time to time. During the summer vacation I had taken advantage of my free time and worked over the little organ. By fall, I was able to play any of the five hundred simple four-part hymns in the book. When I consider that I learned the rudiments of organ playing virtually by myself, I am astonished, looking back, at my accomplishment. Undoubtedly my childhood experiences with the quaint harmonies of *gagaku* music laid the groundwork for my triumph. (Later on I was organist for my college chapel.)

Now that I could actually perform, my early love for music sprang up again with great force. I took enormous happiness in playing. At seventeen years of age, it seemed to me that to be a musician was far more than a mere means of earning a living; it was an ideal life, and I approached my father with the idea that I should go to music school. He was sympathetic to the idea, as he had been to my early desire to study horticulture. But the old pattern repeated itself; he began asking relatives for advice. Genjiro, my eldest brother, was solidly against it. An uncle, Kichinosuke, a prosperous gold-brocade and damask dealer, whom my father asked next, was even more vehemently against the idea. Both felt that music was an effeminate profession, hardly suitable for a boy from as ancient a family as mine. (It was somewhat the same as an American boy suggesting to his father that he become a ballet dancer.) Unfortunately, my father had no real knowledge of the matter, and quite naturally he refused to let me study music.

I despaired. I had been determined to dedicate my life to music, and I was thrown into a deep misery. Inconsolable, I simply did not know how to deal with my unhappiness. Finally I stopped going to school. For twenty days, just before final examinations, I spent my time wandering aimlessly through the woods and fields of the hills around town, watching the maples come to leaf and the flowers blossom.

Then one day, for no apparent reason I climbed up into the attic of our house, which was used, like American attics, for storage. There I came across a group of ancient ritual swords and daggers which had been handed down from generation to generation of Kotsujis. I picked one up and drew the blade from its scabbard. The steel was un-

stained. It shone with a queer, enticing glitter. I stared at it, transfixed, seeing my own face reflected in miniature on the shining surface of the blade. The notion of suicide passed across my mind. I could turn the knife on myself very simply. Then the power of my emotion forced me to take a deep breath, and the momentary spell was broken. In shock I dropped the dagger to the floor, where it landed point first and stood upright in the wood.

The suicidal impulse of that brief moment awoke my common sense. I ended the days of brooding over my parents' not permitting me to become a musician, and returned to school. Yet for years the regret lingered. It wasn't until I was thirty that I was able to conclude that I was better off in other occupations. In the world of music there is endless strife and struggle, constant bitter competition. I love music still; but perhaps my enjoyment is all the greater for having remained an amateur.

At the time, however, I felt only the tragic loss of my great ambition. I began to entertain feelings of bitterness and resentment toward my family. Twice now I had been prevented from following a career I loved; twice I had been thwarted in a laudable ambition. And gradually, out of despair and anger, I began to form an audacious plan. I would break with my family. I would go to live in Tokyo, where I could be free and unfettered.

To understand what this meant, you must realize what a powerful position the father held in the family in that society. There is nothing comparable in American history. Not even the Victorian father of the last century controlled the life of his family as did the Japanese man of my youth. The children could do very little of importance without his consent, and this situation continued until long after

they were grown up. The father had a strong voice in the occupations his sons chose, and he selected husbands for his daughters. His wife had very little influence on him. She was very much confined to a secondary role.

The idea, therefore, that an adolescent boy should leave home to strike out on his own was unthinkable, especially against his family's wishes. There was, in fact, a Japanese ceremony called *kando* to symbolize the cutting of the relationship between a father and son. It was normally used in cases of a prodigal son, who often would be given a last sum of money and then sent away from the family house forever.

Before I could break away, however, I had to have some place to break away to. Inevitably I sought the advice of my Christian mentors—Dr. Gorbold and the Reverend Senji Hashimoto. Just as inevitably, they suggested that I might be able to get a scholarship to the American Presbyterian College in Tokyo, a school run by a coalition of Dutch Reform and Presbyterian missionaries. I broached the idea to my parents. My mother objected. It made her unhappy to lose her baby from the nest.

But my father was the important one, and his reaction surprised me. Instead of objecting, he simply washed his hands of me. I had been rebellious. I had broken from the ancient religion. Now I wanted to break from the home itself. I could go to Tokyo to study at the foreign college, I could do whatever I wanted. The conditions he made were quite specific. I would be exempt from any interference from family or relatives, in return for which I was not to make any financial or other demands on the family. My father could not legitimately perform the ceremony of *kando* for me because, after all, I was not a prodi-

gal; I was a youth with a very good record in sports and school. The effect, however, was the same. I was, quite simply, cut adrift. My personal integrity and the burden of tradition produced an inevitable conflict in my soul. But I managed to save my honor. The loss of traditional protection was the price I had to pay, and great sorrow was my lot.

That spring, at sixteen, I was graduated from high school. (Primary school ran for six years, middle school for five, high school for three.) A soft rain fell almost silently when, on the evening of April 7, 1916, I went to the Kyoto railroad station with my mother, and boarded the train for Tokyo. As the train melted into the darkness, my mother stood in the station weeping bitterly. On the train I also wept. I would not return to Kyoto for seven years, nor would I see any of my family for that long time.

Chapter Five

AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE STANDS ON A PIECE OF high ground in Tokyo called Shiba-shirogane. Founded in 1869 by Dutch Reform and Presbyterian missionaries, it introduced baseball to the Japanese. It is built around a quadrangle. In my day most of the buildings were wooden, many in the Japanese style, with an admixture of Western-style brick buildings. Some of the buildings of the theological seminary were made in the style of the eighteenth-century Dutch and the chapel was nineteenth-century Gothic. The college emphasized the teaching of English; half the teachers were American. (One of them was the father of America's present ambassador to Japan, Mr. Edwin Reischauer.)

The dormitory to which I was assigned was called Severance Hall, after the man who paid for its construction. A low, wooden Western-style building, something like a

barracks, it was largely cut off from the sun. It was always dark, dank, and gloomy; no sun fell through its windows. To a boy from a city like Kyoto, where natural beauty was everywhere, the contrast could not have been more vivid. The depressing atmosphere was hardly calculated to enhance the feelings of a young boy torn for the first time from his home. Beautiful weather was rare; whenever we had a bright, warm day the students did not attend their classes, but went off together to have a sukyaki party.

As a rule, the students attended classes six hours a day and spent most of the rest of their waking hours studying in their rooms. The classes were, for the most part, taught entirely in English from English texts, which made our work doubly difficult. It took a stubborn and determined student to finish the course.

Here at the college I began a seven-year ordeal, which, however much it taught me about the virtues of patience and fortitude in the face of adversity, scarred me for the rest of my life. I marvel yet that I survived. My financial condition was frightful; I lived in abject poverty. The college supplied my room and my food for nothing. I ate in the main dining hall. It also supplied me with a scholarship which purchased an occasional candy bar. I couldn't buy any clothing; I had to depend on the compassion of my mother, who despite my father's views, occasionally sent me a kimono. I had difficulty getting the books I needed, even at secondhand prices, and of course there was nothing left for entertainment or travel. Occasionally, later on, I was able to earn a few extra sen tutoring American teachers or their families in Japanese, but this income was spotty and meager.

I could have borne the poverty, however, had it not been

for a worse tribulation: the collapse of my health. I began, during the first year of my stay at the college, to feel inexpressibly fatigued. My throat was chronically inflamed, and I seemed to be suffering from an ailment similar to malnutrition. As the second year passed, the condition worsened. Exhausted most of the time, I found work of any kind difficult. I had to drag myself through my studies, and I was forced to cut down heavily on my tutoring jobs, which served to worsen my financial plight.

The crisis came during the summer after my third year in Tokyo. I was staying in Tokyo for the holidays. One summer night I slept at a Buddhist temple in the room of a friend of mine who boarded there. In the morning, we had a cup of breakfast tea together, and then he went off to his duties. Shortly after he left, I felt a constriction in my throat. I coughed to clear it. Still the constricting feeling persisted. I coughed again, and gradually I began to notice that I was having difficulty breathing. Something was clogging my lungs. Then I realized what it was. In sudden fright I dashed to the old granite sink and there I began to vomit blood. Standing by the sink I had coughed again and again, hoping I would avoid being strangled on my own blood. I wondered how long I could live; for it was now clear that I had been suffering from tuberculosis for years.

Then, miraculously, the hemorrhaging stopped. I lay down on my friend's mat, exhausted and weary, my chest and lungs aching painfully. Then, when I felt enough strength to move, I crept back to my own room, collapsed on my bed, and lay there, hardly daring to move lest the bleeding start again. For twenty-four hours I lay still; when

I finally dared to move again I felt as if I had risen from the dead.

I went then to a doctor. He told me solemnly that I must take three years of absolute rest if I were to survive. I despaired. I knew that if I did any such thing I would forfeit forever the opportunity of studying at the college and with it chances to make something of my life. I sat in my room, considering. Finally I made my choice: I would take my chances with the tuberculosis, for what was the point of clinging to a life I did not want?

In the end, the hemorrhaging proved beneficial. I grew somewhat better; but still the tuberculosis lingered, keeping me weak and tired all of the time.

I was still in this condition three years later, as I approached the end of my university schooling, when a kind of a miracle occurred, as if the Almighty had decided to intervene in my case. There was in Tokyo a Dr. Shusaku Fukui, who claimed to have invented anti-tuberculosis shots. Not only could his serum prevent the disease, it could produce a cure in a few months if the disease was caught in the early stages. Naturally, people were skeptical. To erase popular doubt, Dr. Fukui said that he would have another specialist take X-ray photographs of his patients before the treatment and again when he felt the disease was cured. It was public skepticism that kept him from publishing his cure, despite his own confidence in it. He was, he said, a simple general practitioner. Unless he had overwhelming proof of the efficacy of his treatment the medical profession would still his small voice, and he planned to wait until he had ten thousand cures to his credit before he made his findings public.

I heard about his work, and his confidence in it impressed me. I decided to try it. He began by giving me six shots in the back. Almost immediately my appetite picked up. As he continued giving me the shots, my temperature dropped to normal, and stayed there. Within five months I was completely healthy. Incredibly, my tuberculosis was cured.

Even in these days of antibiotics and miracle drugs a cure like this would not be taken for granted. At that time it was astounding. Why did the cure never become popular? Four months after I regained my health Dr. Fukui was crushed under his house by the Great Earthquake of 1923. His wife and his assistant died with him. With him also went his medicine and his records, totally destroyed by the quake and the fire which swept through the area in its wake. Such are the accidents of chance. Had he lived to publish his cure he might have become one of the world's great benefactors. As it was he saved only a few people. I was one of the last.

My six-year fight against tuberculosis, though the worst of my troubles, was hardly the only one, particularly in those first days away from home. During those beginning months in Tokyo I was often struck by a deep remorse over my break with my parents and a powerful desire to be home again in my old, familiar surroundings, a feeling my constant illness had fed. Yet I could not return without great loss of face. In Japan of that time—indeed up until World War II ended—a youth who left home against the desire of his parents could return only if he came heaped with honors and accomplishments. Then his parents would take him back with tears of joy. No homesickness, no regret, was strong enough to override that loss of face.

Then one morning toward the end of my third year, I awakened to hear ringing in my ears the great Psalm of David: "I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me." My fragile life, I then understood, depended not on parents, no matter how compassionate, but on the Lord God of life. Suddenly I felt the strength to sustain myself for my studies, no matter what trials beset me. The thought of retreat to Kyoto was gone.

A second problem I faced in my early days was the absence of the kind of comradeship I had been used to at home. I was a little frightened by the tough country boys who came to the college from odd, remote places, and I was ashamed of my Kyoto accent. The difference between Kyoto and Tokyo speech is somewhat like the difference between the accents of the North and South in the United States. Kyoto is softer and slower; Tokyo is sharper, more precise, and often caustic. The vocabularies are slightly different as well. My Kyoto drawl, because it was soft, set me apart from the majority and made me an easy mark for teasing. I attempted to change my accent to the Tokyo fashion, but I found the task virtually impossible. It is not a matter of accent alone, but of vocalization. I gave it up as a bad job. As the years passed, I was not sorry, for it began to seem to me that the Kyoto vocabulary has deeper significance in its nuances than the Tokyo one.

As studded with misfortune as my college years were, they were not entirely without their joys. Primary among these was my increased experience with music. My voice was good, and I joined a male quartet called the Gregory Band, after Pope Gregorio I, who created the famous Gregorian chant. I sang first tenor, and in those days I could produce the high G. My experience with this group

is one of my fondest memories of college. Those of us who belonged to the band developed strong bonds of loyalty and friendship. We stuck together as much as possible, united by our love of music. Ultimately two of us became professional musicians.

Along with my singing, I developed my organ playing. In time I was asked to be the organist for the college chapel service. The organ, compared to the one I had learned on in the Kyoto Church, was enormous, equipped with two keyboards and a set of foot pedals. It was not pumped electrically, but by hand. One of the janitors, a man whose name I remember as Ohkubo, was required to pump it. Ohkubo was short and bald, and he did his pumping behind a small screen next to the organ, which was supposed to hide him from view of the congregation. The screen, however, was about an inch shorter than Ohkubo, and as he pumped his bald head appeared rhythmically above the screen. During fortissimo passages, when he had to pump very hard, he made a quick little jump on each stroke, so that the louder I played, the larger a section of his bald dome flashed above the top of the screen. The sight, needless to say, was not conducive to the solemnity expected in chapel.

My desire for musical expression must have been insatiable. Organ and voice were not enough. I had a burning desire to learn the violin as well. Fortunately, the conductor of the Gregory Band was the assistant professor of violin at the Academy of Music at Uono. He liked me, and he promised to give me free violin lessons, if I found an instrument. The offer excited me; more important, I knew where there was a violin for sale. In a tiny secondhand shop

near the rear gate of the campus I had seen an old, dusty violin hanging, which was probably very cheap.

"Three and a half yen," the owner told me.

I despaired. Even this infinitesimal price was more than I could afford. Three and a half yen would pay for ten days of rice. Five yen—the tiny pittance I had in my pocket —was reserved for some medicine I was supposed to be taking for my debilitated condition. I walked slowly out of the shop and down the street with heavy steps.

The violin acted on me like a magnet. It pulled me, tugging me back toward the shop. I stopped, turned, and walked a few paces back toward the shop. Then I remembered my medicine, and I turned sadly around again and went on a few paces, when the magnetic lure of the instrument stopped me again. For fifteen minutes I walked up and down the street behind the campus, first tugged this way, then that. Finally I made my decision. I might recover my health without medicine, but I could never learn the violin without an instrument. I returned to the shop, bid the price down to three yen, and took the dusty, battered violin home with joy. Thereafter I studied with my violin teacher friend for four years. Those three yen were an investment of incalculable value. For the rest of my life the violin has been a source of solace and great joy.

Despite my devouring interest in music, my studies were of primary importance. I spent a total of seven years at the university. The first three at the college were devoted basically to languages. In addition to English, I labored over Latin, German, and Greek, which I studied for seven years. I excelled in languages and often stood at the head of my

class. The heavy emphasis on languages, especially Latin and Greek, later enabled me to read the Bible and early theological writings in their original tongues. I became interested in comparing various translations, and it occurred to me that when my command of the language was good enough, I would prepare parallel translations of the Bible in the five languages I knew: English, Japanese, classical Chinese, Greek, and German. It was not until I studied in America that I became aware of the Polyglot Bible, in which Hebrew, Greek, Latin, English, and German versions exist in parallel order.

The last four years of my study in Tokyo were at the seminary school attached to the college. Here I began to face the doctrines which had bothered me from the moment of my first contact with Christianity. My life there was difficult, for a deep intellectual crisis was added to the problems I already had with poverty and poor health. Despite my tribulations, I must be grateful to the seminary. There I laid the foundation for the later studies which were to become the heart of my life. Without the seminary teaching, much that I did later would have been impossible. Not only did it enable me to develop my English into a workable instrument, but it gave me the opportunity to learn both German and Greek. Through Greek I was able to look into the Septuagint and other Greek translations of the scriptures, an experience which widened my views of the Bible immeasurably.

My study of Hebrew alone disappointed me. I was very anxious to start with Hebrew, and during my first year at the seminary I found a course in the ancient tongue. I signed up for it eagerly. But after a few classes I began to have an uneasy feeling that the teacher had no real com-

mand of the language. His grammar did not seem to make sense, and his method of pronunciation filled me with doubt. I resigned from the course.

A few days later, as I was walking through the halls of the seminary building, I heard somebody call my name.

"Mr. Kotsuji."

I stopped and turned. It was Professor Tsuru, the Hebrew teacher. He spoke sharply. "Why did you leave my class? Don't you care for Hebrew?"

I was trapped. "Yes sir, my desire to learn Hebrew is serious."

"Well then, why didn't you keep it up?"

I hesitated, searching for words. "I'm sorry sir, I just wish to be excused from the course." I did not have the courage to say anything further.

Professor Tsuru frowned. "Why do you dislike my class?"

"Because . . . because. . . ." At that moment the president of the college came down the corridor. I appealed to him with my eyes, and he joined the conversation and saved me, both from the situation, and from being forced to learn Hebrew incorrectly. It was, undoubtedly, presumptuous of me to question my professor's competence on so scanty a knowledge of Hebrew as I possessed, yet fortunately my insight was a correct one. None of the students who took that course ever learned to translate correctly a single chapter of the scriptures in Hebrew. It may seem odd that a Christian seminary should teach a biblical language so incompetently; but I have since discovered that Hebrew is often badly taught in seminaries.

Of course, the main interest of the seminary I attended lay in the teaching of the life of Christ. It was taught with

reverence, sympathy, and understanding. I responded sympathetically to the life of Jesus. Despite all of his accusations against the scribes and Pharisees and despite his burning desire to correct the evils of his age, it was as a Jew that he lived and died. He wanted the Jews to abandon their blind observance of law and ritual, which he felt lacked spiritual significance, and substitute genuine faith in God.

Although I responded to Jesus, I could not accept Pauline theology. Paul was a Jew by birth and education and thus a real apostate. His major doctrine of salvation by faith bears a close resemblance to the mystic religion of Mithraism, which was widely practiced in the Greco-Roman world around the time of the birth of Christ. (Mithraism, a sort of reverse Christianity, was based on a myth that described the Son of God—represented by Mithra—as killing the father—represented by a bull. Much of the content of its ritual is startlingly similar to Christianity.)

I reacted similarly to Church History, which was not surprising in a Protestant seminary in that time and place. The history of the Catholic Church was presented as little more than a series of bloody controversies, quarrels among church leaders, and vast persecutions, with the Spanish Inquisition at the summit. It seemed that the teachers were more interested in justifying the Protestant revolt than in exploring the continuity of Christian thought.

As the result of my seminary studies, one fact came home to me clearly: Christianity is not genuine monotheism. All the major branches of the religion—the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and a few Protestant groups—accept the Nicene Creed, which among other things defines Jesus Christ as "very God of very God." I felt that Christianity was contradicting itself, that it could not consider itself to be

a monotheistic religion and at the same time maintain the Godhood of Jesus. Curiously—or perhaps not so curiously—neither the students nor the professors at the seminary liked to debate the contradiction I saw here. They shied away from the whole subject.

I could not ignore the matter. Finally, I went to Professor A. K. Reischauer, who lectured on systematic theology, and who had written a highly reputable book, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism.* I caught him just as the class was leaving his lecture room.

"Professor Reischauer, I want to ask a question which is very important to me," I began seriously.

He noticed the gravity of my demeanor and halted at the door. Smiling his usual sardonic smile, he turned and led me back to one of the long classroom benches, where we sat side by side, a discreet neutral space between us. "Well, young man," he said, "let's have your question."

"May I speak bluntly?"

"Of course."

I gathered my forces. "When you use the word 'Lord' in your prayers, who do you mean?"

"I mean the Lord God," he said.

"But you pray in the name of Lord Jesus. Please, one of these two Lords must be the true one, the other merely a name."

He hesitated. "Well . . ."

I took a deep breath and plunged ahead. "Jesus taught, 'No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other.' Jesus was a Jew, who believed in one all-powerful God, and yet Christianity has this dualism of Father and Son."

Dr. Reischauer was often quick tempered, although in

theological discussion he invariably remained calm. Now, vastly to my surprise, he simply burst into laughter. When at last he pulled himself together he said, "You're right, Mr. Kotsuji. Theoretically Christianity is essentially a dualism. The gap cannot be bridged."

I was startled to hear a Christian teacher of theology so frankly and openly admit to a contradiction in his religion; yet, despite my admiration for his openness, I continued to press the argument.

"You say Christianity is theoretically a dualism; what about practically?"

He sobered a trifle. "Practically, Christianity offers monotheism." He watched my face quietly.

"The contradiction is still there, Dr. Reischauer. Who handed down the practice?"

"Jesus himself."

"Then Paul, who founded Christianity, must be an apostate. Is that not so?"

He smiled sardonically again. "That's up to you."

"But if you rule out the Pauline documents from the New Testament, along with the doctrine in them, you won't have much left."

I was disappointed—not with Dr. Reischauer, but with Christianity itself. This good teacher recognized my disillusionment. "Don't let all this contradiction dishearten you. Christianity is a practical religion in the end. Resist the temptation to split theological hairs and someday you'll make a fine preacher." He leaned forward, bringing his face, now serious, closer to mine. "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," he said quietly.

Despite Professor Reischauer's kindness and concern, the crisis was not resolved. As I came to the end of my studies

at the seminary it began to dawn on me that I had not yet found a career for myself. My health was still poor. It was clear that I was not strong enough to undertake the rigorous training necessary for a musical career. By the same token, it did not seem possible for me to teach. Considering the condition of my lungs and throat, it didn't seem likely that my larynx could stand four or five hours of daily lecturing. That left very little other than a career as a Christian minister open to me; and my worries about the contradictions of the Christian religion seemed to disqualify me. My essential belief that Jesus was a humane Jew or at most a devout Jew was the result of my interpretation of Christian doctrine. Thus, it seemed to me that all roads were closed.

Troubled, I pondered the problem for a long time, and then I decided to discuss my worry with Dr. Ibuka, president of the seminary, a sober and sensible man who had always looked on me with understanding. I went to him and asked him to help me find a life's work.

"Well," he said, considering, "there is a call from a Presbyterian church in Asahikawa, on Hokkaido. It's a hard climate. The temperature goes down to thirty below zero in the winter. But it's healthy."

"I'm not worried about the climate. What bothers me is my lack of conviction in Christianity."

"Don't worry. No minister has perfect conviction. Most are just striving to reach it. Don't press for pure orthodoxy. It will come to you in time. You have been a conscientious student. Take it easy, enjoy the pastor's life and get your health back."

Deadlocked as I was, the advice made good sense. At that moment I decided that I would teach my strong belief in

One God and his loving kindness; what else was necessary for salvation? Once more I set my eyes on the Old Testament, and all the doubts and struggles about the contradictions in the Christian faith seemed to fly away. I decided to accept the call from Hokkaido.

Chapter Six

THE KIND, WISE WORDS OF DR. IBUKA HELPED ME TO COPE with these growing theological doubts to the extent that I was able to undertake Christian work. But kind words could not win for me a battle with the church authorities.

In order to graduate from the seminary it was necessary for the student to write a theological dissertation on a theme selected by the examining committee chosen by the general congress of the church as well as to give a sermon. The theological paper caused me no trouble. It was essentially a matter of scholarship. The sermon, however, was a matter of faith. To escape the contradictions in my Christian belief I wrote a purely theistic sermon that failed to mention Jesus at all.

The sermon caused an inevitable uproar among the university officials. Some understood my doubts, felt sorry for me, and wanted to pass the sermon. Others were simply

angry. But I could not disclaim the sermon; I could not change my mentality. In the end the missionary groups felt that the sermon ought to be passed, but the Presbyterian Examining Committee, which had the final word, refused to accept it. This solved nothing, and finally a compromise was effected. I was to pass conditionally, with the proviso that I study more about Jesus Christ for a year. I felt ashamed to have been turned down in that manner, but this did not prevent me from leaving the university and starting on a career.

I had accepted the call from the church in Hokkaido, but before I went I had a sentimental journey to make. I had left Kyoto as a boy of seventeen. I had not seen my home, my family, and the places of my youth since that rainy spring evening in April, 1916. Now, seven years later, it was time to return.

I went back to Kyoto. My mother wept to see how thin I was; if she had seen me six months earlier, when I was still suffering from tuberculosis, she would have despaired. Tears streaming down her face, she held my *tatami* mat in her hands, examining it. When I had left home it had been a plump three inches thick. Now it was a hard-packed inch. How cold it must have been to sleep on all those years. Why hadn't I written her for a new one? I knew there wasn't any point in trying to explain to her that I had endured that cold for an independence I would not have traded for a new sleeping mat.

I told the story of my seven years; my mother laughed and wept. I saw my brothers again and my uncle, Kiichiro Ishida, for whom I had great respect. They gave me some clothing and new bedding, and then, toward the end of April of 1923, I left Kyoto by train and headed for Hok-

kaido. I was finally and at last a man, an independent citizen of Japan.

Hokkaido is the northernmost of the four main islands of Japan. About 250 miles square, it is the second largest, the most sparsely populated, and by far the coldest part of the country. The climate and topography are similar to those of Canada or the northern United States. In the winter, temperatures go down to thirty or forty below zero. Pine trees cover the hills, deer and bear roam the forests; there is splendid cod, herring and sardine fishing off the coasts.

For hundreds of years Hokkaido has been the home of the Ainu, the original settlers of Japan. They are rather European-looking people with abundant, curly hair and stocky physiques, and about 15,000 of them remain on Hokkaido. Hunters and fishermen, they are looked upon by the Japanese as the remaining Indians are regarded by Americans. Once they were the sole inhabitants of Japan; but as, over two thousand or more years, newcomers streamed in from Korea, China, and other parts of Asia to create the population of modern Japan, the Ainu were driven north to Hokkaido. But even here they found no peace. After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, serious efforts were made to colonize the empty spaces of Hokkaido. An overpopulated nation like Japan could ill afford to let a quarter of its territory lie empty.

Thus, when I reached the island in the spring of 1923 it still bore the scarring marks of recent colonization. It must have resembled—in feeling at least—the frontier towns of the last century in Oregon and lower Canada. Asahikawa, the town to which I was called, had very much of a frontier look. At that time supporting perhaps 20,000 people, its streets were unpaved and the roofs of its rough wooden

buildings were largely thatched. There were hardly any automobiles there and those few belonged to the military contingent stationed in the town. Even if there had been many cars, they would have been unusable half the year; in winter the snow piled up in ten- and twenty-foot drifts. Transportation around the city was by "street car" sledge. The Ainu, who lived around the outskirts of the city, were usually visible in the streets, but even for them there was nothing to do. There were two small movie theaters in town; that was the extent of its amusement center. For pleasure, people walked in the woods, hunted, fished, and ice-skated. It was a simple life and in many ways a good one. The cold was excellent for one's health. (The old-timers like to boast of the year it went to forty below and the petroleum froze in cans.) During my stay in Hokkaido my health improved rapidly, until I was finally, for the first time in many years, a completely well man. I even learned to skate, although I was never very good at it.

My church was a big barnlike building, which seemed more like a warehouse than a church, for it was totally without ornament. It was, however, big enough to hold several hundred people. My job was to fill it. I discovered on my first Sunday that this task wasn't going to be easy. When I came out into the pulpit, I stared down at twenty faces looking lost and lonely in the huge spaces of the building. Afterward I expressed my astonishment to one of the elders.

"The church is thirty years old," I said. "How is it possible to have such a small congregation?"

The elder shrugged. "We made an effort to get all active members to attend your first sermon."

"You have a lot of inactive members, then?"

"Yes," he said. "At least a hundred."

I was surprised. "What happened? How could you possibly lose so many members?"

The elder shrugged again. "They were proselytized in a hurry, before they had much idea of what Christianity was all about. They backslid almost immediately."

The general tedium of life in Asahikawa helped me to solve the problem of my empty church. With nothing to do in their leisure time, the people inevitably took an interest in the new Christian minister who had arrived from Tokyo. I was young and passably good looking; I was educated; I could speak several languages; I played the organ and the violin. All of this impressed the people of Asahikawa, and soon I was something of a minor celebrity in the city. My church began to fill up, especially with young, marriageable girls. A group of them circulated a photograph of me among themselves; it was obvious that most of them were looking for husbands.

However, the dullness of life in Asahikawa had its evils, too. It helped to fill my church; but at the same time it turned the minister into something like a part-time entertainer. I was expected to be available for conferences whenever anyone wanted to drop by, and far worse, I had to make that constant round of visitations which are the bane of Christian missionary life. Ministers in Japan suffer more than others in this respect. Each visit calls for a cup of green tea. The poor minister can't refuse it, for fear of offending his host. By the end of the day I was often nauseated. Generally speaking, the practice of daily visitations is an enormous waste of the minister's time. A man of God ought to have maximum time to devote to study, to meditation, to communing with The Highest. Adding to my difficulties

was the fact that my stock of entertaining material ran short after a few months. When I first arrived in Asahikawa I had much to talk about: my youth, my college experiences, stories about what I had seen and done in the great cities of Kyoto and Tokyo. When my storehouse of stories was empty, however, my parishioners began to grumble. "He told that same old story, again," they complained after I had left.

I was urged especially by the elders to make regular visits to the rich men in town, in the hope of recruiting them for the congregation, and they asked me to preach on the subject of charity. I was supposed to point out to the members that God would reward them for contributing to the church. Another time a church elder wanted me to play my violin in the theater he owned. I refused to follow these orders. I preached that the material blessings, prosperity and pleasure, didn't matter, that they are evanescent, and easily lost. I told them that the true blessing is to feel God's hand on your soul.

I hoped to become a righteous person, so internally beautiful that people would want to emulate my religious example. I wanted to be a religious as great as Samuel, a preacher as powerful as Isaiah, a leader as bold as Abraham. But this was impossible. The elders felt that they could not raise money to support the church unless I carried out the Christian ideal of service, with its constant visitations and its emphasis on social work, charity, and relief of the poor. I grew to hate the myriad details which interfered with my pursuit of religious knowledge.

Feeling as I did, conflict with the church elders was constant. Part of the trouble, it seems to me now, was inevitable in a small congregation. Where only a handful of people

provide the minister's support, each is likely to feel that the minister is in his own employ and that he has a special right to his services. It did not take me long in Asahikawa to begin to feel that perhaps I had made a mistake and that perhaps my natural bent was not right for the Christian church. The thought depressed me. Instead of the optimistic viewpoint a Christian minister needs, I became pensive and questioning.

Yet all was not without hope; my emphasis on pure religion helped me to develop a following among young people and those who were troubled and sorrowing. The young people came to me for help with family troubles, with the pains of love, with those nameless longings of youth, and sometimes even with stories of crime. From this devoted following I took much solace; it was the most meaningful thing in my religious life in Hokkaido.

My public life was not always happy; but fortunately, my private life began to improve radically shortly after I came to the church. During all my years at the university I had avoided the company of girls. I had felt that since my health was very poor, I ought not to risk marriage, or even a close association with a girl to whom I could bring only sorrow. In effect, I lived like a monk, tasting neither the joy nor sorrow of love, and in recompense, I enjoyed the sweetness of a composed mind.

When I came to Hokkaido and my health began to improve, this frozen peace of mind began to thaw, and I decided I wanted to marry.

Despite some changes in the old traditional ways, most Japanese marriages were still arranged in the 1920's. Usually the parents of the young couple settled the matter, working through a go-between, but sometimes, especially when

the parties were adult, a friend or mutual acquaintance might act as middleman.

Dating between the young couple was very much frowned upon as vulgar and unmannerly. Usually the bride and groom were barely acquainted on their wedding day. (Kissing, of course, was unheard of. It was introduced into Japan only after World War II, by the American occupation troops.)

Mineko Iwané was the daughter of a wealthy landowner of Sapporo, the capital city of Hokkaido. It is about seventy-five miles from Asahikawa, a city surrounded by flatlands and low hills. Her father, Seiichi Iwané, had been born into the nobility in the 1850's, before the Meiji Restoration. A good-looking youth, he had sat at the right hand of his feudal lord and would certainly have grown to be an important figure among the samurai.

The Meiji Restoration changed all that. When the feudal system was abolished at one stroke, Iwané found himself without a future at sixteen. Striking out on his own, he took advantage of the efforts of Emperor Meiji to colonize Hokkaido. He was assigned to the first pioneer mission on the island. In time the local government sent him abroad to study stockkeeping and then appointed him head of the meadowlands belonging to the Imperial household. He was just twenty. By virtue of his natural abilities he continued to rise in the world. When I came to Hokkaido he owned a private meadow of one thousand acres and lived almost like a tribal chieftain.

I had decided not to marry any of the girls in Asahikawa, in order not to create jealousies and petty envies. Mineko Iwané was a Presbyterian, and I met her at a party in Sapporo, in June, 1923, and was immediately struck by her

beauty. Graceful, pretty, with exquisite manners, the daughter of a wealthy, aristocratic man, she was obviously able to marry someone better than a poor Christian minister. Yet after the party I could not forget her. Simply looking at her gave me a clean, fresh feeling. The host of the party suggested the marriage, and according to the old tradition I was to allow him to do all the negotiating. Instead, I began to write her. She answered my letters. This correspondence was indeed unconventional. After a few more letters, however, we grew bolder, and I met her in Sapporo occasionally. We did nothing more than walk around the countryside a bit, but even this took great courage, for it simply wasn't done. Our love flowered, and we decided to marry.

Although her father was willing to permit the marriage, a good many of her relatives were against it. Mineko's sisters had married into wealthy families; why should she not do likewise? Why should the last girl be consigned to a poor scholar? As a matter of fact, it was something of a source of wonder to me that I had succeeded with so well-placed a girl. Of course my family heritage was good; there could be no complaints on that score. What really swayed Miné in my favor, however, was my scholarship. Everything about the situation fired me with new ambition to become a great scholar, so that I could justify my wife's faith in me against the opinion of her relatives.

We were married on October 1, 1923. Normally marriage in Japan is a civil matter, conducted at home. Since we were both Christians, we were married by a Christian minister. My parents were not present, for the recent earthquake in Tokyo discouraged them from travel. After a honeymoon in Tokyo, we made a brief visit to my parents'

house in Kyoto, and then we returned to Hokkaido, where we moved into the parish house next to the church. It was a cold, small, dismal place, and I felt sorry for my wife, who had been raised in luxury. She never once complained, and I was very grateful.

Happy as I was in my marriage, however, my religious work continued to trouble me. The pressure on me to search out wealthy parishioners and to preach agreeable sermons continued. Moreover, I was beginning to discover that there were some people in my church who did not want any new members at all. The older people in my church dwelt upon the time when the church was new and belonged to a handful of people who worked together and built it. Of course I could sympathize with their feelings. Yet if they had their way the church could never grow. I had to overrule them as well as I could, and the result was constant friction.

Making matters worse was a general anti-Christian feeling which blossomed after the United States Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1924. The act, which grew out of a feeling in the United States that a flood of post-war immigration would change the country's complexion virtually shut off immigration from Asia. The Japanese people felt insulted, and the entire country became violently angry. They transferred their negative feelings onto Christians, whom they identified with America. Hokkaido did not escape the hysteria, and there was strong anti-American feeling among the members of my church. I tried to calm them, and inevitably my words were interpreted by the local military authorities as favorable to the United States. They sent an inspector to my house to question me about

my activities and beliefs. Fortunately I had my family lineage to fall back on. When the inspector realized that my Shinto ancestors were closely connected with the imperial house, he lost his nerve, made a polite bow, and left.

It was beginning to grow clear to me that I would have to make a change in my life if I were really going to do effective work. Already forming in my mind was the thought that I ought to leave the church; the seed was as yet small and undeveloped, but it was there, and it might have grown to fruition then had not a wind blown events from a different quarter.

One noontime, as I sat in silence with my wife, contemplating the possibilities for my future, my wife said softly, "What are you thinking about so hard?"

I merely shrugged.

"Too much knowledge increases sorrow," she said quietly. "Stop thinking for today. Go to a public bath, relax, and let go of your worries."

Pleased by this sensible advice, I went out. In the public Japanese bath of the day there was a tub in the center of the room, surrounded by a wide stretch of floor space. One never washed in the tub itself. The washing was done on the floor; then one sat in the tub and soaked in very hot water afterward. The heat was excellent for circulation, and it acted as a tonic for the spirits.

This day, happily, only one old man was in the bath, and he began a conversation immediately. Much to my astonishment, he spoke with a Kyoto accent. In a moment we were talking together like old friends.

"I take you for a scholar," he said. "Am I right?"

"Partly," I told him. "I am a minister."

He shook his head. "A man like you ought not to stay in as rude a place as Hokkaido, when he could live among the shrines and temples of Kyoto."

So we talked about Kyoto, and I told him of my ancestors who had been priests at the Kamo Shrine.

He shook his head sadly again. "It's too bad you're a Christian, instead of a Shinto priest. With your lineage you could have been a great success." He paused. "Have you ever been to Gifu?"

I said I had not, although I had heard of the place.

"It's like Kyoto," he said, "only more so. Kyoto has hundreds of shrines and temples, of course, but in Gifu the people of the town really live religious lives. The town is a big center of Buddhism, and the religious spirit is everywhere."

The old man's words sparked my imagination. Living in a town dedicated to religion in such fashion appealed to me greatly, and I said so.

He nodded. "You're young, you can still head in any direction you want."

We conversed a little longer, and then we parted saying, not *sayonara*, but *sainara*, in the Kyoto fashion.

My meeting with the old man was prophetic. A few days later I received a scroll letter written in the traditional brush-stroke style. The penmanship was familiar, evoking old memories; it was in the hand of the Reverend Hashimoto, the argumentative preacher whom I had met in my adolescence. I read the letter, and to my astonishment discovered that there was an opening at a Presbyterian church in Gifu for a minister who knew not only Christianity but Buddhism as well. Gifu was crowded with dignified and scholarly Buddhist priests. The Christian church needed a

man who could command the same respect from the people of the city. My lineage was as ancient as that of any of the Buddhist priests of the city and my scholarly training as good. I seemed like an obvious choice to the Reverend Hashimoto.

I was overwhelmed. I did not think I measured up to the responsibility, and I wondered if I could manage it. At the back of my mind was still the thought that one day I might leave the ministerial profession, a profession for which I was not certain I was suited. Yet many forces prompted me to accept the offer: the problems I was having with the elders in Hokkaido; my desire to take my wife to a warmer, happier land; and above all, the curious meeting with the old man in the bathhouse. After some mental struggle, I decided to accept the call.

Gifu is a middle-sized town in central Japan near the port city of Nagoya. It is only about seventy-five miles from my home town of Kyoto; it is one of the prettiest towns in the country, and today it is something of a tourist attraction. It lies along the Nagara River, a swift, scenic stream above which rises a hill known as Kinkazan. On top of the hill is an ancient castle, and because of the castle and the beauty of the river scenery the river has been called by Westerners the Japanese Rhine. Gifu is noted for two things: paper lanterns, a local manufacturing specialty; and cormorant fishing. The cormorant, a bird which looks something like a duck, is worked by fishermen from a long tether during the nights from May to October. The birds snatch up a little fish called ayu from the river; because of a ring around the bird's neck, it cannot swallow the fish. When the bird has filled its gullet with twenty or so ayu, the fisherman hauls him in, and squeezes out the catch. The birds are

highly trained and seem to take pride in their work. All told, Gifu is a charming and fascinating town. The two years we spent there were happy ones, and the extraordinary beauty of the city contributed not a little to the joy my wife and I felt there. I think that if I could have lived right at the riverside I might never have left.

Moreover I was now earning sixty yen, which at that time was a good salary for a minister and enough to keep us in comfort. Thus, virtually everything about the change was an improvement. My wife was delighted to leave the cold, comfortless atmosphere of Hokkaido, and I found Gifu, filled as it was with highly cultivated Buddhist priests, a great challenge. During the time I was there I studied hard and was especially proper in my behavior in order to compete with the Buddhist priests. We worked hard, and we enjoyed ourselves. We liked to climb the hill up to the castle, and we liked to go and watch the cormorant fishing. In all, the experience in Gifu was deepening and enriching.

My experiences in Hokkaido had taught me something, and I had brought some resolutions with me to Gifu. The first of these was that I would readily and instantly give up my post without regret the moment I felt that there was any dissatisfaction with my preaching. This determination was important, for it freed me for my second resolve. It was that I would preach boldly and honestly, without soft-pedaling the messages of the Bible. This turned out to be an excellent decision, for the reaction was far better than I had expected. My boldness brought me far more respect than I would have received from a lifetime of ordinary ministry. I said to my parishioners right at the beginning, "God is not asking you to become members. You must ask if you

can join. Nobody is required to stay. Anyone who wants can leave this church." They stayed.

The old man had been right about Gifu. It was a thoroughly religious town. There were expensive gold-plated altars in the windows of many of the stores. The religious experience was a common one; religion was everywhere and people were accustomed to turn to it naturally for solutions to their problems. Priests and ministers were constantly visited by people who in other places were seeking the advice of psychiatrists or lawyers. Criminals came for help, star-crossed lovers for advice, the mentally ill for solace. In Gifu I sometimes had to deal with genuine schizophrenics and paranoiacs.

From this point of view life in Gifu was exciting. Religion filled my days. I studied a great deal, and I fell into the habit of meditating with the Most High in one of the densely wooded hills around town, even in the dead of winter when the air was full of snow.

In Gifu, too, my wife and I were blessed with another happiness, the birth of our first child, a beautiful little girl whom we named Aiko. She was never to grow up; but our tragic loss brought by her death in later years was in part compensated for by the pleasure we took in her while she lived.

We had much to enjoy in Gifu; yet, despite the charm of the place and the excitement of its religious atmosphere, there was still a shadow on my happiness. At the back of my mind, the old problem of my belief continued to nag at me. How could I continue to be a Christian minister when I could not accept so many of its major doctrines? I tried to believe, I tried to accept, but much of the Nicene Creed—

the virgin birth, the trinity of the Godhead, the ascension of Christ and much else—was merely words to me. I found the stories of the birth of Christ as recounted in Matthew or Luke beautiful and poetic. Yet I could not take them for more than an emotional fabrication based upon one tiny fact.

A change was inevitable, and while I was in Gifu two things precipitated that change. The first involved my reading. I had become interested in archaeology, and I had studied as many books on the subject as possible. Inevitably a good deal of what I read was about explorations in the Holy Land and of the work archaeologists had done there. And as I read it gradually dawned on me that the true, original religion of the Bible actually existed. Judaism was alive. As this realization grew in me, I was filled with enormous elation. It was astonishing to me that I had never known it before; surely somewhere in my studies I should have found this out. But I hadn't, and now the knowledge moved me deeply.

I was in this state of mind—excited by the discovery of Judaism and perplexed by Christianity—when a small incident occurred which pointed it all up. Early one winter evening I answered a knock at the door, to discover a leper standing there. Gifu is often visited by lepers, who count on the sympathy of its Buddhist population for help.

"I'm sorry to bother you so late, but I'm ashamed to walk around during the day," he said.

"That's all right," I said. "How did you happen to choose my house?"

"Because we have met before."

I stared into his deformed, horrible face. "What is that? Who are you?"

He pronounced his name. "I was with you in college. I was studying English literature when you were at the seminary."

I was startled and speechless. He was trembling with cold. "Come in, come in and get warm," I said.

"No, I don't want to come into the light. I'm too ashamed of my face."

I remembered his gay student days, and I thought of the torment of shame he was undergoing as he stood on my doorstep, and the tears blurred my eyes. I remembered, then, a story about Dr. Kagawa, a great Japanese religious leader, sometimes called the Gandhi of Japan. Once Dr. Kagawa took into his home and bed a beggar who was suffering from trachoma; Dr. Kagawa then contracted the disease, from which he suffered the rest of his life. Should I do likewise? Yet what, after all, had the great man given that beggar!

"What can I do for you?" I asked.

"I need clothing."

"Of course," I answered. "And you could use some money, too."

He nodded silently. I took from my chest the clothing I had bought for my own winter use and gave it to him, along with enough money to keep him going for a few weeks. "Where are you headed?" I asked.

"No destination. No end. No tomorrow, but it's a long, impatient way."

Then I told him I would help him to get into a leprosarium, where he might at least live more peacefully, and sent him on his way.

And it was then I felt ashamed. I was supposed to be a religious leader, and yet what could I do for this poor man?

I could not take him into my bed; I could not take him into my house. I wanted only to send him on his way. For what else could I do? What use was my religion? I searched my soul.

And so the time came when I knew that I must turn away from the religion of the New Testament and turn back to that of the Old. I determined that I would go to America and take up the study of Hebrew.

Chapter Seven

WHEN A YOUNG MAN REACHES THE AGE OF TWENTY-EIGHT he ought to be settled in his work. For me, this was not so. Twenty-eight was my beginning, not an end; for it was with my trip to America that I came alive to the things which were to become so important to me.

My decision to go to America was occasioned by the fact that during the two years in Gifu I preached almost exclusively on the basis of the Old Testament texts. The New Testament interested me less and less, the Old Testament more and more. It was clear to me that no matter how strongly the New Testament had been presented to me by my spiritual overseers my heart lay with the book of Israel. The sensible thing for me to do was to become an Old Testament scholar, with the ultimate hope of teaching it. Such study was impossible in Japan, of course; America was the obvious place for me to go, for many reasons. In

the first place, I knew English better than any other foreign tongue. In the second place, my church connections would help me secure admission to a college. Last but not least, I had retained a childhood yearning for a chance to visit this great country which had appeared so gay and free-spirited in my elementary textbooks.

The decision seemed sensible and easy enough to make. But to finance the trip was another matter altogether. I was naturally not inclined to ask my parents to help. I had come this far without them, and I did not want to do anything to jeopardize my independence. I felt, however, that I could safely ask them for enough money for second class passage for my family. Once in the United States, I assumed that I would be able to survive. They sent me enough money for third class passage. My brothers were able to add a little more; but the real help came from an unexpected source—my wife, Mineko.

One evening as we sat considering the matter she said, "I know of a way to raise some money."

"Oh?" I replied.

"I will sell my kimonos."

The offer meant a great deal more than it may seem. One of the largest portions of a Japanese woman's dowry was her kimonos. A wealthy man such as Miné's father gave her kimonos as presents from time to time, and she added to them herself later on. They were both her most significant property and a symbol of worth and status, comparable in a way to the flat silver a Western woman inherits, or gradually builds up over the years. My wife had several dozen kimonos. Therefore, she was a rich woman; to sell her kimonos for her husband was an act of great sacrifice.

"No," I said, "I can't allow you to give up anything so important to you."

"Did Abraham's wife carry many kimonos with her when she followed her husband from Ur?" she demanded.

"No," I admitted.

"Then I will follow the example of Sarah," she said. "Besides, it would be a waste of money to ship them all to America."

"A woman's regret can linger long, Mineko," I said.

"Please don't think of me as Lot's wife," she answered.

She was clearly serious, and I let the subject drop in order to give her feelings a chance to quiet down. If she did nothing further about it there would be nothing to regret, and I would have the gift of her desire to be helpful to me.

She said nothing further; nor did I. A few days later she came up the street accompanied by a fat, middle-aged man carrying a *furoshiki*—a kind of carrying cloth used for making bundles. I understood, but I did not interfere. She saved only a few of her favorites. The dealer carted away the rest. She never once complained or looked sorrowful. In fact, I was more depressed than she was; it was a sad thing for a Japanese woman to part with her kimonos, each representative of a piece of her parent's affection for her.

Because of her sacrifice and the money my family gave us, the trip to America was now possible. Through officials of my church I was matriculated at Auburn Theological Seminary, then at Auburn, New York. (It has since been moved to quarters on the Union Theological Seminary grounds in New York City.) A generous scholarship was granted me, and in the spring of 1927 I advised the elders of my church that I was leaving. They were surprised—

even shocked—for I was just beginning to get a thorough grip on my work in Gifu. They tried to dissuade me, but my mind was made up. I left, feeling deep inside me that I would never return to the ministry, and on July 23, 1927, my wife, my child, and I boarded the *Tenyo-Maru* at Yokohama, bound for the United States.

We landed at San Francisco; our stay was brief, but it included one important event. We were met by the Reverend Dr. Hata, one of my superiors in the Presbyterian church. I asked him, in conversation, what he knew about the living religion of the Old Testament.

He knew very little about it. Once, he explained, he had been invited to attend a Jewish service. He told me about some of the rituals and customs. "I uncovered my head in order to show respect for the congregation," he smiled. "There was a bit of a flurry. In the synagogue men are supposed to remain covered."

"But that's exactly what they did in the ancient religion," I said excitedly. To me, this simple fact was a stirring piece of news. It was confirmation that the religion of the Old Testament was alive, was immediate, and was practiced in some measure at least as it had been thousands of years before. But Dr. Hata's information was limited. I was still outside the Jewish religion, and I knew of no way to get in.

From San Francisco we took a Panama Line boat to New York City. Everything was new, exciting, and bewildering. We slid into New York harbor at dusk on a September evening. The huge buildings towering above us appeared to be gigantic monsters with golden eyes; to a simple tourist they were living creatures, awesome and mammoth.

From New York we took a sleeper—another new experience—to Auburn and there I began my real education.

Auburn is a typical upstate New York small town. It sits on Lake Owasco, about twenty-five miles from Syracuse. The seminary was run jointly by the Presbyterian and Congregational churches, who picked Auburn for their college when it seemed likely that the town was to become the state capital. The hope did not materialize, and as a result the seminary, sequestered as it was in this sleepy American town, developed a homey, family air, which however charming, was not conducive to great scholarship. A second drawback for a man in my position was that Auburn offered little in the way of part-time work; and of course there was no companionship for my wife, at least at first. I would have been far better off in New York City, where I would have had a wider variety of courses available to me and where I probably could have earned a little extra money translating or doing other scholastic chores. Today I still regret that I did not make the change. If I had made the Jewish friends then that I have made since, my path to Jerusalem might have been thirty years shorter.

But I did not know, and I matriculated for the Bachelor of Divinity Degree at Auburn. We were virtually paupers; and I had to live apart from my family. I moved into Morgan Hall, a dormitory where I could live rent-free, and my wife and child went to live with a professor who had a house on campus. That period was the only time I have ever had to live away from my family. It was lonesome for us all, but it had one virtue: undistracted by family demands, I was able to study long hours without interruption, and I accomplished a great deal.

My studies were mostly confined to Hebrew and the Semitic languages. Because I had already taught myself a good deal of Hebrew grammar, I was allowed to start with

the second year. In order to really grasp the language, I decided to follow the same method I had used to learn my native tongue. Like all Japanese children, I had learned Japanese from my mother, who had spoken it to me day in and day out. By the time I was old enough to speak, I had already developed a sense of the language. Over the years, hundreds of hours had gone into developing that sense, and I decided that in order to develop the same sense of language in Hebrew I would have to be exposed to it for many, many hours. In addition to skill and methodical study, I would have to devote to my studies considerable time. I resolved then to steep myself in Hebrew for six solid hours every day. As I had other subjects to deal with, I had to study my Hebrew from eight at night until two in the morning. Since breakfast at the seminary was served at six sharp each morning, my regimen allowed me only four hours of sleep. I adhered to this rule the entire time I was in the United States, over four years in all. There is no question but that such a method of study is dangerous for one's health, and I warn students against imitating it. But I survived it and inevitably the effort showed up in the quality of my work.

The man whom I worked most closely with and who taught me my Hebrew was the professor of Semitic languages, Dr. William Hinke. He offered courses in Aramaic, Arabic, and Assyrian; and he specialized in Hebrew archaeology.

The school offered no course in the Talmud, which I was eager to study, and I asked Dr. Hinke if he might give me a brief introduction to it.

"Christian students don't need the Talmud. It's a waste of time for you."

"I thought you would say that," I said. "But didn't Jesus study the Talmud?"

"I assume so," he responded. "He was, after all, a Jew."

"Then why shouldn't I imitate Jesus?"

After that he gave me a few private lessons in the Talmud, quoting to me bits and pieces of the great text. It was a great experience for me; for it marked my first real glimpse into the world of Jewish lore. Dr. Hinke's knowledge of Hebrew was profound, and his understanding of the Talmud was sure. I have always suspected that he was born a Jew, although I didn't, at that time, dare to ask him. Because of my timidity, I again perhaps missed a chance to shorten my road to Judaism. I had discovered that there was a synagogue in Auburn, and I occasionally walked past it; but just as I could not bring myself to ask Dr. Hinke if he were a born Jew, I felt that I would have been intruding if I had entered the synagogue. During my entire stay in Auburn I never had the courage to investigate it.

In the end, my stay in Auburn lasted only a year and a half. Auburn's limitations became obvious to me. I had covered all the courses in Semitics and the Old Testament that the seminary offered, and I was anxious to go further. I had heard of Professor William Frederic Badé, a noted Biblical scholar and archaeologist, who had made several expeditions to the Tel-en-Nasbeh diggings near Nablus, north of Jerusalem. A Dutchman, Dr. Badé was one of the most brilliant archaeologists of his day and a formidable linguist besides. He knew all the Semitic languages, the Romance languages, and his grounding in German was so solid that he had lectured at Göttingen University.

Dr. Badé taught at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. Originally organized as a Congrega-

tional theological seminary, it had been turned into an interdenominational school. In practice, it was virtually nondenominational. Its administrators were broad-minded enough to allow Jewish rabbis to speak occasionally, and once a Japanese Buddhist studied there. It seemed like the logical place for me to go; and in the spring of 1929 I made arrangements to transfer to Berkeley.

To travel there was a more difficult matter. Train tickets were beyond our means. Instead, I got a friend in Auburn to give me driving lessons. I practiced for a week, and then bought an old Oldsmobile for forty dollars, loaded my family into it, and headed west.

The car was overpriced, even at forty dollars. If I had known anything at all about automobile mechanics I would have never undertaken the venture. The wheezing Oldsmobile could not go over twenty-nine miles an hour, and it was a strain to do that. In this timeworn vehicle I expected to cross the Great Western Plains and climb the Rocky Mountains.

We had hardly left New York State when the car began to fall to pieces. As we wandered through the Midwest, we left behind us a trail of broken parts, along with small portions of our meager supply of money. Nearly every day a small repair had to be made. By the time we crossed Kansas and Colorado, we had only a few dollars left. As we entered New Mexico we had only sixteen carefully hoarded pennies to our name.

Feeling desperate, we drove down a mountain road when suddenly an Indian stepped out of the shadow and blocking our path, stopped us. Visions of every Western movie I had ever seen rose up in my mind, and I nervously looked at his belt for scalps.

He fumbled in his pocket and drew out a can. "He wants canned food," I whispered to my wife.

"We haven't any," she said. "We have hardly any food left. What can we give him?"

"Opeen, opeen," the Indian said, holding up the can.

We began to laugh. I handed him our can opener. He grinned broadly, nodded his thanks, and stepped out of the way of the car.

We were winding down out of the mountains into Gallup, New Mexico, when the motor made a peculiar noise, one I had never heard before. We lurched down the road, into town. The noise grew louder. As we came into the middle of Gallup the car suddenly gave its death rattle and stopped dead on the main street. Simultaneously the gas ran out. Despair in my heart, I looked around and saw that I had been vouchsafed a miracle. The car had given up the ghost directly in front of a Japanese restaurant. During the several days we spent in Gallup, waiting for money to come from a friend in Berkeley, the townspeople received us cordially and took good care of us. If they still live, my gratitude goes out to Mr. Yoshimi and Mr. Hayashi, of Gallup.

Although I had the largest possible scholarship at Berkeley, we were still extremely poor. I managed to find an attic room for twenty-five dollars a month, and we managed somehow. I was able to do a little tutoring from time to time, especially in Greek, and that helped. Still, an extra five dollars a week would have been a Godsend, we were so close to destitution.

Dr. Badé was extremely generous to me, to the point where envious students began to comment. He permitted me to use his private library, and although he was required

to teach only four hours a week, he used half of them to offer a course in Semitic epigraphy for me alone. He kept warning me that I would ruin my eyesight and my health in general if I did not cut down on my studying, yet undoubtedly it was the long hours I put in on my books that moved his scholarly conscience to help me in any way that he could.

Within a short time at Berkeley I completed my work for the Bachelor of Divinity degree and began working toward my doctorate. I chose to specialize in archaeology, partly because of Dr. Badé's influence and partly because I had become more and more convinced that, contrary to the opinion of the day, archaeology would testify to Biblical truth. Poor Biblical scholars, meaning to be devout, shy away from archaeological fact because they fear it may contradict the Biblical message. My own feeling is that dodging such contradictions will only serve in the end to undermine confidence in theology.

My studies, however, were only part of my Berkeley experience, for something else of considerable importance happened to me while I was there. One day I took my courage in hand and walked into a synagogue. It happened to be Temple Emanuel in San Francisco proper, a large Reform synagogue. I had begun to know a little more about the Jewish religion, and I chose the Reform synagogue in part because I knew that it was fairly difficult for outsiders to participate in an Orthodox service, due to the complicated siddur and tephillah, as well as traditional customs. Partly I chose Temple Emanuel because it was close to a streetcar line convenient for me to ride.

On that first day I walked in and asked one of the ushers if I could buy a prayer book. He looked at me with in-

terest. "Are you a Japanese Jew?" he asked. He was full of curiosity and good will, and I might have told him I was.

I said instead, "No, I'm not. As far as I know there are no Japanese Jews."

"Can you read Hebrew?" he demanded.

"Yes," I said.

"Really? That's interesting. Come in, come in." He took me into an office and, full of curiosity, picked up a prayer book from the shelves. Opening the page of "Shma Yisroel" (Hear, O Israel) he handed it to me and begged me to try it. Of course I read it without faltering.

He was astonished. "Wonderful. Are there no Jews in Japan? How did you develop an interest in Judaism?"

Briefly, I recited my history. He was delighted. He refused to let me pay for the prayer book, and he urged me to attend service any time. From then on I attended the synagogue every Sabbath. At the same time, I seldom attended the Christian church. I was not a Jew, I was a Presbyterian minister, and my obligation should have been to Christianity. Yet I was drifting away from it, and there seemed to be nothing to prevent me.

Dr. Badé was a wise man and right about many things. One of them was the matter of my health. For three years it stood up to the rigors of my studying regimen, but inevitably lack of sleep and overwork caught up with me. In the fall of 1930, as I was making the final push to complete my doctoral dissertation, I caught a cold, which rapidly developed into a stubborn bronchial cough I could not shake off. I dosed myself with cod-liver oil (today it would have been vitamin pills) but I did not slow the pace of my studies.

To make matters worse, Dr. Badé had arranged a job for

me. At the time I was in Berkeley, he was continually receiving case after case of archaeological fragments he had dug out on his recently completed expeditions to Nablus. He gave me the job of unpacking these objects and restoring them. They came packed in straw chaff, and when I worked with them, straw dust was in every breath I took. Furthermore, the solvent used to restore the objects, contained ether. This too I breathed in. Therefore with the lack of sleep, and breathing in ether and dust, I became desperately worried that my tuberculosis would recur; the effect was only to make me work harder. I raced against my health to finish my dissertation. (Among the articles I restored was an incense burner dating back to the time of David. When in 1960 I visited the school as I passed through San Francisco on a lecture tour, I saw the incense burner in the exhibition hall of the school's Palestine Institute.)

The kindness and great human spirit of a man named Tokinobu Mihara saved me from total collapse. He was the thirty-seven-year-old editor of a small Japanese-language paper for the San Francisco area, called *New World*. Despite my scholarship, my job in the Palestine Institute, and my occasional tutoring work, I was constantly pressed for money. Tokinobu Mihara, whom I had met in the San Francisco Japanese colony, befriended me. Watching my health gradually give way under the strain of my studies, he concluded that I would simply ruin myself unless something was done. He was not a well-paid man himself; nonetheless he managed to spare some of his salary for me every week. When I finally finished my work and went to speak to him about returning the money, he shook my heart with his words.

"I don't want the money back. If you want to do something sometime, pass it along to other poor scholars who need it." His kindness was overwhelming. Not only did he give me money, he arranged for me to lecture on the Old Testament in Christian Japanese churches and put himself out in other ways for my benefit. The example of his lofty spirit and great humanity has remained with me always.

In the spring of 1931 I finally finished my work, defended my thesis on "The Origin and Evolution of the Semitic Alphabets," and prepared to end my American experience. For my wife and my family it had been a turbulent, busy time. For one thing, our second daughter, whom we named Mary, had been born in Berkeley in February, 1931. That in itself had been an experience. My wife's English was poor; the doctor asked me to stay with her during childbirth, to act as translator, something never done in Japan. (In fact, in Japan the man does not even come to the hospital but waits at home for the news.)

America itself had been a great experience. Contrary to what we had expected, we found very little anti-Japanese feeling or prejudice. People for the most part were kind and generous to us, and we were given the opportunity to remain here. The University of California offered me a position teaching Japanese language and history. My wife begged me to take it. She wanted to stay in the United States forever. In truth, America is a far better place for women than is Japan. It shocked me, when I first arrived, to see men rise when a woman came into a room, to see them take off their hats when a woman walks into an elevator. The women, for their part, seemed to accept the courtesies as their right, rather than as a gift. Brought up believing that women held a distinctly second place, I was

annoyed by their attitude. Once, when some of us at Auburn had been invited to the president's house to hear a recording of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and I failed to rise when five girls came in late, I was criticized; but I replied, "Which deserved the homage, Beethoven's Fifth or five girl stragglers?" They could not respond. Today, now that I have seen more of America, I am no longer so shocked and angry by the behavior of women. I suppose this means I have become a little Americanized.

The basic difference I feel between the Western world and East is the Western habit of analyzing, verbalizing, abstracting. This kind of thought process makes Western science possible, but it seems to me that there is a loss of some of the beauties of life. The Eastern mind works figuratively. The Oriental is intuitive, subjective. Where the West is prosaic, the East is poetic. Where the West analyzes, the East symbolizes. Western poetry, for example, is inclined to be long, narrative, and explicit. Eastern poetry is very short and indirect, implying much by saying little. It is understandable, then, why the Old Testament, with its strong Oriental mystery and symbolism, fired my Japanese mind while the directness of the New Testament failed to strike a spark.

I left America as a Jew more than a Christian.

Chapter Eight

WE LEFT SAN FRANCISCO IN SEPTEMBER, 1931. IT WAS A PROphetic time to return to Japan and an ominous period in the history of the entire world. We were still on the ocean when the Japanese army marched into Mukden and the Manchurian Incident—the harbinger of fifteen disastrous years of world history—began. I will have more to say on this subject later; for the moment, let me turn to personal matters.

We had been gone from Japan nearly five full years. I had seen my parents and close relatives only twice in fifteen years—once after my marriage, and once more before we left for America. Both of those occasions had been unceremonious. But now I was returning from five years of study in America with a doctor's degree, *magna cum laude*, and fluency in several languages. I had gained the honors necessary to reunite me with my family. When we landed

in Japan I took my wife and children directly to Kyoto. The family welcomed me back into its bosom. They honored me with a banquet given for all our relatives, and they praised my work. It was a source of deep satisfaction to me to have proven myself in their eyes.

Honors, no matter how pleasant, do not feed a family, and jobs were not necessarily easy to find, even for Ph.D's. That fall, Japan was in a turmoil. The depression which struck most of the world during the early thirties crept up on Japan as well. Prices fell, and people were out of work. Propagandists on the left and the right battered the public ear; rioting in the streets grew more common; and a Communist organizer was shot down in the Tokyo station. Japan did not escape the ferment and turmoil which led to revolution in Spain, Nazism in Germany, and Fascism in Italy.

Fortunately, I came home just at a time when the Theological Seminary at the Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo was looking for a man to teach the Old Testament and Semitic languages. It was not precisely what I had hoped for. I preferred teaching ancient history or peripheral studies at a non-Christian university where I might avoid doctrinal problems and be able to teach what I wanted as I wanted. However, because of the incipient depression, Japan's colleges and universities were all trying to economize. One does not get everything one wants in life, and consoling myself with the thought that if Israel could eat the bread of Egypt for four hundred years, I too could wait for the time God may prepare, I decided I had better accept the position at Aoyama Gakuin University, and I moved my family to Tokyo.

The two years I spent at Aoyama Gakuin University in

Tokyo were possibly the most placid years of my adult life. They were a moment of calm between the ardors and tribulations of my Christian years and the storms which were to follow.

Prior to my coming to the university, study of the Old Testament had been pushed off into a corner. As in many Christian seminaries, concentration was on Christ and the New Testament. In my inaugural lecture I took advantage of the opportunity to create an interest in the Old Testament by making my lecture as stimulating and exciting as possible. I was successful, at least in part, and I began to attract students. I was able to bring fresh, sound scholarship to subjects which my poorly trained predecessors had made either dull or too difficult. Unhappily, my success occasioned some resentment among some of the Old Testament scholars in Tokyo, many of whom were simply inadequately prepared.

It was during this period that our third daughter, whom we named Julie, was born, on July 4, 1932. We were now a cozy family of five. I took pleasure in my work. I was doing well enough, and after the tribulations of fifteen years I felt I deserved a respite from trouble. I did not get it.

One midnight, early in October, 1933, our eldest daughter, Aiko, aroused her mother from sleep, complaining of a pain in one of her fingers. She had been perfectly happy during the early evening and had eaten a good supper, so that nobody was especially alarmed by anything so minor as a sore finger. Mineko comforted her and went back to bed. But when I looked in on Aiko at six o'clock in the morning, our usual arising time, she appeared weak and flushed.

"I can't raise my head," she whispered. She could hardly speak. I immediately took her temperature. It was over 104 degrees. In extreme alarm, we called the doctor. He diagnosed the case immediately. Our six-and-a-half-year-old daughter had a type of children's dysentery, cholera infantum, very common in Japan at that time. The disease works extremely rapidly and is usually fatal. Poison created in the intestines moves quickly to the brain, finally paralyzing the heart action. We despaired. All that morning she lay still on her bed, exhausted. Her temperature continued to climb. By the afternoon she showed signs of cyanosis; by nightfall she was unconscious. All that night the doctors gave her camphor injections and managed to keep that small heart beating; but at daybreak it stopped.

In Shinto it is taught that the spirit of a good person goes close to God, and there is solace in that for the bereaved. In Christianity, the consolation of Heaven is less concrete, less easy to grasp, less solacing. Even so, in any religion it is difficult to face a personal loss. The death of Aiko was so real. We felt so alone, and the biggest solace were the people who came in and wept with us. When one is lonesome, those who join in sorrow are most precious. Judaism says that visitor to a sick person takes away a sixty-fourth of his illness. Yet it was many years before my wife and I overcame the sorrow of the death of Aiko. Finally I understood that the loss had given me this virtue: I was able to console people who had suffered a similar tragedy. I think that it is better to smile when you visit someone who is in mourning, for a sad face simply gives the bereaved a heavier load to carry.

Two weeks after the death of Aiko, my wife and I, still suffering from the burden of our loss, were out walking

with our two babies, Mary and Julie, still in the carriage. Suddenly I began to feel odd, as if cold water were running through my body. I was instantly uneasy.

"Mineko, let's go home."

"What's the matter?"

"I feel a little strange," I said, "but it's nothing."

We rushed home. I tried to eat, but couldn't manage it. Feeling suddenly weak, I slumped down heavily on my bed, and, as if on cue, my temperature started to rise. For a week it fluctuated wildly, and then the doctor diagnosed my disease as typhoid fever. I was taken to the quarantine hospital, and a municipal employee went through the house, disinfecting everything. My wife, in an agony of horror and disbelief, could only stand and stare blankly at him as he went through her rooms.

Typhoid fever has one peculiar side effect. It often works havoc with the memory of the victim. One man I knew, recovering from typhoid fever, could not recognize any of his family. Sick as I was, it never occurred to me to worry about a possible memory loss. To pass the time in the quarantine hospital, I rehearsed Hebrew verses hour after hour. I did not do the same with my English, and one day, not long after I had been discharged from the hospital and was resting at home, I picked up an English book and began to read it. Startled, I discovered that I was stumbling over passages I had always read easily. To test myself, I began to read aloud.

"Mineko, my English doesn't sound right to me. Listen, please."

She listened while I read a bit. "No. No, you used to read it better." She paused. "For God's sake, what about your Hebrew?"

I snatched up a Hebrew Bible and began to read. Her features relaxed. "Yes, your pronunciation is as good as ever."

It was a relief that my Hebrew was saved, for my livelihood depended on that. Still, it was a year before my normal facility in English returned. Nonetheless, I was not able to return to my teaching job. Once again poverty stared at us.

Gradually, over a period of three or four months, my health and strength returned. I was almost feeling like my old self when I noticed an intermittent pain in my stomach, or side. I did nothing about it for a week or so, but it persisted, and I was thinking that I would have to visit a doctor, when my wife fell ill with pleurisy. This last in the unbelievable chain of disasters almost ended matters for us. For weeks she lay helpless in bed, while I nursed her. At odd moments I washed, cooked, cared for the two little girls, and picked up whatever part-time work I had the strength for. All the while the pain in my side persisted. It had been diagnosed as chronic appendicitis, and I had been told that I must have my appendix removed immediately. But until my wife was able to care for our children this was of course impossible. For three months my wife lay helpless in bed. Then, as she began to recover, I hired a maid, spent ten days training her in her work, packed a suitcase, and went off to the hospital to have my appendix removed. It had been a year of torture, but it was over.

At times like these, when the foundation of a family is shaken by disaster, many couples move toward divorce, holding each other responsible for their trials. That is the time, however, when the marriage bonds—the oath to love

in sickness as well as health—ought to be remembered. Mineko and I remembered.

One other virtue came from the disasters. During the time that Mineko was sick and I was forced to remain at home, I began to write a Hebrew grammar, the first one ever put into Japanese. I had the time, and it served to distract me a little from the ache of my appendix.

Now, however, I was faced with re-establishing a way of life. Given a choice, I would have wished a lectureship in Semitics, but there was no such thing offered at any Japanese university. A second choice would have been the chance to teach the Old Testament for its own sake, rather than as an adjunct of Christianity. But there seemed little likelihood of that.

I considered: what is a university? Is it the scholars? Or the buildings? Or its institutional status? The answer was obvious: A university is its faculty. I thought of the private scholars of Chinese philosophy and literature, who, during the feudal period, were so respected and renowned. I thought of the poor rabbis of Jewish history. I thought of Jochanan ben Zakkai, the founder of Beth Din at Javneh. Was it for his wealth or his learning that he earned his place in history? Again the answer was obvious; and from that moment on I knew that the solution to my problem was to establish my own school—an Institute of Hebrew Studies, where I could teach as I pleased.

With the help of a few friends, I was able to organize the Institute of Biblical Research. Through the favor of Mr. Auler, a broad-minded and sypathetic man who had charge of the Bible House on the Ginza, Tokyo's main street, I was able to use the eighth floor of the building for my lec-

tures, and on October 1, 1934, I opened the doors for the first time.

I had only a handful of students that first night, but the number increased rapidly, until I had fifty on my rolls. In Japan it is not usually difficult to find students if you have something to offer them. I drew on theological students from the Christian institutions who wanted better teaching in Hebrew studies than that offered at their own colleges. Many students came from Tokyo University, especially religion, history and education majors. In Tokyo there was considerable interest in Hebrew studies, which had been excited by Christianity. Besides, it is the sort of study that Japanese like. I lectured only in the evening, and I concentrated on the basic course, the Hebrew language and the Old Testament. At last I was able to teach that great book without Christian interpretation.

I never expected to get rich from my work at the Institute, and I did not. Each student paid only a small tuition. It was enough, however, to enable me to support my family in comfort, something I had not done very often. In addition to what I earned from my teaching, I earned some money from the sale of my Hebrew grammar, which was published in 1937, and from the publication of my doctoral dissertation, which had been well received in the academic press.

Yet the envy I had stirred up among Old Testament teachers during my stay at Aoyama Gakuin University continued to plague me. Because I had studied the Old Testament from an archaeological point of view, I was able to fill my lectures with details about Biblical life and times which made them more colorful and exciting. Inevitably, I drew students away from the seminaries, and this only

served to worsen matters. No university likes to lose students to a private teacher, and one evening, when I went to open the doors to my classroom after an absence of a few days, I found the doors locked tight.

I went immediately to the janitor. I had been lecturing in the building for three years at that point, and it seemed to me there must be a mistake. I asked the janitor to open the doors, but instead of doing so, he put me off.

I got angry. "Why won't you open up the door for me?"

"I—I—" He looked away timid and apologetic, and I understood that something had happened while I had been gone. "Mr. Auler has authorized me to use this floor, you understand that, don't you?"

"Yes sir—but—"

"But what?" I demanded sharply.

He bowed several times and remained silent.

"Did Mr. Auler order you to lock the doors?"

He nodded, looking unhappy.

"I don't believe it. Mr. Auler isn't that kind of a man. You believe in the Bible don't you? Tell me the truth," I said sternly.

"He—was—pressed by—people."

So the whole story came out. A number of Japanese Christians of various denominations had apparently brought pressure to bear on Auler to close the building to me. When I finally persuaded the janitor to open I saw that they had gone even farther. All of my Bibles, papers, letterheads, and other pieces of small equipment had been thrown into a broom closet, where they lay in a heap in the dust. With tears streaming down his face, and trembling in fear of the sacrilege he feared he had committed, the janitor helped me to rescue my Bibles, and wipe the

dust off them. I got my possessions back; but the right to use the Bible House building was permanently withdrawn, and I ended up lecturing in whatever quarters I could find.

On a larger scale, however, events were working out to make my problems academic. By 1938 Hitler was in Austria. Japan was at war with China and had cemented its alliance with Germany and Italy, creating the so-called Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis. In Japan, the average citizen—and I was an average citizen—knew very little of what was actually happening in the world. The military clique had taken a firm grip on the country. The newspapers were rigidly censored; we were told what the military wanted us to know and nothing more. Things had reached beyond mere politics in Japan by February, 1936, when a group from the militarist clique had raided the houses of a half-dozen top government officials and assassinated them. But because of the censorship, we had only a very poor notion of the flame spreading across the world. For example, I understood the war between China and Japan to have been instigated by the British, supposedly to impoverish and weaken both countries so that England could maintain its trade rights in the East.

The matter of most importance to me was the Nazi persecution of the Jews. I knew nothing about the details until much later, but the little I knew began to touch my life before that time.

What happened was this. With the signing of the German-Japanese pact, and the establishment of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis, the Nazis put immediate pressure on Japan to adopt the German policy of Jewish extermination. As far as Japan proper was concerned, the policy was relatively unimportant. There simply weren't enough Jews

in Japan to constitute a "problem." But it was different in Manchuria and China.

To be very brief, Manchuria, although naturally and historically a part of China, has for the past seventy years or so been pulled back and forth between Russia and Japan. Each country has felt it belonged in its sphere of influence, and each has managed to gain the upper hand at alternate times. Russia, furthermore, was notoriously vicious toward the Jews, millions of whom lived among its people. During most of the past two hundred years, Russian czars periodically carried out pogroms against the Jews, slaughtering them by the tens of thousands. Pressure on the Jews to leave Russia was unremitting.

During the early part of this century, to encourage Russian colonization of Manchuria, Czar Alexander permitted Russian Jews to settle there, principally in the rough new city of Harbin, located in the central part of the country. A few other Russian-Jewish soldiers remained after the Russo-Japanese war. Other Jews fled into Manchuria, especially Harbin, during the Russian revolution of 1917, taking advantage of the upheaval to flee the country. By the time the Japanese came to Manchuria in 1931, there were 300,000 Jews in the country. About 13,000 of them lived in the city of Harbin alone. They owned businesses there, including banks and newspapers, and lived a relatively happy and prosperous life.

When Japan came to power in Manchuria, it was faced with governing a country full of minority groups—White Russians, Jews, Koreans, Chinese (who constituted the bulk of the population), and Japanese. Japan wanted most of all to create an orderly, well-organized society in Manchuria. Occupied with a war in China, it wanted no upsets in Man-

churia, or Manchoukuo, as the country had been rechristened. Japan was especially eager to remain on cordial terms with the Jews in Manchuria, for this and for many other reasons. Japan had never been an anti-Semitic nation, and it had no intention of becoming one. Yet Japan was in alliance with Germany, and Germany wanted pressure brought on the Jews. Japan, thus, was caught in something of a quandary; and it is to its credit that on the whole, it resisted Nazi pressure and maintained throughout the war honorable, if perhaps slightly strained, relations with the Jews under its rule.

In 1938, the Nazis sent some S.S. men to Japan to make Nazi propaganda, specifically anti-Jewish, in the country. One of their devices was an organization called *Seikei Gakkai,* or Political-Economic Association. One day its president got in touch with me. Japan was faced with a growing "Jewish problem" he explained. I was undoubtedly the man most expert in Jewish matters in Japan. Would I be willing to help the group in its research work?

There was no reason for me to refuse. I signed up and began to attend their meetings. I also made translations of a few articles on international affairs from English for them. In a short while, however, a few things became obvious about the organization.

One was that although the association never seemed to put any money in the bank, it was always able to draw out as much as it needed. A second was that the organization was violently anti-Semitic. It published a journal called *Researches into the Secret World Power,* which was essentially a vehicle for translations of anti-Jewish pamphlets. They were full of the ancient notion that there was a con-

spiracy of Jews to take over the world, stated in the usual hysterical accusations. Occasionally a Dr. Pausch, who belonged to the S.S., spoke on the Jewish conspiracy.

I withdrew; but the organization continued, to startling effect. Japanese officials first laughed at it, but the Germans began producing cleverly forged documents supporting their contentions that the Jews were indeed conspiring to rule the world, and some of the officials grew convinced of the justice of the charge.

The whole matter of Japanese attitudes toward the Jews, then, was exceedingly fluid. It was in this fluid state in January, 1939, when, vastly to my surprise, I received an invitation from the president of the South Manchuria Railway Company to work for him in the capacity of an expert in Jewish affairs.

The South Manchuria Railway is far more than a simple business. Like the British East India Company of a century ago, it was virtually a second government in the country. The South Manchuria Railway owned coal mines, foundries, and shipping companies; and it ran its own hospitals, medical colleges, and technical schools. It was the single biggest lump of capital in the entire Japanese economy, and it acted like a small welfare state toward the thousands of people who were employed by it. Imagine that the ten largest corporations in America were gathered under a single management, and you will have some idea of its importance to Manchuria, and indeed to Japan.

The head of the South Manchuria Railway was Yosuke Matsuoka, later one of the Class B War Criminals. Like any other official in Manchuria, he had to deal with Jews and Jewish matters daily, and he needed somebody to advise

him. He had apparently heard of me through my books, especially my Hebrew grammar, and he urged me to come to work for him.

I flatly refused. I was happy with the Institute of Biblical Research. I was doing what I wanted to do, and I was content to continue. Furthermore, there is a feeling among Japanese scholars and people of the upper classes that it is degrading to go into the world of commerce. I did not like the idea of selling my scholarship for money. But Matsuoka did not give up easily. He raised the first offer of three hundred yen to three hundred and fifty, and when I refused that, he raised it again. I still refused, and this game continued for several months.

Yet my refusals began to trouble me. It seemed certain to me that Nazi anti-Semitism would eventually reach the East, and that the Jews in Manchuria would suffer for it. I thought: is all my learning merely a matter of cold knowledge, or is it for love of the people of the Bible? If I can do something to help the Jews, shouldn't I do it?

By this time Matsuoka had raised his price to five hundred yen, a salary so enormous that the personnel department of the South Manchuria Railway refused to authorize it, telling Matsuoka that he must offer it on his own authority. (Five hundred yen was a salary a top corporation executive might make.) I discussed this with my wife, and it was decided that I would accept.

Chapter Nine

DAIREN—NOW CALLED TALIEN—IS A TOWN OF ABOUT A HALF million people on the Liaotung Peninsula just north of Port Arthur on the Yellow Sea. The southern terminus of the South Manchuria Railway, it came under Japanese control after the Russo-Japanese war in 1904. The home office of the South Manchuria Railway is there. It is the most northern year-round port on the Chinese coast, and it is connected by rail with the Chinese Eastern Railroad, which in turn branches off from the Trans-Siberian Railway. It is connected, thus, with every important city in Russia and Northern China, and has therefore been a city accustomed to receiving immigrants and refugees from the West. Harbin, to the north, where the Chinese Eastern and South Manchuria Railways joined, was the center of Russian—and Russian-Jewish—groups in Manchuria. Dairen, how-

ever, had a Russian-Jewish colony of considerable consequence.

In general, Japanese policy toward the Jews in Manchuria during the years just before the war was colored by the feeling that friendly relations with the United States, France, England, and other Western nations might be disrupted if Japan were harsh toward the Jews. There was also the hope that Jews might be persuaded to invest capital in Japanese enterprises. Despite Nazi pressure and propaganda, there were very good reasons for Japanese kindness toward the Jews, and since the Japanese had never been anti-Semitic there was no emotional reason for persecuting them. Indeed, many Japanese officials, especially on the lower levels, were almost totally ignorant of the existence of the Jews as a special group until they became a refugee problem. To them, Russians were Russians, Germans were Germans.

Yet despite all of this, as early as 1938 the Nazi propaganda machine had infected numbers of Japanese with anti-Semitism. This was especially true among the military, who admired German methods. Typical of those practicing this attitude was Ohshima, a former high army officer who had been ambassador to Germany before the war. Although Ohshima must certainly have known of the Nazi persecution of the Jews, he cooperated with the Germans in keeping the story from being made public in Japan. In any case, Japanese policy toward the Jews was sometimes contradictory, although in the main it held to one of tolerance—in Manchuria, at least.

I arrived in Dairen on October 14, 1939, tense with expectation. Just over forty years of age, I had spent all of my life in the cloister, either as student or teacher. In practical

affairs, I was an innocent. During my stay in Manchuria, I was to come down out of my ivory tower and learn the hard facts of life. Not only was I connected with a powerful institution which viewed everything pragmatically, but life in Dairen itself had the quality of that on a military outpost. There was not much cultural entertainment. Consequently the people drank constantly, and the men spent much money on women. The sight of a man destroying himself through high living was not unusual.

At no other time in my life was I so materially comfortable as during our stay in Manchuria. The company supplied us with a first-class house, snug and well-heated. My salary was high, and I was allowed to travel first-class at company expense sixty days a year. The South Manchuria Railway trains had four classes. The lowest class was for the coolie.

Yosuke Matsuoka, the president of the South Manchuria Railway and the man to whom I was directly responsible, was a badly understood man. Short and stocky, he wore a heavy mustache and projected an attitude of self-importance, but he nonetheless was basically a good-hearted man. It is true that he played a major role in persuading Japan to sign the anti-Communist agreement with Germany. Nonetheless, his attitude toward the Jewish people was correct and even warm to some extent. He had spent part of his boyhood in America, had studied at the University of Oregon, and was friendly to the United States. He fervently opposed war with America—partly because he didn't think that Japan could win—until the very last.

When I arrived in Dairen I reported to him immediately. I was of course curious about him, and I was especially curi-

ous about the South Manchuria Railway's policy toward the Jews. Matsuoka was the first man of real national importance I had ever had a chance to know well, and as we sat in his office I took advantage of the opportunity to understand something of what was going on in the minds of Japan's leaders. How, for example, did Matsuoka justify Japan's treaties with both Communist Russia and Nazi Germany, two nations with contradictory outlooks?

Matsuoka was amused by what must have struck him as a naïve question, and he laughed. "One is the bear, one the leopard. When you train a tame bear, you feed him only vegetables from babyhood, and he will never bite. However, once you begin giving him meat, he will start biting."

"And Russia has had a taste of meat?"

He nodded. "Russia is no longer a tame bear. Sooner or later it may bite Japan, irrespective of our neutrality treaty."

"Then why bother with a treaty?"

He shrugged. "Mainly as a gesture to indicate that we don't want war, that we're not a threat to Russia."

"And the leopard?"

"Germany is the leopard. He'll bite, no matter what you feed him. It's in the nature of the beast. The bite perhaps we needn't fear. He's too far away. But he'll try to use us, just as we'll try to use him against Russia. Thus another good reason for the treaty with Stalin. We want to placate him, if possible."

He looked thoughtful. "Personally, I don't like the leopard very much, but I've got to get along with him. I was raised in America, I went to school there. I like America very much. If it will only keep silent until the China Incident is closed, Japan can have a fine future. But if America

chooses to interfere—" He looked somber and grave, and I understood that he had touched upon what he considered to be the heart of Japan's international problems.

I changed the subject. "I think I ought to know what your point of view toward the Jews is, in view of your support of the treaty with Germany."

He nodded. "It's very simple. I support the anti-Communist agreement, not anti-Semitism. These are quite different things, and Japan must be clear-minded on this point."

Matsuoka was not dissembling. He was eager to win the Jewish people over to the Japanese viewpoint. My task was to advise him, to tell him what the Jews wanted, and how best to obtain their good opinion.

I was fortunate in being able to establish my own position with the Jews shortly after my arrival in Manchuria. There had been in 1937 and again in 1938 meetings between Japanese and Jewish leaders in Manchuria. An important figure in these meetings, and indeed in all Jewish-Japanese relations in the Far East, was Colonel Senko Yasué, an army specialist on Jewish affairs. Yasué, about whom I will have more to say in a moment, had helped to arrange the conferences in order to smooth out differences between the two peoples, and when the third conference was scheduled for late December, 1939, I was asked to speak, as a representative of the South Manchuria Railway. The conference—called the Third Far Eastern Jewish Conference—convened on December 23. There were various speakers, including Dr. Abraham Kaufman, perhaps the most influential Jewish leader in Manchuria, who later became a friend of mine. When it was my turn, I gave only a short speech, entirely in Hebrew. The Jews in the audience were astonished, and they gave me a standing ovation. The news that

there was a Japanese Hebrew scholar who could talk to them in their own language spread rapidly among the Jewish colonies of the Far East. Indeed, the incident was even reported in a Hebrew paper in Jerusalem.

With that introduction, I was able to make many friends among Manchuria's Jews, and my work was that much easier. I had, of course, no authority of my own. I worked for the South Manchuria Railway in an advisory capacity only. Nonetheless, because of my personal relations with Matsuoka, I was able over the months to make myself useful to the Jews in a number of ways.

The man who helped me most in this respect was Lieutenant Yoshinori Shirahama, one of the best of men. He was a member of the military police mission, had been at the Far Eastern Conference, and was altogether a kind man. I came to know him and his family well and had lunch with him often. On one occasion he helped me save a Jew who was about to be arrested for smuggling. In another case I told him the story of a Jew who was being unfairly taxed. Again, he helped. A third time he helped me bring a Jew who needed an operation into a hospital.

But even with the South Manchuria Railway behind me and the cooperation of decent people like Yoshinori Shirahama, I was at constant odds with the military.

The military mission was headed by Colonel Yasué. He was considered by Jews, familiar with his work in Manchuria, a real benefactor, and it is perfectly true that he helped the Jews in many ways. Yet he and I had trouble from the start for I was fully aware of his not-too-innocent past. Despite his protests of friendship for the Jews, in his earlier days he had published a book called *Inside the World Revolution*, which was essentially a translation of the notor-

ious anti-Semitic work, *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion.* Even as late as 1936 he had published statements accusing the Jews of wanting to take over the world. Most of this writing had been published under the pseudonym "Hokoshi." I knew the true facts because once in Tokyo he had proudly presented me with a copy of his book.

As a result of this activity, he had in military circles come to be considered an expert in Jewish matters. This explains why he was stationed in Dairen. The military did not care what his personal feelings were. They had established the policy of getting along with the Jews in Manchuria, and they expected Yasué to carry out that policy. It hardly mattered to them—or to Yasué for that matter—whether or not he was a true friend of the Jews; and the fact that so many Jews familiar with the situation considered him sincere in his dealing with them merely indicates how well he carried that policy out.

Unhappily, Yasué was well aware that I knew of his previous writing. If his earlier views had become public his position among Manchurian Jews would have been impossible. To allay his fears, I pretended to have forgotten his book completely, but he remained almost neurotically suspicious of me. However, we might still have managed to work together, if it had not been for malice on the part of an unfavored South Manchuria Railway official named Oyama.

Oyama had been educated at Nicholai Seminary, a Russian and Greek Orthodox school in Tokyo. This irregular education worried his South Manchuria Railway superiors, and although they found his excellent Russian useful, they

failed to promote him. When I arrived in Dairen as a high-ranking official, he became jealous of me, and began to play upon Yasué's neurotic attitude toward me.

Finally, Oyama came to me and said, "Mr. Kotsuji, the Chief of the Military Mission, Colonel Yasué, wants to see you."

I was instantly suspicious. "What for?"

He shrugged. "How would I know?"

There was something portentous about his manner that became understandable when I appeared at the Military Mission. To my surprise, instead of taking me to a conference room as usual, Yasué guided me into one of the examination rooms. I realized that I was in trouble, but I remained calm. "Colonel, if you want to see me, there is a proper routine for asking me. You need not use Oyama. I work for the president of the South Manchuria Railway, not for him." Yasué's face twitched. "Please remember that I have the authority to arrest you—or even have you killed by the police under me."

"Perhaps you could explain how I have offended you?"

"Don't argue," he shouted. "Now listen to me. From now on you have no direct contact whatever with any Jew."

"I don't understand," I said blandly. "Do you wish to have the monopoly on my friendship?"

He slammed the floor with the end of his saber. "Didn't I make myself clear? Don't you realize what I can do to you?"

I felt certain then that he was about to arrest me; yet at the same moment I suddenly understood how to handle him. "Of course you have the power to arrest me, and if you decide to do so you will. I want to point out, however, that I am not merely a simple citizen here. All the Jews in

the Far East know about me and they like me. If you do something rash, word will get out instantly that the Japanese military are being ruthless toward friends of the Jews." I paused. Then I added quietly, "I've always spoken highly of you. Somebody has slandered me, isn't that so?"

His manner suddenly softened. "I may have spoken out of turn. Don't be offended."

I met his gaze and stared into his eyes. "I mean to be offended so long as a high ranking officer like you can be influenced by so mean a man as Oyama."

That ended the matter, and smiling in friendly fashion, he let me go. Despite his bluster, Colonel Yasué left a good record of protecting the Jews in Manchuria during the war. It is too bad that even he was not free of the tendency toward stratagem and deceit which characterized the entire Japanese military system of the period. I learned later that he died in a Siberian prison camp a few years after the war; some say he was shot by a cunning stratagem.

On the credit side, he did attempt to help the Jewish refugees in Shanghai. Shanghai's Jewish colony dates back to 1843, when the city was first opened to the West. Under the influence of the Sephardic Jews, and especially the fabulous Sassoon family, the Shanghai Jews developed a prosperous and highly cultivated colony which was perhaps, by the 1930's, seven thousand strong. Shanghai was an international city, an easy place to enter. Between August of 1938 and August of 1939, some thirty thousand Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany poured into Shanghai. Despite its efforts, the Jewish colony could not take care of them all. Thousands of them had to be established in the Hongkew area of Shanghai, which was largely rubble because of the fighting between Japanese and Chinese

troops. Here, in barracks and in camps, some eleven thousand Jews lived hard lives.

In May, 1940, a group from Manchuria went down to Shanghai to inspect conditions there. It included Colonel Yasué, a Navy representative, Captain K. Inuzuka, the Consul Ishiguro from Japan, and myself, representing the South Manchuria Railway.

As a whole, the Shanghai Jews were relatively well taken care of, compared to what they had suffered elsewhere in the world. There were complaints, of course, for there was no variety in the diet and in some cases people were hungry. Young people, especially, found the food inadequate. When our party walked through the community kitchen in one of the camps, which was guarded by a high wire fence, young men and women outside stood staring hungrily at the huge pots bubbling on the stoves. I asked one of the girls how old she was.

"Sixteen," she said.

"How are conditions here?"

"I'm hungry," she said, and glanced again at the cooking pots. "I want to get out of here, to find work as a housemaid. Please, take me into your house. Please help me."

I was deeply touched by this hungry girl. When we left I told a high Japanese official about her, and he was able to find a place for her. To my regret, we left to return to Dairen before she was released, and I lost track of her. Perhaps if she reads this, she will have the courage to write to me some day.

The most enjoyable aspect of my life in Dairen, and the most valuable to me, was the many new friends I made. Later, these friendships were to become of life and death importance to me; but during those South Manchuria Rail-

way months it was a happy matter of getting to know a large number of the Jewish people. There was a restaurant in Dairen called the Victoria, which was run by a Russian Jew. Here both Jews and higher South Manchuria Railway officers usually ate lunch. Nearly every man in the restaurant had a story to tell. There was, for example, the old man everyone called "The General." Since he was poor and aging, I assumed the name was a rather bad joke, until I discovered that he had once indeed been a general in the czar's army.

Another man whom I met in the Victoria was a Jew named Becker, who had fought at Mukden with the Russian army which had been badly mauled by the Japanese army in 1905. He didn't mind talking about it all.

"Most of the Jews," he told me, "had no stomach for a war against the Japanese. We shot in the air most of the time. It was either the front lines or the pogroms at home, and consequently our morale was very low. But then the morale of the whole army trapped in Mukden was low. On the last day of battle a strong, sandy wind blew into our faces. We couldn't keep our eyes open. And then there arose on the distant horizon white figures like ghosts. We couldn't explain it. It was God's will that Russia be defeated."

Japanese soldiers who had fought in this battle had also referred to these white ghosts, and they were presumably real. What made them so frightening to the Russian Jews in the army was that the word for "the ghost of darkness" in Hebrew is Tohu—very similar in pronunciation to Admiral Tojo's name—and therefore they refused to admit that the curious figures might have been sand dust stirred up by the wind.

Perhaps most important to my understanding of Jewish life were the stories I began to hear everywhere of Nazi persecution. I made a point of asking people what conditions had been like under the Nazis: they were glad to tell me. There was, for example, Karl Rosenzweig, who had been director of the Coal Division of the Danube Navigation Company. A young man in his office had served him faithfully as secretary. One morning, shortly after the Nazis marched into Vienna, Karl Rosenzweig walked into his office to find the young man sitting at his desk.

"I'm director now," the man said boldly. He had been working with the Nazis all along. Ultimately Rosenzweig was forced to flee to Manchuria. He was living with an uncle in the suburbs of Dairen, and we became friends. The war finally separated us, and he seemed lost to me forever. Then, twenty years later, I found him again in Vienna—an importer of cultured pearls from Japan.

I knew another man named Weinberg, who had been one of the 67,000 people arrested in Vienna on the eve of Hitler's arrival there. Because he was able to show that he was not an important person, he was ultimately discharged from prison. As he went out, the jailer shot him in the arm—merely out of pique.

From these people, I was able to piece together the true story of conditions in Europe. I was able to give Matsuoka the clearest idea of what was really going on. As for myself, I began to develop a hatred for the Nazis and began to find myself thinking and feeling more and more like a Jew, as if there were a Jew living inside me. There was, it seems to me now, a prophetic spirit residing in me.

But my South Manchuria Railway days were almost over. Late in 1940, Matsuoka was appointed Foreign Min-

ister of Japan and resigned from his post in Manchuria. In such cases it is usual, as a sign of loyalty to one's superior, for a subordinate to resign. Moreover, Matsuoka told me he would give me some kind of diplomatic post in the course of time. It seemed as if my resignation was in order. I resigned, and we packed to go back to Japan.

The two years in Manchuria had affected me considerably. For one thing, I had experienced the world outside the ivory tower, and I had participated in large events. For another, I had finally come to be familiar with the Jewish people, to make friends with them, to understand their ways. I was closer than ever to Judaism.

Chapter Ten

IN JULY, 1940, A LITTLE SHORT OF TWO YEARS' SERVICE IN Manchuria, I brought my family back to Japan. As was customary, I had received "retirement money" amounting to twenty months' pay from the South Manchuria Railway —severance pay which would keep me comfortably for a year or more. I took a summer house in a resort town called North Karuizawa, near the volcanic Asama-yama, in central Japan, and here I worked revising my Hebrew grammar for a second edition. I had also, during my spare time in Dairen, translated the Canticles into the classic Japanese thirty-one syllable verse form, and I worked these over in hopes of finding a publisher for them. Then, in the fall, I moved my family into more permanent quarters in Kamakura. Kamakura is a small village about thirty miles down one of the arms which form Tokyo Bay. A historic town (it was *de facto* capital of Japan in the twelfth and thir-

teenth centuries) it is an important beach resort today. It is especially noted for the *Daibutsu,* or "Great Buddha of Infinite Light," a giant bronze statue of the Buddha which weighs one hundred and three tons and stands over forty feet high. It is considered one of the finest examples of this kind of statuary in Japan. In fact, because of its antiquity the town is rich in shrines and Buddhist temples. It is indeed a very pleasant place to live.

The house we took was directly on the water, separated from the beach only by a small road—a point which was to have significance later on. The house was not large; but it commanded a view of the whole bay down to Miura Point, where the famous lighthouse stood. At night the revolving light flashed dimly into our bedroom. I loved taking my ceremonial tea there, where I could look down the bay to that distant light and point of land.

I came to Kamakura looking forward to a peaceful time, when I could concentrate on my Hebrew studies, enjoy my family and the wonderful sea air. I had been there exactly two weeks when I got a telegram which put an end to this serene way of life. It was from some Jewish leaders in the Japanese town of Kobe, asking me to meet with them in Tokyo. I did, and suddenly I found I had a problem involving 5,000 people.

Kobe lies toward the southern end of Japan, not far south from Kyoto, on the inland sea locked in between the islands of Honshu and Shikoku. It is pressed against the water by a string of mountains rising above it, and it has been forced to expand lengthwise, to curve along the coast. Westerners have called it the "Japanese Rio." Having a population of one million it is the second-largest open port in Japan, and it is the sixth largest city. It is not a town of temples, espe-

cially, and it lacks the antique flavor of so many Japanese towns. It has instead a modern, cosmopolitan air. (As an example, there is a Kobe folk dance called the Philosophers' Dance, or *Dekanso*. De-Kan-So stands for Descartes-Kant-Schopenhauer.)

Kobe is also one of the main centers of what little Jewish activity there is in Japan. A few Jewish traders from Iran and Iraq had established themselves in the port city before World War I, and a few more families had come in after the 1923 earthquake which had destroyed their settlement in Yokohama. Some White Russian Jews had come in after the Russian Revolution. By 1940 there were perhaps fifty Jewish families in Kobe, with both Sephardic and Ashkenazic temples. The little community was prosperous and on good terms with the Japanese citizens of Kobe.

In July, 1940, the quiet of their lives was suddenly shattered by a flood of refugees pouring in from Vladivostok. They were coming from various places, but most of them were Polish and Lithuanian Jews who had managed to get Japanese visas in Kovno, Lithuania, from a sympathetic Japanese consul, Sugihara, who later disappeared, possibly assassinated by the Germans. By 1940, of course, European ports were all shut tight. These Jews had come east on the Trans-Siberian Railway. Many of them literally had come on the last train out of Europe. They were mostly men; the women and children were often not up to the rigors of the journey, and it was felt that it was the men who stood the greatest risk at the hands of the Nazis. They came by way of Harbin, where the local Jewish community fed them and sent them on, usually to Vladivostok, where they took a boat to Tsuruoka on the Japanese coast and from there went by train to Kobe.

The Jewish community in Kobe was assisting them, but it was clear that fifty families could hardly handle the flood of refugees. Money coming from America—largely from the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society—helped, but the need was to get the refugees out of Japan, into other lands where they could rebuild their lives. Arrangements could be made to have them admitted to the United States, Canada, Jamaica, and various other places. The difficulty was that their Japanese entry permits were temporary. They could stay in the country for ten days only. Ten days was far too short a time to arrange to place them elsewhere. Some, in fact, who had come without entry permits, were in even a worse plight. They could not get off the boat at Tsuruoka, and went back and forth from Japan to Vladivostok.

The Kobe Jewish Committee had heard of me through my work in Manchuria, especially because of my well-publicized speech in Hebrew before the Far Eastern Congress. Was it possible, they asked, for me to intervene with the government and get the entry visas extended?

I knew it was not going to be easy. Since my return from Manchuria I had become increasingly aware of the rise of anti-Semitic feeling, especially in military and government circles. Anti-Semitism meant little to the average citizen, for few had ever seen a Jew, or even knew what one was. Those who had, like the people of Kobe, were not much fooled by government propaganda. Yet there was a general wariness among the people. One well-connected man who had visited the Jewish committee in Kobe and had promised to help had been threatened by a militarist and had never shown up again. Many Japanese were sympathetic to the plight of the refugees, but because they lacked courage they closed their eyes. (Adding to their fear was the fact that

most of the refugees were Eastern Jews, who were heavily bearded and appeared somewhat strange compared with the local Kobe Jews.)

I determined, however, that I would do what I could and use what influence I had to help. There is a *Bushido* saying which goes, "It is cowardice not to do, seeing one ought"; running away from the trouble went against the grain of my youthful samurai-trained notions of honor and pride. Further supporting me were words of the Old Testament: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; But the word of God shall stand forever."

I commuted to Tokyo almost daily to press my suit with the Foreign Ministry. Time after time I appealed to any official who would listen. In a few days the unfortunates who were riding back and forth between Vladivostok and Tsuruoka were given tacit permission to land in Japan. What part my pleas played in this and what other factors were involved I do not know.

In any case, there was still the problem of getting the visas extended. The Foreign Ministry simply refused to respond to my supplications. Finally an official at the Ministry warned me not to press the matter any further.

Disappointed, indeed heavy hearted, I still took hope from the fact that I had not yet played my trump card: my old superior, Yosuke Matsuoka, now Japan's Foreign Minister. Matsuoka, I was aware, had the pistol of the military at his head. He had to consider their attitude to everything he did, especially when it involved so touchy a problem as anti-Semitism. Still, he was my last hope.

I went to him and told him my story. "I have been trying desperately to awaken the conscience of my country," I said. "It appears that I have not succeeded."

He nodded. "I'm sorry, Dr. Kotsuji."

"So now I have come to the minister himself, to tell him of my sorrow, for he is my superior."

My sad eyes and his sympathetic ones met and held for a moment. Then he leaned back. "Dr. Kotsuji, can I give you a tip?"

"Of course."

"But wait," he said. "Not here. I speak as a friend, not as a ministry official. Let's go out to lunch."

In a quiet restaurant a good distance from the ministry, I detailed the entire story to him.

He listened quietly. Then he said, "Further pleas by you or the Jewish committees will be useless. The ministry has set its policy, and the pressure is on us to keep it unchanged. But there is something that can be done. It is possible that you can get the local prefectural government in the Kobe area to extend the refugees' visas. If you can, I promise you that the ministry will look the other way. The central government in Tokyo simply will ignore whatever action the local government takes."

Heartened by this good advice, I went down to Kobe to see the Jewish committee, which was headed by Mr. A. Ponevejesky, who later became a naturalized American. The refugees were sleeping on borrowed mattresses on floors, eating what they could, and spending most of their time on the street in front of the Jewish Community Center, where their European faces and long black beards stood out vividly in the Oriental city.

The problem now was dealing with the local officials. The easiest way was to buy them, not by obvious bribery, but with liquor, parties, and small gifts. All of this would take money; and I had very little of my own.

It might have been possible to get funds from the Jewish relief agencies, but that would have been dangerous. All of my dealings with national and local officials had to be kept quiet, for the plan could only work so long as the right hand failed to see what the left hand was doing. A little gossip at the wrong time, a letter in wrong hands—and negotiations would have collapsed.

I turned, then, to the only other source of money I knew: my wealthy brother-in-law. A millionaire by inheritance, he had never done very much for me. "You must make your own way," he had always told me. "However, you'll have better luck if you dress well," he would add. On this principle he had for years given me his hand-me-down clothes, so that even when I was poor I had always dressed like a slightly worn millionaire. This was the sort of man he was; getting money from him would not be easy.

I went down to Osaka and called on him at his door.

"Come in, come in," he said. "What are you doing these days?"

"I'm trying to help some old friends," I said. "In Manchuria my work was mostly with the Jewish people. They need me now, and I want to keep faith with them." I told him the story of the refugees and my plan for helping them. "You have said I should wear your old clothes so as not to lose face. Now I need money so as not to lose face."

"Is it important to you?" he asked.

"It is not for me, it is for humanity's sake. Look, you told me that you once lost a million yen overnight when the stock market fell. Money means nothing to you; it is only counters in a game. You can do something."

"I'll think it over tonight," he said.

In the morning he gave me three hundred thousand yen, a handsome sum of money in those days.

My pockets bulging with currency, I hurried back to Kobe, registered at the Oriental Hotel, the best and most expensive in the city. Then I went around to the police chief and introduced myself as somebody concerned with Jewish affairs. "Something has to be done about these refugees," I said. "Why don't you and some of your section heads drop in at my place this evening, where we can discuss it."

Five or six people came that evening. I took them out to the best restaurant in Kobe and fed them a luxurious Japanese dinner: shellfish soup, lobster in soy sauce, seaweed with vinegar and bean jelly, and plenty of sake along with it all. We had a geisha girl with us to play the guitar-like samisen and to sing to us. The officials sang, laughed, and got uproariously drunk. I did not touch upon the refugee problems at all.

Two days later I invited them to dinner again; but still I did not mention the refugees. Finally, at a third dinner a few days later I brought up the question of the homeless Jewish men. The visa extensions were granted.

The local officials would not grant visa extensions for more than fifteen days at a time. Over the course of the next several months I became a great friend of the Kobe police, seeing that they were constantly my companions. I traveled from Kamakura to Kobe—a trip of twelve hours —once or twice a week. I spent a night or perhaps two buying lunches and suppers, and I talked with the Kobe Jewish Committee to see that things were going properly. The police became most cooperative. They allowed the

refugees to open a Talmud torah and were as helpful as they dared to be. It took about three months to get a man out of Japan. The flood of refugees began to dwindle in the spring of 1941, and by the fall of that year most of them had passed safely out of Japan, either to Western countries if they had visas, or to the open city of Shanghai if they had not. Though the hospitality of Japan toward the suffering Jews was nothing to boast about, because of the propaganda efforts of the Nazis, the country at least tolerated their presence until they could find a way to move on to safety.

Occasionally in the years since then I have run across people who were in Kobe at that time. In 1959 on my trip to Jerusalem I met a young woman who said that she had been in Kobe when she was four years old and that she could remember some scenes of Kobe still. In 1960 I met the wife of Rabbi Shlomo Poupko in Brooklyn and discovered that she was also in Kobe when she was four. She still can sing a Japanese song she learned then.

Another young man, Rabbi Pinchos Hirschprung, had published in Canada in 1944 a short history of Jewish refugees entitled *From the Nazi Vale of Tears* (*Von Nazischen Yomerthol*). He dedicated the last chapter to "Japanischer Professor Abram Kotsuji." He concludes with the information that I was assassinated by the militarists for my liberal views. It was true that I was later marked for assassination; how that information came to Canada I do not know.

In any case, by the autumn of 1941 nearly 5,000 refugees had passed through Japan, and the flood was over. I settled down in my lovely house, once again hoping for a period of tranquillity. I had two months of it. Then one morning I went out for my daily paper, only to discover that it had

not arrived. I intended to go up to Tokyo anyway to look for some books I needed, so I walked down to the Kamakura railroad station. It was a pleasant walk; the day was sunny and warm for December.

At the station there were newspapers. I picked one up. The headline read: "This morning our Navy has entered into a state of war with the battleships of the United States."

Chapter Eleven

BY THE JAPANESE CALENDAR THE WAR BETWEEN THE UNITED States and Japan began on the eighth of December with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The people of Japan were nearly as unprepared for this attack as were the people of the United States. They were shocked and dumfounded. They were not told at first of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, but merely that there had been a battle between United States and Japanese naval forces. The story of Pearl Harbor and the subsequent invasion of the Philippines came out bit by bit over the next several days.

Despite their initial shock, the Japanese of course rallied to the support of their country—encouraged by the thought of victory following victory, as was the case in the early days of the war.

A militaristic tone began to creep over the country. Men were urged to wear combat uniforms, and they were re-

quired to wear puttees as they went about all day. Small shopkeepers were forced into the factories, rationing was instituted, charcoal-burning taxis began to appear in the streets. The country began to resemble an armed camp. The military, already firmly entrenched, now became absolute masters of the country. The civil police were helpless against the military police, the *Kenpei-tai,* who as the war progressed became as ruthless as the German Gestapo.

My own position in Japan was extremely ambiguous. For one thing, since my wife and I had lived in America we felt friendship and gratitude toward the country. For another, my feelings toward the Jews made it impossible for me to accept Japan's German allies. Beyond this, my always stubborn nature revolted against the banzai-crying spirit adopted by the masses. I refused to go into the factories, I would not wear the puttees, camouflaging their absence by tucking my trousers into my socks. I was a Jeremiah, crying "Woe" to my nation. Perhaps I was unpatriotic. My attempts to rouse the conscience of my country against the anti-Semites seemed more patriotic to me than the so-called banzai patriotism of the masses.

At the time the war broke out I had been out of work for a year, and my severance pay was nearly exhausted. My refusal to work in factories might have been disastrous had I not experienced another of those coincidences which have marked my life. One day, about three weeks before the Pearl Harbor attack, I was in the Yokohama station waiting for a train to Kyoto, when I heard somebody call my name. I looked around and saw a couple I had known in Manchuria, Lewis Zikman and his wife. He had pioneered the sugar refining business in Manchuria and owned a factory at Ajho, about an hour away from Harbin. He

stopped to chat. The Zikmans were sailing for the United States the next day, and they were now on their way to the customs house to make sure everything was in order. They needed some help, and after a moment's thought I decided that I could easily postpone my trip for a day in order to shepherd them through customs. The next day they sailed for San Francisco on the *Tatsuta Maru,* but they never reached their destination, for at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack the ship turned around and came back to Yokohama. Troubled and upset, Zikman called on me. A short time later he put me on his payroll to teach him Japanese and to advise him on his business ventures in Japan. Both he and Mrs. Zikman were kind and grateful, with a deep understanding of the Japanese mind; they were God-given friends and a great help to me during the confusions of the war years. (The Zikmans finally reached San Francisco, many years later. I met them there again in 1960 during a lecture tour.)

My main involvement during the war, however, was in the struggle against anti-Semitism. It is a curious matter that such a movement appeared in a country that had virtually no Jews. The fault lies entirely with the Nazis. Hitler had sent a man named Dr. Pausch to Japan expressly to stir up anti-Jewish feeling, and he had ordered his ambassadors in Tokyo and China to continue to press for the deportation of the 20,000 Jews in Shanghai to the places they had come from. This of course meant condemning them to Hitler's gas chambers, and fortunately Japan did not succumb to this pressure.

The people most concerned with the so-called Jewish problem were two or three military people—Colonel Nosuke Yasué and Captain Inuzuka among them—and such

civilians as U. Wakamiya, Atsushi Akaike and Masao Masuda. Most of them were in no sense the experts they claimed to be, but merely translators of anti-Semitic documents. They would not have had much luck extending their influence, except that they were heavily supported by some mysterious financial source, presumably a Nazi agent. The target of the anti-Semitic program was not the tiny handful of Jewish families in Kobe; it was the 20,000 people in Shanghai. It was useful to the Germans to try to justify some of their actions to the Japanese, for the Japanese were not unsympathetic to Jewish people. Nevertheless, many among the Japanese military group were taken in. It was helpful, too, for the militarists to claim that the United States was under the thumb of such Jewish capitalists as Carnegie and Rockefeller, both of whom were gentiles; for many Japanese had relatives in America and were otherwise sympathetic to the country.

Despite the influence of the military, there were a few bold men, showing great courage in the face of the military, who stood up against the anti-Semitic propaganda. One of these was Mr. Tanzan Ishibashi, who after the war became Minister of Trade and Industry, and for a short period, Premier. Ishibashi was president of an organization called the Economic Club (not the Political-Economic Club mentioned earlier) with branches in the chambers of commerce of thirty-five major cities and headquarters in Tokyo. It supplied lecturers to all its branches at least once a month. In order to handle the demand, Ishibashi hired a man to deal with the so-called Jewish problem. He was Toshio Shiratori, and he had once been ambassador to Italy. To Ishibashi's vast surprise, the man turned out to be one of the most violent anti-Semites in the country, and he went

from branch to branch pouring out Hitlerist poison in his lectures. Ishibashi fired him of course, but he could not stop Shiratori from continuing to lecture around the country.

At just about that time, a conference of scholars in various fields was called, with a view to supplying the Foreign Ministry with expert opinion on a number of topics. The speakers included Professor Kiyoshi Miki, who later died in the hands of the *Kenpei-tai;* and Dr. Kotaro Tanaka, former chief judge of the Japanese Supreme Court and now one the judges at the International Court at The Hague. I was among the speakers; and I took advantage of the opportunity to counter some of the anti-Semitic propaganda so prevalent in government circles. I began by pointing out that the Nazi notion of *Rassenschande*—racial shame—was absurd, since no civilized nation in the modern world is composed of a single original race. I pointed out why Hitler was so interested in promoting anti-Semitism in Japan and added what other details I knew. As it happened, Mr. Ishibashi heard my lecture. Immediately afterward he came to me and asked if I would be willing to undertake a tour pursuing the footsteps of the anti-Semitic Shiratori. I was delighted and accepted the offer immediately. For the next several months I crisscrossed Japan, giving people an insight into the true nature of anti-Semitism and into the Jewish people. I opened eyes everywhere. People who heard me speak usually believed what I had to say, despite the Nazi propaganda. On one occasion, when I was speaking at Hakata on Kyushu Island, a corporal from the military police, wearing a pistol and full uniform, strode into the lobby of the hall where I was to lecture and asked to be admitted to the lecture, even though he was not a member of the chamber of commerce, which sponsored it. I was

alarmed by his presence, for the appearance of a military official was usually a prelude to trouble.

Nonetheless, I nodded politely and said, "You're welcome to join us. I'm delighted that you want to hear what I have to say."

He smiled politely. "Will it be all right if I take notes, Dr. Kotsuji?"

I nodded again. "Certainly. I appreciate your great interest."

When I rose to speak I decided not to give an inch. I gave my usual lecture, in the firm belief that if the facts convinced ordinary citizens, they would convince the military too. At the end of the lecture I walked off the rostrum and down into the hall where he was waiting for me, surrounded by the anxious officers of the sponsoring committee.

He bowed politely. "I enjoyed the lecture very much. It was very enlightening. Thank you, Dr. Kotsuji."

The sponsoring committee—and myself as well—drew a sigh of relief.

The lecture tour, unhappily, ended a few months after it began, because civilian travel was curtailed and railroad tickets became impossible to buy. Although my lectures had necessarily reached only a small portion of the population, they had reached an important portion—business leaders, academicians, local officials—and much had been done to counteract the Nazi-spread anti-Semitism.

I felt, then, that perhaps I could do something more. A book on the subject seemed to be the obvious answer, and I cast about for a means of getting it published. As it happened, a friend of mine, a professor of Chinese literature at Kyoto University, knew some people at the Meguro Pub-

lishing Company in Tokyo, which was then issuing a series called "The Nations and Cultures Series." I told them what I had in mind, and they offered to publish it, an act of some courage considering the state of mind then prevalent in official circles.

I wrote the book, a three-hundred-and-fifty-page volume which I called *The True Character of the Jewish Nation,* and delivered it to the publisher. The book was essentially a history of the Jews and a discussion of their religion and mores, but it also contained an analysis of Hitler's anti-Semitism and the admonition that Japan should not be misled by European propaganda.

Shortly after I turned the manuscript over to the publishers, I was ordered to appear before the director of the intelligence bureau of the central government, who was in charge of the censor's office through which all books must pass.

The director came to the point immediately. "Dr. Kotsuji, do you mean to publish this book as it stands?"

"Why yes, of course."

"Then you will probably be arrested," he said bluntly.

"Why?" I demanded.

"Believe me, I don't want to stop publication of this book. It is the first solid, well-balanced history of the Jews offered in Japan. Therefore, I want to warn you that there are a few changes you'd better make. You've criticized Hitler and the Nazis outright, and you've made some remarks which might hurt the feelings of the Italians. You have criticized both of Japan's allies. Isn't that so?"

"Yes," I agreed.

"The *Kenpei-tai* will probably arrest you if I let them see the book. In fact, I didn't have to tell you any of this.

I could have let the book go. I respect you, however, and I want to ask you to make the cuts."

There was certainly no point in bucking the government; I would be jailed, the book suppressed, and nothing would be gained. I took out the direct criticism of Germany and Italy, and let the book stand as a history and analysis of the Jewish nation. (Incidentally, the item which the censorship office thought would "hurt Italian feelings" was the indisputable statement that the Romans were responsible for the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.)

The book was an immediate success. The first printing of five thousand copies was sold out by subscription before it appeared in the bookstores. Then the book began to suffer a series of misfortunes. First, just as the publisher was considering a second printing, paper was rationed. Then his offices were bombed out and the plates lost. My own manuscript disappeared during the war. Secondhand copies are very scarce today and will sell at thirty times the original selling price. Judging from the mail the publisher got, most of which was congratulatory, the enterprise was still a considerable success.

Shortly after the book was published I was visited by two men from the Kamakura police station. They belonged to a branch called "Special Higher Service," a group responsible for keeping a watch on intellectually suspicious persons—in other words, a kind of thought-control police. One of the men began to question me immediately.

"You have recently published an excellent book, I understand, Dr. Kotsuji."

"Thank you."

"We understand that the Jews of Kobe are extremely grateful to you?"

"Is that so?" I said.

He played his trump. "You must have made a lot of money on it," he said casually.

"Why yes, I made some money from the book."

"Who paid it to you?" he asked.

"Why, the publisher, of course."

"No, Doctor, not the publisher. The Jews."

I laughed. "Come, that's nonsense. You're victimized by the current spate of anti-Semitism, just like so many others. You prefer to believe Hitler and not your own countryman. Suppose I were a foreigner, would you have better faith in me?" I pointed around at my tiny house. "If the Jews were paying me a lot of money, would I be living so simple and frugal a life?"

He frowned, but looked abashed; evidently he decided that there was no point in pursuing that topic. "What are you writing these days?" he asked, as if merely being polite.

"I am beginning a history of Jewish literature."

"Very interesting. I'd like to see the manuscript."

"I'm still thinking out the plan for the book. I have nothing to show you."

At this point my wife brought in cups of green tea, and the conversation ended. I was aware now that I was being watched, and that I was marked as suspicious. I had espoused the cause of the Jews. I had spent four years in the United States, had been educated there, and had friends across the country. Finally I had been (and was still, at least nominally) a Christian. All of these things conspired to mark me as a suspicious person.

By early 1944, as the tide of war began to turn against the Axis nations, conditions in Japan worsened. The government did not conceal our defeats from us, although they

did gloss them over as much as possible. There was a feeling of doom and despair in the air; and yet, the idea that we might lose was somehow unbelievable. The people clung to straws; there would be a miraculous deliverance yet. Meanwhile, American troops crept inexorably closer to the chain of islands, from the Solomons to the Marianas to Okinawa to Iwo Jima.

Food grew scarce. The rations were not enough to fill the stomachs of children, and the purchase of black market food direct from the farmers became the general rule. This meant walking for miles out into the villages and farms with a rucksack on your back, begging from door to door to be allowed to buy some rice. The farmers grew arrogant. They refused money, but demanded kimonos and other valuables. Once as I walked through a village I found a man who had a full bag of flour for sale. I bought it, and staggered home under its heavy weight. The stuff turned out to be inedible, and all I had for my pains was a stiff and swollen shoulder. My wife and I decided that our children came first. We held back only a single handful of rice for ourselves and gave them the rest to take to school for their lunches. Boiling the rice with some ill-tasting seaweed and salt sea water, we were able to fool our stomachs. We were, in fact, slowly starving. My wife was pale as death, and my face was swollen. In Nagoya, a well-known court prosecutor actually died of starvation because he refused to deal on the black market.

Nearly everything was in short supply. Women stopped wearing kimonos and pretty dresses, and put on *monpes*—ugly bloomers—mostly because social pressure demanded that people be serious and grave. The draft age rose to forty-five, and it seemed that I might have to fight. The yen

fluctuated wildly, finally dropping to about a fifth of its usual value. It didn't matter: nobody wanted to buy anything but food and the basic necessities. I sold a typewriter for the unbelievably low price of five yen. It was possible to pick up fine furniture for virtually nothing. In fact, after the great air raid on Tokyo that March there were hundreds of pieces of fine furniture for sale at three and four yen.

By 1944, too, the air raids became a fairly regular occurrence. Sometimes, as I walked on my lovely beach at Kamakura, I would see the huge American planes, darkening the distant northern skies like masses of birds in flight, as they headed inland to devastate Yokohama or Tokyo. Once as I watched such a mass flight, speculating on its deadly beauty, I thought of Jeremiah watching the Chaldean army invade Jerusalem. A few minutes later the flight so blasted Yokohama with incendiary bombs that the town was reduced to ashes. The fire department of Kamakura disappeared for a week, and we knew that they had spent that long time helping to dispose of the corpses scattered everywhere in the streets.

One day in the fall of 1944 I returned from a walk along the beach. My wife was out, my girls were in school. I opened the front door to enter and saw a note which had been pushed under it. I picked it up and read: "Dr. Kotsuji: You are requested to appear at the *Kenpei-tai* headquarters at the earliest opportunity." I knew I was being honored; usually the *Kenpei-tai* just came to arrest one. They were giving me the chance to turn myself in before they came.

I stood for a moment in a state of shock, my heart pounding, unable to think. Men who visited the *Kenpei-tai* often simply disappeared. Later, Professor Kiyoshi Miki, my

philosopher friend, was to die at their hands during the ten-day period between Japan's surrender and the arrival of American forces. This was a time when the *Kenpei-tai* killed at wild random. My wife and daughters suddenly seemed remote and distant from me, as if I had already been carried off to my death. I could refuse to go; I could attempt to run; or I could wait for them to come and arrest me. Terror grew in me; then, suddenly, I remembered the ringing words of Jeremiah: "Whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of them; For I am with thee to deliver thee, Saith the Lord."

I decided I would go the next morning without telling my family; there would be grief enough for them later, and it would spare us all a difficult farewell. So I left in the morning, telling them I had business in Tokyo. A great love welled up in my heart, and I said to them silently, "Good-by forever." The hour train ride seemed to last only minutes, and those thirteen steps up to the entrance to the *Kenpei-tai* headquarters were a heavy climb.

I went to the desk and showed my summons. A young lieutenant came and took me to a gloomy, windowless, secluded room. Then he began to question me. What work had I done for the Jewish underground? Who were they? How did they work? What were their agents' plans? He was quite clearly gripped by the delusion that Jews were everywhere, plotting to take over the world.

At first I tried to show him his mistakes, and then I simply began to deny his charges. He pressed me with wild, insane stories of Jewish intrigue. I denied them. An hour passed, and then a second, and then a third. He continued to question me relentlessly. The pounding monotony of his questioning made me drowsy. When I began to relax he

jerked my hair to snap me erect. I still denied his accusations. He resorted to physical torture.

He started with a most simple trick: he put a pencil vertically in the V of two of my fingers and squeezed them in his hands. This may sound mild, and compared to other forms of torture, it is. But it is still extremely painful.

What he wanted of me was the single word "yes." I was determined not to say it, even if I had to die for it, for not only would it wrongly indict the Jewish people, but it would be a mark against my pride, a stain on my soul.

The hours passed. They gave me nothing to eat or to drink. Thirst came, then hunger, and the pain continued. I became weak, and my mind grew dim. I dimly remembered something I'd heard about Captain Alfred Dreyfus in France. After a long, monotonous period of questioning, Dreyfus had reached a trancelike state where he answered "yes" without even knowing it. I now understood how such a thing could happen. My battle was no longer against one young lieutenant, but against trance. I mustered every effort to stay alert and awake, and I continued to say "no."

He continued to press me. I had been there nearly ten hours. The young lieutenant was threatening me with the water torture, and I was coming to the end of my strength. Then suddenly the door opened, and there stood Yoshinori Shirahama, my old friend from Manchuria, now wearing the insignia of a colonel.

"What's going on here?" he shouted. "Kotsuji, what are you doing here?"

"I am being tortured for no reason," I gasped out weakly. And then I collapsed.

Shirahama turned on the young lieutenant. "You get out of here," he shouted. "Out."

The lieutenant stood his ground. "In a moment, sir. The examination is almost finished."

"Examination? What examination?"

"About this man's connections with world Jewry."

"You idiot," Shirahama shouted. "Get out of here, or I'll have Professor Kotsuji examine your brain." He paused. "Leave the case to me, lieutenant. Your superior is under my command. I'll take charge now. You can leave." The young lieutenant understood and reluctantly left. Then Shirahama, tears of rage and shame running down his cheeks, stepped to the examination table, picked up the report, and tore it to pieces. "If I'd only known sooner," he said.

I began to recover myself a little and sat up in my chair. He sat beside me. "It's been a long time, old friend," he murmured.

"You came in like the whirlwind to save me," I said, still dazed by the turn of events.

"I understand your book is doing very well," he said.

"How is the military taking it?" I asked him.

"Very well," he said. "You are bringing some of them out of this insanity. But there are still some mad dogs like this young lieutenant among them." He paused. "I'm sorry for you, Kotsuji. You are the conscience of your country, and your courage is more than the courage of the soldiers at the front."

When I heard these words, all the pain and tribulation I had endured seemed worthwhile. But Shirahama would not pursue the subject further. "You'd better leave right away," he said. "Keep out of alleys, walk only on the main streets. Go right to the station and get on the first train home."

I struggled to my feet and staggered after him down a corridor to a rear exit. "Grab a taxi if you can. I'll watch you from here until you're out of sight. Tomorrow I'll try to think of a way to protect you, but there is nothing I can do tonight. Good luck."

With great physical effort, I left the building, my body aching with pain and exhaustion, and reached the main street, where I was able to get a cab to the station. When at last I was seated safely on the train, my heart throbbed with joy and my thanks burst forth as I murmured the twenty-third Psalm in Hebrew: "Adonai ro'i lo' echar. . . ." ("The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. . . ."). The Jews repeat this Psalm at funerals, but it is more than a euphonic liturgy. The verses are filled with the emotion of deliverance from the horror of death. I felt as if the Psalm had been written for me at that moment.

When I arrived home all the houses around were blacked out; there seemed to be no sign of the human world, just the myriad sparkling stars and the roaring of the waves sounding the beat of the eternal universe. I was hungry, exhausted, and disturbed; yet I had never seen the natural world so beautiful, nor felt so moved by the sight of it.

I told my family very little about my harrowing experience, just enough to explain my lateness. I didn't want to distress my wife, nor cast a blackness on the innocent minds of my two children.

This experience at the hands of the *Kenpei-tai* marked me. I had read many times of the massacres of millions of Jews during the Middle Ages by the Crusaders, during the Inquisition, and by other groups and peoples. It had always seemed a horror to me; but after my own small ordeal, the persecution of the Jews over the centuries had a reality for

me it had lacked before. I now knew what persecution was, and I had discovered that in the face of torture, I could not abandon my belief in the One God as my Lord and citadel. I felt closer than ever to the persecuted people of Israel. I knew that some day I would become a Jew.

By the beginning of 1945, there was a feeling abroad in Japan that an invasion by the American forces was imminent. In February of that year I had a curious, illusory experience. I was standing in front of my house looking down Kamakura Bay, where the cove waters meet the Pacific. The surface of the water was dead calm, and mirror-like. Suddenly there appeared on it ships and hundreds of landing barges bearing in rapidly toward the shore where I stood. I was shocked, and gasped in astonishment. Then as quickly as it had come it all disappeared, leaving only the calm sea and the growing realization that my beautiful little beach would be an ideal place for an invasion. The water was calm, the beach flat, and the capital city only thirty miles away. If the invasion should occur at Kamakura, my small house standing only twenty-five yards from the water would certainly be devastated and my family along with it. I began considering ways to move to some safer place.

A week later a sailor walked into our front yard, and asked if he could eat his lunch there. He was a country boy, obviously away from home and lonesome, apparently hoping to spend a day in a peaceful setting away from the rigors of the naval base. We made him welcome and offered him such hospitality as we had. We gave him a bit of our valuable rice, and a bottle of beer—the only one we were allowed each month.

He was grateful, probably more for the kindness than for the beer or the rice, and in return he gave us a piece of confidential information. The whole area on which my house stood was to be evacuated by government order in a few months. The military, too, had decided that Kamakura would make a fine landing beach.

It was now clear that we were going to have to move. My first thought was that we should go to Manchuria. I had many Jewish friends in that country, and to go to Harbin, where there was an extensive Jewish colony, seemed to be a good idea. It was a curious thing: I had come so far that I trusted my life to the hands of the Jews more than to my own people. I broached the subject to my wife and children; they agreed with me, and we began to prepare for the move.

They knew we could not ship many of our belongings, for at that point in the war cargos had a way of disappearing, either through thievery or submarine warfare. We decided to sell most of our furniture and other surplus goods for whatever price anyone would pay. We loaded what possessions we had kept for ourselves into eight four-hundred-pound packing boxes. And on a rainy seventh of June, 1945, we left Kamakura. We felt a strong need to flee, and the words of the Angels to Lot were with us: "Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city."

I wondered about the sense of this conclusion. Were my fears ridiculous? I subsequently learned that my name was on the list of those to be assassinated by the *Kenpei-tai* and that my friend Professor Miki, not so fortunate as I, had been brutally murdered. My decision to leave Kamakura had been a right one.

Chapter Twelve

I LEARNED THAT JAPAN HAD LOST THE WAR ON OUR TRIP TO Harbin. The atomic bomb and the surrender were still two months away, but the people were defeated. Like defeated people, they did not travel, they fled.

From Kamakura we went to Tokyo's Ueno Railroad Station. We had managed through connections, to get second-class train tickets, but the station was jammed with people desperate to get out of Tokyo and willing to fight their way to the ticket counter if necessary. When the gate was opened, the mob poured through, sweeping my little family along with it. It was a nightmare. We each carried two suitcases, plus a rucksack on our backs. Stumbling along under this weight, with the mob of half-crazed people surging around us like thunderous ocean waves, we struggled desperately to keep our footing lest we be trampled underfoot. My daughters were pulled away from us. I

couldn't reach them; but luckily they were able to push themselves along until we all finally met on the train. Their faces and hands were scratched and bleeding, and when I saw those marks I knew that the people of Japan had given up; it was each man for himself.

It took the train twelve hours to reach Niigata, a large port city on the Sea of Japan. The aisle was packed tight with people. It was impossible to sit down, even more impossible to walk to the lavatory. For twelve hours we stood, unable to move.

From Niigata we took a boat across to Rashin in North Korea. As the boat moved toward the dock at Rashin, I suddenly had a vision of thousands of Russian soldiers pouring down the red-colored hills to the east like an avalanche. The vision quickly passed; but two months later the Russians did indeed pour into Rashin, the first point they attacked on their march into Manchuria. From Rashin we took the train north to Harbin. The journey took twenty long, hard days, and when we finally reached the International Hotel in Harbin, we were completely exhausted.

Harbin, which was to be our home for almost a year and a half, had become a city of distress, misery, and poverty; of rapine, pillage, and death. A city of some three-quarters of a million people, it strongly reflected the international character of Manchuria. Five ethnic groups were officially recognized: Japanese, Manchurians, Russians, Koreans, and Mongolians, and of course there were small scatterings of other nationalities besides. The city was well-governed. Each national group was to some extent responsible for maintaining its own order. Each group elected a leader, and

those leaders who kept good order were commended by the Japanese authorities. Partly as a result of this orderly coexistence, Manchuria remained a relatively prosperous place up until the very last days of the war. Whereas Japan proper felt the shortage of nearly everything, in Manchuria only cigarettes were rationed. We bought almost anything we wanted, even meat and fish; and our health improved immediately with the change to a proper diet. My wife's good coloring came back, and the swelling in my face disappeared.

When we arrived in Manchuria, the Japanese forces were of course still in charge, although their days of power were numbered. They knew the end was coming, and they were nervous and high strung, suspecting spies and fifth column agents to be lurking everywhere among the Chinese and Russian populations. (As it turned out, they were right to be suspicious.) Anyone who spoke English was doubly suspect, and I tried to speak only Japanese, especially in public. One time I was in the fur shop of a Jewish friend, David Goorevitch, who now lives in Migdal Emek, Israel. Goorevitch and I were having a conversation in English, and just as I was leaving, a Japanese policeman walked into the shop.

"Who is that man who just left?" he demanded of Goorevitch.

Goorevitch shrugged. "He's a customer. I don't know his name."

"Is he a friend of yours? Where does he live?"

Goorevitch shrugged again. "I've seen him around. You could call him an acquaintance if you want. But I don't know where he lives."

The policeman turned and raced out of the shop, looking for me, but fortunately I had gotten on a streetcar moments before and was gone.

Dr. Abraham Kaufman, the leader of the Jewish community, was involved in a similar situation. He was director of the Jewish Hospital and president of the Jewish Bank, and he had led the Far Eastern Jewish Conferences in the early days of the war. A person of considerable importance in Harbin, he was considered suspect by the Japanese police because he was well-connected with people of the West.

One day shortly after our arrival at the International Hotel, Kaufman's eighteen-year-old son Ted came to me, looking pale and shaken. The reputation I had made in my previous stay in Harbin as advisor to the South Manchuria Railway still lingered. Young Kaufman knew me as a man he might turn to in trouble.

"What happened?" I asked him.

"Yesterday a policeman came to our summer house looking for my father. He wasn't there, but he went down to the military mission this morning. They're claiming that he's a Russian sympathizer because he speaks Russian."

"I'll see what I can do," I told the worried boy. I knew that a month or so before, Dr. Kaufman had received an imperial gift: a picture of the palace in Tokyo in a special frame denoting it as a royal gift. The name of the Emperor still carried enormous weight among the average Japanese. I walked into the military mission, attempting to look casual. A grim-looking Kaufman was standing before the front desk, surrounded by a half-dozen officers, tough and determined.

I pretended to be surprised to see him and walked over, my hand extended. "Congratulations, Dr. Kaufman. I un-

derstand you've been honored with an imperial gift."

The policeman looked startled. Kaufman took my hand. "It's nice to see you, Dr. Kotsuji. Yes, it's the greatest honor I've ever received."

We chatted briefly, and then I left. The Emperor's name did its work, however. In order to save face the Japanese military handed Kaufman over to the local police, who released him; but they dared not touch him, for he had the Emperor's blessing.

Kaufman's troubles were not over, however. Because of his difficulties he was ostracized by his community. Although they felt sorry for him, many of his friends would not visit him for fear of being suspected themselves. This attitude annoyed me, so on the Sunday following his arrest I went out to his summer house, located across the Sungari River from Harbin. He was there with his son, and he was delighted to see me. We spent the day eating and drinking, and talking. It was bread cast upon the waters. When I left he surprised me by giving me three thousand yen, enough to keep my family for many months.

July passed. The panic and sense of impending doom increased, and the Japanese authorities grew more tense and nervous. They had three armies to worry about: the Russian, the Chinese Communist, and the Chinese Nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-shek. On August 8 we were still living out of our suitcases in the hotel, for my eight huge packing cases had not yet arrived. That night at about midnight, my wife aroused me, filled with alarm. "Look," she cried, pointing out the window. "Something is burning."

The whole sky to the southwest was red. "Perhaps the American B-29's have dropped incendiary bombs on the

city. But don't worry, they can never make the kind of air raid they made on Yokohama here. Go back to sleep." We slept. In the morning we found out that incendiary bombs had indeed fallen, on the Asian Alcohol Factory—but the planes had been Russian. At the same time the Russians began a three-pronged drive on Manchuria, one fork of which reached Rashin two days later. The beginning of the end was at hand.

Harbin was now alerted and uneasy. My older daughter, Mary, had been going to a girl's school in Harbin. On the day of the Russian attack, all the girls at the school were taken to a military hospital located well out in the Harbin suburbs. There, the girls were compelled to act as nurses' aides. I was deeply worried about her, for in such tumultuous times, the threat of banditry was ever present. The incident had its comic overtones, however, for the schoolmaster ordered the girls to change their underwear every day, so that if they were murdered they would not be ashamed.

On that first night when she came home for supper Mary asked me, "Father, is it painful to die?"

"No," I said gently. "Fear of death is more painful than death itself."

She smiled and nodded, but her eyes were grave, and it hurt me in my heart to think that a fifteen-year-old girl should have to face such a reality. Each day I saw her off was like a last farewell.

For four days Harbin remained in a state of suspension, waiting for what would come. Then, on the twelfth of August I received word that my packing cases had arrived at last. I went down to the Harbin station and discovered that they had come through absolutely untouched, one of

the few instances of a cargo reaching Manchuria in those parlous days intact.

I began checking them through the usual red tape, expecting that I could hire one of the many Chinese draymen who hung around the station to carry the cases to my hotel in his wagon. But when I looked for one I discovered that they had nearly all disappeared. Finally I collared one, and told him what I wanted. He quoted me three times the standard fee.

"What's this?" I demanded.

"Look around," he said. "The wagon drivers have all run off. The Soviet Army came into Harbin this morning."

"And Japanese money isn't worth anything any more?"

He shrugged; just then I heard a distant patter of rifle shots coming from the south. It was no time for dickering. "All right," I said. "I'll pay. Let's go."

We loaded the cases and started for the International Hotel, when it suddenly occurred to me that the Japanese-run hotel would undoubtedly be searched. Instead I ordered the driver to go to the Hotel Moderne, a handsome, Russian-owned hotel on Kitaiskaya Street, Harbin's Fifth Avenue. When we reached it, I immediately went to the manager, whom I knew to be a Jew named Pesner.

"Professor Kotsuji," he greeted me. "I haven't seen you since you addressed the Far Eastern Jewish Conference right here in this hotel. That is years ago."

"I need your help," I said. "It's urgent."

When I explained about my packing cases he instantly arranged to keep them for me in a storage room in the hotel basement. *Baruch ha-shem!* A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

That afternoon Mary came back from the hospital alone. The Japanese soldiers had disappeared, having pulled back from Harbin during the night. It frightened me to think that she had come into town by herself during a day of such danger, yet it was a relief that she would not have to leave again. (We learned later that the army had retreated to the southern mountains to make a last stand.)

By that afternoon nobody dared to go out. I returned safely to my own hotel and climbed up on the roof at about 2 P.M. There was the sound of sporadic rifle firing. It was not the Russians, however, but the local fifth column, which crept out of hiding to open the gates of the city. By evening the fifth columnists were everywhere, both Chinese and Russian. A few days later, when a Soviet captain arrived at the Japanese military mission to take it over, the secretaries who worked there were struck by the fact that the captain seemed somehow familiar. Several hours later they realized he had been a chauffeur for the military mission.

Manchuria was occupied first by the Russians, then by the Chinese Communists. The Russian occupation began in August and lasted for three months. The Russians' sole interest in the country was to loot it, and their plan was to hang onto it until it had been stripped. Later, they intended to turn it back to the Chinese.

For the Japanese living in the country, the Russian occupation was a period of hell. In theory, at least, Russian policy was to treat decently what they called "third nationals"—people who were neither victorious Russians nor defeated Japanese. The Japanese, however, were the enemy, and they were spared nothing. Hundreds of men were shipped as slave labor to Siberia, many of them dying be-

fore they got there. Women were raped, children beaten, and everybody robbed with impunity.

To survive, the Japanese had to keep their wits about them. The occupying Russian Army had been recruited from the criminal classes. Dirty and ill-mannered, they were incredibly ignorant. They were so bad that even the Chinese coolies said, "*Solen pin pu-shin,*" meaning, "The Russian soldiers are bums." Barbarian and savage, they stole anything they could, even burglarizing the homes of their allies, the Chinese. A doctor told me a typical story. He was on a train, trying to reach Harbin from the small village in which he lived. Two Soviet soldiers came in to inspect the train. Their eyes fell on the doctor's stethoscope.

"What's this?" they demanded.

The doctor demonstrated by way of explanation. The soldiers didn't understand. They snatched it away from him and began pulling and twisting the apparatus to see what would happen. Finally, completely baffled, they gave up and returned the instrument to the doctor, who later used it on me.

They loved watches. They would steal any watch they saw. Some of them walked around with a dozen going all the way up their arms. They were so ignorant that they did not understand that watches needed winding. When a watch stopped ticking, the Russian soldiers took it to a watch repair man.

They took women as well as watches. They were absolutely shameless in this respect. Once a Russian soldier caught a woman from behind on Kitaiskaya, Harbin's main street, and tried to rape her in this posture in broad daylight. When the woman cried for help, a Russian military policeman appeared and ordered the soldier to desist.

The soldier refused and began arguing with the policeman, who let him go on for a few minutes and then shot him dead in the street. There was a huge storehouse in the Nangan area of Harbin where such bodies were callously tossed. Life was incredibly cheap, and it was even worse in the villages outside the cities.

We lived in constant apprehension. The Russian soldiers indulged in "midnight visits." They would burst into a house shouting "*davai,*" the Russian word for give, take whatever money and other valuables they could find, sometimes rape the women, and then go on their way. The Japanese ultimately learned to keep any valuables well hidden and to get the women out of the way when the Russians were around. Before they understood this, however, most of them had been robbed, and many of the women raped. Sometimes, in the aftermath, the women committed suicide. We escaped this disaster, but we were robbed of all the money Dr. Kaufman had given us. Ten times we were raided, and each time we hid in the mud under the floor, cowering in the dark among spider webs.

What saved me from almost certain shipment to Siberia was the kindness of my Jewish friends, who protected me as well as they could, and the fact that I do not have typical Japanese features. Most Japanese have round faces, flat in profile. My face is narrow and thin and sharp in profile; it is what is known as "a little high." I discovered that if I wore a Tartar's hat I was easily mistaken for a Tartar, and this piece of luck, coupled with the fact that I spoke both Russian and English, enabled me to walk around the city at small risk. I always dressed in my best suit and kept a high gloss on my shoes, and that helped to protect me, too, for the Russian soldiers assumed that a well-dressed man was

an official of some sort, not a Japanese without a penny in his pockets.

But it was the kindness of the Jewish community that actually kept my family alive and safe. A Mr. Judkin, a man whom I had known in former times, arranged for me to have a house next to his in the Jewish quarter. I lived there for a year, and two of his friends, a certain Plotkin and Joseph Moiseeff, escorted my belongings to the new house so that they would not be stolen in transit. (Happily, I met both men again in Kfar Chabad on my trip to Israel in 1959.) Other kind people supplied us with small amounts of money or food from time to time. The names Klein, Malay Lehnenstein, and Birger stay in my memory. A man named Dagilaievsky, who owned a public bath, gave me a free pass.

Yet life for me was still risky. One day, as I was walking down Kitaiskaya Street, ignored by the soldiers, I was suddenly pounced upon by a ten-year-old boy. He caught my sleeve and clung to it in a determined manner, crying loudly, "Japanese, Japanese." I recognized him as a spotter for the Russian man-hunting squads, but unfortunately, in my first unthinking moment I answered instinctively in Japanese: "No, I'm not Japanese."

"Yes, yes, you spoke Japanese." The boy called out loudly that I was Japanese.

I tried to shake him off, but he hung onto my coat sleeve. Then Soviet soldiers began trotting up, waving their automatic rifles. I thought then that my end was near. A feeling of resignation passed over me, and I stared up at the calm blue of the sky. Then, as I looked down, I saw a military policeman's sentry box. Suddenly I decided, like the distressed bird, to fly into the bosom of the huntsman

for protection. I dragged the wretched Russian boy toward the sentry box, and I snapped out in Russian, "Who speaks English?"

After a few minutes of confusion a young lieutenant arrived; he spoke excellent English. "I am Professor Kotsuji," I insisted. "What is the meaning of this boy grabbing me like a common criminal?" I had once met the Soviet Consul Loginoff, and I decided to use his name. "I'm a professor, and I'm a friend of Consul Loginoff," I said boldly. The Russians have great respect for the word "professor" and the lieutenant relaxed his attitude toward me.

"Do you really know Consul Loginoff?" he asked. By this time several hundred Chinese civilians, drawn by the commotion, had gathered around.

"Of course. If you doubt me, call him up."

"When did you come to Manchuria?" he asked, still trying to feel me out.

"I have just come from Tokyo. I'm a historian, and someday I hope to have the chance to write about the good qualities of the Russian Occupation Army and not about its bad qualities."

This touched his pride. "All right, you can go."

I continued to act boldly and pushed through the crowd with my cane. I saw the Chinese staring at my face and heard them whisper, "What kind of Japanese is he?"

Without any leaders, the Japanese in Manchuria had become lost sheep. The army was gone, and the consul-general was in hiding. Finally I decided that something had to be done to put a halt to the rape and robbery. Working through my friend Judkin, I managed to get an interview with Consul Loginoff. The meeting was considered by the Russian to be important, for it was attended not only by

Consul Loginoff, but by Ivanoff, the Chief Staff Officer of the Red Army, along with an interpreter and two stenographers. I told them that I spoke for all the Japanese in Harbin, but that I was speaking as a scholar, not a diplomat. I pointed out that the Soviets could not expect to rule entirely by force, that they needed the good will of the people, and that they couldn't expect to get it unless rape and pillaging stopped. I then suggested that one Japanese ought to be appointed to the board of the South Manchuria Railway to act as a kind of liaison between government and the Japanese community.

The military staff man answered for the Soviets. "The bad behavior of the soldiers will cease in three days. As for the appointment to the South Manchuria Railway, that will have to be taken up with higher authorities."

The meeting changed nothing. I met twice again with the Russian officials, but nothing helped. Pillage was their program, and by the time they allowed the Chinese Communist Army in to take over the occupation, Manchuria was an empty house.

The arrival of the Chinese Communists was a great relief. They had suffered more at the hands of the Japanese than had the Russians, and they might have been expected to desire revenge. The reverse was true. Well-disciplined and of good moral conduct, they did not abuse the women or pillage to any large extent. It was true that there were occasional incidents about the countryside, where Chinese people revenged themselves on a specific person, but there was no general policy of vengeance. This is partly because as Asiatics they felt a closer kinship to the Japanese than the Russians had. Partly it was due to Chiang Kai-shek, who broadcast a message to all Chinese to return grace and

kindness for the damages they had suffered. Finally, it was due to the simple fact that China has an ancient culture built on the ethical system of Confucianism.

It might have been otherwise had the Chinese Nationalist Army taken over Harbin. Beaten back from the city shortly after the Communists took it over, the Chinese Nationalist Army began there its long retreat down to South China and exile in Formosa. Despite Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, the morale of the Nationalist Army was low and its morals even lower; it was defeated in spirit before it began fighting the Communists. Later, when the Japanese were liberated from Manchuria and passed through Nationalist Chinese lines in the process, the Nationalists had to be bribed to keep the train moving. They also demanded ten Japanese women for the use of their troops; fortunately the Japanese official in charge had been farsighted enough to bring with him ten prostitutes for this express purpose.

Even the Chinese Communists, though they controlled wholesale looting and rape, were not in a mood to be especially kind to the Japanese. Landowners—and those who owned businesses—in Manchuria were liable to be tried by so-called People's Courts and executed. No Japanese was allowed to operate a trade in a building: they had to work as street peddlers. Frequently enough, when a man grew slightly prosperous, the conquerors came and kicked his merchandise into the gutters. Once, when I was courageous enough to ask an official why he did such a thing, I was told that the defeated Japanese ought to look sorrowful and humble.

Not even in death did they show the Japanese any kindness. Japanese were dying by the hundreds from disease—mainly typhus. Due to a shortage of coffins, the bodies were

simply wrapped in thin kimonos, carried on a baggage cart to a huge pit, and flung in. Down in the pit stood a Chinese coolie, who then stole the kimono and broke the gold teeth out of the dead man's mouth. One Japanese mother found the kimono of her dead child being sold by a street merchant. In this respect we were lucky again. My daughter Julie fell ill with typhus, and lay sick with a fever of 104 degrees for almost two weeks. I was able to get a doctor to come only twice during this period. He showed me how to reduce her temperature with ice packs, and how to give her regular injections of camphor and digitalis. The child did not speak for a week; but her resistance was strong, and after twelve days her temperature began to drop.

During the first period of the occupation I managed to keep my family alive through the kindness of the people in the Jewish quarters and by selling my suits, each of which brought me two bushels of potatoes. Later, I worked with a man named Jinnaka, a professor of applied chemistry, who had invented a tasty synthetic whisky which he bottled as Scotch and exported to Russia. Disguised as a Tartar, I traded the whisky, and was able to make a little money.

For all Japanese in Manchuria, true hope was repatriation. We wanted to go home, for life under American occupation forces was far better than under the Chinese. We had, however, no grasp of what actually was going on in Japan. News from home was sketchy and more often than not inaccurate. We learned that the war was over through a brief radio message. We understood that the Emperor had killed himself. We knew about the atom bomb only months later, and we had no idea of its real significance or power. It was not until I actually set foot in Japan that I

understood the monstrous extent of its destruction. Thus, when a Colonel Bell appeared in Harbin in July, 1946, to negotiate repatriation for those of us still surviving in the Japanese colony, we were astonished but delighted.

Chapter Thirteen

ACCORDING TO THE REPATRIATION AGREEMENT WORKED OUT between the Americans and the Chinese Communists, each Japanese was assured of personal safety until he boarded ship at Kolotao. However, the Communists allowed the repatriated Japanese to take very little with them. One was permitted to carry only one extra set of clothes; no textile goods whatsoever except for a towel; no new shoes, writing paper, photographs or jewelry, no gold, nor anything of value. Such was the stern directive handed down by the Communist authorities. What made it worse was the fact that the examinations, which took place at Harbin's railway station, were in the hands of teen-age Chinese girls and their male supervisors. These girls were chosen from comparatively low classes. They were greedy and severe. They stole baked bread which the Japanese had prepared for their children. They also stole shoes and pretty kimonos. No

Japanese dared to object to such treatment because objection might end in indefinite detention. The attitude of the United States Army of Occupation was generous by comparison.

My wife had suffered from chronic hemorrhoids and was very pale. One of the girls who examined us assumed she was a bad woman because she did not have a lively face. The girl cross-examined her sharply. I began to explain to the girl what was wrong with my wife. I showed her a special certificate which I had obtained beforehand from one of the Communist officials who had once studied at the Kyoto Imperial University. I also showed her my card which bore my Doctor of Divinity title. I did everything to explain that our family had served humanity steadfastly. The following conversation took place:

"What is theology?" she asked.

"Theology is the study of God."

"What is your god? War? Trade?"

"Neither. My God is the all-governing God of the universe. God is benevolent like your parents, and his goodness is perfect. When you were a feeble baby, God watched over you, and so you grew up to be a nice girl. Will you be kind as our God of loving-kindness is?"

During this conversation I gazed deeply into her eyes. She looked bored, half-understanding, half-puzzled. She said, "Can't help, all right." My spirit had won her over to our side.

We were required to walk part of the way, and most of the time we slept on the ground or on plain wooden floors. I had served as Colonel Bell's interpreter during the nego-

tiations, and I had hoped that my elder daughter Mary, who had an American birth certificate, would be allowed to fly immediately to Japan; but there were no planes. Transportation of any kind was in short supply; we could carry very little, and most of our possessions were simply left behind in the hands of friends.

Fortunately, we had a helper. He was a young Japanese soldier who had been captured by the Chinese Communists at the end of the war and put into a labor battalion. Along with a group of fellow Japanese he had escaped, walking for days through the Manchurian wilderness to Harbin. He was, of course, a fugitive, and I had taken him into my house as a member of my family. Out of gratitude, he served as a guard and helper on the repatriation journey. He not only carried most of our baggage for us but volunteered to do the task work levied on me by the Chinese. We left Harbin in September and traveled by train and by foot for a month. For all that time we had neither blankets nor mats, and we ate bad food of which there was very little. By the grace of Almighty God, we arrived a month later in Hakata, on the Japanese island of Kyushu, alive and transported with joy to be home again after a year and a half of exile.

We immediately went to my eldest brother Genjiro's house in Nishinomiya, a town near Kobe. Here we learned that an old prophecy had been fulfilled. My mother had died in my absence. Just as she had always believed, her youngest son was not at her deathbed. She was seventy-eight years old. She had not been eating for months, and she was suffering from malnutrition. When she heard of the mass murder of so many Japanese in Manchuria she feared

that I had died also, and she could not stand the shock. She died, calling my name, "Setschan."

I am a reasonable and not a superstitious man. Yet curiously, I now found that as my mother lay dying in my brother's house, in Manchuria I had been overwhelmed by sudden, longing thoughts of her, poignant to the point of pain. It had been some time before I could shake the feeling off.

From Nishinomiya we went to Tokyo, with no idea whatever of what we were going to do, where we were going to sleep. Postwar Japan was a mass of confusion. Change was everywhere, some of it simply due to defeat, some of it brought in by the Americanization of the country under occupation. Unemployment was high, housing was short. Landlords did not always charge rent, since the feeling prevailed that you could not have people living in the streets just because they could not get work; for that reason we were able to get rooms for nothing. I found a job with the American Red Cross and began the long, arduous task of remaking my life.

The most impressive part of that time was the peaceful and magnanimous American administration of Japan in the postwar period, especially to one who had seen how horrible an occupation army can be. Japan was extraordinarily fortunate in its conquerors. The dignity and goodness of General Douglas MacArthur captured the minds of the Japanese, pervading the whole country, even the smallest hamlets. To display one of those two qualities is easy; to possess them both is something only a rare personality can manage. MacArthur's dismissal by President Truman was a grave shock to the Japanese. I understood Truman's posi-

tion better than most Japanese could, due to my familiarity with American constitutional procedures, but even so I was astonished. Truman's action cost the United States much prestige in Japanese eyes.

However, despite the admirable work of the American administration, my own position remained poor. There is still considerable unemployment in Japan, and of course there was far more immediately after the war. Furthermore, it is extremely difficult for older men to get work in Japan at any time. It is expected that a man work his way up; joblessness among the intellectuals, whose careers were broken by the war, is still acute.

My English was of course useful, and I was able, finally, to get a job with an import-export firm, where I worked from 1947 to 1950. Then I worked briefly as an advisor to the United States Navy in Tokyo, until I became ill with pleurisy and had to resign. The disease plagued me off and on for seven years, and after 1950 I did not hold a regular job, but worked part-time in export-import trade. I did various kinds of writing on the side. I wanted to teach, but there were times when there was no demand in Japan for Hebrew courses.

Yet throughout this time my Hebrew studies were my deepest concern. Everything that had gone before, reaching deep into my childhood, seemed to point toward a conversion to Judaism. Such an act, it seemed to me, was the natural culmination of a long sequence of events, beginning with my discovery of the Old Testament, intensified through my work with the Jews in Manchuria and the help I had given the Jewish refugees in Kobe, and climaxed by the life-saving assistance the Jews of Harbin had given me

in return. My life had become bound up with this people; conversion seemed inevitable.

Some of my Jewish friends questioned my decision. Why adopt a religion which is so likely to bring troubles and sorrow? My response was that I would come to Judaism with joy and pride. From my suffering for the Jewish cause, my attachment to Judaism had grown and grown, and with it had grown my affection for the Jewish people. My unshaken belief in One God lived together in my heart with the love of His people. It seemed only natural for me to become one of them.

Yet formidable obstacles stood in my way. For one thing, there was the question whether the Jewish people would receive me. Jews are divided on the question of converts. Secondly there was the problem of getting to Jerusalem, where I wanted to make a pilgrimage. In the years after the war passports were very difficult for Japanese to get. Then again, I was not in a financial position to make such a trip. I was beginning to feel discouraged. I was in my mid-fifties, and I was worried that I might not live long enough to find my religious home. Abraham was circumcised at ninety-nine. I was considerably younger but my health was not as good as Abraham's.

Then one day I received a letter from Dr. Israel Ben-Zeev, president of the *Agudah Lema'an Gerei Zedek*—the World Union for the Propagation of Judaism. It was dated March 20, 1957, and it said simply that if I wished to come to Jerusalem for my conversion, they would extend every assistance.

I began to work on my passport problem vigorously, and late in 1957 I received my passport. Two obstacles had been overcome, but my financial troubles continued. I simply

did not have the money to finance a long trip. A year passed, and then another, and suddenly I became sixty. I recalled the proverb: Larks do not fall ready-roasted into the mouth. *Agudah Lema'an Gerei Zedek* was eager to facilitate my conversion. The rest was up to me.

It was my wife who suggested I mortgage our house. "Life is short," she said. "When you want something, you should have it, regardless of the criticism of friends." So I mortgaged the house. I did not know what would happen later. I did not calculate like an accountant, but I placed my faith in God and went ahead with my plans. Without my wife's encouragement, perhaps I would not have done it. If she had been opposed to me I would have been troubled in my heart; but she knew that conversion was my destiny, and she was my support. Thus, on August 8, 1959, without telling anyone but my family, I went out to Haneda Airport in Tokyo and boarded a plane for Israel. I felt, suddenly, as the plane fled down the runway, that I had embarked upon a brand new life.

As I had no particular desire to visit any of the places along the way in the midst of the summer heat—cities such as New Delhi and Tehran—I flew direct, nonstop, over the great Thar Desert, over the ocean, finally over the Mediterranean Sea. At dusk on August 9 the plane touched down at Lydda Airport outside Jerusalem. Friends met and drove me up the winding Shephelah highway to the Holy City. Without sleep for thirty-six hours, I dozed off in the car. I dreamed I was climbing up a silver ladder; my friends awoke me and said, "Look, Jerusalem." There on the mountaintop across a valley were the lights of the city shining in the dark. I was in the land of Isaiah.

My friends took me to the Hotel Ron. When I awoke in the morning the sky above the Holy City was absolutely cloudless, absolutely blue, and the sunshine was dazzling. I went out and walked the streets where Isaiah had walked. The morning was so clear, so quiet; I saw the city through the eyes of love. (Later in my stay, as fall began to come, the sky began to fill with clouds a little more each day, and I understood for the first time the line from Isaiah 18:4, ". . . like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest." It is impossible to have a complete understanding of some of the Biblical verses until you have seen the land where they were written. Isaiah especially is filled with the weather of Jerusalem.)

That morning, too, I heard two women conversing in Hebrew. I was thrilled by the sound: it was the first time I had heard the living language spoken and of course I could not understand it. Modern Hebrew is much different from the Biblical tongue.

Later that first day my friends took me sight-seeing and then to meet Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Toledano, Minister of Religious Affairs. I had not expected to meet anyone, and I was wearing a blue aloha sportshirt, for which I apologized.

"Don't worry about it," Toledano said. "After all, man was born naked." His kindness was typical of the people of Israel.

My friends had arranged for me to stay in the private house of Mr. Mouyon instead of a hotel, which was a great blessing. How long I would stay I did not know. In the end, I remained there four months. I had two major tasks to accomplish. One was to prepare myself for the rigorous

examination I would have to undergo before I could be converted. The second was to learn to speak modern Hebrew. I daily attended Ulpan Ezion, a Hebrew school, for this purpose. I tried to practice conversation as much as possible.

Here the children were a blessing and a delight. To watch them at play in the evening was a charming sight. A scene so reminiscent of Biblical illustrations that I was cast into the past. It was from the children that I got the real sense of the language. Their speech was fresh, idiomatic, and enthusiastic, without the stiff formality sometimes found in adult talk. Moreover, they were the friendliest children in the world, showing no rudeness about my foreign appearance. Once I made a visit to Dr. Zerach Warhaftig, former Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs and now full minister, a man who had been among the Kobe refugees as one of the leaders. For fun, I taught his son and daughter to count to ten in Japanese—*ichi, ni, san* being one, two, three. A week or so later I happened to meet a group of schoolchildren on King George Street. One of them saw me and raising her hand shouted, "*Ichi, ni, san.*" Instantly, the others fell in with her, reciting the numbers in unison. There was nothing jeering about it; it was a salute, a welcome.

Another time, when I was strolling along the beach at Tel Aviv I fell in with a group of young men and children who were curious about Japan. They asked me many questions, which I encouraged for the practice it gave my Hebrew. Finally one the the boys said to me, "Sir, perhaps you did not know that there is a famous scholar from Japan now visiting in Jerusalem."

"Is that so?" I said. "I will certainly see him without fail."

"I saw his picture in the paper," the boy continued. "He looks like you."

"Is that so?" I asked soberly. "Isn't it surprising?"

Children are the flowers of the culture of the home, society, or state. By its flowers the health of the tree can be judged. For this reason I tried to have as much contact with the children as I could, and from those little teachers I learned much. From them I felt the real pulse of the country and got the real sense of the language.

Another of the great pleasures abounding for me in Israel was the renewal of old friendships, some of them going back twenty years to my days with the South Manchuria Railway. There is in the suburbs of Tel Aviv a settlement called *Shikum Yoz'ei Sin* composed of Jews who have lived in China and Manchuria. I was asked to attend the dedication of their new synagogue, at which Rabbi Toledano spoke. I found so many old friends there that I was dazed with joy. When Rabbi Toledano finished speaking I joined in the ovation, and then suddenly I heard somebody saying, "And now Dr. Kotsuji will say a few words."

I was embarrassed. My modern Hebrew was very shaky and I would have liked to refuse, but with the eyes of so many friends upon me I could not. So I stood and managed a few halting words about the relationship between Japan and Israel and ended by saying that I would be the tie which binds them both. I was so excited, I barely remember my own words, but considering the ovation I received, apparently I did well enough.

I met another old friend, David Goorevitch, the fur

dealer from Harbin who had helped me in so many ways. He was living in Migdal Emek, and when he heard I was in Jerusalem, he traveled fifty miles to see me and fulfill an old obligation. In Harbin I had asked him to hide a classic woven picture of some value. He kept it in a trunk, but later, when I left Harbin, he couldn't find it. It had since turned up, and now he brought it to me. I took it, for the sake of his warm friendship, but I gave him another picture as a token of appreciation.

Although seeing so many old friends again was a thrilling experience, my real business in Israel was my conversion. And on September 9, 1959, I went to the Beth-Din, the rabbinate court, to be examined. The examination took place in a rather nondescript office in Jaffe Road in Jerusalem. The three examining rabbis were formal and austere in their manner, and conducted the questioning with utmost seriousness.

Why, they asked me, did I choose to believe in Judaism?

"My entire past life answers that question," I said. "When there is no God but one, what could I believe otherwise than that the Lord our God is that One?"

They were also concerned about the reaction of my wife. How did she feel about my conversion? "In Japan," I explained, "what the husband decides, the wife follows."

The questioning took about thirty minutes, and then I was asked to wait outside for another half hour while they deliberated. When I re-entered the room the austerity and gravity were gone. They were smiling and cheerful, and they said they were happy to accept me into Judaism. Ten days later I went to the Sha'arei Zedek Hospital, where Dr. Nahum Cook performed the circumcision under the bless-

ing of a number of high officials. There on September 20, 1959, by the name of Abraham Ben Abraham I was embraced into the fold of B'nai Abraham. Forty-seven years of wandering in search of my religious home was over.

Chapter Fourteen

SINCE THAT MOMENTOUS DAY IN SEPTEMBER, 1959, I HAVE been asked many times why I became a Jew. I was not converted by one single event, but by many years of acquaintance with this great religion. The sum of my studies, of the events of my life, of all my contacts with the Old Testament culture brought me to Judaism. The prophetic spirit inspired me; faith and reverence led me to my spiritual home.

After my conversion, I spent three months in Israel, lecturing all over the country. Then, on December 8, I flew via El Al Airlines to the United States, my heart full of boundless gratitude toward my friends in Israel, especially Dr. Ben-Zeev, who did so much to further my cause. The Jewish Information Society had just been founded in the United States. They wanted me to speak at the inaugural meeting, and after that, tour throughout America

under the auspices of the Jewish Center Lecture Bureau. For eight months I traveled up and down the country—and even into Mexico. I was always warmly received, not because I was a famous man, but because of the great interest among American Jews in the question of conversion.

Then, in the summer of 1960, after a year of separation, I returned to my homeland and my family, a new man. The next year I established the Institute of Hebrew Culture in Japan, which, during another speaking tour of America in 1962 and 1963, was incorporated under American laws. The institute is the medium through which I hope to disseminate the Jewish faith in Japan. My task, I now believe, is to inaugurate a new branch in the stream of Jewish history. I shall try to establish a source in Japan from which a new river of Judaism may one day flow.

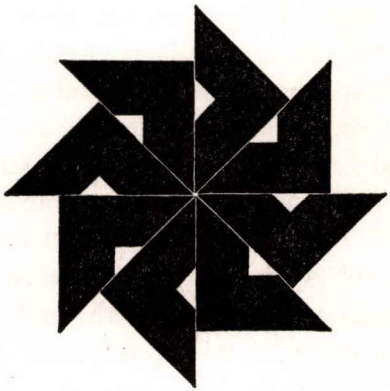
I have often been asked by many Jewish friends throughout the world which of the three versions of Judaism—Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform—I intend to espouse in Japan. To that I answer, none of them. I do not like schism, and I am convinced that the difference between the three is the matter of *minhagim*, the observing practice. Because I was converted in Jerusalem, the Orthodox customs are natural to me, but the Judaism I introduce will not be described as any of the three: It will be a genuine, living Judaism, which will take into consideration the special nature of the Japanese mind.

My Jewish friends also query me about my approach to missionary work. Orthodox Jews are inclined to oppose missions, and if they are thinking of the coercive type of missionary work practiced by some Christians, I fully agree. However, we Jewish people should not neglect to glorify

the Great Name of the Lord among other peoples. What I plan to do, then, is simply to spread knowledge of Judaism throughout Japan. My program is tripartite. First, I will develop a Jewish library in Tokyo. Since so many educated Japanese already know English, we will be able to avoid having to translate vast amounts of work. I have been promised books by some publishers already. Second, I intend to publish in Japanese as much and as often as I can on the subject of Judaism and Jewish history. Third, I expect to lecture continually. Thus will I serve to glorify God. I believe in the power of truth to convince. So it will be with Judaism. I don't expect to convert vast numbers of Japanese. I am not going to urge Judaism on my countrymen. I will simply give them truth; and perhaps in a century's time, that truth will spread itself.

My act of homage to Jerusalem, the Holy City, has determined my life, not only since my conversion but during the many years before. I am conscious today of a single radiant fact—that I am an avowed Jew. This little seed of a faith that I am in Japan has a great power to live, for where grass withers and flowers fade, the word of our God abides. May the divine history of the Lord Almighty in the land of Japan be now declared; may the Holy One bless this enterprise, and may the herald proclaim:

> *"Out of Zion shall go forth the law,*
> *And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."*



THE CREST OF THE KOTSUJI FAMILY

(Continued from front flap)

It is the story of Dr. Kotsuji's struggles, his challenges and triumphs, and of the people who sustained him, as he resolutely followed the tortuous route from Tokyo to Jerusalem, from spiritual doubt to spiritual comfort and certainty.

ABRAHAM KOTSUJI lives near Tokyo. Japan's leading Hebraist, he teaches at the Institute of Hebrew Culture there, which he founded, and is currently at work on a Japanese-Hebrew Grammar.

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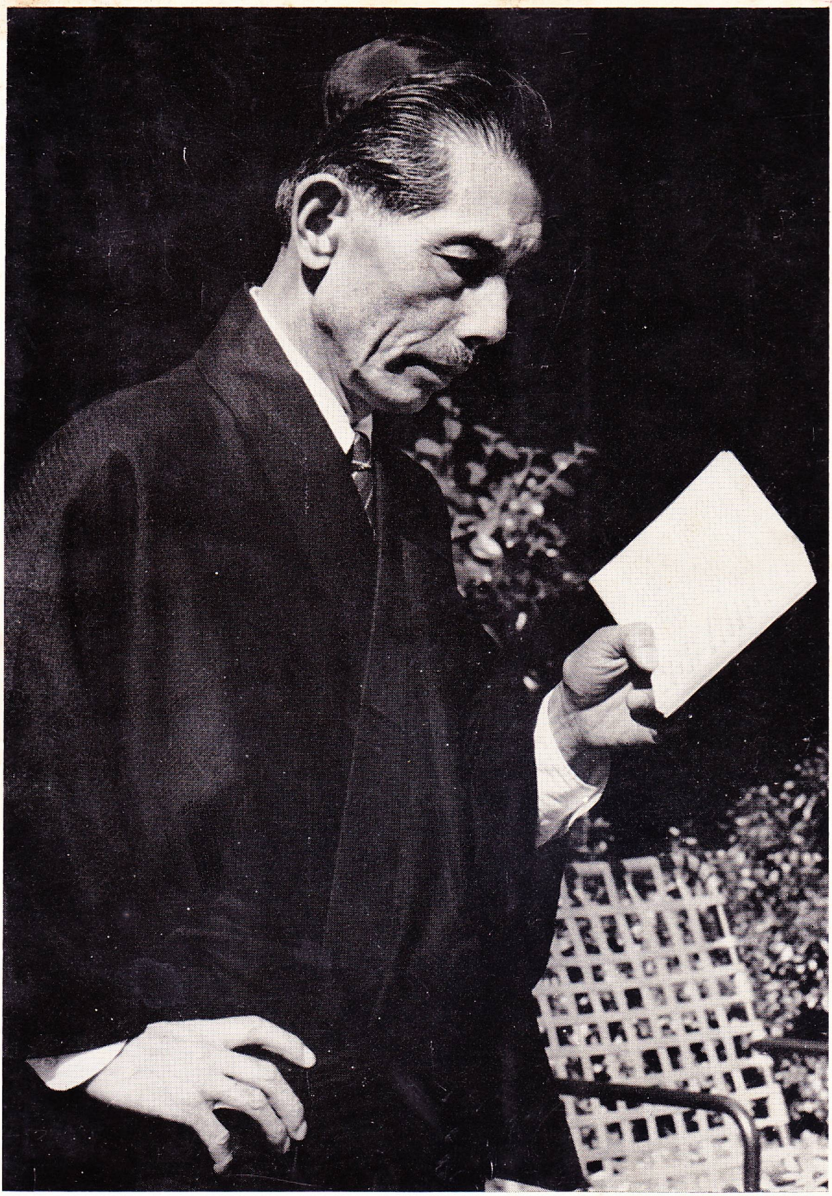

Jack Schneider

ABRAHAM KOTSUJI, wearing the traditional Japanese kimono and the Jewish yarmulke, reading from the Hebrew Book of Prayers.