SOLITUDE IN THE PLAZA

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Chapter I

The teletype clicked incessantly, beating out a tattoo, as news flowed in every minute or two.

"Communist task force including five tanks……Hey, Doi, what's the Japanese for 'task force'?"

"It was an American Navy term during the war. I think we translated it *'kidobutai'*……"

"Oh. Task……no, *kidobutai* including five enemy tanks, o.k. then?"

Haraguchi, an assistant editor, and Doi were talking. Kigaki, sitting nearby, looked up quickly when he heard the word 'enemy'. *Enemy? Why 'enemy'? Is the North Korean task force an enemy of Japan?* he thought. "Hey, wait a minute. Are we *supposed* to call the North Koreans an enemy force? Or does the original say 'enemy'?"

Soneda, East Asia editor, was sitting with his feet up on the table. He was also liaison officer for the paper and had earned the nickname of Mr. Official Business because he was always

taking foreign correspondents and visitors to geisha houses for parties, explaining that this was all part of his official duties as liaison man. As he stretched his legs in front of him on the table, his loud socks showed beneath the cuffs of a fancy Palm Beach suit which he always proudly explained that he had gotten in Saigon during the war. Without moving his head, he glanced sideways at the three—Kigaki, Haraguchi, and Doi—and said, "Use whatever translation fits the context." Then he got up and left the Editorial room by the back door.

When the door had closed behind him, Mikuni said, spitting out the words, "Thers's a fine guy for you. That damned Official Business has gotten scared. 'Use whatever translation fits the context!' That's a fine business. What nonsense!"

Kigaki turned and looked closely at the thirty-year-old Mikuni, since the latter usually spoke but little. But Kigaki couldn't detect any ripple of emotion in the face of his colleague. Mikuni, a dictionary in one hand, continued translating the MacArthur statement which he had been working on. The thought crossed Kigaki's mind, 'I wonder if this fellow Mikuni might be a Party member.' But no, it didn't seem probable that a Communist would be working on a newspaper which was noted for its reactionary tendencies.

Kigaki returned to his translation of a Hong Kong dispatch which he had been doing for the evening edition. The teletype had reported that the Chinese Communists were making concentrated efforts to buy munitions through Hong Kong and Macao and that oil was even being smuggled into Communist

China from Formosa. As he read the dispatch, Kigaki thought about the perverseness with which events had been deepening Britain's dilemma, since the Korean War had broken out after she had already recognized Communist China. He kept on translating until he came to the word 'commitment' and put down his pencil. He could not afford to waste any time since he had only 15 minutes before the deadline for the second evening edition, but the word stared up from the ticker tape at him and burned itself into his brain. "Commit—give in trust, pledge, do, perpetrate, imprison." Like a machine, his brain drew out the Japanese equivalents one by one. But soon the automatic process was completed, and the machine was running down. Suddenly the question ran through his mind, *'Is my job a kind of 'commitment'?'* This made a chill run up his spine, although it was not the first time that the thought had occurred to him. The word 'commitment' had stung him sharply; and, coming on top of the discussion about the translation of the North Korean force as an 'enemy' force, it had made him realize more clearly the vacuum in his own beliefs. But the deadline was getting close. He swallowed hard and picked up the pencil again. Finishing the translation, he handed it to a copy boy and leaned back in his chair. Behind him someone was speaking, using American slang.

"What's the good word, Doi?"

"Nothing. Everything's bad."

There was no mistaking the fact that the man who had addressed Doi was Japanese—you would guess by looking at him that he had lived in a house with paper screens and eaten with

chopsticks ever since he was a baby—but he was using American slang and sporting a bright green and yellow Aloha shirt. Doi was a Nisei, twenty seven or eight years of age, although he looked much younger. He had gotten a jo') as a reporter on the papar, since he could not go back to America because he had been an interpreter for the Japanese *Kempei Tai* during the war. *That was also commitment of a sort*, Kigaki thought as he listened to the two.

They began talking about girls, still speaking in English, and laughed exaggeratedly as they imitated the gestures and movements of eyes and shoulders of foreigners. The gestures looked natural when Doi made them, but Mr. Aloha-shirt, whose face was wrinkled and tannd, looked as awkward as a kitten playing with one paw raised in the air. He was continuing the conversation with an accunt of the charms of the girls whom he had had in Manila during the war. When at a loss for words, he filled in the gaps with meaningless slang expressions as he talked.

Just before the deadline for the third evening edition, the low sound of a buzzer reverberated in the room, signalling the issue of an extra. People gathered quickly around one of the desks. There had been a Government announcement about the banning of the Communist Party. Haraguchi picked up a phone and, in a voice too low for the others to hear, told the behind-the-scenes story about the banning and the 'unfavorable' war situation on the sectors of the Korean front. Kigaki thought that he was probably talking to someone in a high political or financial circle. Haraguchi picked up the receiver again soon after he had put it down and called a magazine office, telling

them that his current affairs column was finished and that someone might come to get it. Then, putting down the receiver, he called, "Boy! Manuscript paper!" and began to write rapidly with his ball point pen. Biting onto a huge briar pipe that would have looked more natural stuck in the larger face of a Westerner, and blowing thick clouds of smoke incessantly, he scribbled with furious speed and finished 16 or 17 pages within half an hour.

Kigaki pictured in his mind the process by which the lines on the manuscript paper would be changed into type and hundreds of thousands of copies would be printed and sent to every corner of Japan. *But*, he thought, *newspaper articles, like the ones I have been translating since this morning, will more nearly bear the stamp of truth in the eyes of the people, since they will not be signed.* The word 'commitment' flashed into his mind again and he muttered to himself, "I might have known it……"

The editor-in-chief telephoned from the conference room to say that there would be a meeting of all members of the editorial staff to discuss policy in covering the Korean War. All the permanent members of the department left for the meeting, leaving Kigaki temporarily in charge of the desk. No important news came in for half an hour or so after they had gone and Kigaki, putting his feet up on the desk, sat there musing. *Yes, I might have known……*

He thought back over the events of the last two years. Two years ago he had quit the Sekai newspaper office and since then he had managed to earn his living by doing odd jobs as a

translator with the help of Kyoko, the girl with whom he lived. With the outbreak of the war in Korea, every newspaper had become swamped with work and short handed in dealing with the numerous announcements on the war situation from MacArthur's G. H. Q. Thus Kigaki had been called to the Towa newspaper office as a temporary assistant.

He had not regretted quitting the Sekai office two years ago. Newly established after the war, it had soon been confronted with a financial crisis and reached the point where it could not continue operation without getting new capital from doubtful sources. At long meetings held for several nights in succession, the workers' union had discussed the question of this new capital. It was a foregone conclusion that the money would be accepted, but just before the decisive vote at the last meeting a young reporter had stood up suddenly.

"I have an important question to ask," he said. "Does the chairman imply that our company is in such bad shape that it must accept money from one of the purgees who drove us to that damned war, fattened themselves on war profits, and now are waiting, with glaring eyes like savage beasts stalking their prey, to strike again? Would the investor enter the company as a director and influence our editorial policy? I have no proof, but there is a rumor that this investor is involved in the Shinko Electric Company scandal. His associates are being tried now. Is this true? These questions are important."

Kigaki remembered that the Japanese public had deeply shaken by the Shinko case, although he had forgotten what the chairman's reply had been. Perhaps the reply had been too vague

and evasive to fix itself in his mind. Throughout the Business and Advertising departments, and even in the Editorial Department, voices had whispered, "That young fellow is too big for his britches. Splitting hairs at a time like this! He must be a Party member." Actually, the youth who had asked the question was not a Communist, although Kigaki had also once thought that he seemed like the kind of young man who might enter the Party. Later this same youth had surprised everyone by becoming a convert to Catholicism. Kigaki himself had not spoken a word at the meeting.

With the induction of new capital the paper had stopped being an ordinary newspaper and had published mainly financial news and articles. Hence there was no more work for Kigaki to do. At the time that he resigned he had not made up his own mind whether he was against the induction of the new capital or not. Actually, his immediate motive was to collect the severance pay which employees got when they resigned, for he had been having difficulty in paying the rent on even the one small room where he lived with Kyoko. More than twenty people had retired at that time, but the unmarried youth who had raised the question at the workers' meeting was the only one to state his opposition to the new capital as the reason for his resignation. The others had families and couldn't take the chance of being considered troublemakers even if they had the same reason for resigning.

Some people say that the mechanized side of our society deprives human beings of their joy in living. For many people this may be true, but for Kigaki it was not so. After reading the teletype reports from distant places one by one and translating

them into words to be set down on clean white sheets of paper and then printed, then to hear the groan of the presses, and to feel with his whole body the shaking of the floor under his feet as the presses rolled—these things gave Kigaki a strange sensation of physical pleasure. When Mr. Takahashi, a high executive at the Sekai office who had frequently helped Kigaki during the two years he had been without a regular job, had called and asked him to take a temporary job with the Towa; Kigaki had deliberated for some time. The call of the groaning presses shook some frail part of his heart and disposed him to break the vow he had made to himself not to work on a newspaper again until Japan had regained complete independence. Then, too, he was under obligation to Mr. Takahashi and it would be just a temporary job anyway. Rationalizing and blaming his decision partly on fate, he had gone to the Towa office. That was ten days ago and here he was now, calmly smoking as he translated the war communiques which told of bitter fighting, and muttering to himself, "I should have known……"

A telephone call came from the reception office. "There's a foreigner here from the O. A. News Service and the liaison staff are all at the meeting, aren't they? What shall I do with him?"

Kigaki said at once, "Send him in," and then was surprised at his own answer. As a temporary helper, he was not in a position to speak officially. But his desire to talk with an American about the Korean War got the better of him. At this critical point in the war, what would be the opinion of someone whose country was directly involved?

He went to the next room and picked up a foreign paper from a desk while he was waiting for the visitor. It was a Swiss newsper, the Gazette de Geneve. The type was large and easy to read, in contrast to the crowded appearance of the type in Japanese newspapers, and the pages were larger than those of the average Japanese paper. The Swiss paper seemed to have the same articles on the front and back pages, one of which was printed in French, the other in German. As Kigaki stared at the big letters spelling out 'Coree' on the front page, they did not seem to have the same meaning that the familiar 'Korea, or 'Chosen' had·····

It looks well laid out, he thonght as he looked at the first page, which was devoted to various columns and the literary news of Paris. His eyes lighted on the headline, 'M. Sartre Argues with M. Mauriac'. Though he knew of Sartre only by reputation, he got interested in the article and began reading. As he read he took his feet down from the desk and sat up straight.

The article was much more plain spoken than the usual friendly discussions in literary circles. Sartre, together with Jean Cassou, André Gide, Vercors, Aragon and Jean Gaineau—all writers and poets whom Kigaki identified as 'progressive' or 'left wing'—appealed for peace and urged the French Government to act independently in recognizing Communist China and advocating her participation in the U.N. They asserted that this would help to lessen the tensions on the international scene and would second the efforts of India to promote peace. Mauriac, the Catholic writer, had bitterly opposed their appeal. Kigaki

wondered what basis Mauriac had for his objections to these proposals and read on……According to Mauriac's argument, French 'independence' was an illusion in the light of the present. If the Pentagon regarded the assertion of French 'independence' as an indication of French disunity, France would be left open to annihilation by the Soviet mechanized divisions. If Sartre and Gide are able to live and die as free men and write what they think is the truth, calling themselves indepent Frenchmen, it is only because the Unitd Nations, backed by the military power of America, makes it possible for them to do so. It is really thanks to America that they are free to carry on their work. It would be a fatal mistake to weaken America's trust in France by advocating the entry of Communist China into the U. N. or advocating an independent course of action for France……

Kigaki remembered that he had frequently read very similar articles in Japanese magazines. Wouldn't the case be quite the same if the words 'France' and 'French' were replaced with the words 'Japan' and 'Japanese' in Mauriac's argument? Sometimes Kigaki wondered if he himself might be more a nationalist than an internationalist, for somewhere in his mind there was the stubborn feeling that belief in the independence of one's country was indivisibly linked with the independence of one's own spirit.

As the cylinder presses started up in the basement, the naked cement floors began to shake like the decks of a ship powered by diesel engines. If the news in the paper could only solve the world's problems and soothe the anxieties of the people, how welcome this vibration would seem! "Newspapers, fly like doves of peace!" had been a slogan of some previous

Newspaper Week. Kigaki, suddenly remembering the slogan, still felt a chill after he had wiped the cold sweat from his back. *Even in this heat, everything I think about makes me feel cold,* he thought. 'Cold, cold,' he kept repeating to himself and then, all at once, as a result of reading Mauriac's article he realized what had worried him about the words 'commit' and 'commitment'. Actually, the newspaper he had come to work on was clearly on Mauriac's side. At the same time he remembered hearing a rumor a few days before that the Japanese magazines which had favored the point of view of Sartre and Gide had had to stop publication. *The fact that I am working on this newspaper means that I have committed myself,* he thought, *and that I have taken Mauriac's side against the others.*

Kigaki wiped the sweat away again. He thought back to the night a few days before when he had gone to Yokohama with Chang Kuo-shou, a Chinese Nationalist correspondent whom he had first become acquainted with during his detention in Shanghai after the war. They had seen many munitions workers who had gotten drunk on the extra wages paid them during the 'special procurement demand' boom. And he also remembered that Chang had said when he saw them, "Look! The Japanese are really happy about the war!" The workers were drunk and carefree, indicating that they had plenty of money in their pockets, but Kigaki failed to note the feeling of exultation that Chang had alluded to. Kigaki had also overheard fragments of a conversation: "That damn bomb……It slipped from my shoulder and I thought sure as hell I'd drop it……Scared? I guess so." In the eyes of this worker Kigaki seemed to find uneasiness,

discontentment and a kind of apologetic rationalization, although he realized that this might be nothing more than a reflection of his own state of mind. *However,* Kigaki thought, *they haue committed themselves and gone a step over the borderline by actually carrying bombs, no matter what they may think about it. But where is the borderline? For me does it mean not going to thenewspaper office—that is, not actually aligning myself with a social organization—but working at home translating mystery stories, popular novels, adventure stories, World War II memoirs, and other jobs that are easy to get and good ways of making money? Is that a way to keep my hands clean and make a living without crossing the borderline? No, that can't be the way.* He thought of Kato, one of his neighbors who had been purged because he was on the staff of a Communist newspaper. He often came to Kigaki's to sell American and English made coffee, cheese, butter, soap, cloth, and other products. Whenever he came he made a point of saying that the goods were not from the black market but were legal Army surplus although he didn't seem to be trying to justify himself. *It is a bitter blow to Japan's own industry,* Kigaki thought, *that such goods are being sold, although they are both cheap and of good quality.*

The shouts of newsboys selling extras came up from the street below. News of the suppression of the Communist party was spreading. *But there must be some people who don't think of it as suppression.* Knowing that whatever he might think about, his train of thought would not go in a straight line but would bounce off in another direction, like a bullet ricocheting in a closed room, Kigaki was about to wander over to

the window for a breath of air when he heard a cheerful, hearty voice behind him saying, "Hello. Is everybody out?" He turned around and found that Howard Hunt of O. A., the foreign correspondent whom he had met ten days ago during his first day at the office, had placed his hands on the back of Kigaki's chair.

Indicating the desk of the editor with a nod of his head, Hunt asked where everybody was as he wiped the sweat from his face and neck with his muscular arm which showed below his short-sleeved shirt. When Kigaki told him that they were at a meeting but should be back in ten minutes and suggested that he wait, Hunt first nodded again in agreement and then answered, "All right".

Hunt drew a chair over beside Kigaki's and looked over his shoulder at the Swiss newspaper he had been reading. Muttering sarcastically "Sartre, Sartre……Is Sartre famous even in Japan?", he read through the controversy between Sartre and Mauriac which Kigaki had just finished reading and said, "The French are getting confused."

"No, the French are just thinking," Kigaki replied.

"They might be defeated while they are stopping to think," Hunt said.

Kigaki felt the keenness of this answer and was glad that they had gotten started on a topic that promised to be much more interesting than the usual subjects with which people pass the time of day. "Even if they run the risk of being attacked, they must think the thing through," he said. "Judging by this article, Mauriac seems to be scared, but Sartre and Gide seem to be

thinking carefully about the future. A happy future can't come out of fear or one-sided thinking which makes the gap between the two sides wider."

Hunt, shrugging his shoulders slightly as if to say, 'You are too argumentative,' began another topic. "I've just flown back from the Korean front. What do the Japanese really think about the war?"

"According to public opinion polls, run the same way that those in your country are, our feeling of dependence upon America has increased considerably."

"Why is that?" Hunt asked, apparently wanting to hear Kigaki answer the question, although the reason was obvious. His lips were slightly parted in a faint smile as he asked the question, but there was no merriment in the eyes that had looked upon the scene of massacre in Korea only a few hours before.

"Fear of war! Hate of being conquered and occupied!" Kigaki said.

"Didn't America conquer and occupy your country?"

"Yes. But once was enough. We don't want an encore!"

"But don't conquest and occupation result inevitably from war, whether you like it or not? If you don't want an encore, why don't you try to defend yourselves without depending on America?"

"Well, for one thing, armament is prohibited by our new constitution. And then anyway, no country except Russia and America is strong enough to make the decision for war or peace by itself. That's why France is stopping to think and Japan is thinking too. If Sartre's and Gide's ideas are so repellent to

Mauriac, it is probably because Mauriac's thinking is based on fear. Fear can shake anyone's confidence in his own standard of judgment. If there is no common standard of judgment in the world, all discussion will be looked on as merely a challenge to the opposite side and not a chance for honest debate. If this happens, reason will no longer play its part in human life and history will whirl automatically into catastrophe, pushing aside man's aspirations and his prayers ....."

Feeling for each word carefully as he spoke in the language which was not his native one, Kigaki became aware that his heart was gradually beating faster. He realized that to Hunt this might be merely daily conversation, not an important discussion, but why was his own heart beating faster? Was it perhaps because he too had become haunted by fear and lost confidence in his own standard of jugment?

As Kigaki stopped speaking, Hunt, guessing that he might pause for a minute, offered him a cigarette. Kigaki, conscious of wanting to form his own opinion without being influenced by Hunt in any way, refused Hunt's cigarette and took out one from his own pack. When he had lighted it and taken a drag or two, he heard Hunt's voice saying, "And then.....?" Hunt was wiping the sweat from his face again with his hairy arm as he urged Kigaki to continue. Kigaki felt somewhat as if he were being cross-examined, but at the same time he was anxious to have a chance to think these things out.

As he sank into meditation without a word, still trying to frame an answer, Hunt also cast his eyes down—*the eyes*, Kigaki thought, *that must have seen so much bloodshed in Korea*—and

placed his big hands on his knees, as if he were trying to soothe some wound in his heart. Then he suddenly broke the silence, saying deliberately, "The Korean situation is serious, but the American Army will never be thrown into the sea. While Americans are shedding blood, Kigaki, they are giving you time to think—and I am thinking too." Hunt said this in the frank, straightforward manner peculiar to non-Oriental people.

Then he explained that he had intended to see Soneda, the editor, first, but since the meeting was lasting so long and 'everybody seemed to be thinking' he would see the president first. He shook hands with Kigaki, walked away a few steps, and then returned again to say, "I'm celebrating my thirty-fourth birthday tomorrow. How about coming to the Correspondents' Club about six tomorrow evening? We can talk with some of the other fellows there."

Telegrams began to flow in again and the teletype began clicking in the next room, bringing in news from Washington, London, Paris, Moscow, Canberra, and Buenos Aires. A report from New Delhi said that even in Sinkiang, beyond the Himalaya Mountains, men's sympathy for the usual goals of human society had been suspended, and disorders, hitherto unknown, had broken out. Kigaki, unable to handle all the reports by himself, phoned the conference room where the meeting was being held and asked for help.

Mikuni came running. He sat down at the desk but paid no attention to the stack of dispatches about the war situation which were piled up in front of him as he turned to Kigaki and said, "You really started something."

Unable to understand what Mikuni was talking about, Kigaki continued to write and said, "What's that?" He was not really listening to Mikuni anyway but was thinking, *The faster I write, the bigger the letters get.*

"You asked why the North Korean Army was translated as an 'enemy force'. That's what."

"Oh. What's the story?"

"They seem to think you're a troublemaker — Haraguchi especially——"

Kigaki remembersd Haraguchi's thick red lips talking into the mouthpiece of the telephone a few hours before, as he had said to some figure high in political or financial circles, "If worst comes to worst and the Americans are thrown back into the sea before reinforcements come ·····Yes·····If so, rearma—I mean, the increase of the National Police reserves is inevitable and then textiles and leather and lumber and·····"

"Oh·····So that's it," Kigaki said. "A troublemaker, eh?"

"Yeah, a troublemaker. You better watch your step·····I've got troubles too. I thought they were going to tell me to get out even before you telephoned for help."

"You?····· Why?" Kigaki put his pencil down on the desk as he asked the question and the thought crossed his mind again, *Maybe he* is *a Party member,* but just then the Local News editor came bursting into the room. His well-formed body was naked to the waist and he held a sheet of manuscript paper in his hand.

"Where's the chief, the chief?" he shouted excitedly. "It's a bomb attack! Air raid!"

Mikuni's right hand grabbed for the telephone to call the

conference room while his left hand seized the manuscript from the Local News editor. At the same time he looked toward Kigaki and nodded to the phone which was a direct line to the foreign press services. The half-naked forty-year-old man who had the manuscript snatched from him by Mikuni without a word, picked up another phone to call the Press Section and tell them to make preparations for an extra. Soneda naturally told him that they couldn't go ahead until they had verified the news with the foreign news agencies. On the other end of Kigaki's line he could hear the pleasant voice of a girl saying, "Hello ····· Hello." Mikuni handed the report to Kigaki just as he got through to the chief of the press bureau. "Our branch office at Tottori has sent a news report which they got from the local police," Kigaki began. "They say that six airplanes of unknown nationality circled around some distance out from the shore and dropped several bombs into the sea before leaving the area. Have you got anything on it? Any verification?" The news service agent said he had no information. Mikuni had already begun calling another news agency but the answer was the same. Kigaki tried a third agency with the same result.

By this time quite a few people had gathered around the desk, shouting, "Air raid! Bomb attack!" Everyone was excited. *And they are glad too,* thought Kigaki. *These people will go out drinking tonight and proudly whisper this unverified report.*

Soneda phoned and repeated his directions to wait until the story had been formally verified by a foreign press service. The half-naked Local News editor suggested they suspend all preparations for the extra, as he talked waving the manuscript

which had finally come back to his hands. The Press Section seemed to be angry at the order to cancel the preparations, for Kigaki, who was standing near the phone, could hear the receiver crackling as someone said, "What did you guys swallow, anyway? Japan isn't in the war yet!"

Haraguchi came hurrying in and, putting his arm around the shoulders of the Local News editor, said, "Tough luck your scoop was crushed. Explain to the people in the Tottori Branch, will you? We can't print it without verification from a foreign press service." Then he lowered his voice and said, "Well, I guess it really has come at last. It's dangerous in here too! Perhaps we better get out our helmets again. I'm hanging onto mine anyway."

Have these people already committed themselves by one step across the borderline and begun to dance to the sinister melody of war fever? Kigaki asked himself. Staring at the rippling muscles on the huge naked back of the Local News editor, he sank into a gloomy mood. *The biggest news is always the most unhappy,* he thought. *And war has always provided the greatest variety and the most constant source of bad news.*

What had they discussed at the meeting? Hadn't these people already gambled on the assumption that 'war has come at last'? If, as Mikuni had said, they had decided to form their editorial policy on the basis of calling the North Koreans 'enemies', wasn't the fate of Japan already decided……? *What does it mean to work on a paper like this?* Kigaki asked himself. *What responsibility am I myself assuming?*

Haraguchi and the Local News editor were talking in low voices. Kigaki caught only fragments: "……emergency meeting of

editors……at six o'clock……be sure everybody gets word……hmm ....."

Whenever a big news story comes in, stories that had seemed very important before are pushed into the background and suddenly fade in importance to mere trifles. Mikuni, with ten sharpened pencils arranged on the desk in front of him, was energetically dealing with dispatches and passing them on to Haraguchi's desk, but Kigaki had lost interest. Also he was tired. Looking out through the window, he saw the blazing light of the four o'clock afternoon sun, which was thrown on the big buildings, all differing in architectural style and scattered at random over the city, which marked the very center of Japan. Carrier pigeons were flying around the roof of the Asahi newspaper building, whose shape was like the bridge of a battleship. One or two of the pigeons could not keep up with the others. They were the weak. As Kigaki gazed at them he felt a certain uneasiness and began to wonder what would finally become of those pigeons which were weaker than the rest.

The telephone on the copy boy's desk began to ring, but the boy had gone to night school. Kigaki walked over and picked up the receiver. The happy voice of Doi, the Nisei, came leaping out of the receiver at him. "The American swimming team is getting in to Haneda Airport at half past twelve tonight. I'm going to interview them, so tell the photographer and the driver they'll have to work all night. Oh, and get us four orders of *sushi* for a late supper. O. K. ?" Doi had hung up without waiting for an answer, probably thinking he had been talking to the copy boy, but something like anger welled up without reason in Kigaki and

he said, "Sure. *Sushi*. Anything you want. Four orders or four hundred orders."

Haraguchi's mouth fell open and he looked over at Kigaki absent-mindedly as if to say, 'What *are* you talking about?' But just then the other people returned from the meeting. Soneda, sitting down at the table, took off his Palm Beach coat and looked at the collar to see how much perspiration it had absorbed. Howard Hunt came out of the editor-in-chief's room, flashed a friendly smile at Kigaki, and then offered his hand to Soneda. Soneda looked at Kigaki suspiciously for a moment, forced a sickish smile, stood up unsteadily, and shook hands with Hunt.

When Mikuni came over to the window and said, "Hey, Kigaki, how about going out for a cup of coffee?", Kigaki, anxious to hear more about the meeting, got up immediately and the two went out together.

Chapter II

We Japanese are extremely partial to tea houses. We often take people who come to our offices on business to a tea house and talk there. Some people even take visitors who come to their homes to a neighboring tea house instead of entertaining them at home. Actually, both at the office and at home, the average Japanese is apt to be reserved, hiding in his shell like a hermit crab. Only at a tea house is he able to be himself and treat guests naturally.

Thinking about this characteristic of the Japanese, Kigaki sat on a frail looking chair which seemed as if it were about to

break with his weight and might have been used for a stage prop in a slapstick comedy. The back of the chair was painted pink. At the other tables were seated girls with young men who wore gabardine slacks and looked very much like the young Chinese men with flat faces whom one saw in Shanghai dance halls during the war. Just from looking at the girls, it was hard to tell whether they were the mistresses of foreigners or the well-bred daughters of good families. Both girls and men were nodding their heads in time to the sweet music being broadcast from the Occupation radio station.

Mikuni said, "Kigaki, I hear that you've been earning your living by doing translations and free-lance writing the last couple of years since you quit the other newspaper office. Is that right?" Mikuni's short-sleeved white shirt was open at the neck, showing a flat, skinny chest which looked as if he might have once suffered from pleurisy or tuberculosis. Kigaki was startled by Mikuni's question. He had expected that Mikuni would start at once to talk about the meeting.

"Yes, I've been managing to get along somehow without a regular job."

"You've really managed to get along?" Mikuni seemed rather too persistent in his question.

"Why do you ask?"

"Well……my future looks doubtful. That is, judging from the meeting this afternoon."

"What do you mean?"

"Looks like I might get the axe."

"Oh? But we have a union in the office don't we?"

"Yes, for all the good it would do."

"Hmm. Is it because of your beliefs?" And then Kigaki boldly added, "Are you a party member?"

Mikuni didn't answer 'Yes' or 'No' but the muscles of his pale face twitched as he said instead, "I worked as a reporter at first but last winter several of us were transferred to the Morgue. My job was to file photographs. Then when they got short-handed after the war started in Korea, I was put back on reporting."

"It's about the same with me. I came after the war started. One of my former bosses asked me to take this job. He'd helped me out and I felt obligated to him, so I came."

"Why did you feel obligated——if you don't mind tellng me?"

"Well····· when I had some personal troubles I asked him to try and help straighten things out. So I felt obligated."

Mikuni stared straight at Kigaki for a moment with a gaze that Kigaki thought might penetrate to his heart. Looking straight back at him, Kigaki wondered if Party members (for he had decided that Mikuni must be one) were more frank with each other than the average person in their criticisms of themselves and other people. Maybe they had a specially strong feeling of solidarity and comradeship, although such a binding feeling would seem somewhat intolerable to Kigaki.

"You seem to be cross-examining me," Kigaki said.

Mikuni smiled innocently as he made a denial. "No, I certainly didn't mean to." His former sharp stare, which had been so penetrating, had been replaced by a look of boyish

shyness in a moment. "It's just that I might get fired pretty soon. I just asked you, wondering about ways I might get along if that happens. Anyway, I don't have any children to worry about yet, since I just got married. How about you, Kigaki?"

"I've got a girl who's not quite two. I'm poor enough but we can manage to make ends meet somehow if I'm not too fussy in choosing my jobs. But since you are ....." Kigaki was about to say "a Party member", but he checked himself and continued, "....the kind of guy who wouldn't be willing to take just any job .....Jobs translating mystery stories and stuff like that pay a lot, but they are bourgeois entertainment, I suppose, and certainly a far cry from the passion of revolution."

"That wouldn't matter."

"It wouldn't matter? Why"

"Because any way that you earn your living you have to dirty your hands."

"But——"

"No, I mean it. I suppose you think it's strange that I'm working on such a reactionary newspaper?"

"Yes. I thought maybe you were a Party member after the discussion today about using 'enemy' in the translation. Of course I didn't have any proof and I'm not going to ask you about it again, but I couldn't quite figure out why you were working in such a newspaper office."

Thus far in the conversation Mikuni had seemed to be looking at Kigaki in a straightforward manner without any feeling of uneasiness, except for his anxiety about his own future. But from the instant that Kigaki had said he couldn't understand

why Mikuni was working in the office, a certain tenseness was expressed in the entire set of Mikuni's young body.

"But we must infiltrate every organization. Some of us are even in the very headquarters of oppression."

Kigaki thought that this might very well be true. He could sense from Mikuni's words the desperate—no, systematic strength of the people who associated with the Party. He felt keenly that someone who had merged his life into the close system of solidarity which depended on oppression and resistance, and had found meaning in life only in resistance and regimentation, was neverthelese much more sure of himself than he was; for Kigaki had been feeling uneasy ever since that morning, wondering if working on the newspaper, even as a temporary assistant, wasn't a kind of 'commitment'. "Oh. Then I suppose Party members are mentally at ease no matter where they are or what they're doing. But how about other people who are not Party members? I mean people who hate to 'dirty their hands', as you say, to make a living, but who can't rationalize with systematic……that is, practical dreams the way you can? '

"That's just it. To save those people and free them we hav. resolved to die if necessary."

"Then, would you die for me?"

"Yes! …· By year after next there will surely be world chaos. You know that, don't you?"

Kigaki started to answer but then shut his mouth again and a heavy silence continued for some minutes. Then suddenly Mikuni began to laugh loudly. It was a distorted, unnatural laugh which made Kigaki look up quickly. But at that moment

Mikuni got up and went to the counter to order something. When he came back to the table he said, "Let's talk about something else……Why don't you write a novel, Kigaki?" The tone of voice seemed to imply that the novel he was referring to would have nothing to do with things like Mikuni's resolution to die for his cause if necessary.

"If you mean a novel with disconnected scenes like those in a cabaret in the average Japanese movie or the kind of novel in which the hero talks with his girl in a cheap restaurant, I don't want to write a novel like that. If I write a novel, I'd like to have it show all the forces of the modern world itself. I'd like to write about people like you who know where they stand and who have hope even in our present day. But individuals can no longer be heroes—incidents, facts, or accidents become the heroes."

"Yes. Well, in that case the author must speak his own mind clearly then, mustn't he? But if incidents or accidents become the heroes, I suppose people like me become interesting patients who are suffering from the disease of narrow-mindedness and can be made sport of to the author's heart's content?"

"No, that isn't it; I don't mean that," Kigaki said, making his denial emphatic and lowering his voice. "Anyway, the reason I probably won't write a novel is that I am afraid of speaking my own mind clearly, to use your phrase. Written things are permanent records. Quite apart from the question of whether I have any talent or not, in times like these it isn't wise to leave any evidence—you can never be sure which way the world is going to turn."

With his voice almost down to a murmur, Kigaki couldn't help thinking *I am lying.* He said aloud, "I asked you if you would die for me and you answered 'Yes'. When I heard your answer I remembered the war. I had a weak body—or actually, the doctor thought I had a weak body—so I didn't have to go to the Front. Fellows my age left their homes with expressions on their faces that said 'We are dying for you' although they said nothing with their lips. I can remember that. I felt a gnawing sense of shame as if I were being blamed for not going ....."

Kigaki stopped again and fell into silence. But in his heart he continued the words, *And when the war ended and everyone felt so relieved, I swore I would never put wyself in a position to have that gnawing sense of shame again. But.....*

"Well then, what did you decide, Kigaki—to do nothing? And you shut yourself up in your house after you quit the Sekai office?..... But, you know, I think the introduction of ideas from abroad by means of translations is a healthy thing for society."

Kigaki was not listening to Mikuni any longer as he said mechanically, "Yes, that's right." His interest in the conversation had waned and he was lost in thought. *If there were a great social change like a revolution, a person whose mind wanders as mine does in a conversation like this might easily change sides to just the opposite point of view if a single blow were delivered, not even against his convictions, but against his haphazard habits of thinking.*

Mikuni looked at Kigaki, who had apparently lapsed into

sullen silence, and blinked his eyes as if he had gotten a grain of dust in them and could not see. Then he looked around the room in an embarrassed way, stood up, said "Excuse me for a minute" to Kigaki, and went over to a table where a youth was sitting. Kigaki thought the youth was probably workng with Mikuni at the newspaper.

Kigaki became lost in thought again. *At the fork in the road one way always leads to death. Man must always know how to choose the way that leads to life. The man sitting without ambition on a chair in a tea house on a certain day of July 1950 is not a specific person named Koji Kigaki but just a cipher who might be anyone. By his choices man asserts his individuality, giving his life meaning according to the choices he makes, and thus becoming more than a mere mathematical unit. Around me choices have been made constantly. The newspapers and the financial circles have gambled on the side of war and public opinion polls show that most of the people have also made up their minds, even if their thinking is based on fear.* Kigaki stared at his hands. *My hands are dirty too and the dirt is a part of me. To try to find an excuse to justify the dirt would be to betray a part of myself.* He remembered Kato again, the neighbor who had been purged as a Communist and was earning his living by peddling American Army surplus goods from door to door. He remembered, too, the workers he had seen a few nights before, who were getting drunk on the wages paid them in the munitions boom. *There is no absolute standard of morality to guarantee that you can keep your hands clean. And since that is so, aren't the faces of the workers, flushed with drink, a sign of life and health, and aren't you, sitting here on this chair, really dead?*

Mikuni returned to the table with wide-browed youth who wore a short-sleeved white shirt and white pants as Mikuni did. Mikuni introduced him. "This is Tachikawa. He's in charge of the cylinder presses. Today is his day off but he came to the office because he's anxious about the war situation in Korea."

Tachikawa, a short young man whose hair was carefully slicked back with hair tonic, bowed in greeting to Kigaki, lifting the look of hair which fell over his forehead as he did so and smoothing it back carefully.

"I borrowed one of the mystery stories you translated from one of my friends and read it," he said.

"Was it interesting?" Mikuni asked.

"Yes, it was very interesting."

Kigaki was glad that he had said this sincerely without seeming merely to be paying a compliment out of politeness. Then Kigaki looked up abruptly as Tachikawa continued, with a side glance at Mikuni, "It's a novel in which a fellow with a perfect alibi, whom no one could suspect, turns out to be the culprit at the end. Isn't that right, Mr. Kigaki? Therefore it was very helpful for me." Tachikawa laughed in a conspiratorial manner but at the same time there was something in the expression on his face which betrayed a certain naivete. The laugh did not seem to be for their benefit but rather solely for himself. It did not reflect any sophisticated self-mockery, but, rather, a complete emptiness. *Only by action for a cause could this emptiness be filled for the first time,*

"It's the same with newspapers, isn't it' Kigaki?" Mikuni said in a low voice, resting his cheek on his arm. "You can't get

around the fact that newspapers are among the ringleaders of the war criminals. And newspapers always have a perfect alibi, for they can say they just reported the facts. Actually, they are like the fellow who seems to be in the clear, but turns out to be the master criminal, for if the newspapers hadn't reported whatever statements the Emperor and people of Tojo's sort had told them to, the statements wouldn't have been worth a damn."

Kigaki had had scarcely any contact with real laborers, especially with a mechanica' laborer who had a social conscience as Tachikawa did.

Kigaki said, "Maybe it's because I'm a temporary worker and havenn't been on this job even ten days yet, or maybe it's because I've been working at home for two years by myself—I don't know. Anyway, as soon as I get out of the office I breathe more freely and feel like myself again. It's then that I feel like doing some writing on my own. How about you?"

"Well," Tachikawa replied, "you have another life in addition to the job by which you earn your living—well, maybe it can't be called earning a living since it's only temporary. Anyway, you're working here only to earn a living and like most salaried men of the intelligentsia you find your main stimulation outside your everyday work. You look at it that way, don't you? But men like me get a feeling of satisfaction when we're facing the presses at the office. Actually, it represents a way of life for me, although of course it's also a way to earn a living."

Kigaki couldn't really enter into this conversation beyond giving a word or two to indicate a polite interest in what was being said. He thought to himself, *If I take his words at their*

face value, labor means more toil to him—it is a spiritual value, or the essence of life itself. Tachikawa says I have another life. But what is it? What can another life be, except this same life where the issues are vague and I worry all my waking hours about their being vague?

"Our presses are printing harmful things now," Tachikawa continued, "but it won't be long before they will be printing our views. The day isn't far off." Tachikawa's little eyes gleamed brighter as he spoke. It was a gleam of desperation rather than of hope, Kigaki reflected, and then changed his mind—perhaps it was really hope. And if that hope should be realized tomorrow, Kigaki might be swallowed up in the gulf between today and tomorrow. This was Kigaki's fear and it seemed to him as they talked that he could see a knowledge of that fear reflected in Tachikawa's eyes.

Mikuni took out a large pocket watch, looked at it, and stood up to go. "Well, it's about time for the local news for tomorrow morning's paper to be coming in," he said. The three walked back together to the office. Tachikawa said "See you" and started for the basement where the cylinder presses were groaning. He went down the narrow stairs as quickly as a sailor going down a ship's ladder, hunching over to avoid hitting his head.

When Kigaki and Mikuni had returned to their desks, Haraguchi hurried over and handed a dispatch to Mikuni. "Hurry this up, but don't forget to add the annotation at the end." It read, 'This information came from the Pyongyang Radio, which is a propaganda instrument of the Communist Government, and

has not been otherwise confirmed.'

Next Haraguchi came over to Kigaki, carrying one of the manuscript pages that Kigaki had written before. "Apparently you are not accustomed to the post-war style of writing yet. Don't use this character, which looks like an old man in a kimono sitting cross-legged on the floor. The proper character to use is this one, which looks like a smart, good-looking boy standing up straight."

Chapter III

Kigaki kept his engagement with Howard Hunt and went to the Correspondents' Club. The lobby was less crowded than he had thought it would be, since most of the reporters had flown to Korea following General MacArthur, who had left by plane that morning. As soon as he set foot in the air-conditioned building Kigaki felt better, for he had been walking along with the afternoon sun beating down on him.

Howard Hunt rushed out of the elevator, commenting on the heat. "*Atsui, atsui*. Today sure is a scorcher. Come on up to my room. I share it with a Chinese correspondent."

The room, which was not very large, was divided into two parts by a screen. In Hunt's part there were an iron bed with blankets, one table and three chairs—that was all. Kigaki was surprised to see that there was no other guest. As soon as they came into the room, Hunt called across the screen to the Chinese reporter, who was typing.

"Hello, Chang. It's my birthday. Come and have a drink with us."

"Thanks." Kigaki thought he recognized the deep voice with an American accent. Chang came around the screen.

"Well, I'll be……It's you," Kigaki said in Japanese.

Hunt looked at each of them in turn as if to say, 'Oh, you know each other. I won't have to introduce you then.' Then, without speaking, he began to arrange the Coca Cola, beer, whiskey, and Russian crackers which a boy had brought, placing them in a row on the table. Then he picked up a glass without waiting for the others and said, "Happy birthday to me!" as they all laughed.

Chang said, "I first met Kigaki, here, in Shanghai. We made the rounds of some of the night spots in Yokohama a few nights ago."

Kigaki wondered if they were to be the only guests. "Incidentally, Mr. Hunt, no other guests? Just us?"

Hunt pointed to the telephone, making a nasal sound like a puppy's whine. "This takes the place of two guests. My wife and daughter are going to phone from San Francisco at eight. That's all the guests. Everybody is so busy these days that I was thinking of celebrating alone with just the telephone, but I invited you because I enjoyed our conversation yesterday."

After the drinks were beginning to take effect Chang asked Kigaki, lowering his voice, "The other day when we were in Yokohama did you notice anything strange?"

"No. Nothing." Kigaki's voice trailed off on the last word, because lately he had become aware of so many strange things wherever he was, whatever he was doing.

Hunt, quickly sensing something unusual in Chang's words

and look, asked, "Strange? What do you mean something strange?"

"Well, the other night Kigaki and I started out on the Ginza and ended up in Yokohama. We really made the rounds. When I began to get a little drunk, I always chose bars and cabarets managed by Chinese, and wherever I went I was followed by a man who looked like a Chinese and had shifty eyes. He would sit in the next booth and listen to everything we said. I'm about certain that's the only explanation. In a cabaret in Yokohama called 'Kathy' he even forced a group of Japanese who were sitting in the booth next to mine to move. I couldn't help noticing that. I'm sure I was being followed and spied upon."

"I think I went to Cabaret Kathy with someone once. Yes, with Soneda, the liaison officer at your paper." Hunt seemed somewhat skeptical of Chang's story and turned to Kigaki as if to say, 'Did you notice anything?'.

Before Kigaki could say anything, Chang said, "I was afraid you might have trouble after that, Kigaki, since you were with me."

Hunt said, "And you think the spy was working for the Chinese Communists?" He frowned and kept his blue eyes fixed on Chang. Suddenly his face looked like that of a gloomy old man.

"I don't know about that," Chang said. "At least I can't be sure."

"You mind if I track this thing down and write a story on it?" Hunt asked. "I won't make any trouble for you." Chang

nodded and Hunt continued in a loud voice as if he didn't care who heard, "Headline—Chinese Communist Underground Network Spread Throughout Japan."

"I hope you get a hundred dollar raise for your scoop." Chang said in a low voice.

Hunt, guessing from the tone of voice that something was wrong, apologized. "I'm sorry. Forgive me if I hurt your feelings."

Kigaki, who had been counting his drinks carefully so that he wouldn't get really drunk in front of foreigners, became impatient when the talk of spies began and started to drink more rapidly. *If there actually is such an organization,* he thought, *I may be marked since I was with Chang. Maybe something terrible will jump out at me from the simple fact that I renewed an old friendship with a foreigner by having a few drinks.*

"When I hear all this, I feel as if I were standing naked at a cross-road," Kigaki said aloud, addressing neither Hunt nor Chang however.

Hunt picked up the remark at once. "You are not the only one who is naked. Maybe all Japan is. I've been in Japan four months now and I've interviewed a lot of people. The more definitely they belonged to the intelligentsia, the more confused they seemed to have become. Some of the people I interviewed share Mauriac's point of view that we talked about yesterday and said that Japan couldn't remain independent if the American Army left, while others of the left wing hold opposite views. You picture yourself as naked while you are stopping to think, but....."

The three had gradually lowered their voices as they spoke

when the telephone bell jangled loudly. Hunt smiled and looked at his wrist watch. The hands showed just eight.

"My wife and daughter." he said happily. He picked up the receiver and moved his arms in a big circle as if he were actually embracing his wife and daughter. In a pleasant voice which was happy with expectation he said, "Hello."

There is a world in which one can telephone from thousands of miles away at eight o'clock sharp if the time has been decided beforehand, Kigaki thought. Hunt began an unrestrained conversation over the phone, winking at Kigaki and Chang, making gestures of embrace with his unoccupied left hand and sending kissing noises into the phone. Chang looked on for a while, somewhat taken aback by Hunt's lack of restraint, and then made himself a boilermaker and began to drink it.

"How are your wife and children?" Kigaki asked Chang in Japanese. No sooner had he said it than he realized he shouldn't have asked, but it was too late.

"They're in Shanghai. I didn't have any money and couldn't get them out of Chungking very easily even after the war ended. And then the civil war began. I finally managed to get them to Shanghai when the revolution .... the Communists occupied Shanghai. She wrote recently and said she wouldn't move from Shanghai to Taipei. She said it was too much to drift from place to place and always have to worry where she was going to be the next day."

"Oh."

As the connection became stronger or weaker, sometimetmes the others could hear a child's voice saying, "Daddy, daddy,"

issuing from the receiver which was pressed against Hunt's ear. Hunt was saying, "It's one o'clock over there. Time to take your nap. Go to sleep. Sweet dreams."

Kigaki put his glass down and thought about his child. He always woke her when he came home after drinking. Tonight he would let her sleep without waking her. No, whenever he came home after a few drinks and saw her sleeping peacefully, he would remember briefly the face of his first child, peaceful in death, after it had been suffocated during the war in an air raid shelter when the entrance had been blocked by deris. And then he would have to wake the child.

Hunt was talking happily with his wife now, who had taken his daughter's place. He was telling her about the presents he had bought for her in Japan. He changed the receiver to his left hand and began writing some numbers on a piece of scrap paper near the phone, figuring as he talked. Soon he hung up the phone, perhaps afraid that he had gone over the time limit. Chang was just starting to drink his third boilermaker and was staring gloomily into his glass. When they had been talking before about Japan's being naked, both Chang's and Kigaki's faces had shown a kind of tense alertness, but when each remembered his wife and children, they fell into private reveries and a chill came over the party. Hunt alone was still gay.

"I should have ordered champagne," he said. "My friends are drinking champagne in my apartment in San Francisco, but I'm afraid you'll have to be satisfied with boilermakers."

A bellboy knocked at the door and came in with a telegram in his hand. "Send film at once," Hunt read and looked at his

watch. "There's a cargo plane leaving at ten tonight. I'll get it on that," he said to himself. Then he clapped his hands together and said, "Yes, Chang, let's take a breather. After we've sent the film, we can go on to Yokohama. If you' l come to Cabaret Kathy, the drinks are on me."

Chang refused in a tone of finality with the simple word 'No', looking up, somewhat drunkenly, with his cloudy, Asiatic eyes. Refused here, Hunt looked at Kigaki.

"How about you? Are you game, or is it inconvenient?" Hunt said it in a tone which made the invitation sound sincere.

Kigaki really wanted to refuse because he was tired, but he consented to go, partly because he felt some obligation from having been invited to the birthday party. He also wanted to see the airport, which was one of the most important outposts of Japan, to see if he could sense the smell of war drifting in the air around it. Finally, he was also curious deep down in his mind to find out something about the Communist spies that Chang had been talking about, if they really did exist. *Both the airport and Cabaret Kathy are in Japan,* he thought, *but Japan is no longer herself. Every nook and corner has been affected by outside influences.*

"I'm going to bed," Chang said and went over behind the screen, his fat body shaking as he walked. The springs creaked as he lay down on the bed and then he called in Japanese to Kigaki.

"What is it?" Kigaki asked as he looked over the screen and saw Chang lying on his back on the bed and looking at a small framed picture of a young Chinese woman embracing a baby.

"I'm starting for New York in a day or two," Chang said. "Maybe at midnight tomorrow. I'm being transferred to cover the U. N. I'd like to see you again before I go."

Chang's big round face was flushed and shining, but neither in his voice nor in his expression was there any hint of joy or expectation at this new important assignment as a correspondent at the U. N.

Hunt and Kigaki hurried to the nearby newspaper office by jeep and brought the box of film down from the seventh floor. Hunt let the jeep out to forty as they went along the dark asphalt road.

"What did Chang say in Japanese just before we left?" he asked.

This young American wants to know everything, kigaki thought as he told Hunt about Chang's wife and children and his transfer to the U. N.

"Oh……" Hunt nodded slightly, his hands grasping the steering wheel. "Chang was lucky to find a place to go, even though he was driven out by the revolution. I was in Berlin for a little while before I came to Japan. In Europe hundreds of thousands of people who had separated from their families and no place to go were herded into camps……" The jeep stopped at a red light and Kigaki looked at Hunt's profile, which was silhouetted against the light from a street lamp. His blue eyes looked brown in the subdued light and seemed to be blinking. Kigaki wondered for a moment, unlikely as the thought seemed, if Hunt were perhaps shedding tears.

"We must buy time so that those people will have a chance to be happy." Hunt stopped there and closed his mouth abruptly.

Buy time? Kigaki could not understand the words although he thought, *My mind may be too used to going in circles to understand this American's simple, direct line of thought. Maybe I can't understand any longer what happiness is. But haven't people like these unfortunate ones in Europe been produced by the thousands in Korea?*

"But in Korea too, many unhappy people must have been produced," Kigaki said aloud.

"Yes. It's the worst human disaster of all modern history."

Kigaki thought, *He says 'of all modern history.' But isn't modern history entirely a history of tragedies? World war, atomic bombs, insecurity after the war, and now mankind is being burned by the insecurity which is smouldering in a corner of Asia……Yet Hunt seems able to look at this modern history in terms of 'happiness'!* To Kigaki the sense of disaster came first and therefore he could't think of anything to say to continue the conversation.

The jeep began to whizz along faster. Headed by a jeep with a screaming siren, a convoy of trucks, probably going to load munitions, rushed past them, blowing a cold wind into their faces like that of the Devil, who is said to rob parents of their children. Kigaki had a vision of explosions and red flames mounting toward the sky near the destination of the trucks.

A vague glow now suffused the sky and the loud droning of airplanes drowned out the noise of the jeep's engine. Leaving the main road, they went along a broad sidestreet which skirted the ruins of burned out buildings and came finally to a group of shacks, one of which seemed to be a small bar. Hunt stopped

the car in front of it and said, "If you don't mind waiting here at this *sake* shop, I'll go deliver the film and be back soon." He stepped on the accelerator and drove off.

Kigaki stepped into the bar, where men were drinking and talking.

"Yeah. My first job at the airport was more than ten years ago. During the war they sent me to airports in China and the South. Then the war ended. No more airports, I thought. But they gave it to the Occupation just as it was. Yeah, it's more than ten years." The speaker, who appeared to be about fifty, had a firm, muscular body which almost looked as if it had been painted with lacquer.

"Yeah, first you help our war and then you help the Yanks' war. It's a hell of a screwy world."

Four or five men who had taken off their work jackets, furnished and stencilled by the Occupation Forces, and hung them over their shoulders, were seated around a table drinking *shochu*, Japanese gin. Apparently ditchdiggers, they all had towels tied around their necks in exactly the same way to catch the sweat. Only one of them, a youth with a projecting chin, was dressed differently in a short-sleeved white shirt. Looking across the table to a man with an expressionless, almost stupid face, he said in a teasing tone of voice, "Hey, Nogami. How's The Bum? Pretty good liquor, huh?"

Kigaki sat on a wooden stool placed in a corner against the wall. The fat proprietress brought him a glass of *shochu* and went back behind the counter without saying a word. Kigaki couldn't drink more than about so much American beer or

whiskey—they seemed tc smell of machines and mass production. But the drink in front of him, which was as transparent as pure alcohol, had too much of the smell of Japanese war about it.

The young fellow was still making fun of Nogami, calling him The Bum. If one read the two characters for the name backward, the word Nogami could stand, not for the name of the expressionless man, but for any of the vagrants who made their homes in the dark underground passages of Tokyo's Ueno Subway station. The fifty-year-old man who seemed to be the boss of the other workers turned his head abruptly to the man called Nogami. "Whatever you want to say, war means good times for us. Neither side makes a single penny from a war but anyway guys like you eat well."

"More than eating. We make enough to drink too."

"And when you think about it, the bosses in the munitions industry must be making a pile too."

A man with a short neck and a crew cut who was sitting behind Kigaki put his hand to his throat and made a cutting motion and a metallic noises as he said, "But if the Commies ever take over, we'll all get it in the neck."

"My pal in kyushu says……"

Kyushu. Hokkaido. How can they know what's going on in those far away places? Kigaki wondered. *They must have a special information network of their own.* As Kigaki listened to them without saying a word, the man in the short-sleeved white shirt stared at him hostilely for some time and then whispered something to the man who appeared to be the workers' boss.

"Waitress. Check." Hundred yen notes fluttered onto the table

and the group disappeared in a moment with heavy steps.

From outside a voice said, "That's funny. No jeep."

Kigaki understood at once. The workers had heard the jeep when he came and concluded that anyone who came by jeep to such a bar must have come to spy on them and listen to their conversation.

After they had gone, two huge rats stole out of the kitchen and, looking around them, scurried here and there. Kigaki felt unutterably lonely. He was sorry that the workers had thought he was a spy, peering around like these rats. And then he had a strange sensation in his heart when he realized that there had been very little difference in originality or depth between his conversation with Hunt and Chang earlier in the evening and that of the workers just now. Was the only difference between these workers and foreign correspondents, who were supposed to be experts on the international situatiton, that the latter expressed themselves more subtly? The sight of the white-shirted youth kept stabbing at his brain. The rats, which had been loitering near the wooden wall, disappeared into a hole under the wash basin as the spouting sound of a jet plane, like a buzzsaw, suddenly broke the silence. When he had seen the rats he had remembered the sailors' legend that rats disappear just before a ship sinks. He remembered also the way Kyoko's face looked when she opened the newspaper each morning and said, "What a mess." Kigaki had met Kyoko in Shanghai and her only hope since the end of the war had been to emigrate to Argentina. Perhaps she and Kigaki too were rats on a ship.

He went outside and looked up at the sky. A huge silver

body, visible even at night, was flying away toward the west, spitting out four pale fires from the four engines. The plane disappeared and left the large stars of summer shining in the sky.

He got into the jeep with Hunt again and Hunt asked him all about the bar, who had been there and what they had talked about. Kigaki remembered the sharp stare of the young fellow with the white shirt as he answered Hunt's questions.

"It all boils down to the fact that Japan, a country located on the edge of Asia, is no one's ally." He spoke the words rather abruptly and with a trace of irritation in his voice.

Ambulances, a string of more than ten of them with a big red cross painted on each one, passed the jeep with sirens screaming. They were carrying the wounded from Korea. As they went by, Hunt pointed at the line of cars loaded with blood-stained human beings and said, "And how does that fit in?"

He asked the question in an insistent tone of voice. But Kigaki did not answer. He felt he could not answer until he had gotten out of the car, perhaps not even until he had walked along the wide, lonely night road for a while in the opposite direction. But Hunt would probably not understand such a feeling.

Since Kigaki had become silent and gloomy, Hunt changed the subject. "I saw Doi at the airport while I was making arrangements to have the film shipped. He said another swimming team's arriving tonight."

"Oh. you mean the Doi who used to be a Nisei?"

"why 'used to be'?"

"Young Doi came back to Japan on an exchange ship during the war and committed himself to the Japanese side. So he lost his standing as a Nisei."

"How did he commit himself?"

"He was an interpreter for the *Kempei Tai*."

"Oh, like Tokyo Rose." Hunt nodded, saying "I see" in Japanese, and went on, "So he lost his American citizenship from that. I knew there were traitors like that in Germany and Italy, but I guess there were some in Japan too."

"Yes. He lost his American citizenship and now he's a plain Japanese like the rest of us."

"But he can't seem to become a real Japanese either."

"Apparently not."

"He showed me his autograph book. I was surprised—even Mrs. MacArther's name was in it. Generals, politicians, journalist, sports stars, businessmen, actors, singers—all kind of people. The book ought to fill up pretty fast now with all the performers who are coming to entertain the soldiers in Korea. I hope he gets a lot of names if it gives him any pleasure, since he has no real country of his own."

"Yes, I hope so too. Japan is a very small country with a very large population, and we aren't very tolerant toward people who can't fit into our pattern of life, so……"

"I was really surprised when I saw that autograph book. I didn't realize so many famous people had visited Japan."

"But, after all, Japan is one of the focal points of the world."

"Yes. And Japan, according to the mass of your people, is no

one's ally……" Hunt muttered the words, almost with a groan, speaking in a low, serious voice, and the last words of the sentence seemed to blend with the quiet hum of the engine. Perhaps because he was surprised at the heaviness of his last words, he started to speak louder as if he were running after someone and trying to make him hear. "Incidentally, Doi said he would meet us at Cabaret Kathy after he finishes his work. He was surprised you were with me.."

Japan is no one's ally. Kigaki had spoken these words before, but when they were repeated by this American, who was no older than himself, the words seemed to increase in weight and breadth. They sounded as if Kigaki had made an important declaration on behalf of many people. The words themselves seemed to cast a solitary long, dark shadow.

The engine ran along smoothly, the conversation seemed to have died, and the night air had become chilly. Kigaki had been repeating the words to himself. *Maybe I shouldn't have said 'Japan', but said 'I' instead. For that matter, am I really an 'ally' of Japan? What should a trye 'ally' of Japan do? Should I gamble on this war, on an international showdown, as the capitalists and the newspapers are doing? Is that being an 'ally' of Japan?*

Hunt began to sing something. It was a sentimental, melodic song, a little bit like a Negro spiritual. He sang the refrain loudly, drawing out the last few words in a broad tone:

"—just standing alone,

Just standing alone……"

Kigaki waited until his heart became calmer and repeated the refrain which Hunt had sung. Then he said, "Japan is standing

alone, but maybe modern people always become more solitary as communications become more rapid. Isn't that possible?"

When Kigaki had gotten this far, Hunt suddenly took his right hand off the wheel as if it had been plucked away by some invisible force and pointed to factories from which glared the lights of the night shift. "Look at that ! No solitude or isolation there. Maybe you're right when you say that there is isolation and solitude, or at least a kind of vague doubt, at the bottom of people's hearts. But no matter how they feel, Japan—in your word—is 'committed' already. The people working together there certainly can't feel isolated."

The car had already passed Rokugo Bridge and entered the heavy industry section of Kawasaki. The naked ruins of the wartime bombing still remained. Jagged iron skeletons pierced the sky from the bottom of the night, like suppliants with hands raised in prayer. In the next lot there was a factory alive with the glare of the smoking red flames of hell itself. The night shift was working busily here as if the place had nothing to do with the iron skeletons and metal skulls of the ruined factory next door. *Who could believe,* Kigaki thought, *that a factory in the midst of the ruins of war would be making things for a new war? And if the factory is making things for war, who can deny that the People who are working there must feel solitary?* As Kigaki turned this violent contrast over in his mind, he realised that the keynote of his own mood was to be found, not in the living factory, but in the desolation of the dead ruins next door.

"Howard," he said, "you know, you're thinking about the living factory, while I'm thinking about the ruins caused by

war."

"Do you know the saying, 'Let the dead bury their dead?'"

" Yes. I think maybe it has penetrated even closer to my heart than to yours."

"Well, maybe."

Kigaki began to regret having come with Hunt. It had become clear that they were no longer thinking along the same lines. Hunt did not really feel deeply about these things. Although this fact didn't make Kigaki uncomfortable, he still knew that their respective ways of looking at things, like the two wheels of a car, would never meet and become identical even though they were traveling in the same direction.

From Kawasaki to Yokohama the houses were sleeping, but all the big factories were awake.

Hunt pushed open the door of Cabaret Kathy and looked around, then went to the innermost booth and ordered champagne. Hearing the word 'champagne', several of the hostesses came over. The first bottle of the clear liquid, which cost two thousand yen, was emptied almost at once. After the second bottle had been ordered, a Chinese, who seemed to be the manager, came over to greet the party. This done, he left the booth and Hunt followed him to the bar, perhaps to see if he could find out anything about the spy network that Chang had mentioned.

"Who's that foreigner? He was here the other night." A girl slightly flushed with liquor, her back arched like that of a cat, asked Kigaki the question.

"A reporter."

"Oh. Maybe if I asked him he'd know about my boy friend.

He was in headquarters—now he's gone to Korea."

Kigaki didn't reply.

"War's an awful mess, but I guess that's life."

At that moment suddenly a reddish black shadow fell on the table, cutting off the pink light from the lamp, and Kigaki felt large, soft hand on his shoulder. Startled, he turned around.

"Baron Tilpitz!"

"Yes. It is Baron Tilpitz."

The clock in Kigaki's head started to turn backward speedily. It was Shanghai just after the war. Kigaki and Kyoko, like many other Japanese, had been short of money. Kigaki, making use of his linguistic ability, had acted as agent in selling the household goods, curios and objets d'art of his countrymen, bargaining to get the highest possible price. The biggest buyer had been this former Austrian nobleman, Tilpitz, who was then a refugee from the Nazis. He remembered Tilpitz, with the cavernous wrinkle in the center of his forehead and the grey eyes shining out of what appeared to be caves in his fleshy face rather than real eye-sockets. Each time Kigaki had bargained with this man he had felt an increasing sense of indescribable fear. Perhaps it was because Tilpitz seemed to be a man whose presence at any place presaged ruin, just as an earthquake often precedes the sinking of land into the sea. When such disasters actually happen—an epidemic of typhoid fever in India, a famine in China, the plague in Spain—certain people quickly appear, apparently from nowhere, ostensibly to help with 'relief' work, while most people are still trying to find the place on the map. Piecing together what he had heard about him, Kigaki thought

of Tilpitz as an undertaker who is always on hand when a large scale disaster occurs. Tilpitz had entered Czechoslovakia, fleeing from Austria, and stayed in Prague until the last possible moment when all of Czechoslovakia was threatened by Hitler, acting as a broker for refugees' household goods and taking part in the smuggling of gold and jewelry. At the time of the Spanish Civil war he had managed to get many masterpieces of Spanish art at Madrid, Toledo, and Barcelona in the same way and later sold them to Americans. Until the last moment before the outbreak of World War II he had stayed in Paris and dealt in the household goods of the rich who had seen the handwriting on the wall and wished to get out of France. Then he went to South America by the last available boat and made a big profit by buying up the movables and immovables of German and Italian residents there. Immediately after the war he had gotten a position with UNRRA—nobody knew how—and had appeared in Shanghai. Surprised and disappointed to find that the things the Japanese had plundered were worthless for the most part, he nevertheless stayed on and made a profitable thing of buying goods dirt cheap from important figures in the Nationalist party and rich people whose holdings were threatened by the southern advance of the Communists. Then he sent the things of most value to Manila……Now he appeared in a Japan which had begun reconstruction during the five years since the end of one war, and Kigaki couldn't help wondering what dark portent for Japan's future he might represent.

"Baron, whose funeral did you come to Japan to be the undertaker for ?"

Tilpitz sent the girls away from the table, slowly eased his sturdy body into the place where Hunt had been sitting, and took a large handkerchief out of the pocket of his black suit, much as a magician produces a flag from his pocket. He blew his nose with an unpleasant sound and then carefully wiped his moustache, which stood out on his face as sharply as a bow tie. Then he answered slowly, speaking in English with a trace of a German accent.

"Funeral? It is not for a funeral I have come. It is with the hope of contributing something to the beautification of Japan that I am here."

Though Kigaki knew little about the usual diction that a Western nobleman might be expected to use, he thought Tilpitz's voice had a resonant and rhythmic quality, almost as if he were reciting poetry.

"Beautification?"

"Yes. Now I am a florist."

"A florist?"

"Yes. With the modern transportation, people come from America within twenty-four hours by airplane. When these people leave America, at the airport most of them receive bouquets. They are expensive flowers like roses. These flowers last well during the trip—especially the roses. Their life is very long. These flowers I get at the airport and after treating them with chemicals, I grow them like ordinary cuttings. Many of the varieties are worth twenty thousand yen a pot. You know I was a nobleman and I have never worked in the soil during my life except for rose growing. In roses I am an expert……Oh, it is

champagne you are drinking ?"

Tilpitz, raising his eyes in their deep set, fleshy socket, looked toward the bar with a gesture that seemed to imply that he wondered who Kigaki's friend might be, a man who drank such an amateurish drink as champagne. Hunt returned from the bar, his ruddy face twisted into an unhappy scowl. Apparently this hasty young man had been able to get nothing out of the wily Chinese manager. When Hunt reached the table, Tilpitz said "Excuse me" in an indifferent tone of voice and frowned slightly as he walked away, his long arms hanging down loosely like those of an orangoutang but his hands not moving at all. Looking at the somewhat stooped figure, Kigaki had an uncanny vision of one of this old man's forebears sitting in a huge chair in a dismal medieval castle while he gazed at rare varieties of roses and had music played to him. *But this is not a medieval castle,* Kigaki thought. *It is a cabaret run by a Chinese located near the harbor of Yokohama. It has a foreign name and this is post-war Japan.* The sight of the old man in the black suit, his arms hanging down loosely as he threaded his way through the din of the jazz band, was incongruous and merited more attention from the patrons than did the strip-tease show which had just begun on the dance floor.

"That old man, does he come here often?" Kigaki asked the girls who had gathered at the table again. At the same time Hunt asked, "who is he?" with the frank curiosity of an American, his face no longer clouded as it had been when he returned from talking with the manager.

"I guess he knows the manager," one of the girls said. "He

comes every now and then. He hasn't got a steady girl here, but sometimes he gives awfully big tips. And he does't expect you to go somewhere with him afterwards either."

Obviously impressed by this last fact, the girl looked over enviously and round eyed to where Tilpitz was sitting with another girl. *What an innocent face this Japanese girl has with the small nose and the large mouth, compared to those of the Chinese manager who came over to greet us, or Tilpitz, or even Hunt,* Kigaki thought. He held her hand casually, almost as if by accident. Her hand was warm and he could even feel her pulse, which had been speeded up by the liquor she had been drinking. In some of the expressions she used when she talked there still remained the fresh smell of the country district where she had probably been born and brought up. *What will become of women like this, clothed in garish evening dresses, making their living by entertaning foreigners? And if she has a baby, what sort of child will it be?* Leaning back behind the girl, Kigaki was conjuring up an image of all Japan, including himself—*a Japan, into which various foreign countries have already penetrated, not only over the surface of the earth but also into the depths of the womb*……

Suddenly he remembered something and looked instinctively at Hunt's face. Since the girl had said that Tilpitz was an acquaintance of the manager, he wondered if Tilpitz might have something to do with the spy network that Chang had been talking about. The possibility could not be ruled out. He had once heard the rumor that Tilpitz had been dealing in munitions.

"Who was that man?" Hunt asked again insistently.

Kigaki answered by merely saying that the old man was called Baron Tilpitz and that he thought he was an international broker but he didn't know any details about him.

"Incidentally, did you find out anything?" Kigaki asked, changing the subject.

Hunt shrugged his shoulders once or twice as if to say, 'No, of course not.'

Kigaki stopped Hunt from ordering more champagne again and changed to a cocktail. Then the manager came over and said to Hunt, "A Japanese named Doi is asking for you."

Partly because he was tired with continually speaking in English since he was unaccustomed to it, Kigaki wanted to hand Hunt over to young Doi, who was more at home in English than in Japanese. And he wanted to go home.

Doi came over and talked to Hunt enthusiastically about the wonderful young swimmers he had met at Haneda a little while before, describing them in superlatives. He also praised the American government policy of sending sports teams even during the present wartime conditions to serve as a diversion for the Japanese people. Then he asked Hunt's good offices in helping him to get an exclusive interview the next morning.

While Kigaki was listening to Doi chattering away, a waiter brought a message from Tilpitz. On the reverse side of a menu something was written in German. Kigaki could not read German, but supposing that Tilpitz must want to talk to him, he excused himself and said good-bye to Hunt and Doi. Hunt thanked him for coming with him, told him he would see him at the newspaper office again, and said that he would remember their

talk.

"Good-bye, Mr. Thinker, Mr. Sartre-Gide," Hunt said. Then curling his lip slightly and indicating with his eyes the seat where Tilpitz was, he added, " Remember me to your monster of an old man."

Kigaki began to feel rather drunk as he started to walk acrose the floor and he was bothered by this fact, beacuse when he got drunk he had more trouble in speaking English, often mixing French in with it. He stood before the former Austrian noble and shook hands with him. The sixty-year old man, his face stern and serious, was sitting half embracing a slender, narrow-faced Japanese girl. Kigaki couldn't get it out of his mind that there must be something unpleasant connected with Tilpitz, coming to Japan. *Since this old man is coiled to strike here, isn't it probable that things are already ripe in Japan for others of his kind to come wriggling?*

The Baron offered Kigaki some wine of rather poor quality saying, "After drinking champagne I suppose you don't want anything except femele companionship or a breath of fresh air. Wouldn't you like to talk to this girl ?" The Japanese girl, who was younger than Tilpitz's daughter might have been and who understood some English, looked at Kigaki and the old man with surprise.

After Kigaki had declined the Baron's offer, Tilpitz took out of his breast pocket a roll of American dollars, Occupation military scrip, and Japanese yen. He sorted out the Japanese bills deliberately and handed all of them to the girl murmuring, "Men have the habit of printing bigger and bigser bills the

smaller the country they live in…… Tomorrow what customer will give me money ?"

The girl looked up at Kigaki with a worried expression and said in Japanese, "This old man, he always says things like that when he comes. Just like he was planning to commit suiside."

"Oh, I don't think you need to worry," Kigaki said.

There was nothing to worry about. The Baron didn't have to answer to anybody in the world for his actions. His former positions had been successively wiped out by World War I, Hitler, and World War II. Vienna was now under the joint occupation of four countries, so he probably couldn't go back there even if he wanted to. Even if he should return home he would enter as a foreign national rather than an Austrian citizen. He had once told Kigaki in Shanghai that he had relatives in America and Argentina, but the ties didn't seem close.

"Let us go outside," Tilpitz said. "The air of Japan is good yet, although it is changeable. At least it has not the smell of death……"

Kigaki walked along, enjoying the scene without realizing where they were until he suddenly became aware that all the buildings had signs on them written in the Western alphabet and knew that they were in the foreign section near the harbor.

Did I unconsciously enioy this scene because we were in the foreign settlement and I felt protected, cut off from the life of my own country? Kigaki wondered. Even the cars which occasionally rushed by seemed appropriate to this setting. *Perhaps it is necessary for the health of people living in the swampland of present day Japan to feel a certain joy in the inorganic quality of*

a truly modern landscape. But the Japanese people who are the props behind this scene, living in houses with pointed roofs of tile or thatch, or mud huts without floors, and looking at this scene from behind it—the people of Asia: colonies, semi-colonies, occupied countries……The thought could not be stretched to its conclusion, but was refracted and broken at this point.

Kigaki's thinking may have been partly a reaction against the fact that in the cabaret Western merchants and sailors--yes, even Indians, Chinese and Indonesians—had been more numerous than Japanese guests. It was also a reaction against an incident that had occurred just after they left the cabaret. A streetwalker had sidled over, peered into Kigaki's face, and said in a surprised voice, "Oh, a Jap!" Until then Kigaki had been using the plural 'we' in his thoughts unconsciously. There was certainly present in every Japanese a slight residuum of the wartime nationalism and racialism even though they now went under different names and different banners. But in this too the borderline was vague. Someone could even mistake Kigaki for a foreigner. *'We'—does 'we' have any meaning at all?* Kigaki wondered. At least the other element of this 'we' was not Baron Tilpitz who was walking beside him with steady step. It must not be Tilpitz ……His mind left the present scene and the romantic figure walking beside him with his arms swinging loosely and returned to yesterday's conversation with Mikuni about novels. Perhaps he would analize this 'we' in his novel.

"Well, my son, after I parted with you in Shanghai I sold those baubles to America through Manila and went almost as far as Europe." Tilpitz, who had not spoken till then, broke the

silence, addressing Kigaki as 'my son', just as they were passing along a broad street in front of a church which rose in a dark silhouette against the sky. There were no signs of age in the straight line of the nose that contrasted so sharply with the swelling flesh between the eyebrows, or in the firm set of the lips of this old man who must be at least sixty.

"From Manila I went through the Indian Ocean," Tilpitz continued, "and then we came to Somaliland in East Africa. There was a cold wind but the sun was hot like fire. On the port side of the ship a huge wall of rock rose directly from the blue sea. The rocks were almost a red, mottled with brown here and there. Through crevices in the rock hot sand was flowing down into the sea like a waterfall. Beyond the cliffs is a desert of great heat where no tree nor animal can live. When I saw this again after all these years my heart was touched. This terrifying, barren desert is part of the outer frame of Europe—the Europe I have been brought up in, lived in, and believed in—together with the Arctic wastes to the north and the barren Russian steppes to the East which seem boundless when viewed from Europe. This cliff in Somaliland was like the rim of a cauldron, the huge cauldron of Europe with its seething human beings; and I understood for the first time what the cauldron was like. I am sorry I understood this, for when a man comes to understand…… Well, I never realized what it meant to be a nobleman until after my title had ceased to exist."

In Shanghai the Baron had sometimes invented his autobiography as he talked, although Kigaki thought he was telling the truth now. The Baron had known that it was senseless for a

man who had lost his rank and his land in his own country to talk about the past to people who had no interest in that land or that rank. Therefore he had become whatever time and circumstance dictated. Changing his story to fit his audience, he had been by turns a trader, art collector, gang boss, blackmailer, dealer in precious metals, jewelry merchant, smuggler, diplomatic consultant for small nations, black market money dealer, gambling casino proprietor—he could play any part and compose any past skillfully. Reality was actually of no use to him, for he was living in a series of romantic worlds that he created for himself.

"I had no reason to see Europe again yet, so when the ship reached Jibuti I got off and crossed to Yemen in Arabia on the opposite shore. Yemen was crowded with Jews who, threatened by the instability in India, the Middle East, Asia, and the South Pacific, wanted to settle in their own newly created independent country. My son, ours is an age in which even the Jews must gather and live together. They were all waiting their turns to get airplane passage to Israel. I had intended to return to Asia from Yemen but I decided I would like to go and see Israel. I managed to get a seat in the airplane and went to Tel Aviv. And I had the shock of my life. What do you suppose the Jews were doing in Israel? A people famous for their contributions to natural science and social science, who possess one of the highest cultures of Western Europe. Together with illiterate Arabians and Syrians they were farming! They were reclaiming waste land by the labor of their hands. I couldn't help thinking that European culture might be destroyed from its very roots in

the near future—because it has become too civilized—and a new culture born from Israel."

"What do you mean by the near future?"

The sound of their footsteps on the pavement bounced off the surrounding buildings and echoed in the midnight air. Their only common bond of humanity seemed to be the footsteps—the color of their skins, the history of their lives, everything else was different. That the sound of their footsteps alone should be the same touched Kigaki's heart strangely.

Tilpitz continued without answering Kigaki's rather clumsy question. "My son, you might think that desperation would drive me to commit suicide, but I have really been in my grave since long ago. Neither my title nor my position among the nobility exists any more. My existence itself is fictional—a mere fiction. During the last twenty years I have worn many costumes, sometimes changing my clothes two or three times a day. I have learned to change my mental outlook and my mood to suit the clothes I am wearing. If a man can change himself merely by changing his clothes, it can be said that he does not exist. But I don't want to really die, even though I can always leave any existence behind by changing my costume. Therefore I warm myself by coming to places where new human blood is being shed as disorder breaks out. Disorder is my element. To put it another way, disorder and revolution begin from human ideals, although their results are inhuman. I am one of those results of disorder. Perhaps the effort to build human values again from the inhuman results of disorder and revolution is fruitless from one point of view—but in that effort itself lies the only hope of

the modern age……I like to see it actually happening. Even my sons—the oldest is 35—may all have become Communists by now ……Howard Hunt, the young man you were with, represent fresh blood too."

As Tilpitz talked, Kigaki had a vision of himself sunk in a deep abyss at the bottom of which vague bleeding forms were struggling. In the deepest and darkest part of the pit he could see Tilpitz's face standing out in clear relief, a face perspiring in agony that was completely different from the Oriental notion of a peaceful old man's face. As he hung in the abyss, Kigaki could feel his heart swinging wildly to right and left like a pendulum. The old man was looking up at the starry sky.

After a while Kigaki climbed back to the surface from the abyss and consciousness of the present returnd. He realized suddenly that the Baron had known Hunt's name and he remembered that the Chinese manager of the cabaret had whispered something to Tilpitz and pointed at Hunt.

Tilpitz hailed a taxi and had Kigaki ask the driver if there was time to make the last train for Tokyo. Hearing that there was just time, he pushed Kigaki into the cab with his bony hands and said as he stood outside the car, "My son, I shall see you again. My telephone number is……" and he made Kigaki write down the Tokyo number.

Although it was midnight, Sakuragicho Station was crowded with young men and young women whose gaily colored dresses looked like the flags of many nations. Kigaki rushed into the train, found a seat, and crossing his arms, felt something in the inside pocket of his coat. It seemed to be a thick bundle of scrap

paper. *Oh ····· Maybe it's something that was planted on me by a member of the spy network that Chang was talking about,* he thought. He was afraid to touch it or look at it there, so he just sat there listening automatically to the words of the songs that the young people around him were singing.

"I'll kill him with a knife or a colt ,45·····"
"Who did this woman wrong?·····"
"She lost her honor in the rain.
She'll never be a saint again····· "

A sense of frustration came from the words of all the songs. The young men and women sang with expressionless faces, also reflecting frustration, as they distorted loosened lips almost masochistically.

"Hey ! Look at that !" Suddenly a young man wearing an Aloha shirt who was standing in front of Kigaki pointed out the window. On a freight loading platform at a lower level lamps were glaring and a searchlight illuminated men who were loading silver-colored cylinders into boxcars.

"Looks like shells crated in wooden frames, but they're really auxiliary gas tanks for planes."

"They made here ?"

"Yeah. They put them on both wings and then the fighters leave from the Japanese side of Tsushima Strait. After the gas is used up, they throw the tank away."

"Oh."

"Say, Tsuta's G.I.—isn't he a pilot?"

"Oh? That right ?"

As he listened to the talk around him, Kigaki was wondering uneasily about the bundle in his inside coat pocket.

(*to be continued*)