

ARTICLES

Insights into Okinawa and Identity through ‘Dete Oide Kijimuna’: The I-Novel as a Source for the Student of Japanese Studies Part (1)

John Herbert*

Table of Contents (Part 1):

1. Introduction
2. What is a ‘watakushi shousetsu’?
3. ‘Dete Oide Kijimuna’: Why is it a relevant source for the student of Japanese Studies?
4. ‘Dete Oide Kijimuna’: Setting the Scene
5. Identity

Introduction

For the student of Japan and Japanese, the ‘watakushi shousetsu’, or I-novel, can bring a rewarding glimpse into the life and times of another place and another age. The autobiographical style of this type of novel, with its emphasis on a faithful portrayal of actual events in the life of an author, often makes this kind of novel somewhat easier to read than novels steeped in literary style and overflowing with flowery prose. Spending time reading such novels is not only of value from a linguistic viewpoint, but is also valuable through the insight that it gives the reader to the issues taking place at the time of the author’s life. A well chosen ‘watakushi-shousetsu’, whether it be written by the famous or the non-famous, can be a most enlightening glimpse of some aspect of Japan.

What is a ‘watakushi shousetsu’¹?

The ‘watakushi-shousetsu’ is a well known form of writing in Japan. It has been defined as a, “form of modern Japanese prose narrative, narrated in the first or third person, that purports to represent (with varying degrees of distance or “purity,” i.e. faithfulness) the experiences of the author” (Karatani, 1993, p. 214). Kato states that the ‘watakushi-shousetsu’ is a novel in which not only the experiences of the author should be

* Foreign language Lecturer, College of International Relations, Ritsumeikan University.

represented, but it is also a novel in which, “the background, characters and incident are all closely related to the author’s life” (Kato,1990, p. xiv). This form of writing is often categorised as belonging to the pre-war period, but as Cohn points out, the ‘watakushi-shousetsu’ “is generally considered to have reached its zenith in the Taishou period (1912-1926) in the hands of such practitioners as Shiga Naoya and Kasai Zenzou, [however] autobiographical fiction continued to be a staple feature of the Japanese literary scene well into the postwar era, and has never entirely disappeared” (Cohn, 1998, p. 25).

As well as the many professional writers who have written in the ‘watakushi shousetsu’ style, many non-professionals have turned their hand to writing their autobiographies in a narrative form, in an attempt to have their stories heard. One such example is the I-novel ‘Dete Oide Kijimuna’, by Suzuki Teruko.

‘Dete Oide Kijimuna’: Why is it a relevant source for the student of Japanese studies?

‘Dete Oide Kijimuna’ is a novel based on the experiences of the author Suzuki Teruko, born in 1946, in Ishikawa City on the island of Okinawa. The main protagonist in the novel is Yoshino who was born in 1946, the product of the relationship between her unwed mother, Toki, and a U.S. military doctor, Michael. The novel is an account of the childhood years of Yoshino (a very thinly veiled version of author, Suzuki Teruko) right up until the time of her departure for university. The book is a simple account of Yoshino’s life. It is by no means a literary masterpiece, yet it manages to avoid the pitfalls that have led “less talented and original writers to produce works of extraordinary dullness in which the fictional element is so attenuated that the term novel or short story seems hardly appropriate” (Morris, 1997, p. 16-17).

‘Dete Oide Kijimuna’ is a good source for the student of Japan as it gives us insight into life in Okinawa during the war, just after the war, and in the period of American occupation of the islands. This ‘watakushi shousetsu’ also broaches very important social and political problems which have great relevance in Japan today, and it is these links to the present which make this book such an interesting read. The themes that are dealt with in this novel are numerous, and therefore too great in number to deal with in their entirety in this paper. However, two themes stand out.

First is the theme of identity. The story has as its beginning impending Japanese defeat in World War II, and the tale unfolds during a period of American occupation of Okinawa. This period was a time of much soul searching in Japan, a time when Japan was facing an identity crisis. This is not surprising when we think that Japan was under American occupation rule. The Emperor had been reduced to a merely symbolic status, a new Constitution had been drawn up including the famous article 9 which renounced the possible future use of military force, and a wide range of sweeping structural reforms took place. And all this carried out under the auspices of the former enemy. It was not only mainland Japan that faced such a struggle to grasp its true identity. Okinawa, too, had to deal with a three-way relationship between itself, Japan, and the occupying Americans. ‘Dete Oide Kijimuna’ portrays a spiritually strong, and culturally rich, Okinawa in times of

hardship under American occupation; a land of traditional crafts, of dance, and of music.

The three-way identity crisis is not limited to the territories in question. This novel is the story of Yoshino and her three-way identity ordeal. Is she American like her estranged father? Is she Okinawan? Is she Japanese? Can she cope in a Japan which sees itself as a homogeneous society when physically she looks so different from 'pure' Japanese? ² As it becomes easier to cross international boundaries, more and more children the world over face a similar dilemma to Yoshino, that of having to decide on a nationality and an identity. They are faced with the external problems of being looked upon as slightly different (a problem exacerbated in the 'homogeneous' Japanese society) and the internal struggle for their own identity.

Second is the theme of the American presence in Okinawa, and the effects that this has had on the land and the local populace. Feelings toward the Americans take various forms in the book. Before the Americans land on Okinawa in the final stages of the war, there is the fear of the unknown enemy. Once landed, the Americans are portrayed in a favourable light during the early stages of their occupation of the islands. However, feelings of growing resentment are shown with the constant presence of the U.S. military, a presence which has a profound effect on the everyday lives of many Okinawans. Feelings of repulsion at the high wire fences of the U.S. military bases which prevent them from being able to enjoy their land to the full, remind the reader of the controversial political issue of whether land currently used by the U.S. military should be returned to Okinawa, or whether Okinawa should remain the U.S.'s "keystone of the Pacific".³

These two main themes remain extremely relevant to this day and they are the themes that will be considered in this paper.

'Dete Oide Kijimuna': Setting the scene

The main character of the novel is the red-haired Yoshino, and this novel is the story of her childhood. Yoshino spent much of her childhood searching for Kijimuna, a cheeky, red-haired water sprite that often appears in Okinawan tales (hence the title of the book 'Dete Oide Kijimuna', 'Where are you Kijimuna?' or 'Come out Kijimuna!'). In contrast to the Okinawan people around her, Yoshino's red hair singled her out, and it was for that reason that she felt a special attachment to Kijimuna who had hair the same colour as hers.

Yoshino was born after a romance between her mother, Toki, and a U.S. military doctor, Michael. Toki had been injured in the fighting and was treated at a military hospital by Michael. As a result of the ensuing romance, Yoshino was conceived. However, even though the war had ended, the couple were unable to marry under international law as Japan and the U.S. had not yet normalised diplomatic relations. Michael received orders to return to the United States in 1946, but vowed to return to Japan to marry Toki and help raise their child. In August of 1948, a law was passed which recognised marriage between Japanese and Americans. However, Toki had received no news from Michael, and fearing for her future, she decided to marry an Okinawan man, Seikichi.

In 1951, Michael returned to Japan but was dismayed to find that Toki was married,

had a second child, and was pregnant with a third. He was also distressed by the living conditions in which his daughter, Yoshino, lived and he thought of taking her away with him. He 'kidnapped' his own daughter and spent two days with her before he was apprehended by the military police and was forced to return Yoshino to her mother and step-father. His departure was acrimonious and this was the last that Yoshino, aged five at the time, was to see of her father.

Identity

identity: 1. Your identity is who you are. 2. The identity of a person or place is the characteristics they have that distinguish them from others. (Collins Cobuild Dictionary)

identity n. absolute sameness; individuality, personality; condition of being a specified person. (The Concise Oxford Dictionary)

Identity is a difficult word to conceptualise as each person probably has a different idea of what identity means to them. As Kimball states, "One is expected to draw and quarter and then further subdivide oneself into innumerable bits of allegiance which, metaphysically glued together, make up one's 'identity.'..... he may identify himself in terms of various combinations of factors - geographical, political, economic, social, religious, psychological, family, home, or other" (Kimball, 1973, p. 19). However, for many, geographical boundaries often play a large part in a person's concept of who they are. Those geographical boundaries may relate to the place in which they were born, the place in which they grew up, or even to the place in which their parents were born. Yoshino is faced with an intriguing identity problem. Her identity is very much affected by geographical and political boundaries. For her, it is not simply a question of choosing between the two possibilities of being Japanese or being American. A third sense of geographical and political identity is possible, namely that of being Okinawan. It was in Okinawa that she was born. It was in Okinawa that she spent her childhood, right up to the end of her high school days. The novel gives us an interesting insight, through Yoshino, into the problems of finding one's identity. Is she Okinawan? Is she Japanese? Or is she American?

Shedding any traces of an American Identity

Yoshino started to have negative feelings about having an American father from a fairly early age. She had been stigmatised by her mother's (Toki's) attitude to her physical difference from the other children around her. When Yoshino's Aunt Michiko gave her some brightly-coloured clothes which would go well with her red-hair, Toki's response was,

ありがとう。うれしいわ、そんなふうに、よしののことを思ってくれて。でも赤毛の子なんて、よしののほかには、いないでしょう。あまり目立つと、いわれのない差別を受けたり、いじめられたりす

るんじゃないかと.....。(p. 59-60)

Thanks. I'm really pleased that you take an interest in Yoshino in that way. But there are no other kids with red hair are there? If she really stands out from the crowd, I'm worried she'll face unjustified discrimination and be bullied.

Yoshino soon came to connect her red hair with her father, with America, and with being different from the other children around her.

In her final year of elementary school, she experienced various forms of discrimination from teachers and others connected to the school. At this stage she made the connection between her red hair and the fact that she was not seen as a pure Okinawan. Yoshino had fully been expected to become a class representative by winning the prize for the child who was the symbol of good health, a child who was physically strong and tall, good at sports and also no slouch at study. However, surprisingly she was not chosen.

よしのが代表からはずされたと知ったときから、理由は聞かなくても、わかるような気がしていたからだ。『はっきりと理由を言ってほしい。』よしのの目がそう語りながら、先生に注がれていた。でも、先生の目は、意識的によしのを避けている。『よしのが混血で、純粋の沖縄人ではないからだ。』なんて、言えないに決まっている。みんなも、そう思うから聞かないのだ。(p. 118)

From the time that she knew she had been looked over as the class representative, she felt she knew the reason why, without even asking. Her eyes, which were fixed on the teacher, were saying, "I want you to tell me the real reason". But the teacher consciously avoided eye contact with Yoshino. "Of course he can't say the real reason as it is because I'm of mixed-blood and not a pure Okinawan", she thought. "Nobody is asking him why, because everybody knows that is the real reason".

At the end of a PTA meeting, parents were lamenting the fact Okinawa never seemed to have control of its own destiny. Before the war it had been controlled by Japan and before that by China. Now that the war was over, the situation had not improved. Now it was America that ruled over the Okinawan people. Among the parents of the school friends of Yoshino the following exchange took place in response to one parent's feeling that Okinawa had to "give up" when faced with competition from America.

『そういう諦めが、沖縄県民の自信と誇りを奪い、虚脱感を生むのですぞ。それは、ひいては沖縄を滅ぼすもことになる。諦めてはいかん。』

『このごろでは、子どもたちまでこう言うんですよ。沖縄人は、やっぱりアメリカ人になれない。その証拠に、クラスに混血の子がいるのだけど、何をやらせても、だれもその子に勝てないんですって。』

『困ったものですな。せめて子どもたちには、沖縄人でもやればできる、という自信や誇りをもたせてやりたいですね。』(p. 126)

"That kind of resignation takes away the confidence and pride of Okinawan people, and gives rise

to despondency. And that will be the cause of the destruction of Okinawa. We mustn't give up!"
"These days, even the children are saying, I guess Okinawans are no match for Americans. To prove the point, in class there is a mixed-blood kid, but no matter what the teacher makes the kids do, people say nobody can beat her."
"That's a problem, eh. We want to get at least the kids to have the confidence and pride in knowing that Okinawans too can be successful."

Her antipathy towards America can be traced to these early days when the adults around her looked on "mixed-blood" in a negative manner. The issue of "mixed-blood" children was certainly a big issue at the time. We can see from the novel how Yoshino's relations were adversely affected by Yoshino's existence as a "non-pure" Okinawan.

登紀が、結婚もしない相手の、しかも、軍医とはいえ敵国の人間の子を産んだ、ということで、ウミトや、良雄までもが、世間や親戚の人々から白い眼で見られ、肩身の狭い思いをしてきたことを、よく知っていたからだ。(p. 294)

Toki was wise to the fact that Umit and even Yoshio felt humiliated because they were treated coolly by society and relatives on account of Toki having given birth to the child of someone she wasn't even married to, and what's more, despite being a military doctor he was one of the enemy.

There was certainly stigma attached to having a "mixed-blood" child in the immediate aftermath of the war.⁴ However, Yoshino was a strong child and in spite of this stigma, as time progressed and she grew older, the community surrounding her grew used to her different physical appearance and she herself became comfortable with her existence as a red-haired Okinawan.

Any remaining feelings of closeness or identity with America had begun to wane from her elementary school days. These feelings of antipathy grew to a hatred of America during her teenage years which led to her neglect of her English language study.

ジェット機墜落事故以来、すっかりアメリカが嫌いになって、英語の勉強をサボっていた (p. 233-234)

Since the jet fighter crash, she'd grown to really hate America, and had stopped studying English.

As can be seen in the above extract, the main reason for her hatred was the crash of an American military plane into Miyamori Elementary school, which had claimed the lives of seventeen people, eleven of them children at the school. In addition, two hundred and seventy-nine people had been injured, the majority of them children. Yoshino had suffered a lot of mental anguish at that time, fearing that her sisters, who were students at that elementary school, had been killed in the crash. Fortunately, that was not the case, but the mental scars remained.

Yoshino finally severed ties with her American identity by ridding herself of her ties with her father on her eighteenth birthday. She had written a letter to her American father, Michael, and was desperately awaiting a response. After waiting in vain for a reply

from him which never came, Yoshino gathered together all her keepsakes of her father. These included photographs, old clothes, old letters and everything that was connected to him in any way. She then made her way silently out of the house and down to the beach.

砂浜を踏みしめながら、いしかわ川の河口まで歩いてくると、よしのは思いでの品を一つひとつ、砂の上に重ねて置いた。そして、まわりにだれもいないのを確かめてから、いっしょに持ってきたマッチをすった。かぼそい炎は、海風に吹かれてすぐに消えた。燃えがらをすてると、改めてマッチをすった。今度も、軸に燃え移らないうちに消えてしまった。よしのは、何度もマッチをすった。が、何回やっても火はすぐに消え、そのうち、足元は、軸の先だけが黒くこげたマッチの燃えがらで、いっぱいになった。マッチ箱には、あと数本しか残っていない。よしのはあせった。(お願い、消えないで。) 体で風をさえぎり、くじけそうになる気持ちを奮い立たせながら、ようやくついたマッチの火を、急いで砂の上の手紙に近付けた。手紙は、たちまちメラメラと燃え上がり、炎は写真や衣類へと燃え移っていた。周囲から縮んで、めくれ上がっていく写真の中で、軍服を効い着いたマイケルの顔が、みるみるうちに、ゆがんで消えた。衣類なども、あっけないくらい簡単に燃えつきて、灰になった。ちょっと、もの足りない気分だった。(p. 291)

She picked her way across the sandy beach until she came to the mouth of the Ishikawa River, where she piled up these keepsakes one on top of another. Then after checking nobody was around, she struck one of the matches that she had brought with her. The feeble flame was blown by the stiff, sea breeze and immediately went out. She threw away the spent match and struck another. This time too, it went out before the flame had spread to the matchstick proper. Yoshino struck match after match, but, no matter how many times she tried, the flame soon went out, and, after a while, the base of her feet was littered with the remnants of matches burnt black only at their tips. Only a few matches were left in the matchbox. Yoshino was agitated. "Please don't go out," she thought. She blocked the wind with her body, and, as a feeling as if she would despair rose in her, finally a match lit and hurriedly she moved the flame towards the letters on the sand. They blazed up in an instant and the flames spread to the photos and the clothing. Amongst the warping photographs, curling up from their corners, the face of Michael in his army uniform, rapidly contorted and was gone. The clothing and other things caught fire disappointingly easily, and turned to ashes. Yoshino was left with a slightly unsatisfactory feeling.

The symbolic burning of these keepsakes marked the first stage in Yoshino finding out who she was, finding out her identity, and there was little place in her heart for America. Even though she would always have the physical reminder of her American connections, the American part of her identity, along with any thoughts of going to the United States to continue her education, went up in smoke along with the photograph of her father.

A Dual Okinawan/Japanese Identity

However, Yoshino's identity problems had been a three-way affair, and so the severing of ties with the United States did not entirely solve her identity crisis. She had decided to go to university on the mainland of Japan. This however brought further anxieties.

極東の小さな島でなら、キジムナーのように赤い髪をした自分が、黒い髪の人々に混じって生きていくのに、どれほどの不安があるというだろう。自分が生まれ育った沖縄には、ウミトがいる。登紀や美智子、それに妹たちもいる。たくさんの友人や先生たちもいる。だから、楽しく暮らしていける自信はある。でも、この人たちのいない本土の大学で、はたして、自分を失わずに、勉強が続けられるだろうか。(p. 292)

“How much I wonder, do I, with my red hair like Kijimuna, actually worry about living amongst black-haired people on a small island in the far east. Umit is here in Okinawa where I was born and brought up. So are Toki and Michiko, and my younger sisters. I have a lot of friends and teachers here too, so I am confident that I can enjoy living here. But at a university on the mainland, without those people around, can I really keep studying without losing my identity”.

She was comfortable on Okinawa. She identified with Okinawa and had support from those people around her. She had grown accustomed to dealing with her physical differences from those around her and felt an integral part of the community. However, would she be able to become an integral part of a community on the Japanese mainland? Once again, she would have to deal with others looking on her as different, not only due to her red hair and “mixed-blood”, but because she came from Okinawa and not mainland Japan.

Yoshino makes the reader aware of some of the differences between mainland Japan and Okinawa when she says,

同じ標準語で話しても、本土と沖縄では、文化も、ものの考え方も違うだろうし、学力のレベルだって、沖縄とは比べものにならないだろう。(p.292)

Even though we speak the same standard language, the culture and way of thinking between the mainland and Okinawa is surely different, and as for the level of ability in terms of education, Okinawa surely isn't even in the same league as the mainland.

It is true to say that many people on the mainland of Japan looked down on Okinawa as a poor cousin, and also that many people on Okinawa felt that sense of inferiority in comparison. This had historically been the case.⁵

Yoshino clearly thinks that Okinawa is no match for mainland Japan when it comes to education and it is interesting to see mention of the standard language that connects Okinawa with the mainland.⁶ The Okinawan dialect was clearly seen as being inferior to ‘standard’ Japanese within the education system. The degree to which Okinawan dialect is different to ‘standard’ Japanese has been noted through the ages and can be seen to this day.⁷

Yoshino had gained some kind of grasp on her identity with the casting off of her feelings toward America. Now she faced the difficulty of identifying with Japan, a place that she clearly felt was superior to her native Okinawa in many ways. Taira notes that the “overriding question for Okinawans is how they can maintain a sense of personal integrity (the feeling of being true to themselves) under the challenge of a dual, Okinawan-

Japanese, identity” (Taira, 1997, p.164). This is quite clearly the dilemma that Yoshino felt that she was facing with her decision to study at a university on the mainland. Former Okinawan Governor Nishime Junji puts the three-way comparison between Okinawa, Japan and the U.S. in a nutshell when he says, “although vis-a-vis Americans, Okinawans insisted that they were Japanese, they felt that in Japanese society they were a different kind of people (*ishitsu no mono*) from the Japanese” (Taira, 1997, p. 165).

For Yoshino, the answer to the question of whether she could identify with Japan as well as Okinawa, was found on her journey home after burning the keepsakes that reminded her of her American father. Yoshino was staring out to sea across Kin Bay.

そのとき、急に、目の前の空が明るくなり、平安座の島々が、影絵のようにくっきりと浮かびあがった。

『春はあけぼの。やうやう白くなりゆく、山ぎは少しあかりて、紫だちたる雲のほそくたなびきたる。』よしのの唇をついて、ごく自然に、『枕草子』の冒頭の一節がでてきた。『君の感じ方、君の考え方は、日本人そのものなんだよ。』

先日、盛加先生から言われた言葉の意味が、いま、やっと理解できたような気がした。よしのは、黎明の美しさに感動しながら、『わたしは、やっぱり日本人なんだわ。日本へ行こう。そして日本人として生きよう。』と、明るさを増やしていく東の空に向かって、胸を張った。(p.293)

At that moment, suddenly, the sky in front of her brightened, and the striking silhouette of the Henza Islands stood out. “In spring it is the dawn that is the most beautiful. As the light creeps over the hills, their outlines are dyed a faint red and wisps of purplish cloud trail over them”.⁸ From Yoshino’s lips the opening passage of ‘The Pillow Book of Sei Shounagon’ came forth very naturally. “Your way of feeling, your way of thinking is that of a typical Japanese”, her teacher Mr. Morika had told her the other day. Now, finally she felt she could understand the meaning of what he had said. Impressed by the beauty of daybreak, she proudly declared to the ever lightening sky, “I am after all a Japanese. I’ll go to Japan and will live as a Japanese”.

The Pillow Book of Sei Shounagon is familiar to nearly all Japanese students and serves to emphasise the fact that Yoshino, in remembering these lines at this point, thinks and feels like a true Japanese. It could also be said that the mere fact that the silhouette of the *Okinawan* Henza Islands reminds her of the inherently *Japanese* Pillow Book, serves symbolically to show that Okinawa can sit comfortably within the sphere of Japanese influence, and therefore that dual Okinawan-Japanese identity is possible for Yoshino. As if to reinforce that by leaving Okinawa for the mainland she was not deserting her Okinawan identity, we read that,

よしのは、盛加先生の言う『豆腐チャンプル』になろうと、あらためて決心した。(p.293)

Yoshino reaffirmed her resolve to, in Mr. Morika’s words, “cut the mustard”.

The *toufu chanpuru* to which Yoshino refers is an Okinawan dish often comprising *tofu* and fried vegetables. The phrase is used here metaphorically for the English phrase ‘come

up to scratch', or, to continue the food metaphor 'cut the mustard'. Her use of an immediately identifiable Okinawan dish, and metaphor, to describe her resolve suggests to us that her Okinawan identity remains intact.

Okinawan Identity Intact

A sense of Okinawan identity is retained throughout the novel, not only for Yoshino, but for the other main characters involved too. Okinawan dialect is used in many places in the novel, followed by a 'standard' Japanese translation. The Japanese speech of the older characters in the book is smattered with Okinawan dialect. The dialect is used in several ways in the novel. It is used when emphasising the "Okinawan-ness" of something. A good example is the following conversation between Aunt Michiko and Yoshino's mother, Toki,

『そのうち、ウミト母さんに追いついて、ガーजू（私の強い）ウチナーイナグ（沖縄女）になるわ。』

『あなたもよ、美智子。そのときは二人して、ウチナー（沖縄）カンブーを結おうね。』（p.307）⁹

"In the near future you'll catch up with Umit and become one of our gaajuu (real, strong) Okinawan women". "You too, Michiko. At that time let's the two of us tie our hair like Umit in the traditional Okinawan kanpuu way".

Okinawan dialect is also used at times of high stress. Okinawan words and not Japanese flow naturally from the mouths of the characters, particularly the older ones, in times of high emotion. Yoshino's grandmother, Umit, being of the older generation, often uses Okinawan as opposed to Japanese in these circumstances. At Yoshino's birth we see an example of this,

『アキサミヨー（どうしよう）！これが、ワ（我）んの孫なのかい。』

美智子は、いまにも取り落としそうな赤ん坊を、あわてて抱きとり、胸にかかえた。そして、『アイエーナー（かわいそうに）、登紀。チャースガテー（どうしたらいいんだろう）、』と、なおも泣き叫ぶウミトに、思わず声を荒らげた。（p.315-316）

"Akisamiyou - What on earth shall we do? Is this my grandchild?" Michiko hurriedly plucked away the baby that Umit looked on the verge of dropping and clutched it to her chest. Then, without thinking, to Umit who was still wailing, "Aieinaa Toki - Poor Toki. Chaasugatei - what on earth shall we do?", she raised her voice in anger.

It is not simply the dialect that gives us a taste of how much Yoshino, and those around her, identify themselves as Okinawan. Things Okinawan are emphasised throughout the novel. We read of the traditional Okinawan kanpuu hairstyle, the kujirigoushi kimono and the high esteem in which the weaving industry is held.¹⁰ We read descriptions of traditional Okinawan bullfights (where the fight is between two bulls, rather than between one bull and one or more humans) and of very lively celebratory

dinners, where everything has an Okinawan, and not Japanese, feel. The food includes kaminuusuimun (chitterlings soup), and soukibuni (ribs of beef) which are spicy and sweet. The drink is the Okinawan liquor, awamori. The musical accompaniment to the dancing is supplied courtesy of the sanshin, the ubiquitous Okinawan string instrument "said to have filled the (POW) camps with song and dance" (Field, 1991, p.85). The dances themselves include the celebratory dance, the gujinfuu, and the songs include the song which Yoshino's relatives will sing for her as she sets sail for mainland Japan, namely the danjukariyushi, a traditional sailor's song asking for favourable winds.¹¹

Final thoughts on identity

For many Okinawans, identity, as much as it is affected by geographical boundaries, is a case of a dual relationship between feeling Okinawan and feeling Japanese. As former Okinawan Governor Nishime pointed out, Okinawans tend to feel Japanese when amongst Americans, but a different kind of Japanese person when amongst Japanese. For Yoshino, too, this was the case, but only after a long battle with a third geographical aspect to her identity, namely her identity as American. Had circumstances and timing been different, perhaps an American identity would have been less stigmatised, and Yoshino may have retained a greater sense of her "American-ness". As international borders become easier to cross, and the number of children from so-called "international marriages" or international relationships increases, one wonders whether the stigma attached to children of "mixed-blood" will continue to ease, and whether Japanese society will change to the extent that it becomes easier for children to retain a multiple, cross-border identity, without the hardship and suffering that Yoshino experienced.

(To be continued)

Bibliography (Part 1)

- Cohn, J. R. (1998). *Studies in the Comic Spirit in Modern Japanese Fiction*. Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Collins Cobuild English Dictionary (1995). London: HarperCollins.
- Concise Oxford Dictionary (1987). Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Creighton, M. (1997). *Soto Others and Uchi Others: Imaging Racial Diversity, Imaging Homogeneous Japan*. In M. Weiner (Ed.), *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity* (pp. 211-238).
- Field, N. (1991). *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor*. New York: Pantheon.
- Hibbett, H. (1997). *In Akutagawa Ryunosuke: Rashomon and other Stories*. Tokyo: Tuttle.
- Karatani, K. (1993). *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*. Durham & London: Duke Univ. Press.
- Kato, S. (1990). *A History of Japanese Literature: Vol. 3 The Modern Years*. Tokyo: Kodansha.
- Keene, D. (1998a). *Modern Japanese Diaries: The Japanese at Home and Abroad as Revealed through their Diaries*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press.
- Keene, D. (1998b). *Confessions of a Japanologist*. Tokyo: Asahi Press.
- Keene, D. (1998c). *Dawn to the West: A History of Japanese Literature Volume 3*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kerr, G.H. (1964). *Okinawa: The History of an Island People*. Vermont: Tuttle.
- Kimball, A. G. (1973). *Crisis In Identity and Contemporary Japanese Novels*. Vermont: Tuttle.

- Kirk, G. et al (1999). A Joint Project of the Interhemispheric Resource Center and the Institute for Policy Studies. In *Focus: Women and the U.S. Military in East Asia*, 4 (9). Available at <http://www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/briefs/vol4/v4n09wom.html>.
- Koujien (1976). Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Kokuritsu Kokugo Kenkyuujohen (1963). *Okinawa Gojiten*. Tokyo: Oukurashou Insatsukyoku.
- McClellan, E. (1979). In *Shiga Naoya: A Dark Night's Passing*. Tokyo: Kodansha.
- Morris, I. (1987). *The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon* (trans. & ed.). London: Penguin.
- Morris, I. (1997). *Modern Japanese Stories: An Anthology* (Ed.). Vermont: Tuttle.
- Seidenstecker, E. G. (1999). 西洋の形式に日本の叙情 (Japanese Lyricism in a Western Form) in *Kyoto Shimbun*, Nov. 8, p. 9.
- Shinjo, K. (1999). This is No Time to Feel Depressed. *Ampo: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review*, 29 (1), pp. 35-38.
- Spahn, M. & Hadamitzky, W. (1989). *Japanese Character Dictionary*. Tokyo: Nichigai Assoc..
- Suzuki, T. (1991). *Dete Oide Kijimuna [Come out, Kijimuna!]*. Tokyo: Yuu Cosmos.
- Taira, K. (1997). Troubled National Identity: The Ryukyuan/Okinawan. In M. Weiner (Ed.), *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity* (pp. 140-177).
- Takamine, C. (1982). *Okinawa: Keystone of the Pacific or Nuclear Bull's Eye*. *Ampo: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review*, 14 (4), pp.16-23.
- Takasato, S. (1982). *Women on Base*. *Ampo: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review*, 14 (4), pp. 24-29.

Notes

- 1 The following quotes give a further flavour as to the extent to which the I-novel is known in Japan, to its status worldwide (which is sometimes low), to its content, and to the many different terminologies used for this kind of novel.
"The Naturalists sanctioned only the literary method to which, in the name of the first-person-singular shi-shousetsu, their successors still adhere. This was the Confession, ranging from the sentimental memoir to the clinical report of an author's sexual life" Howard Hibbett in (Akutagawa, 1997, p. 11).
"... that genre known in Japan as the watakushi shousetsu - the "I", or the "private", or more loosely, the "autobiographical" novel - which reached the height of its popularity in the 1920's" Edwin McClellan in (Shiga, 1979, p. 9).
"The shi-shousetsu tradition, though it has sometimes given rise to works of unusual sharpness and honesty, has had a number of baneful effects. In their efforts at faithful reproduction, many modern Japanese writers tended to forget the demands of fiction and of literary style. Furthermore, the confessional type of literature implies a rather dangerous form of conceit, based on the idea that there is something intrinsically interesting in an honest account of one's inner life. In the case of gifted authors this assumption has sometimes been justified" Ivan Morris in (Morris, 1997, p. 16-17).
"西洋では、志賀直哉のような『私小説』はエッセーとしか言わない" サイデンステッカー, (京都新聞, 11月8日, 1999, p.9) [In the West, 'shi-shousetsu' or I-novels, such as those of Shiga Naoya, would only be called essays (Seidenstecker in *Kyoto Shimbun*, Nov.8, 1999, p.9)]
For an extremely thorough explanation of the intricacies (or lack of them) of the I-novel see the chapter on the I-novel in Keene, D. (1998c), pp. 506-555
- 2 It is clear that Japan has seen itself as a homogeneous nation at even the very highest levels of government. In 1986, Prime Minister Nakasone let the world know that Japan had no racial minorities. "The Japanese government's response to the United Nations' call for the elimination of discrimination against minorities was an official statement that no minorities exist in Japan and that therefore there is no discrimination against minorities in Japan. (The statement added that Japan believed minority groups should not be discriminated against in

those countries where they did exist)" (Creighton, 1997, p.227).

This way of thinking has, as Creighton suggests, "been capable of denying the realities of those on the margins, Japan's minorities, including Burakumin, Okinawans, resident Koreans, indigenous Ainu" (Creighton, 1997, p.213).

- 3 For a discussion of whether Okinawa should be viewed as a Pacific stronghold or as a 'Nuclear Bull's Eye', see Takamine, C. (1982) pp.16-23.
- 4 The stigma was not only in the immediate aftermath of the war, but continued well into the post-war era. A large number of "mixed-blood" children were brought up single-handedly by their mothers. In fact, as recently as the early 1980's, in Okinawa the total number of "mixed-blood" children was estimated to be 3500. The prefectural government of Okinawa gives figures of almost 1500, for the number of mixed-blood students, a staggering 80% of which lived only with their mother (Takasato, 1982).

A more recent paper explains the problems that such children face. "Amerasian children born to women impregnated by U.S. troops are a particularly stigmatised group. They are often abandoned by their military fathers and raised by single Asian mothers. They live with severe prejudice and suffer discrimination in education and employment due to their physical appearance and their mothers' low status. Those with African-American fathers face even worse treatment than those having white fathers" (Kirk et al, 1999).

It is not only prejudice in education and employment that some of these children have to face. There is also the problem of legal standing. As the 1999 paper explains, "[In the case of] Amerasian children, who are often abandoned by their fathers, no government takes responsibility for the dire situation of these children, who have no legal standing in the United States. The 1982 Amerasian Immigration Act, which addressed the situation of Vietnamese Amerasian children, does not cover people born in Japan or the Philippines. To qualify under this act, one must be born between 1951 and 1982. One must also have documentation that the father is a U.S. citizen, formal admission of paternity, and a financial sponsor in the United States" (Kirk et al, 1999).

- 5 The samurai Sasamori Gisuke, who had been sent to make an investigation of the Ryukyu Islands in 1893, comments that, "... it is the natural fertility of the land that makes [the Okinawans] easygoing and lazy, reluctant to exert themselves even if this means contenting themselves with coarse food and badly made clothes. As a place of corrupt public morals, they are beyond comparison with anywhere in the other prefectures" (Keene, 1998a, p.182).
- 6 About this time, in the early 1960's, a wave of programmes had been taking place to eradicate the Okinawan dialect. As Takara Ben notes (cited in Field), "In the late fifties and early sixties, teachers hung 'dialect tags' from the necks of offending students, which could only be gotten rid of by finding other students slipping into the tabooed sounds. The hapless student who was still tagged at the end of the day had to go home wearing the badge of humiliation" (Field, 1991, p. 72).
- 7 In the late nineteenth century, Sasamori on his investigation of Okinawa, "insisted that [Okinawan] too was just a dialect of Japanese, but he was obliged to admit that he could understand almost nothing" (Keene, 1998a, p.166).

Just over fifty years later, as the war was coming to a close a young Donald Keene was sent to Okinawa to work as an interpreter. He says, "I landed on Okinawa on the first day of the operation. A few minutes later we had a 'prisoner,' a woman in her thirties who kept repeating a single phrase that was meaningless to me. I suddenly realized that I was faced with a problem that I had not anticipated: most women and most men over forty could not speak standard Japanese, and the Japanese I had learned was therefore almost useless. Eventually I acquired an 'interpreter,' a boy of nine or ten who had learned standard Japanese at school" (Keene, 1998b, p.33).

- 8 I have chosen to use Ivan Morris's translation of the opening passage of *The Pillow Book*. In

his notes to the translation he makes the following comment. “The famous opening words of The Pillow Book constitute an elliptical sentence. Their literal meaning is ‘As for spring the dawn’, but some predicate like ‘is the most beautiful time of the day’ must be understood” (Morris, 1987, p.21 and p.267).

- 9 Okinawan hair was traditionally tied in a topknot with hairpins denoting rank (See Kerr, 1964, p.442).
- 10 This kujirigoushi is a type of intricately woven kimono for which Okinawa is famed. “The threads are dyed appropriately before the weaving begins, and each thread is selected individually and applied to the loom with painstaking care to bring out a desired design and pattern. Okinawan skills brought this to the highest degree of perfection” (Kerr, 1964, pp.94-95).
- 11 For more up-to-date information on the importance of music and culture in Okinawa, Shinjo offers some thoughts on the ‘Okinawa boom’ that occurred in the 1990’s. See (Shinjo, K. (1999), pp. 35-38)