University of Maryland, College Park

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

on the

ALLIED OCCUPATION OF JAPAN

Interview

Subject: Marius Jansen
Place: Princeton, New Jersey
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By: Marlene Mayo

Q: Professor Jansen, I wondered if we could start out, as I always like to start out, by learning something about the background of the people who ended up in the occupation. Could you tell me where you were born, something about your family, where you grew up?

MJ: Sure. I was born in Holland, imported at a very early age and grew up in Massachusetts where my father was a florist, and went to Princeton, accelerated because of the outbreak of the war, and got out in 1943.

Q: Could I ask you what subjects you were interested in?

MJ: Yes. I was in History. I planned to become a specialist in Renaissance and Reformation history. There followed infantry training in Georgia, and most of us were college types, and afterwards a long sit on a day coach to Boston. And as we checked around, we discovered that we all knew Dutch or German or both, and it seemed obvious to us
that we were headed for the European theatre. When the train stopped in Boston, we were given a choice of studying Japanese or Chinese.

Q: So this wasn't a matter of being recruited or signing up for training?

MJ: By no means.

Q: You were put into it?

MJ: No. It was partly the fact that the Army had a lot more people than it could use at that time. There were almost no fronts in operation. This was in 1943, and it was preparing for civil theatres and also I guess keeping the colleges alive. And this seemed a useful way of training a lot of people in languages that might come in handy.

Q: You chose Japanese?


Q: Or you chose Chinese?

MJ: No, I chose Japanese because it seemed to be more useful at the time and besides, the chap I was sitting next to had already had a little bit. There followed a year in an Army Specialized Training Program [ASTP] at Harvard in which we were about fifty-fifty Japanese/Chinese. On the Chinese side were my colleague, Fritz Mott, Morton Freid at Columbia, Jim Crump at Michigan, and a number of others whose names don't come to mind.
Q: Could you tell me how the program was organized, for example, who the teachers were? Were they nisei Japanese? I assume it was intensive training or total immersion. What sort of texts you had? And was the purpose to get you speaking and reading or just what?

MJ: The Army directives were for speaking, and they were not permitted for about six months to show us even hiragana or much less kanji. The instruction was directed by Professor He was rather distraught at this. First of all, the first class met at 8:00 every morning. That had never happened to him even when he was in a Bolshevik prison. We used his textbooks, Elementary Japanese for College Students, which appeared in both romaji and character form, as you may know. But he was assisted by a number of people, of whom far the most able and important was Matsukata Makuto, the youngest brother of the present Mrs. Reischauer and a scion of the Tokyo Matsukata family. He had been studying mathematics at Principia, the Christian Science college in Illinois and returned for a while and then agreed to teach Japanese. And Mako, with whom I became very close friends, was an absolutely brilliant young fellow who once he put his mind to problems of teaching language, really more or less took over the program. So that the morning lessons were out of textbook, but all the
rest of the stuff came out of his ditto machine. And he
organized it and it ran like a top. There were also a
number of other people, of course, teaching, but Mako
was in my view the soul of the program.

Q: This mimeo stuff that he prepared, did it ever end up
later in any other textbook that you know of? It was just
strictly what he prepared for Harvard?

MJ: No, I don't believe so because--

Q: He didn't have any influence on other teaching?

MJ: --it was Army and occupation directed. And one came away
with a vast and useless vocabulary of kinds of cruisers
and submarines and so on.

Q: Were you also attending classes on history, culture,
literature and anything like that in addition to the
language training?

MJ: There was something called "Area Studies." That was a
mess because of course all the specialists were in other
places by then.

Q: The term was used, Area Studies?

MJ: Area Studies, that's right. So the lecturers tended to
be Harvard instructors from other fields. I recall a man
in Western Political Thought, I think, who was more or
less in charge. It wasn't very well done. The materials
then available weren't very good either. I suppose the
thing I remember most about it, you know aside from
dreary assignments and things like the geography and so on, were pretty much weekly lectures by outsiders who would be brought in. And in that series came Sir George Sansom and Langdon Warner and Joseph Grew and Stanley Hornbeck and so on and so on.

Q: Now you've really piqued my curiosity? Can you tell me what you remember of those people and those lectures?

MJ: I don't remember a great deal about what they said, but I do remember their persons. Langdon Warner, for instance, was the embodiment of what a titled nobleman should look like. And the thought, "If this is Langdon Warner, what will Sir George Sansom be like?" naturally occurred. And the answer was of course that he was not a titled nobleman.

One that stands out in my memory, an enormous number of people from Washington would begin by telling us what we were doing was very important, because there were 450 million Chinese. And Mr. Hornbeck followed a series of people who had begun exactly that way and he too fell into that trap. This was in the Fogg Museum lecture hall, and the audience rather irreverent, including large numbers of New York City College and Brooklyn and so on, Queens types, as he swung into his first sentence, joined him and chanted: "450 million people."

Q: And did that sit well with him?
MJ: He recovered.

Q: I'm curious as to whether--you say Joseph Grew came down. Did Eugene Dumon turn up at any point giving lectures?

MJ: If he did I don't remember.

Q: This was 1943?

MJ: This was 1943.

Q: Oh, yes, he was on assignment. I forgot about that.

MJ: If he did I don't remember.

Q: That's right, he didn't really do much with State until 1944. Just to clarify it again in my own mind, you were being trained for what? Purposes of interpreting or interrogation of PW's [prisoners of war]? This is not the Catz program that was set up by [Edwin O.] Reischauer?

MJ: Well, that was never clear. It was kind of an all-purpose--no, it was an all-purpose program. Some people were drained off at one point for Michigan for that program which seemed to have perhaps a higher priority, since they took people away.

Q: And what was the Michigan program?

MJ: Well, that was the main Army language program, the one directed by Mr. Yamagiwa.

Q: I see. And how long did this training of yours go on?

MJ: Incidentally, if I can interrupt you long enough with a Yamagiwa story?
Q: Yes. I would like to hear about that.

MJ: Our daughter went to camp in Maine, Gulick Camps, and this is the Gulick family, old relatives of the Japan Gulicks. And talking one afternoon to Halsey Gulick, who was an elderly gentleman who had established the camp and telling him what I was doing, he said, "Oh, Japan, eh? You know," he said, "years ago I had a young fellow from Bowdoin cooking for me. He was a very good worker. He spoke English very well. He wanted nothing more than to teach English at Bowdoin, but you know what it was like in the mid-thirties. Who would hire a Japanese to teach English?" He said, "So he finally decided maybe he ought to go back and try to do something about his own language and literature. He had a fine voice, too."

And I said, "Was his name Yamagiwa?"

He said, "How did you know that?"

Q: Returning to your own training in 1943, was this set up for six months or eight months, ten, a year?

MJ: The setup was initially for six or nine months, I believe and then it was extended for the survivors. In extension the Army relented and permitted them to add some characters in kana. And so what we then did was to sweep through the same textbooks, this time with the other text. But already knowing the lessons terribly well, practically having memorized sentences like
we made excellent headway, I suppose, but retention was not necessarily that great. Nevertheless I'm grateful that it was added.

Q: And what was the assignment which followed the completion of this training?

MJ: There followed a long and confused period, I must say, initially out to California to a Signal Corps camp that was situated on the grounds of what had been a Japanese relocation center in Pineville outside Fresno, California. And the great advantage of that location was that I met my wife. And then we were now in the fall of 1944 and the Battle of the Bulge suddenly created an urgent need for infantrymen. And large numbers of us, including me, were swept up and subjected to second infantry basic at Camp Maxium, Texas, prior to shipment to the Western Front where numbers of my colleagues ended both their Army careers and in some cases, their lives. And from there I applied for the Michigan program and was told that I had priority for something else, which I assumed to be the Western Front. But it turned out to be Intelligence at Camp Ritchie in Maryland. And there I joined the Counterintelligence Unit with what I guess was appropriate training.

Q: Are you permitted to talk about that training?

MJ: Well, it was training in the order of battle and map-reading and so on. And the graduation exercise was an
followed all-night hike in which one/compass azimuths and so on and were supposed to show up. But it was a well-trodden path and little kids in the area sat on porches and would say, "Hey, Mister, you're a little bit off. You ought to be over there."

Q: All helping the war effort.

MJ: Camp Ritchie was very elegant service indeed after the Texas infantry camp.

Q: I'm still confused about your Japanese training at Harvard and then being assigned to the Western Front. But is that just Army?

MJ: Well, no, that was the kind of wastefulness that's part of armies, all armies. The miracle is that I got to Japan and not that I didn't get—not that they thought about sending me elsewhere.

Q: And this counterintelligence training then lasted what, until early 1945?

MJ: Into the spring of 1945 when our unit was sent off to Okinawa.

Q: So you were with the initial invasion of Okinawa?

MJ: No, it was a long, meandering convoy, of course, and we got there in August very shortly before the Japanese surrendered.

Q: And did you know that you would be probably assigned to go to Japan?
MJ: I hoped so. By this time there was enormous eagerness and curiosity.

Q: That would have been my next question, having had the language training.

MJ: And even, I must confess—and it's mad to me now when I think back on it—even a sense of, what shall I say, disappointment that the surrender came before I got there and could be useful.

Q: Did you have any chance to review your Japanese?

MJ: None whatever. It was really quite rusty by then.

Q: You had your training in 1943 and then—yes. So more than a year and a half had gone by since the last time you had really used Japanese?

MJ: Not quite. It extended to September 1944, say. Yes, just about a year.

Q: Could you tell me then the circumstances of your arrival in Japan and since you had this enormous curiosity to see the country, what were your very first impressions of the country and some of the people?

MJ: Well, let me begin with Okinawa.

Q: All right.

MJ: About which I'm a true believer.

Q: Oh, all right, fine.

MJ: And I haven't dared go back yet because my memories of it are so clear, and I'm sure they'd be very disappointed
now. The Navy had moved all the civilians from the south up north to clear it out as a staging area for the invasion of Japan, and so I was assigned to the Intelligence Officer, although I was a sergeant--but we all posed as civilians--attached to a Navy Military Government Unit. And I tented with the commandant and these looked very Japanese, I would say. They were Okinawans, of course. But I also would take the jeep and go up in the hills and bring back Japanese standing by the roadside wanting to surrender as they came out of the woods, malarial and underfed.

I recall one discussion with a major who came in and asked, perhaps pro forma, to be permitted to commit suicide. And we told him he shouldn't because his country and emperor had surrendered. He said well, if he could listen to a radio, if we could convince him of that, then he would reconsider. If we couldn't, he wanted to go through with it. So he listened to the radio for a while and said okay. But that was one dimension. The other was an enormous admiration and affection for the way the Okinawans living in absolutely rudimentary circumstances, managed to carry on a dignified, really civil existence waiting to be permitted to go back south.

Q: You came in then after the initial fighting? Is that it?
MJ: Yes, after the surrender in fact. It was, I guess, the third week in August that I went in there.

Q: And then what were your orders?

MJ: Well, in Okinawa as a CIC representative, I reported back to the, what was that, the Army command there, which in turn reported directly up to Major General Charles/Willoughby's headquarters. There was a lot of malaria, for instance, and I wrote a report on that at one point. It turned out the local military government people, unknown to me, had hush-hushed this because they didn't want to be bothered. So then there was a great investigation, and learned men came down and said, "That's because of paddy agriculture. It's just dangerous to have paddy agriculture, mosquitoes and all that sort of thing." There was some astonishing comment of that type.

But this comes to mind because just the other day I encountered a visiting professor from Okinawa who proved to have been in the same village in which I was quartered, as a little boy at the time. And his chief memory was that there had/quite a lot of malaria.

In November I think it was, though I didn't check this, orders to go up to Yokohama and join a unit there. Well, you asked about impressions and I guess the word would be astonishment. Everything was flat. The pictures you see of destruction don't begin to tell the
story. One could drive practically from Yokohama to Tokyo and see nothing standing.

Q: Well, you had already been using your Japanese down in and villagers. Okinawa and had spoken to soldiers. What was it like going up to Yokohama and to the Tokyo area, just observing the people, say, on the street or maybe talking to them?

MJ: Well, people were much more ambivalent, much more fearful. The Okinawans were still at that time immensely grateful to find themselves alive and somewhat surprised to find themselves alive, and had very few good things to say about the mainland Japanese and fewer about the Japanese army. There were two readings of characters, as you know, Okinawan and Japanese, and almost everybody changed his name. All the Shiroma's became Gusagora's overnight and things of this kind. And that was a form of cultural assertion and disaffiliation from Japan. So there was a great deal more ambivalence and caution in Japan.

Q: You were billeted then in Yokohama?

MJ: Billeted in Yokohama briefly where we lived in a bank building and then assigned to a small sub-detachment in Gora and it was headed by a man who's now a stockbroker in New York who was Dutch and had German and Japanese, too.
I guess he'd been trained at Michigan and he and I were presumably there because our main task was the German Embassy people that were billeted in the Gora Hotel with the bad Italians. The Badoglio Italians were in the Fujia with friendly nationals.

Q: And you said your job was the bad Italians and the Germans. You were interrogating or getting ready to repatriate or--

MJ: Well, the single most time-consuming effort, I guess, that came our way was the Zorga case, about which G2 had an enormous curiosity and we had in our files the originals of all the things like Ribbentrop's telegram to Ambassador after Zorga was exposed, saying, "What's the matter with you fellas?" and so on. By the way was nearby too and he had to check in regularly. But that was a major effort compiling reports on that, most of which, in somewhat garbled form, reappeared in Willoughby's book on the Zorga case, Shanghai Conspiracy. It proved that it was legal and they used them all.

Q: How did you get these materials? They were captured Japanese--

MJ: Well, we had the German Embassy files, the Embassy having been . . . Hakone by the way, too, had a number of German sailors, the crews of one or two submarines that had come through, I guess. And the mountains there were
full of Germans, either in their own summer homes or homes they had taken over in the course of being moved out of the cities. Singe Okahara had a

Q: Was this the job that you continued through your stay in Japan? Or were there other assignments with the CIC? And I'd also like you to give me your observations, insofar as you know them, of other tasks that CIC people were involved in.

MJ: Well, Eighth Army also asked us to monitor things at times. If for instance censorship picked up a letter threatening [General Douglas] MacArthur. I recall checking one such out in Otani; I think the man proved to be mad.

We managed to get Izu Peninsula added to our territory in time on the ground that connections were better from the north than from the Shizuoka side. So we developed a rather close familiarity with some of the most beautiful country in the world.

Then there was a certain amount of monitoring activity for Eighth Army, going around public schools, for instance, to see what they were using for textbooks and having principals proudly show me textbooks that had--in which pages had been pasted together or pictures of tanks cut out and so on at some cost to the use of the other side of the page.
I recall well the first election in which women voted. We all went to the polls and watched to see how this was going to go.

Q: Oh, tell me something about your recollections of that. It's interesting.

MJ: I have photographs of it somewhere, just those long lines of quiet people taking it very seriously, babies on backs.

Q: Were you surprised at the huge turnout or the proportion of women who came or even the results of the election?

MJ: Well, I suppose there was a good deal of gratification at that turnout, the fact that all the women did in fact come. And that proved that those who thought they wouldn't were wrong. The results I have no clear recollection of now, and Japanese politics at that early point didn't seem very relevant or important even. It's about then that Hatoyama appeared and was personally purged at the moment that he seemed likely to recreate the old

Q: Perhaps you can clarify for me the Eighth Army, the Counter-Intelligence Corps and Willoughby's operations. He was wearing two hats, is that right?

MJ: Well, Eighth Army was the occupying field army, I guess.

Q: Yes, the [Robert] Eichelberger.

MJ: Under SCAP [Supreme Commander Allied Powers].

Q: Yes. And was Counter-Intelligence coordinated under
Willoughby, or did Eighth Army have its own?

MJ: Counter-Intelligence reported directly to G2 in Tokyo.

Q: Now you mentioned the elections in April. You had been in Japan five or six months at that point, and I'm wondering what sense you were picking up of the overall purposes of the occupation?

MJ: Well, I confess not a great deal, Marlene. We were perhaps pretty far down and kept on the business of . . . .

Q: We were talking about your sense of the overall purpose of the occupation. You were saying you were pretty far down.

MJ: One rather sharp recollection is that October 1945 when orders came that all political prisoners were to be released and it was to be made clear to each one that this was at the personal instructions of the Supreme Commander. And I have very good memories of going down to the Odawara Prison at that point and making this little speech to each prisoner as he came out clicking and of one of them, a Communist, clasping my hand and saying, "Wonderful! Are you a Communist, too?" That was the first stage of liberation.

By the time spring 1946 came along, still very early, and yet I recall a sense of change to the degree that we thought we really ought to be quite careful with Communists, that they were different from other people, although no reporting on them as such that I can recall
took place. They were very good about coming in and
telling us about other people and how militaristic they'd
been and so on. For a while this was very appreciated.
Then one began to be somewhat curious as to both accuracy
and motive.

Q: How did that work if they came in and told you about
someone who was ultra-nationalistic or militaristic?
You investigated? You compiled reports? You sent the
information to Tokyo?

MJ: My recollection is that the thing would be noted and
sent along and if ordered to check it out, and so on.

Q: Were there other Counter-Intelligence assignments that
you recollect?

MJ: No. The Zorga thing was overwhelmingly the largest and
I guess most spectacular and time-consuming and interest-
ing. Along about spring 1946 we moved down from the
mountain; the German thing had run its course. Oh, I
should add that a lot of time was spent on, oh, for
instance, let's see, Meisinger, who was head of the German,
well, he was Gestapo representative for the German com-
community in Japan and before that had been. . . .

END SIDE I, BEGIN SIDE II

. . . in Warsaw and achieved a maladorous reputation as
how they butchered Warsaw. He was shipped
back, I think, for execution, trial and execution, by spring.

We had also in the Gora Hotel the German military attache and his wife, Kretchmer, and the German ambassador, Sthanner, and we spent really quite a lot of time talking with them and getting Kretchmer to write up his memoirs and so on. So until that spring of 1946 the Germans took much more time than the Japanese and were at the forefront of our consciousness. And in the spring that had been pretty well done and we were getting ready to ship the Germans back and the occupation no doubt needed the Fujia more than the diplomats did.

We moved down the mountain to Odawara and were supposed to cover western Kanagawa and Izu. We did so. We took a house in Odawara—which proved—the Meiji genro had houses there, too. Oiso was senator number one, Yamagata was in Odawara, as you know, and Ito had a place there too. And I believe the one we had, a very modest, small house but very pleasant too, was Ito's. There was some kind of statue of him out in the garden. And then it was more or less routine political reporting, nothing of/great interest or importance.

Q: Routine political reporting meaning what in those days?

MJ: Yes, well, what did it mean? Things that we were asked to check out or things that we heard, stories that seemed
worth following up. And I think probably the CIC, which
was, you know, once a boondoggle, a very pleasant, absolutely free time assignment with transportation laid on, but that insofar as it worked, it was probably one of the most important ways that SCAP had an ear to the ground.

Q: Well, since these early months are so important in the occupation, there are all sorts of things that come to mind. From your vantage point in the Gora Hotel in Odawara, did you have much opportunity to see how the ordinary occupying GI was interacting with the Japanese or how they were behaving? Or you didn't see many of them?

MJ: No, because we had almost no ordinary GI's out our way.

Q: No teams?

MJ: By spring of 1946 of course weekends would bring truckloads of GI's, frequently with companions to the hot springs of the area.

Q: As for yourself, you subsequently ended up a scholar of Japan. Were you at that time getting very intrigued or deeply involved in things Japanese?

MJ: Well, I was trying to develop a reading vocabulary but without great success, I must say. There was just enough routine to keep that as first thing. There wasn't enough coal to provide much warmth in the evening so that it wasn't very useful that way.
I should add another—you asked about interesting assignments. Rather early in the stay there was one to take an Army doctor down to Izu to interview former prime minister and general Ugaki, who had been requested by the Yamashita defense to appear in Manila. We did so and it proved he had high blood pressure and so he was not sent. But that was I guess a two-day operation. That sort of thing took one's time and one didn't realize later, at least I didn't, how interesting this was. No, as I look back on it, the great misfortune of that stay is that I didn't know enough about Japan. It would be an infinitely more interesting period now because I'm sure there were all sorts of interesting people in those hills that I didn't know about.

Q: And as for your own standard of living as an American in Japan, you've given me some sense of what the billeting you mentioned must have been like and the problem of heat. But generally speaking, were living conditions fairly good? Was your food fairly good?

MJ: Oh, yes indeed, but ours of course were very special. The Gora Hotel with the sit-down served meals was hardly what the average occupationeer—well, I think after the first year probably it was average but initially we were far better off than people in the cities. And if we
went off for a weekend say to Izu, we normally tried to take a chunk of beef with us and sugar, things that they didn't have. One wasn't supposed to impinge on an already strained economy.

Q: Did you at that time have an opportunity to—I know you weren't supposed to, but did you have an opportunity to go into a Japanese home or eat Japanese food or do anything like that?

MJ: Yes, there were a few, not very many. There was a Princetonian, an old friend who lived in Oiso, and I visited him and his family rather frequently. Then there was an Iwasaki scion up in the hills and he came in in great perturbation one afternoon. He had a very sick grandchild and needed medicine, I guess. One of us jumped in the jeep and picked this up because it was accessible to us and not to him, and he was immensely grateful, of course and we visited that mansion.

Later, from the Odawara center, moving around west in Kanagawa by jeep I did alone whenever I could. That was fascinating. People were cautious and by no means inclined to say, "Come on in," but I loved the countryside and would seldom lose an excuse if I could to strike up a conversation. It was interesting too, as one moved along these little roads, almost paths some of them were, people had an absolutely magical assumption of what a jeep could do. If you asked, "Is it passable up ahead?"
nobody ever said it wasn't. As I read the journalists and to some degree some of the studies more recently of the early occupation months, it seems to me that they made--and it's easy now to make--too little allowance for confusion. And every shoulder shrug or "I don't know" was taken to mean duplicity or a cover-up, but by no means. It was just enormous uncertainty on every side.

Q: You were always using your own Army transportation jeeps? Or did you ever have occasion to get on the Japanese trains?

MJ: I was on trains now and again to Yokohama and Kyoto once or twice.

Q: I was going to ask you if your love for the countryside meant that you didn't have much opportunity to explore Kyoto and Tokyo.

MJ: Well, there wasn't a great deal, no, but we did get to Kyoto. And the trains were something then. Of course they were divided off into first and second class and the occupationeers were first class, which had windows and seat covers whereas the other cars were just an immense mess without windows. I recall sitting in one such without windows once and having a chap bounce right through the window and land 'in my lap and then seeing it was an American apologize and bounce right out again. Transportation was something!

Q: Did you have much opportunity during the stay in Japan
to see much of Tokyo?

MJ: No, very little. Only once or twice.

Q: You were too far away?

MJ: I believe, I'm not sure, I think that was then the PX [Post Exchange]. I recall getting in to that once, maybe twice. I saw nothing of the rest of the city. We also, I recall, on one occasion got up to Nikko, a bone-shattering drive on the roads of that period. The along Hiratsuka and so on was passable but not much more than that. The roads everywhere were fantastically destroyed.

Q: But the scenery, it just must have been tremendously beautiful.

MJ: The scenery was gorgeous, unimaginably beautiful. And one thing we did a great deal of in our Hakone stay was hike. Those were the first mountains I'd ever seen, and I haven't been able to see enough since, certainly not in New Jersey.

Q: You said, when I asked a few minutes ago about your sense of the occupation, that you were pretty far down the line and you had your assignments to do and they brought you more together with the Germans than with the Japanese. And yet I'm still wondering how you got your news of
Japan or your news of the outside world. Were you reading Stars and Stripes? Was say Newsweek or Time getting in to the occupation people? Were there other ways in which you might have been forming some impressions of what our purposes in Japan were? For example, did you even know about this presidential statement which was made public in September 1945 indicating the aims of the occupation?

MJ: No, flat no. No, as I look back on it, that's one of the remarkable things how much one can be in something without really having the distance knowledge of it.

Q: What about the great general himself or even the one to whom you ultimately were reporting, Willoughby?

MJ: MacArthur I saw only once on the steps of the Dai-Ichi Building as he was coming in. I happened to be far enough to hold the door open. He strode through, looking neither to the right nor to the left, in his usual manner. Willoughby I never saw. I was aware of him once when I asked to interview a German woman journalist named Lanie Acht who was staying in the--oh, maybe she was Swiss--in the Fujia. She wrote some things about Japan somewhere along there. I forget why. I think someone had suggested that she might have some contribution to make on this Zorga thing. And she refused to be interviewed and a little later came from Tokyo a thunderbolt from Whitney to Yokohama passed down to us that this
kind of interference with a friendly national was not to be tolerated and if it happened again, a court-martial would be in order.

Q: That's clear enough.

MJ: It was entirely clear. I made no further efforts.

Q: Now you left approximately in June of--

MJ: May or June.

Q: May or June of 1946. Was this the accumulation of enough points to be out of the Army?

MJ: Oh, I had enough points I think by December or so. I wanted to stay on a bit. The urgency of getting back was I wanted to be in the fall semester at Harvard.

Q: I wondered if it had something to do with going on with your education.

MJ: No. I applied for admission to Harvard Graduate School planning to do it in Japanese while I was there and was anxious not to miss out on that.

Q: So in effect you had decided that your future career would be somehow involved with Japan or Japanese studies?

MJ: Yes.

Q: May I then ask you about the curriculum or the course of study when you returned to Harvard?

MJ: Well, the most remarkable thing about it perhaps was the company: Howard Hibbard, Tom Smith, John Hall, Ken Schwartz,
David Osborn, Frank Kenny. Ray Waters, one of the most brilliant, marvelous, in the group, who decided to leave the field, the only one who did.

Q: You were in classes together, seminars together?

MJ: We were in language classes and there were really no seminars as such. There were language classes and lectures by Professor who alternated between a year of history and a year of literature. He and I were fast friends then because we had both shared the terrible wartime experience of the eight o'clock class and so on.

You know, going back to that for one moment, one of the things that was interesting about that/the Army's theory was that if you knew a language, you could pick up another one more quickly. To some degree that was true, but some of these people knew languages but not by dint of having studied them but only by residence. And I recall a Los Angeles gardener named who knew Dutch, German and English and therefore it was thought should be able to learn Japanese. But he didn't know a part of speech from another and so on. And he hadn't lived in Japan, so it was going to be a long haul. And Professor then and afterward had the habit of concluding a long, grammatical discursion by rolling back on his heels—he was a very short, stocky, little man—and saying, "Is it?" meaning "clear?" And as he rolled back and said, "Is it?" and Mr.
said, "Professor what is a werb?" Now had never met this before in his instruction in St. Petersburg or Paris or Harvard. So we shared that. We were close friends. It wasn't just the eight o'clock hour. It was really this bizarre kind of setup. Well, there were his classes and then Reischauer came back and taught mostly languages, as a matter of fact. 

Q: That was just after his brief State Department service?

MJ: Gave me a B, the rascal, because my written vocabulary doing was miles behind these characters who had been/decoding and reading during the whole time and that remained true. Then what else? I guess the only regular kind of lecture and seminar in that sense would be my Western fields in American and Renaissance and Reformation. Yes, the materials in Japanese history and studies then were of course still largely nonexistent. Even the first what you might call post-war history, Reischauer's little Japan Past and Present came out I think only in the course of our second year there, something like that. And then he and Fairbanks set up experimentally this survey course in Far Eastern history and I was a section man, reader, for them.

Q: Is this the famous rice paddy course?

MJ: The rice paddy, yes.
Q: They had experimented a bit before the war and then were picking up again on it?

MJ: Yes.

Q: You see, I'm obviously getting at what happened to East Asian and in this case Japanese studies after the war was over, whether the experience in wartime training of Americans in the language was carrying over into the post-war period. And of course Harvard already had a bit of a head start with its activities in the 1930's and before that, bringing in and going back into the 19th century. But I'm very, very curious as to what happens in places like Harvard and Michigan and Columbia in the immediate aftermath of World War II in these studies.

MJ: Well, the main story there is John Fairbanks' China Program, and that's the one I entered. But the other names I've mentioned were by and large graduate students in the Harvard Department of Far Eastern Languages. John persuaded me that I should come into the China Program and I could use Japanese and work out a topic for a paper or whatever for which Japanese could be used. That's the origin of The Japanese and Sun Yat Sen. And John's China—what was it called? The China Studies? China Area? That's the one in which I guess Ben and I and Rhodes Murphy and Saül Chapkin, who was in government,
Bill Nelson, Andy Rice left the field. Nelson went into Central Intelligence Agency. We were perhaps 12 or 15 that first year. Barsley, New York Times. And that was a heroic effort on John's part, I must say, because it met every afternoon. Of course there wasn't enough to keep that going by himself in any seminar form, but all kinds of people at Harvard and near Harvard would come in and be corralled by John into leading sessions; the series on economics, for instance, by Michael Lindsey. Where China specialists were not available, John worked out the device of having a social scientist come in and sit there and John would give a lecture. He worked like a fiend in those days. He would have worked it up the night before, I suppose, say about Chinese government. And then Karl Friederick sitting there and Friederick was supposed to give us the comparative disciplinary perspective with comments that followed, followed by discussion. Those were pretty much all-afternoon jobs up in old Boylston Hall, the second story. Marion Levy was writing his thesis at this point. It was a intended, and this was a cast of characters that ran from Biff Vogel to Agnes Smedley.

Q: I'm very interested to hear you say this about the China Program and also Japanese studies at Harvard. In the aftermath of war and having fought the Japanese, did you
pick up any underlying sentiments of—how shall I put it—China identification, Japan identification, that would make it difficult for a China specialist to be deeply involved in the study of Japan or vice versa? Or was that just simply something that didn't exist? One moved back and forth between the cultures?

MJ: I don't recall it as a distinct concern. There was a vast amount of concern about the political state of things in China, of course, especially as the civil war broke out. But any kind of Sino-Japanese rancor or hostility, competition, I don't recall. If there was a division there, it was between the attempt to build a new kind of disciplinary area studies and old-style reading texts. For instance, never had very much use for it or Francis Cleves, although they taught some of their students in the program. So you really didn't think this was a very valid form of intellectual enterprise.

Q: I would like to hear more about those discussions or debates over area studies, the discipline of history if you're interested in Japan versus—or not versus, incorporating area studies.

MJ: Well, that's an early and perhaps still a primitive stage. I think it's not till maybe 1949 or 1950 that John set up what could be called a regular kind of seminar in Cheng history. Nor was there really one in Japanese history either as such.
One did papers in lecture courses. We did papers out of these China things; that's where my Sun Yat Sen interest began. But in the early program, toward the end, yes, there began to be stupid reports on papers and so on. But if one compares it to what we now expect in a seminar, it was still fairly primitive, I would say.

Q: Oh, it occurs to me, you're talking about graduate level of study at Harvard. This rice paddies course, was it geared to undergraduates or to undergraduates and graduates?

MJ: It was geared to, what shall I say? Undergraduates were in it and yet all graduate students were and I guess for the most part still are expected to enroll in it.

Q: Is this too early for East Asia Studies to be making an effort to get into the undergraduate curriculum as well as to train?

MJ: Well, there was a good deal of viewing with alarm in the department if an undergraduate came in planning to do the language. He would be told to examine himself seriously and was this really what he should be doing and shouldn't he be getting his own civilization under control first and then and so on. I think that was true really through the period until 1950 when I left Harvard.

Q: Now who was giving this advice in the East Asia Studies Program?

MJ: People that taught the East Asian languages. Right.
Q: They were saying, "Get your own civilization under control first?" That's very interesting.

MJ: As they had.

Q: Yes. Now, you went back to Japan, is that right, at the end of the occupation?

MJ: Yes.

Q: What led to that?

MJ: I went to the University of Washington to teach in the fall of 1950, and the Institute at Seattle, its main strength was in Modern China Studies with George Taylor, Helm Franz Michael, Will/ and so on. And the Rockefeller Foundation thought that it should do something in its library about Japanese books on China, and so did the department, and gave me a grant to spend the fall of 1951 in Japan to mostly buy Japanese sinology. I think that was there was a vast sum of something like $5,000/available. Well, at that time I still knew nothing about Japanese higher education universities or Japanology. I hadn't organized it. And this really launched me, I suppose. It was immensely exciting for me. I was in many cases the first academic, or pseudo-academic might have been a better term at that point, to come along and create contacts with American universities. I've never worked harder, traveled all over the country, visited as many institutions as seemed to have people that ought to be
visited. I bought a mountain of books for the University of Washington Library. Five thousand dollars on the Tokyo market at that point was something! And was of immense help and suggested, "Why don't you get this by on in two volumes and just have the bookseller pick out all the footnotes for you?" It was quite a crazy suggestion, so that's the way we started. And then I started also going around in talking to the other side of things, modern Japanese history with the advice of people like and others, who have remained friends, I collected things on Japan, too.

Q: Were you one of the first Americans to go to Japan on an educational program or to have a grant to go to Japan?

MJ: I think so. I think so. The occupation was still there, of course, and I at this point had no contact with any part of American official or Army structure and lived in a little Japanese inn near Kao and.

END TAPE I, BEGIN TAPE II

Yes, the Japanese had begun coming through, very few. I recall a visit from Koashima whom I was able to look up again in Tokyo. A man from Oshida named Matsumoto and so on, but very few. It was early in the game.

Q: Now how long were you in Japan buying these books and making contacts?
MJ: Three months. I think—I'm not certain of this. I think Howard Hibbard may have gotten there about the same time, too. Ted Poblank was there from England. That's about it as far as I can remember other people who were there.

Q: I'm very interested in your comments now about Japan and the Japanese in 1951. You left in the summer of 1946, you come back in—what part of the year is it in 1951?

MJ: Fall.

Q: In the fall? The Korean War has broken out. And how did Japan look to you? Any significant changes?

MJ: Oh, yes. The cities obviously were rebuilt, not in very satisfactory form, but people were in out of the rain and things were moving. I don't recall that I got up to Hakone or Odawara and saw the few people I'd known before. My Japan experience really begins from 1951 in that sense. Now I had things to talk about, people I wanted to see. I was no longer an occupier. Not but what I guess there were some doubts. tells me that I talked shortly before leaving to a seminar as at Todai, which met then in a temple in Osaka. It looked like a temple. It may have been a building. I went to their seminars whenever I could anyway.
people whom I knew there. And the last one they asked me to give my impressions of Japanese scholarship, which was quite a I think, in Japanese. And tells me that there was quite a lot of talk about, "Who is this guy anyway? Who is he working for? Do you think he's a spy?" It was still very early.

Q: When you were in Japan initially, you were with the Army and Counter-Intelligence and you were being taken care of and billeted and had good food. Coming back in 1951, what was your standard of living in Japan? You mentioned that you didn't want anything to do with the Americans and you lived away from them.

MJ: Well, it was rudimentary. I had a little room in a little inn and I ate as I could here and there.

Q: And living Japanese style?

MJ: Actually it wasn't. Well, it was maybe half and half.

Q: I know that you weren't thinking about the occupation necessarily as a part of Japanese history or--but still I wonder if you had any sense of great recovery, enormous recovery from 1945/1946? It was too soon of course to know about the phenomenal economic growth that would take place.

MJ: Oh, it was far too soon. It hadn't begun yet. The Korean
War I suppose in a way was the opening chance for it, but things ran again, the trains particularly, the streetcars, shosen. There was still a great and probably excessive deference in many ways to Westerners. I recall, on my way to that session of which I spoke to, I left my bag on the shosen rack and got out at Tokyo earlier that day. And it had in it three months' worth of notes and my passport and my ticket home. I was distraught and ran back out and jumped in the train and then realized I'd run down a different stairway and on a different train. So when I got off this time it was at Khanda, I think, and I rushed into the station master's office and told them my troubles.

"Calm down," he said. "We'll see if we can't find it. Where'd you get on the train and when/you get off and where were you going, so what train was it?"

And in a few remarkable minutes, he figured out it could have been one of four trains and started phoning up and down the line. And they were stopping trains and examining them. Can you imagine?

Q: No.

MJ: And picked it up at Omori way up at the end of the So I went up there and then back to and I was about half an hour late to the meeting I was supposed to be talking to.
Q: Only half an hour late? That's remarkable.

MJ: Well, maybe more but maybe that extreme kind of cooperation was still there, evidence of the fact that the occupation was still on.

Q: You mentioned interviewing or talking to some of these Communists as they were coming out of the prisons in 1945. When you went back in 1951, Marxism, Communism, was very much a part of the academic scene. Is this something that you would care to comment on?

MJ: Well, I was impressed of course by the almost universality of Marxist analysis and social science work by then. I knew about it. I spent a great deal of time, I remember, with—who was the authority on the Right Wing Movement?—Kinoshita Hanji, a great deal of time discussing it with him. But it didn't seem alarming. It was understandable and as he put it, "In your country anti-communism comes from democracy. In this country it comes from anti-democracy." I learned an immense amount that fall. I've always been grateful that my career as a scholar was able to begin with this kind of period.

Q: You were making contacts then with Japanese universities on behalf of an American university. In what state were the Japanese universities that you visited, just their sheer operating facilities?

MJ: They were in terrible shape. They had no money, no
materials. Their buildings were in sad repair. A lot of the new universities, I think of were living in army barracks, drafty and so on and so on.

Q: The libraries were very badly stocked?

MJ: The libraries were in tough shape. They hadn't been able to add anything. They were totally out of touch with what had gone on in the Western world for really quite a long time. I imagine that going to China just might have something of that feeling for specialists.

Q: I just have two or three more questions. Back in the United States about this time, 1951, a lot of academics were beginning to get in trouble for their beliefs. Did this in any way touch you at the University of Washington? I know Fairbank and Reischauer—Reischauer told me last week that he was just dropped as a consultant for the Department of State, that he had been going down fairly regularly to Washington. It just abruptly ended with no explanation. And of course Fairbank and others, for their views on what was happening in China were having some trouble. There was the IPR hearing and so on. Did that reach into your academic life at the University of Washington?

MJ: Into my academic life? Not really because my charge was Japan and that was conflict-free at that time. I was however fully aware of the other because my China colleagues
were close to Vic Fogel and therefore associated in the minds of many in the profession with the wrong position. There was also an interesting aspect. China Studies have been, I think, particularly tempestuous and not only for that reason. At Seattle they had built up really quite a major institute and operation and yet felt themselves immensely oppressed by Eastern and especially Harvard primacy. And there was a great deal of tension about this on almost every issue. As you formed a committee, an SSRC or AAS committee, you could almost be sure of some kind of scrap on this. And I think that the political wrangles, of which there were some, probably were motivated as much by this geographical distance and institutional jealousy as by pure politics.

Q: And then after 1951, when was your first trip back again to Japan?

MJ: 1955, at that time for a year. And by then things were quite different.

Q: Yes. I can well imagine, having come myself just a few years after that for my very first stay in Japan.

In this last question I am not asking literally for a discourse or anything like that. But you are a scholar of Japan and of the whole sweep of Japanese history and culture. This is kind of unfair to ask you but looking brief at that period from 1945 to 1951 or technically 1952, is
it your perception that this was a very, very important period in modern Japanese history and that the occupying forces and, in particular, the American thrust in Japan at that time really made a difference?

MJ: Yes, I think it was an immensely important period. I'm sure you do, too.

Q: Yes.

MJ: I don't see how any specialist could feel it was not, and it was so, I think, because—I wonder how, incidentally, the American thrust happened to be in line with what a great many in Japanese society deeply wanted.

Q: And how do we explain that then becomes the problem.

Of course I've been thinking about the wartime planning from 1942 to 1945 as our people who thought they knew something about Japan tried to divine what they could do and what they should do. Then there's the question of how much of those insights were picked up by SCAF people or by MacArthur and how much fresh or new was brought to the scene once those people got to Japan and assessed the situation. And then of course everybody is interested in the Japanese contribution to all of this, maybe.

MJ: It happened to be a very happy match, didn't it?

Q: Yes.

MJ: And while the institutional structure that was created seemed in some ways inappropriate at first and as Japanese
society developed, worked into it very easily. Some of them worked out in different ways and ended up being more Japanese than was thought at the time. But it's a new amalgam now that is there.

Q: You teased me a bit yesterday with your comment. I was talking about the planners perhaps being—that is, the Japan experts among the planners—being cautious modernizers or tepid or tinkerers, not wanting to unleash revolutionary forces in Japan that couldn't be controlled by the occupying authorities. And your comment was, "Which has changed more, Japan or China?" And do you as a just want to leave that/teaser or do you want to say anything about that?

MJ: Well, I think my guess would be Japan has changed more, that the unleashing of this degree of personal initiative and opportunity makes for a much more far-reaching change.

Q: Well, I want to thank you very, very much.

END OF INTERVIEW