

# Atolls of Amnesia

## Touring Japan's Pacific Past in the Marshall Islands

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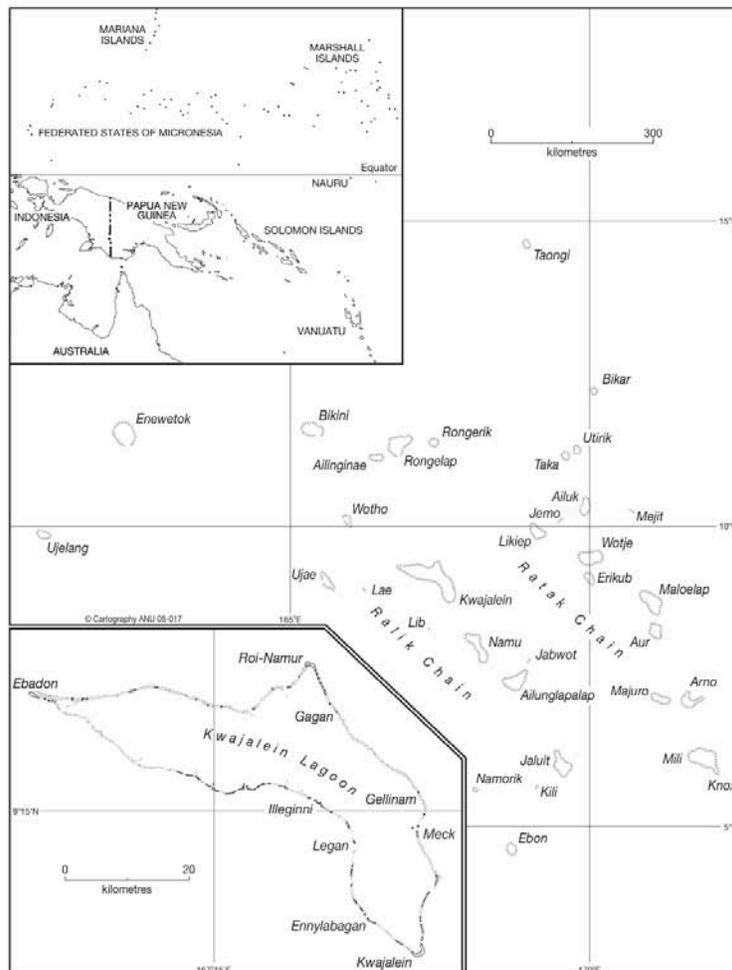


Figure 1. Map of Kwajalein and the Marshall Islands  
(Source: Australian National University Cartography, 2005)

Here is the Republic of the Marshall Islands, with its Ratak, or Sunrise Chain, and Ralik, Sunset Chain of islands, a world of 26 atolls and islands. At nearly its center is Kwajalein Atoll. The largest atoll in the world, it is a coral reef formation comprised of nearly 100 small islands, enclosing a lagoon with a surface area of 2,850 square kilometers.

Kwajalein Island, nicknamed “Kwaj” by Americans, is the main island in this particular atoll. Since the American invasion of the atoll in 1944, when it was taken from Japanese forces, the atoll has been occupied by the US military. Though the Marshall Islands became an

independent republic in 1986, since the 1960s, eleven of Kwajalein's islands have been leased to the US military by Marshallese landowners, so that the US can test intercontinental ballistic missiles there.

Of course, Kwajalein's history extends far back into deep time. Like the layer upon layer of coral that built up the atoll, myriad Islander canoe voyagers settled and waged wars over the land, followed by Spaniards, Germans, Japanese and Americans, forming a complex genealogy of chiefs, landlords, workers, traders, whalers, missionaries, fishermen, soldiers, and missile testers who all shaped the islands in some way. And since my father was a civilian radar engineer for a major defense contractor, I also took part in Kwajalein's history as I grew up there in the 1970s-1980s. Like countless other children of missile testers and support staff, I spent the first ten years of my life there, an American "Kwaj Kid," as they call us, ambivalently growing up amidst a Marshallese sea of islands that was largely ignored by the American community around me, swallowed up by the rhetoric of weapons testing and "national security." I was aware of the Japanese relics of war, too, which stood like monuments around the island. American victory narratives of the war muted these Japanese histories for me as a child, but inevitably these traces of the past eventually sparked enough curiosity in me to take me to Japan, where I have lived, worked, and studied for much of the past twenty years.

Unlike in the Pacific islands south of the equator, or in Guam, where the Japanese presence was brief and characterized by violent military occupation which took place mainly in the early 1940s, Japan's Nanyō Guntō, or 'Uchi Nanyō' above the equator, was colonized by Japanese civilians starting between the end of World War I and 1922, when the region was assigned to Japanese administration under a League of Nations Mandate. For nearly thirty years, the islands of the Marshall Islands, along with the Caroline Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau, were essentially a part of the Japanese Empire. During the war, they were even labeled "Umi no Seimeisen," or "Lifeline of the Sea" to suggest their strategic role in protecting the Japanese homeland.

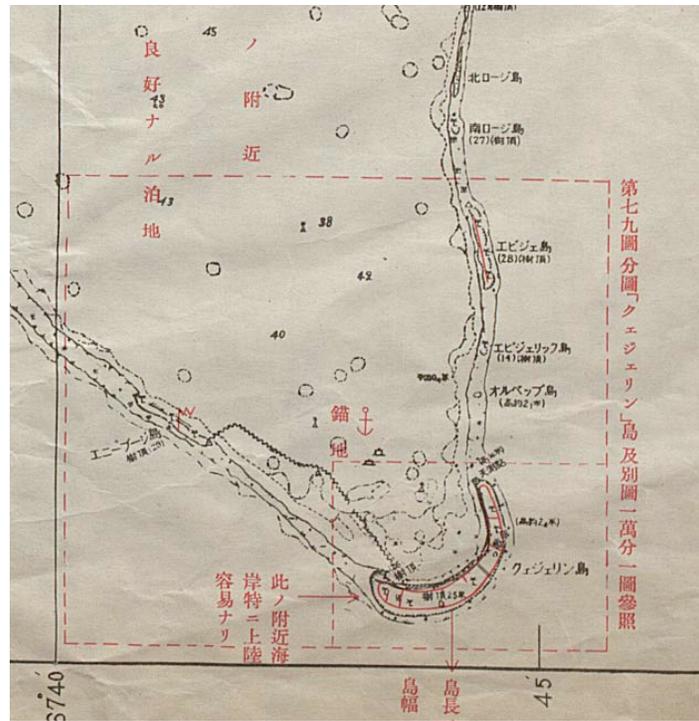


Figure 2. Imperial Naval Map (1943) of Kwajalein (Kuezerin) Atoll, focusing on Kwajalein Islet (Source: Louisiana State University)

The Marshall Islands were geographically the furthest from Japan. Low-lying flat islands, they were not suitable for agricultural production, and so the “Japanese” who settled there, mainly around the district capital of Jaluit Atoll, known in Japanese as “Yarūto,” were mainly fishermen from Kyushu and Okinawa, local traders, and businessmen on assignment from the big companies that developed the region like Nanyō Bōeki Kaisha, Nanyō Takushoku Kaisha, and others.



Figure 3. Nantaku Employee Ishiwata Tatsunosuke from Ibaraki at age 24 (third from right) Ebon, Marshall Islands (photo courtesy of Minami Lemae (Ishiwata), Jaluit Atoll)

There were also many civil administrators, doctors and schoolteachers. Japanese schools were established throughout the islands, and to this day many elderly Marshallese remember their education and old Japanese songs with nostalgia. Unlike Saipan or Palau, where Japanese migrants severely outnumbered the local population, the Marshalls were more sparsely settled by Japanese colonists, many of whom forged very positive relationships with Islanders, often producing children with local women, like this man, Ishiwata Tatsunosuke, essentially a prewar “salaryman,” so to speak, who was sent to Ebon Island to work for Nanyō Takushoku Kaisha and fell in love with a Marshallese woman. He was killed after the war in a skirmish that erupted when Japanese soldiers and civilians, distrusting the American marines that told them the war had ended, tried to defend the island by opening fire on the American ship that had come to repatriate them to Japan. Ishiwata’s part-Marshallese daughter Minami, who was three at the time and still remembers him, shared this photo (see Figure 3) with me, which she had lovingly preserved since the war.

Despite the strong memories of Japanese colonialism amongst Marshall Islanders and extensive Japanese-Marshallese genealogies like Ishiwata’s family and others, these contemporary Marshallese memories are contrasted by widespread amnesia in contemporary Japan. Aside from the bereaved families of the Japanese soldiers who died at Kwajalein, and an isolated few families that are aware of their Marshallese relatives, there is little awareness whatsoever in Japan today about Japanese legacies in the Pacific. Even while Japanese fleets still

catch a considerable percentage of sashimi consumed in Japan in the waters of the Marshall Islands every year, and the Marshall Islands is the number one consumer per capita of Kikkoman soy sauce outside Japan,<sup>1</sup> most people seem oblivious even to the present-day connections.

There are some exceptions. Speaking of tuna, one postwar representation of the Marshalls in Japan is that of the shared Japanese-Marshallese experience of nuclear warfare, often symbolized by the irradiation of the Dai Go Fukuryū Maru, the “Lucky Dragon,” a long-line Japanese tuna fishing vessel, which had received no warning of the US Department of Energy’s atmospheric atomic test Bravo at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands on 1 March 1954. In fact, the nuclear testing program conducted by the United States in the Marshall Islands had already been going on since 1946, immediately after the war, and it was based almost entirely at Kwajalein Atoll out of the previous Japanese airbase that had been there,<sup>2</sup> in a testing program that slowly evolved ultimately into the present day missile-testing program. Arguably, one might say that the Marshall Islands were chosen as a test site partly due to their status as collateral from the former Japanese territories, and these tests were almost a seamless continuation of the devastation that had been unleashed at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.<sup>3</sup> Igarashi Yoshikuni and other scholars point out how the Lucky Dragon incident was the inspiration behind Honda Ishirō’s film *Gojira* (Godzilla), released 3 November 1954 (Igarashi 2000, 115), and how this represented Japan’s wartime trauma coming back to haunt the population. Yet, from a Pacific perspective, Marshall-Islands born Godzilla is in some ways more like the monster of Japan’s colonial past in Micronesia coming back for revenge after the war. Godzilla represents a defunct paradise gone bad, an imperial experiment gone awry.

The image is a screenshot of a Japanese website advertisement for JALPAK. At the top, the JALPAK logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'Home' and 'Site Search' are on the right. Below the logo, there are three buttons: '行き先で探す' (Search by destination), '上質な旅 アイルで選ぶ' (Choose quality travel by island), and 'お手軽な旅 アヴァで選ぶ' (Choose easy travel by area), followed by a link for '電子パンフレット' (Electronic brochure). The main content area features a banner for 'JALチャーター直行便で行く マーシャル諸島 マジュロ5日間' (JAL Charter Direct Flight to Marshall Islands Majuro 5 days). Below the banner is a photograph of a tropical beach with turquoise water and a small island in the distance. Under the photo, the text reads '東京発 2007年6月30日(土) 188,000円~209,000円'. Below that is a quote: '『太平洋に浮かぶ真珠の首飾り』～想像を超える透き通った楽園へ～'. At the bottom, there is a paragraph of descriptive text: '29の環礁と1,225の島、870のリーフで構成され、国全体が環礁でできている国のひとつです。サンゴの種類は160、魚は800種類も超え、まさに海の楽園です。中心地は、南部のマジュロ環礁。57の島々はリング状につながりダイビングやシュノーケリングの拠点です。'

Figure 4. Japan Airlines Advertisement for Charter Flights to Majuro Atoll, Capital of the Marshall Islands (Source: [www.jal.co.jp](http://www.jal.co.jp), accessed 1 June 2007)

Nowadays, contemporary representations of the Marshall Islands in Japan tend to be entirely disassociated with the prewar or wartime past. In 2007, Japan Airlines began a charter service to the capital of Majuro Atoll in the Marshalls, which advertised the islands along familiar tropes of a tropical paradise for divers, not unlike other Micronesian destinations which are also portrayed as “minami no rakuen” (southern paradise).



Figure 5. Kommoltata Brand Ice Cream Advertisement for “Kwajalein” Sundae, 2007  
(Source: Kommoltata, Inc.)

Likewise, a Japanese national ice cream franchise that was popular a few years ago, Kommoltata, which means “thank you” in Marshallese, played upon the vision of the Marshall Islands as an idyllic tourist destination. Started by a group of ecology-minded Japanese divers who hoped to raise awareness about rising sea levels by drawing attention to the low-lying atolls and islands of the “Marshall Islands Paradise,” they named their various ice cream dishes after Marshallese atolls and dive sites, such as these flavors, which included my childhood home of Kwajalein—the largest atoll in the world, Pacific War battlefield, top-secret missile-testing range, and now: a sundae topped with pineapple, yogurt, and mango pieces, the flavors of year-round summertime fun in the sun, as suggested by this advertisement.

Such paradise-like visions of the Marshalls are by no means new. Ask almost any elderly Japanese or Okinawan person if they know about *Māsharu Guntō* and they will begin to sing the song, “*Shūchō no Musume*”: *Watashi no labā-san wa shūchō no musume. Iro wa kuroi ga, Nanyō ja bijin....Sekidō chokka Masharu Guntō. Yashi no kokage de tekuteku odoru....* In English: “My lover is the Chieftain’s daughter. She’s black but in the south seas, she’s a beauty. Beneath the equator [sic], in the Marshall Islands, she sways and dances all day long.” This popular song, which in 1931 became Polydor Records’ first album ever released, was adapted from a genre of dance called “*Nanyō Odori*,” invented by Japanese university students who parodied Pacific Islander “natives” by painting their bodies black and dancing in minstrel style. This kind of dance was often performed by Japanese men at drinking parties throughout the empire, and it was usually accompanied by “The Chieftain’s Daughter” song.<sup>4</sup>

Aside from the intensely racist overtones of this song, the romanticization of a “*Nanyō*” Islander woman, specifically a “chieftain’s daughter,” spawned a whole tropical wanderlust of male-centered romanticism and eroticism. As I have written elsewhere (see Dvorak 2007, 2008), this constituted a simultaneous ridiculing and idealization of the presumably darker-skinned “*Kanaka*” female body,<sup>5</sup> and it also focused the colonial male gaze onto the Marshall Islands itself. We see echoes of an almost Gauguin-esque romantic imaginary, for example, in the photographs of Japanese ethnographers in the Marshalls, such as this one, which depicts young “*Kanaka*” women in their indigenous attire.



Figure 6. Marshallese “*Kanaka*” Women (Photo: *Nanyo Gunto Chiri Fuzoku Daikan*, 1932)

Unfortunately, like Japanese popular cultural amnesia about Japan’s Pacific past, with very few exceptions, like Mark Peattie’s 1988 landmark study “*Nan’yō: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia*,” the regional imaginary of Japanese studies has also tended to elide the

Pacific from Japan's past. When we discuss Japan in relation to the Asia hyphen Pacific, the Pacific Islands are completely neglected in lieu of discussions about an "Asia" that means Korea and China and a "Pacific Rim" that refers mainly to Australia and New Zealand, as if the Pacific Islands were somehow negligible. In fact, as David Hanlon has noted (2009), the regional imaginary of Oceania in general further marginalizes the myriad islands of Micronesia, of which Nanyō Guntō was comprised. Although historians like Tessa Morris-Suzuki (2005) have been particularly adamant about a reconsideration of marginalized histories in Japan, for instance, there is a shocking lack of recent work in Japanese or any other language that looks closely at the deeply marginalized history of Pacific Islanders in relation to Japanese empire, especially in Japan's Nanyō Guntō. What about Japanese migrants to these places—about their liaisons with local people, about the Korean laborers who were deployed to these places, about the young Japanese soldiers who were suddenly sent to these unfamiliar locales and left to starve on remote coral atolls bypassed by American forces?

The Typhoon of War, a groundbreaking study by Poyer, Falgout, and Carucci (2001), and their following work, *Memories of War* (2008) are among the few widely-published studies that go into any depth about Islanders' experiences and histories in relation to Japanese imperialism and militarism; however, the authors situate "Japan" predominantly in the war years with little attention to the previous twenty-five years of colonial settlement and do not engage Japanese contexts or nuances of Japanese or Korean subaltern identities within the colonial frame. Although they are regionally limited in scope to Western Micronesia for the most part, the oral histories conducted by Tomiyama Ichirō (2002) or Imaizumi Yumiko (2000) of Okinawan experiences in colonizing Micronesian islands in general come the closest in providing a nuanced picture of the complexity of this migration and the diversity of the "Japanese" experience in relation to Islanders. Additionally, postwar literary work set in the former Nanyō Guntō by Oda Makoto<sup>6</sup> is also a meaningful point of departure towards recuperating Japanese links to the Pacific.



Figure 7. The Coral of Kwajalein Atoll, Near Oceanside Drop-off by Gea Pass  
(Photo by Greg Dvorak, 2005)

It is important, however, not only to recover but also articulate these marginal histories. And though I do not intend to “reconcile” the horrors of war or colonialism; my work aims to engage both Japanese public narratives and personal memories with their counterparts in the Marshall Islands and the United States. As Imafuku Ryūta states, history is about relating stories, looking at how they connect.<sup>7</sup> My approach to multiple histories follows in this postcolonial, “multi-sited” (Marcus 1998) trajectory, and in line with the practices of Pacific Islands-oriented scholars such as Greg Dening, Margaret Jolly, Teresia Teaiwa and Katerina Teaiwa, Vicente Diaz, Keith Camacho, and many others.

In my own contribution to this larger discussion about the postcolonial Pacific, I explore the Marshall Islands, and particular this place called Kwajalein as an example of the way in which Island histories, and indeed Japanese histories, can be related through the metaphor of coral—an analogy which is by its very nature Oceanic and suited to a historically Pacific-centered perspective; for unlike the notion of an isolated island, coral is the stuff of migration, ancestry, connectedness, and land. Coral, as many marine biologists and environmental ecologists tell us, is in fact a migratory organism that travels ocean currents over great expanses of the sea, landing upon the edges of submerged volcanoes, amalgamating into communities, forming colonies, dying, hardening, and building layer upon layer upon layer of ancestral heritage to break the surface of the water and make island after island, connected by reef, to form atolls—delicate rings of land that can be found throughout Oceania but especially in the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, or Kiribati. We could extend this to speak of Okinawa for instance, or to the reefs of Ogasawara, to think of how human beings, like coral reef organisms, have ridden upon

the “currents” of colonialism, imperialism, militarism, exile, or desire to settle in their own way upon these reefs of history, to make new sense out of their surroundings.

The Japanese layer of Kwajalein’s reef is one that has literally been overwritten, bulldozed, or concreted over by a hegemonic American history of “liberation,” a narrative reproduced throughout Micronesia that casts Islanders as innocent bystanders and Japanese as little but vicious aggressors. Kwajalein was one of the main bases in Nanyō Guntō by 1943, labeled “Centergate in Japan’s Pacific Fortress” by one American propaganda film, which depicted the rays of the rising sun reaching out like tentacles to all corners of the Pacific, with the Marshall Islands as its point of entry.

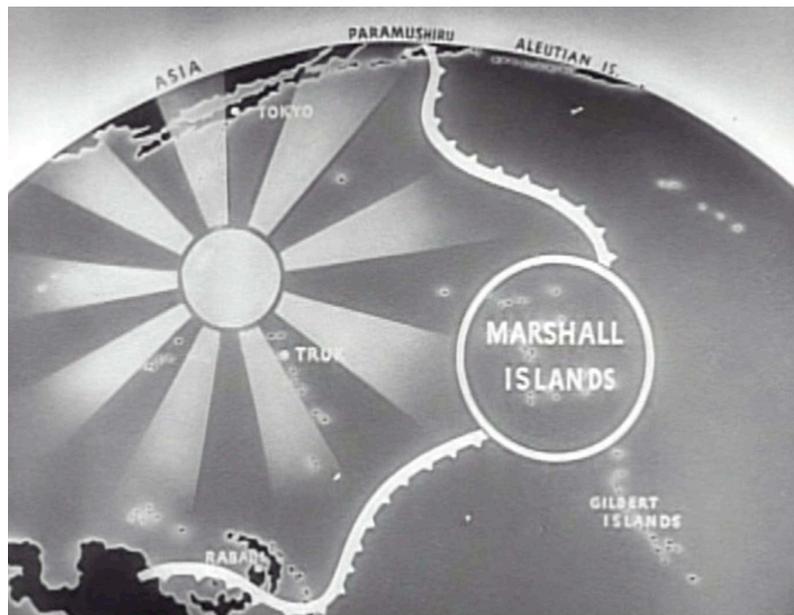


Figure 8. American Illustration of the Marshall Islands as “Center-gate” from the Film *What Makes a Battle?* (Source: U.S. Army Pictorial Service, 1944)

But while American victory narratives that dominate most of our English language histories of the Marshall Islands demonize the Japanese presence as a vicious occupation, the nearly 8,000 or so Japanese and Okinawan soldiers and sailors that were sent to Kwajalein in 1942-1943 were mostly rural draftees between the ages of 17-21, the majority of whom had very little military training. They were joined by Japanese civilians who had lived in the Marshall Islands for decades and chose to enlist in the military in the “South” rather than face an uncertain deployment elsewhere on the Northern front, which might take them away from their families, friends, and homes (Higuchi 1987).

There were also nearly 1,200 “tanki kōin” Korean laborers on Kwajalein at the time of the American bombardment of 1944, many were recruited from rural parts of the Korean peninsula—and particularly Jeju Island and Busan—under the threat of imprisonment. These workers, labeled “ninpu” (or “coolies” in the slang of the day),<sup>8</sup> along with scores of Marshallese men, worked in small battalions in the repair shipyards of the Japanese base or in construction

units where they sweated in the hot sun, pulverizing coral from the reef around the atoll to make concrete for buildings and runways. In parts of the jungle even today, one can find slabs of concrete in which Korean and Marshallese names are etched. These Korean laborers experienced discrimination not only from Japanese supervisors, but also from many Marshallese, who internalized the prevailing racial stereotypes of colonial Japan and presumed that Koreans and Okinawans were inferior to “pure” Japanese from the “Naichi” Japanese home islands.<sup>9</sup>

The bombardment of Kwajalein Atoll lasted over several days and was to American forces a classic “textbook” amphibious landing that involved an entire 46,670 troops. When the bombardment of Kwajalein in February 1944 was complete, only 332 Americans versus 8,410 so-called “Japanese” had been killed (Walker, Bernstein, and Lang 2004). But the invading Americans could not distinguish between Japanese and Koreans, let alone many mixed-race Marshallese, thus this figure included all three groups. According to some accounts, throughout the atoll, there were only about 300 survivors—130 Japanese and 167 Korean POWs (Rottman 2005).



Figure 9. Communal Ofuro Bathing Area Left Standing after the Bombardment of Kwajalein Islet, 1944 (*Source: US National Archives*)

All of the bodies were buried in mass graves around Kwajalein Atoll, mostly by Marshallese men. Literally, these remains became a part of Kwajalein’s reef, together with the Japanese concrete buildings still standing. For the most part, the bones of these soldiers were never returned to Japan or Korea and still lie intertwined with the bleached white coral beneath the surface of the atoll.<sup>10</sup> Bereaved families, instead of receiving the remains of their loved ones, eventually were all sent simple boxes made of light paulownia wood, containing nothing but a notification that the soldier’s spirit had been enshrined at Yasukuni Jinja, the shrine dedicated to the souls of soldiers who died on behalf of the emperor. Unable to inter the actual remains of

their family members, most families made do by erecting empty graves back home, and interring these wooden boxes there, according to Satake Esu.<sup>11</sup>

It was not until the 1950s that the families of war dead first learned where their loved ones had died. Naval operations had been kept secret, and sailors were not allowed to reveal their location in letters home. Only after much pressure to the Japanese government did these families learn the name Kwajalein, or Kuezerin in Japanese. Gathering year after year on the 6th of February at Yasukuni, these families began to organize themselves into what eventually became the Marshalls War Bereaved Families Association, or *Māsharu Hōmen Izokukai*, and they represented the families of all 35,000 Japanese military personnel and civilians (such as *gunzoku* contractors who worked in construction, engineering, communications, etc.) who lost their lives not only at Kwajalein but throughout that whole defense campaign in the Marshall and Gilbert Islands (Kiribati).



Figure 10. Marshallese Men Bury Japanese Bodies, Namur Island, Kwajalein Atoll 1944  
(Source: US National Archives)

It is worth noting that the bereavement group, however, effectively only mourns “Japanese” war dead from the main islands<sup>12</sup> and has no Korean or Okinawan members—though according to long-term American residents of the base, at least some of the Korean-American descendants of Korean laborers have reportedly also visited. The memorial on the island today also includes a plaque that acknowledges the loss not only of Koreans and Okinawans, but which also recognizes the sacrifices of all people involved in the conflict.<sup>13</sup> Noticeably, up until 2006, there was little to no acknowledgement by the bereavement group toward the sacrifices and suffering of Marshall Islanders under colonial rule and later military occupation. This is likely

due in part to the fact that the group's visits to Kwajalein had been mediated by the US Army, not the Marshall Islands government; and in recent years, the group has corresponded directly with the Marshall Islands president and local traditional leadership, in order to secure their blessings.

Japanese bereavement access to the military base at Kwajalein, however, was hard-won, and there are many stories of very frail elderly relatives of fallen soldiers who, upon discovering the place where their loved one had died, purchased air tickets and traveled the long journey to Kwajalein, only to realize that military security restrictions prevented them from disembarking at the atoll. Today, through a complex system of government-to-government negotiation between the US and Japan, family members are granted permission to visit Kwajalein briefly under stringent military coordination as part of the bereavement society's pilgrimages to the atoll every few years. As a consultant to the group, I have had the privilege of joining the group on several occasions on their journeys back to the graves of their loved ones.<sup>14</sup> Though bittersweet, these trips are among the few active linkages between Japanese of the wartime generation and the Marshall Islands. Often the pilgrims are greeted by elderly Marshall Islanders who serenade them spontaneously with Japanese songs and shake their hands, much to the bewilderment of American onlookers.

Kwajalein Atoll is a highly complex place, and here I have only addressed one tiny aspect of its many layers. I could have talked, for instance, about the experiences of Marshallese landowner resistance to the American presence and the ambivalent extension of the US military land lease, which was concluded quite recently after a decade of debate. Or I could have elaborated the ways in which American residents from Huntsville, Alabama imagine their peculiar existence in a central Pacific atoll. Indeed, I could also focus on the increasing Chinese and Taiwanese influences throughout the Marshall Islands that have completely transformed the contemporary economy. Here, I have surveyed merely one dimension of the "Japanese" layer, but there is much more to be explored and remembered as we make sense of the present. I write this paper in Tokyo, at a time when we in Japan are aware of the not-so "Pacific" nature of the great and restless Ocean that crashes upon our shores. Yet, the cataclysmic tsunami that tragically swallowed so much of Japan's northeastern Honshu coast on March 11, 2011 rippled throughout all of Oceania and served as a stark reminder of how we are all linked through the Pacific, as island after island was visited by the same series of dramatic waves. The ensuing nuclear crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi Reactor facility also revived unpleasant memories of the horrors of radiation— an unfortunate legacy shared both by the people of Japan and the Marshall Islands.

For many in Japan, while the Marshall Islands may seem distant and forgotten, there is much to learn from the past that can serve a greater sense of Oceanian community, cooperation, and identity. Marshall Islanders themselves have not forgotten: Their layered reef-like awareness of history has given them the strength to triumph over the tremendous adversity of colonialism and rise with dignity above the horrors of World War II, the worst nuclear detonations known to humankind, and perpetual dispossession of their land. There are other stories from other Marshallese atoll communities, both local and diasporic, in which people have dealt with similar adversity and survived. And I would argue that in this era of globalization, these reefs of history have salience not only for all of the Pacific, but for all of us everywhere. Now more than ever, Japan and other nations cannot afford to forget how indebted they are to the people of small island nations like the Marshall Islands, and to honor their shared ties to these coral reefs and the

unpredictable waters that flow between us all.

### Notes

This paper, presented in November 2010 at *Academica Sinica*, Taiwan at the CAPAS-MARC joint workshop on colonial legacies in the Pacific Islands, provides an overview of various research themes which I covered in more depth in my doctoral dissertation (2007), which I am currently revising for publication. I wish to acknowledge the Australian National University (2004-2007), the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (2005-2010), the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (2008-2009), and the Toyota Foundation (2010-2011) for funding different aspects of this research.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> This fact is based on an interview with a Kikkoman employee in Majuro, Marshall Islands, April 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Granted, the U.S. was already contemplating further testing its nuclear weapons in the Pacific prior to the deployment of nuclear weapons on the Japanese homeland; however the former Japanese bases and the recent acquisition of those territories from Japan was a major mediating factor in President Truman's decision to utilize Bikini Atoll as a test site.

<sup>3</sup> Toyosaki (2005) is one of the few researchers focusing on nuclear testing issues who have written about the linkages between Japan's mandated islands and their postwar usage as nuclear test sites; however Kawamura Minato (1994) and Kobayashi Izumi (1983) have also looked at postwar cultural and political shifts, respectively, in relation to the shift between Japanese and American colonial regimes.

<sup>4</sup> Eventually the song was regularly requested by Japanese tourists and businessmen who traveled to the colonies of Micronesia, and there are still Islander elder women today in Palau, the Marshall Islands, and elsewhere who remember dancing a romanticized version of this dance at parties to entertain guests from the Japanese "mainland."

<sup>5</sup> *Kanaka* is a term that originated mainly in reference to Native Hawaiians, such as *kanaka maoli*, but which was later appropriated by European colonial leaders to refer to indigenous laborers. Japanese Nanyō Guntō authorities used the term specifically as a racial category that described the indigenous people of most Micronesian territories, as opposed to mixed-race Islanders, which it unilaterally described as "Chamorro," regardless of island group or origin.

<sup>6</sup> In particular, see his novel *Gyokusai* set in Peleliu, Palau (Oda 2003), and his 1998 essay, "Sanzen Gunpei no Haka" ("The Graves of 3,000 soldiers), which chronicles the postwar nuclear experiences of Marshall Islanders and the memory of Korean forced laborers.

<sup>7</sup> From panel discussion at Keiō University symposium in honor of Hokari Minoru, 23 April 2006, Tokyo.

<sup>8</sup> The word "ninpu" evolved into the Marshallese word "neinbu," and it came up frequently as a keyword in all interviews with elderly men who had worked for the Japanese military in Kwajalein atoll when they were young. Many of these elders would also accompany this word with a gesture that indicated a fundoshi loincloth, and when I would follow up, they explained that the ninpu always wore just their loincloths, hats, and shoes in the hot sun.

<sup>9</sup> While Tomiyama (2002) discusses this discrimination in relation to Okinawans, I was surprised to find many elderly Marshallese who casually described the Koreans before the war as “poor,” “uneducated,” “dirty,” or “disorderly.” Though beyond the scope of my overall project, some male Marshallese also associated Korean women with prostitution and sexual entertainment, which may be suggestive of the presence of “comfort women” brought to serve the Japanese soldiers.

<sup>10</sup> I am grateful to U.S. Army Kwajalein Atoll archaeologist Leslie Mead, who explained in detail not only about how the repatriation of remains is undertaken but also how few remains have actually ever been repatriated.

<sup>11</sup> Personal communication at Yasukuni Shrine, 4 April 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Because the majority of the soldiers who died at Kwajalein were in their early twenties or late teens and had not started families of their own, they would have only been remembered by their siblings, parents, or spouses. Since over sixty years have passed since the war, most parents would be deceased by now, and those siblings or spouses are often too old to make the journey. Thus the majority of bereaved individuals who travel nowadays to Kwajalein and most Pacific War sites are typically the next generation of “children” (now in their sixties and seventies) mourning the loss of their fathers—who died in their late twenties or early thirties and were often more senior in rank.

<sup>13</sup> In fact, the memorial on Kwajalein, which was erected in 1973 from a kit produced by Japanese masons in Tokyo and reassembled by Japanese-American personnel on the base with permission from the U.S. Army, includes small plaques carved in the shape of each of the places (out of marble donated from those places) in the former Japanese Empire from which military personnel were deployed, including all prefectures, Okinawa, and the Korean peninsula. Interestingly, all of the prefecture’s names are carved in kanji, while the plaque for Korea is simply labeled in English, “Korea.”

<sup>14</sup> As I describe elsewhere (see Dvorak 2007, 2008), my relationship with the bereaved families came about through a very extensive search and about two years of negotiations with the coordinators of the group, who first met with me in Tokyo in January of 2005 and have since bestowed me with an honorary membership. I am mindful, however, of my position as an American, as well as my ambivalent role as participant-observant in the group’s remembrance practices, and how these factors likely have influenced some of the group’s responses to my research.