

mem file

*Statute*

MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE  
EAST LANSING

MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE MISSION  
TO THE UNIVERSITY OF THE RYUKYUS  
OKINAWA

August 22, 1956

Dean Milton E. Muelder  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan

Dear Dean Muelder:

This is a report on the present crisis at the University, a crisis which has been building for some time and has at last exploded. It began several months ago, when the Japanese Literature Club published an unauthorized magazine bitterly attacking the United States as a nation of oppressors and imperialists. One of the magazine's cartoons depicted the U. S. as a slaveholder abusing Ryukyans chained in leg irons. Eventually Rycom had translations of the magazine and of course demanded action from the university. Since the magazine repeated the usual communist attacks, the CIC began investigating students and faculty. They already had a file on the professor of Japanese Literature who was the club's advisor.

I went to President Asato at once and our discussions revealed that the worst articles were not written by students but by a reporter from a Naha newspaper and a former student named Nakagone, who is a brother of the university's vice-president. Both these men were on the CIC's list of known communists. Moreover, the club's advisor had not censored, or even examined the magazine's content before publication, nor had the student affairs office or the vice-president, who have the responsibility. In short, there was dereliction all along the line.

In dealing with this problem, I felt that the students had been taken in by outside anti-American agitators. However, in order to keep the CIC off the campus and prevent a recurrence of this sort of thing, I proposed to President Asato that he 1) suspend the publication for one year, 2) reprimand the advisor and relieve him of his advisory function with the club, 3) reprimand the student editors and contributors and place them on probation, and 4) put the Japanese Literature Club on probation. President Asato suspended the publication for one semester and asked the advisor to admonish the students against such inflammatory publication in the future. In effect, he gave the students authority to do pretty much as they pleased, and the sequel will bear this out.

Ever since the Price Committee recommendations were made public, there has been much agitation over the land problem. The Ryukyans oppose further use of land by the U.S. and insist on annual rentals rather than lump sum payments. A whole series of public meetings have been held in which the Ryukyans have rallied sentiment to oppose the Price recommendations. It is significant that the U.S. did not interfere with such

meetings. Moreover, the local newspapers repeated again and again that this was not an anti-American movement and must not be allowed to become one. The students attended a meeting in Naha in mid-July and, for the first time, carried anti-American placards. They gave enough evidence to indicate that some students (the same group involved in the magazine episode) were eager to stir up an anti-American movement. Kogachi, president of the Student Body Association, delivered an anti-American speech.

The next morning I was in Mr. Asato's office, and nearly every day for the ensuing ten days. Using every argument I could muster, I encouraged him, always gently, to take action. I wanted him to draw a line, to indicate to the students what was permissible and what was not permissible in their actions. It was certain that anti-Americanism in this American-supported university would lead to trouble. We held emergency meetings of the Foundation where Mr. Goeku and Mr. Kokuba tried to prevail upon him. It was useless. He was simply too scared of student reaction and of public criticism to do anything. In addition, he insisted that the students really meant no harm. Mr. Goeku on several occasions lost his temper and told Mr. Asato that he was too weak to do his job properly.

When a big public meeting was announced for July 28 in Naha we knew that the climax was approaching. The students held meetings, practiced songs, and started getting their placards ready. They got permission from the Shuri police to march down Shuri hill to the meeting. I begged Mr. Asato to prevent them from demonstrating. Diff, Mr. Goeku and others warned him of the consequences. On the morning of the 28th Mr. Asato promised me that he would caution Kogachi against anti-American demonstrations. Kogachi promised that there would be no anti-Americanism. A few hours later 300 students marched down the hill carrying anti-American signs ("Down with the Oppressors" etc.) and chanting "Yankee Go Home." This was the first time this chant had been heard in Okinawa. The students were joined in a snake dance by Okinawan students returned from Japanese universities. Kogachi gave a vicious anti-American speech. At the meeting the people, completely confused, chose Senaga, the leader of the communist party here, to go to Japan as their representative. G-2 had already reported that during the morning Kogachi and the other student leaders had been in session at Senaga's house.

The jig was now up. The students had taken the law into their own hands. American reaction to their demonstration was strong. The people began calling USCAR and demanding that something be done about the students. I made my daily visits to Mr. Asato's office and urged him to take action against the student leaders. He was so afraid of student reaction that he would do nothing. Mr. Goeku gave up on him and proposed that we seek another university president. Throughout these proceedings, I never spoke unkindly to Mr. Asato, as I did not want to spoil our friendly relationship. He agreed to talk to Kogachi, which he did, but nothing came of it. Mr. Asato listened to me always. He never argued and rarely replied. He just sat silent.

Ten days went by, and still no action. Meanwhile the students announced that a demonstration would be held at Kōza. The U.S. immediately put Kōza and central Okinawa off limits to Americans. (We had repeatedly told Mr. Asato that this might happen unless the students were stopped.) There was of course a great hue and cry. Ryukyans were stunned and angry at the university. When the students appeared at Kōza they were met by 1500 nightclub operators, restaurant owners, bar owners and others whose business was wrecked, and ordered to get out of town.

Mr. Asato now had lots of Ryukyuan supporters, but still he would not act. Meanwhile the U. S. Marines withdrew their \$2,500 scholarship funds. The American Society of Military Engineers canceled their aid to engineering students, one of whom was an anti-American demonstrator. Americans were so irate that the University Foundation, in a letter to Mr. Asato, withdrew all student aid. (Fortunately we are between mountains.)

Both Americans and Ryukyans now began to plague Gen. Burger, asking him to do something about the students if the university was too weak to do so. Burger was furious and told Diff that unless immediate action was taken he would dissolve the Board of Directors and dismiss the president. Meanwhile the students had been chased out of Kadena and Futema by the village authorities. The next day I attended an emergency meeting of the Board and the Foundation. At this 9-hour session we made clear the absolute necessity of expelling the student leaders and making assurances that there would be no more student demonstrations. They refused to expel, so we retreated to suspension. The Board agreed, but Mr. Asato said they would have to dismiss him first, as he did not want to punish the students. He finally agreed to probation. Again our arguments proved futile.

The next morning the Board and Mr. Asato made their report to Gen. Burger. He was waiting for them like a hungry bear. He told them that he had been very patient, but they had shown their inability to administer the university. Their report was entirely unacceptable. We were going to have a university for the Ryukyuan people, and it was not going to be run by communist agitators. He gave them two days to report that the student agitators were permanently expelled and that there would be no further demonstrations.

The hour of decision was delayed by typhoon Babs, which kept us indoors for a couple of days as it skirted the island. On August 17 the Board and Mr. Asato submitted their report to the General. They made a general apology to both Americans and Ryukyans for the students' conduct and expelled the six student leaders. Another student, a girl, was put on probation. The report was accepted. Actually, the Board and President had no choice except to submit it or resign. At present there is a good deal of reaction to the expulsions. The papers deny that the students were anti-American, they call for the report to be withdrawn, and one of them says that both Board and President should resign. I hope things will simmer down soon so that we can get back to work. However, the students are angry and intended to hold a protest meeting. But Mr. Asato ruled that that there would be no student meetings of any kind until further notice.

I will inform you of future developments. The situation continues to be most difficult for the Mission. There is doubtless a good deal of enmity toward us simply because we are Americans. I do not think there will be any stability here until something is done about the Price report. The agitators have been stirring up the people for more than two months. The focus of attention will doubtless shift from the university to some other area, but even so I suspect that we will have our hands full in the months ahead. I think that our scholarship grants will be restored soon, now that American feelings have been soothed by the expulsions. We can only make the best of this unfortunate situation at the university and push our plans for its development despite the furor.

Sincerely yours,



C. D. Mead