TEA HOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON - THE PLAY
OPENING NIGHT 21 APRIL 1954
OKINAWA

PLAY POSTER

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GLENN PIERCE - DIRECTOR

MEMORIES OF THE PLAY “TEA HOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON”

OKINAWA 1954

GLENN PIERCE - 13 SEPTEMBER 2014
TEAHOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON...REVISITED

In October of 1953 I was assigned to the 12th Aviation Field Depot Squadron, a unit assigned to the Strategic Air Command, and all 215 of us boarded a train from Sandia Base in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We moved by rail to San Francisco, California, where we were put on a “General Class” troop ship and headed for Okinawa, along with about 2,000 other troops.

We made brief stops in Formosa, now called Taiwan, at Yokohama and finally, 22 days later at Okinawa. There we discovered that the military had not done an effective job of preparing for our arrival: the special facilities needed to accomplish our mission were hardly started, rooms with temperature control, humidity control and top secret security. Nor were they prepared to house us comfortably. We were assigned to 12-man tents erected on concrete slabs with toilet and showers in a large frame building about 20 yards away.

At one of our earliest gatherings our commanding officer told us that we would be unable to pursue our expected tasks for many weeks so we were set free to wander around Kadena Base and look for work with other Air Force organizations. I had been happy doing theatre work while stationed at Sandia and thought that there might be a Special Services group on base that would offer that outlet for me. I soon discovered that the only work there would be checking our ping pong paddles or cleaning up the wood working shops after they were used. I decided that I might just bide my time there and wait for something more interesting.

Something more interesting did appear almost overnight. General David A.D. Ogden, commanding officer of the Ryukyu Island group had visited New York City, where he had seen a production of "The Teahouse of The August Moon", produced by Maurice Evans and George Schafer. On December 29 Mr. Evans granted General Ogden permission to stage the play on Okinawa as a fund-raiser to rebuild schools destroyed during the invasion of the island during World War II. John Patrick, the author of the play, quickly added his authorization to Mr. Evans' and General Ogden announced through every possible means available that he would "take a direct hand in Okinawa's staging of the play" and keep the New Yorkers informed of production developments.

The island was soon buzzing with word of the play and of the General's search for a person to put a production on the stage — or stages— on Okinawa. He called for volunteers to contact his chief of staff, a bird-colonel, to arrange for interviews. There weren't any theatre folk at the Air Force Special Services office where I was biding my time, nor were there any at Rycom Headquarters, the US Army's power base.

I decided to take the bull by the horns and marched over to the General's office to arrange an interview. I went in civilian clothes, mind you, as I didn't think a 24 year old A/IC Air Force guy was likely to make much of an impression, especially one that weighed a scant 120 pounds. There wasn't a waiting line, in fact there weren't any people there inquiring about the theatre job, just the Colonel and the General.
I was ushered into the General's office and he asked if I was interested in directing the play. I said I really didn't know, that I hadn't read that play and couldn't make any commitment without studying the play. He handed me a mimeographed copy and I left his office, promising that I would get back to him in a day or two.

Mind you, I had never directed a play; I had acted in major parts in several plays in Albuquerque while stationed at Sandia and felt that one of my directors had demonstrated the skills needed to put a play together properly, so I decided I could wrap my arms around this project. "Fools rush in....???

The next day I went back to the General's office and told him I would take the job. I don't think he really had offered me the position but that seemed to have slipped his mind, so he gave me the job.

Remember I was an A/lC in the Air Force, without a real job, hanging out around an Air Force Special Services office, checking out ping pong paddles and sweeping up wood chips! But now I had to arrange auditions for five Occidentals and maybe two dozen Orientals, a goat, a scene designer and crews to build a set. Oh, there was also the lack of a stage that would accommodate live theatre. Movie theatres at Rycom and Kadena were designated as the places to stage the play, with the addition of the Ernie Pyle Theatre in Naha, although the latter never materialized. It would take Herculean effort to make those modest movie houses fit for live production. I figured the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers might be called into play to re-do the movie houses. They did.

We got more publicity than the law should have allowed. The General saw to it that EVERYONE knew we needed actors to appear in this all-important production and that they should get themselves to the auditions. That included the proprietors of the Naha Restaurant and the Teahouse of the August Moon, who could see to it that attractive Okinawan and Japanese women of all ages were available to take parts in the play, the more the merrier!

A teahouse called "Under the Pines" in Japanese was owned by an enterprising woman named Eiko Uyehara who renamed it "Teahouse of the August Moon" when the novel of that name and the highly successful stage play began to gain publicity. She immediately put a young dancer forward as a candidate for the role of Lotus Blossom, the central female roll in the play. That was Yukiko Hama (actually a stage name provided for the young Japanese-born beauty). Fumiko Uezu owned the Naha Restaurant, the largest of its kind on the island and she suggested her young daughter Anmei Uezu might be perfect for a child in the village scenes. Her top assistant at the restaurant, a seasoned performer, was Toyo Takamiya and she was just right to play Miss Higa Jiga, the head of the "Women's League for Democratic Action" in Tobiki. Kiyo Funakoshi a musician at the Naha Restaurant, was a gifted character actor and took the part of the old woman who sat atop the luggage in the celebrated "Jeep Scene" in the first act of the play and appeared in numerous other scenes.
She stole every scene in which she appeared. Casting was intentionally juggled to make certain that each of the big teahouses on the island was given appropriate recognition and celebration. Politics always seems to be involved in any major project.

Other oriental actors came from an acting company in Naha, the Naha police department, Department of the Army Civilians, the University of the Ryukyus and volunteers who came just because they were interested in acting. Choki Makabe was a sergeant in the Naha Police Department and Al Cabanero was a Filipino employed as a Department of the Army Civilian.

I attempted to cast the chairman of the Department of English at the University of the Ryukyus. He indicated an interest early on but later, professing his conversion to Christianity (Baptist) condemned the play as untruthful and immoral. He claimed that Geishas were nothing more than glorified prostitutes and wanted no part of the play.

Emmy Omija was a secretary for a business firm and others came from sources unknown to us from various and sundry professions and locations. Somehow, they all blended together harmoniously both off stage and on.

Stephen Joyce, Paul Savior and Robert Wilson all indicated stage experience at the open auditions. Stephen was especially gifted and showed marked improvement from his first reading to the next and showed the special art and skill it would take to play a character from another race who was called upon to speak both English and Japanese. I initially cast a 60 year old civilian who worked for the United State Civil Affairs Ryukyus, but he quickly showed that he was unreliable, failed to show up for rehearsals, and I let him go, replacing him with Robert S. Van Hook, a civilian with the Department of the Army. Original casting included an Air Force sergeant as Gregovich, but he showed little skill in early rehearsals and I replaced him with Robert A. Wilson, a young New Yorker who knew his way around the process. Paul Savior seemed right for the young Captain McLean from the start, eager and innocent. He was experienced as an actor and steady with the rehearsal process. John Coolidge I designated as technical director, largely because of his academic training in technical theatre, but he soon showed difficulty in putting the pieces of the set in order and with properly lighting the actors, lacked the practical skills of technical theatre and I let him go. We counted on the technical skills of the Okinawans, five of whom worked in the scene shop at our Rycom Special Services headquarters and five Okinawan women who worked on costumes for Special Services to aid in technical matters.

Abe Bassett was in the army, working as a radio announcer and had a fine voice. Like many radio talents, he didn’t have much physical skill as a stage actor, but I thought that we could weave that weakness into his character and allow him to succeed in the role. That approach worked. Captain Fishy was something of a klutz, so the actor playing the role could appropriately lack physical grace and be true to the script. We had arranged for the people to play the characters in the play, Americans and Okinawans alike.
But we also needed a goat. I asked our Okinawan stage manager to see what he could do to get one for us. He prevailed upon an area farmer and returned with a handsome white male goat with an imposing rack of horns. He looked great but his disposition was somewhat aggressive and he frightened the children who were to appear with him in the play. Obviously that wouldn't do, so I asked our stage manager to take the billy goat back and find an animal more suited to our need. He went back to the farmer, who refused to take the billy goat back, but he did provide a splendid, healthy female goat as a replacement. Problem solved, for the moment. A few days later our new cast member gave birth to twins, so now we had four goats, none of which was up to playing the part in the play, so we had to get still another goat, this one was an older sister of the newborn twins. She ultimately was the last cast member added to our happy group and appeared in all of the performances. Between shows she and the other four were staked out in the yard beside our headquarters at Special Services, Rycom. Just one of the many trials and tribulations of "show biz".

Long ago I accepted this definition of directing: Directing is correcting the mistakes you made when you cast the play. I had made mistakes in casting both Colonel Purdy and Sgt. Gregovich and was obliged to correct them both. I had also erred when I put John Coolidge in charge of the technical elements of the production. My other choices seemed to work, especially Stephen Joyce and the oriental characters, all of whom seemed to direct themselves. I learned there and then that actors should be given their heads, allowed to put their own imaginations into their roles and that I should stay out of their way. Everyone's creative juices need to be flowing through the play, not just the director's,

Where were we? On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, February 10,11 and 12 we had open auditions, callbacks on Saturday, February 13. Rehearsals began the following week, aimed toward the opening of the play on April 21 for a total of 16 performances. Thirteen were given. We gave seven performances in the Sukiran Theatre, six more at the Lackland Theatre on Kadena Base. The performances in the Ernie Pyle were scratched because the facilities would not accommodate the production. Tickets sold for 120 Yen each, $1.00 American. Had we gone on to the Ernie Pyle Theatre the ticket prices would have increased to 300 yen, or $2.50 American.

We had a cast, a script and were almost ready to get to work, but many of the cast members did not read English, the language of the play. I immediately asked the United States Civil Affairs Ryukyus people to divide the script into several chunks and to pass them out to their people to translate into Japanese. The result would never pass muster as a cohesive work of art, but I just needed to make certain that everybody in the cast knew what was supposed to be happening on stage and what all of the characters were saying. I had an ulterior motive: I wanted to put the script on slides to project onto the proscenium wall in Japanese so that a larger and more diverse audience might be attracted to our production at the Ernie Pyle Theatre in Naha or in Tokyo, where rumors circulated that the Nippon Times wanted to put our production on stage.
The Tokyo prospect dissolved when Japanese authorities turned it down. Too many Okinawans wanted to get to Japan and away from Okinawa and the Japanese government wanted no part of such a thing.

During the busy weeks of rehearsal and performance there were many struggles; transportation for all of the actors and crews, meals for the American cast members, pressures on performers who were taken away from their day jobs. At one point I was taken out of my tent on Kadena and given accommodations at the Field Grade Officers quarters in the Rycom Headquarters area, the facility for officers with rank of major or above. A little later I managed to have the military personnel in the cast and key crew members assigned to the Rest and Recuperation facilities at Yaka Beach. That removed some of the pressure and was good for company morale. Robert Van Hook, the Department of the Army Civilian was especially anxious and had experienced some serious emotional disturbances in his past. I feared he might find the pressures too much for him to continue. One tough moment came when the Colonel in the General's office visited rehearsal and heard Van Hook say the line, "I will teach these natives the meaning of democracy if I have to shoot every one of them." The Colonel came to me and said that the line had to be changed, I told him that the material was under copyright and that I could not, would not, change it. He went around me to Van Hook and, in essence, ordered him to change the line, saying instead, "I will teach these natives the meaning of democracy if I have to court marshal every one of them." There was nothing I could do about it. Van Hook was shaken by the experience and that worried me.

The only other comment I got from the top brass also came from the same Colonel. He didn't like the shape of Abe Bassett's head, the actor playing Captain Fisby. He also wanted to place a military band in the front row seats in the theatres where we were playing to play the Star Spangled Banner" before each performance. I told him we weren't doing a baseball game, but a performance of a play and that such a band recital was not appropriate. He didn't like my comment or my attitude, but I heard no more about it.

Major Cliff O'Rorark, a former OSS, now CIA, officer during WWII was assigned to the Special Services Office that was our home base. He was a hardened veteran, served in the underground in Yugoslavia when it was in German hands. He took to the cast and to our project with all of his heart and soul. He was responsible for my assignment to the Field Grade Officers Mess and for seeing to it that Okinawans in our cast got some compensation for their efforts by taking money from the box office receipts, a move that all of us applauded. There were many favors that he arranged for the company and individuals that went unnoticed and without applause but that made our lives easier and happier. He was a staunch ally and friend to us all.

I had directed my first play. I trusted the script, I trusted the actors, I trusted my own judgment and did everything in my power to establish and maintain an atmosphere of professionalism around everything we did. I made some tough decisions, fired people who were not doing what the production needed and fought to represent the production and its people in ways that they, Occidental and Oriental alike, would approve.
THE NEXT 14 PAGES SHOW THE ENTIRE AUTOGRAPHED PROGRAM
December 29, 1953

D. A. D. Ogden, Major General, USA
Headquarters Ryukyu Command
Office of the Commanding General
APO 331

Dear General Ogden:

As a wartime Special Service Officer, myself, (under General Richardson's C.P.A. Command) I find it hard not to reply to your letter of December 11th in the prescribed military form.

However the subject of your communication has touched us all so deeply that a less formal reply seems to be indicated.

I am forwarding the pictures of the makeshift schoolhouses to the authors, with the strongest recommendation that they grant permission for the amateur production you propose. Immediately upon receipt of their concurrence, this office will send you a manuscript of the play and photographs of the New York production. It is my sincere hope that those of us who are benefitting financially, from THE TEAHOUSE may be able to do something further to assist your Special Service Section. I am sending out an appeal to all concerned, but it would be helpful, in the meantime, if I might know what is the estimated cost of producing the play in Okinawa, or whether there is some other type of monetary contribution which might be appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Evans
(Major, A.U.S., Inactive)
Dear Mr. Patrick:

This Headquarters has received with pleasure your authority to produce "Teahouse of the August Moon" on Okinawa. A copy of your manuscript also has been received from Mr. Schaefer, and it is being reproduced for use by the Ryukyus Command's Special Services Little Theater Group in the production of the play.

Your generous permission to grant this headquarters rights in the production of the play for United States Forces personnel on Okinawa is appreciated sincerely. It is most gratifying to know that you have authorized the play's local production and thus have a direct hand in helping to rebuild schools for Ryukyuan children.

Those of us who every day see the effect of the war on so many of Okinawa's classroom buildings cannot help but feel a sense of responsibility to aid these Ryukyuan school children, who will grow up to become the island's leading citizens. Thousand of miles away, you have shown sympathetic interest to aid war-devastated peoples. This interest I regard as most commendable.

Reaction in this command to the announcement that the play can be produced here has been enthusiastic and overwhelming. We, of this Headquarters, will take a direct hand in Okinawa's staging of the play, and will keep you informed of production developments.

Please accept my heartfelt thanks for your cooperation and kind assistance.

Sincerely,

D. A. D. OGDEN
Major General, USA

Mr. John Patrick
Hasty Hill, Haverstraw Road
Suffern, New York
Tea House of

Sponsored by the Ryukyuan American Friendship Committee with Rycom Special Services. Through the courtesy of George Schafer and Maurice Evans. Written by John Patrick. From the book by Vern Sneider.
the August Moon

Directed by Glenn Q. Pierce, Technical Direction
John Coolidge.
Stephen Joyce's first interest in theatre work came in his college days at Fordham University, New York, where he took part in "Dr. Faustus" as Mephistopheles, and Mark Anthony in "All for Love". On television he has worked with both Dumont & NBC Productions. And was seen on Broadway in "Julius Caesar" with Basil Rathbone.

Abe Bassett's first stage appearance on Okinawa is with the "Tea House of the August Moon", but his voice is a familiar one to Island Radio listeners. Since arrival on the Island a year ago he has been a Staff Announcer with Far East Network Okinawa. His Theatre experience had it's beginning with the Drama dept. at Bowling Green University, Bowling Green, Ohio; where he graduated in June 1952. Abe has appeared in many plays at the University Playhouse at Bowling Green, and at the Huron Playhouse Huron, Ohio—among them "12th Night", "Double Door", "My Heart's in the Highlands" and "Fireside".

Yukiko Hama is no stranger to the entertainment business. Prior to her arrival on Okinawa in 1949, Japanese born Yukiko worked with the Japanese Theatre. For the last year she has been employed as a dancer by the "Tea House (of the) August Moon" at Naha, Okinawa.
Robert S. Van Hook, who was born in Burley, Idaho, started his acting career in 1939, when he had the major role in the High School play. Robert continued his acting at the Idaho State College and after graduation joined the University Players at Denver, Colorado. He has been seen in the principal speaking parts in "Arizona", "Rose Marie", "The Red Mill" and "The Desert Song" with the "Post Opera", presentations at Cheesman Park, Denver, Colorado. He says his favorite role was Uncle Chris in "I Remember Mama".

Paul M. Savior was long ago bitten by the drama bug. Before his graduation at Hofstra College, Hempstead, Long Island, where he majored in Drama, he played in the College productions of "Twelfth Night", "Petrified Forest" and "The Glass Menagerie". Paul spent two sessions with the Seacull Summer Theatre on Long Island. Appearing in "Rambunctious Inn" and "They Know What They Wanted".
People sometimes ask if the story, "The Teahouse of the August Moon," is not, in reality, a serious piece of work. Then I hasten to point out that they should make the "Teahouse" what they wish, for it was meant to be that way. The "Teahouse" was meant to make you think if you wish to think, or to make you forget if you wish to forget.

Actually, "The Teahouse of the August Moon" contains two stories, but only one story is told directly. That is the surface story which shows the trials and tribulations of Captain Jeff Floy in Tanaki Village, Okinawa. Perhaps it is too silly, or farce, or comedy, call it what you wish. Yet I, for one, sincerely hope that it will bring a few smiles, or better still, a few chuckles.

However, underlying this surface story is another one, never told but rather implied. And if anyone wishes the "Teahouse" to be serious, the seriousness will come from this story.

The people of Okinawa were to be neither Chinese nor Japanese. In ancient times they had their own language, known as the Luchar dialects, and a few of the older people still speak it. In ancient times they had their own kingdom, known as the kingdom of the Ryukus, the name for their chain of islands. But Okinawa was small.

As the centuries passed, little Okinawa at times paid tribute to China, at other times to Japan. And sometimes she paid tribute to both at once. But on April 1, 1945, a new conqueror came to replace the Japanese who had held the island since 1895. He came off his steel ship, and he was American, especially if he was assigned to work with the civilian population. For, technically, they were enemy. And once the line of Military Government is to keep the civilian population from interfering with the military operations, and since one American would be called soon to handle perhaps 5,000 Okinawans, it was only natural that someone assigned to such duty would have visions of bridges and supplies, and switchboards being blown. But then, the American met the Okinawans completely lacking in sham and pretense and filled with wide-eyed, childlike gratitude. What happened is illustrated by a story told by a lieutenant of infantry.

The lieutenant looked across the lines one morning and saw movement. It had to be the enemy out there, yet the figures ahead of him wore American uniforms. But they couldn't be American, for the lieutenant was holding the front. This was the furthermost outpost. The lieutenant was tempted to open fire, but thinking better of it, he called, "Who's out there?"

"Military Government," came the reply.

"Military Government! The lieutenent could hardly believe it. Military Government was supposed to be in back, not in front. "Well, what are you doing?" the lieutenant demanded.

"Looking for sewing machines."

"Sewing machines?"

"Yeah, we heard there's some in the caves ahead. And we need them in the village to make dresses for the women."

But I would like to point out that "The Teahouse of the August Moon" is not a war story. And I hope that the reader or the viewer will not be concerned with the under story if he is not so inclined, or if he is not in the mood for such. The "Teahouse" was meant to be whatever you wish to make it.

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Cast
In Order of Appearance

Sakini
Sergeant Gregovich
Colonel Purdy
Captain Fisby
Old Woman
Old Woman's Daughter
Daughter's Children
Mr. Seiko
Mr. Hekaido
Mr. Omura

Stephen Joyce
Robert A. Wilson
Robert S. Van Hook
Abe "Bill" Bassett
Kiyo Funakoshi
Emmy Omija
Annie Uezu
Naoko Kinjo
Junko
Al Cabanero
Choki Makabe
George Miyagi

Mr. Sumata
Mr. Sumata's Son
Mr. Oshiro
Miss Higa Jiga
Mr. Koea
Lotus Blossom
Capt. McLean
Lady Astor
Ladies League for
Democratic action

Nozo Miyagi
Seitoku Miyazato
Grilleromo S. Umali
Toyo Takamiya
Kadokei Gisnaii
Yukiko Hama
Paul Savior
Saki II
Kamee Itokazu
Kikuko Uema
Nae Yoshinaga

サキニ
グレゴビッチ軍曹
バーディ大佐
フィスビー大尉
老女
老女の娘
婦子
セイコー氏
ホカイダ氏
大村氏

ステイフン・ジョイス
ロバート・エイパード
ロバート・エース・バン・ホック
アベ・ビル・バーセント
宮崎富明
大見勝英
上江しん作
金村喜子
藤子
セイコー氏
ホカイダ氏
大村氏

スミタ氏
スミタ氏の息子
大城氏
比嘉真嘉輝
ケオラ氏
ロクス・プロオサム・藤花
マツクリーン大尉
アスター婦人
梶原
婦人会

宮崎能隆
宮崎隆司
宫崎之子
宫崎信子
宫崎小心
パワール・セイエイオー
サキトウー
勇次
米永ナエ
Synopsis of Scenes

Act I

Scene 1 Okinawa - Col. Furdy's Office G.H.Q.
Scene 2 Outside Capt. Fishy's Quarter G.H.Q.
Scene 3 Tobiki Village

Act II

Scene 1 Tobiki Village
Scene 2 Capt. Fishy's Office, Tobiki
Scene 3 The Same
Scene 4 Tobiki Village

Act III

Scene 1 The Teahouse of the August Moon
Scene 2 Capt. Fishy's Office Tobiki
Scene 3 The Teahouse of the August Moon

- 10 -
Mr. Pierce's interest in Theatre work began during his High School days in Olathe, Kansas. He attended Kansas University, where he majored in Drama - and was Author director of a prize winning one act farce. When the Armed Forces called, he was sent to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he carried on his Theatre work with the Sandia Base Little Theatre, the Albuquerque Little Theatre and the "Old Town Players". He was seen as Charles in "Blithe Spirit", Horatio in "Hamlet" Ascanio in the "Firebrand" and had his first introduction to the Far East as the Japanese houseboy in "Remains to be Seen".

John Coolidge was born in Brooklyn, New York, but calls Cleveland, Ohio his home town. His first introduction to footlights and grease paint came at the age of twelve. John's interest continued. He went on to study stage production, Direction and Lighting at Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, and Television Production, Direction, Lighting and Make-Up at the Caine Park Theatre. He later joined the Eldrid Players in Cleveland where he worked on Stage Production.
Credits and Acknowledgments


特別贊助者

技術演出者

Stage Manager
Seiei Yamashiro

Stage Crew
Atsui Sadoyama
Kuranshita Watari
Heitaro Chibana
Mutsunehi Yamashiro
Seihen Arakabi
Joe Ippodo

House Manager
Virginia Dean
Natsumi Utachi
Linda Van Dyke
Raymond Watters
Shizuko Tomihara
Tomiko Yamashiro

Make-up Costumes and Properties

Props
Yoko Miyagi

Lighting and Sound
H. J. Germain

Business Stuffs
Bill Craver

Brasswagen and Historian
Charles S. Griffin

Photographer
Deann Bollinger

Camera Possessors
Donald Workman
Bill Sheldon
Roger G. Huda

Camera Possessors
James E. Peterson

Assistant to Technical Director
John Rinesburg

Translation
Choza Oyama
Ukiko Ohno
Haru Shima

Business Stuffs
Fred Bailey

ArmsKeeper
Sgt. Lee Williams
Kenneth McDonald
Tony Peterson

Robert Bowmich
Choza Oyama
Shingiku Jhu
Kanashite Kanjo

- 12 -
Tamako
Rev. Y. S. S. Sakurada
Nakade chokki
Cobano (Siko)
Mr. Sumata is played by Kamiya Yoshitaki

Old man on the Jeep — Nashiro Seisuke

Other villagers are — Yoshiko and Kayoko

Additional technical assistance —

Roland L. Duba    Edward Patricelli
Robert Chisolm    Janet Leary

Deepest appreciation to the Corps of Engineers for their assistance and cooperation.

SAKI II, cast as Lady Astor, gave birth to two kids on the morning of April 19, and has been replaced by her eldest daughter SAKI III.
STEPHEN JOYCE

SAKINI
MEMORIES
TEA HOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON
STEPHEN JOYCE AS SAKINI

Glen Pierce the director had a clear vision of the play, no mugging, nothing overdone it was played as a character driven comedy between Asians and Americans and often funny moments between them.

The cast and crew for Teahouse was great, friendly, funny and very hard working. The Okinawans were very helpful to me particularly, Mr. Yahamashiro the stage manager. I asked for help with the parts I wanted to speak in Japanese and I went over and over it until it passed his judgment, good he would say to me "Hi" or yes in Japanese, knowing gave me confidence, Bob Wilson who played Sgt. Gregovich, all of us became friends, it was a very united company. The Okinawans took me in after awhile, I felt like one of them. The audience clapped, laughed and cheered.

At the reception opening night I met General Ogden and his wife, they congratulated me on my performance, "I wished there was something I could do for you, of course I can't pay you". We stood looking at each other after a moment I said "Sir, maybe if you could put a letter in my file" "Good idea son" He clapped me on my shoulder and called Major Fredrick, his Aide and there was a nodding of heads between them and he came back to me "Done, that was a good idea". We chatted about the easy co-mingling among the cast and I told him of a beautiful blue silk kimono that the costume people presented me that evening.. "Keep you warm in America Stevie-san. You no forget us...."

And so a month passed and I arrived at Williams Air Force Base in Arizona and as a casual I was picking up trash with a stick that had a nail in it. I had been doing this for about a week in the oven in July in Arizona when a large heavy Indian came up to me and said in his musical voice "Colonel wants to see you, follow me" He lumbered ahead, we entered headquarters, he left me there chuckling thinking I was in trouble, his secretary in a crisp blue uniform ushered me into the Colonel's office, I saluted, and it was returned by him., a rangy man who had a crease on his face from a bullet wound and one half of an ear " Son I owe you an apology, Alice get the young man a cold drink, Sit down." The colonel offered me a towel to wipe my sweaty face, "Son I must apology" and he slid a piece of paper across his desk for me to read, It was the letter that General Ogden had written about me, ..In glowing terms he wrote "Do what you can do for this man" it was signed Major General David Ogden, Commander of the Ryukyus Command. I thought, well, the General had kept his word..

" Is there anything you would like to do", he asked
" I'd like to start a theater company"
"Good, there are some ladies here on the base that have been trying to do that, I'll have you transferred to Special Services, my secretary will handle the paperwork."

Suddenly all the people in Teahouse came back to me, the police chief who looked at me and said "You Hawaii Boy". I took it as a compliment since I was from Brooklyn, I decided to try and find a cast for "A Streetcar Named Desire" a play I had always wanted to do Blanche was easy, a slightly dizzy and flaky woman showed up but I couldn't find a Stella, I was about not to do the play when a yellow station wagon pulled up and a beautiful woman with the sky in her blue eyes came in, we sat down we read a few lines from the script. "The part is yours" I said. Thank you General Ogden, that's how I met my wife of 60 years. (6 AUGUST 2014)
CAST PHOTOS

PAUL SAVIOR - CAPT. MCLEAN

ROBERT VAN HOOK - COL. PURDY

YUKIKO HAMA - LOTUS BLOSSOM

GRILLERMO S. UMALI - MR. OSHIRO
KADEKARU GINSEI - MR. KEORA

GEORGE MIYAGI - MR. OMURA

AL CABANERO - MR. SEIKO

TOYOKO TAKAMIYA - MISS HIGA JIGA
Okinawa Gets Exclusive Rights to Broadway Hit

NAHA, Okinawa, Jan. 29—Exclusive permission to produce John Patrick’s currently popular Broadway play, “Tea House of the August Moon,” for island audiences was received by the Ryukyus Command this week.

The author, the playwright and the producers of the sensational Broadway hit, starring David Wayne, John Firth and MariKO Niki, gave the go-ahead signal this week for local production of the stage drama, to U.S. forces personnel here, in letters sent to Maj. Gen. David A. D. Ogden, RyCom commander.

It all began several months ago when RyCom officials received clippings of the play’s opening in New York. Receipt of the review clippings coincided with a request to reactivate the Little Theater Group of Special Services here.

Subsequently, Gen. Ogden wrote to the producers of “Tea House of the August Moon” requesting that play rights be granted. He mentioned that net proceeds from Okinawa’s production of the play would be used to construct permanent classroom buildings for Ryukyuan students.

Producers of the Broadway comedy, Maurice Evans and George Schaefer, immediately granted exclusive off-Broadway rights to the Ryukyus Command with no obligation.

In his letter to Gen. Ogden giving the permission, Patrick said, “I am honored by (this) request, and grateful for the opportunity to be of help. The rehabilitation of war-devastated peoples is our obligation and privilege.”

Entire proceeds from ticket sales for Okinawa’s “Tea House of the August Moon” production will go to the Ryukyu-American Friendship Committee.

March of Dimes Party Planned at Shinagawa

TOKYO, Jan. 30—The Tokyo Quartermaster Depot’s NCO Mess (Butterfly Club) will hold a March of Dimes benefit party Monday night in Shinagawa.

All grades are invited to attend the charity event. Proceeds will go to the FEC March of Dimes fund.
CASTING FOR PARTS IN
"TEA HOUSE" PRODUCTION
WILL BEGIN TOMORROW

Casting for parts in the forthcoming show on Okinawa, "Tea House of the August Moon", will begin Wednesday. Rehearsals will be held in Building T-422, Kurem Special Services workshop on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 10 p.m.

Call-back night will be Saturday February 13 to test rehearsals may begin the following week. Both professional and non-professional talent is sought. There will be parts for four males and possibly three others. In addition to this there will be 10 to 15 parts for Japanese-Americans or bilinguals.

Glenn Q. Pierce, Jr., with the 12th Aviation Field Depot Squadron at Kadama will act as director with the cooperation of Kurem Special Services Entertainment Section to produce the Okinawan production. Pierce has worked with both the "Old Town Player" and the Albuquerque Little Theatre for two seasons, and with the University of New Mexico Drama Department.

On January 24 it was announced the Ryukus Command had officially received exclusive permission to produce Broadway's latest hit comedy "Tea House of the August Moon" for island audiences.

Written by John Patrick, the play is based on Vern Seidler's best selling novel by the same name. The story is a familiar one to men and women stationed in the Far East. Told with humor, it's calculated to keep you laughing at yourself - where the East is East and West is West and the twin do meet during the first days of occupation and rehabilitation on Okinawa.

April the 20th has been set as the opening night, with tickets going on sale April 15 for $120 per person. For further information call Glenn Pierce at 34242, the Special Services Workshop.

The entire proceeds from ticket sales for Okinawa's "Tea House of the August Moon" production will go to the Ryukyu-an-american Friendship Committee for one of its major projects - the rehabilitation of education facilities for Ryukyuan children.

The "Teahouse of the August Moon" sits on a hill overlooking the Pacific Ocean and the city of Naha, Okinawa. Nазвание of the famous teahouse in the novel by Vern Seidler.
PRESS & PUBLICATIONS
C I & E
USCAR

PRESS RELEASE:

24 February 1954

(Japanese translations of CI&E press releases are unofficial and are provided as an aid to editors)

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RYUKYAN PRODUCTS DISPLAYED IN NEW YORK CITY IN CONNECTION WITH 'TEAHOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON'; LETTER OF APPRECIATION SENT

Local Production, For School Benefit, Now in Rehearsal

NAHA - Residents of New York City, where the theatrical production "Teahouse of the August Moon" is playing to enthusiastic audiences, tomorrow for the first time will view a display of Ryukyuan products air-shipped by the Ryukyu-American Friendship Committee so that Americans may see the diversified items created here.

The ninety-nine items filled eight large cases and included handkerchief boxes, cigar boxes, ash trays, lazy Susans, trays, bon bon bowls, lamp bases, gold bowl sets, book ends, boar mugs, name plates, book cases, cigarette cases, jewel boxes, sake bottles, ash trays in various designs, dishes, shishi, shrine and food, water jugs, flower vases, tooth pick pots, a variety of hats, shower shoes, sandals and silk paintings. Price tags were on all in the interest of stimulating an American market for Ryukyuan products.

In connection with the "Teahouse" production at the Martin Beck theater in New York, a certificate of appreciation, co-signed by Maj. Gen. David A. D. Ogden, Commanding General of the Ryukyu Command and Deputy Governor of the Ryukyu Islands, and Chief Executive Shuhis Higa has been sent by the Ryukyu-American Friendship Committee to the personnel of "Teahouse." It reads:

"To all personnel of the production 'Teahouse of the August Moon,' we send congratulations for your outstanding contributions in furthering understanding and friendship between peoples of the Ryukyus and the United States of America.

"Through your unselfish efforts you have made possible a sympathetic understanding which is international both in scope and in participation. Your efforts, accomplished so many thousands of miles away, will serve to supplement and make more meaningful our work here.

"To each and all of you in any way identified with 'Teahouse,' it is with gratitude we send our personal regards and sincere best wishes."

Meanwhile, through the personal interest of General Ogden, who wrote to the producers of "Teahouse" some weeks ago requesting that play rights be granted for production of the play here by a cast of U.S. Forces personnel and Ryukyuans, it will be possible to see the play in Okinawa.

All proceeds from the locally-produced play will be given to the Ryukyu-American Friendship Committee for one of its major projects - the rehabilitation of educational facilities for Okinawa's children. The Pycom Special Services Workshop (theatrical group) went into rehearsal this week, using the script as it was forwarded from New York.

The play humorously depicts problems encountered in the rehabilitation of Okinawa in the early days of the postwar period. Its immediate locale is Okawa.
Cast of The "Teahouse of the August Moon" in a recent rehearsal at the Teahouse (of the) August Moon Restaurant in Naha, Okinawa. Left to right: John Coolidge, Technical Director; Joe Ippalito, House Manager; Yukiko Hama, Lotus Blossom; Abe Bassett, Cast Fisby; Glenn N. Pierce, Director; and Stephen Joyce Sakini.

(US Army Photo by Jacobson)
 Articles contained herein do not reflect the official attitude of either USCM or the United States Armed Forces. They have been selected for translation and summary by CIE Department, USCM in order that Americans on Okinawa might be informed of Ryukyuan attitudes as expressed in their press.

NEWS ARTICLES

SPLENDID ACTING DISPLAYED AT REHEARSAL (Okinawa Times, 11 Apr.) Y.

A row of quonset huts stand silently in the rain on a hill. There is light from one of the quonset huts. Laughter and chattering voices are heard now and then as if coming from a forgotten gramophone. This is where the play "Tea House of August Moon" is being rehearsed.

In Act I - Immediately following the end of the war, mayor of Tobiki village is elected, chief of police is appointed, a democratic women's association is organized, schools are opened and the requirements for the normal function of a democratic society were about complete. At this juncture, Col. Purdy, Capt. Frisky, interpretor Sakini, hostile old woman, tactful village mayor and celebrated geisha girl make appearance almost reproducing the Okinawan edition of "The Bell for Adano".

The Okinawans playing their part in the play though with scanty knowledge of English, have learned their parts well and the Japanese spoken by interpreter Sakini is indeed good and evidently there is no language difficulty in the rehearsal.

To see the rehearsal which goes on for two or three hours at a stretch without tea or even water being served is indeed a scene of Ryukyuan-American friendship in action, in itself.

As each player talks and acts, director Pierce follows him with his eyes. The rehearsal has been so thorough that at present there seems to be no need of repetition any longer. Only one more act with 3 scenes remains to be rehearsed and judging from the progress so far made "a splendid performance on the stage is guaranteed", observed an American reporter.

Okinawans taking part are Yasuko Uemura impersonating Naoko Kinjo (a village girl), Yukiko Naka, Mr. Choki Takada as chief of police, Mr. Saisho Hokama (University of Ryukus) as artist Oshiro, Miss Makiko Ono as daughter of the old lady, Mrs. Takuji Takagi as chairman of the women's association and Mr. Noz Piyagi, who offers a geisha girl and others.
Mr. Robert van Hook (37) plays as Col. Fury who is addicted to reading pirate fictions (assigned to Armed service) and who plays sycophant with superior officers while raging at his men. He is from Idaho. After finishing college he played on stage for several years.

He is the oldest member of the cast and is the biggest. He has been here 2 ½ years.

Mr. Abe Bill Bassett, 25, plays as Capt. Fisby who always gets bailed out by the Colonel and makes an endless series of mistakes in the dealings with natives due to language barrier and difference in living conditions and habits.

DAILY OKINAWAN PRESS SUMMARY (15 March 1954 cont’d)

He hails from Columbus, Ohio, and majored in dramatics in the Rollins Green University. He has been on the island 12 months. Mr. Robert Wilson, 23, of Air Force, hails from New York city and studied dramatics in a college there for 3 years. He plays the part of a lazy Sergeant. He has been on the island 4 months.

Mr. Stephen Joyce, 23, of New York city, studied dramatics at the Fordham college. He plays the part of Okinawan interpreter Sakini, who always answers "yes, not sleeping" every time he is called. Although the role of an interpreter is the hardest of the entire cast since the interpreter has to be a link between the stage and the audience, Mr. Joyce’s acting is superb and this may be due to his previous experience gained through his participation in Shakespeare’s plays.

Mr. Paul Sevilla, 22, works as a radio announcer. He hails from New York, and majored in dramatics at a college for 4 years and has 2 years stage experience. He has been here for 4 months.

Mr. I.L. Savior, 26, comes from the Philippines and has been here since 1946 and he is naturally well acquainted with things Okinawan.

Mr. John Goolidge is in charge of stage settings and lights as the right hand man of director Glenn Q. Pierce.

Mr. Glen Pierce, 24, majored in dramatics at the Kansas University, Missouri, for 4 years.

Later he continued his study of dramatics at the University of New Mexico. He has produced and directed plays on stages in theaters of Albuquerque in New Mexico, so he is just the man for the job. He is slim and has a genial ready smile and says that nothing will please him better than to see his work being instrumental in promoting, even slightly, Ryukyu-an-American friendship.

Mrs. Pierce, who is in Albuquerque has also majored in dramatics and at present works for a television company, it was learned.
‘Teahouse of the August Moon’ Booms

By Cpl. Don Towles
NAHA, Okinawa, Mar. 20
(S&S)—A bit of ancient Okinawa can be found at a restaurant named after a smash Broadway hit.

The ‘Teahouse of the August Moon,’ opened in December, 1952, was named after Vern Snyder’s book of the same name and has become a popular entertainment spot for Americans on this Pacific island.

The colorful restaurant is owned by Eiko Uehara, who ran Okinawa’s No. 1 geisha house before the occupation. When American troops landed and the island fortress fell, Miss Uehara took a job with the U.S. forces.

In 1952, however, she bought the restaurant and started building it up. About that time, ‘August Moon,’ written by Snyder, who landed with the invading force, became popular.

The restaurant, one of the best known on Okinawa, was named after the novel from which the play was taken. Entertainers at the restaurant dress in Okinawan costumes such as the Kasuri dress, worn by the lady on the left and the entertainment costumes worn by Yukiko and the girl on the right. (S&S Photo)

AUTHENTIC ACTRESS—Yukiko Hama (center), who has been selected to play the part of a geisha in the forthcoming production in Okinawa of the play ‘Teahouse of the August Moon,’ is in real life a geisha at the Teahouse of the August Moon. The restaurant, one of the best known on Okinawa, was named after the novel from which the play was taken.

The star entertainer in the ‘Teahouse of the August Moon’ is attractive Yukiko Hama, who will enact the role of Lotus Blossom in the play which opens on Okinawa Apr. 21.

The restaurant, which caters almost exclusively to U.S. personnel, will accommodate 200 to 400 at a sitting, depending upon the arrangement of facilities. It is also used for special-occasion parties for Japanese and Okinawans.

Ed Potter, a native of Providence, R.I., manages the teahouse.
Tickets For 'Teahouse' Go On Sale Next Monday

Personnel on Okinawa have been anticipating the opening date of "Tea House of the August Moon" since the first announcement by Major General, Ryukyu Command, that permission has been granted to produce the Broadway hit comedy.

Under the sponsorship of the Ryukyuan-American Friendship committee and produced by the Rycom Special Services Entertainment workshop, the 25 member cast directed by Glenn Pierce, will open at the Sukiran Theatre April 21 at 8 pm. It has a scheduled run of seven performances — April 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25 — with a matinee on Saturday and Sunday at 2 pm.

The play will then move to the Lackland Theatre, opening April 28 and run through May 1 with a Saturday matinee. Next, the cast and production crew, will take the show to the Ernie Pyle Theatre in Naha for two performances daily, 2 pm and 8 pm on May 7, 8, and 9.

Tickets will be on sale starting April 5 at the Sukiran Theatre, Lackland Theatre, the Ernie Pyle Theatre in Naha, and the GRI (USCAR) Building in Naha.

All proceeds from the ticket sales will go to the Ryukyuan American Friendship Committee for one of its major projects, the rehabilitation of educational facilities for Ryukyuan children.

Tickets will be 300 yen or $2.50 for the opening night performance at the Sukiran Theatre; 120 yen or $1.00 for the remaining eleven performances scheduled at the Sukiran and Lackland Theatres, and 50 yen for the six present scheduled performances to be given at the Ernie Pyle Theatre in Naha.
An Authentic Touch

Okinawa Readies Own ‘Teahouse’ Production

OKINAWA, Apr. 16 (AFGE) — Theater history is being made on Okinawa this month as the island rendition of “Teahouse of the August Moon” is being prepared.

The unusual fact that the show is being presented here while it is still a tremendous success in New York is making the play the topic of many Okinawa conversations.

The Okinawans have shoul-dered the bulk of the responsi-bility for costume execution and scenery construction, as well as taking the greater share of the roles in this show.

Don’t Impress Movie Test

of a gorilla on the screen would have on a captive chimp. Just the sight of one of the larger beasts is supposedly enough to send any red-blooded chimp scurrying for a higher vine.

Bill, a roughneck of sorts, had to remain in his cage for the picture, but lady-like Susie was allowed to sit outside in a chair.

As the six minutes of gorilla scenes were shown, Susie co-operatively expressed her non-publicity polluted opinions on what was happening.

To prove that she wasn’t the least bit frightened by a mere shadow on a bedsheet, Susie jumped up and down and clapped her hands with joy as a hairy fellow on the screen curled his lips, pounded his chest and screamed in a fierce fashion.

No Interest

When humans appeared, Susie lost interest and began looking for something to do. Her attention was regained, however, when the sound of

PACIFIC STARS & STRIPES
16 APRIL 1954
Okinawa 'Teahouse' Hit Too

By JOE Peter Noyes

SUKIRAN, Okinawa, Apr. 25

(3&S8)—That theater-goers in New York and London are enjoying "Teahouse of the August Moon" cannot be doubted for the multitudes attending this island's rendition of the play have nothing but praise for the production.

John Patrick's breezy satire of the Army's initial attempts to bring democracy to Okinawa stepped into its original setting at Sukiran Theater here last Wednesday to begin a three-week run which has drawn capacity crowds so far.

Added Note

An extra note of authenticity was added to the first performance as Geisha girls from Okinawa's own "Teahouse," built here by enterprising residents in 1952 following the success of the book by Vern Sneider, served tea to the evening dress and dinner jacket first-nighters between acts.

The audience included Maj. Gen. A. D. Ogden, commanding general, Ryukyus Command, a generous native contingent and servicemen and their dependents, all of whom fell completely into the mood of the comedy-satire.

The audience sympathized as Col. Wainright III chewed out his subordinates, laughed at the flippant interpreter Sakini, and applauded a host of Okinawans who seem to have an innate ability to steal scenes and who portrayed the Okinawans in the production.

A/2c Glenn Pierce, Albuquerque, N.M., has given superb direction to the play. His meticulous care for small details produced a "Teahouse" which made a worthy attempt at professional finesses. Although the presentation was skillful, it was also ragged in spots. But if Pierce can smooth over the few ragged spots it won't be too difficult to understand why the critics have been almost universal in the opinion that "Teahouse" is the stand-out play of the 1954 season.

Critical Comment

One RyCom colonel summed up the reaction of the audience this way: "I merely laugh at a stage show. For 13 years, I was one of the most critical of audiences—a legitimate theater usher. But I couldn't help but laugh at the fresh and unusual humor in "Teahouse.""

Proceeding by 24 hours a similar showing in London, the island's rendition of "Teahouse" cast Abe R. Basset, Columbus, O., in the role of Capt. Fishby, whose job it was to indoctrinate the Ryukyans in the ways of democratic life. Though apparently experiencing opening night tension, Basset turned in a bit of talented acting.

The part of Sakini was brilliantly done by A/2c Stephen Joyce, New York. Stephen's surprisingly perfect Japanese was the highlight of the show. Lotus, the Geisha girl "gift" to Capt. Fishby, is given a sparkling rendition by Yukiko Hama, who in real life is a Geisha at the "Teahouse of the August Moon" built by locals.

Realistic Performer

PFC Paul Savior, New York, was a realistic performer portraying the psychiatrist sent to investigate Capt. Fishby after he throws caution and the rule book to the winds and "goes native." But the agriculture-inclined psychiatrist also "goes native."

Purdy, the colonel who says he will give the Okinawans democracy "even if I have to court-martial them," is given a bombastic performance by Robert Van Hook, a DAC from Denver, Colo.

Sgt. Gregovitch was played by A/2c Robert Wilson, New York, who did a nice job of falling into a vat of brandy.

The play is being staged free of royalties by permission of Maurice Evans, the New York producer who had even volunteered to pay for the sets. Proceeds will aid Ryukyan schools.

PACIFIC STARS & STRIPES
25 APRIL 1954
‘Teahouse’ Closes With $5,000 Clear

Tuesday, May 4, the final curtain fell on the Okinawa production of "Teahouse of the August Moon".

As the echoes of the hearty laughter and the thunderous applause faded, director Glenn C. Pierce added up the monetary gains, but found it impossible to calculate the pleasure and entertainment the 8,800 viewers gained.

He could total the $8,708.50 box office receipts, estimate the sale of cricket cages at $300, and programs at $700.

Pierce predicted that the Ryukyuan American Friendship Committee would receive over $5000 clear profit from the 16 performances of "Teahouse of the August Moon." (Rycom PIO)
**REHEARSAL PHOTOS**

L-R
MISS HIGA JIGA (TOYOKO TAKAMIYA)

SAKINI (STEPHEN JOYCE)

MR. HOKAIDA (CHOKI MAKABE)

L-R
MR. OSHIRO (GRILLERMO S. UMALI)

OLD WOMAN (KIYO FUNAKOSHI)

OLD WOMAN’S DAUGHTER (YOSHIKO “EMMY” OMIJA)

SAKINI (STEPHEN JOYCE)
L-R
ABE BASSETT (CAPTAIN FISBY)
PAUL SAVIOR
STEPHEN JOYCE
YUKIO HAMA
CHOKI MAKABE
NOZO MIYAGI
KADEKARU GINSEI
KIYO FUNAKOSHI
STEPHEN JOYCE
FRONT ROW
GEORGE MIYAGI
NOZO MIYAGI
GRILLERMO S. UMALI
KIYO FUNAKOSHI
EMMY OMIJA

BEHIND KIYO FUNAKOSHI IS TOYO TAKAMIYA

BACK ROW
CHOKI MAKABE
AL CABANERO
YUKIKO HAMA

CHOKI MAKABE (MR. HOKAIDA)
GRILLERMO S. UMALI
TEAHOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON

The beginning of prosperity for the rehabilitation, Okinawan village of Tobiki. Capt. Fisty (Abe Basset) (kimono-clad) is discovering the "kick" of the local brandy. Capt. McBeen, (left) (Paul Saviour) the wayward psychiatrist, has first tested the potent brandy on the favorite kid, Lady Astor.

US ARMY PHOTO BY PFC DAVID JACOBSON
KRYCOM SIGNAL SERVICE

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNLESS RELEASED BY A UNITED STATES ARMY PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER.
FROM THE BOOK “KICHI OKINAWA” PUBLISHED 1954

The Tea House of the August Moon, a comical portrayal of Okinawa under the occupation, was performed at an army theater in Kadena. (April 1954)

FROM THE BOOK “OKINAWA - 50 YEARS” PUBLISHED 1995
STEPHEN JOYCE

YUKIKO HAMA
ABE BASSETT (CAPT. FISBY)
PAUL SAVIOR (CAPT. MCLEAN)
ROBERT S. VAN HOOK (COL. PURDY)
ROBERT S. VAN HOOK (COL. PURDY)
ROBERT WILSON
SGT. GREGOVICH

SEIEI YAMASHIRO
JOE IPPOLITO

ACTORS AND CREW

IOHI YAMASHIRO

TECHNICAL CREW
Okinawan Hit Wows Okinawans

ARMY PUTS ON 'TEAHOUSE'
RIGHT WHERE IT BELONGS

Hundreds of thousands of people have been given delight by *The Teahouse of the August Moon*—as the novel written by Vern Sneider and as the play produced in New York and London. The delight came home to roost recently on Okinawa, the island that inspired the book in the first place, when the U.S. Army put on 15 performances of the play at Kadena Air Base. In the all-amateur production real soldiers played themselves, with slight switches in rank; real Okinawans played the natives; and a real geisha, Yukiko Hama, aged 25, played the geisha Lotus Blossom. Miss Hama sits and dances in the real Teahouse of the August Moon, which was built in 1952 and named after the imaginary teahouse of the book.

Everybody who saw the play, both soldiers and Okinawans, loved its satire on the Army’s initial attempts to bring minshushugi (democracy) to the people of Okinawa. This included Shukuri Higa, chief executive of the Ryukyu government, who commented, “I think it’s wonderful the way you Americans can laugh at yourselves.” But maybe the most wonderful thing about the show, which is full of talk about building a new schoolhouse, is that it raised some $5,000—to build a new schoolhouse.
OUTSIDE REAL TEAHOUSE  geisha girls, with Miss Hama in foreground, stand in the garden. Inside they sing, dance and converse with the guests.

KIMONOS, suitably labeled with name of teahouse, are kept for the guests to wear informally. Sitting beyond the teacups is Miss Hama, folding kimono.
HAPPY AUDIENCE laughs loudest at line, "We will teach the Okinawans the meaning of democracy if we have to court-martial every one of them."

BETWEEN ACTS in the lobby of the Service theater geisha girls from the real teahouse offered free jasmine tea to the spectators as goodwill gesture.

CRICKET CAGES were sold at theater by Ryukyu-American Friendship Society. Buyers had to catch own crickets, which Orientals consider lucky.
APPENDIX

TEA HOUSE AUGUST MOON
NAHA, OKINAWA - 1953
11X14 HAND COLORED PHOTOGRAPH
TEA HOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON
PLAY SCHEDULE

SUKIRAN THEATER - CAMP SUKIRAN
21 APRIL 1954 TO 25 APRIL 1954

LACKLAND THEATER - KADENA AIR BASE
27 APRIL 1954 TO 1 MAY 1954

A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE AND LETTER INDICATED THAT THERE WERE TO BE
PERFORMANCES AT THE ERNIE PYLE THEATER IN NAHA, BUT PER GLENN
PIERCE, THE DIRECTOR, THEY WERE CANCELED BECAUSE THE THEATER
STAGE COULD NOT ACCOMMODATE THE PRODUCTION

Sukiran recreation area (center), theater (left foreground).

LACKLAND THEATER - RENAMED KEYSTONE IN 1955
HOSTESSES FOR OPENING NIGHT FROM THE NAHA RESTAURANT AND TEA HOUSE AUGUST MOON

The Largest in Okinawa
For Your Social Gatherings

Restaurant Naha
Fumiko Uezu
Tel. Makishi 161
5 March 1954

Dear Mr. Jacobson:

In reply to your memo of 3 February 1954 I am pleased to make the following report on your production of "Teahouse of the August Moon".

Casting is almost complete and the principals have been selected. A few minor native roles remain to be filled and we are receiving wonderful cooperation from the Ryukyuans in assisting us to find the right people for these parts.

Enclosed you will find some pictures made at a recent rehearsal. Many rehearsals are being held in the "Teahouse of the August Noon", located in Naha, Okinawa. The director believes that this will help him cast to better understand and feel the roles they portray.

Our tentative plans are that the production will open in the Sukuran Theater, one of our post theaters, on Wednesday, 21 April and close on Sunday, 25 April. Matinees on Saturday and Sunday, open at the Lackland Theater, Okinawa Air Force Base on Tuesday, 27 April and close on Saturday, 1 May. Matinees on Saturday only. Open in a local Okinawan Theater on Monday, May 2 for five performances. We believe that this schedule will give all our American personnel and most of the interested Ryukyuans an opportunity to see the play. Admission will be 1.00 per person.

I have instructed my Public Information Officer to keep you informed of the progress made with our production. Pictures will be made at our first dress rehearsal and forwarded to you for placement.

If we can be of service to you at any time, please let me hear from you.

Sincerely,

[Inclu]

Photos

[Signature]

R. A. B. OGDEN
Major General, USA
Commanding

Mr. Col Jacobson
Press Representative
Teahouse of the August Moon
229 West 42nd Street
New York 36, New York
March 19, 1954

Dear Mr Jacobson;

General Ogden has called to my attention the correspondence he has initiated for your information and dissemination, and I have several things that might be of interest that his Public Information Office may not be able to cover.

The cooperation of the Armed Forces, civilian personnel and native businessmen and women has been complete from the first day of production. Without their help the show would have been difficult, to say the least. But overnight the Ryukyuan people in the entertainment business have come to my aid with a wealth of actors, actresses, artists and other theatre people anxious to help with the show.

The cast has complete representation from the island population. Two Air Force men, two Army men and a Department of the Army civilian take the only parts cast with our people. A Filipino boy and 18 Okinawans complete the cast. (There is no problem of finding extras. The island is full of them.)

Set construction and costume design and execution is being executed by Okinawans employed full time by the Rycom Special Services Entertainment Section. Our stage manager is also an Okinawan, as well as the major part of our art staff.

They've taken the show to heart, and share the Americans enthusiasm for the

A great many Ryukyuans have attended parts of the rehearsals and have been caught up completely in its humor. They seem to recognize the story as theirs, and have taken it to heart. They share the American's enthusiasm.
FROM THE DESK OF: Sol Jacobson
229 W. 42nd St.
New York 36, N. Y.

Dear General Ogden,

Would very much appreciate your wiring me the date of the opening of TEAHOUSE in Okinawa. Have alerted wire services here and they are anxious to send their representatives notification and instructions.

Best wishes,

/s/ Sol Jacobson
Maurice Evans

(Invitation attached to above note)

You are cordially invited to the opening of an Okinawan Folk Crafts Exhibit in the mezzanine of the Martin Beck Theatre at 302 West 45th Street on Tuesday, March 16th at 6 P.M. The exhibition assembled by the U. S. Army consists of lacquerware, pottery, textiles, paintings and photographs and is being shown by the American-Okinawan Friendship Committee. We hope you will be able to attend.

The Teahouse of the August Moon

Company