Chapter 7: THREE WOMEN

Saturday, December 18, 1943
Morning: coffee, toast
Lunch: bologna, salted cabbage, tea
Dinner: rice, salted and broiled mackerel, soup (nappa, carrots), apple pie, tea

This was the most food we’ve had since we moved into this stockade. Today marked the fifth week in the stockade. Since the authorities could not return all the food items they had confiscated during their camp search and seizure raids, the stockade prisoners were given two gallons of salted squid and one gallon of rakkyo (pickled onions). We doled out one rakkyo to each person. It was so tasty. I will never forget how tasty it was. Imagine, just one piece of rakkyo.

Two men were released but one man, similar to *Keisuke Tanimura, was returned to the stockade after a body search was conducted. *(In 1877, Saigo Takamori’s army surrounded Kumamoto Castle. The food supply of the government army stationed within the castle was depleted. General Tani sent Keisuke Tanimura out to ask for support. Tanimura disguised himself as a farmer and covertly got out of the castle. The enemy caught him several times but each time, he succeeded in escaping and was able to get troop support. Two days later, Tanimura was killed in the Battle of Tabaruzaka.)

Twelve more people were put into the stockade. Later, three more were placed. Around 11 p.m., an additional five men were put in. The stockade population rose sharply.

Total: 206.

We saw three women, under heavy guard. We asked the newcomers about them and wondered why the guard took them away. Apparently, the three women were insisting on being put into the stockade. In addition to the three women, several Japanese representatives came over to the barbed wire fence (besides the gate, there are two more fences). The women were saying, “Let me in.”

A sentry telephoned his superior, saying, “What should I do?”

One woman came to the gate with her children. She cried, “My husband did nothing wrong. Why did you arrest him? Release him immediately.”

Just past noon, we heard that Churchill had passed away. Since the American flag was flying half-mast, there was a lot of commotion among the men that this information must be true. I was not sure whether the news was true or not but surely, if the flag was lowered, there must be some truth to it. At roll call, someone asked the sergeant, “Is it true that Churchill kicked the bucket? If so, we are sorry.”

The sergeant responded, “I don’t know.” We found it funny that he hadn’t heard.
I was told that I talked in my sleep and that I said, “If it hurts, you shouldn’t do it.” The men teased me about this many times.