

Life On Japanese Island Compared To University Life By Student

Return To Family And Homeland Anticipated By Okinawan Following 1956 Graduation

"I'll see my family and homeland for the first time in four years when I graduate in 1956." University student Seichi Kashima, a native of Okinawa, explained his homeland is too far away to make the journey during the summer vacation months. Kashima, attending the University on a GARIOA (Government Account for Relief In Occupied Areas) grant said he found University life interesting although much different from life in Okinawa.

ON THE island, Kashima noted, the land is divided up differently from the state, county and city arrangement in the United States. Our island is divided into districts and the districts into villages, with each village having a population of about 1,000 persons, he added.

School courses on Okinawa are comparatively hard, Kashima said, and all young children are required to attend school until they are 16 years old.

"OF COURSE, school life is very different on Okinawa," Kashima explained. "There we have schools for boys and girls and there are no co-educational institutions. Also, there are no colleges or universities on the island, so most of the students go to Japan to attend university. "After the American occupation began," Kashima noted, "The GARIOA began sending a limited number of high school graduates to the United States. In the past there have been about 50 students a year who go to the USA for their college work, but the number has been cut considerably in recent years."

PRIOR TO the American invasion of Okinawa (a heavily defended Japanese base during the war) many families were sent to Japan, Kashima explained.

"I came back to Okinawa after three years of living in Japan," Kashima said, "and was shocked at the great changes the invasion had brought. The life in Japan wasn't bad while we were there, but we had to work very hard going to school and working on military installations."

KASHIMA SAID there are three other Okinawan students at the University now, Yoshinobu Harushima, Koken Kokubai, and Seiei Shimada. Kashima, majoring in mathematics and enrolled in Teacher's College says he intends to return to Okinawa and teach when he receives his degree.

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