



PROBATION  
VACATION

LOST

IN

ASIA





After hours of riding intercity trains, an overnight ferry and then more trains still, we finally arrived in Sapporo. We dropped our bags off at a hostel and directly went to check the metro system. While riding the lines we came across a two-train layup on the outskirts of the city. We would have to paint against a wall, but as the train would be one of the first to go into service in the morning we were sure to get good photos then.

By the time we finished painting, the area was desolate. There was no one in sight, much less any foreigners. We were out of place and we knew it, so we decided it would be best to look for somewhere low-key to wait until the metro started running.

As we made our way along the road that ran underneath the elevated metro line, we noticed a dim light up ahead. As it got brighter we realized it was a car, a police car to be more precise, slowly making its way towards us.

Knowing that if the police saw us they would most certainly stop, our eyes began darting around for places to hide. We weren't even half a mile away from the layup we had just painted and still had our cameras and spray paint on us, so when we looked to our left and saw a park behind a shoulder-height wall, we didn't hesitate. We quickly hopped over the wall and darted behind some trees. From a safe distance we watched as the police car slowly rolled past our hiding spot and continued on down the road. As we crouched down behind the trees we began to notice quite a few vehicles driving around in the park. Not wanting to have a run-in with park security we waited some minutes until the brightness of the cop car's tail lights faded into the distance to hop back over the wall.

As we continued walking down the road we could see another car approaching, this time a taxi. It pulled right up to us and a young woman stepped out. To this day we have no idea where this woman could have been going to at that hour or why she decided to get out of her taxi on that road,

right where we were walking. It was so totally random that we felt it must be a sign for us to get off of the road and into the cab.

Just as we were about to enter the cab, three military guards approached us, assault rifles drawn. They began to speak to us in Japanese and it was obvious that something was amiss. We quickly scanned the area for a place to run. The nearest cross street appeared like it might lead to a small residential area, but it was dark and we couldn't be sure. Besides, running and hiding in some Japanese person's backyard didn't seem like the best plan. The military guards continued to try to speak to us in Japanese, and we continued to reply in English that we had no idea what they were trying to say, but it was obvious they wanted us to go somewhere with them. Amid all this confusion we gave the paint, tools and memory cards to our camera man and threw him in the taxi with instructions to clean out the hostel. We could tell the military guards weren't sure if they should let him go, but we changed the subject by agreeing to go with them.

They took us back into the park and inside a building to a higher-ranking officer who spoke English. He asked us why we had invaded the base, and what our intentions were. We were unpleasantly surprised to find that we had hopped not into a local park, but rather the grounds of a military base. They began to quiz us on why we were in the area and what we were doing out at that hour of the night. We apologized, saying that we were drunk and didn't know that the metro closed so early, so we were just looking for a place to sleep until it started service again in the morning. Which actually wasn't too far from the truth, as we really didn't mean to 'invade' their base. Also, we pointed out the fence was quite small and therefore hardly secure enough to protect a military base. They agreed.

After a few hours of repeating the same answers to the same questions, the mili-



















