

Divine Wind

In Hiroshima, Japan, Minato Shurikin was born in 1920, the year of the Monkey, or '*Saru*'. Those born under the sign of *Saru* are said to be the erratic geniuses of the Zodiac cycle. They are clever and skillful in grand-scale operations and are smart when making financial deals. They are inventive, original and are able to solve the most difficult problems with ease. Also that year, American chemist William Draper Harkins postulated the existence of a subatomic particle, the neutron, a heavy particle of no electric charge; Robert Goddard worked with rockets. Minato's father and mother would have a brother and a sister for him very soon.

When Minato was one year old, in the year of the Rooster, or '*Tori*', Albert Einstein received a Nobel Prize in Science. Minato's brother Sota was born. Those who are born under the sign of *Tori* are deep thinkers and are always busy and devoted to their work. They always want to do more than they are able, and if they undertake a task beyond their abilities, they are disappointed. Rooster people have a habit of speaking out directly whenever they have something on their minds.

The next year was the year of the Dog, or '*Inu*'. Those born in the year of the Dog are said to have all the fine qualities of human nature. They have a sense of duty and loyalty; they are extremely honest and always do their best in their relationship with other people. Dog people inspire confidence in others and know how to keep secrets. That year, Mussolini marched on Rome, and formed a Fascist government; Neils Bohr received a Nobel Prize in Physics for investigation of structure of atoms and radiations emanating from them.

When Minato was 3, Adolf Hitler's 'Beer Hall Putsch' in Munich fails. Minato's new sister, Arai was born. It was the year of the Bear, or '*Inoshishi*', for people with tremendous inner strength which no one can overcome. They display great honesty. They are short-tempered, yet hate to quarrel or have arguments. They are affectionate and kind to their loved ones.

It was in 1924, the year of the rat, or '*nezumi*', when Minato was 4, a man named Adolf Hitler wrote '*Mein Kampf*'. Minato would learn that *Nezumi* are thought to be charming, honest, ambitious, and have a tremendous capacity for pursuing a course to its end. They will work hard for their goals. They are easily angered but maintain an outward show of control.

The next year, the year of the Ox, or '*ushi*', brings people who are patient, mentally alert and when required to speak are skillful. They have a gift for inspiring confidence in others. This allows them to achieve a great deal of success. During that year, Stalin begins his rule as Soviet dictator; John Baird transmits the first television image in London.

Minato turned six in the year of the Tiger, or '*tora*'. Those people are sensitive, stubborn, short-tempered, courageous, selfish and slightly mean ... yet they are deep thinkers and are capable of great sympathy for those they are close to and love. That year, Robert Goddard fired the first liquid fuel rocket; Emperor Shōwa, commonly known as Hirohito, assumed the throne in Japan.

During the next year, the year of the Rabbit or '*usagi*' is for the most fortunate. They are smooth talkers, talented, ambitious, virtuous and reserved. They have exceedingly fine taste and regarded with admiration and trust. In 1927, Charles Lindbergh made the first nonstop solo transatlantic flight.

Then in the year of the Dragon, or '*tatsu*', the Kellogg-Briand Pact, outlawing war, is signed in Paris by 65 nations, including Japan. *Tatsu* people are known to be healthy, energetic, excitable, short-tempered and stubborn. However, they are honest, sensitive, brave and can inspire trust in most anyone. They are the most peculiar of the 12 signs of the Zodiac cycle.

1929, the year of the Snake, or '*hebi*', and Minato was a bright boy of 9 who loved music and running around the neighborhood in Hiroshima with his friends, especially Hiroto and Ren. *Hebi* people are deep thinkers who speak very little and possess tremendous wisdom. They are fortunate in money matters and will always be able to obtain it. They are determined in what they do and hate to fail. That year, the U.S. stock market crashed, which began the Great Depression, almost 6,700 miles away from home.

During the year of the Horse or '*uma*' is for people skillful in paying compliments and talking too much. They are skillful with money and handle finances well. They are quick thinkers, wise and talented. Horse people anger easily and are very impatient. That year, unknown to 10-year-old Minato, Britain, U.S., Japan, France and Italy signed naval disarmament treaty.

In 1931, the year of the Sheep, or '*hitsuji*', Japan invaded Manchuria, China and Harold Urey discovered heavy water, water that contains deuterium, a rare hydrogen isotope that would be used one day for atomic weapons. *Hitsuji* are elegant, highly accomplished in the arts, passionate about nature. At first glance, they seem to be better off than the people born in other years. They are deeply religious and passionate in whatever they do and believe in.

Minato turned 12 as Japan failed to capture Shanghai; Nazis led in German elections; famine is widespread in USSR; physicists Sir John Douglas Cockcroft and Ernest Walton split the atom for the first time; the Nobel Prize in Physics went to Werner Heisenberg (Germany), for creation of the quantum mechanics. Minato's little street gang members are deciding their futures, and Minato wants to go to Upper School in Tokyo. He wants to study science.

Barely a teenager, Minato doesn't know about the Reichstag fire in Berlin or the beginning of Nazi terror; Hitler became German chancellor; Germany and Japan withdrew from the League of Nations.

Minato learned well – he liked to study, and he memorized facts easily. He was very good at mathematics and his teacher complimented him all the time. 14-year-old Minato experienced typhoon Muroto that year, and he was very scared. He asked the local Shinto priest for understanding, and that's how Minato learned about Japan's history, and how it was intertwined with famous typhoons of the past. "They are called '*Divine Wind*' for a reason: in 1274 and again in 1281, Kublai Khan's Mongol fleet was threatening Japan, and would have certainly conquered our land; but at just the right time, a typhoon rose up and crushed the invaders. The *Kamikaze*, or *Divine Wind* saved Japan, by timing and by great force. 4,000 ships with 140,000 men were swept away or captured. The way of the gods is not knowable by man," the ancient Shinto priest told him, "but the Mongols were aggressive conquerors, and the gods do not want such men to succeed. Try to find peace and understanding in your life, young Minato – that is the way of man – that is *Shinto*." Minato bowed low. He was very grateful for the *Divine Winds* that had helped Japan. In his heart, he hoped that he could get to know the way of the gods, and the *Divine Winds* more intimately. And in that year, the year of the Dog, Hitler became Führer; Enrico Fermi worked on the creation of new elements through the bombardment of uranium with neutrons, and the first man-made radioactive substance was created. Minato continued to attend the Shinto temple, and prayed for true understanding about the way of the gods, and the *Divine Wind*. The Shinto priest's words about aggressive conquerors would come into Minato's thoughts many, many times over the years.

Following that was the year of the Bear: Nazis repudiated the Versailles Treaty; Mussolini invaded Ethiopia; Nazis enacted the Nuremberg Laws against Jews to prevent 'racial pollution'; Heinrich Himmler

started a breeding program to produce an 'Aryan super race'; nylon was created; the Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded for the synthesis of new radioactive elements; and in Physics, for the discovery of the neutron. 15-year-old Minato heard about the war, but it was very far away, and he was busy studying at school.

Then, he turned 16, in the year of the Rat. Japan joined with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in signing the *Anti-Comintern Pact*; the Rome-Berlin Axis was proclaimed; a war between China and Japan began. He heard a lot about the war, which was now discussed everywhere in the busy sea port city of Hiroshima. Yui, one of the pretty girls from his school held his hand one afternoon, and looked down at her feet. Without saying a word, she stole Minato's heart.

In 1937, Japan invaded China, and conquered most of the coastal area; the U.S. gunboat *Panay* was sunk by the Japanese in Yangtze River; the dirigible *Hindenburg* exploded at Lakehurst, N.J., U.S.A. 17-year-old Minato started at the University of Tokyo. Every night, he thought about Yui.

Now he was 18 and it is the year of the Tiger. Japan battled Soviets in the Changkufeng Incident – with a Soviet victory; Hitler marched into Austria; Britain, France, and Italy agreed to let Germany partition Czechoslovakia; Nazis destroyed Jewish shops, homes, synagogues in *Kristallnacht* riots; 20,000-30,000 Jews were sent to concentration camps; Orson Welles broadcast his adaptation of H.G. Wells's *War of the Worlds*; the Nobel Prize in Physics went to Enrico Fermi (Italy) for identification of new radioactivity elements and discovery of nuclear reactions effected by slow neutrons. Japan was drafting young men for military service, but his professor talked to the leader of the Prefecture, and they bypassed Minato.

During the year of the Rabbit, he graduated. He was just 19, but his professor has never encountered such a keen mind. Young Minato wanted to work on the nuclear theories of Neils Bohr. While his professor pondered how to make that happen, Hitler proclaimed to German parliament that they should exterminate all European Jews; Germany and Italy announced the Rome-Berlin axis; Germany invaded Poland; occupied Bohemia and Moravia; World War II began; U.S. President Roosevelt proclaimed U.S. neutrality and declared a 'limited emergency'; Albert Einstein wrote a letter to Roosevelt regarding the possibility of using uranium to initiate a nuclear chain reaction, the fundamental process behind the atomic bomb.

Typhoon Guam hit during 1940. Also in the year of the Dragon, Minato married Yui. And around the globe, Britain introduced food rationing; Frank Sinatra has his singing debut with Tommy Dorsey's Orchestra; Auschwitz Concentration Camp was established; France fell to Nazi Germany; Japan occupied French Indo-China; Japan joined the Rome-Berlin Axis; Winston Churchill became Britain's Prime Minister; Hitler invaded Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Luxembourg; and the first McDonald's hamburger stand opened in Pasadena, California, 5,867 miles away from home.

In the year of the Snake, Professor Hyakada got approval for 21-year-old Minato to work on the super-secret atom project. Japanese agents stole some documents from Germans, who stole them from U.S. scientists – and Minato and a team of 6 was never allowed to leave the underground bunker under the University of Tokyo. He missed Yui, but 1941 was a very bad year for Japan – they bombed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii with shouts of "*Tora! Tora! Tora!*", but they don't notify the United States in time; Plutonium was first produced; the first U.S. commercial FM radio station went on the air in Nashville, Tennessee; the U.S. declared war on Japan; Japan occupied the Philippines, and the Dutch East Indies, Burma and Malaya; Germany attacked the Balkans and Russia; Glenn Seaborg and Edwin McMillan isolated plutonium, a fuel preferable to uranium for nuclear reactors. Yui brought new-born Yuuma to see her father, but she wasn't allowed access to his lab.

1942: the year of the Horse, came and so did typhoon Juliet and 9 other Divine Winds came; Minato and Yui have another beautiful daughter; Japanese troops occupied Kuala Lumpur and Manila; Japan

attacked Singapore, Burma, Ceylon, China; More than 120,000 Americans of Japanese descent were interred in the American West; The U.S. left the Philippines; a Japanese sub fired on an oil refinery in Ellwood, California; a small squadron of bombers, led by a pilot named Doolittle flew a raid on Tokyo; Nazi leaders attended the *Wannsee Conference* to coordinate the 'final solution to the Jewish question', the systematic genocide of Jews known as the Holocaust; the first self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction was accomplished by Enrico Fermi, Edward Teller and Leo Szilard at the University of Chicago; the U.S. began the *Manhattan Project*, to build the atomic bomb; Japan lost the Battle of Midway, a turning point in the Pacific war. More secret papers came into Minato's hands, and he clearly understood the destructive power of the U.S. device. He warned his professor, who couldn't do anything about it.

Three Divine Winds hit Japan in the year of the Sheep. Minato received his Ph.D. from the University of Tokyo, and his thesis was immediately classified *Top Secret*. His wife and children were put under constant surveillance; the Pentagon was completed; Americans landed at New Georgia and Bougainville, in the Soloman Islands – a short hop for Allied bombers.

1944, the year of the Monkey, and 24-year-old Minato was injured by flying debris from typhoon Cobra as he's working on the Japanese A-bomb prototype; Allied troops first set foot on Japanese territory; Japan lost the Battle of the Philippine Sea and Battle of Leyte Gulf; the first B-29 raid against Tokyo shocked Japan; Allies invaded Normandy on D-Day; the Battle of the Bulge began; Germans developed the V-2, the first true missile; the Nobel Prize in Chemistry went to Otto Hahn (Germany) for work on atomic fission. Minato dreamt of the day when a Japanese citizen would win it (he visualized himself as the winner).

Things were not going well for Japan in 1945, the year of the Rooster. Typhoons Ann, Betty, Connie, Doris, Nancy, Opal, Peggy, Edna, Eva, Queenie, Frances, Grace, Ruth, Susan, Tess, Helen, Ursula, Ida, Verna, Wanda, Jean, Kate, Louise, Marge, Yvonne, and Nora all boiled out of the Pacific, and some did great damage to Japan; Minato had secret hopes that the many Divine Winds would push the Allied aggressors back to sea. He was drafted on August 1 – and he and his friends were handed antique firearms, and put on a smelly old ship, pointed east. When they arrived at a small island, they were told "*Defend this island against the American invaders! The Emperor is counting on you.*" They were given 30 days' rations, and the troop ship left, but as it cleared the lagoon, they could see it get strafed time after time by low-flying aircraft. All eight Japanese soldiers looked at Minato for orders. He had 2 stripes, and they only had 1, but he didn't know what to say.

He looked at his map for the 10-hundredth time: it said Location 7 degrees North; 150 degrees West. Its name was *Vella Lavella*. It was a useless desert-like rock that had a heavily-damaged runway, and some old blown-up buildings. There were a couple of coconut trees. The squad members all knew that they'd be there for a while – they just didn't know how long 'a while' would be.

Also in the year of the Rooster, Tokyo was firebombed by 334 US B-29 *Superfortresses*; Hitler committed suicide; Germany surrendered; the Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded to Wolfgang Pauli (Austria) for work on atomic fissions; the Soviets invaded Manchuria. Two weeks after the arrival on *Vella*, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed with the U.S. weapons of death – Minato's friends and family members were all killed in a blast of heat from the splitting core of the atom; a few days later, Emperor Shōwa (Hirohito) surrendered; also, Manila was freed from Japanese control. Food rations on the island quickly spoiled from the heat and humidity, but Minato realized that fresh water was going to be the real problem, so they all dug holes in the sand and put salvaged pieces of scrap metal around the holes so that the early-morning dew could be collected – it was better than nothing. The days wore on, and the hot equatorial sun baked everyone. They all had a chance to try to climb the coconut trees, but they all failed with less and less dignity. They all realized how critical the food issue was, but there was no practical way to get the coconuts to fall, until they were ready to fall. They tried their ancient rifles, but

nobody had received training, so after 100 rounds were shot at the sky, they gave up. They drank sandy, tepid water for breakfast, lunch and dinner – but the rations were so sparse that they all groaned in agony.

In the year of the dog, Minato was 26, and he was in charge of a squad of untrained soldiers on a piece of rock in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. He learned about *Divine Wind* that year, as typhoons Barbara, Charlotte, Dolly, Elinor, Ginny, Ingrid, Janie, Lilly, Maggie, Opal, Priscilla, Querida, Alma, Betty and Dianne formed in the Pacific and blasted around like pool balls on a lop-sided table. On many nights, Minato prayed that the Divine Winds would sweep aside the invaders. Two of his men died of starvation. Lacking any communications to the outside world, he didn't hear Emperor Hirohito's announcement "*I am not a god*"; the Japanese Diet (legislature) was formed. Nobody sent him a letter, explaining that Japan's war was over. Nobody told him that 2 weeks after he was drafted, the Emperor capitulated. Nobody told him that his Ph.D. thesis on atomic research was perfectly valid, but a little late, since the U.S. solved the problem of E and m and c-squared, first. Nobody told him that the price of atomic fission was Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and then his family, and his Emperor, and finally his country.

The year of the Bear brought typhoons Anna, Berneda, Carol, Donna, Eileen, Faith, Gwen, Helena, Inez, Joyce, Kathleen, Laura, Mildred, Nanette, Olive, Pauline, Rosalind, Alice, Beatrice, Cathy, Dora, Elnora, Flora, Gladys, Hannah, Irene, Jean, May 1, May 2 and May 3 to plague *Vella*. Minato prayed fervently that the invading U.S. troops would be slammed into the depths of the Pacific Ocean. Japan formed a Constitutional democracy; the microwave oven was invented by Percy Spencer (US); a transistor was invented in the U.S.; a UFO landed in Roswell, New Mexico, or was it an experimental high-altitude surveillance balloon from the top-secret Mogul program? No matter – finally, after 2 years of near-starvation, Minato realized that no further help was coming. His long-time friend Hiroto died when Typhoon Nanette blew a coconut down from the only remaining tree and cracked his skull. It was not the first time that Minato cursed the gods and the Divine Winds, just the most sincere.

In 1948, the year of the Rat, typhoons Karen, Lana, Mabel, Nadine, Ophelia, Peral, Rose, Annabell, Bertha, Chris, Dolores, Eunice, Flo, Gestrude, Hazel, Ione, Jackie, Kit, Libby, Martha, Norma, Olga, Pat, Rita, Agnes and Beverly convinced Minato that the Shinto priest's idea of *Divine Wind* was not right – typhoons, he realized, were just a plague. Back home, Japanese premier Hideki Tojo was sentenced to death by war crimes tribunal; the Nation of Israel was proclaimed; the Berlin Airlift occurred; and Edwin Land (US) invented the Polaroid Land Camera.

The year of the Ox brought typhoons Carmen, Della, Elaine, Faye, Gloria, Hester, Irma, Judith, Kitty, Lise, Madeline, Nelly, Omelia, Patricia, Rena, Allyn, Betty and Camilla; the Soviet Union began testing atomic weapons. Minato stopped praying to the gods one day – perhaps he knew that Japan was impotent against the invaders, or perhaps he'd lived through so many Divine Winds that he just couldn't stand it anymore.

The year of the Tiger brought super-typhoon Doris, and then Elsie, Flossie, Grace, Helene, Ida, Jane, Kezia, Lucretia, Missatha, Nancy, Ossia, Petie, Ruby, Anita, Billie, Clara, Delilah, Ellen and Fran. Doris brought quite a gift – a ship foundered because of the storm, and then fell on its side, and got stuck on top of the reef, about a mile off of *Vella*. Minato's squad quickly swam out to the ship to help the survivors, but there weren't any. Almost instantly, they realized that the remains of the survivors had been eaten by sharks; and worse yet – the sharks were still in the water. They raced back to *Vella* as fast as they could, and they all cried tears of terror when they hit the beach. "Let's build a raft," Minato commanded. "There's food and supplies on that ship that we absolutely must have. *Come on!*"

They fabricated a huge raft out of rotten palm trees, and then they paddled it out to the overturned ship. They stripped out everything that they could carry in one trip, and headed back. Before they could return for more, the ship cracked in half and was gone into the blue depths. In other parts of the world, the Korean War began; Communist Chinese forces invaded Tibet; Truman ordered development of a hydrogen bomb; the first Xerox machine was produced; the first self-service elevator was installed in Dallas.

1951, the year of the Rabbit brought more typhoons to bash *Vella*. Elsewhere, Japan signed a peace treaty with 48 countries; Seoul (South Korea) fell to Communist forces, and then to US-led UN troops; Seaborg and McMillan (US) received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Typhoon Kate killed another squad member, but brought another ship, which they quickly ransacked, while carefully avoiding the sharks.

The year of the Dragon was filled with typhoons, including Charlotte, Dinah, Emma, Freda, Gilda, Harriet, Ivy, Jeanne, Karen, Lois, Mary, Nona, Olive, Polly, Rose, Shirley, Trix, Vae, Wilma, Agnes, Bess, Carmen, Della, Elaine, Faye, Gloria and Hester. Final ratification of a peace treaty, restoring sovereignty to Japan, was signed; Britain announced its development of atomic weapons; U.S. exploded its first thermonuclear bomb at Enewetak Island, 1,381 miles north; Jonas E. Salk (US) developed a safe polio vaccine.

Minato, now 33, used the year of the Snake to dig pits for the remaining supplies. A Korean armistice was signed; Moscow exploded a hydrogen bomb; DNA was discovered.

In the year of the Horse, more typhoons – Minato just curses the *Divine Wind* of his ancestors every day now. The first atomic submarine, USS Nautilus was commissioned; Boeing tested the 707, the first jet-powered transport plane. Late in December, when he saw a high-flying silver dot, leaving white trails behind, he realized that the war is most certainly over. He missed his wife and children, but he cried because he couldn't remember their faces.

1955, the year of the Sheep brought more *Divine Wind*, and the Soviet Union and seven East European countries signed the Warsaw Pact. Minato's squad is thin, but alive. They get sick easily, and they've all lost their teeth due to scurvy.

The year of the Monkey is the same on *Vella*. Somewhere far away, a American B-47, carrying a hydrogen bomb disappeared. Minato knew that he was born in the year of the Monkey, but he still wondered what that had to do with anything.

Minato turned 37 and faced another typhoon season. Russia launched Sputnik I, the first earth-orbiting satellite, and then it tested its first successful ICBM. One night, Minato was awakened by one of his men, who pointed at a fast-moving dot of light in the pure-black sky. That is the night that Minato knew for sure that the war was over. Nobody sent him a letter explaining satellites, and how they orbited earth – soon the heavens would be full of them.

The year of the Dog brought many typhoons, and 8 super-typhoons. In Georgia, in the United States, a mid-air collision near Tybee Island brought down a B-47, carrying a Mark 15 nuclear bomb. Minato cursed the many super-typhoons and he cursed the U.S. for making war on Japan. Finally, Minato cursed Japan, for abandoning him and his squad on *Vella*.

As if in response to his cursing, the 1959 Pacific typhoon season was regarded as one of the most devastating years for Pacific typhoons on record, with China, Japan and the Philippines sustaining catastrophic losses; the Vietnam War began; typhoon Vera scoured *Vella* bare; Fidel Castro assumed power in Cuba.

In the year of the Rat, there were 900 U.S. military advisors in South Vietnam. Minato turned 40, but he looked and felt 80.

1961, the year of the Ox, typhoon Nancy blasted *Vella*; East Germany erected the Berlin Wall; USSR detonated a 50-megaton hydrogen bomb; the first man orbited the Earth - Yuri A. Gagarin, a mild-mannered Soviet citizen was successful.

The year of the Tiger saw super-typhoon Karen and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Minato felt alone, more alone than any man on the planet.

During the year of the Rabbit, a Washington-to-Moscow 'hot line' communications link opened; U.S. President Kennedy was shot and killed 7,500 miles away in Dallas, Texas.

It was the year of the Dragon when the Olympic Games were held in Tokyo; the U.S. Congress approved the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution; China detonated its first atomic bomb.

The year of the Snake – Minato is 45. The first U.S. combat troops arrived in Vietnam.

In 1966, the first episode of Star Trek was broadcast. Minato had enough trouble with the typhoons that year to last a lifetime (Scotty would have told him that his plight was impossible).

China exploded its first hydrogen bomb in the year of the Sheep. Elsewhere, The MIRV (Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle), which allows one missile to carry several nuclear warheads, was developed; the first successful human heart transplant was performed.

And in the year of the Monkey, North Korea seized the U.S. Navy ship *Pueblo*; the North Vietnamese launched the *Tet* Offensive, the turning point in the Vietnam War; Martin Luther King, Jr., civil rights leader, was slain in Memphis, Tennessee; Senator Robert F. Kennedy was shot and killed. There were only 4 squad members left. Minato had thought long and hard about being born in the year of the Monkey, and the meaning of the childhood verses about each of the animals eluded him – what did monkeys have to do with it, anyway?

1969, the year of the Rooster and U.S., USSR and 100 other countries signed a nuclear nonproliferation treaty; Americans walked on the moon.

It was the year of the Dog, and Minato was 50, and feeling 150. U.S. troops invaded Cambodia; the Beatles broke up; bar codes were introduced for retail and industrial use in England; IBM introduced the floppy disk. It was another year of typhoon terror on *Vella*.

In 1971, the year of the Bear, Intel introduced the microprocessor. Another ship slammed into the outer barrier reef, providing much-needed supplies to the starving few.

The year of the Rat and typhoon Helen vomited up another ship onto *Vella*; electronic mail was introduced; the last manned moon landing returned to Earth.

In the year of the Ox, the U.S. signed a ceasefire, ending involvement of American ground troops in Vietnam; Skylab was launched. Every few weeks, in the perfect velvet darkness of the mid-Pacific island of *Vella*, a few ancient Japanese men saw the fast-moving star, far, far overhead, but they had no comprehension of its true meaning.

In 1974, the year of the Tiger, India successfully tested an atomic device, becoming the world's sixth nuclear power; there was a political scandal called Watergate; U.S. President Nixon resigned.

During the year of the Rabbit, the Vietnam War ended; home videotape systems (VCRs) were developed in Japan.

When Minato turned 55, in the year of the Rabbit, Viking I landed on Mars. During the next 15 years, far, far away from *Vella*, a long string of events occurred: typhoon Babe; the neutron bomb was developed; Lasers were first used to initiate a fusion reaction; a fusion reaction in a reactor at Princeton reached 60 million degrees Fahrenheit; typhoon Tip; nuclear power plant accident at Three Mile Island released radiation; Voyager I reached Saturn; IBM introduced its first personal computer; Honda opened its first plant in the U.S.; typhoon Ken; typhoon Bess; typhoon Judy; space shuttle Columbia deployed 2 communications satellites; typhoon Forrest; a South Korean Boeing 747 was shot down by a Soviet fighter – all 269 aboard were killed; cell phones were first deployed in Chicago; Toxic gas leaked from a Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India, killing 2,000 and injuring 150,000; Apple introduced the user-friendly Macintosh personal computer; British scientists reported the opening of an enormous hole in the earth's ozone layer over Antarctica; a major nuclear accident occurred at the Soviet Union's Chernobyl power station; the Voyager 2 probe passed Uranus; Klaus Barbie, 73, Gestapo wartime chief was sentenced to life in prison for war crimes; a Pan-Am 747 exploded from a terrorist bomb and crashed in Lockerbie, Scotland; Emperor Shōwa/Hirohito died; typhoon Judy; Tens of thousands of Chinese students took over Beijing's Tiananmen Square in a rally for democracy; leaders took a hard-line toward demonstrators; the Berlin Wall was opened to the West; the first World Wide Web server and browser were developed; Voyager 2 sped by Neptune; two Japanese soldiers surrendered in Thailand – the world reacted in awe; and then there was a sighting, possibly of Japanese holdouts near Vorombare Bay, on *Vella Lavella*, but it was unconfirmed, so the world yawned and moved on.

In 1990, the year of the Horse, Minato celebrated his 70th birthday. He was gaunt, sun-tanned, ancient-looking (and toothless). His squad celebrated their long life. They all cursed the *Divine Winds* – the typhoons.

From then until his death in the year of the Sheep, the world kept spinning. Of all the things that happened, Minato knew most abundantly about the *Divine Winds*. Typhoon Flo; East and West Germany reunited; typhoon Mireille; break up of Soviet Union and formation of Commonwealth of Independent States; leak of radioactive water caused a nuclear plant 220 miles west of Tokyo to release about 8% of the plant's annual radioactive emissions in a single day; Formal end to the Cold War was declared; typhoon Yancy; China broke nuclear test moratorium; U.S. sent forces to the Persian Gulf; Russians attacked secessionist Republic of Chechnya; an Earthquake in central Japan killed thousands; typhoon Oscar; Nerve gas attack in Tokyo subway killed 8 and injured thousands; France exploded a nuclear device in the Pacific; super-typhoon Herb; typhoon Oliwa; U.S. spacecraft began exploration of Mars; Mother Theresa died; India conducted 3 atomic tests; Pakistan staged 5 nuclear tests; typhoon Bart; the first human hand transplant in the U.S.; typhoon Kirogi; typhoon Prapiroon; typhoon Saomai; Hideki Shirakawa (Japan) won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry; the human genome was deciphered; U.S. spy plane and Chinese jet collided; Ryoji Noyori (Japan) won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry; tropical storm Vamei; typhoon Higos; typhoon Rusa; typhoon Sinlaku; typhoon Chataan; typhoon Pongsona; North Korea admitted to developing nuclear arms in defiance of treaty; Koichi Tanaka (Japan) won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry; Masatoshi Koshihara (Japan) won the Nobel Prize in Physics; typhoon Imbudo; typhoon Etau; typhoon Kujira; tropical storm Linfa; typhoon Maemi; typhoon Soudelor; North Korea withdrew from nonproliferation treaty; the International Atomic Energy Agency discovered Iran's concealed nuclear activities; space shuttle Columbia exploded, killing all 7 astronauts; typhoon Conson; typhoon Dianmu; typhoon Nida; typhoon Sudai; typhoon Rananim; Pakistan admitted that they sold nuclear weapons designs to North Korea, Iran and Lybia; typhoon Haitang; typhoon Longwang; typhoon Matsa; typhoon Nabi; typhoon Maria; typhoon Ewinari; typhoon Shanshan; typhoon Soulik; tropical storm Wukong; tropical storm Bilis; typhoon Yagi; typhoon Chanchu; typhoon Saomai; typhoon Xangsane; typhoon Durian; North Korea exploded a nuclear device; India test-launched a missile with a range of 1,800 miles; typhoon Nari; tropical storm Faxai; typhoon Fitow; typhoon Wipha; Japanese prime

minister resigned due to scandals; typhoon Jangmi; typhoon Rammasun; typhoon Sinlaku; two Japanese scientists received Nobel Prize in Physics; typhoon Melor; typhoon Morakot; typhoon Ketsana; typhoon Parma; NASA spacecraft discovered water on the moon; typhoon Kompasu; typhoon Fanapi; the 4th Japanese prime minister in 4 years resigned; A Japanese chemist won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry; typhoon Muifa; tropical storm Aere; typhoon Ma-on; tropical storm Washi; Japan was hit by earthquake that triggers 23-foot tsunami, causing cooling systems at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station to fail, causing a nuclear crisis; typhoon Bolaven; typhoon Damrey; typhoon Guchol; typhoon Haikui; typhoon Jelawat; typhoon Sanba; typhoon Saola; typhoon Bopha; North Korea successfully launched a rocket into orbit, inching closer to ICBM capability; typhoon Soulik; typhoon Fitow; typhoon Wipha; typhoon Utor; typhoon Haiyah; North Korea detonated its 3rd nuclear bomb; a magnitude 6.7 earthquake hit north of Okinawa. Minato cursed and shook his thin brown fist at each of the divine winds loudly, and with great fervor.

Minato Shurikin, Ph.D., age 95, an unpaid Corporal in the Japanese Imperial Army was the last soldier of Japan's Great War. Born in the year of the Monkey, he died in the year of the Sheep on Vella Lavella, a small island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, where U.S. Marine Fighter Squadron VMF 214, the *Black Sheep*, under Colonel "Pappy" Boyington was based, only a couple of years before Minato arrived.

He would have understood the statistics of the war: that Japanese military lost 2.1 million young men, mostly in 1945, the year he was marooned on *Vella*. Starvation or malnutrition-related illnesses were responsible for 80 percent of Japanese military deaths in the Philippines, and half the military fatalities in China. American bombardment caused possibly 600,000 civilian deaths. During that awful winter of 1945, civilian deaths among Japanese citizens attempting to return to home from Manchuria probably approached 100,000, and around 600,000 soldiers were held for two to four years in forced-labor camps in Siberia.

As a huge wave from super typhoon Barb picked him up and slammed his ancient body into the stump of the coconut palm tree that had split Hiroto's skull, a knowing light came into his eyes. In the fullness of time, he truly understood what the old Shinto priest meant about the way of the gods and the *Divine Wind*.