

SYNOPSIS

Japanese by Spring is about a black lecturer, Benjamin 'Chappie' Puttbutt, who was lust for his tenure in Humanity department of a white academy, Jack London College. While enrolled in Air Force Academy, he was studying Japanese since he had read that Japan would become a future world power. However, it was not for a long time. Chappie was expelled when he was suspected in organizing some blacks in Black Panther movement. It prevented him from finishing Japanese.

Chappie's journey of life, moreover, was exactly started when he finally settled at the English department at Jack London College. As a military brat, Chappie knew how to play the 'tenure game'. He did not have to use violence. He joined whatever side that could lead him close to his tenure. He had adopted feminist perspectives, written articles opposing the affirmative action, and frequently stated that the black's misery is because their own fault. He needed the other minorities' support and the white's attention.

Consequently, all of his opportunistic actions were causing pros and cons in the academy. Almost all of his colleagues hated him. His black colleagues regarded him as a chameleon-like betrayer. On the other hand, being a white defender did not mean that his white colleagues would accept him. Even Dr. Crabtree, a white-minded lecturer, never spoke to him and Dr. Charles Obi, a chairperson of African American department, mocked him. Chappie only got attention from Marsha Marx of Women's Studies but not for a long time. However, his tenured was denied.

But not long after that, Jack London College was bought by the Japanese elites and they became the new president. The Japanese man, Dr. Yamato, was Chappie's former Japanese teacher. Magically, Chappie became the second man in campus. This position made him gain full authority. He fired some professors that hate him. He even demanded Dr. Crabtree, the most Eurocentric professor, to teach Yoruban language. On Dr. Yamato's manner, the campus experienced what so called the air of Japan. He changed Jack London College into Hideko Tojo No Daigaku. Then, the European Studies was merged with the Ethnic Studies department and renamed as 'Bangaku' or 'Barbaric Studies'.

Nevertheless, the Japanese chauvinistic attitudes brought Chappie into his own consciousness. He felt that it was not right somehow. Then, with other lectures that were against Dr. Yamato organized to have him stop monopolizing the academy. However, it had not finished yet when Chappie's father came to inform him that Dr. Yamato was a criminal. It made him realize that power gave nothing at the end. At last, Oakland Hills, his dream house, was on fire and he had to be evacuated.

The story ends with the epilog by Ishmael Reed. He told about a party, which was attended by some professionals with different life background. In that party, various cultures were gathered and performed. There, Dr. Crabtree led a song of praise Olódùmaré, Owner of Heaven in Yoruban tradition. That multicultural party has drawn a thought that every one's culture deserves to be freely expressed, not extremely or as dominant over others.

