

PART II

REMARKS ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN JAPAN

Austin M. Brues and Paul S. Henshaw

15 January 1947

The Commission has also had occasion to deal with the Economic and Scientific Section (ESS) of SCAP, since it must work with Japanese scientists.

RELATION TO THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT - The divisions of SCAP do not deal directly with the Japanese people, but work with their parallel divisions of the Japanese government (in this case, the Ministry of Welfare). The Minister of Welfare and his subordinates are, therefore, frequent visitors at the Public Health and Welfare Division of SCAP. It is the policy of SCAP to try to get the Japanese on their feet as soon as possible and to allow the Japanese government as much autonomy as possible. Therefore, SCAP tries to avoid issuing directives to the Japanese government, but rather makes recommendations which are the basis of directives by the Japanese ministries. The reason for this is that the war-weary Japanese tended, early in the occupation, to avoid responsibility and let the occupying forces take care of them. General MacArthur's policy is to avoid this situation at all costs. This policy leads to certain small complications when there is a particular job to be done, but it seems to be unanimously agreed that the overall results of this policy are excellent and that it should be maintained until (as a result of its own efforts) SCAP is no longer necessary.

SCAP AND THE JAPANESE NATIONAL ECONOMY - In accordance with SCAP policy, a minimum amount of material aid is given the Japanese government. Thus, penicillin is being withheld from the Japanese, although all aid is given them in planning for its large-scale manufacture. This is said not to be done in a spirit of vindictiveness but in order to ensure that the Japanese commence large-scale manufacture at the earliest moment.

In carrying out its functions, SCAP makes use when possible of Japanese personnel and materials. Cost of materials and labor are charged off as cost of occupation. This is distinguished from reparations, which are materials taken as costs of war and distributed largely to China and Russia. Where personnel and materials of American origin are used, they are paid for out of SCAP's budget, and hence it is impossible at present for an independently financed American organization to operate in Japan. The only exception to this is certain missionary groups, which are required to act wholly on their own, getting Japanese food, housing and supplies. SCAP appears willing, however, to support in a substantial way any important project in Japan.

---

The ensuing discussions represent a picture formed as the result of many contacts, American and Japanese, high and low, and opinions are expressed only where there is a great measure of agreement among different sources.

LIFE IN JAPAN - The Japanese are said to have the highest standard of living in the Orient, but it is very low according to our standards and also in comparison with that in Japan before the war. Over half of the houses have been destroyed in many communities, and wood for reconstruction is short. Also, many of the best buildings and houses have been offered us by the Japanese government for use in the occupation. A man

can easily carry his winter's supply of charcoal home from the ration depot in his hands. Where windows have been broken, no glass is available for repair. Sand, of course, is available to make glass, but there is no heat. Many men (including some prominent individuals) wear used Army clothing and canvas shoes). A little gasoline is available, but most Japanese trucks and busses are fitted with charcoal burners which feed carbon monoxide to the carburetors.

FOOD - Although every available square foot of tillable soil is utilized, food, especially rice, is strictly rationed. It is due in a large measure to the necessity for conserving food that Allied personnel are excluded from Japanese restaurants and hotels. The railroads are tremendously overcrowded with Japanese travelers, most of whom are traveling from the city to the country to get food for their own use, or from the country to the city to sell it on the black market. Two dogs and no horses were seen in six weeks; a few oxen are used to carry burdens in rural districts.

There is no gross evidence of malnutrition among the Japanese, but it seems probable that subclinical deficiency states are common. This is suggested by the mild anemias in such control population as have been observed. The markets show dried squid and octopus meat. Garbage cans containing the scrapings from infected animal cages in the American medical laboratories must be kept locked to keep hungry Japanese from stealing scraps of vegetables, etc., and using them for food.

ECONOMICS - A moderate inflation is under way in Japan. The yen, which was worth about 50 cents before the war, has been pegged at 15 to the dollar, with purchase of yen permitted but sale prohibited. It is said that yen can be obtained in many places at the rate of 50 or 60 to the dollar, and it is not clear what becomes of the dollars used in their purchase, as they cannot be spent in Japan. Comparison of prices of various standard articles suggests that the true equivalence is 75 to 100 yen to the dollar.

As in other occupied countries, American cigarettes are greatly in demand, much more so than food. Consideration of the price of Japanese cigarettes (3 yen each) and frequent rumors indicates that a carton of cigarettes would, if illegally sold, yield 400 to 500 yen.

HOSPITALS - The Japanese economic situation is epitomized in the hospitals. They are unheated except for one or two charcoal pots burning a few fragments of charcoal in each ward; the limited coal ration is devoted to sterilizing. Many windows are broken, and there is no glass for repairs, so that cold air blows through the corridors and down some wards and clinics. Radiators were removed for scrap metal during the war, but generally have been left rusting in the hospital yard.

Due to scarcity and rationing of food, no central kitchen facilities are available, so that families of patients bring in their rations and heat them over the charcoal pots, and also feed the patients. The floors, linen, etc., are usually dirty; this may in part be due to the shortage of soap, although no entirely satisfactory explanation was found.

ATTITUDE OF JAPANESE TOWARD THE WAR - It is a commonplace among Japanese that the war was a good thing. The explanation, given by many

Japanese of all ages and types, standing among the ruins, is essentially simple: the unsuccessful war eliminated certain social nuisances and created certain reforms which could never have happened in any other way. This seems to be the opinion in all classes except those close to the Zaibatsu (feudal lords).

The position of the emperor is paradoxical. It is recognized that either (1) he used poor judgment in allowing the war to continue or (2) he was not properly informed as to the military situation. But the emperor is not expected to be a statesman but rather is a symbol, a role he fills well.

The position of Americans, from number one down, appears on the surface to be very secure. They appear to be, if not honored by the Japanese, at least respected. The commander of the Kure Naval Base, in charge of scrapping of Japanese warships, is a single officer aided by a staff of ex-naval officers of the Japanese navy, who have said that it is an honor to work with an organization which proved itself better than the best organization in Japan - its navy. The Japanese scientists appear eager to learn what they can about American methods and recent literature. Although there is no such thing as a "good" occupation, it is generally believed that the present occupation is as nearly good as one can be, partly due to the Japanese temperament and partly to the way in which the occupation has been handled, and that if present causes are followed and extended and if occupation funds are not cut or withdrawn, it is certain that the Japanese can become our strongest ally in what is a strategic part of the world.

THE PURGE - This represents the removal from public offices of all sorts, those Japanese who were closely allied with military activity and with the feudal overlords. Dr. Tsuzuki, who is a key figure in the Japanese Atomic Bomb Casualty Study, has been placed on the purge list and therefore, had to resign his position as Professor of Surgery at the Tokyo Imperial University January first because of military service. Whether he will be allowed to continue collaboration with SCAP is in doubt; although SCAP may be willing to encourage this, the more or less autonomous Japanese government is less inclined to allow liberal exceptions of this sort.

THE JAPANESE TEMPERAMENT - Japanese are polite (but with less elaborate formality, probably, than before the war). They are fatalistic about the war, which is only another of many disasters to which the Japanese are accustomed. Yet they are not stolid, but are a spirited people with a good sense of humor and much intelligence. It is interesting to see the almost universal reaction of men who 18-24 months ago were shooting and being shot by Japanese. These men appear to share this recognition of the Japanese character which is also held by those "feather merchants" in the occupation who have observed the Japanese only recently, arriving in the wake of the victors.

"Every Japanese must have a master," it is said. During the war, the master was the Army, which engineered the war against the better judgment of the navy. The master, now, is MacArthur and the SCAP organization, which is attempting to remove itself from this position without leaving a successor or a vacuum. The question of whether the Japanese can govern themselves remains to be seen, and may lie with the coming generation. If

they do learn to govern themselves, they will no doubt do it with wisdom, as the lawmakers will probably follow the will of the people with a care not seen anywhere else.

Babies and young children hardly ever cry, although in other respects they are spirited. The reason for this cannot be given.

The relations between men and women are somewhat unusual from the standpoint of an American. The husband is the unquestioned ruler of the household. In the case of a widow with no sons, the eldest daughter is legally completely responsible for the family, unless one daughter is married, in which case she, and the rest of her family, are subservient to her husband. The wife may occupy the position of a drudge, or may occupy place number one with her husband, as the case may be. In the former case, the man usually cuts a much wider and shallower swath than is usual in other countries, with a resulting high incidence of social diseases. This may even have some influence on the high tuberculosis rate. The possibility of congenital luetic children and stillbirths may become an important part of a genetic study. It has been considered that if children were educated in coeducational schools, which have never existed even for the lower grades, this might help to foster a new social relationship. Some of the SC'P members believe that this would represent undue interference by the occupation, and it is one of the few instances where SCAP has attempted something not given complete Japanese acceptance.

Marriages are still commonly arranged by parents, who investigate one another's families with great care. Since vital statistics records are open to the public, this is thought to influence the reporting of abnormal and stillbirths.

In the past century, western civilization has made a heavy impact on the ancient civilization of Japan. Since the war, Japan is ready for a deeper influence. Where this new social impact will be derived, is not yet known; America is certainly in an excellent position to exert it. No doubt other ideologies are at work; although they are not seen, they must be recognized. We must bear in mind that many of the sincere efforts in Japan are hampered by lack of support and by the manning of Japan by young American soldiers who have hardly learned the significance of their own system beyond the full dinner-pail. More attention should be paid to providing adequate communications for the military government. The occupation of Japan may well turn out to be, although eminently peaceful, one of the decisive battles of the world.