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THE PROGRESS OF URBAN SOCIAL WELFARE WORK IN JAPAN.

By YONOSUKE NAKAGAWA

INTRODUCTION

By urban social welfare work is here meant public social work of various kinds carried on by municipalities, and accordingly the present article is not concerned with social welfare work which is under either State or private management. It was not until 1918 that the term "social work" (*shakai jigyo*) came into official use in Japan. Charity and relief work, as social welfare work was formerly called, has a long history, however. The *Taihoryo*, a statute promulgated in the reign of the Emperor Mommu (in 701 A.D.), already contained provisions bearing on such undertakings. In the more modern days of the Tokugawa Shogunate, each clan had a fairly advanced relief system. The social welfare work dealt with in the present article refers to that in the period following to the Restoration—a period in which social welfare work, influenced by the development of capitalism, assumed unprecedented dimensions and importance.

1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN URBAN DISTRICTS.

In the Restoration days, it was chiefly in Tokyo and Osaka that urban social problems arose, but as it was immediately after the collapse of the feudal system and capitalism had not yet been developed in Japan, urban problems were limited, apart from the relief of destitute individuals and disaster-stricken people, to the protection of the unemployed and vagrants, whose number witnessed a sudden increase in consequence of revolutionary changes in the social and eco-

conomic system. It was after the Sino-Japanese War, that is, from about 1897, that modern social problems began to attract increasing public attention in Japan. Capitalism in Japan developed after the Sino-Japanese War and made vigorous headway after the Russo-Japanese War, reaching its zenith after the World War. Then, in or after 1920, Japanese capitalism entered into a panicky stage. With the progress of capitalism, various evils resulting therefrom gave rise to a number of social problems, and this was especially the case in urban districts, which are, so to speak, the bases of capitalistic operation. Social problems manifested themselves first in labour problems. That is to say, factory workers started labour movements and disputes, demanding better labour conditions and higher wages. Up to about 1897, such labour movements and disputes were rather infrequent and the methods employed by labourers but simple and crude, but after the Russo-Japanese War they witnessed a vigorous growth. Class consciousness was aroused among the labourers, and in all branches of industry labour unions were organised. Not only did labour movements and disputes become very frequent but the methods and tactics employed by labourers become more subtle. Moreover, the ideology of labour agitators took on even a revolutionary tendency. Such a tendency of labour movements and disputes persisted until the outbreak of the Manchurian affair. This affair aroused strong national and patriotic sentiment among the working classes, with the result that all ideas and movements based on class strife entirely subsided. It may be here remarked that social problems since 1897 have not consisted of labour problems exclusively, for, as capitalism developed, the gulf between wealth and poverty in society became accentuated, and poverty overtook not only the working classes but small merchants and industrialists also. This caused marked changes in the circumstances of all classes of people. Although a business boom followed on the heels of each war, a reaction set in soon afterwards, and no matter whether there was business prosperity or depression, people of the

lower classes invariably suffered. In times of business prosperity, they were hit by the high price of rice, while, when business was depressed, they suffered from unemployment and the scarcity of money.

Now, in studying the policy pursued by the Government in dealing with social problems since the Restoration, the years under review may be conveniently divided into three periods. The first period was one in which the *laissez-faire* principle ruled the Government policy; the second period was one in which the social reform principle claimed special attention; and the third period has been one in which the Government policy has been chiefly dictated by the desire to promote the welfare of the nation as a whole. Roughly divided, the first period covers the years prior to the Russo-Japanese War, the second period the succeeding years up to the Manchurian affair, and the third period the years subsequent to the Manchurian affair up to the present. In the first or the *laissez-faire* period, capitalism was not yet developed in Japan and consequently there were very few social problems. Partly due to this circumstance, the Government, in shaping its course, held individualism in such regard that it refused to take responsibility for social relief. The Government's indifference may easily be gathered from the fact that, in regard to the relief of the poor, for instance, very primitive "Relief Regulations", enacted as far back as 1874, had remained in force for some fifty years, despite repeated demands for their revision, until the Relief Law was promulgated in 1918. Various socialistic ideas and movements which manifested themselves in this period were suppressed by a variety of laws and regulations. In urban districts, no social enterprises had yet been launched by municipalities, and social relief undertakings were left in private hands almost exclusively. In the second period, in which Japanese capitalism witnessed marked development, the gulf between the rich and poor became widened. As social misfortunes such as poverty, disease and unemployment became widespread in urban districts, the public came

to evince greater interest in the social system. Moreover, socialistic ideas and movements were assiduously imported from abroad by the intelligentsia. In such circumstances, the Government finally recognised the imperative necessity of a social policy, and accordingly enacted social legislation of various kinds, to which reference will be made later. Social reform was the guiding principle of the Government policy in this period. While recognising liberalism and individualism, the Government endeavoured to eliminate various evils attending them. Concerning the class problem, the Government upheld the principle of harmony between Capital and Labour. Although the Government discarded the *laissez-faire* principle, it was opposed as stoutly as ever to the principle of social revolution. In this period, public social enterprises in urban districts made remarkable progress. Measures for the relief of the poor developed into those for the prevention of poverty, and what was really economic in nature was pushed into the sphere of education and culture. Furthermore, as these undertakings were adopted by the State and autonomous bodies, the former relative position of public and private social undertakings was reversed. The third period covers the years subsequent to the Manchurian affair. The social policy adopted by the Government in this period became dissociated from both class policy and the social-democratic principle, or the principle of harmonising Capital with Labour, and tended more and more towards the nationalistic and totalitarian axis. This was partly because the international situation which arose after the Manchurian affair increased the necessity of strengthening national defence power so greatly that the State found it unwise to adhere to the old policy for the removal of various social defects, including agrarian impoverishment and the deterioration of public health; it was also partly due to the fact that the cultural consciousness of the nation saw such growth after the Manchurian affair that there gradually arose a widespread demand for the establishment of a national science and policy, instead of slavishly following

foreign ways and ideas. Thus, the Capital-Labour harmony principle, which tended to promote capitalistic interests more than labour, and the social reform principle, which aimed chiefly at the promotion of labour interests, fell into disfavour and were condemned as too individualistic and un-national, and there came into vogue the idea that all people, irrespective of class, should direct their efforts, first and foremost, towards the progress of the State. Although this idea has not yet been firmly and definitely established, there are signs of its steady growth hereafter. For the realisation of a policy so conceived, various problems, such as national health insurance, the nationalisation of electric power, relief of agrarian communities and the establishment of a Health and Social Welfare Department*, are claiming official attention, though, due to the outbreak of the China affair, their solution is delayed.

I have thus far briefly surveyed the social problems in Japan since the Restoration and the policy adopted by the Government in handling them. Now, I shall proceed to deal specifically with urban social welfare work.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN SOCIAL WELFARE WORK.

As already mentioned, it was after the Russo-Japanese War that public social welfare work made progress in urban districts. The year 1918, in which, due to a sharp rise in the prices of rice, the so-called rice riots broke out in many parts of the country is particularly memorable as marking an epoch in the history of Japanese social welfare work. I shall describe the progress of such work in Japan under the subdivided headings of laws and regulations, administrative organs, institutions and expenditure.

(a) Laws and regulations. The "Relief Regulations" constituted the pivotal rules governing public social welfare

* Note:—Recently (Jan. 11, 1938) a Department of Social Welfare ("Kosei-sho") was established in the central Government. Hereafter the administration of all forms of social welfare work will be controlled by this Department.

work in the days prior to the Russo-Japanese War, that is, in the days in which social welfare work was chiefly carried on by private organisations. Relief for the poor, provided for in these Regulations, which were enacted in 1874, was of a very limited character. Rules for dealing with persons found sick or dead on the roads were laid down in 1870 and were revised in 1881 and in 1899. For the relief of the families of those killed or wounded in battle, the Military Relief Law was promulgated in 1917. These represent the more important relief laws and regulations which were in force prior to 1918. After 1918, however, an entirely new face was put on legislation relative to social welfare work. With regard to general relief measures, the "Relief Regulations," to which reference has already been made, were radically revised, and in 1929 they were supplanted by the Relief Law. Under the new Law, not only was the scope of relief considerably extended but a State subsidy was granted for the furtherance of relief work. The Military Relief Law, enacted in 1917, was also so revised that the scope of its application was extended in respect of the kinds of relief to be given and the wounded and sick soldiers to be relieved. For the relief of unemployment, the Labour Exchange Law and the Seamen's Labour Exchange Law were promulgated in 1921 and in 1922 respectively. Again, in 1931, the Law for the Safeguarding of Employment for Conscripts was promulgated. So far as medical aid measures are concerned, the Law for the Prevention of Tuberculosis, the Law for the Prevention of Trachoma, and the Insane Asylums Law were newly enacted in 1919, while the Law for the Prevention of Venereal Diseases was enforced in 1927. The Law for the Prevention of Leprosy, enacted in 1907, was revised in 1916, in 1929 and in 1930. With regard to the protection of children also, many laws and regulations have been made since 1918. The Law for the Cultural Protection of Juveniles and the Law for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, enacted in 1933, have close bearings on urban social welfare work. Among the enactments relative to economic protec-

tion may be mentioned the Residential Guilds Law of 1921, the Public Utility Pawnbroking Law of 1927, and the Law for the Improvement Slum Areas of 1931.

As will be seen from what I have so far stated, most of the laws governing urban social welfare work, which are now in force in Japan, are laws which have either been newly promulgated or radically revised since 1918. A study of the manner of their development shows that what, prior to 1918, was practically confined to the protection of the needy has since then extended the scope of its operations so as to cover the relief of unemployment, medical aid and the protection of children, as well as economic protection in the wider sense. A closer study will reveal the fact that social welfare work has advanced from partial relief to all-round relief, from individual relief to organised and systematic relief, from negative to positive relief, and from the relief of the poor to the prevention of poverty.

(b) Administrative organs. The Social Bureau of the Home Office constitutes a State organ for the control of social affairs administration in Japan, while each prefectural office has its Social Section. Practically all cities with a population of over 100,000 have also their Social Sections, though it was only after 1918 that such Sections were set up. Osaka took the lead of all cities in creating a Section in its Municipal Office for social welfare work. That is, it set up a Relief Section in 1918. This was the first instance of a Japanese municipality establishing a separate Section for social welfare work. This Relief Section was re-named the Social Section in 1920. In 1919, Yokohama established its Social Section, and Tokyo its Social Bureau. In the following year, a Social Section was set up by each of the remaining three big cities, viz., Kyoto, Kobe and Nagoya. Mention must here be made of the *homen iin* (local social welfare committee) system, which has made a steady growth in all cities and which has done much to help municipal activities in the promotion of social welfare. This system was copied, both in spirit and in organisation, from the *gonin gumi* (five

neighbours' mutual aid) system, which operated in the Tokugawa period, and other autonomous relief systems which were in force in Japanese cities in the old days. It was in 1917 that this *homen iin* system came into being. The local social welfare committees, created under this system, are semi-official in nature, and their functions are to help the social activities of municipalities. Committeemen are elected from among the inhabitants of the wards constituting each city, and they make investigations concerning persons requiring relief within their wards and attend to business relative to their protection and guidance, thereby promoting harmonious collaboration between public and private social undertakings. The number of committeemen in all cities throughout the country totalled 9,752 in 1936.

(c) Institutions. Whereas there were only 65 institutions, public and private, for the operation of social welfare work in 1887, they had increased to 137 by 1897, that is, soon after the Sino-Japanese War. In 1907, after the Russo-Japanese War, their number stood at 372, and by 1918, after the World War, it had expanded to 752. As already noted, capitalism in Japan developed after every war, and, as it developed, social problems increased correspondingly. Up to 1918, however, social welfare work was largely under private management, as can easily be gathered from the fact that, out of a total of 752 institutions in 1918, 680 were private institutions. After that year, public social welfare work made remarkable progress. In 1930, there were 1,495 public social welfare institutions against 2,979 private institutions.

The following table gives the number of public social welfare institutions in the six big cities:—

It will be seen from the above table that, of the six big cities, Tokyo and Osaka have by far the largest number of social welfare institutions. It will further be noticed that Nagoya has a comparatively small number of such institutions, considering its population, while the number in Yokohama is disproportionately large. The comparatively small number of social undertakings in Nagoya is ascribable to the

Table No. 1.

* Number of public social welfare institutions in the six big cities
(the figures are those for 1927).

Works.	Tokyo.	Osaka.	Nagoya.	Kyoto.	Kobe.	Yoko- hama.
Protection of pregnant and lying-in women and infants.	27	9	4	10	7	2
Protection of special classes of children.	3	3	1	4	1	1
Economic protection.	64	99	33	20	29	92
Social culture.	—	2	—	1	—	4
Medical protection.	4	20	4	4	6	2
Others.	100	16	6	21	9	8
Total	198	149	48	60	51	109
Note. "Others" includes personal affairs consultation offices, local reform- ation enterprises and organs for aiding private social undertakings.						

* The figures are taken from "Outline of Municipal Social welfare
Work in the Six Big Cities", compiled by the Social Section of the
Osaka Municipal Office.

fact that the city is backward in the matter of social welfare work, while the existence of a comparatively large number of such institutions in Yokohama is due to the fact that this city has had a large number of sufferers from the Kwanto earthquake and fires to care for. Referring to the classified items, enterprises for economic relief are most numerous in all cities, while next in order come those for the protection of pregnant and lying-in women and infants. Under the item "Others", Tokyo's figure, 100, stands out conspicuously, and of this number, it may be mentioned, no fewer than 99 constitute organs designed to aid private social undertakings, a fact which incidentally illustrates the remarkable progress of private social enterprises in Tokyo.

(d) Expenditure. As often mentioned, public social welfare work in urban districts witnessed marked development after 1918. The amount of expenditure defrayed by all cities is given in the following table:—

It will be seen from the above table that whereas the social welfare expenditure in all cities totalled some ¥ 400, 000 in 1916, in 1919 it amounted to over ¥ 3,880,000, or an increase of about 970 per cent. As compared with 1916.

Table No. 2.

Social welfare work expenditure in urban districts.*

Years.	Social welfare expenditure. (In ¥ 1,000)	Total expenditure. (In ¥ 1,000)	Percentage.
1916	400	90,620	0.4
1919	3,883	178,365	2.2
1921	6,801	324,225	2.1
1926	9,403	644,418	1.5
1931	15,095	634,459	2.3
1932	16,897	590,575	2.8
1933	20,374	808,197	2.4
1934	22,892	840,114	2.7

The figures for the years down to 1932 represent settled accounts, while the rest represent estimates.

*The figures have been taken from the "Japanese Municipalities Year Book for 1937."

This remarkable increase in the few intervening years will confirm the assertion that the year 1918 was an epoch-making year in the history of Japanese social welfare work. The social welfare work expenditure witnessed a yearly increase after 1918 until it amounted to ¥ 22,890,000 in 1934. It is not as regards the absolute amount only that an increase took place, but there was also an increase in the percentage of the total expenditure covering social welfare work. For instance, the percentage rose from 0.4% in 1916 to 2.4% in 1934. Since then, the rising tendency has, on the whole, been maintained, the percentage standing at 2.7% in 1934. From this fact it will be inferred that the social welfare expenditure in all Japanese cities has made a marked increase, especially since 1918.

The social welfare expenditure in the six big cities, as appropriated in their estimates for the fiscal year of 1935—1936, is shown in the following table:—

The above table shows that Tokyo's social welfare expenditure amounted to some ¥ 14,460,000, or more than the expenditure of all other five cities put together. Next to Tokyo, Osaka expended the largest amount on social welfare work, and Osaka's expenditure, amounting to some ¥ 5,900,

Table No. 3.

Social welfare expenditure in the six big cities *
(figures are in units of ¥ 1,000).

Items.	Tokyo.	Osaka.	Kyoto.	Nagoya.	Kobe.	Yoko- hama.
Administrative organs.	2,328	39	5	127	14	101
Poor relief.	2,069	1,072	213	47	477	267
Madical protection.	1,342	1,370	241	59	317	12
Economic protection.	7,453	2,316	144	1,455	444	493
Social culture.	116	247	40	234	330	—
Protection of children.	1,080	820	74	223	124	1
Others.	42	49	14	8	82	* 224
Total	14,459	5,916	734	2,158	1,791	1,100

* The figure is inclusive of the *homen iin* (local social welfare committees) cost, the maintenance cost of neighbours' mutual aid halls, mother-and-child dormitories cost, the cost of supervision of residential guilds and the cost of control of dwellings.

* The figures have been taken from the "Japanese Municipalities Year Book."

000, exceeds the total of the amounts spent by all other cities except Tokyo. This shows clearly that social welfare work is being carried on in Tokyo and Osaka far more actively than in the other four large cities. With regard to the classified items of social welfare expenditure, the expense relative to administrative organs in Tokyo is particularly heavy. It is more than seven times the total amount shown under this head by the other five large cities. while it is undeniable that this is partly because the Tokyo Municipality is carrying on social welfare work very actively, and is consequently employing a large number of officials, it seems that it is, in part, due also to the fact that many of the numerous relief organs set up at the time of the Kwanto earthquake and fires in 1923 are still maintained. It is probably for the same reason that Yokohama's expenditure on account of administrative organs is comparatively heavy. Concerning the items of expenditure with direct bearings on relief, the cost of relief for the poor and the cost of economic protection are heavy in all cities. In Tokyo, Osaka and

Nagoya, the economic protection cost is far bigger than the poor relief cost, so much so that the outlay under the former item in these three cities totals ¥ 11,220,000 against ¥ 3,180,000 representing the total of the defrayals under the latter item. In Kyoto, more is expended on poor relief than on economic protection, while in Kobe the two items are fairly equal. Next to poor relief and economic protection, medical protection and the protection of children from the most costly items. The amount expended by the six big cities on medical protection totals ¥ 3,410,000 and that expended by them on the protection of children aggregates ¥ 2,320,000. The absence of appropriations for social culture in Yokohama, as well as the smallness of the expenditure for the protection of children, is attributable to the fact that these expenses are included in the item "Others". The percentage of each item to the total expenditure is given in the following table:—

Table No. 4.

Percentage of each item to the total expenditure in the six big cities.*

Items.	Tokyo.	Osaka.	Kyoto.	Nagoya.	Kobe.	Yokohama.
Administrative organs.	16	7	1	6	1	9
Poor relief.	14	18	28	2	26	24
Medical protection.	9	23	33	3	18	1
Economic protection.	52	31	18	67	24	45
Social culture.	1	4	6	11	18	0
Protection of children.	7	14	10	10	7	0
Others.	0	1	2	0	5	22
Total	100 (99)	100 (98)	100 (98)	100 (99)	100 (99)	100 (101)

* Fractions of one-hundredth omitted.

The individual characteristics of the cities in carrying on their social welfare work are clearly reflected in the figures in Table No. 4. In the survey of the previous table, I have pointed out the enormous amount defrayed by Tokyo in the administrative organs cost, and in the present table its percentage to the total is given as 16%—the highest

percentage among the six big cities. It is also noticeable in the case of Tokyo that whereas the economic protection cost accounts for more than half—52%—of the total expenditure, the total of the sums allotted to poor relief and medical relief constitute only 23%. In Osaka, 31% of the total expenditure goes to economic protection and 41% to poor relief and medical relief. The percentages of the cost of social culture and the protection of children to the total expenditure are also far lower in Tokyo than in Osaka. On the whole, Tokyo shows a partiality for economic protection, while Osaka's social activities are all-round and well-balanced. This goes to confirm the general verdict that Osaka excels all other cities in the field of social welfare work. The smallness of the administrative organs expenditure in Kyoto and in Kobe presumably illustrates the inactivity of public social welfare work in these cities. Both cities spend more on poor relief and medical relief—negative activities—than on economic protection—positive undertakings. The allotment of a large proportion of expenditure to medical protection and the protection of children in Kyoto is probably because, besides possessing two medical Universities, the city has many intellectuals among its citizens. Like Yokohama, Nagoya devotes a large proportion of its social welfare expenditure to economic protection, but its poor relief and medical protection expenditure constitutes only two and three per cent. respectively, a fact which illustrates the city's neglect of negative relief measures. In short, in all six cities the largest proportion of the social welfare expenditure is allotted to economic protection. It is also worthy of note that, besides the time-honoured poor relief work, measures for medical protection and for the protection of children, which are undertakings of a comparatively recent growth, are making steady development. Generally speaking, Tokyo, Yokohama, and Nagoya show a predilection for economic protection, while the social activities of Osaka, Kobe and Kyoto are all-round and well-balanced.

CONCLUSION.

To sum up what I have so far said about the progress of public social welfare work in Japanese cities, chronologically viewed, it was after the Sino-Japanese War, or after 1897, that social welfare work in Japan began to develop, and it made remarkable progress after each of the subsequent wars, that is, the Russo-Japanese War and the World War. Although social welfare work was largely under private management before 1918, public urban social welfare work has been actively initiated since then. Regarding the nature of social welfare work, the relief of the poor was dominant from the early days of Meiji till 1897 or thereabouts, but in later years, especially after the Russo-Japanese War, a number of social welfare laws pertaining to unemployment relief, economic protection, medical protection, the protection of children, etc., were promulgated. Moreover, the various municipalities started social undertakings voluntarily. In a word, the old negative relief policy was supplanted by a positive policy for the prevention of poverty and for the promotion of social welfare, and sectional and isolated social activities developed into comprehensive and systematic activities. With regard to the administrative activities of municipalities, the various cities established a separate Social Section in their Municipal Offices about 1918, and this was the occasion for the springing up of a variety of social enterprises. The expenditure required for the operation of these enterprises has increased year after year until it has now come to constitute an important item in municipal finance.

Due note must also be taken of the fact that urban social welfare institutions in Japan are acting in close co-operation with many other social welfare activities, such as the social policy and social welfare work of the State and the various private social enterprises, and are taking advantage of the equipment in factories for the protection and the promotion of the welfare of the workers. In conclusion, mention must be made of the fact that the family system peculiar to Japan is still fulfilling its functions in the direction of social relief.