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HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH ARMY  
Military Government Section  
Internal Affairs Division  
CIAE Branch

MEMORANDUM TO: Lt Colonel Satterwhite

SUBJECT: Training and Background Desirable for  
Competent Interpreters.

Need for Competent Interpreters.

1. With the gradual expansion of the CIAE program throughout Japan, one important problem of CIAE activity that should be increasingly considered is that of competent interpreters. Language barriers stand as obstacles in the way of a fundamental understanding and mutual relationship between peoples of different thoughts and ideals. Our pace has been slow in the democratization of the Japanese because of our not being able to converse freely and thus exchange ideas. Further, misconception and misrepresentation of SCAP policy may exist and yet not be known to the authorities concerned.

It might be said that the CIAE officer is no stronger than his interpreter. Through poor interpreters only a portion of his work is effective, and he can not feel the pulse of those people whom he is trying to help. Confidence and cooperation of the people can be secured only by a perfect liaison between the parties concerned.

Background Necessary for Competent Interpreters.

2. The Japanese language is one of the most difficult languages to translate into English. The Japanese psychological concept, being entirely different from ours, tends to confuse the interpreter or translator when he attempts to translate with speed. It is estimated an average Japanese has a vocabulary of about two thousand words. There are special words for special occasions and special people. This distinction is clearly set and those who do not know it are considered low and uneducated. An interpreter, especially one representing an education specialist, should be one who will in no way bring discredit on the occupational forces by his lack of knowledge of specific educational terms. The selection and training of good interpreters therefore becomes a matter of great importance.



**Training & Background Desirable for Competent Interpreters. (cont'd)**

**Present Condition.**

3. The present interpreters in the CIAS program are not entirely adequate. The type of people in this field at present are Nisei soldiers and civilians, Japanese university students and nationals who have either studied or lived in America, and some few linguists. The Niseis and linguists in most cases have too little knowledge of Japanese; the others, too little knowledge of English. There are a number of capable interpreters in other fields, such as military intelligence, but it is equally important to have the best qualified interpreters in the educational field. A good interpreter must be more than just a mouth piece; he must also be a promoter of good will, a diplomat, a carrier of the democratic mission. It is unwise to consider the interpreter as unimportant because he has tremendous influence over people whom he contacts.

**Possibilities and Suggestions.**

4. It is suggested that teams in the field be encouraged to select the best and most qualified personnel. Points to be especially considered are educational and social background, experience, ability in public speaking, personality, and health.

After the best possible personnel has been acquired, a training program designed to fit the needs of the work of the particular area should be instituted. If the personnel selected have no American educational background, it would be wise to indoctrinate them with the educational aims and purposes of the occupation.

Group training conferences for interpreters, where the most effective methods of translation can be discussed, can be held on a regional basis by inviting professionally trained interpreters from Tokyo to give lectures and demonstrations.

The interpreter must be given responsibility in his position. He must understand the importance of his mission. Through proper use of competent interpreters, the work of the occupation can be made more effective.

M. OGAWA



INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE INTERPRETER

1. Try to translate as exactly as you possible can. But in cases where the Japanese translation is long and involved, give the gist of his explanation.
2. In interpreting lectures, don't worry about a word-to-word translation of the speech; think more of the contents and try to get the meaning across.
3. Simple straightforward Japanese is desirable, but do not neglect the use of polite terms. Keep the respect of your audience by a proper use of language.
4. If at any time, you are not clear on a point, do not try to guess at it. Make sure at all times that you are giving the right information. Your responsibility is great.
5. Be courteous and respectful at all times. Address the officer with "Yes Sir" and "No Sir". Never be haughty in your attitude.
6. In conferences, it is the officer's job to conduct the interview, but it is your job to be the liaison man. Preliminary study of the subject is very necessary.
7. Have in mind at all times that you are a part of an organization that is carrying out a great mission. On various occasions you may be asked questions concerning the occupation; you must use good judgment in giving out information.



## HINTS ON USING AN INTERPRETER

### Conversation and Lectures:

1. Make short, simple, direct statements. Avoid difficult vocabulary or flowery speech, as their translations are not apt to have the same effect as in English. The concrete example is worth more than the more general statement. Contents broken down into shorter paragraphs tend to give better effect in interpreting.
2. If technical vocabulary is involved, word lists should be worked up beforehand. Interpreter's familiarity with the text and background of work is very essential.
3. Quotations, jokes, unusual terms (slang, etc.) and reference materials must be understandable to the Japanese knowledge and psychology. Reference from Japanese sources have greater effect on the audience as they tend to show the speaker's knowledge and interest in the Japanese.
4. Preliminary practice between interpreter and speaker as to pauses and intonation is desirable before speeches and lectures.
5. Speak slowly and distinctly, giving ample time to the interpreter to translate clearly. Stop after each thought unit (sentence, several related sentences, or short paragraph) to let your interpreter translate.
6. Be firm, but patient and courteous, at all times. Implanting fear into the interpreter will make him less effective.
7. Enthusiasm shown by the speaker himself helps to keep the attention of the listeners. The speaker should be directly facing the audience with the interpreter to the side.
8. Give your interpreter responsibility in his work, as he has a great deal of influence on the people he contacts.