

HEADQUARTERS
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(PACIFIC)
AFO #234
C/O POSTMASTER, SAN FRANCISCO

INTERROGATION NO. 182

PLACE Tokyo
DATE 31 October 1945

Division of Origin: Manpower, Food & Civilian Supplies.

Subject: Adequacy of Medical Supplies and Services.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Dr. Tsuneo MURAMATSU, Assistant Director Matsuzawa
Psychopathic Hospital.

Where interviewed: His Home.

Interrogator: Lt. Comdr. SPINKS.

Interpreter : None.

Allied Officers Present: Lt. Harold FASSBERG.

Summary:

There was a general shortage of all medical supplies which became serious toward the end of the war. The shortage of physicians, however, was not so noticeable.

An interview with Dr. Tsuneko MURAMATSU, Assistant Director of the MATSUZAWA Psychopatic Hospital, was held to elicit information of a general character on the supply of medical services and pharmaceuticals available to the Japanese during the war. While no statistical information could be obtained, it is thought that the following observations made by Dr. MURAMATSU are of interest and value to those concerned with this field.

As was expected, Dr. MURAMATSU confirmed the impression that a shortage of medical supplies was experienced by the medical profession during the war years. The situation assumed alarming proportions toward the end of 1943, and the government took cognizance of the impending critical shortage by setting up an advisory committee, to which Dr. MURAMATSU was invited to join, for the purpose of standardizing the many types of medicine appearing on the market. Many of these medicines, according to Dr. MURAMATSU, were sufficiently identical as to be utilized for the same specific purpose. No headway along these lines was made, however, and the shortage continued to grow more acute. To aggravate the situation, the civilian population flocked to the drugstores, purchasing the few supplies available, which soon depleted the stocks.

Without attempting to list them in order of their importance, Dr. MURAMATSU listed the following items as being extremely difficult to obtain: bandages, alcohol, plasters, oils, anti-septics, anesthetics, serums, drugs, vaccines--in fact, every item he could think of. Those medicinals such as boric acid and others which must be imported were all but impossible to procure.

An ill-conceived and wholly inadequate system of establishing stockpiles of the important medical items throughout Japan was instituted. With the onset of the air attacks, however, the plan broke down, and the situation reached very serious proportions. A near epidemic of Paratyphoid A broke out which could have been if not wholly prevented, at least in part abated. Fortunately for the Japanese, the lack of the requisite serums was somewhat compensated for the mildness of the disease. Nevertheless, the number of man-hours of work lost must have reached considerable proportions. In varying degrees Typhoid and Dysentery as well as Spotted Fever (German: Fleckfieber) appeared widespread. To make matters worse, mosquitoes and other disease-bearing insects could not be eliminated because of the lack of insecticides.

In addition to the shortage of medical supplies, many, if not most, of the Histological laboratories ceased functioning, resulting in the inability to get tissues stained and dyed, a serious defection in analytical work. Dr. MURAMATSU further emphasized the effect of malnutrition on the population by citing the fact that out of a total of one thousand patients in his hospital suffering from malnutrition one third succumbed either directly to it or their resistance was so lowered that they fell easy prey to other ailments. The present caloric value of the average daily diet was estimated to be 1200 calories as against 2,400, which is considered adequate.

The shortage of doctors, on the other hand, was not nearly as serious as had been anticipated. Of the estimated 100,000 physicians in Japan (including those in the armed forces) 40 to 50 percent were serving the civilian population: a ratio of one to twelve hundred. Had the medical services of all the doctors been available, there would have been one physician for every 600 persons, a ratio which the Japanese officials considered as too great. When viewed, thus, in the light of the prevailing Japanese standards, the shortage of physicians, if indeed shortage it be, was not serious.

By way of statistical summation, Dr. MURAMATSU concluded that of the total production of medical supplies at the beginning of 1944, about 60% was allocated to the armed forces, the remaining 40% being available to civilians.