

U.S.S.B.S.
Morale

Interview with TANAKA, Y., School Education Bureau, Ministry of Education,

SUBJECT: Morale
TIME: 1000 - 1145 - December/8, 1945
PLACE: Meiji Building, Room 749
INTERROGATOR: Truman, D. B.
INTERPRETER: Mr. Taji

BACKGROUND:

Mr. Tanaka graduated from Tokyo Imperial University, Department of Politics, in 1925. Entered the Home Ministry, where he stayed for 10 years. He has been concerned with administration in various prefectures; has held a position in the Prefectural offices at Kumamoto, Okayama, Kanegawa, Nagasaki, Osaka, etc. In these positions he was concerned not only with education but industry and police. In the Home Ministry he was one time Vice-Chief of the Industrial Affairs Section, where he was concerned with statistics on subsidies, advice to industrial unions. He was also in the Peace Preservation Section of Foreign Affairs Section in the Special Police Section of the Police Bureau of the Home Ministry. In 1935 he entered the Ministry of Education. He was the Chief of the Shiso Kyoku (Thought Bureau). He then entered the General Affairs Section of the Board of Education and Training (Kyogaku kyoku). He was head of the General Education Bureau (Futsu Gakumu Kyoku) and in 1942 was Chief Secretary to the Education Ministry. In 1942 he went to the capital of Manchuria, Sinking. For a time he was in the Kwantung Bureau in Educational work. He later entered the Manchurian Government service, as Vice Chief of the Education Ministry (Bunkyo bu). In July 1945 he returned to Japan to the Education Ministry, where he is Chief of General Affairs Office, and in October was transferred to the School Education Bureau (Gakko Kyoiku Kyoku).

SUMMARY:

After three minutes of this interrogation it developed that we had the wrong man, since Mr. Tanaka had spent most of the war years in Manchuria. It was decided to attempt to salvage as much as possible and discussion covered his duties in the various parts of the Education Ministry, and pre-war changes in the educational system; his experience in Manchuria and the changes he noted upon his return. Tanaka is a typical bureaucrat, of limited capacity. The interview was considerably less than rewarding.

INTERVIEW: T - Truman, TA - Tanaka

T - (After the usual structuring) What were the functions of the Shiso Kyoku (Thought Bureau)?

TA - Its main duties were to prevent the teaching of Communism and radical nationalism.

T - Can you tell me how that was accomplished?

TA - They gathered teachers together and held lectures, explaining communism and radical nationalism and cautioned them not to let these doctrines enter into the teaching. They also issued a few pamphlets on the same theme and distributed them to the schools. Prevention of these two radical thoughts was not the main point of

educational policy, which was to emphasize a neutral and peace-loving ideology for the students.

T - In carrying on this work, were you more interested in any one group of teachers than in others?

TA - The selection of teachers was up to the schools and in ~~the~~ ^{most} cases senior members of the faculty attended the lectures. There was no selection of teachers according to the subject matter which they were teaching.

T - Was there any way of knowing whether this procedure was successful?

TA - As a few students became Communists and held radical ideas, it may not be said to have been completely successful. Actually, on the whole, the majority of students held a moderate ideology.

T - Were there any more direct ways of evaluating the effects of this work?

TA - We made no investigation of results of our efforts during the time I was in the Bureau. I do not know what may have happened afterward.

T - What did you mean by radical nationalism?

TA - In my opinion it is considering the nation as the absolute highest organ and the idea that for a national objective peace, order and individual happiness may be neglected, and in cases even terrorism may be used.

T - What particular aspects of Communist doctrine did you warn teachers against?

TA - We were mostly concerned with the prevention of Communism in the sense of eliminating individual property, rice, and the abolition of the Emperor system.

T - Was either of these considered to be more important as an objective?

TA - Both were given the same importance. We were of the opinion that either idea would disrupt order in the nation.

T - Can you tell me about the changes which occurred in that work after you left it?

TA - I don't know what changes occurred. I was there for two years (1935-1937).
(Long pause at this point) Later I believe pressure was put on the Section from the military for the purpose of continuing the war effort, so I think that more rigid control was later exercised.

TAJI - What kinds of pressures?

TA - I am not sure, but I think there were demands for the prosecution of anyone who objected to nationalism during the war.

T - What powers could the Education Ministry use against teachers under such pressure?

TA - The Education Ministry has no power to prosecute, but in case of a government school or a private school, they can ask the teacher to resign.

- TAJI - Suppose the teacher did not want to?
- TA - If a teacher did not obey in the government school the Ministry could deprive him of his post, by law, but still leave him with his status as a civil officer. After one or two years without any post his status as a civil officer would automatically lapse. In the case of a private school the Ministry could require the school principal to secure the resignation of the teacher and if the teacher refused the Ministry could take away the principal's permit to operate. This is my recollection. I think also that because of military pressure it was not possible for the Section to keep on with the policy of preventing Radical Nationalism during the war.
- T - Did you have any difficulties in carrying out this policy prior to the war with the U.S.
- TA - We had no difficulty prior to the war. There was no interference from any quarter.
- T - What were the duties of the General Affairs Section of the Guiding Bureau (Ryogaku Kyoku)?
- TA - In 1937, when I entered this Bureau, there was great confusion in ideology; clashes between Rightists and Leftists. The purpose of the Bureau was to revise education in Japan to a moderate form between materialism and spiritualism, and to carry on research on ways and means.
- T - What were specific examples of this revision?
- TA - The main means were the publishing of literature, lectures to both faculty and students and an inspection system to advise the schools.
- T - Did the Ministry have no inspection system prior to this time?
- TA - It had one long before, but the ways of advising were changed.
- T - In what way?
- TA - Up to then the inspectors would simply inspect facilities, the attitude of students in the classes and other matters, primarily of a superficial character. From the time of this revision they concerned themselves more with the material taught and held conferences with the teachers to obtain their viewpoints. The inspectors were told to take more note of any radical things seen or heard.
- T - What were the major purposes of education in Manchuria while you were there?
- TA - My first post was concerned with the education of the children of Japanese in Manchuria. The objective was to teach them and educate them exactly as in the home islands, and make them good Japanese nationals. The second, which was in the Manchurian Government, had as its object the expansion of education in Manchuria, as they are very backward as a whole.
- T - How did this system differ from the system in the home islands?

and

- TA - In Japan there are three ~~or~~ four stage educational systems. In Manchuria we had a three-stage system -- primary school, middle school, and university. Primary school took 4 years in Manchuria, as against 6 in Japan, and it was not compulsory. The only difference in time was in the primary school.
- T - How about differences in purposes?
- TA - The object in both cases was to make good citizens. When it came to actual education, we had to deal with Russians, Mongolians, Chinese and Japanese in Manchuria, and each had to be taught with materials conforming to their customs and habits.
- T - How were the teachers selected?
- TA - More than half were drawn from those who had been teachers before Manchuria was taken. The rest were people who went through the Training School for Teachers in Manchuria. Anyone could enter training school. Only 2 or 3% were Japanese teachers. We had teachers from all races.
- T - When you returned to the Education Ministry in July of this year, were you impressed with any changes in the purposes of Japanese education?
- TA - When I left the students were normally in school. When I returned the majority were working in the factories.
- T - Any other changes, especially in purpose or method?
- TA - When I came back I found that labor and education had become the same thing, to the extent that education while working or work while studying was the advocated policy.
- T - Were there any changes in the supervision of teachers or the inspection of schools?
- TA - The method of inspection and control of teachers was the same, but the viewpoint of the inspectors had changed because the inspectors had to see whether war production efforts were satisfactory, as well as whether curricular requirements were being fulfilled.
- T - Was the General Affairs Bureau the major point of liaison between the Army and the Education Ministry?
- TA - There was no liaison office with the military at that time. Its main duties were research on various educational systems; to secure information and material for revision of the Japanese educational system. At present it is the Liaison office between the occupation troops and the Education Ministry; also, it conducts control and supervision of school administration, but we are doing little of that now.
- T - What were the liaison points between the Education Ministry and the Army?
- TA - There was no particular office, but liaison depended on the subject and the section concerned would contact the military.
- T - What was the extent of Army control of the Education Ministry?
- TA - Everything was devoted to the war effort and the Education Ministry could not follow its policy as it wished to. It could not do real educating. The Ministry wished to have more study hours and classes, but the demands for labor were so heavy that the

that the Ministry could not fulfill its educational plans.

T - Are there any other examples of Army influence?

TA - Our biggest obstruction was labor conscription. Also the military used a great number of the school facilities and students were conscripted into the Army before they finished their education. This was especially regrettable in the cases of technical students.

T - What was Japan's greatest strength during the war?

TA - That the Japanese would follow faithfully the orders of the government. They had faith in the government, this was the strong point, but at the end of the war gradually the nation began to have doubts, especially with the scarcity of food, etc., and if things go on like this there will be some disorder. Previously people lost faith in the government and with the difficulty of livelihood I thought disorders would occur if things held on.

T - Do you mean if the war had continued for any length of time?

TA - Yes.

T - From what sections of the population did you expect this disorder?

TA - From the lower classes, the laborers and farmers.

T - What was Japan's greatest weakness during the war?

TA - This sounds like a paradox, but the people had doubts whether with Japan's small resources they could carry on the war. Toward the end their faith in the government became weak. The majority of the Japanese people are peace-loving, and ~~with~~ with increasing demands from the government and the over-bearing and strong pressure methods of the military, the people began to lose faith and the situation created an anti-military trend. So, from the point of view of a unanimous ideology, I think the thoughts of the people began to split up.

T - I am not sure I quite understand exactly what you regard as Japan's greatest weakness.

TA - (Long pause) The loss of faith in the government and the peace-loving character of the people were of about equal importance. At the time of negotiations between the U.S. and Japan, before the war, the masses did not know the difficulties, and when the war was declared the masses were greatly shocked and worried whether Japan could win or not. The masses wanted peaceful negotiations which would not culminate in war. ~~But~~ (Pause) I would like to tell you something else, if I may. The Japanese people did not believe all the statements of the government and the military on policies in China through the China and Manchurian incidents. There were several "accidents" and the people had doubts about the reports and the military stories. They thought that although the military say that the Chinese did it, perhaps we started it. The Japanese people were pulled toward war all during that time. When the Pacific War started, people were very gloomy. People brightened up a little bit when good reports were received, but toward the end, doubts and anxiety greatly increased. The majority were wishfully hoping for peace before utter destruction occurred.

T - Regarding these doubts concerning the China policy, in what section of the people were they apparent?

TA - Among the intelligent people; those who had influence in the nation.