Despite the impressive progress made in the health care of the Chinese population, a very significant gap continued to exist between the personnel and facilities that served the urban population and those that served the rural population. Since the Cultural Revolution the regime has made a special effort to narrow this gap, and hundreds of thousands of medical personnel, from paramedic to doctor, were sent down to the countryside to improve the health care of the peasant population. As part of this emphasis on rural health, the normal teaching functions of medical colleges have been expanded to include the training of paramedical personnel in the communes and villages. Every medical college has established rural teaching centers in the communes and has sent out mobile medical teams not only to supplement rural health care but also to offer short-term medical training courses. In this way good teachers are made available for the training of rural medical manpower at the same time urban-based professors receive political reeducation by living and working with peasants for several months every year.

The Sidels have the most complete description of how health care is organized and delivered in both the rural and the urban sectors of the society. One of the fundamentals of the system is that it works on a referral basis. Each problem is first handled at the lowest possible level of medical competence. Thus the paramedics in the street health centers or the village health rooms take care of most of the routine ailments, maintain local health records, provide vaccinations, and are intimately involved in various aspects of education, from daily sanitation to the planning of births. They are assisted by numerous part-time health workers who keep an eye on the health of their neighbors and the sanitation of the homes and the streets. When cases come up that are beyond the capabilities of the paramedics they are referred up the line of competence. In this way the more seriously ill individuals finally come under the care of the better-trained and more experienced doctors at the county or city hospitals. The advantages of such a system in a country with a limited pool of higher medical manpower are obvious.

Although there is probably more information coming out of China on public health and medicine than in any other single field, there are still many questions that cannot be answered. In some instances the Chinese are reluctant to respond; in others—especially where quantitative data are concerned—they simply don't have the answers. No doubt with continued contact between the scholarly communities of China and the United States more and more information will become available, and in years to come we may even discover how many doctors there are in China. For the time being, however, the books reviewed here should adequately fill a void that has persisted for too many years.

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The Japanese Worker

Management and Worker. The Japanese Solution. JAMES C. ABEGGLEN. Sophia University, Tokyo, in cooperation with Kodansha, New York, 1973. 200 pp. $12.

British Factory—Japanese Factory. The Origins of National Diversity in Industrial Relations. RONALD DORE. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1973. 432 pp., illus. $11.75.

Japanese Blue Collar. The Changing Tradition. ROBERT E. COLE. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1973. xiv, 300 pp. Paper, $3.45. Reprint of the 1971 edition.

Japan's rise to the status of economic world power within two decades has generated great interest in the institutional framework and the policies through which this miracle was achieved. The facts of the rise are well known and impressive: for example, the output of crude steel increased from 7.6 million tons in 1953 to over 100 million in 1973; automobile production went from 8500 (imagine!) to more than 4 million, and production of ships from 412,000 gross tons to nearly 13 million. The gross national product of Japan at present is exceeded only by that of the United States and of the Soviet Union, and figures from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development suggest that in GNP per capita Japan may already have surpassed Great Britain and Italy.

Much less is known about the system of employment and labor relations that has accompanied the growth process. From occasional news stories one gets such notions as that there is a lifetime job guarantee for every worker in Japan; that trade unions there never call a strike, except perhaps for one day each year, and cooperate enthusiastically with management in the interest of increased productivity; that Japanese workers know their place; in short, that it is a manager's Nirvana. It sounds too good to be true, and in fact, it is not true, as two of the three books under review make clear.

Abegglen's *The Japanese Factory* was a pioneering work when first published in 1958, and has been responsible in considerable measure for much of the mythology about the Japanese labor market. His present volume is a reprint of the earlier work with some deletions and additions, including an introductory chapter in which the "efficiency, peace, and harmony" of Japan are contrasted with the "enormous economic costs of strikes that have proved so devastating to the economies of Europe and the United States" and "the terrible economic costs of trade unions to Western economies." All this is simply asserted without any effort at substantiation. The book is important historically but is not of much use for an understanding of contemporary Japan.

The books by Dore and Cole, on the other hand, are compulsory reading. They agree on basic facts. Since the early 1950's almost all large Japanese firms have hired most of their new employees, blue and white collar alike, right out of school, and they evidently mean to keep them on the payroll until retirement at age 55. But this system of "lifetime commitment" is by no means universal. Outside the favored enclave are employees of the numerous small firms found in the Japanese economy, substantial numbers of temporary workers hired by the large firms as such, employees of the many subcontractors working for the major firms, and most women workers. The rate of industrial growth has been so rapid and steady that whatever occasional need there may have been for retrenchment in the labor force could be satisfied by laying off members of these groups.

To a considerable extent, earnings increase with age, although the ability factor is coming to have greater weight in wage determination. As for labor organization, there is normally a single trade union for each firm, with membership extending to all employees except middle and top management—white as well as blue collar workers,

the skilled and the unskilled, foremen and section chiefs. The union shop is standard, for it is a privilege to belong to the union. Temporary workers and those employed by subcontractors are usually not even eligible for union membership, though they may be working for considerable periods of time at the same site as the permanent employees. Many of the enterprise unions are affiliated with national industrial unions, which may in turn belong to one of the two major or of the several minor labor federations. To the extent that unions have economic power, it is concentrated in the enterprise unions, which retain most of the dues money, bargain over collective agreements, and sanction the single-day strikes that may occur in the spring as part of a national wage movement—the so-called Spring Offensive.

When one leaves fact and enters the realm of interpretation, the two books are so far apart as almost to have been written about different countries. Dore's work is based upon a survey sample of 300 workers each in Japan and England, plus more intensive observation of an electrical manufacturing firm in each country. The writing is somewhat prolix, and one must be prepared to wade through a good deal of descriptive material that is often beside the point; for example, a dozen pages are devoted to the drawbacks of the piecework system, standard fare in elementary textbooks on industrial relations. The central thesis, however, is startling. During the American occupation of Japan, before the "second, cold war generation" of labor officials took over, Japan experienced nothing less than a "social democratic revolution." This, Dore argues, is in sharp contrast to Great Britain, where the trade unions are still slogging along and winning whatever rights they have "by continuous inch-by-inch pressure against dogged managerial resistance." (Dore never makes it clear whether he means to characterize contemporary Japan as a social democracy; if he does, he must certainly be using the term in some sense other than, say, what Olof Palme has in mind for Sweden.)

This central proposition leads to some interesting analytical results. Since the legitimacy of trade unions is fully recognized by employers, there is little scope for any basic labor-management antagonism. The recognition of mutuality of interest replaces class conflict. Workers are enterprise conscious, not class conscious. The Japanese have shown Western nations the way to a system of employment in which there is an "extension of democratic ideals of a basic 'equality of condition' for all adults at the expense of earlier conceptions of society as naturally divided into a ruling class and an underclass." Unionization with the enterprise, rather than the craft or industry, as the basic unit of organization also represents a more advanced stage in the evolution of labor market institutions, again in contrast to British unionism, which is struggling to extricate itself from the "chrysalis of nineteenth century traditions." Japanese managers are much less privileged than their British counterparts, and Japanese workers are less deprived of dignity and prestige than are British workers.

Dore finds that the "democratic centralist" model is an apt one to describe the Japanese factory, as opposed to the British "two party" system, and indeed, there are striking similarities between his conception of Japanese industrial relations and the prevailing system in the Soviet Union. Although the Japanese trade union is "a Finland to the management's Russia," he apparently rates Finland high, since Japanese unions are "more efficient, formally well-thought-out, and more literate" than those of Britain. The fact that Japanese labor leaders may receive "continuous and even lavish hospitality from the company, or even direct money payments" does not make them creatures of management. British unions, he points out, often resort to a "slap-happy" show of hands in electing union officials, whereas Japanese unions are more democratic because they use the secret ballot, even though the number of candidates is usually equal to the number of offices to be filled.

Cole does not use any such "social democratic" paradigm. His perception, based upon time spent as a manual worker in several Japanese factories plus close contact with his fellow workers over a long period of time, is quite different. To him, Japanese wage structure, far from representing a more advanced social stage, is an indication of underdevelopment. Some of the workers he encountered had a strong class identification, others did not. The subordination of workers to management authority remains a persistent force; favoritism, fed by flattery and back door deals, is common. Union elections can hardly be democratic because any opposition to the official slate is tantamount to a declaration of lack of confidence in management as well as in the union officialdom. In sum: "Mutual understanding based on mutual trust works in the interests of workers and democracy only if the power between management and labor is fairly evenly balanced. When the company holds a commanding edge, as is so often the case in Japan, mutual understanding is little more than a front for company domination."

Who is right? The implication of the Dore model is that Japanese workers are hardly likely to move to the left. He observes that the chances for a Socialist electoral majority have become increasingly remote, and that the road to "a totally apolitical business unionism seems wide open." Cole, writing two years earlier, predicted that Japanese blue collar workers would continue to support Marxism as a symbol of their opposition to management authoritarianism, and that the outlook was for more radical unionism. In the last elections for the lower house of the Japanese Diet, held in December 1972, the left-wing Socialists and the Communists increased their representation very substantially, while the governing Liberal Democrats and the moderate Democratic Socialists suffered sharp setbacks. This is only a straw in the wind, of course, but it does suggest that Samuel Gompers has not yet won out in Japan.

Which of the conflicting views set out in these two books turns out eventually to have been the correct one is by no means an academic matter. If Dore is right, the Japanese labor system should have no difficulty in weathering such current shocks to the economy as inflation, a reduced rate of growth, and the need for heavy expenditures for pollution control and the improvement of urban amenities. If Cole proves to have been nearer the mark, Japan may be in for a great deal of social turmoil. For where channels for the expression of legitimate grievances are not kept open, the end result may be violent eruption when the accumulation of discontent reaches a critical level.

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