

NIPPON

a charted survey of JAPAN

1992/93

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***Edited by
The Tsuneta Yano Memorial Society
(Yano-Tsuneta Kinenkai)***

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PREFACE

“NIPPON, a Charted Survey of Japan,” is an English-language version of *Nihon Kokusei-Zue* which was first published in 1927 by the late Tsuneta Yano*, founder of the Dai-ichi Mutual Life Insurance Company, Tokyo. Mr. Yano was one of the pioneers and leading experts in the field of practical statistics, as well as an active and prominent figure in Japanese financial circles.

The first edition of “NIPPON” was published in 1936. Subsequent editions, however, became impossible for a time due to World War II. It was not until 1955, by which time Japan had fully recovered from the effects of the wartime devastation, that the second edition of “NIPPON” was published. Since 1957, with the exceptions of 1960 and 1991, it has been published yearly.

“NIPPON” has been enthusiastically received in many foreign countries, not to mention the foreign residents, businessmen, members of the diplomatic corps and tourists here. Its comprehensive and easy-to-read statistical surveys provide a true and clear picture of the basic situation confronting the people of present-day Japan.

The Tsuneta Yano Memorial Society was established, following the death in 1951 of the man who started this publication, with the object of commemorating and further propagating the work begun by the late Tsuneta Yano.

I sincerely hope that this thirty-sixth edition of “NIPPON” will also greatly contribute, as did the previous editions, toward a

Preface

deeper understanding of this country and its people by our foreign friends here and abroad, and that it will be received with as much enthusiasm.

We were unable to bring out the 1991 edition because the society was too busy with its publishing activities. This year, we have resumed the annual publication of the English version. We apologize to our readers for having caused a great inconvenience, and sincerely hope that you will continue reading this publication in the coming years.

* Jan. 18, 1866 ~ Sept. 23, 1951.

Hachiro Arima

Chief Director,
The Tsuneta Yano Memorial Society
(Yano Tsuneta Kinenkai)
Tokyo, August 1992

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Remarks

- (1) Symbols
 - ... Data not available
 - Magnitude nil (or negligible)
- (2) 0 Magnitude less than half of unit employed.
- (3) Billion stands for 1,000 million according to the American usage.
- (4) Tons are metric tons.
- (5) Fiscal year in Japan refers to twelve months beginning April 1 of year stated.
- (6) Date relating to China do not include Taiwan Province unless otherwise noted.

Part I
General Aspects

CHAPTER 1

GEOGRAPHY IN BRIEF

Japan consists of four main islands and about 3,900 smaller islands which are located east of China and Korea. The country is surrounded by seas. The four larger islands are called Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu from north to south. The largest of the smaller islands is Okinawa-Honto. After World War II, this island was placed under the trusteeship of the United Nations and occupied by the United States. In 1972, Okinawa was reverted to Japan.

The question of the return of the four islands off Hokkaido has been a long-pending one between Japan and the Soviet Union. Under the Yalta Agreement of 1945, the Kuril Islands were to become a territory of the Soviet Union. The agreement was read to mean that the four islands nearest to Japan are excluded, but the Soviet Union occupied these islands, too, at the end of the war. Anyway, Japan's administrative right has not covered these northern islands yet.

Japan's land area is about 370,000 square kilometers, excluding the four above-mentioned islands under Russian occupation. It is slightly smaller than the land area of France but a little larger than that of Germany. It extends from the eastern tip of the Asian Continent in the north to the western tip of the Pacific in the south. Thus, the climate of the country has characteristics which are described in Chapter 7. Japan is situated relatively south in the Northern Hemisphere; Tokyo, its capital, lies at 35° north latitude, or about the same as north Algeria and Morocco.

A number of mountain ranges and volcanic ranges run through the Japanese archipelago. Mt. Fuji, the country's highest mountain, is 3,776 meters above sea level and is a dormant volcano. In central Japan, there are a number of high mountains of the 3,000-meter range. Mountainous districts cover a greater part of

Chapter 1 Geography in Brief

Japan, so habitable areas are only a little over one-fifth of the nation's total land. Some 120 million people live in these limited habitable regions. Accordingly, the country's population density is very high as discussed later in Chapter 8.

Rivers in Japan are mostly short and rapid-flowing as they run across narrow strips between mountains in the middle of the archipelago and seas not distant therefrom. The three largest rivers in terms of the area of basins are the Tone (running near Tokyo; basin area: 16,840 sq. km.), the Ishikari (Hokkaido; 14,330 sq. km.) and the Shinano (central Japan; 11,900 sq. km.).

CHAPTER 2

PEOPLE IN BRIEF

The Japanese are relatively homogenous people. From where the original Japanese came is still an unsolved question, but it is certain that they belong to the Mongolian group ethnically. Earthenware made by the aborigines in Japan around 10,000 B.C. and thereafter has been discovered. Constructed out of blackish coarse clay, this earthenware is characterized by unique patterns and contains straw ropes and twisted thread. The culture created by these ancient Japanese is called the Jomon (straw-rope pattern) Ware Culture. The Jomon Period lasted from about 10,000 B.C. to about 300 B.C. The major economic activities of the Jomon people were hunting and collecting natural foods.

The years from 300 B.C. to the 3rd century A.D. are named the era of the Yayoi Ware Culture. The name "Yayoi" came from the fact that this culture had earthenware found in Yayoi as its representative products. Yayoi ware uses more refined clay than Jomon ware and is baked at higher temperatures. It has geometric patterns, which are more polished than its predecessors. The origin of the Yayoi people is unknown but many archeologists believe that these people are different from those in the Jomon period. The relation between the Jomon and Yayoi peoples and the present Japanese has long been the subject of controversies, and no definite conclusion has been reached yet. It appears that today's Japanese are strongly influenced by mixture with neighboring peoples in South and North Asia.

The Yayoi people brought rice cultivation to Japan, and agriculture was started by settled farmers. The Yayoi Period was followed by the Kofun (ancient tomb) Period (4th to 6th centuries) when large mounds were built for powerful families. Then came Japan's historical ages (from the 6th century).

The Japanese people use the Japanese language. There are

many theories as to the origin and family of the Japanese language and linguists have not succeeded in reconciling their conflicting opinions. While some basic Japanese words seem to have characteristics common to those of the languages in South Asia, Japanese grammar has a strong influence of languages in northern countries and similar features to such Tungusic languages as Korean, Mongolian and Turkish.

The basic characteristic of the Japanese language is “te-ni-o-ha” or postpositions. These words follow nouns and are linked with other elements of a sentence. They also indicate the case of nouns and therefore Japanese is defined as an agglutinative language. The Japanese language belongs to a family different from that of Chinese characterized by isolated syllables and ideograms. But in late 6th century Chinese culture began to flow into Japan and under its predominant influence Japan introduced *kanji* or Chinese characters, which were adapted to suit the Japanese language. Chinese characters have great capacity to build new words, and they were used to express abstract concepts.

In the Nara Period (8th century), only Chinese characters were used to write verse, but later simplified characters were invented from Chinese ones. While Chinese characters were called “magana” (true *kana*), the simplified versions were named “hiragana” (flat *kana*). During the Heian Period (9th to 12th centuries), *magana* (i.e., Chinese characters) remained official characters, and *hiragana* was used only by women. *The Tale of Genji*, a novel by Murasaki-Shikibu (died circa 1014), is the most famous literary work written in *hiragana* in this period. This era also witnesses the creation of many tales and accounts of journeys in *hiragana*, which suggests its widespread use.

From ancient times, the Japanese people believed in pantheistic animism-like *Shintoism*. In the 6th century Buddhism was introduced through Korea, and this religion spread quickly among the ruling class and finally became a national religion. In the Kamakura Period (13th century), Shinran, Nichiren, Dogen and

other priests founded new sects of Buddhism and propagated their respective teachings among the people.

The Tokugawa Shogunate, which inaugurated the Edo Period (17th to mid-19th centuries) in 1603, suppressed Christianity in its early years. This Western religion had gradually expanded its influence since its introduction in the mid-16th century. As part of its anti-Christianity measures, the Tokugawa government systematically forced the populace to belong to any one of the Buddhist temples as followers. Because of these historical reasons, Buddhism is dominant in the religious world of the Japanese people although Shintoism newly inspired by the Meiji government and its successors in prewar days gained much ground among the people. Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Constitution and all religious activities are free. But the fundamental situation mentioned above remains unchanged.

The attitude of the people toward religion may roughly be summarized as follows: (1) Most Japanese do not adhere to one form of religion; they generally feel no contradiction in adhering to more than one religion. For instance, it is not uncommon in many cases that wedding ceremonies are conducted in *Shinto* rites, while funeral services are held according to Buddhist rites. Both Shintoism and Buddhism are tolerant with each other. Both temples are erected and worshiped at the same place in many cases. (2) In general, the Japanese people are not firm believers, especially in larger cities. Their norm of behavior is not always religious morals but may be usually a kind of behavioral esthetics derived from Confucianism. The influence of group psychology seems to be fairly strong, too.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORY IN BRIEF

The earliest historical records of Japan can be found in the 3rd century in China and in the 6th century in Japan. In the 6th and 7th centuries the capital of the country was changed several times in the Kinki district, mainly in the present Nara Prefecture. At that time, Japan was ruled by the alliance of powerful clans and at its top was the Emperor. In the mid-6th century Buddhism was introduced to the country through Korea, and after that it became a major religion in Japan. Around the late 6th century this country began to be influenced by Chinese culture. In 701, the Taiho Code was enacted after Chinese laws; this code established the system of state and punishment.

The capital was transferred to the city of Nara in 710 and its streets were built and designed in the style of the Tang Age in China. About 80 years from then onward are called the Nara Period. In 794, the capital was moved to the city of Kyoto and the Heian Period started. The name "Heian" was given after that of the capital, which was called "Heian-kyo". This period lasted for nearly 400 years until the Kamakura Period was inaugurated in 1192. During the Nara and Heian periods, the system of direct rule over land and people by the state, originally established by the Taiho Code, collapsed gradually, and the manor system was formed. At the same time, groups of warriors (bushi or samurai) began to rise.

Against the background of the emerging power of warriors, MINAMOTO-no-Yoritomo obtained an approval from the Emperor in 1185 to appoint *shugo* (protectors) and *jito* (stewards) all over the country from his base in Kamakura. Thus, Yoritomo founded the basis of the feudal system in Japan. In 1192, he was appointed *sei-i-dai-shogun* by the Emperor and obtained the right to rule the nation. During the Kamakura Period, which lasted for