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[10] CAPITALISM AND CASTE IN
JAPAN

Eugene E. Ruyle in this section demonstrates that the creation and maintenance of outcaste groups on a racist basis facilitates the exploitation of such groups while creating scapegoats who function to reconcile other exploited segments of the society to their lot. On this level both this chapter and the following one by Karen L. Michaelson are concerned with the processes by which rationalizations of equality come to be accepted and internalized. With the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Japan, the continued existence of outcastes and outcaste communities facilitated the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production by serving the system as "the reserve army of the unemployed," the casually employed, or those involved in marginal underpaid manufacture.

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This chapter is not, primarily, about the so-called *eta*.¹ Other writers have poignantly described the social degradation and personal agony of the

¹ This is a revised version of a paper originally prepared for the symposium, "Marx I: Critiques of Theory," 71st Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Toronto, December 1, 1972.

millions of Japanese who are stigmatized by that name (Greenbie 1920:315-28; Ninomiya 1933; Donoghue 1966; Cornell 1961, 1966; De Vos and Wagatsuma 1966; Brameld 1969:81-162; Shimahara 1971; DeVos and Wetherall 1973; Wetherall and DeVos 1975; Koyama 1975). Rather, this is an analysis of Japanese society itself, an attempt to understand why it created the outcastes and why it maintains a substantial proportion of its members on a subhuman level. What kind of social structure is it that needs to clothe itself, to borrow the metaphor of George DeVos and Hiroshi Wagatsuma (1966:384), by clutching the flayed skin of the suffering outcastes?

Both anthropologists and "natives"—meaning the outcastes, the general public, and the Japanese government—agree that this is a "most serious social problem" that urgently cries out for some sort of solution. Ever since 1921, when Sano Manabu declared in his essay, "On the Emancipation of the Tokushu Buraku," that the solution to this problem lies in a socialist revolution (DeVos and Wagatsuma 1966:42), this idea has dominated discussion of the problem among Japanese intellectuals, outcaste and nonoutcaste alike. Yet no American scholar has taken this idea seriously. Perhaps because of their reluctance to consider this socialist alternative, many scholars have turned to cultural idealistic explanations. Anthropological explanations of the Japanese outcaste problem have run along the familiar lines of idealist explanations of our own "peculiar institution." As set forth in Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*, 1962 (which, despite devastating critiques by Herbert Aptheker [1946] and Oliver Cox [1948:509-38], is widely regarded as a classic and still valid statement on American race relations), this explanation has two aspects, which we may call the "vicious circle" and the "moral dilemma."

The vicious circle refers to the mutual cause and effect relationships between discriminatory ideas and substandard economic conditions. According to Myrdal (1962:75):

White prejudice and discrimination keep the Negro low in standards of living, health, education, manners and morals. This, in its turn, gives support to white prejudice. White prejudice and Negro standards thus mutually "cause" each other.

Myrdal (1962:1069) opposes this idea of multifactoral, mutual cause and effect relationships to the idea that there is "one predominant factor," mainly in the form of a "vague conception of economic determinism," which he mistakenly attributes to Marxism.

Similar reciprocal cause and effect relationships are seen in the Japanese case. John Donoghue writes that, "Such beliefs (about dirty,

diseased, clannish *eta*) . . . operate as a self-fulfilling prophecy in maintaining outcaste status" (Donoghue 1966:139, citing Myrdal among others). Thus majority conditions not only recreate majority prejudice but also serve to give the outcaste a negative self-image and thereby inhibit true mobility aspirations (Cornell 1966:181; DeVos and Wagatsuma 1966:152, 222).

The second aspect of the explanation is the derivation of majority prejudice from basic psychological and moral principles. Thus Myrdal tells us:

The American Negro problem is a problem in the heart of the American. It is there that the interracial tension has its focus. It is there that the decisive struggle goes on. This is the central viewpoint of this treatise. (Myrdal 1962:xxi)

Similarly, we are told:

The concept of caste remains a social force because it exists in the emotional structure of individual Japanese. (DeVos and Wagatsuma 1966:xxi)

Just as for Myrdal (1962:59, 100) "sexual urges, inhibitions, and jealousies, and social fears and cravings for prestige and security" lead to a "totally irrational, actually magical belief" concerning the "unclean" nature of the black, so the discussion of the roots of Japanese prejudice involves

the distinction between magic and religion; the prelogical thought processes of children; the rules of pollution and taboo in primitive societies; the relation of occupational restrictions and women's lower status to menstrual taboos; ritual acts of communion and commensality; the psychological mechanisms involved in scapegoating; racial prejudice; and individual psychoneurosis. (DeVos and Wagatsuma 1966:353)

This idealist approach has not generated much optimism concerning the possibility for amelioration of the outcastes' condition. No solution to this problem has been proposed by American social scientists; DeVos and Wagatsuma themselves see the answer as depending "ultimately on moral maturation" (DeVos and Wagatsuma 1966:383).

Thus the vicious circle of cultural idealism and political passivity is complete. The problem, lying in the hearts and minds of majority Japanese, can be resolved only by a change of heart and a new mental outlook. The anthropological approach to caste, in short, is as "dismal" as Malthusianism and functionalism.

The somber circularity of the cultural idealist approach to caste may be broken, however, by following up Cox's suggestion, that

both race prejudice and Negro standards are consistently dependent variables . . . both produced by the calculated economic interests of the Southern oligarchy. (Cox 1948:530)

Here Cox opens another possibility linking racism to political economy and especially to a particular kind of political economy, class rule. It is this perspective that is most profitable.

The theoretical viewpoint that is adopted here is that systems of exploitation designed to support ruling classes generate class, caste, racial, and other minority group antagonisms within the oppressed classes. In particular, feudal status distinctions have been used by the Japanese ruling class in establishing and strengthening capitalism and, in the process, the feudal outcastes have been perpetuated as a disadvantaged minority group within the Japanese proletariat.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to clarify the two concepts caste and capitalism, since there is no real unanimity on their meaning.

Following Alfred Kroeber (1930), and in contrast to some others (Berman 1960, Dumont 1970, Leach 1960), *caste* is a special form of social class. As I have argued elsewhere (Ruyle 1973a, 1973b, 1975, 1977a, 1977c), social stratification may profitably be viewed in thermodynamic terms, as a process in which energy, in the form of human labor and its products, is pumped out of a producing class into a ruling class. An *economic class* may be defined as a group of individuals sharing a similar qualitative relationship to the flow of labor energy through the system, and an *income class* as a group of individuals sharing a similar quantitative relationship to the flow of labor energy, that is, enjoying similar incomes. *Social classes*, by contrast, should be defined in terms of families, as groups of intermarrying families sharing similar qualitative and quantitative relationships to the flow of labor energy through the system. Castes are "closed" social classes, characterized by extremely low rates of interclass mobility and interclass marriage.

But there is more to caste than this. In addition to these purely materialist aspects there are ideological ones. Given the idealist emphasis of bourgeois social science, it is these ideological aspects—ideas of honor, of ritual purity and pollution of "blood," religious justifications, and deeply felt emotional reactions to all of these—that have claimed the most attention, and these are usually seen as the prime movers of the entire system. From a materialist standpoint, however, it is essential to understand how these ideological factors emerge from the materialist ones, even as they react back upon and help determine their precise form. The rate of intermarriage, for example, is of course greatly influenced by ideas of "blood," "honor," "purity," and the like; but these ideas are in turn generated by particular class situations.

I suggest that the caste tendency results from the tendency of social classes to protect, for themselves and their heirs, their class position and the associated life-style and values that give it meaning. One way of accomplishing this is to erect barriers against mobility and intermarriage and to justify these barriers—indeed, the entire status system—in terms of honor, ritual purity, racial superiority, and the like. Although this caste tendency emerges from the conscious and subconscious drives of individuals to maximize their own satisfaction, it is not necessarily willed or completely controlled by any individual or group of individuals (see Ruyle 1973a). Further, although the ideological aspects are generated by the materialist ones and, in the long run from the standpoint of the system as a whole, are of lesser causal strength than the materialist ones, this does not prevent them, for short periods and for particular cases, from playing a preponderant role, as Freidrich Engels recognized (Selsam and Martel 1963:204).

Caste tendencies are likely to be most pronounced at the uppermost and lowermost levels of a stratified population. This is because the ruling class exerts the greatest degree of control over the system as a whole, and especially the exploitative system on which the entire system rests, and its members are the primary beneficiaries of the system. The objectively advantaged position of the ruling class, whose members do not engage in bothersome labor but who nevertheless enjoy access to the greatest variety and quantity of pleasurable use values, is frequently legitimized in terms of descent, nobility, or ritual purity, and these would be diluted by intermingling or intermarriage with less elevated families.

This elevation of the ruling class to a material and ideological position above humanity demands the degradation of another segment of the population to a position below humanity. The remarks of Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy in this regard, although meant to refer to a system of monopoly capitalism, refer equally well to any system of social stratification:

Within the basic class framework, which remained in essentials unchanged, there took place a proliferation of social strata and status groups, largely determined by occupation and income. These groupings, as the terms "stratum" and "status" imply, relate to each other as higher or lower, with the whole constituting an irregular and unstable hierarchy. In such a social structure individuals tend to see and define themselves in terms of the "status hierarchy" and to be motivated by ambitions to move up and fears of moving down. . . . The net result of all this is that each status group has a deep-rooted psychological need to compensate for feelings of inferiority and envy toward those above by feelings of superiority and contempt for those below. It thus happens that a special pariah group at the bottom acts as a kind of lightning rod for the frustrations and hostilities of all the higher groups, the more so the nearer they are to the bottom. It may even be said that the very existence of the pariah group is a kind of harmonizer and stabilizer of

the social structure—so long as the pariahs play their role passively and resignedly. Such a society becomes in time so thoroughly saturated with race prejudice that it sinks below the level of consciousness and becomes a part of the “human nature” of its members. (Baran and Sweezy 1966:265-66)

The legal establishment of a pariah caste may, thus, serve to provide convenient scapegoats for popular discontent. This pariah caste may also be used to fulfill necessary but disagreeable economic and political functions.

The particular stratified order generated by capitalism is not incompatible with caste phenomena. Capitalism, like all other systems of exploitation, has as its core the extraction of surplus value from the direct producers. What is unique in capitalism is the manner in which this is done. The secret of capitalist exploitation lies in the difference in value between what the worker is paid and what he can produce in a normal working day. The difference, in Marxian terms, is surplus value, the ultimate source of profit and interest in bourgeois society (for a fuller discussion of Marxian economics, see Sweezy 1956).

This exploitative process generates the fundamental class antagonism of the capitalist social order, that between the bourgeoisie, who own the means of production and live on income from property, and the proletariat, who own little or no productive property and are economically compelled, therefore, to sell their labor power and live on the income from this sale, wages, or salary. Within each of these classes, moreover, there are secondary antagonisms.

Within the bourgeoisie, there are distinctions based upon family wealth and family pedigree (for Japanese material on this see Chioshi Yanaga 1968). Within the working class, there are distinctions based upon type of work, level of skill, and associated life-style. Not only does capitalism generate a whole series of wage-status differentials within the employed workers, it also generates competition within the working class for the “better” jobs. Further, it generates a pool of unemployed workers, the Industrial Reserve Army, that acts as a drag on wages and serves as a continual reminder to workers that their lot could be worse. The resulting competition and hostility within the working class constitute secondary antagonisms (secondary, that is, to the fundamental antagonism between capital and labor) that serve to maintain and heighten such ethnic and racial distinctions that may be present. This process was recognized by Marx:

Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working class population *divided* into two *hostile* camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a

member of the *ruling* nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country *against Ireland*, thus strengthening their domination *over himself*. He cherishes religious, social, and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude toward him is much the same as that of the “poor whites” to the Negroes in the former slave states of the U.S.A. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees the English worker as both the accomplice and stupid tool of *English rule in Ireland*. (Marx 1972:292-94)

Thus racism cannot really be considered an “American dilemma,” for it appears as an irreducible product of the capitalist mode of production.

Capitalism, to endure, must prevent the rise of socialist consciousness and working-class unity. The existence of objective antagonisms within the working class as well as the conscious oppression of “communist” ideas by the ruling class militates against such unity.

Capitalism, however, does not appear in the abstract, but only in reality, always modified by concrete historical circumstances, always co-existing with the remnants of earlier social orders and the germs of new ones. We turn then, to an analysis of Japan, with an emphasis on how the Japanese ruling class in establishing capitalism, used status distinctions of the feudal period to strengthen their rule and assist their drive for Great Power status.

Capitalism and Outcastism in Japan²

Functions of Outcastism in Feudal Japan

The outcaste tradition is as old as Japanese history itself, and the changing form of outcastism has varied with changing systems of exploitation and oppression (Ruyle 1971). By the fifteenth century earlier caste systems were in a state of dissolution, but with the unification of Japan in a system of centralized feudalism, caste phenomena reemerged at all levels of society as part of the conscious efforts of the feudal ruling class to consolidate their rule. Let us examine the economic, psychological, and political function that outcastism played in feudal Japan.

As the rising feudal lords, or *daimyō*, consolidated their power in new territorial units known as *han*, they found it useful to assemble the previously scattered leather workers into one place to guarantee a supply (and probably also control prices) of saddles, drums, and protective armor. To guarantee further the production of these essential war materials, leather workers were forbidden to engage in other occupations and the trade was made hereditary. Thus, “like a tadpole becoming a frog and croaking in the mud,” the son of an outcaste could aspire to nothing more than his father. It is this function that accounts for the ubiquitous presence of outcaste ghettos on the outskirts of caste towns throughout Japan. In this

way the outcaste constellation of hereditary outcaste status, hereditary outcaste occupation, and hereditary outcaste residence was consciously created by the *daimyō* for their own purposes.

Outcastes were also used for other undesirable and unclean work, as manual laborers, as sweepers and scavengers, and as porters. As peace was established by the Tokugawa Shogunate, outcaste communities were established along the major highways to provide porters and underlings for the police.

Outcastes were also used for the most disagreeable and despicable tasks in the political system as watchmen, jailors, and executioners. Outcaste communities were typically placed at the entrance to the caste town, where they formed, as Takeo Yazaki notes,

... a psychological impediment to free entry and exit. In this position the *eta* could be used also as a first line of defense against rebellious peasants. At times they were even moved to battle fronts as supplementary troops. (Yazaki 1968:158)

The outcastes served as the foundation stone for the Neo-Confucian *shi-nō-kō-shō-eta-hinin* system in which there were major social barriers between the warrior (*shi*) caste and the commoners [peasants (*nō*) and townspeople (*kō*—artisans and *shō*—merchants)] on the one hand, and between the commoners (collectively known as *heimin*) and the outcastes (*eta*—“defilement abundant” and *hinin*—“not human”) on the other. In this way the rulers compensated for their own elevation above the common mass of humanity by forcing another group into a subhuman status. Thus, whatever feelings of inferiority and envy the peasants might feel for the warriors could be offset by feelings of superiority and contempt for the outcastes, and the hatred they might feel for their feudal oppressors could be redirected onto their “subhuman” accomplices, who not only performed the “dirty work” of the rulers but were also fed from the produce taken from the peasantry.

It is this last psychopolitical function that becomes increasingly important in the later Tokugawa period. With the establishment of peace came the growth of cities and towns, the rise of wealthy urban merchants, and the growth of capitalism in the Japanese countryside (for the best description of this complex process, see Thomas Smith 1966). On the one hand, wealthy peasants emerged who employed even *samurai* as teachers, retainers, and laborers, while, on the other hand, many peasants lost access to land and drifted into the outcaste ghettos or formed new ones on agricultural wasteland. As the feudal status structure weakened under the onslaught of a money economy, and as social unrest led to peasant uprisings and urban riots, the feudal rulers attempted to strengthen the status structure by increasingly strict sumptuary laws regulating the behavior of merchants and peasants and, to make these more bearable, the restric-

tions placed upon outcastes were made even more severe. To strengthen the status order in the countryside, groups of impoverished peasants were legally declared outcastes (Tojō 1969). Outcastes were also used as scapegoats. A feudal edict might begin, “These days, the behavior of the *eta* is extremely bad. . . .” It was at this time that, when the outcastes appealed for justice after an outcaste youth was beaten to death by a gang of rowdy commoners in Edo, an infamous court decision was made: “Since an *eta* is worth only one-seventh of a commoner, if you want the murderers punished, bring me six more dead *eta*!” (Inoue 1959:32-33; see Passin 1955:35).

Thus as the Tokugawa period drew to a close there was an increase in the number of ghettos, an increase in the outcaste population, and an increase in discrimination against the outcastes, all resulting from the emergence of capitalism and the efforts of the feudal rulers to preserve a dying social order.

Outcastism and the Transition to Capitalism

Capitalism necessarily passes through a phase of bourgeois revolution to establish in the political sphere what is already established or must become established in the economic sphere. As the Communist Manifesto noted, capitalism, after it first emerges in the advanced nations,

...compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production, it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it created a world after its own image. (Marx and Engels 1964:9)

In Japan the form of the bourgeois revolution was conditioned by the threat of Western imperialism acting upon a particular arrangement of class forces. After disaffected segments of the *samurai* class, supported by indigenous rural and urban capitalist elements, seized power in the Meiji Restoration, they rapidly proceeded to restructure Japanese society along capitalist lines, abolishing feudal restrictions on labor, capital, and profits, restructuring the land tenure and taxation systems, and establishing financial and industrial institutions to serve as the basis for rapid economic growth. Since this was a “revolution from above” however, it was affected in such a way as to preserve, rather than destroy, feudal sources of strength in the old society (for a fuller discussion of Marxist and non-Marxist views of the Meiji Restoration, see Albert Craig 1961, John Dower 1975, Jon Halliday 1975, E. Herbert Norman 1940, and Yasukichi Yasuba 1975). As pertains to the outcastes, the following aspects of this process should be noted.

1. Although legally emancipated from *eta-hinin* status in 1871, the outcastes were in no way emancipated as far as material conditions were

concerned. They continued to have only marginal access to land and they continued to follow traditional, "unclean" occupations. In fact, since they lost their monopoly rights in their old occupations, and since they were now obliged to pay taxes as well as be subject to military conscription, the economic position of the outcaste actually worsened.

The economic deterioration due to loss of monopolies was a gradual affair. In Tokyo the shoemaking industry was taken over by Mitsui capital early in the Meiji era, but in Osaka ghettos, shoemaking and leather working flourished until after World War I (Matsuo 1956). In fact, there was an outcaste *zaibatsu*, Nitta, that controlled the entire leather-working industry of the Kansai by controlling sources of supply and marketing outlets. Osaka ghettos flourished during World War I as large numbers of shoes and other leather goods were exported to Russia and other combatant nations. In the recessions following World War I, the ghetto industries came under increasingly strong competition from nonghetto leather-working firms, which directly controlled the productive process in large factories. The competitive advantage of large, industrial capital over smaller, mercantile capital was further strengthened after the Manchurian Incident in 1931. As the Japanese economy became increasingly tailored to the needs of the military, leather was strictly rationed as an essential war material, and military orders for shoes and leather articles went to the large nonoutcaste firms. As a result, the sources of leather for the ghetto enterprises dried up, and the ghetto leather-working industry completely collapsed, except for an insignificant trade in articles made from scrap leather discarded by the larger factories and black-market leather. In the postwar period, the leather-working industry reemerged, but is now totally dependent upon nonoutcaste agencies for supplies and marketing outlets.

Slaughtering and the disposal of dead animals were another outcaste monopoly in feudal times. After the feudal ban on killing and eating of cattle was abolished and meat-eating became common, privately operated slaughterhouses were established in many ghettos. In 1908, however, a Slaughterhouse Law was passed that encouraged local governments to establish slaughterhouses as a means of business and their owners became city workers (Buraku Mondai Kenkyūjo 1969:86).

As a more recent example of the takeover of a "new" ghetto industry by Japanese capitalism, we may note the case of rubber sandals, or *zōri*. These were invented in a Nara ghetto about 1949 or 1950. Since this footwear proved very popular, and since the productive techniques involved were very simple and the required equipment minimal, the *zōri* industry became one of the mainstays of ghetto economic life, with over half the labor force of some ghettos dependent upon it. By 1954, however, large rubber manufacturers began production of rubber *zōri* and soon

gained a dominant position in *zōri* manufacture, eclipsing the small-scale commodity production in the ghetto (Buraku Mondai Kenkyūjo 1969:88-89).

2. The *shi-nō-kō-shō-eta-hinin* status system was not completely abolished, but rather was transformed into a new status system, composed of two classes of nobility (*kazoku*, or *daimyō*, court nobles, and their descendents, and *shizoku*, or *samurai*, and their descendents) and their descendents, and *heimin*. Although not legally recognized as such, the outcastes remained a distinct subgroup, known as "new" commoners, *shinheimin*. The family-registry system, as it persisted through World War II, maintained a strong sense of status consciousness. There was a status column (*mibun no ran*) for noting a family's noble or common status. In some areas the practice of writing *shin*, or "new," in the status column persisted to World War II, although in most areas this was discontinued early in the Meiji period. Further, the legal residence, or *honseki*, of an individual could not be legally changed, so even if an outcaste moved out of the ghetto, he could be identified by his outcaste *honseki*.

In the postwar registry system, there is no status column and the *honseki* can be freely changed. But, since one's previous *honseki* is also recorded, it requires at least two moves to remove the taint of outcaste residence from one's record. Further, since old registrations are kept, it is possible to trace an individual's residential origins no matter how many moves are made. There exist, in fact, detective agencies for just this purpose, since it is customary to investigate a prospective spouse's background before marriage (see Hayashida 1974:75).

3. Since the outcastes remained an identifiable, economically depressed group, and since no positive steps were taken to improve their social position, it is scarcely surprising that feudal status discrimination continued. Many outcastes simply were not told about the emancipation proclamation, or they were told that it was to take effect in 5,000 years. In one case a landlord assembled his low-status tenants, and gave them *sake* out of a freshly scrubbed night-soil container, saying, "Even if you wash a dirty thing, it is still dirty" (Tōjō 1965:131).

In fact, status discrimination and caste tensions actually grew worse during the turbulent early years of the Meiji era. The dramatic events surrounding the Restoration had raised the hopes of the peasantry that their economic and social positions would be improved. But they soon found that, far from improving, things got worse.

The peasantry . . . had to bear a double burden in the first transitional period, the burden of the old system which the government could not yet afford to destroy, and the burden of the new centralized regime which was being built upon the ground floor of the old. (Norman 1940:79)

The pressure of this double burden was the underlying cause of the nearly two hundred peasant uprisings of the first decade of the Meiji era, more than any similar period of the Tokugawa era. The actual spark that ignited most of the uprisings came from the modernizing policies of new government, which were seen by a distrustful peasantry as attempts to exploit them further.

Peasants frequently were excited by wild rumors that the numbering of houses was a preliminary measure to the abduction of their wives and daughters; that the phrase "blood-taxes" in the conscription decree was to be taken literally, so that in joining the army their blood would be drawn and shipped abroad to make dye for scarlet blankets; that the telephone and telegraph lines would be used to transmit the blood; that the children herded into the new schools would also have their blood extracted. (Norman 1940:73)

In the light of the above, it is scarcely surprising that the Emancipation Proclamation of 1871 was seen by the distrustful peasantry as an attempt to reduce them to the level of *eta*, particularly when we recall the psychopolitical functions of the outcaste in the feudal status system. Neither is it surprising that many of the uprisings developed into *eta* hunts (*eta-gari*) and "campaigns to exterminate the *eta*" (*eta-seibatsu*). One example is the Mimasaki riot in Okayama, which lasted from May 25 to June 1, 1873. More than 26,000 farmers were involved in the uprising, which destroyed, according to government estimates, ten houses of government officials, forty-seven homes of village heads, twenty-five homes of policemen, fifteen school buildings, and more than three hundred *buraku* homes. Eighteen *burakumin* were reported dead and eleven badly injured. Finally, army troops were called in to put down the uprising (DeVos and Wagatsuma 1966:36-37).

In short, far from liberating the outcastes, the political transition from feudalism to capitalism actually worsened their economic condition and increased social discrimination and prejudice against them.

Outcastism and the Primitive Accumulation of Capital

In Marx's analysis the primitive accumulation necessary to establish capitalism has a dual aspect: first, the accumulation of money in the hands of the capitalist, and second, the separation of labor from the means of production. In the classic case, England, the first aspect was achieved through the plunder of the colonial world, the second through the enclosure movement.

Japan, however, was unable to embark on a program of colonial conquest until the very end of the nineteenth century, and so it was necessary to rely on internal sources of capital formation. As Baran notes (1957:155):

It is . . . no exaggeration to say that the main source of primary accumulation of capital in Japan was the village which in the course of its entire modern history played for Japanese capitalism the role of an internal colony.

That the village was able to play this role was largely due to what Japanese scholars called the "parasitic landlord system" (*kisei jinushi sei*), parasitic because the landlord merely collected extremely high rents without investing his capital in improving agricultural conditions.

It must be pointed out . . . that in Japan the landlords are required to pay only the land taxes; all other farming expenses are met by the tenants. Thus agricultural rents in Japan, although perhaps not as extremely high as in other Oriental countries, are exorbitant when compared with those of the old agricultural nations in the West. . . . The Japanese rate is 7 times that of England, 3.5 times that of Germany, 4 times that of Italy and 3 times those of Denmark and Holland. . . . The high rent characteristic of Japanese landlordism has made the non-cultivating landlord interested exclusively in collecting rent and has deterred him from using his capital to enter agricultural enterprise as a capitalist. (Norman 1940:150)

These high rents collected by the parasitic landlords were deposited in banks and other financial institutions where they could be invested for further capital accumulation (see Nakamura 1966:165-69). An additional contribution was the land tax, which formed the bulk of the government revenue in the early Meiji and which was used to establish government enterprise and to indemnify the dispossessed daimyo, thus transforming them at a stroke from territorial magnates into finance capitalists (see Norman 1940:94, 130-32).

However, this high-rent system had a dual aspect. Money, of course, is not yet capital, but only becomes capital when it is able to exploit a "free" labor force. This free labor force was recruited from that portion of the peasantry that was unable to maintain itself given the high rate of exploitation in the countryside. As rural populations grew, a portion was forced off the land by the high-rent system. But this transition from overburdened peasantry to urban proletariat was a complex process that took a variety of forms.

Perhaps the most important of these was a young female labor. The Japanese textile industry literally purchased young girls, for a longer or shorter period, from impoverished peasant families and, by nearly working them to death in prisonlike factories, was able to achieve a preeminent position in the world market (Utley 1937:160-200; Norman 1940:151-52). Significantly, this young female labor, no longer fully peasant but not yet quite proletarian, constituted a major part, if not the absolute majority, of the labor force throughout the Meiji period (Norman 1940:152). To employ our earlier distinction, the female proletariat was an economic

class, but not a social class. The distinction is extremely important, since an economic class does not have to reproduce itself, as does a social class, hence its wages can be lower. A young female laborer, with no family to support, can work for less than a man with a family; therefore wages can be lower and the degree of exploitation higher.

Male, as well as female, labor was driven off the land. Although the more fortunate parts of this population—for example, younger sons of established peasant families—were able to use family connections to obtain apprenticeships or other respectable employment, the less fortunate drifted into the slums and ghettos of the growing cities, to find work as casual laborers, coolies, rickshaw pullers, and the like. This urban sub-proletariat, together with female labor, formed the foundation for what the Japanese Marxists called the semicolonial wage system (*hansho-kuminchi-teki chingin-sei*) or sometimes the “below-colonial wage system” (*shokuminchi-ika chingin-sei*).

But the high-rent system, on which the primitive accumulation of Japanese capital rested, could not have been maintained without the existence of a dispossessed, land-hungry group in the countryside. It is here that the economic function of the outcastes in the transition to capitalism in Japan comes into clearest focus. Land, to the outcaste, had a more than economic significance. It was a means of obtaining respectability and outcastes were willing to pay higher rent for poorer land than were majority peasants. According to Kiyoshi Inoue, in cases where the rent was generally 50 or 60 percent, outcastes would pay 70 or 80 percent, and in extreme cases they would turn over the entire rice crop as rent, keeping only a second crop and straw for making sandals (Inoue 1959-49). Given the existence of the outcastes, majority peasants were scarcely in a position to complain about high rent.

The outcastes, then, served as the foundation stone upon which the parasitic landlord system of the Japanese countryside rested, and, together with female workers and other semiemployed workers in the slums and ghettos, formed the core of an Industrial Reserve Army that supported a semicolonial wage system in the cities. In addition to their economic role, the psychopolitical functions of the outcastes undoubtedly continued. More than ever before, the hard-pressed peasantry needed the despised outcastes to compensate for their worsening condition.

It may be too much to say that Japan could not have industrialized without the outcastes, but the above analysis strongly suggests that the outcastes did facilitate the process of capital accumulation and that their own condition was in no way improved by the transition to capitalism in Japan.

Structure of the Industrial Fief and Antagonisms within the Working Class

The fundamental class antagonism in a capitalist society is between capital and labor, but there are also secondary antagonisms within the working class arising from the competition into which workers are forced by the labor market. As Marx and Engels observe in the *Communist Manifesto*:

[The] organization of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. (Marx and Engels 1964:18-19)

Since the number of desirable jobs is always less than the number of available workers, workers must necessarily compete for them. In developed capitalist systems, this competition divides the labor force into three broad categories: (1) the aristocracy of labor; (2) other employed workers; and (3) unemployed workers, or the Industrial Reserve Army (cf. Taira 1970:45-46).

As a concrete example of the manner in which the Japanese proletariat is divided by the wage and status structure created by monopoly capital, we may discuss the case of Matsushita Electric, makers of Panasonic television and electronic equipment.

At the top of the Matsushita pyramid is Matsushita Electric itself, where approximately 40,000 workers enjoy the benefits of union membership, guaranteed raises and promotions, medical insurance, pensions, company housing, special vacation and recreation facilities, and so forth. The privileged position of Matsushita's permanent employees is important in creating an extraordinary degree of company loyalty. The main company is the general headquarters for the direction of production and marketing. Below the main company are approximately sixty branch companies, and below this a first subsidiary (*shitauke*) level of approximately sixteen hundred enterprises that make parts of Matsushita. These are not directly controlled by Matsushita nor does Matsushita have any particular obligation to them. Below this is a second subsidiary level and countless domestic industries. Within the larger firms, there is a distinction between regular employees (*honko*) and temporary (*rinjiko*) and “extra” (*shagaiko*) workers. Only regular employees enjoy the benefits mentioned above. In addition, outside companies are contracted to provide special jobs such as guards, janitor service, telephone operators, and so on. In all, there are approximately 300,000 workers in Matsushita's productive network, but as one descends the scale from the top, working

conditions, pay, and job security worsen. In this way, by granting special privileges to some workers and withholding them from others, Matsushita and other capitalists create a discriminatory system designed to maximize profits and minimize the risk of loss.

The educational system is intimately tied into this status structure, since it is the sort of education that creates loyal workers for capitalist enterprise. The educational system also sorts out the youth, assigning each his future status in the employment structure. This is done as early as elementary school, when the students are assigned to one of five grades. Only the highest two will receive, in middle school, the sort of education that will enable them to progress to high school, the university, and the better jobs. The education of the lower three grades will stop with middle school and they will thereby be confined to the lower levels of the employment structure. Children from the ghetto typically are in the lowest grades in school, and are thereby confined, even without considering the discriminatory barriers in employment, to the lower levels of the employment structure.

As we have seen in the Matsushita example, the upper levels of the Japanese employment system enjoy considerable benefits as compared to the lower. These benefits include the so-called paternalistic patterns of "lifetime commitment" (*shushin koyō*) and the "seniority system" (*nenkō joretsu*)—once a worker is hired, he does not leave nor does the company lay him off, and his pay and status within the firm increase with length of service (for a brief description of this system, see Koya Azumi 1969:30-49; for a description of the life-style of members of the aristocracy of labor, see Ezra Vogel 1963). This is not simply the result of the continuation of feudal ideas and values in the modern context, as has been alleged (Abegglen 1958:17), but rather, as Ronald Dore suggests:

It appears that some of the industrial features thought to be traditionally Japanese—the lifelong commitment, the seniority wage system, etc.—are in fact fairly recent innovations, supported by traditional values to be sure, but consciously designed for good profit-maximizing reasons. (Dore 1962:120, quoted by Taira 1970:100; see also Taira 1961, Odaka 1963, Levine 1965, Azumi 1969, Dore 1973).

Japanese paternalism, then, is not feudalism, but capitalism. Paternalism is the instrumentality through which an aristocracy of labor is created.

Paternalistic benefits have the function of dividing privileged from unprivileged workers. The aristocracy of labor can contrast their benefits with the conditions of unprivileged workers, who in turn contrast their condition with the plight of the unemployed in the Industrial Reserve Army. The Industrial Reserve Army is thus an essential part of the system, for it generates important psychological forces supporting the sys-

tem. Workers see themselves as dependent upon their employers, who are viewed as benefactors rather than exploiters. Workers are grateful for having a job, and hostility is directed toward other workers, rather than employers. Further, unemployment together with the benefits enjoyed by the aristocracy of labor generates competition within the working class for desirable jobs, which heightens hostility within the working class.

Thus, although the system, especially its upper levels, appears harmonious and "functional" on the surface, it generates profound frustrations and anxieties that may or may not be repressed. Such feelings exist even within the aristocracy of labor itself, who are much more ambivalent toward their employers than usually recognized (Azumi 1969:35), as well as among blue-collar workers (Cole 1971). It is particularly marked among those who are most actively competing: students. Each stage in the educational ladder is marked by an "examination hell" (*shiken jogoku*), with intense pressure on the student since failure at any stage means virtual abandonment of any hope of a decent career. Understandably, suicide rates among the student age group (15-24) in Japan are the highest in the world (Passin 1965:103-16).

Thus, the unemployed in the Industrial Reserve Army are not only the worst victims of the wage-status system, they form one of the tools for the construction of that system. Significantly, as the reserve army of unemployed has threatened to dry up, the more rigid aspects of the system have tended to weaken and wage differentials within the system have tended to decrease (Azumi 1969:104; Taira 1970:chaps. 2 and 3).

Discrimination in hiring has kept the larger part of the ghetto labor force in the reserve army of unemployed and underemployed, where it finds miscellaneous employment as ragpickers, stall keepers, construction laborers, workers in home industry, and so forth (see Ruyl 1971:chap. 6). As with the aristocracy of labor, paternalistic and semifeudal relations are strong in the industrial reserve army, with the *oyabun-kobun* (literally parent role-child role) relations existing in both the ghetto and the slum (for a discussion of *oyabun-kobun*, see John Bennett and Iwao Ishino 1963). The stagnant pool of ghetto labor has been exploited by smaller capitalists in a number of so-called new ghetto industries (*atarashii buraku sangyō*)—artificial pearl making, net and rope making, fawn-spotted tie dyeing, artificial flower making, and so on—that have become associated with the ghetto as a result of the cheap labor available there.

Modernization Policies and the Industrial Reserve Army

We have seen that the presence of the Industrial Reserve Army in Japan, to which much of the ghetto population has been relegated, has benefited capitalists by depressing wages and creating feelings of depen-

dence and gratitude toward employers and of competition and hostility toward other workers.

However, as the Japanese economy has expanded, labor reserves have tended to diminish, forcing the price of labor up. This has been particularly true for the young graduates sought out by the largest firms for their adaptability and because their labor is the cheapest available (see Broadbridge 1966:79).

To deal with this "labor shortage," Japanese monopoly capital has embarked upon "modernization" policies designed to increase the relative supply of labor, that is, recreate the Industrial Reserve Army and make Japanese capitalism more competitive on the world market as well as on the home market. In the context of the present discussion, the major features of modernization include the following.

1. The revision of the Agrarian law to permit the emergence of large-scale farms. After the Land Reform of 1949, the size of Japanese farms was limited to the amount of land that could be farmed by a single family, and limitations were placed upon the renting of land. Under the revisions, larger scale farms, with greater rationalization and mechanization, can emerge. Obviously, the result will be a reduction of the amount of labor absorbed by agriculture, with the surplus available to replenish the reserve army of unemployed and compete with industrial labor.

2. In the industrial sphere, those firms that have the potential to survive in a modern economy are given encouragement; the remainder are left to themselves. What this accomplishes is to increase the rate of bankruptcies among smaller firms, while bringing the remainder under the tighter control of the large firms, since the backing of a large firm is necessary to obtain credit for modernization (Broadbridge 1966:75). Here again, higher capitalization and greater mechanization means a reduction in the amount of labor required to maintain a given level of output, thus reducing the demand on the labor force, while the owners and workers in the bankrupt enterprises serve to replenish the reserve army of unemployed. Such unemployed workers cannot find employment in the large firms, because of the firms' preference for young workers, but instead must remain in the small enterprise sector or, being unemployed, drift into the slums and ghettos. There has thus been a growth in the size of ghettos and slums associated with the postwar economic boom (see Ruyle 1971:chap. 5).

3. In the monopolistic sector, we noted that large firms try to hire as many young workers as possible, thus keeping their wage level low. Typically, such workers tend to become dissatisfied after a few years because of the monotonous quality of the work and the lack of advancement possibilities and seek work elsewhere. This pattern enables monopoly capital to exploit young workers for a few years while it is cheapest and

get rid of it before it becomes more expensive. It is thus comparable, in many ways, to the exploitation of young peasant girls, which permitted the prewar textile industry to capture international markets.

In recent years, as increasing numbers of majority Japanese continue their education through high school or college, an increasingly high proportion of young middle school graduates looking for work come from the ghetto (from 18 to 27 percent in the Kansai, Ruyle 1971:40). Since the ghetto has become too important a source of labor for monopoly capital to overlook, discriminatory barriers are being relaxed at the lowest level even while they are being maintained at the upper levels. This is illustrated by the remarks of the personnel director of the Japan Battery Company, who was asked about his refusal to hire a high school graduate from the ghetto as a staff member (*shain*):

If we hire a person who lives in a house that is about to fall down, or that is flooded easily, after a disaster the company would be annoyed by the requests for relief or a demand from the union to enter company housing. At the time of the home investigation, there was a young man who looked like a hooligan standing nearby. I don't know if it was a *buraku* or not, but we don't hire people from such bad looking (*gara no warui*) districts as staff members. (Mahara 1969:168)

When asked about hiring middle school graduates as workers (*kōin*), he replied:

About workers, if we made too much of a fuss over the home investigation we wouldn't be able to get many people, so we don't worry about it. For this reason, I think we have a number of people from such districts, but I don't know if they are *buraku* or not. (Mahara 1969:168)

This relaxation of status discrimination for certain categories of labor permits Japanese monopoly capital to exploit certain categories of labor (young, cheap labor) that are in short supply, while continuing to bar other categories that are abundant. The result is that although employment rates improve for some categories, the overall rates continue to worsen.

4. Finally, as the cost of living and wages have tended to increase in Japan, Japanese capital has tended to flow out of Japan into underdeveloped nations such as Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan in search of cheap labor. This is particularly true of the middle ranges of Japanese capital that had earlier exploited ghetto labor in the so-called new ghetto industries (*atarashii buraku sangyō*), industries in which outside capital was attracted to the ghetto by the reserves of cheap labor and which thereby became mainstays of ghetto livelihood, such as artificial pearl making, artificial flower making, glove and mitt making, fish net, brush,

and rope making, and fawn-spotted tie dying. In each of these areas, as ghetto labor has come into competition with labor in underdeveloped nations, real wages have fallen and unemployment risen. Thus, although unemployment and welfare rates in Japan are generally falling, in the ghetto they are rising (Ruyle 1971:96, 315).

Thus it is clear that high economic growth and modernization are not eliminating the underlying material conditions on which outcastism rests; they are merely restructuring these conditions to the benefit of monopoly capital.

Psychopolitical Aspects of Caste

Given the objective existence of a new wage and status structure with a reserve army of unemployed at the bottom, it is scarcely surprising that descendents of the feudal outcastes would come to form the core of this unemployed group and that feudal status discrimination would be perpetuated in the new structure of capitalist status discrimination. But this is not the whole story. The bourgeoisie not only creates the fertile soil in which the seeds of status discrimination grow, it also cultivates the growing plant.

We have already noted how the transition from feudalism to capitalism brought about an increase in prejudice and discrimination against the outcastes. Although this was clearly a result of conscious policies in the late Tokugawa period, there is no evidence that the early Meiji leaders consciously followed policies of using outcastes as scapegoats. It may well be true, nevertheless, in view of the fact that the outcastes formed the foundation stone of the high-rent system in the countryside, that local leaders were instrumental in maintaining discriminatory barriers in rural areas. Although the registry system made the identification of outcastes a simple matter, the new status system of the Meiji period, together with the conscious inculcation of feudal values by the educational system (Passin 1965:152-54), certainly helped perpetuate a psychology conducive to status discrimination. When a government document of 1880 described the outcastes as "Eta and hinin, the lowliest of all the people, almost resembling animals," this not only "made overt the prevalent attitude of social discrimination" (DeVos and Wagatsuma 1966:38), it also served to reinforce it.

Although social discrimination was certainly intense, the outcaste problem did not surface in the social consciousness until after the Rice Riots of 1918. Sydney Greenbie, who was conducting investigations into the outcastes at the time, writes as follows:

Aside from the muffled use of the term, I heard little and saw less of any people answering to this mysterious name (*eta*—EER) during the early months of my stay in Japan. . . . [During the Rice Riots, however,] my investigation received an

impetus and a new turn. They sprang into the political limelight. It is always convenient to blame the dog when anything happens. All over the Empire the poor were rising in rebellion against the high cost of living. . . . The majority of rioters were ordinary laborers—men and women. Yet all of these facts notwithstanding, the *eta* were immediately accused of being at the bottom of the trouble. It was safer to blame them than to trouble the speculators. A flurry of accusations forthwith took place. Accusations flew. Eyes were blinded. The government evaded accounting for the real cause of the riots by instigating investigations into the condition of the *eta*. It was as though a man seized with hunger pangs were to turn to the problem of why crabs walk both ways. (Greenbie 1920:317-20)

The riots were put down by the police and army, but social unrest continued and with it the scapegoating of outcastes. After the rise of the militant, left-wing *Suiheisha* (an organization for the liberation of the outcastes), the Japanese press, controlled by government and big business interests, assisted in "spreading rumors that the Eta are really Bolsheviks, and that they plan to murder prominent Japanese," even though such rumors were groundless. For example:

Under the headline "Eta Advocate Recognition of Red Republic" the reader finds only a forecast that an Eta convention may discuss the matter. (Wildes 1927:293)

As Japanese monopoly capitalism entered its Fascist phase, organizations arose like the *Dai-Nippon Kokusuikai*, sometimes called the Ku Klux Klan of Japan, which

specializes in the wrecking of workers' organizations, the beating up of strikers, the recruiting of strikebreakers, and similar activities. . . . [The *Kokusuikai* also specialized in attacks on the *Suiheisya* [*sic*], a society for the defense of the pariah caste *Eta*, against whom it organized a number of clamorous campaigns and acts of violence. (Tanin and Yohan 1934: 75-77)

The use of outcastes as scapegoats also appears to exist at lower levels of the body politic. Thus, for example, Richard Beardsley, John Hall and Robert Ward (1959:273; see Cornell 1966:164) write of the outcastes near Niike, "whose children are still blamed (often with justice) for most of the pranks and vandalism of the neighborhood" (the authors do not, however, indicate how they know the justice of these accusations). Further, a knowledgeable informant from the *Kenkyujo* told me that Kyoto police usually look first and hardest in the ghetto for suspects (see Caldarola 1968-69:522, on the "real or imagined" discrimination by police against residents of Japanese slums—*doya-goi*).

In the United States one source of racial antagonisms is from the use of blacks as strikebreakers (Baran and Sweezy 1966:264). This does not appear to have been an important factor in Japan, perhaps because of the

strength of Marxist ideas about working-class unity within the Suiheisha. Strike leaders were often sheltered within ghettos (see DeVos and Wagatsuma 1966:53). A further factor is that the repressive measures against strike leaders—legalized police repression and extralegal harassment from Fascist organizations like the Kokusuikai—were extremely strong.

In the coal mining districts of Kyushu, however, monopoly capital did explicitly use outcastism as a basis for “divide and rule” policies. The heavy concentration of outcastes in Northern Kyushu, as well as the precise distribution of ghettos in Northern Kyushu, is the result of the fact that coal mining was an outcaste occupation in this area during the Tokugawa period. When the coal fields began to be developed at the end of the Tokugawa period, *eta* were imported, or commoners were made into *eta* to provide labor. Later, as heavy machinery began to be used, outcastes were pushed out into marginal mines or into poorer jobs within the larger mines. This status distinction between majority and outcaste workers was reflected not only in job classification and wages, but also in dormitory styles. During the Miike coal strike of 1960, the striking union, since it included both outcastes and majority workers, was stigmatized as an *eta* union, and a new union was organized by the company (Mahara 1960). Also, in recent mayoral elections in Fukuoka, one of the candidates was denounced as an outcaste.

Further, it is part of the conscious policy among the capitalist class to refrain from hiring outcaste workers. Thus, according to a 1967 survey by the Nishinomiya City Employment Office (*shokuan*), 39 percent of the companies within its jurisdiction discriminated against outcastes. The personnel officer of one company told an investigator:

Not only our company, but most companies in the Kobe-Osaka-Kyoto area don't hire people from *buraku*. I myself travel widely for home investigations of job applicants from all over the country; the first object of this investigation is to find out whether or not the person is from a *buraku* (Mahara 1969:166-67).

Similarly, at Matsushita Electric, which is said to have an agreement with school placement officials in Osaka to indicate which job applicants are from the ghetto, the following reason was given for not hiring an outcaste:

According to the results of the home investigation, the father worked as a day laborer and the living conditions were slum-like, and so she wasn't desirable. (Mahara 1969:165-66)

As this last quote, and the one quoted earlier indicate, feudal prejudice and capitalist rationality coincide. The ghetto, after all, is a place of substandard economic and social conditions rampant, in the minds of the employers, with crime and political radicalism. To hire workers from such

areas if others can be had would scarcely be economically rational. The reasons given for not hiring workers from the ghetto, of course, apply equally well to workers from slum areas, and a number of observers have noted the existence of discriminatory attitudes toward the Japanese poor (Caldarola 1968-69:521; Taira 1969:168, 176; Befu 1971:140; Moore 1974). Befu has suggested that much of the outcastes' behavior “is in part simply an expression of Japan's culture of poverty, rather than a caste phenomenon” (Befu 1967:772). Given the existence of similar objective conditions in the ghetto and the slum, we would expect attitudes toward outcastes and the ghetto to be readily transferable to the poor and the slum.

Finally, the outcaste liberation movement itself must be placed among the factors that have helped to maintain the awareness of feudal status distinctions. In the prewar period, the Suiheisha followed a policy of “thorough denunciation” (*tetteiteki kyudan*), in which those guilty of discrimination were forced to confess and apologize. Whatever the moral justification of such a policy, it was largely counterproductive, since the guilty confessed without actually changing their feelings and antioutcaste tensions were heightened in the process. In the postwar period, the shortcomings of this “thorough denunciation” policy have been realized, and the present policy is more conciliatory, attempting to make the offender realize his mistake, rather than force a confession of guilt (see Ebuchi 1971:21; Shimahara 1971:23).

Another way in which the liberation movement has contributed to the perpetuation of the visible aspects of outcastism is by forcing the government to practice “reverse discrimination” (*gyaku-sabetsu*). In response to the *suihei* and *kaihō* movements, the government has initiated its own assimilation program (*dōwa-taisaku*). Access to the benefits of this program are not open to all impoverished Japanese, however, only to outcastes. Ghettos are officially recognized as “districts requiring assimilation” (*dōwa chiku*), and only outcastes are eligible for most of the benefits, thus causing resentment among the impoverished residents of neighboring areas (see Cornell 1966:164; Ebuchi 1971:17). In Kyoto, where an ambitious *dōwa* program is completely rehousing some ghettos, a government official put it this way: The city has two programs, a *dōwa* program for the ghetto, and a “slum program” for the slum, but the slum program is “not yet in orbit” (*kido ni noranai*). The reason, according to the official, is that the government has to be “kicked in the ass” (*shiri o tataku*) before it attempts anything for the people. Since there is no movement in the slums, the slum program exists only on paper. Yet a more fundamental reason lies in the government's preference to spend for rapid economic growth rather than on social programs. By practicing *gyaku-sabetsu* and spending only in response to highly vocal demands, the government reduces the amount spent on social programs, thereby

retaining more to finance rapid economic growth (see Sasayama 1969).

It is to be noted here that, just as competition for jobs (which are limited by the conscious policies of the capitalist class) creates secondary antagonisms within the body of employed workers, so competition for social welfare funds (also limited by the conscious policies of the ruling class) helps to create antagonisms within the Industrial Reserve Army. Discrimination based on feudal status ancestry has proved to be an effective issue around which to organize a movement of social protest, but in organizing around this issue, the liberation movement itself helps perpetuate the feudal status distinctions in the social consciousness.

On the Apparent Absence of Ghettos in Tokyo

The analysis is all but complete. We have seen how monopoly capitalism, far from being incompatible with status discrimination, has in fact used and perpetuated status discrimination in both its objective and subjective aspects. This analysis explains the fact that it is precisely the most advanced, industrial areas of Japan—the Kansai, the Inland Sea area, Northern Kyushu—that have shown the greatest increases in outcaste population during the modern period and that status discrimination is still most visible in these areas.

There is, however, one apparent flaw in this explanation: Tokyo. Government surveys, which confirm the growth of the outcaste population in the above areas, indicate a steady decrease in the outcaste population in Tokyo from 1907, to the point that neither of the latest surveys, in 1963 and 1967, indicates any outcastes in Tokyo at all (Ruyle 1971: 366-67). Thus as far as the Japanese government is concerned, there are no outcastes and no outcaste problems in Japan's most modern and industrial city. How is this to be explained?

First, the manner in which the surveys were conducted should be explained. These were not independent investigations; instead the central government merely asked prefectural governments to report the number of ghettos and their population. Thus, the nonexistence of outcastes in Tokyo merely means that the Tokyo metropolitan government did not report any. However, the Tokyo chapter of the *Kaiho Domei* claims there are 300,000 outcastes in Tokyo, and there are major slums which in Tokugawa times were considered outcaste: Sanya was a *hinin buraku*, Asakusa an *eta buraku*. Thus, from an objective standpoint, outcastism certainly exists in Tokyo, but what is lacking is a strong liberation movement that would force the metropolitan government to admit the existence of ghettos. The question that needs to be answered then, is not, "Why are there no outcastes in Tokyo?" but rather, "Why is there no strong liberation movement in Tokyo?"

The explanation, as has been suggested by Hitoshi Abe (1965), lies in

different patterns of mobility in Tokyo compared to western Japan. It is clear that there has been considerable outward mobility and "passing" (Ruyle 1971:71-73), although it is impossible to measure it. If an outcaste wants to sever his ties with the ghetto and attempt to pass, the most sensible place to do so is Tokyo, and as Abe (1965:64) notes, such passing outcastes include active businessmen, men of wealth, high government officials, and university professors. As a result of the large number of passing outcastes in influential positions, Abe argues, a "taboo" has developed against discriminatory references to the outcastes, since one can never be sure one is not talking to a passing outcaste. This taboo has helped submerge outward manifestations of discrimination and further has inhibited the development of a liberation movement in Tokyo.

Further, in contrast with the Kansai, there is no identifiable outcaste elite in Tokyo. We have already discussed how, while an outcaste *zaibatsu* developed in the Osaka leather-working industry, the Tokyo leather-working industry was taken over by Mitsui capital early in the Meiji period. Thus, although in the Kansai there developed a wealthy, identifiably outcaste elite with an economic base in the ghetto and outcaste industries, in Tokyo there was a nonidentifiable group of passing outcastes who were economically integrated with majority society. It is clear that the Kansai outcaste elite formed the motive force behind the development of the liberation movement (DeVos and Wagatsuma 1966:38-39), but in Tokyo a comparable group was lacking. Consequently, the liberation movement has always been weaker in Tokyo than in south-western Japan.

Thus, although the objective conditions of outcastism continue to exist in Tokyo as a result of the primary forces of monopoly capitalism, the subjective, psychological aspects have been submerged by secondary forces that have operated in a direction opposite to that of the Kansai.

Conclusion

Anthropological interpretations of the outcaste problem in Japan have tended to emphasize psychocultural factors to the neglect of the underlying politico-economic system. Indeed, it has even been suggested that caste in Japan cannot be understood in terms of social structural features but rather must be understood in psychological terms. This chapter has demonstrated that status discrimination is generated by particular systems of political economy and therefore can and must be understood in terms of social structure. This is not to deny the importance of psychocultural factors, for these obviously form an important part of the total causal system generating status distinctions and status discrimination. Rather, it is to suggest that psychocultural factors be understood in articulation with politico-economic factors. The analysis is summarized in figure 2.

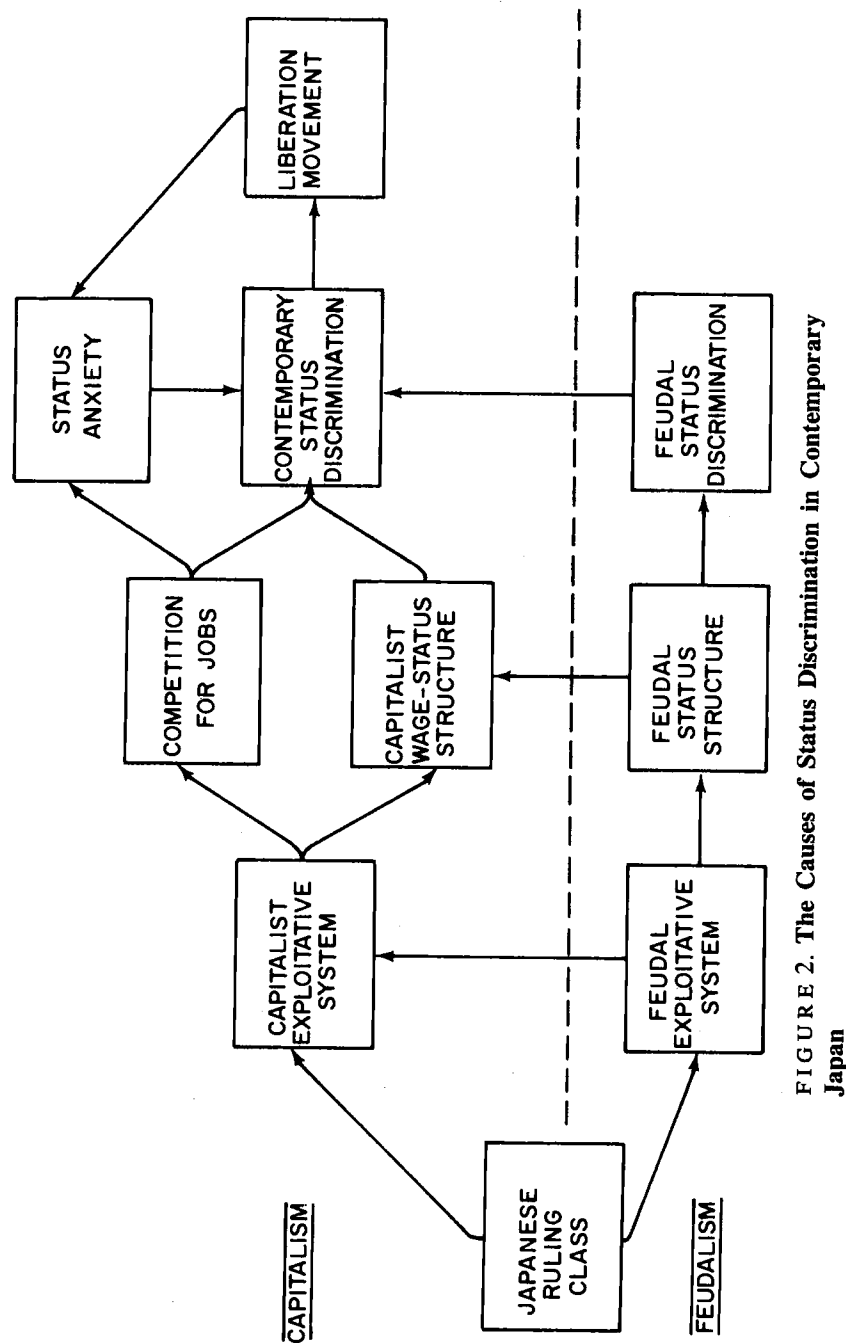


FIGURE 2. The Causes of Status Discrimination in Contemporary Japan

Capitalism is a system of exploitation designed to extract economic surplus from the direct producers, the working class. This system of political economy generates a structure of wage-status differentials and associated life-styles within which the members of the working class are forced to compete. Competition is intense, and the rewards for achievement are considerable, but so are the costs. These costs include, for the successful, a sense of status anxiety that is manifested in feelings of envy toward the more successful and feelings of fear and loathing toward the less successful. For the unsuccessful, the costs include poverty, loss of self-respect, and social discrimination. It is within this discriminatory, competitive wage-status structure that the status system of feudalism has been perpetuated. Further, as the descendents of the feudal outcastes have protested against their assigned place in the new structure, this has had the effect of heightening anxiety and tension, and hence of increasing social discrimination.

Thus, a whole series of politico-economic and psychocultural forces have been at work in the origin and maintenance of status discrimination in Japan. However, it is essential to understand that these forces have been set in motion by, and operate within, particular systems of political economy designed to benefit the Japanese ruling class. The plight of the outcastes in contemporary Japan, then, is indissolubly bound up with the contemporary system of class rule, capitalism.

If this analysis is sound, perhaps Sano Manabu's suggestion, that the solution to the outcaste problem can lie only in a socialist revolution, should be examined. It should be stressed here that socialism involves more than a simple change in the political system. Socialism involves a total social revolution, the overthrow of class rule and its associated institutions (see Ruyle 1977b, 1977c). Only under these conditions can status discrimination be eliminated. If, as many argue, the elimination of class rule is impossible, the possibility for the elimination, rather than the amelioration or modification, of outcastism is indeed remote. On the other hand, if, as many others argue, socialism is indeed a possibility, then perhaps there is cause for a greater degree of optimism.

Notes

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gle, see Hiroshi Wagatsuma 1976). I would like to thank the National Institute of Mental Health for its support. I would also like to thank my dissertation sponsor, Morton H. Fried; the members of my dissertation committee, Conrad Arensberg, Koya Azumi, Myron Cohen, and James Nakamura, for their encouragement; Herbert Passin, for contributing greatly to my understanding of Japan; the discussants at the 1972 AAA Symposium, Gerald Berthoud and Eleanor Leacock; and others who commented on this earlier work, especially Harumi Befu, George DeVos, and Hiroshi Wagatsuma, for their advice and criticism, without which the paper would have been much weaker. None of the above-mentioned individuals necessarily agrees with my interpretation. Indeed, several people have criticized me for what they see as an uncritical acceptance of the Marxist position of the *Baraku Mondai Kenyujo*. Responsibility for any errors of fact and opinion is entirely my own.

1. The term *eta*, which literally means "filthy," is inappropriate for scholarly use, despite its widespread currency within anthropology and other disciplines (see Brameld 1969:106-7). The new term *burakumin*, literally, "people of the hamlet (or ghetto)," is generally acceptable (see DeVos and Wagatsuma 1966:4-5), although it, too, has taken on undesirable connotations. I prefer to use the simple English word *outcaste* for a person of feudal outcaste ancestry, and *ghetto* for the places where outcaste families live (*buraku*). It should be pointed out that, although some people are clearly outcaste and others clearly not, the lines between outcaste and nonoutcaste and ghetto and nonghetto are by no means clearly drawn (see Ruyle 1971:23-27).

2. The basic framework for this analysis is taken from Yoshihisa Tokita (1969) and others associated with the Outcaste Problems Research Institute in Kyota (*Buraku Mondai Kenyujo*).

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