

Sheldon Harris, *FACTORIES OF DEATH :*
A JAPANESE EDITION

Tokyo : Kashiwa Shobo, 1999

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[The following is an enlarged English version of the review of Prof. Harris' book. The original Japanese review appeared in local newspapers in almost all prefectures of Japan under contract with the KYODO News Agency. their circulation is more than ten million.]

The author is a Professor Emeritus of modern history at California State University at Northridge. He is a 70 year old historian. Fourteen years ago, he visited the ruins of a former Japanese biological warfare [BW] Unit, Unit 731, the Factory of Death in Northeast China, and he was shocked. Since then, his life's work became a search to reveal everything known about this BW crime.

He visited and investigated every Factory of Death known to have existed in China, and he also discovered a number of reports and documents relating to BW that are located in many U.S. archives. We cannot deny the occurrence of these horrible BW crimes committed by the network of the Death Factories, since there exist objective and official investigations and documents which confirm them.

The Japanese government, however, has tried to vigorously conceal the existence of these death factories, since their existence would raise the question of the responsibility for the atrocities perpetrated there.

The author was horrified by the BW crimes. At the same time, he was even more

horrified by the fact that the U.S. Military had made a deal with the leading staff and medical scientists associated with the BW units to receive their secret medical records in exchange for their immunity from war crimes charges. Thus, the author's indictment is also directed toward the U.S. government for having concealed the information on these war crimes.

The spirit that moves Harris to write his shocking accounts is not for the benefit of the U.S. but for humanity as a whole. Regardless of the individual's nationality, if a medical scientist violates the morality of medical science, he or she should not be excused for having conducted immoral research such as the human experiments which Harris exposes as having been conducted at these many sites.

How were the experimental results from the work of these death factory scientists and staff communicated and/or utilized?

First, the BW medical scientists brought lot of biohazards not only to Chinese, but also Japanese people.

After the war, the U.S. Military ordered the Japanese government to set up the Japanese National Institute of Health (JNIH) which was staffed with many leading medical scientists who cooperated with the network of the BW units. Since its establishment in 1947 until the middle of the 1960s the JNIH was always controlled and supervised by the U.S. Army 406th Medical Laboratory (USAML), an Asian branch of the U.S. Army's BW research center, headquartered at Fort Detrick, Frederick, Md. The JNIH was even ordered by the USAML to continue their study of some unsolved experimental research still being conducted within the BW network of the Imperial Japanese Army. Thus, the JNIH continued to cooperate with the network of the U.S. Army's BW institutes.

In such a way, the corrupt and inhumane character and tradition of the BW medical scientists of Japan were inherited by most of the staff of the JNIH. For example, many human experiments of pathogens and ineffective vaccines were conducted on babies, children and prisoners without informed consent. Further, a compulsory system of applying many ineffective vaccines, including influenza vaccine, was introduced on babies, infants and children in the name of public health. So, since the establishment of the JNIH, almost all Japanese babies, infants, children and citizens have been victimized with the tradition of the BW network.

In the Preface to the Japanese edition of his book, Harris exposes one of the most terrible current misdeeds committed by the JNIH. From 1982 through 1985, the JNIH was informed of the danger of the unheated blood products. But, in collaboration with many pharmaceutical companies, the JNIH continued to affix governmental stamps "Approved by NIH" on these products. As a result, about 2,000 hemophiliacs were infected with the *HIV*, and over 650 of them have already died.

The JNIH's responsibility for this misdeed was officially confirmed by the Minister of Health and Welfare in the Diet. Thus, in 1997, the JNIH could not but change its infamous name to the National Institute of Infectious Diseases [NIID]. Of course, the agency's original character is still alive in the renamed NIID.

Second, Harris reports that the U.S. continued to expand biological warfare research. For example, in the early 1960s, the U.S. Military conducted field BW experiments against rice and wheat fields in Okinawa. In 1962, the highest officials of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces were invited to be trained in the U.S. at its top secret biological weapons factory. Thus, the morals of medical scientists, as the heirs to the traditions of the BW network, are still alive. This is the reason

why the author concludes his study with a subtitle, "The Final Irony."

The author proves everything he discusses in his book by relying on a massive amount of investigations and official reports. With this solid research, the book becomes one of the best in modern historical studies on this subject.

The Preface to the Japanese edition is, itself, a new and excellent contribution toward the study of Japanese modern history. It is strongly critical of the ultranationalists who still do not accept the reality that Japanese Militarists were responsible for committing the war crimes in the invasion of Asian and Pacific countries. There is still such a group of politicians and scholars, even after 54 years since the end of WWII, who both hide and negate the existence of these crimes.

The book also includes an Epilogue by Mr. Shoji Kondo, the translator, who is one of the best experts in the research of the BW network. His explanation of technical terms, footnotes and list of new references in Japanese as appendices might be most informative to non-Japanese experts on the modern history of Japan.

In this respect, I appreciate that the Japanese edition is more informative than the English language edition, because it drew upon new information that was discovered after the English language edition was published in 1994. Needless to say, the original English paperback edition (ISBN 0-415-13206-1) deserves to be carefully studied.

Note : For more information about the JNIIH-NIID, please see our website at <http://village.infoweb.ne.jp/~yoken> .

Acknowledgement : The author is grateful to Professor Erik E. Christy for his kindness in having read the draft and made helpful corrections.