

MEDICAL EDUCATION IN JAPAN

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THE following brief sketch is not written with the purpose of recording accurate statistics on this subject, but rather to give the reader a general idea of how such work is carried on in this far-off Eastern country.

While en route for Korea I was fortunate enough to meet Dr. Avison (M.B., Toronto) in Tokyo, and to be invited by him to make a tour of inspection of several of the best medical institutions in Japan. Seven of the fourteen medical colleges, as well as the famous Kitasato Institute and Imperial Institute for Infectious Diseases were visited. Thus a good insight into Japanese methods of medical education was obtained.

There are at present between 6,000 and 7,000 medical students enrolled, and hundreds of young men waiting to enter the ranks as soon as accommodation is available. The young men of Japan are determined that lack of education shall not bar their progress in after life; as a result all departments of the universities are likewise full and overflowing. Those who can not secure education during the day, manage to attend one of the many night schools during the evening.

Two standards of medical colleges exist, under the Imperial University. Entrance to the higher grade requires a standard almost equivalent to senior matriculation, while junior matriculation would give a man an excellent pass to the second grade college. The student receives a four year course, and during this period covers the same subjects, and in much the same order as in any American college.

The fee per year varies at different institutions from \$25.00 to \$50.00. This in most instances covers all official expenses. Even these small fees would be prohibitive to our students in Korea, who pay the small sum of \$50.00 for a full four year course. Naturally such small fees do not go far in supporting the institution,

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which derives its funds either from the Imperial Government, Local Government, hospital attached or private subscriptions.

In one instance a splendid medical school and hospital were not only entirely self-supporting, but at the same time paying off an inaugural debt of \$400,000.00 at the rate of \$40,000.00 per year, and banking \$5,000.00 annually. The Dean of this college was kind enough to go into the details of the high finance, which was most interesting, but unfortunately too lengthy to repeat here.

Before leaving the student, it might be interesting to follow his career after graduation. Until recently, unless a graduate of one of the universities, a further Imperial Government examination had to be passed, before a license to practise was granted.

Few men, however, pass directly into active practice. If the graduate possesses unusual talent he will most likely receive an honorary position in one of the medical schools as an assistant. After a few years a small salary of \$15.00 to \$25.00 per month may be received which is carefully placed away to help defray the expenses of a trip to Germany, which usually follows three or four years later. Post-graduate work in Germany is very essential before an important position can be obtained.

The average graduate is dependent upon his father for support for several years after leaving college, during which time a small practice is being established.

Some remunerative positions can be obtained in the smaller private hospitals. Here from \$25.00 to \$35.00 is the usual salary. The men are well trained but local conditions make it almost impossible for the physician to obtain a salary sufficient to live on. The majority of the people have not yet been educated sufficiently to appreciate the value of a trained doctor, and also seem to be inately fond of "patent medicines". Moreover, the masses are poor and will not part with their hard-earned money unless they absolutely have to.

Getting back to the subject of medical education, the facilities for teaching are generally excellent. One thing that impressed me more than anything else was the splendid collections of wax-work models. Everything had been made in wax with wonderful dexterity. Even bacterial growths had been so perfectly imitated in wax that one could not distinguish the artificial from the real. These models were of course used largely for demonstration purposes. A unique collection is that of Professor Dohi's at Tokyo. Here, beside many models representing almost every known skin disease, are several series of models depicting in life-like exactness the effect of radium and other similar treatment on malignant growths.

The class-rooms are large and the furnishing satisfactory, but not as elaborate or comfortable as in western institutions. One must, however, remember that many of these buildings are from twenty to thirty years old.

The laboratories are well illuminated usually with continuous glass windows, but the working place per man is often too limited. An excellent idea for obtaining good light for all the class, is the elevated platform. One row of desks follows closely the contour of the room, a second similar row is placed a few feet in the rear, but on a platform raised about eighteen inches above the level of the floor. Thus all students obtain equally good light. This plan seemed to me well worth adopting where space is limited.

The equipment of most laboratories is very good. The apparatus and instruments are, however, almost exclusively of German origin. Japanese material will undoubtedly replace the German as new equipment is required. Excellent native microtomes are on the market, and a good resistant glass ware has recently been produced.

In all the Government medical schools there is evidence of much research work being done. Each department seemed to have plenty of room and equipment and frequently the advantage of an individual library. The latter is, however, very much German. In one instance, out of about twenty journals there were but three in the English language, the others being German. It was interesting to note that two of the three were journals of recent publication.

The professors are men of high standing and like our own frequently appear profound and studious. Practically all are Japanese graduates who have taken post-graduate work for several years in Germany. Germany is the ideal in medical education. This is quite natural as German professors introduced and founded medical science in Japan, many years ago, and since then hundreds of the leading Japanese physicians have taken post-graduate work in that country. Many busts and occasionally a shrine to eminent German professors are to be seen in the university grounds, indicating appreciation of past services.

The students all appear to speak a certain amount of German and many of the text-books are in the same language.

However, there is some consolation in knowing that the Japanese navy is just as English as Japanese medicine is German, and the people generally are markedly pro-British.

Before closing, a few words must be added in praise of the

Kitasato Institute. Dr. Kitasato is so widely known as an eminent scientist that it will be gratifying for many of his friends to know that he is now directing a private institute which is doing for Japan what the Lister Institute is for medicine in England, and the Pasteur Institute for France. A most enjoyable morning was spent with him and his assistants. Working with Dr. Kitasato are Drs. Hata, Shiga, Miyajima, and Kondo, as well as many other younger men of first-rate ability.

Another excellent institution where similar work is being carried on, is the Imperial Institute for Infectious Diseases.

From this brief sketch one can realize how medical education is going ahead in this somewhat isolated country, and need not look with surprise at the fact that the leading bacteriologist in America to-day is a product of its labours.