

# Complex Routine Set Pattern for Downfall Of General Staff

(This concludes the articles written by Yoshiko Seki on the last days of the Japanese Empire.)

By YOSHIKO SEKI

The Imperial Japanese General Staff was a massive organization of levels, classes and clans. It was composed of military officers, both commissioned and non-commissioned, and civilian officials who were divided into two categories; higher civil service officials and junior officials or the clerical staff.

**The higher civil service officials** were exclusively those who had passed the higher civil service examination after having graduated from the government established universities. Graduates of private colleges and universities were disregarded, a trend to be found in Japanese government circles generally. Thus a clannish faction always dominated there, which naturally affected promotion. Those of the same clan were likely to be promoted, and others received little recognition. It was really bureaucratic.

### Class Feeling

One predominant characteristic of the government office was the class feeling between higher civil service officials and junior officials or the clerical staff. The same thing was true of the General Staff members who were graduates of the Military College, and non-staff officers who were graduates of the Military Academy.

The presence of any General Staff member in a room brought about an air of dignity or high acclamation. Coming back from official tours to the South Sea island then occupied by Japan, the General Staff members never forgot to bring something back as a souvenir to bestow upon their superiors. Such being the case, General Staff members were never short of sugar, cigarettes, and other things which the Japanese people lacked.

Moreover, a ridiculous Army rule prohibited feminine workers at the General Staff from appearing in gay apparel and make-up. Once a week women employees were forced to attend lessons in Japanese style sewing, tea ceremony, and flower-arrangement, as if these subjects were necessary at that stage of the war. They called this education military discipline. All this was taking place during supposedly the most difficult and busiest time for the General Headquarters. Thus wasting precious time, we went on the way that gradually led to our downfall.

### Punctuality Demanded

Salutation to one's superiors had to be observed without fail. Besides, there was one thing in particular which was strictly enforced. That was punctuality. However, that did not apply to the time of leaving the office, but only to the hour of entering. The overtime work was not counted. The employees who were late had to sign their names at the gate, and later the paper was passed around so that they would be shamed. This was merely one phase of the nonsensical ultraformalism executed in that office.

For 13½ months while I was there—almost daily for the latter half of the year—we had to run down the stairs to the underground air raid shelter whenever the siren sounded. The tunnel led to a very finely furnished room, fully equipped to house government offices. Perhaps a thousand of us were under this one government building at once.

(Allied bombing of Japan increased following the surrender of Germany in May, 1945. The Allied forces had practically completed the encirclement of Japan by that spring. The Philippines had been recovered, and heavy fighting was in progress on Okinawa, on the doorstep of the Japanese home islands. Ed. Note)

### Long Hours in Shelter

Sometimes we were down in the shelter for two or three hours and while the men were on look out duty, we girls took our own knitting, sewing and reading with us. These air raids, having delayed our routine office work, meant late

hours. No matter how late we were kept in the office, we were to appear at 8 a.m. the following morning.

About 8:30 one winter evening, while I was going home with an escort—usually girls found officers going home in the same direction—an air raid warning came just as we approached the railway station. My heart pounded, as I knew a moving object was sure to attract the bombers. Fortunately, the attack must have been in another part of Tokyo.

There were two kinds of air raid sirens; the preliminary warning, a long, drawn-out wail, and then the sharp, staccato shrieks signifying "Planes Overhead."

I got so weary of running to the air raid shelter that I would watch the actual attack. Once, as I was going out of my home to enter the underground shelter in our front yard, an explosive shell from one of the planes which were machine-gunning the city, fell right at my feet. Even though it was a dud, I dashed for the shelter, shaking in my boots in terror.

### Practical Clothes

My everyday clothes were Western ski pants, blouse and sweater, and a hood well-padded to protect my head in the underground tunnels. No skin could be exposed even in the hottest part of the summer because of the danger from flying, white-hot fragments of incendiary bombs. When the girls had to run through the fire they dipped their hoods in cold water and put them on wet to protect their heads and faces. Gloves made of leather completed the outfit.

Never shall I forget the sight of the city in flames at night, and the awful trapped feeling I would get watching the spreading crimson in the skies. But that is all past. I do not have such dreams any longer and they are gradually fading into memories.

### Family Remains in Home

My family still lives in my home, which was damaged by air raids, though homes a few yards away were ruined. This time of year the weather is similar to that in Oregon. The first frosts came late in November, and snow comes in January.

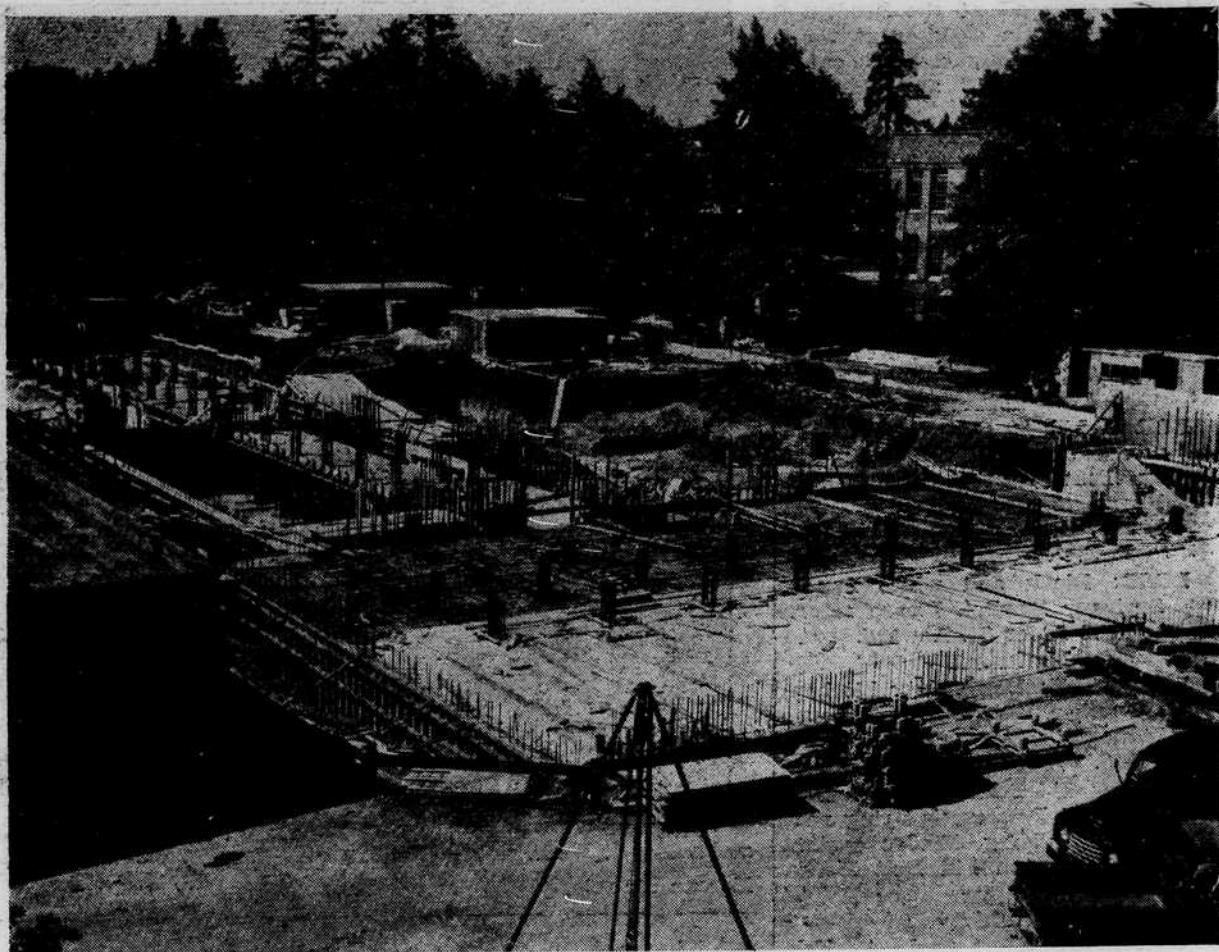
I am now a student in the University of Oregon and am learning how my American neighbors live. I have close friends at Stanford, Columbia, Mills, and Michigan, and our sincere hope is to be able to put democracy to work in our own country.

## Ride 'Em!



RODEO QUEEN—Sorja Rueme, 18, will reign as queen of the 11th annual Palm Springs, Calif., winter rodeo, which will touch off the 1951 "Wild West" season.

## As It Was Six Months Ago



JUST SIX MONTHS AGO, the new Science Building looked like the picture above. Taken in July, 1950, the foundation for the building had just been laid. Construction now has raised the building three stories, with the permanent shape easily recognizable. Located across University from the Journalism building, the new science building is expected to be ready for classes when school opens in September. Students presently taking science in McClure, Deady, and other campus buildings will be moved to the new building. McClure will eventually be razed to make way for the new school of journalism building.

# Do You Know a Rumor--- when you hear one?

During the war we knew enough to mistrust rumors and particularly knew how dangerous it was to spread them. We knew then that rumors affected our unity, and unity was vital to winning the war.

But perhaps we don't know that rumors are just as dangerous today as they were during the war.

Because—rumors about other groups, other religions and other races always threaten our national unity—without which we cannot hope to survive.

Be an active citizen—help keep your country strong, united and

secure—a good place in which men can live together, prosper together and pursue happiness together.

Make sure that you are not spreading rumors against a race or religion. Speak up, wherever you are, against prejudice, and work for better understanding. Remember that's being a good American.



Accept or reject people on their individual worth

