

Japanese Suicide Prone, Is Claim

By CHARLES R. SMITH
 Tokyo — Almost every Japanese schoolboy knows and loves—the tale of the 47 Ronin.

It is a story of mass suicide, 47 brave Samurai warriors who slashed their stomachs in true hara kiri fashion and died without flinching at the orders of the Tokugawa Shogun more than two and a half centuries ago.

This was Japan's most famous mass suicide. It is recorded in history books and has been the basis for hundreds of stories, plays and movies.

On Aug. 22, 1945, a week after World War II ended with Japan's defeat, 10 members of the ultra-nationalist Japan Productive party sat in a circle on the ground in downtown Tokyo. As they chanted their apologies to Emperor Hirohito for losing the war and bringing humiliation to him and the nation they pulled pins from hand grenades and blew themselves to bits.

Wives Too
 Less than a week later, three wives of these victims went to the same spot and shot themselves to death.

There have been no more such mass suicides in Japan these days. But there has been no slackening of the rate of self-destruction.

Every 30 minutes somebody dies by his own hand in Japan. For every three who succeed, two fail.

Some who succeed are frustrated students. Some are disappointed students.

Some take their lives because of financial troubles. Some want to end their existence because of crippling injuries.

Some are like the teen-age high school girl who killed herself because she could not get rid of pimples that spotted her face.

Some are like Mitsuru Sasagawa.

Seeking Entry
 Sasagawa was 21 when he died. He was studying hard for the tough entrance examinations that Japanese students face when seeking entry into the major colleges. He had failed twice. He was studying every spare moment.

His father, Koi Sasagawa, told his son to rest and not study so hard when the youth complained of the constant noise of a pile driver at a construction site near their home.

One day the youth rushed outside and raced down the street. Before anyone knew what he was doing or could stop him, young Sasagawa thrust his head under the pile driver, which crushed his skull like an eggshell.

Some of the suicides are like 24-year-old Shigeyuki Asano, of a small town in Aichi Prefecture. Despondent because of his poor health, Asano smashed a window in a Nagoya television tower and leaped to his death.

Sleeping Pills
 Some who try but fail are like 22-year-old Shoji Umekawa, a frustrated movie and television actor. Umekawa took an overdose of sleeping pills. A friend found him before it was too late.

Like so many of those who succeed, Umekawa's reason for wanting to end his own life was unrequited love.

There are many popular suicide spots in Japan.

One of the most popular is the crater of Mt. Mihara, an active volcano on Okhima island, south of Tokyo. It became popular in the 1930's when two high school girls leaped to their deaths after seeing a sad show by the famed all-girl Takarazuka troupe.

Double Suicides
 It was in the 1930's that double suicide became popular. Frustrated lovers usually were the victims.

So popular did double suicide become in the 1930's that a popular song was composed about it. The song was dedicated to a Keio university student and his lover who took poison and lay down to die together on Sakatayama hill at Otso while watching the sun go down over the ocean.

What drives the Japanese to take their own lives at such a rate, second only to East Germany?

The Japanese Welfare min-

Interior Spokesmen Deny Office Move

Washington — (UPI) — Interior Department officials have "categorically denied" any intention of moving Bonneville Power Administration and Bureau of Indian Affairs offices out of Portland, Sen. Wayne Morse (D-Ore.) said today.

But Morse said the Treasury Department intends to go ahead with plans to transfer its division of disbursement office from Portland to Ogden, Utah.

Morse said he had voiced "strong objections" to the transfer, which will affect about 25 employees.

Radiation Research Center Started on University Campus

Corvallis—A new Radiation Research Center that will be the key facility in future high level radioactivity research in Oregon has been started at Oregon State university.

The \$755,000 Center also will be used to train advanced students in the fields of nuclear engineering, nuclear sciences, and radiation health. President James H. Jensen pointed out. A tremendous need exists for such highly-trained workers, he added.

Oregon State's efforts in radiation research date back 15 years when the chemistry department started work with radioisotope labeled com-

pounds as tracers. Now, there are about 50 research projects under way on campus involving radioactive materials or radiation effects. They include studies on sterilization by radiation of meat and seafood, insect resistance to chemicals, radiation resistant bacteria, effects of radiation on the nervous system, and use of radioisotopes as a research tool in biological sciences, agriculture, forestry, physical sciences, engineering, etc.

NOW YOU KNOW

The practice of adding an extra day to every fourth year (Leap Year) was originated by the astronomer of Julius Caesar in 46 B.C., according to the Encyclopedia Britannica. They determined that since the solar year's length was 365 days and six hours, the extra hours should be added up into a full day every fourth year.

All high level radiation work will be done at the Center; low level radiation studies will be continued in the various departments. A Campus Radiation Safety committee is managing an Atomic Energy Commission "broad byproduct license," under which such research projects are carried out.

Radiation health—or the implications, good and bad, that radiation has on humans—will draw special attention in the expanded program of work planned after the Center is completed, Wang said. Equipment will be provided

to do such basic work as measuring nuclear fallout in the Oregon atmosphere; checking radioactivity levels in foods; measuring minute amounts of radioactivity, derived either from natural or artificial sources; and producing high levels of ionizing radiation for studies in radiation science.

Used Successfully
 In recent years, too, radioisotopes have been used successfully as a diagnostic means for a number of common diseases, Wang added. Half of the funds for construction of the Center came from federal grants; the rest from state funds. Federal grants include \$200,000 from the National Science Foundation and \$177,640 from the National Institutes of Health.

The Atomic Energy Commission is expected to provide additional funds for special equipment in the Center in addition to a \$25,000 equipment grant awarded a few months ago. It is anticipated that a big research nuclear reactor will be established at the Center in years to come. The building design was developed by a team of OSU scientists.

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Circuit Court to Hear Sex Cases

Portland — (UPI) — Dist. Atty. George Van Hoomissen said Wednesday that all sex-of-fense cases in the county involving children under 16 would be prosecuted in circuit court.

He said he ordered the action, which was recommended by the Legislative Interim Committee on Social Problems, to avoid delays in prosecution and to protect child witnesses from having to testify in more than one court hearing.