# New Facts about US Payoff to Japan's Biological Warfare Unit 731

Tsuneishi Kei-ichi

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By Tsuneishi Keiichi

Translated by James Orr

[Sponsored by the Nagasaki Peace Museum last July 9, the top Japanese researcher on Japan's wartime biological weapons (BW) program, Tsuneishi Keiichi, gave a public lecture in Nagasaki together with the director of China's Unit 731 War Crimes Museum in Harbin. Tsuneishi's talk, entitled "The Image and Reality of Unit 731," explained the declassified American intelligence records he discovered in 2005, revealing that U.S. Occupation authorities not only granted immunity from prosecution to Japanese scientists in exchange for their unrivaled BW data, but also made direct cash payments to obtain their experimental results. ("The United States and the Japanese Mengele," a recent Japan Focus article (http://www.japanfocus.org/products/details/2177)by Christopher Reed, reproduced the 1947 documents from GHQ's G-2 intelligence unit.)

In the translated article below, Tsuneishi discusses his suspicion that G-2 embellished the importance of evidence it obtained about Unit 731's human experiments involving bubonic plague, in order to forestall a planned cutoff in the flow of American public money for secret intelligence purposes. "G-2's politically motivated manipulation of data" may have included planting the possibly false notion that the so-called "Q report" described plague experiments on Chinese prisoners. Such intelligence manipulation seems inexplicable, since horrific human experimentation by Japanese doctors involving anthrax and glanders had already been confirmed in uncontested reports. Amidst the intensifying Cold War, though, G-2 in Japan went to great lengths to avoid any constraints being placed on its activities by civilians in Washington.

Tsuneishi clarified for Japan Focus that Unit 731 (as Japan's several BW units have come to be collectively known) had indeed used plague in China in both laboratory and field settings, despite the questionable veracity of the Q report. He noted that the key June 1947 "Fell Report" on Japanese BW activities against humans contains a section on plague with the following seven subsections: infectious or lethal dose; direct infection; immunization experiments; bomb trials; spraying experiments; stability; and infected fleas. Moreover, a former Japanese member of Unit 731 told the Tokyo District Court in 2001 that he prepared plague-infected rats to be dropped from airplanes, and scrubbed for autopsies the bodies of prisoners killed in plague experiments. A second former member of Japan's BW program testified that he air-dropped plague-infected fleas near Hangzhou in 1940 and Nanjing in 1941. The Japanese court ruled that Unit 731 had seriously harmed the Chinese plaintiffs, but rejected their lawsuit claiming compensation on technical grounds.

Tsuneishi said his research into patterns of plague outbreaks in China suggests that the 1940 epidemic in Changchun occurred naturally and was not Unit 731-induced. He added that published accounts of Japanese doctors injecting large numbers of Changchun residents with a

"vaccine" actually containing plague pathogens, the supposition of Sheldon Harris in Factories of Death (http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=br_ss_hs/103-7769973-0094220?platform=gurupa&url=index%3Dblended&keywords=harris%2C+factories+of+death&Go.x=0&Go.y=0&Go=Go) (p. 131), appear to be false. None of these distinctions detract from the murderous reality of Japanese biological warfare in China. Rather, they underscore the importance of careful historical research—and of vigilant civilian oversight of the intelligence community's self-interested excesses. There are clear parallels between G-2's misinformation campaign and the Bush administration's more recent political manipulation of intelligence about Saddam Hussein's possession of weapons of mass destruction. While the former was facilitated by the Cold War, the latter was made possible by the ongoing war against terrorism, resulting in America's war in Iraq and a looming civil war there.

Jing-Bao Nie, a physician and medical ethicist of New Zealand's University of Otago, presented an ethical examination of the American cover-up of Unit 731's medical atrocities in the May/June 2006 issue of The American Journal of Bioethics. Nie proposed that the U.S. government should issue a formal apology and condemnation of Unit 731 war crimes, while offering some form of compensation for its "complicity after the fact" in covering them up. "The Japanese government," Nie wrote, "continues to uphold the 'policy of the three nos' with respect to its medical war crimes: no admission, no repentance and apology, and no compensation to victims." It follows that Japan should confront the legacy of Unit 731 by admitting, repenting, apologizing and compensating. Committed to the opposite approach, the Japanese government currently admits the existence of Unit 731, but says it has no knowledge of the unit's activities.

But "Japan" is not a monolithic entity. The Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, which held the 10-day exhibit on Unit 731 last month, may be the boldest and most effective peace museum in Japan today. With its homepage (http://www.d3.dion.ne.jp/~okakinen/English/indexE.htm)relating through text and photographs the "other side of Nagasaki's truth," the museum's activities highlight growing regional cooperation within reparations movements for Japan's various war crimes. The Nagasaki facility has "sister museum" relationships with the Unit 731 museum in Harbin as well as the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Museum. As part of its "Wings of Hope" exchange program, every year the Nagasaki Peace Museum sends local students to Nanjing and invites massacre survivors to share their testimony in Nagasaki.

The museum's staff includes second-generation victims of the Nagasaki atomic bombing, and takes the lead in redress efforts for both Chinese and Korean victims of wartime forced labor in area coal mines. Activists work together with the main museum for Chinese forced labor in Tianjin, China, and the South Korean government's truth commission on forced labor. The museum's discussion of the city's tragic A-bomb experience focuses mainly on Korean victims, as Christian pastor Oka Masaharu was a longtime advocate of the rights of local ethnic Koreans until his death in 1994. The museum opened the following year and continues to educate Japanese and non-Japanese alike about the nation's primary role as victimizer during the Asia Pacific War. –William Underwood]

Intelligence manipulation casts a shadow

I was more shocked this time than I was ten or so years ago when I learned of the existence of three English-language documents that the old Kwantung Army Epidemic Prevention and Water Supply Department, the germ warfare unit known as Unit 731, had provided the Americans. These were "The report of 'A'" [treating anthrax];

"The report of 'G'" [treating glanders]; and "The report of 'Q'" [treating plague].

Based on official documents of the Allied general headquarters (GHQ) military intelligence section (G-2), I learned this time that these documents had been bought with cash from the American military.

Although biological weapons expert Dr. [Norbert H.] Fell [of Fort Detrick, Maryland] was the individual who conducted the investigation of Unit 731's human experiments and directed personnel connected to the unit to prepare the three reports, the intelligence organization G-2 was controlling things in the background.

I wasn't surprised that the American investigation was conducted under this structure, but I was astonished by its actual implementation. That's because the documents were acquired through payments to Unit 731 doctors from a secret U.S. Army fund.

Is it normal for victors in war to treat losers this way? At the very least it is certainly not something they wish to make public. One would think that in gathering intelligence at war's end the victor usually commands cooperation based on his superior position, partly through intimidation.

A subtle difference arose in the respective positions of Fell and G-2 when, in the middle of the investigation, it appeared that use of the secret funds was going to be restricted by the American home government. G-2 tried to play up the results of Fell's investigation so that they could appeal to high-level officials in the Army on the basis of the program's success.

The three dissection reports mentioned above were prepared for that purpose. Although it hasn't been located yet, we know from American documents that there exists a "report by 19 doctors" on human experiments. They contain detailed reports of human experiments and the content is shocking.

However, Dr. Fell, who oversaw the writing of these reports, considered the results to be of only limited value, noting: "The results obtained with human beings were somewhat fragmentary because a sufficiently large number of subjects to permit statistically valid conclusions was not used in any of the experiments." G-2, on the other hand, praised the results in the highest possible manner in fierce resistance against efforts to limit the secret funding.

What we have here is a kind of intelligence manipulation.

G-2, in charge of military intelligence, and Fell, the biological weapons expert, disagreed in their evaluations of the data they obtained regarding human experiments.

But it was the "high value" that G-2 stressed that has become established history. One should say this is the result of G-2's politically motivated manipulation of data, with the aim of maintaining its secret funding from the home government overriding the specialist Fell's reasoned analysis.

And perhaps it is this particular turn of events that has cast a pall over Unit 731 that prevents us from grasping its totality, reflecting also the opacity of Japanese-American relations, necessarily creating a doubly gloomy picture.

One aspect of the intelligence manipulations is discernable in the handling of the A, G, and Q reports. The reports are currently preserved in the U.S. Library of Congress, under the title, "Japanese medical experiments during World War II."

The archivist has placed each original sheet inside clear plastic holders to prevent damage, but "medical experiments" strongly suggests

human experimentation. Until now some American scholars have introduced these dissection reports as "undeniable proof" of Unit 731's experimentation with human beings. But the truth of the matter is a little different.

It is certain that Unit 731's experiments involving the infection of people with anthrax and glanders, as reported in A and G, constitute human experiments. On the other hand, the Q report records investigation of an outbreak of plague in Northeast China [Manchuria] in 1940.

Where in the Q report, human dissection subjects are identified by initials, and their ages and genders clearly indicated, in the A and G reports, there are no names or initials. As for age, only occasionally is "young man" noted for age and there are times when even the sex is not entered.

In the Q report the infected subjects are handled as human beings; in the A and G reports the infected subjects are regarded as no more than "guinea pigs." It is quite possible that the manipulation of intelligence by G-2, which assigned "the greatest value" to Fell's investigation, planted the notion that the Q plague report treated human experimentation.

Speaking as one who has researched Unit 731 for many years, we need to wipe away the smudge left from the manipulation of intelligence and get at the whole picture by examining the actual medical practice. Sixty years after the war's end, I feel as if I have taken on a new project.

Tsuneishi Keiichi is a Kanagawa University professor who specializes in disarmament of biological and chemical weapons. He is the leading specialist on Japan's wartime biological and chemical warfare Unit 731. This article was distributed by the Kyodo News Agency and appeared in the Kanagawa Shimbun on August 18, 2005. The article is posted at Japan Focus on August 31, 2006.
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Tsuneishi Kei-ichi (/authors/view/8860)