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COMMUNITY CRIME CONTROL IN JAPAN: THE FUTURE OF THE PAST?

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Abstract

The historical development of community-based crime control organisations is outlined and the reasons for the continuation of these traditional activities is found to lie in government policy which has managed economic change in ways which do not disrupt them. In the face of new economic pressures their future in their present form appears problematic.

The bi-annual 'White Paper on Crime' (Ministry of Justice, Tokyo) regularly includes a section showing that Western industrialised countries have several time the rate of 'serious crime' that exists in Japan, and far lower clear-up rates. These differences are so great that it cannot seriously be doubted that Japan has more success in controlling crime than have comparable countries.

This article will first outline the connections between the formal arrangements for crime control in Japan — the police force and court systems which have their Western counterparts — to certain informal organisations relevant to crime control. These only a few of the means by which Japanese society frames incentives to crime-free behaviour. Japan is a society in which the stress on outward conformity and social control is pervasive. Becker (1988) for instance lists many cultural factors which make for harmonious communities including traditional artistic disciplines and oblique ways of avoiding the difficulty of expressing different opinions. Formal and informal systems of crime control are simply two peaks to a single iceberg of social control, most of which is either not apparent or lies outside the scope of this article.

Japanese informants frequently offer historical explanations for their current success. The present arrangements have deep historical roots, continuity has been preserved by deliberate government policy, and economic changes which would disrupt crime control have been avoided.

Feudal influences

There are four elements in the crime control arrangements developed in feudal Japan which continue to guide behaviour in Japan today. These are citizen involvement in crime control, mutual surveillance, collective responsibility, and family responsibility.

The Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1867), a form of military government which had a formative influence on Japanese society, never claimed for its officers the near monopoly of

responsibility for public order and the suppression of crime established by governments in Western Europe. Citizen participation in crime control was required of all social classes. In the countryside, farmers' extended families were grouped into 'five-family units' (*go-nin-gumi*), held responsible for the good behaviour of all their members, and collectively punished should an individual member transgress the laws of feudal obedience, for instance by escaping from the district. The heads of five-family units could call on the assistance of their members for the hue and cry. In the towns, each district was occupied by those following a certain occupation, and their guilds were held collectively responsible for each member's behaviour. Guilds even had the duty of ensuring the payment of taxes. They organised watchmen to guard their quarter and maintain order.

One result of this system was that each family had every reason to exercise close surveillance over the behaviour of its immediate neighbours. In fact Tokugawa society was a society in which surveillance was pervasive. The shogunal government monitored the behaviour of the feudal lords through a network of spies trained by hereditary spy-trainers. The *samurai* magistrate who acted as police chief, prosecutor and judge in each district did not sharply distinguish crime control from political control, and employed semi-official detectives (often outcastes or reprieved criminals) to gather information on groups considered to menace the government (Ames 1981). Surveillance was also prominent in folk religion. The ancestors inhabited a special world from which they could watch and listen to the human world at all times, and fear of this special world inhibited people from doing evil deeds (Kawada 1993).

Finally, access to civil courts was difficult. During the Tokugawa period wed-rice farming was extended to every suitable location in Japan. Wet-rice farming requires a degree of cooperation between neighbours, particularly in utilising the available water. But the shogunal courts were unwilling to hear water disputes, preferring to settle them through the intervention of an official exercising a blend of arbitration and conciliation (Kawashima 1963) who would in practice generally decide in favour of the more powerful party: a 'didactic conciliator' (Henderson 1965). Farming families responded to this situation of few legal rights and safeguards by competing with each other to avoid criticism and maintain respect for themselves by strictly observing the rules of correct behaviour and of equivalent reciprocal help. The emphasis on a common code of conduct was reinforced by the feared sanction of ostracism by the community, which not only imposed a deeply felt disgrace, but would probably make it impossible for the deviant family to maintain its livelihood.

Since the remainder of this article is devoted to the evolution of collective forms of crime control it is appropriate now to consider the role of the offender's close family in present-day Japan as it seems to be influenced by historically determined reflexes. An offence is commonly taken to be a family responsibility, and the offender's family will pay informal financial compensation to the victim before the action of the formal system has been determined. 'Family' in this context means the offender and their parents, or failing them, an older brother, depending on their respective means.

When coming to a decision whether or not to prosecute, the prosecutor makes an assessment of the sincerity of the apologetic attitude required of each offender, their sense of shame and willingness to conform in future. But the prosecutor does this not only through his subjective assessment of the offender's attitude but more concretely, through his estimation of the adequateness of the level of the informal compensation which has been paid to the victim. Plea-bargaining is forbidden, but prosecutors interpret broadly article 248 of the Criminal

Code, which lists the factors which may guide their decisions, to claim that they are legally entitled to take into account the level of the informal compensation already paid when deciding whether to prosecute and what sentence to request of the judge. This is an example of the formal system of crime control reinforcing and supporting the informal system.

The importance of the financial dimension as proof of sincerity is quite pervasive. After the Japan Air Lines crash of December 1985, public comment on the chairman's apology focused largely on the level of compensation offered. At the level of major crime, a citizen prominently associated with the allegedly fraudulent world of motor-boat racing proclaimed his repentance by generous bequests to crime prevention and other good causes. He became the president of the Crime Prevention Campaign in his prefecture before exposure of his involvement with members of the government in the Recruit scandal of 1988 brought public disillusion with the sincerity of his rehabilitation.

Pointing out the importance of material proofs of repentance does not detract from Braithwaite's (1989) unique project of isolating a desirable feature of Japanese culture, 'reintegrative shaming', and exporting this to other jurisdictions (Braithwaite 1989). Reintegrative shaming precedes acceptance back into society providing the deviant accepts public pressure to conform and makes appropriate apologies. 'Stigmatising shaming' characterises Western societies where individualism is more rampant, and is an attempt to control deviants by shunning and isolating them. This tends to be criminogenic by driving them into interaction with similar others, and generates the systematic blocking of legitimate opportunities. Reintegrative shaming is the outcome desired by the public prosecutor in the majority of cases in Japan. But where the offence is sufficiently serious the offender must suffer more than a keenly felt social disgrace. Sanctions reinforce the incentives to the desired behaviour.

To the modern era

The Tokugawa shogunate had kept Japan isolated from foreign influences. The opening of Japan to the outside world in 1853 was followed by internal convulsions which led within five years to the replacement of the shogunate by a modernising imperial government. Feudal privileges were terminated, hereditary occupational castes abolished and careers thrown open to talent, and great social and economic achievements set in train.

But in introducing far-reaching social changes of all kinds, the imperial government was conscious of the need to maintain traditional patterns of obedience and paid close attention to measures of social control, recreating for its own purposes many so-called 'semi-feudal' institutions which had obvious continuities with the previous era. In particular the government insisted that its subjects continued to belong to mutual-responsibility groups which were internally structured to avoid punishment from their superiors by enforcing the norms of behaviour from within the group.

The most important of these were the 'local self-government associations', mostly called *cho-nai-kai* (CNK). In the countryside the CNK were standardised versions of the former village councils made up of heads of families. But the newly industrialising cities were divided into districts of some 400 families which were also obliged to form a CNK. Membership of the CNK was compulsory.

Each CNK was served by a very small police station or 'police box' and members were duty bound to report to the local officer or the CNK committee the presence of a stranger in

the locality or any suspicious behaviour among their neighbours. The CNK acted as the eyes and ears of the police and the territory of the CNK and of its police box was (and still is) identical.

Thus peasants moving to the cities to become industrial workers did not fundamentally change their social world (Wagatsuma and de Vos 1984). Industrialisation took place without the widespread increase in crime and social disruption which had accompanied the process in Western countries.

But the process also took place without creating the potential for greater privacy, democratic diversity and individualism. Japanese and Western observers are at one in the view that the CNK had few if any democratic functions but were a principal channel through which the government, via the police, could make demands on the population (Steiner 1965). The new government's ideology conflated the gratitude due to one's ancestors with gratitude due to the emperor (Crump 1991). This could be expressed in various forms of unpaid service. On police instructions, the CNK mobilised the population for recurrent public health work such as clearing drainage ditches. CNK were also recruiting grounds for various groups of nationally organised 'volunteers' formed into local branches. Their duties were to carry out government business without remuneration. Each CNK was obliged to produce volunteers known as *homen-iin* whose task was to manage the meagre amount of income support available to those without resources. This money had to come from the CNK's own funds. Destitute people were thus subject to close surveillance and didactic moral guidance from volunteers living nearby who could cut off their financial support if they did not co-operate. In any case, new legislation extended to all social classes the former *samurai* family structure whereby those related through the male line were legally responsible for each other's support. Thus claiming from public fund was difficult and brought shame on a wide circle of relatives. Annother group of volunteers relevant to our purposes were the volunteer probation officers, who supervised juvenile offenders.

The formal system of crime control was also imbued with traditional values of hierarchy and loyalty. The abolition of hereditary occupational castes had enabled many younger sons of merchants to became officers in the new model army, displacing the *samurai*, the former military and administrative caste, whom the government regarded as less reliable politically; and peasant recruits replaced the outcastes who had comprised much of the feudal soldiery. Many impoverished *samurai* sought employment in the newly established national police force, which thus recruited personnel of good education and considerable administrative experience. And as artistic achievement had been considered important in validating the exercise of power in feudal Japan, the new police possessed prestigious expertise in the traditional arts, as they do today (Ames 1981). The police are institutional culture carriers of the values of the old feudal Japan, often characterised as a world of perfect order, and of absolute loyalty to the organisation and to one's superior, even to death.

As in other countries, the police had formal responsibility for crime prevention, the arrest of offenders, and maintaining the peace. But they also acted as the main organ of local administration. They regulated public health, factories, construction, and businesses, and exercised surveillance over intellectuals. They retained the power to issue ordinances in respect of these mandated powers. They could summarily prosecute and adjudicate a category of offenses concerning public morality and everyday behaviour and impose sentences of not more than 30 days' detention or fines up to a certain limit (Ames 1981). Juvenile disposals were

decided by the police rather than through a court.

These formidable powers were complemented by the police's service functions. The officers in each police box were legally obliged to visit every household twice yearly to make a thorough investigation of the occupation and the activities of each inhabitant. These visits were yet another instrument of surveillance and an opportunity for the police to 'guide' household members. But they also made the police a repository of local information of all kinds, which together with their position as representatives of the local administration made them an invaluable resource for the population. In rural areas, the police officer ranked with the Bhuddist priest and the schoolmaster as the best-educated local inhabitants and were the most frequently sought source of guidance. In the absence of a more powerful person, police officers acted as 'reconciliators' in civil disputes (Kawashima 1963).

The period of reversion to military rule before and during World War Two saw police responsibilities at their greatest extent. They regulated economic activities for the war effort, mobilised labour, controlled transport and directed fire fighting. Specialist police regulated the media (Ames 1981). The CNK became channels for the expression of patriotic sentiment and self-sacrifice. They also had responsibility for the distribution of food rations, itself a potent instrument of social control. The volunteer probation officers supervised those suspected of having 'incorrect thoughts'. Thought crime was a class of offence almost wholly dealt with by the 'conversion' and reintegration of the offender (Hanks 1976).

From the Occupation to the present day

Reforms during the early period of the Occupation were intended to extend the rights of individuals. The CNK were suppressed because they were considered to be organs of military government. But the groups of volunteers were not disbanded. A system of elected local government was established, with a professional bureaucracy to carry out many functions which were formerly the responsibility of the police. Income support became a local government responsibility and the extended family was abolished as a legal entity. Juvenile courts were established, set in a legislative framework oriented towards welfare, and serviced by psychologists and a corps of professionally trained social workers, the 'juvenile court liaison officers'. The volunteer probation officers now deal mainly with adult parolees.

The Japanese government revived the CNK in 1951 after the Occupation ended, though not without opposition. Though membership is no longer compulsory, non-participation would be very difficult for the inhabitants of long-settled districts, because of public pressure.

Besides the influence of public opinion, objectively it would be very inconvenient not to belong. The CNK now constitute the local administration's main channel of communication with the population. The most frequently mentioned example of the advantages of membership is that each CNK's newsletter, which must be purchased by subscription, contains the timetables for rubbish collection. This is important in a country where summers are very hot, homes are too small to have dustbins, and different types of pre-sorted domestic waste must be taken to the collection points on different days.

Membership of the 'guiding committee' of the CNK is by no means sought after, and now tends to be made up of very elderly males, though subcommittees of middle aged women carry out the work. The major formal functions of the CNK are to organise the annual festivals at the local Shinto shrine and Bhuddist temple. But the CNK's real importance is bound up with

its role as a focus of organised voluntary action concerned with various aspects of social control.

The historic involvement with income support continues. Amending legislation has made the granting of income support by the local administration's bureaucracy conditional on the claimant accepting the 'guidance' of an accredited volunteer, now called a *minsei-iin*. As in former times, each CNK has to find these volunteers. But although a tour of duty as a *minsei-iin* is an onerous chore for most people, those who fulfil their duties vigorously may become members of the local administration's Social Welfare Council, which confers prestige and power through its influence over the local authority's funds for voluntary action.

Selected *minsei-iin* may become 'childrens' welfare guidance volunteers' (*jido-fukushishi*) who have the task of providing 'guidance' to incompetent parents or those with delinquent children under ten years old, and bring children in need of residential care to the notice of the local administration. The relevant municipal employees, though advised by psychologists, have no special training and are spending an unwelcome period in the children's section in between less harassing tours of duty in, say, the roads and the finance departments. Children are sent to subcontracted institutions in the independent sector where they remain, with no further contact or system of case review. Admissions are few, mainly because of the cohesion of the Japanese family, but the statistical category 'parents left to find work in another region', which accounts for a proportion of abandonments, may be indicative of difficulties with the income support system.

For another group of voluntary activities the 'guiding committee' of each CNK constitutes itself, for the duration of a meeting, the local branch of a national voluntary association in order to discuss future activities with police officers. It becomes a branch of the National Traffic Safety Association to organise volunteers to dress in bright sashes and stand in groups at intersections during the annual Traffic Safety Campaign. Their task is to glare at incautious motorists and at pedestritrians who try to cross againt the lights, bringing public disapproval to bear in a peculiarly direct fashion. The CNK becomes a branch of the National Fire Prevention Association in order to service bi-annual Fire Prevention Campaigns.

And it becomes a branch of the National Crime Prevention Association in order to mobilise its members for the annual week-long Crime Prevention Campaign. Funded by the Justice Ministry, the local Social Welfare Council and by public contributions, the Crime Prevention volunteers give gratuitous advice to the public about 'target hardening' and warnings against leaving property unsecured. They deliver short exhortations and distribute campaign literature outside railway stations, in banking halls and similar crowded places. Directed at the respectable public rather than potential offenders, the material first aims to warn people to take precautions against victimisation. Illustrations in the leaflets show motorcyclists snatching a grandmother's handbag, or groups of burglars breaking in at all of a house's vulnerable points simultaneously. Second it directs attention to parental duties with slogans such as 'Listen to your child!' and 'Know where your child is!' and illustrates early warning signs of the risk of delinquency, which are indications that the parents should seek 'guidance' from the police or volunteers. Campaigns are formally led by the mayor and culminate with a parade. They may include sponsored sporting events where the spectators are bombarded with campaign material during the intervals.

Crime prevention activists may have a badge on their houses designating them a 'crime prevention check point', a centre for the collection of information of interest to the police. All

forms of bad or unusual behaviour can be reported to the CNK, which then discusses whether to take the matter up with the family , the school if a juvenile is involved, or the police: each has different implications for the offender. The CNK finds decisions very difficult as it tries to avoid direct conflict with the family.

Each CNK acts as a recruiting-ground for more specialised groups of volunteers. Drug After-Care Volunteers provide guidance to drug dependent people for one year following their release from hospital or prison. Juvenile Street Guidance Volunteers deter bad behaviour where it may otherwise occur. They patrol entertainment districts where juveniles may evade the surveillance in their own neighbourhoods. Volunteers offer 'guidance' to juveniles who are in slot machine parlours after 7.0 p.m., are under the influence of alcohol or are otherwise transgressing local regulations based on a model ordinance presented to prefectures by the National Police Agency. Since well over 90% of all juveniles progress into higher education, the volunteers have at their disposal a terrible sanction - the threat of informing the miscreant's school. If this is done the juvenile will lose their good character and will not gain their school's recommendation to a prestigious institution at the next educational level. The years of after-school cramming which took up their childhood will have been thrown away by the single incident, as achievement in competitive examinations cannot compensate for a blemished character reference.

Juveniles apprehended by volunteers generally have to report to the police the next day. Legislation during the Occupation aimed to reduce police powers by obliging them to refer all juvenile cases, including 'pre-delinquents' who are merely at risk of delinquency, to the juvenile courts. But the police have created a burgeoning category of 'pre-pre-delinquents', and employ psychologists and specially trained officers to 'guide' them and co-ordinate the volunteers.

The police continue to visit each household twice yearly to enquire into the occupation of each inhabitant, though answering their questions is no longer compulsory legally. They continue to offer guidance generally and are a repository of information on their locality. They continue to act as reconciliators; on a warm afternoon the author was able to observe, through the open window of the police box, reconciliation after a window was broken during a baseball game: the players claimed it had been broken earlier.

Volunteer probation officers (*'hogoshi'*) are a slightly different group. In urban areas a high proportion are professional people whose careers are tied to the locality, such as doctors, dentists, and Bhuddist priests. Supervisees contact their *hogoshi* by calling at the latter's home. *Hogoshi* have no role in the courts, where the public prosecutor asks for a specific sentence. But if a supervised person re-offends, a detective from the police interviews the *hogoshi*, who in exceptional cases may send a 'letter of mitigation' to the prosecutor. Police routinely visit *hogoshi* to collect information, confidentiality is not seen as an issue. The *hogoshi* association has its own annual campaign, 'The Campaign for a Brighter Society'. Devised after World War Two to encourage the population to provide employment to former offenders, the emphasis has now changed and it provides talks from experts to parent-teacher organisations or parent members of the CNK. During campaign week, a parallel organisation whose task is to support the work of *hogoshi* provides social events for them and their spouses where they can meet influential officials and members of the municipal social welfare council.

Tolerated deviance

Obviously crime control activities bear particularly upon the young, and together with the demanding educational system leave juveniles a negligible margin of tolerated deviance. Two prominent areas of tolerated deviance for adults are political corruption and organised crime. It is easier to link widespread indifference to political corruption to the variable extent that Japanese people feel they 'own' their present political system, than to make any links with informal systems of crime control.

Organised crime does have clear links to crime control. There are nearly 100,000 gang members listed in the in-house telephone directories published by the major criminal 'families'. Organised crime offers employment, a quasi-family structure and discipline to very large numbers of disaffiliated and disadvantaged people, among whom the descendants of former outcastes are well represented. Heads of 'families' prevent their subordinates from committing crimes on their own account. Gangs also combat unorganised crime by acting as sources of information for the police, reproducing relations between the semi-official detectives and magistrates of former times. Stark (1981) shows that gang members regard lone offenders as perverts and profoundly un-Japanese. In any case unorganised criminals cannot gain access to fences and similar services.

Gang members' offenses offer only a limited challenge to the formal system of crime control. Violence is used mostly on other gangsters in conflicts within and between gangs, and the family head will order an expendable member to confess even though he may not be the culprit, thus slightly inflating the clear-up rate. Traditionally gangs raise revenue from organising the marginal fields of gambling, prostitution and market trading. Stark (1981) shows how legitimate local businesses such as hotels can get drawn into relationships with gangs, though family heads are wary of police reactions should they intervene in 'straight' situations or move into new fields. Companies find the services of larger gangs useful in intimidating trade unionists and Kaplan and Dubro (1986) surmise that there is evidence of collusion at the highest levels. Organised crime can be regarded as incorporated into Japanese life, though the relations between organised crime and the formal system of crime control is not of the seamless nature characteristic of the other community groups reviewed here.

Organised crime is an important part of the far Right politically, which in Japan means those who see themselves as the repository of traditional values, have found democratic thinking impossible to assimilate and advocate a return to military rule. Organised crime is projected as challenging the legal system of crime control in a stream of publications and films about gangsters; but seletively, challenging the legitimacy of legal forms while maintaining respect for the police. In a typical story, clever lawyers secure the dismissal of proceedings against fraudulent businessmen. The businessmen are then assassinated by gangsters, who wait in dignified fashion for the police to arrive. The same points are made in contacts between organised criminals and intellectuals. In a television interview, a colleague pointed out that a juvenile judge was acting within his powers to dismiss a case brought by the police if he felt that it had not been made out. Though the interview was never transmitted, he subsequently received a threatening phone call. The same groups are equally hostile to a legal view of the constitution, and those publishing material specifying the constitutional position of the emperor receive death threats. Organised crime has taken up in a crude form the surveillance

of intellectuals which was a duty of the police before the Occupation.

Assessment

As pointed out above, it is untenable to attribute the low crime rate to the crime control system alone. Among many other directly relevant organistions one could mention that the demanding nature of the education system reduces the opportunities for juvenile offending as well as increasing the sanctions applied. In some cities the juvenile stree guidance volunteers operate under the aegis of the education ministry rather than the police: for lack of space it has been necessary to provide a very simplified account of citizen involvement.

It is also probable that the controversial Japanese system of psychiatric care, with its extraordinarily high numbers of adolescents and adults committed to involuntary in-patient care at the request of their families, plays a larger role in the reduction of opportunities to offend and the production of social conformity than is the case in most Western countries: at some cost of course.

Within the criminal justice system, a substantial proportion of total police time is devoted to co-ordinating and supervising volunteer activity, and national and local governments make financial contributions to the campaigns. The professional probation service is, of course, almost entirely devoted to such activities. Comparatively there are substantial economies in the later stages of the system: the courts process relatively few offenders and with roughly twice the British population, Japan has only half the British number of prisoners. By using the pressure of public opinion and the services of volunteers, Japan has largely avoided the budgetary burden of developing a 'psy complex' (Ingleby 1985) of state-employed human science professionals such as are charged with the 'soft' control of offending in Western countries: again there is a certain non-financial cost. While volunteers deliver face-to-face 'guidance', the public employees who co-ordinate and advise them are remarkably few. The whole of Tokyo save the Western suburbs is administered by fewer than forty professional probation officers, and child care for the main part of Osaka is administered by a similar number of municipal employees.

In Japan it is safer for women and children to walk about after dark than it is in Western countries. The use of informal compensation places the victims of crime in a relatively advantageous position. The citizen is well protected from offences by his neighbours.

On the negative side Wagatsuma and de Vos (1984) allege that the atmosphere of perpetual mobilisation created by the campaigns is more reminiscent of totalitarian regimes than of democracy and helps create a social climate which is inimical to the democratic expression of opposed points of view. This author feels unqualified to judge to what extent the campaigns are responsible for this or to what extent opposed points of view can be freely expressed in other societies outside certain circumscribed situations.

Nevertheless it is instructive that the system as described here now achieves only partial geographic coverage. Ben-Arie (1991) estimates that about one third of the population has moved to greatly expanded suburbs or to new towns since World War Two, and in most such places CNK are either ineffectual, involving only the small original population, or have never been set up. Indeed the absence of a CNK and its perpetual demands for contributions and services is frequently mentioned as a principal advantage of living in such places. Recruiters of volunteers have to shift as best they can by working through Parent-Teacher and similar

organisations.

The negative effects of a CNK on the quality of life can be illustrated anecdotally. A professional probation officer told me with satisfaction that to collect contributions for the Campaign for a Brighter Society the CNK circulated clipboards on which were printed the name of each family against a space for each to inscribe the amount of money they were pledging. Non-participation was thereby rendered impossible. In the same way an academic colleague found his work at home during the weekends interrupted by demands that he spend time with other residents cleaning up the environs of the block. His offer of money to purchase cleaning service instead was refused. And if he was detected working at home during vacations he was subjected to endless visits. He came to realise that the very fact that he was alone, had privacy, was disturbing to his neighbours.

Ben-Arie's field study concludes that in the suburbs non-participation is more possible. Voluntary action there is directed at gaining improved facilities for the locality, or less identified with social control and more with the welfare of disabled or elderly people.

Equally important is the very partial degree of participation now achieved by CNK even in long-settled districts. Japan runs a dual economy: a modern export-orientated large-scale manufacturing sector, where the very long hours of work make participation in volunteering impracticable save for some of the wives of those in it: and a large, archaic and heavily regulated sector of small low-technology manufacturers and retailers resembling a vast job creation project. Retail chains are few, particularly so in those sectors concerned with everyday living rather than luxury goods. Shopowners find it fairly easy to take a few hours off work for volunteer activity, and also belong to an interlocking system of branches of the Crime Prevention Association (*bohan-kai*) each centred on a particular line of business. The organisations described above are virtually dependent on the free labour, contributed by this one social class. We must note that the volunteer probation officers, who often come from a different social background, are in some danger of ending, as most are extremely aged and recruitment does not keep pace with demand.

The reasons for the various campaigns given by Justice Ministry officials are to raise anti-crime consciousness, and to celebrate the work of the volunteers. Findlay and Zvekic (1988) are of the opinion that too much dependence on the formal system detracts from the true voluntariness and hence the effectivenes of informal organisations. But dependence on the police is the main feature of much informal but carefully organised Japanese activity. More nervous commentators see every parade as a confirmation of police power and a reminder that should democracy falter, the former organs of government are still extant and operational. They convey the message that society has not lost its basic homogeneity and loyally supports the police.

What does the small-business class get in return, apart from an opportunity to be recognised not afforded by their limited and predictable business careers? In recent years Western economists have pointed out the archaic retail distribution system as a principal obstacle to the freer circulation of imports into Japan. Attempts to introduce foreign retail chains have been strikingly unsuccessful in the face of seemingly local obstructions. Clearly easier access to cheap foreign goods would be incompatible with the continuation of the present system. The small-business class is thus particularly dependent for its livelihood on the continuation of the present protectionist trade policy. The workings of the Japanese state are not very transparent, but is it not likely that concern about crime control is one reason among

many for Japanese resistance to freer trade, the Justice Ministry with its historic involvement with economic matters lending its weight to protectionism? Being unable to take advantage of cheap imports contributes to upward revaluation of the currency, and should this and American pressure force a change, the Japanese bureaucracy will have to devise some different method of managing their communities and crime control.

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