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Religion in the Tulare Assembly CenterGeneral Organization

Three different church organizations are allowed here in the Tulare Assembly Center--Protestants, Buddhists, and Catholics. Worship must be as a group, and no proselyting for individual sects is allowed. English must be used, unless it interferes with the understanding of what is said. Japanese, however, can only be used with the consent of the Center manager.

Christian Organization

The Christians were already organized when the Pasadena group came in. They have a Christian Church Council, which decided the general policies for the Protestant group in the Center. There are two reverends, and Rev. T. has been put in charge of the Issei, and Rev. S. in charge of the young people. As activities the Protestant group has a Sunday school service in the morning for children, and services for elders and for young people in the evening in separate places. Besides these, they have Quiet Hour, Bible study, prayer meeting, and choir practice three times a week.

Buddhist Organization

The Buddhists have been having services and choir practice, but were poorly organized. There seemed to be a reluctance on the part of leaders to take an active part in organizing the Buddhists. As far as numbers went, there was a good representation from Santa Maria Valley and Santa Barbara, and other rural districts. Those connected with the administration office encouraged the Buddhists to organize because they did not want to seem partial to the Christians, who went ahead and requisitioned for whatever facilities they desired.

On May 24, 25, and 29 meetings were held by former Buddhist leaders to organize themselves. A leader was selected, committees and officers chosen, and a program mapped out. This included a service in English on Sunday morning, with Sunday school classes for children, service in Japanese on Tuesday nights, choir practice two nights a week, and a meeting of Sunday school teachers and leaders to discuss methods of presenting material ~~and of improving the service~~ to the children, of improving the service, and of increasing knowledge and understanding of Buddhism.

This morning about 800 turned out for the morning service, including 200 Issei and 200 Sunday school children. From a group of 15 girls the choir has expanded to 30, and plans were made to make the choir a mixed-voice one. There has been complaints that even the Nisei found it difficult to understand the reverend's sermon delivered in English, and a compromise was reached this morning by his giving a rough summary of his sermon in Japanese for the benefit of the Issei who appeared for the young people's service. There is only one Buddhist minister here, a Nisei, with only a fair command of English.

Conflict over use of facilities

In the use of facilities there were no conflicts until recently. The Christians went ahead and requisitioned what facilities they wanted to use, whereas the Buddhists did not have enough activities to cause much conflict. When the Pasadena group came in, however, Rev. T. had his church piano sent up from Pasadena. At the same time his church members took over the management of the Christian choir in the Center. The Buddhists and other groups were given to understand that they would be allowed the use of the piano. But Rev. T. told the Buddhist group that he was sorry that all of the evenings were taken up with Christian programs, which meant that L-4, where the piano was located, could not be used by others. At the same time he went ahead, without consulting the Council, it seems, and said that private use of the piano would have to be on a rental basis.

There seemed to be several factors at work in this problem. One was the introduction of private ownership of a property which should have been publicly owned. One way of solving this difficulty would have been to wait till enough pianos could be gotten so that everybody who wanted to would be able to use it. As it turned out, the Buddhists were promised the use of the piano, but were told that the evening hours, the only time they could meet, ~~were~~ all taken up.

The other factor seems to be the desire of the Pasadena group to assert their power through ownership of the piano. It was Rev. T., the choir leader, the girl in charge of the piano--all from Pasadena--who thought that others should pay fees or make donations for the use of the piano.

The repercussions to this issue ~~were~~ immediate. The Buddhists felt that they didn't want to use the Christian piano, and decided to get one of their own, which, they said, they would let everyone use. ~~Individual piano~~ Individual piano players were indignant, and one took steps to purchase a piano of his own. Among the Christians themselves there were protests against what Rev. T. had said. The Pasadena group declared that people were spreading malicious gossip. Protests came in to the administration office, and taken up by the social welfare division, who told Rev. T. that if his piano is going to be private it must be kept in his own barrack and taken out of the recreation hall. He was also instructed that no fees could be charged inside the Center, although free-will contributions were allowed. ~~Those~~ ~~Rev. T.~~ Rev. T. agreed to let others use the piano free of charge, but those in charge of the piano still seemed reluctant to let people use it freely.

The religious committee of the civil government ruled that facilities for the religious groups would be requisitioned for a week ahead at the same time, in order to apportion the facilities fairly. The Buddhists were advised to use K-4, and the Christians L-4, as much as possible.

It was discussed by the religious groups that between the two a public address system would be desirable. The Buddhists did not want the Christian group alone to purchase it because they felt that they would not be able to use it. Joint purchase was suggested, but was dropped because there seemed to be no way of determining the final ownership

when the Center broke up and were relocated to scattered places. The Buddhists have decided to purchase one of their own, and the Christians are also getting one ~~for~~ for themselves.

Rev. E.

Rev. E. is a Nazarene minister. The rest of the Protestants does not accept him into their Council because his teaching and standing is not the same as those of Rev. T. and Rev. S. Rev. E. has preached several times wherever he could find audience. Since this is against the rule of the Center, he has been warned not to do it any more. He is said to be a religious fanatic, who does not get along with the rest of his family.

Problem of income

The ministers are not being paid for their work either by the administration or by the Church. They probably do receive gifts when they perform funeral services, etc, but they are faced with the problem of having a great deal of work to do without any definite source of income.

Pasadena

Group differences are beginning to become evident. The Pasadena group is conspicuous for several reasons. They live at the south end of the Center, which people now call Pasadena. They are from an urban district, whereas most of the others are from the country. Usually they dress more carefully. On Sundays, especially, they wear their Sunday clothes to attend church services. This is noticeable to others and one hears such remarks as these:

"Here comes Pasadena'."

"I hear the Pasadena folks dress up to go to church" (This in Japanese).

The Pasadena group has held private dances of their own, and this clannishness has again been noticed. The desire of the group to control church activities is also a good possibility, although not too evident yet.

Resentments

After two or three weeks of residence here, people seem to have settled down enough to pick up their old habit of holding resentments and jealousies, often of petty nature. One lady in the Welfare Division is being sneered at by a former influential member of her community because she thinks she's "good" in her present position. Her tasks are often difficult, especially when she has to move people out of a room, to make way for mental cases, etc. Mr. K. who is organizing the talent show to be put on soon and to be continued as a weekly feature, says he has a difficult time approaching the Issei. Some of them think that he is a strutting cock, displaying a large insignia on his arm. The complaint that there is favoritism in the selection of employees is widespread, and where the selection is poor or unfair there is outright resentment. A brilliant commerce student, who has been doing plumbing and carpenter work here, doesn't believe in getting white collar jobs. He thinks that those in such positions are snobs, and can't see why so many strive to get those jobs.

Taking Advantage

There seems to be an attempt on the part of some in the outside world to take advantage of the Japanese in the Center. In the matter of funerals, for instance, the Hanford Cemetary bid \$50 for the disposal of bodies, whereas the local cemetary bid \$85 and lost the contract. This means that a plain burial will cost the Army only \$50. However, from the reports of the four funerals held here already, it seems that the cost of private funeral runs well over \$200. The cheapest coffin is said to cost \$150, and with a few flowers and cost of transportation, etc, the cost to the individual runs into over \$200, even if the Army pays \$50.

There is also the story of the Negro opportunist who used to hang around on a corner to do errands for workers who came out from the Center and want something bought. For a few days the Negro was faithful, but when ~~an~~ eight dollars were put in his hands one day, he never showed up again.

News

Although the Tulare News Office is receiving very little supply from the office and is now running on donations from the residents here, it is now coming out regularly two times a week. All of it, however, is in English. There seems to be an order from San Francisco, forbidding all publications in Japanese. Newspapers are coming into the Center in large number, but not many Issei can read them intelligently. It seems foolish to keep the Issei ignorant, when there is a good opportunity to improve their morale. If the news is censored in English, there is no reason why the same can't be done in Japanese.

Election

An election of representatives from the nine districts is to be held next week. Something to watch out for is how many of the temporary councilmen (many of them JACL leaders) will be reelected, and how many Isseis will be put into office. On the part of Nisei there is fear that if too many Issei get into office, things will not go smoothly. There is a definite attitude of superiority in handling organizational matter on the part of Niseis, one which I have felt myself in church work.

Taking Advantage

Several cases have come up in the Welfare Office where the lawyer in charge of financial matters of residents has taken advantage of the situation. One failed to make a collection, and in payment for his fees demanded the automobile of the resident, left in another's care. Another had the power of attorney to take care of a store, and he was never heard from since.

Rowdies

The so-called rowdy group here is a rather mild one. They consist of boys who wear dirty cords/ and run around together. There's a Pasadena group and also an Oxnard group, and there may be others. Most of the Pasadena group

work in the M messhall together. Three of the fellows have gotten peculiar sort of haircuts. At the community sing there was a group of boys (not Pasadena) who were singing off time purposely, and raising loud whoops. One of the fellows threw a roll of toilet paper into the air, and everyone laughed. Several of the Pasadena group have been learning how to dance. So far they have caused very little trouble. Their favorite pasttime seems to be to get milk from the kitchen for girls they like.