

# WEBSTER'S NEW COLLEGIATE

# A Dictionary Blasted

The following is a speech delivered by Shosuke Sasaki of Seattle to a group of librarians known as the Social Responsibility Round Table of the Washington Library Association on Nov. 17. Sasaki spoke on the derogatory nature of the term "Jap", focusing particularly on its reappearance in American dictionaries.

Sasaki, a retired businessman, was instrumental in the late 1950s in having major dictionaries add to their definitions of the term "Jap" the cautionary note that the term was offensive and derogatory. Earlier this year, he was nominated by Asian Americans for Fair Media in New York City for a seat on the U.S. Federal Communications Commission.

Sasaki resides at 7004 Murray Ave., SW, Apt. 401, Seattle, Wash. 98136.

\* \* \*

By SHOSUKE SASAKI

The Japanese have been a major thorn in the egos of those who want to believe that the white people are mentally and morally superior to all other races. Among the latter, the Japanese are recognized as the only ones who have thus far rapidly mastered the material and scientific techniques of the West and learned to equal or surpass the white nations at their own games. As a result, persons of the Japanese race have repeatedly been singled out for various kinds of heartless cruelty, ill treatment, and insults by certain types of people. The Japanese are the only minority group in America which has suffered imprisonment in concentration camps solely for reasons of race. The people of Japan are the only people on earth who were subjected to mass murder by atom bombs. And the Japanese are the only people whom some Americans continue to refer to by a derogatory epithet.

When the abbreviation "Jap." first began to be used by Americans in the 19th century, the Japanese made no objections. Starting around the beginning of the 20th century, however, with the use of the term "Jap" by certain Pacific Coast newspapers in their anti-Japanese hate campaigns and with continued usage by most of the American press through the middle of this century, the term acquired exactly the same significance to the Japanese as words such as "Kike," "Wop," and "Nigger" have for Jews, Italians, or Blacks. The use of atom bombs and concentration camps against the Japanese are not likely to be repeated, but there have been disturbing

indications in the past three years that there are persons in this country who desire a revival of ill-will and hatred between the peoples of the United States and Japan. For such a deplorable goal, a widespread revival in this country of the use of the term "Jap" would be highly effective.

### A SPECIOUS EXCUSE

Americans of Japanese descent have recently been shoked to discover that the G. & C. Merriam Co., in their Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, have decided to lend their seeming approval to the use of the term "Jap" by defining it simply as an abbreviation of Japan or Japanese. All protests have been brushed off with the specious excuse that G. & C. Merriam Co. has defined it as an abbreviation and not as a noun and that the definition, therefore, is correct as it stands and needs no change. They state that their unabridged dictionary carries it as a noun with the qualification that it is often used disparagingly, but that the lack of sufficiently frequent usage warrants the exclusion of such definition from the "Collegiate" edition. They choose to ignore the fact that most people do not bother to consult an unabridged dictionary if a seemingly adequate definition of a word appears in a "collegiate" type dictionary.

It is important to note that, in the Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary's definitions of other derogatory epithets, appropriate warnings to users of such terms have been attached. The definitions of "Kike" and "nigger" are followed by the phrase "usu. taken to be offensive." The definitions of "wop" and "gook" are followed by the phrase "often taken to be offensive." Only the term "Jap" is defined as an abbreviation for Japan or Japanese with not the slightest hint to the dictionary user that the word is highly offensive to the Japanese.

The definition as it now stands in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary and also in Webster's Intermediate Dictionary will serve to mislead countless Americans into innocently using the term and unintentionally creating resentment and ill-will among the Japanese. The definition will, of course, delight the twisted minds of racists who know that the term is offensive and who are eager to see the term used wherever possible. If the Japanese were politically and economically unimportant, the editors of G. & C. Merriam Co. might be allowed to rest harmlessly in their stupidly complacent attitude toward their defective definition of the term "Jap". Unfortunately

"B  
The reac  
G. & C. M  
a stubborn  
who can f  
interpretet  
are the "  
is not that  
of a truly  
correct wor  
Indications  
educators,  
by withhol  
use of Me  
aries appe  
to bring a  
misleading  
ly, there a  
good dicti  
which clea  
ive nature  
They are  
Standard  
American  
the Englis  
Random H  
I urge th  
Merriam-W  
wherever

## Japan Employ Y779,0

TOYKO  
end bonus  
lion yen v  
national  
public ser  
nesday.

The am  
1,200,000  
public ser  
239,000 m  
age was 2  
valent to  
and a ha  
crease of

The bor  
million lo  
service er  
540,000 m  
age was 2

The tot  
for the na  
poyees w  
000 millio  
Prime  
ka and  
Chief Jus  
Court, rec  
of 2,793,0  
buro Mae  
of Repre  
Kono, Pre  
Councillor  
yen each.  
ceived 1.



be repeated,  
en disturbing

mi  
e reply  
ire

of

ward their defective definition of the term "Jap". Unfortunately for such an attitude, the Japanese have become a major industrial power and a major customer for American products. Many parts of the American economy depend on purchases by the Japanese for their prosperity. Americans can no longer afford the luxury of needlessly insulting them. The publishers of Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary by seemingly sanctioning the use of the term "Jap" are in effect promoting the use of an offensive epithet even by those who would never use it if they knew the truth. The possible resulting harm to the interests of the people relying on the dictionary's definitions and to the interests of the United States as a whole are too serious to allow the matter to go unchallenged.

yen each. Cabinet  
ceived 1,995,000 y  
members 1,300,00

Tokyo Universi  
Kentaro Hayashi a  
versity President T  
received 1,383,200

## MIYAKO I

Using Miyako H  
from Dec. 10 to 1  
groups: Stanley Str  
matics, Echlin M  
Howmedica, Inc., N  
ball League Prop  
Institute of Real Es  
Lions Council, Atla  
UAL, Bankers Mor  
California, Lee Cos  
of Health.

# Blasted

In the past three years there are persons in the United States and elsewhere who desire a revival of the hatred between the United States and Japan, a deplorable goal, and a revival in this use of the term "Jap" would be highly effective.

## NO EXCUSE

Persons of Japanese descent have been shocked to find in the G. & C. Merriam and Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, have decided to give the seeming approval of the term "Jap" by simply as an abbreviation for Japanese. All such persons have been brushed off with the obvious excuse that G. & C. Merriam Co. has defined it as a noun and not as a verb and that the definition, as it stands, is correct as it stands and does not need change. They state that the unabridged dictionary defines the word as a noun with the qualification that it is often used as an adjective and that the lack of

## "BUREAUCRAT"

The reactions of the editors of the G. & C. Merriam Co. are those of a stubbornly stupid bureaucrat who can follow only his narrow interpretation of what he thinks are the "rules". Their attitude is not that of conscientious editors of a truly trustworthy guide to correct word meanings and usage. Indications of disapproval by educators, librarians and others have been given by withholding the purchase and use of Merriam-Webster dictionaries appear to be the only way to bring about the correction of misleading definitions. Fortunately, there are at least three other good dictionaries of similar size which clearly indicate the offensive nature of the term "Jap". They are the Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary, The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, and the Random House College Dictionary. I urge their selection over the Merriam-Webster dictionaries wherever possible.

---