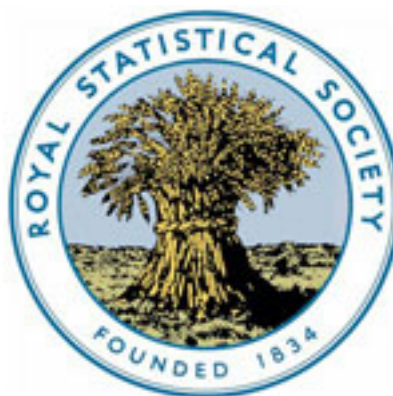


# WILEY



---

The Standard of Living in Japan by Kokichi Morimoto

Review by: A. L. B.

*Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 82, No. 2 (Mar., 1919), pp. 245-246

Published by: [Wiley](#) for the [Royal Statistical Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2340683>

Accessed: 25/06/2014 09:48

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at  
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Wiley and Royal Statistical Society are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

with erudition. Disgruntled scholars have before now sought prominence in *émeutes*, and the academic atmosphere, removing from sobering contact with prosaic affairs, seems favourable to the "constructive imagination" of those grandiose dreams which lead plain men to social chaos. That is, we think, what Mr. Cole, in impish glee, intends by the "very great mess alike of the art of "government and of the arts of production and service" that the world "set free from capitalism to-morrow" might "probably" make. Such "creation" would, we allow, be "chaotic"; and it accords strangely with any "conception of the goodness and the "fullness of life." It is more like a nightmare. L.L.P.

6.—*The Standard of Living in Japan*. By Kokichi Morimoto, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Economics in Tohoku Imperial University. 150 pp., 8vo. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1918. Price \$3.50.

This is not only an important contribution to the study of the standard of living, based on original research, but is also very interesting reading, describing as it does phases of Japanese life and customs in an accurate way that contrasts favourably with travellers' discursive impressions.

The research follows familiar lines. Budgets of food expenditure, but only few in number, were collected from families believed to be typical of their class; these were supplemented by a more extensive inquiry of individual and family annual expenditure on dress. The whole food supply of Japan is also considered, and the amount per capita worked out for each commodity. A study of housing is added.

The writer is a firm believer in measurement by calories, and has compiled a standard budget, "which can be approved from both "practical and theoretical standpoints," and utilises "the best in "both Japanese and foreign foods and in methods of cookery." The weight of an average Japanese is four-fifths of that of a European, and therefore it is argued he needs only four-fifths of the proteins, &c., taken by Voit as the amounts advisable for Europeans. His standard yields per "man" per day 101 grams protein, 44 grams fat and 399 grams carbohydrate, and cost in Tokyo in 1915 30.5 sen, or about 15 cents (U.S.A.). Professor Morimoto is a food reformer and embodies his suggested reforms in his budget, which differs from those put forward by the Japanese Bureau of Hygiene in that it contains 150 grams of wheaten bread and 80 grams of beef or pork. He argues that Japan depends too much on her home rice-harvest, which is barely sufficient even in favourable years, while imported rice is disliked, and that it is necessary to broaden the basis of the national dietary, and he believes that wheaten bread will become popular when it is better baked and prejudice is removed.

The peasant farmers, however, find rice too expensive a diet, and support life principally on barley (2 parts barley to 1 rice). They eat very little meat indeed; dried fish is used mainly for

seasoning. The diet is made attractive by sweet potatoes and radishes, whose consumption over the whole of Japan is 178 lbs. and 123 lbs. respectively per "man" per annum. The peasant's diet, which costs only 12 sen per "man" per day, is well below the minimum recognised as sufficient. In fact, the whole food consumption of Japan is insufficient, and the general average is little better than that of the peasants.

Except in the poorest classes rice is the national food. "Plain boiled rice without milk or sugar is consumed in large quantity at every meal." "But the strong salty taste of pickled radish, combined with the plain taste of boiled rice, makes the rice diet so palatable as to completely satisfy the appetite without much need of varied side-dishes." In the ordinary household a maid-servant [called the *meshtaki-onna*, meaning "girl to cook boiled rice"] must be hired, whose chief duty is to boil rice, and if there is no servant "the greater part of the housewife's time must be devoted to the task." "Thousands of shrines are built in farming districts, surrounded on all sides by rice paddies, in honour of the god of rice."

Sugar is dear because of import duties, and is used very sparingly. It is surprising to find that the consumption of tea per capita is only  $1\frac{5}{8}$  lbs. per annum.

Clothing is relatively more expensive in Japan than in European countries, because a considerable diversity is needed for the different seasons, owing to the defective heating of Japanese houses. The author attributes the high expenditure on clothing even from small incomes, where it amounts to about 20 per cent. of all expenditure to "the social custom of Japan, which puts more stress on matters of costume and manners than on those things that are necessary to rational and economical living." Among the richer classes an additional expense arises from the need of having "both European and Japanese dress in order to appear properly on different occasions."

A distinction is drawn between the "absolute standard of living," sufficient only for bare existence and relative standards which are adjusted to decency, comfort and luxury in any particular society. He appears to consider the absolute standard as definable and obtained by primitive people; but we may well argue that no real definition can be given, since health, physique and well-being are relative terms, and different standards of food and shelter are necessary for different degrees of health and efficiency without decency, comfort or luxury. Every minimum standard yet proposed is a conventional one. Presently he speaks of an "efficient standard of living," which allows for decency and comfort, but excludes luxury. He estimates that the "absolute standard" costs for a normal family for all expenditure 180 yen annually in small cities and the "efficient standard" costs 860 yen. As an essential for efficiency "the dining table should be set in artistic Japanese style."

A.L.B.