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Japanese Rehabilitation Services and Community Involvement

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Social Changes and Rehabilitation Services

Our society is in a state of constant change. Crime is a product of the inter-relationship between individuals and society and is directly related to the direction, degree and speed of social change.

Those who work in the field of rehabilitation services treat offenders within the community. They should be sensitive to social changes in general and also to the environmental changes that such social changes bring about. A quarter of a century has passed since the establishment of rehabilitation services as a system in Japan. It is particularly important to make it clear to what extent social changes have affected environmental changes and how the rehabilitation services have responded to these changes. Let us examine this issue from four viewpoints, (1) economic, (2) social, (3) family structure, and (4) thought patterns.

1. Changes in the Economy

Economic changes accompany the changes in the industrial structure. Rapid economic growth due to the progress of technology and technical innovation has remarkably affected the industrial structure, shifting the importance from primary to secondary and tertiary industries. However, a disparity in the productivity, wage scales and related employment conditions between large enterprises and small and medium enterprises continues to increase. In other words, our economy has grown without solving the problems of the dual structure of the industry.

I would like to note in particular the changes in the working conditions brought about by economic growth. Those who receive community treatment are often placed in a disadvantageous situation.

Since most offenders lack not only occupational knowledge or skills but also good working habits, a recognition of their own ability, and an ability to cooperate with others, they do not possess the basic characteristics needed for adequate job selection and career maintenance.

On the other hand, a rapid economic growth has resulted in an increase of employment opportunities and a widening of the range of available jobs in every sphere of industry. Our clients can find employment more easily now than they could in the past. Most available jobs, however, are either unstable or unskilled, for example, waiters, shop clerks, etc. These jobs belong to the unstable tertiary level and are found in the small or middle-sized enterprises which make up the lowest level of the dual structure of the economy. Furthermore, the increased employment opportunities have encouraged our clients to seek highly paid, easy job. They are no longer willing to remain in the same jobs. Although we have fewer problems in finding them employment, we now find it necessary to encourage them to continue in a given position and to be willing to work.

Japan is presently experiencing a recession which has brought about a change in the clients' attitude toward labor. They are now more interested in semi-skilled rather than unskilled employment. This change exhibits a tendency toward a qualification-oriented society, as opposed to a school-oriented society. To be specific, they desire to get "clean work" such as automobile driving or operation of machinery. In most cases, the clients tend to seek jobs thoughtlessly and prefer socially acceptable jobs regardless of their own aptitude, ability and patience. Whatever their motives may be, it is extremely important for us to develop their will to seek more skilled employment.

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2. Changes in Social Structure

Social changes have originated from the migration of laborers into urban areas, which was caused by the foregoing economic changes. Social changes, especially in the community, have occurred as a result of the migration of laborers into urban areas in search of employment. This migration has been haphazard and without any social planning. It has caused the under- and over-population phenomenon and the disruption of the traditionally cohesive community.

Such social phenomena as the increasing drifts of population and the growing urban way of life, together with the trend toward self-centeredness and pleasure-seeking due to economic prosperity, have weakened the influence of leading citizens in the community and have accelerated the disruption of traditional values, thus posing problems to those of us working in the community.

It should be noted that there is a growing sense of apprehension among residents about the disruption of the community. Their uneasiness is intensified by the solitude and tension of urban living. To alleviate these feelings, residents have launched movements to restore the community such as "Constructing the Pleasant Village," "Creating a Home-town for our Mind." They hold *Bon* festival dances and other festivals in collective housing areas. Also, there has been a so-called U-turn phenomenon of people trying to come back to rural areas from cities. But these attempts are minor ones and have not yet deterred the growing disruption of communities.

These social changes hinder us from assessing the actual situation of the communities where offenders are expected to rehabilitate themselves. Also, these changes make it more difficult for a client to clarify his own life plans and to predict the feasibility of his future plans.

Moreover, the offenders by nature tend to escape into the anonymity of mass society. The intensified drift of the population has accelerated this trend, causing offenders to move more often. This in turn has made it difficult to implement probationary supervision. Although the offenders who drift into urban areas may

enjoy freedom by escaping into the anonymity of cities, they have to constantly fight the temptation to return to a life of crime in their unstable environment brought about by over-population. Offenders who stay in a rural community from where people constantly move out have no choice but to be strongly conscious of the cold and critical glances of the remaining residents. They have to make efforts to rehabilitate themselves by enduring the hardship. In sum, both de-population and over-population are unsuitable for the rehabilitation of offenders.

There are two major ways to approach the change in the social environments. One is to improve the social environment directly surrounding an offender, such as his family, friends and working places, in order to remove its pernicious influences on him. The other is to improve wider social environments in the community as a whole so as to eradicate social conditions conducive to criminal activities.

The improvement and adjustment of the direct social environment include finding a residence and employment for an offender, giving assistance to his family, etc. These activities aim at excluding environmental conditions harmful to his independence and rehabilitation while at the same time creating the conditions which positively promote them. Our task is to mitigate the hostility of neighbors and victims toward an offender, to improve associations, adjust human relationship at school or work, and to mobilize social resources useful for his rehabilitation. In this age of rapid social change, we must recognize more fully the importance of environmental adjustment.

Traditionally, when we were involved in such community activities as data collection or environmental adjustment, we could, to some extent, attain our goals with the help of voluntary probation officers who were well-respected citizens in the traditional community. However, this method has been becoming more inadequate every year. Today, we must rely more heavily upon the positive involvement of professional probation officers. To date, there are 50 Probation Offices with 3 branches and 18 sub-branches. Probation officers go to the

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local areas more frequently. Officers attached to the Regional Parole Board have expanded their services to include interviews with inmates of correctional institutions and consultations with officials of these institutions.

3. Changes in Family Structure

In the past, an ordinary Japanese family was an extended lineal family of three generations, where a vertical hierarchy of authority based on the relationship of elder-youth, superior-inferior dominated. The family pattern has been in a gradual transition from the lineal to conjugal families. The pace of this change has been accelerated by the migration of laborers into urban areas. In response to the demand for labor, many extended families tried to move into large cities, but failed because of housing shortages and because the generations differed in their degree of attachment to their own community. Eventually, in most cases, the joint family was broken up and members settled in different places. Young laboring class couples with their children drifted into urban areas and aged couples were left behind in de-populated agricultural or fishing villages. Through this process, families were split into two nuclei, young and old couples.

Formation of nuclear families is by no means a pathological phenomenon, but the *rapid* nucleation of families in recent years is causing some pathological symptoms. These symptoms might be attributed to the fact that the trend toward nuclear families developed before the social services were not mature enough to take over the functions which joint families had fulfilled but smaller nuclear families were unable to.

One such pathological symptom can be observed in the confused child-rearing practices of young nuclear families. Earlier, I mentioned that traditional families were vertical composite families. Young families nowadays may be called horizontal and bilateral one-unit families where an idea of equality is apparent.

Here are some characteristics of the Japanese nuclear family.

First, the status and rights of wives have improved. The number of working

couples has increased. As a result, the so-called latch-key children are increasing and juvenile delinquency among them is common.

In the past, the rearing of children at every stage of their development was based upon experience of the aged within the joint family and on the wisdom of preceding generations. But in the nuclear family today, parents grope for the ways to bring up their children relying on the fragmentary information they acquire through the mass media. Because of diversification and changes in value orientation, parents have lost confidence in their child-rearing methods and have become emotionally unstable.

In a society where an academic background is emphasized, parents tend to overemphasize intellectual training and try to push their children into prestigious schools. Under these circumstances, the attitudes of parents are confused and inconsistent. It is natural that juvenile delinquency increases when these defects are apparent in the child-rearing within a family.

Now in Japan, where nuclear families are increasing in number, a growing trend has been observed in crime and delinquency by juveniles who come from relatively well-off families. Also, more delinquents tend to come from unbroken families. This symptom is due to over-protection or to neglect on the side of parents who are confused about the educational function of the family. In order to cope with the situation, we have to treat families as a whole. Accordingly, in addition to traditional treatment techniques which are essentially of social casework, we should use more positively the group work and family casework techniques.

4. Changes in Thought Patterns

Thought patterns have been affected in the greatest degree by the spread of mass media and the information explosion in society. These factors have brought about changes in value-orientations resulting in changes in thought structure. This process of change may be restated as a shift from a logical way of thinking based on the printed word to a way of

thinking based on sensory images obtained through radio and especially T.V. This is a move toward a society in which the senses are more highly valued than logic and where people tend to respond automatically to information given by others.

Now, let us examine the symptom of confusion brought about by the explosion of information in our society. First, the selection of information items is based on their novelty and popularity usually prompted by commercialism. In the mass society, the receivers of information accept it as true and valid, and lack the ability for critical assessment of what is reported. Second, a flood of information tends to discourage people's motivation for achievement. As information increases, one feels more confident of his future. Thus, his level of motivation lowers and his willingness to accomplish decreases. In other words, there is an increase in the number of persons who tend to lose their drive because they look their future too brightly. There is a danger for them to become overly optimistic and to withdraw from reality.

The symptom of this kind is not limited to Japan, and may be said to be a worldwide phenomenon. Here, I would like to touch on the value changes pertinent to the Japanese society.

First, there has been a change from a vertical society to a horizontal one. This denotes the shift in the value system from the superior-inferior or upper-lower human relationship to one of equality with its attendant confusion.

Secondly, there has been a shift from a value standard based on the predominance of man over woman to that of equality between the sexes. As women's status improves, men's status declines relatively and confusion results.

Thirdly, there has been a transition from a poor society to an affluent one. The change in people's attitudes from patience and economy to pleasure and consumption has brought about confusion.

Thus, changes and diversification in the value-orientation have caused a variety of pathological symptoms. I believe, however, that it is important for us to be flexible in selecting necessary value standards for our better life by

looking squarely at both the different and the common features of these values with the premise that these changes are an inevitable part of the process of development of our society.

Crime Prevention Activities

Crime prevention activities in the field of rehabilitation services are interrelated with those carried out by the police, but they are different in their contents, range and direction. Crime prevention activities by the police are directed to control the occurrence of crimes and fulfill the defensive function to prevent citizens from being victimized by the offenders. These activities are directly related to the interests of the community, and, therefore, are easily understood by the people as their direct concern. It is not difficult to mobilize community cooperation in this field.

In contrast, the aim of crime prevention activities in the field of rehabilitation services is to prevent crime by contributing to the building of a community which will help ex-offenders rehabilitate themselves and by adjusting social conditions. In order to attain this goal, we try to (1) enlighten and lead the public, (2) improve the social environment, and (3) aid activities of the residents in the community. Therefore, our activities are indirect. The people's interest lacks a sense of urgency. Moreover, real difficulties exist in getting the cooperation of people since their understanding of the importance of such activities is deeply related to their general attitudes and thought patterns of today as explained earlier.

Let me explain how we have carried out these crime prevention activities difficult to pursue under the present conditions. Although these activities have involved community organizations, I cannot but comment first that they are part of a government campaign initiated and sponsored by administrative organs and, secondly, that they are centered on certain events. The following examples will illustrate the situation.

Annually, in July, "the Movement for a Brighter Society" is implemented on a

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nationwide scale through which we try to deepen the understanding of the public and to seek their cooperation in the construction of a community free from crime. This movement is not spontaneous, but is carried out through the initiative of the Justice Ministry. The role of people in the movement is only to respond. We cannot ignore the fact that community residents who should essentially be the subjects of this movement remain the objects to be enlightened.

The second characteristic of these activities is that they consist of holding certain events. Some of the common events of "the Movement for a Brighter Society," including at the local level are: public case-study meetings, lecture meetings, conferences, round-table discussions, open contests for campaign slogans, parades with bands, films to enlighten people, etc. Although these events should be effective means of achieving the aims of the movement, too often they are actually engaged in for their own sake. These events do not necessarily meet the needs of the community residents.

It is desirable that these crime prevention activities be carried out by community residents themselves. To prevent ex-offenders from recommitting a crime, to assist in their rehabilitation and to prevent crime in general are problems of the community. Government officials should only offer expert advice. However, these crime prevention activities are influenced by the traditional government-oriented attitude of the Japanese people.

Now, let us examine the historical backgrounds of our crime prevention activities, and that of "the Movement for a Brighter Society," in particular.

This nationwide crime prevention movement which started in 1951 is carried out in the month of July every year.

The decade from 1951 to 1960 was an initial period immediately following the establishment of our rehabilitation system. It put emphasis on raising the morale of the persons involved. During this period we conducted a humanistic drive to enlighten the public. This drive was aided by Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs) and VPO organizations, and we

attempted to strengthen Big Brothers and Sisters (BBS) organizations, Women's Association for Rehabilitation Aid, and sympathetic employers, and eventually to enlighten the public.

The second decade from 1961 to 1970 may be characterized as a period of development and professionalization of the rehabilitation services. The services were improved through the increase of the probation officers and the introduction of more scientific techniques. During this period, crime prevention activities moved from humanistic philanthropy of the initial stage to a more scientific community action. Along with the development of cooperative organizations, a move toward specialization emerged.

In 1961, "the Movement for a Brighter Society" was expanded under the auspices of the Justice Ministry to include in its main objectives the wholesome rearing of juveniles and crime prevention through assistance for the rehabilitation of offenders. In 1969, "strengthening solidarity in the community" was adopted as one of the major targets of this movement. Furthermore, the fact that the Fourth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders held in Kyoto in 1970 recognized the principle of public participation in crime prevention activities reconfirmed our target of the movement and opened the way to the third period of our crime prevention activities.

The third period is from 1971 to the present. During this period, the emphasis of the movement has always been placed on how to strengthen the community cohesion and community feelings. To date, the movement has consistently stressed the importance of public participation and community involvement. This period may be called a community-oriented period.

Our crime prevention activities aim at adjusting social conditions so as to contribute to the prevention of crime and constructing a community which will better function for the sake of rehabilitation of offenders. To achieve this aim, voluntary participation of residents must exist. But as I have mentioned earlier relating to "the Movement for a

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Brighter Society," we have not been able to go further than just enlightening the community. We have to admit the fact that we have not been successful enough to grasp the feelings of community residents and to enlist their voluntary participation. Therefore, it is our pressing task to find a way to break through this situation.

Human and Material Resources in the Community

The traditions and the special features of Japanese rehabilitation services lie in the wider use of community residents, and volunteers and voluntary organizations in particular. Before going into detail, I would like to state the reasons for this from two aspects.

The first is the historical reason. Our rehabilitation services were originated in 1880 by a volunteer with humanistic drives as ex-prisoners aid services. Since then, because prisoners aid services were found to be effective in preventing recidivism, the government gradually approved it. As a result of government's encouragement, a number of private rehabilitation aid organizations were set up throughout the country. These services steadily developed and built the base of our present rehabilitation services. This process was a gradual transition of our rehabilitation services from philanthropy to a part of our criminal justice system.

The second reason concerns the objective in the treatment of offenders. The aim of punishment is not to isolate them from the community but to rehabilitate them in a free society. To achieve this, it is necessary to reflect the ideas of the people in public policy, to involve the community in the implementation of the policy and make the community understand its significance and to develop crime preventive measures with cooperative efforts of the government and the people.

For these reasons, rehabilitation services in Japan were established and have been administered by mobilizing a variety of human and material resources in the community. In this age of con-

stant social change, the public participation in rehabilitation services has become more vital. There is a pressing need for more appropriate government advice regarding the public involvement.

I would like to state here the roles and present situations of the human resources which have taken root in Japanese rehabilitation services: Volunteer Probation Officers (VPO), Big Brothers and Sisters (BBS), Women's Associations for Rehabilitation Aid, and sympathetic employers.

1. Volunteer Probation Officers

Volunteer Probation Officers are volunteers who are selected from among community residents. They assist the rehabilitation of offenders through probationary supervision and through environmental adjustment of places to which offenders will return. They also carry out crime prevention activities to reduce crime in the community. Officially speaking, however, VPOs are part-time civil servants because their duties are directly related to the implementation of the state criminal policy. VPOs are not paid for their work, but actual expenses they have incurred in carrying out their tasks are reimbursed within a certain limit by the state.

The following points show the unique characteristics of the VPO system in Japan as compared with voluntary organizations in other countries. VPOs in Japan exist on a nation-wide scale. The number of VPOs is as much as 50,000. Furthermore, their status and tasks have a strong governmental character with legal guarantees. It should be noted that probationary supervision in Japan is implemented by the cooperative efforts of professional probation officers (PPO) who are specialists and VPOs who assist them. This does not mean, however, that VPOs are assistants to cover the shortage of 789 professional probation officers. VPOs are expected in their services toward clients to utilize their influences and experiences acquired through unofficial activities in local communities so as to alleviate the bureaucratic rigidity which tends to hinder PPOs' functions in the community. In

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reality, however, due to the definite shortage of the number of PPOs and widespread jurisdictions of local probation offices, we have to entrust to VPOs most of field services which should originally be done by PPOs.

It is well-known that VPOs contribute a great deal to the implementation of our rehabilitation services. But over-reliance on VPOs' services will undermine PPOs' leadership in treating offenders, and as a result may possibly decrease the state responsibility to enforce the laws. In order to improve the situation, we have prompted various programs. Some of them are: more intensive treatment by PPOs, the differentiated treatment program in which clients are classified depending upon their needs, and PPOs and VPOs assume differentiated roles to treat them more effectively.

Along with changes in our society at large, the VPO system itself has faced several problems. The major problems are as follows. First, due to the disorganization of the community, the unofficial and local nature of the VPOs which made them valuable is changing. Secondly, VPOs are gradually getting older and it became more difficult to recruit middle-aged VPOs, resulting in the wider generation gaps between VPOs and young offenders. A recent survey revealed that 55 percent of VPOs are over 60 years old while only 16 percent are under 50. Thirdly, the rotation of new and old VPOs has not been smooth enough. The number of VPOs holding their positions for a longer time is increasing. Although there may be merits in their accumulation of experiences, the position of a VPO tends to become more honorary, thus losing his initiative or flexibility as a volunteer.

Regardless of these criticisms of VPOs, we believe that they are valuable human resources for the future, and that we have to continue to utilize VPOs with increased efforts to resolve the above problems facing the VPO system.

2. Associations for Rehabilitation Aid

Associations for Rehabilitation Aid are voluntary organizations approved by the Minister of Justice as stipulated in the

law. The associations can be divided into two categories by the tasks they perform: (a) Rehabilitation Aid Hostels, and (b) Rehabilitation Services Promotion Associations.

(a) Rehabilitation Aid Hostels

Rehabilitation Aid Hostels offer accommodations to probationers, parolees, offenders released from prisons on the termination of their sentences, or those granted suspended sentence or suspended prosecution, who are unable to receive assistance from their relatives or public welfare services. Such individuals are accommodated in these hostels with or without recommendations of the directors of probation offices. During their stay in the hostels, they are provided with meals, and are assisted in obtaining education, training, medical care, recreation, jobs, material aid, and environmental improvement and adjustment services. At present, 105 hostels with a total of 2,936 beds are providing these services. Residents in most hostels commute to their jobs in the community and earn their living and prepare for their future. Some of the hostels have workshops to provide vocational guidance, to give work, or to defray the management costs of the hostels.

The Rehabilitation Aid Hostels, some of which have been in existence for almost a century, have made an outstanding contribution to the rehabilitation of offenders, even of those with a high risk of recidivism and serious problems in adjusting to social life. Of offenders released from prisons in 1975, 23.4 percent of the parolees and 17.8 percent of prisoners who terminated their sentences were accommodated in the hostels. Altogether, 21 percent of all released offenders used hostels.

Rehabilitation Aid Hostels, however, presently face the following problems.

(i) Because most of the hostels were established by enthusiastic volunteers, their economic base is fragile and they face financial difficulties.

(ii) Increased employment opportunities and improved social welfare services brought about by economic growth have decreased their traditional roles of providing employment assistance and temporary urgent protection for the

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offender. The number of residents has been on a gradual decrease.

(iii) Salary scales of the staff members of the hostels are relatively low despite the difficult tasks they have to perform. As a result, it has become harder to recruit competent workers.

In the recent deliberations on the revision of the Penal Code and the Juvenile Law, the necessity to strengthen the functions of the halfway houses has been stressed. In order to come up to the expectation, the following measures have been proposed:

(i) To reorganize and unite the smaller hostels so as to strengthen their financial base and increase their managerial efficiency;

(ii) To utilize hostels as halfway houses; to give an orientation course to parolees which will prepare them for social life in the crucial period immediately after their release; and to give intensive group work to small groups of offenders in need of living guidance;

(iii) To use the hostels in offering group training to the rapidly increasing number of traffic offenders placed on probation;

(iv) To use hostels as PPOs' day-offices where PPOs interview their clients, clients' families, and volunteers; and

(v) To increase subsidies by the government.

We have no state-run facilities of this kind. Some experts advocate the need for state-run, community-based institutions. This may not be necessary, however, if the present private Rehabilitation Aid Hostels function up to our expectations.

(b) Rehabilitation Services Promotion Associations

These associations are private liaison organizations designed to guide and assist a variety of volunteers involved in our rehabilitation services so that they may function well. These associations receive subsidies from local governments, and raise funds through member dues, allotments from the community chest and donations from citizens. With these funds, they give financial aid to the Rehabilitation Aid Hostels, BBS Associations, and Women's Associations for Rehabilitation Aid. They also assist

VPO organizations, by training VPOs and other related volunteers, by their crime prevention activities, by research projects on rehabilitation services and by spreading the philosophy of rehabilitation services. There are presently 58 active associations working on both prefectural and national levels.

3. Big Brothers and Sisters Associations

BBS Associations, which are groups of youthful volunteers devoted to the sound growth of children, play an important role in assisting the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents by befriending them and by becoming their consultants as their big brother or sister figures. They also carry out crime prevention activities in their own communities. This movement was introduced by university students in 1947, and thereafter has spread throughout the country with about 8,000 youths participating at present.

The BBS Associations tend to lack stability as organizations because they are organized by youths and have frequent turnovers of membership. However, they assume important roles in bridging the generation gaps between VPOs and youthful offenders. We highly value the self-sacrificing activities of these altruistic young people in an age when egotism prevails among youth in general. We recognize the usefulness of their voluntary activities and presently try to upgrade them as valuable human resources for our services in the future.

4. Women's Associations for Rehabilitation Aid

These associations are groups of women volunteers who aim at cooperating with us in the rehabilitation of offenders and crime prevention activities from a standpoint of mothers and women. Their service areas are: giving assistance to activities of VPOs and BBS Associations; visitation of correctional institutions and assistance to inmates' families; assistance in enlisting more public support for the rehabilitation services; visiting Rehabilitation Aid Hostels to encourage residents, give parties, and do sewing services to mend residents' clothes and bedclothes.

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There are presently as many as 250,000 members throughout the country. Considering their large number, we value their potentials as indispensable human resources in rehabilitation services. We expect the further development of the associations through the refinement of their organizations and the utilization of their potentials.

5. Sympathetic Employers

Sympathetic employers are cooperative employers who run their own business and volunteer to employ probationers and parolees for the sake of their rehabilitation without discriminating them from non-criminal employees in terms of working conditions.

Although offenders presently have wider employment opportunities, they still suffer disadvantages because of their criminal records. Even if they may be employed, they often fail to establish posi-

tive human relationship in their jobs and frequently change their employment. Under these circumstances, cooperation of sympathetic employers is highly valuable.

Sympathetic employers are not organized on a nationwide scale and, frankly speaking, most of them run small- or medium-sized enterprises. They tend to be unable to employ offenders in periods of economic recession when offenders have more difficulties in finding jobs, and they can offer more during periods of prosperity when general employment opportunities also increase. In another word, offenders' needs and sympathetic employers' ability to offer work do not coincide. There are about 3,500 such employers throughout the country. We intend to further develop human resources in this area since placement of offenders in appropriate jobs is vital for their self-reliance and ultimate rehabilitation.



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