

Japan's Evolution

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There is a marked background of American influence in the rise of Japan—one of the most rapid and striking national developments recorded in history.

In half a century Japan's population has more than doubled, her wealth has increased twenty-fold, and she has been transformed from an almost forgotten hermit nation into a world power, a leader in industry and commerce, with an ambition to be second to none in capturing the markets of the world.

For Japan's development, there are reasons both internal and external. First and greatest of all was the new mind created long ago by the Oyamel philosophy, which threw the reactionary Confucian cult into comparative shadow.

In this mental discipline it should be noted that every one, without exception, of "the fifty-five creators" of the New Japan was trained, and some proved to be past masters. Without this element, the Japan we now know would not, could not, have been. Introduced from China, in the Seventeenth century, the philosophy of Wang Yang-ming (Oyamel in Japanese) was developed and taught by books and expounders in fifty different centers.

Two hundred and fifty years of peace sufficed for the accumulation of the nation's potencies in preparation for emergence, when the opportunity should come.

During all this period there was unbroken contact with Europe through the Dutch at Nagasaki. Even the Portuguese and Spanish contacts of seventy years, with merchants, military men, and engineers, had left their mark on the Japanese language, architecture, music, military science, and dietetics. Then, from the Dutch, with their mechanics, physicians, language, books, apparatus, and hospitals, such wonderful results were wrought in art, science, invention and trade, in ideas and commodities, that Swift, through his knowledge of Holland, was able to pen his extravagant, "Gulliver's Travels." Dutch culture had been like seed sown everywhere.

A thousand spots of light foretold the coming dawn of a long-bright day. Hundreds of native physicians read the noble Dutch language and in a measure practiced European medicine. At Nagasaki, Dr. Pompe van Merdervoort had established a hospital and trained physicians, while Dutch mechanics, with the aid of Japanese workmen, had built a steam yacht.

"Black Ships" From America

In a word, Japan was as a rich clover field already pollenized from the Occident. Like a steady line of bees, the Dutch ships had been bringing the vitalizing influences for more than two centuries. Yet to the Japanese, the modern revelations, on a large scale, were the "black ships" of the American whalers that gathered in their waters. What the islanders learned both from honestly shipwrecked sailors and from the voluntary waifs (chiefly mutineers) quickened the national temperament.

President Fillmore's fleet, which was ordered to sail for the East in 1852, on the same day that Japan's greatest emperor, Mutsuhito, was born, consisted largely of store ships, which were loaded with American inventions and products.

After Commodore Perry had completed his treaty-making, there was held in 1854 on the strand at Yokohama, Japan's first industrial exposition. In 1872 the more ornamental presents were in a storehouse at Shizuoka, the place of the last shogun's banishment. The things of use, in agriculture and the arts, had already been widely distributed and copied, especially in that new part of the empire called the Hokkaido (Yezo), which throughout bears a very American aspect; and the reason of this is clear. A commission of scientific and practical men, sent out from Washington, was active in the island between 1870 and 1880.

Even more impressive to the student of Japan's evolution were the personnel and equipment of at least five of the first American missionaries. Three, besides being mature in experience, had been long before in China, or were men of science and technical ability. Dr. J. C. Hepburn opened a hospital and dispensary and trained the first surgeons and physicians, and he and S. R. Brown built the bridges spanning the gulf between the two lan-

guages, with their grammars and dictionaries. They also trained the intellectuals, and introduced likewise photography and the finer arts.

The third, G. F. Verbeek, was a marine engineer and master of seven or eight languages. For years, when the Gospel was still unpalatable, he taught the Japanese everything they wished to know. Then he organized their university, taught them the spirit of occidental law and custom, explained the freedom of the press and how church trustees held property. He also proposed the great embassy of 1872-4 around the world to study the details of Western civilization, half the personnel being chosen from his pupils.

Quick to Follow Their Guides.

Back of all was the nation's youth, with its vigor, its innate capacity to select, adopt, adapt, and become adepts. Both geologically and in human history, Japan is the youngest country in Asia.

From 1859 to 1868 not a few foreign helpers on the soil gave their time and talents to aid Japan; but after 1870 and until 1900 and later, Argonauts from the West came in fleets to cover Japan with a golden fleece. No fewer than 5,000 yatol (salaried foreigners), experts in every line and field of human endeavor, were called out and employed. These men started the first railways, telegraphs, lighthouses, navy yards, foundries, mercantile projects, mechanical inventions, appliances, and agencies.

Yet the Japanese already had the capacity and ambition. The aliens were only the guides, helpers, and servants. An American missionary, Jonathan Goble, invented the Jirikisha, that has rolled round the world. Nevertheless the yatol did but teach the rudiments and point the way. It was the Japanese who made the New Japan.

When feudalism had been abolished, in 1871, and the once-despised merchant was given honor and opportunity, he unfolded the pinions of a towering ambition and looked abroad to capture the markets of Asia. It was "like giving wings to a tiger."

As early as 1860 young men had been sent to Holland for naval education; but it was under British officers that the Imperial navy was reconstructed, while French first, and then Germans, recreated the military system. (Admiral Togo was for 12 years under British naval instruction). To Americans was given the task of national education, methods of finance being borrowed from Belgium.

Only the learned Japanese, in 1870, could by ear or eye read anything higher than shop accounts or fiction. All erudition was in the hieroglyphics of China. It was said by aliens first tackling the Japanese script and style of speech that there were seven distinct languages in one. At times Japanese gentlemen in conversation seemed to have graduated from an old-time school for the deaf, for they used their fingers and the palms of their hands most industriously to show just what ideographs they were using or the meaning they wished to convey.

Their New Education.

A reform in this direction meant the uplift of humanity and the manifold increase of the nation's resources through productive individual ability. These facts seem to explain the national renaissance better than official statistics, imposing as these figures of millions are, or even the present-day reports of trained alien journalists. The new education uplifted a whole nation. Almost every village and hamlet pulses with new life. The victories, both over China and Russia and in the world's markets, were won first in Japan's public schools. In 1920 these numbered 25,644, with 178,450 teachers and 8,362,992 pupils—an almost unparalleled record, even in the Occident.

In all this there is a living parable. In Old Japan man was too much like a beast, while the beast was too much like a man. Herein are the parent facts. For ages, and even until today, Japan has suffered from too much hand labor. She needs more live animals at the plow and in the fields, the streets and the mills, while she needs to uplift her men and women.

What has really made the New Japan is this emergence in social life of the new spirit of personality and of individuality. The old civilization was communal. The new national life is based, in the main, on the assertion of the inherent powers of the individual, yet in unity of purpose with the commonwealth.

Tour of Inspection

"Yes, sir," declared a stout man in the smoker, "now that I have wealth and leisure I propose to check up on the song writers."

"As to how?"

"First, I'll count the sycamores along the Wabash and then I'll inspect those braes of Maxwellton."

His Reward

"Howdy, Tobe!" saluted an acquaintance from Slippery Slap. "How'd you come out in that poker game tuther night?"

"I didn't get no money, Newt," replied Tobe Sagg of Sandy Mash, "but great gosh, look at the experience I had!"—Kansas City Times.

X-Ray Sermons

When God Forgets.

"I'll forgive him, but I won't forget." Does a person who says that really forgive? From a study of Christ's answer to Peter when the apostle had asked how many times he should forgive his brother in one day, we judge that a real from the heart forgiveness does not have anything to be remembered against the brother who has offended.

If you say, "I have forgiven that man seven times already today", does not it imply that you are either boasting of your goodness or accusing the offended of the evils which you claim to have forgiven?

God does not forgive us in such a shallow, insincere way, their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

"Love taketh no account of evils." Christ does not say to us poor stumbling human being, "I have forgiven you so many times already."

When He forgives, it is as though our sins had never existed, and if the Power who is infinitely pure and holy forgives us in this way, how completely should we forgive the little wrong which we must endure, and how much hope it should give us to think that we can turn to God sincerely, and He will put our spirits into as perfect a condition as if we had never sinned. If we fall into evil again the Great Father is waiting with an aching heart to welcome his prodigals home.

Every spring, the Power which some call native makes the dead, black muck of our woodlands to grow into snow white lillies, and this same Power can and will (with our help) awaken our weak sin-filled hearts to a spiritual life that is so pure that we may be ready to dwell in the crystal courts of heaven.

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