

OUR JAPANESE QUESTION



Arrival of Southern Foreigners, Portuguese or Spaniards, in Japan, as Shown on a Folding Screen.

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WHAT is all this hullabaloo about hostile feeling between the United States and Japan? Can two countries be found with a longer record of international friendship? For half a century Japan has welcomed Americans, while the United States has been a land of pilgrimage for Japanese. The two countries have also been bound together by eight successive commercial treaties, and the United States in 1854 was the first nation to accept Japan as a full member of the family of nations.

The policies and interests of the two lands are not naturally antagonistic. By the Root-Takahira note of 1908 and the Lansing-Ishii note of 1917 we admit Japan's Asiatic Monroe Doctrine. There is no unassigned territory that both nations covet, except the island of Yap, around which just now rages a tea-potential tempest. Neither nation needs to interfere with the trade of the other except in open commercial competition. The Pacific offers abundant opportunities for both these great maritime powers.

Nevertheless, there has never been a time of such uneasy and hostile feeling between the two nations. It all goes back to the question of the right of the people of one country to settle in the territory of another, translated by Japan in the Peace Conference of Paris into the phrase "equality of races." That claim is positively denied by the action of the State of California. That denial arouses and threatens to embitter Japan. Is it a just claim? Would it be good for the United States of America to allow it?

The Federal form of our Government makes possible this singular triangular difficulty in which the desires of Japan and the Pacific States collide, and the Federal Government acts as a sort of umpire. The legal

and international difficulty is, after all, simple. The President and Senate of the United States, by treaties with Japan and China, long secured and assured mutual freedom of movement of persons from one country to another, as travelers or as immigrants. Congress has by statute limited, and later prohibited, the immigration of Chinese, except the four privileged classes of merchants, travelers, diplomats and students.

Congress has also fixed the conditions of naturalization of immigrants; and in 1884 enacted that no person of "the Mongolian race" could be naturalized: that provision

has been applied both to Japanese and Chinese. On the other hand, under the Fourteenth Amendment, the children of Orientals, if born in the United States, are full citizens of the United States and the State in which they reside. By the "gentlemen's agreement" in 1908, which was recognized by the Treaty of 1911 as reasonable, Japanese immigration of laborers is checked so long as the Japanese Government refuses to grant them passports.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the number of Japanese in the United States has grown steadily. In 1900 there were 95,000; in 1910

there were 153,000. California contained 10,000 in 1900, 14,000 in 1910 and 70,000 in 1920, besides about 120,000 of the Japanese race in the Hawaiian Islands. This increase is due in part to smuggling in Japanese immigrants, still more to the ease with which "students" turn their attention to farming and the industries. Another source is the thousands of "picture brides," that is, Japanese women admitted contrary to the spirit of the "gentlemen's agreement," because they promise to marry resident Japanese and thus increase the American citizens of the Japanese stock. The immigra-

tion authorities of the United States are directly responsible for this method of increasing the present and future Japanese population.

At this point comes in the authority of the States. They cannot prevent the admission of anybody accepted by the United States Government, and cannot exclude any man or woman from the suffrage upon race grounds; but they can deny to aliens the privilege of holding land or of taking part in corporations of certain kinds. This right has been exercised in many States against aliens in general. California by statute, and also by a recent referendum, has prohibited aliens who are not capable of becoming citizens (that is, in effect, Chinese and Japanese) from holding land directly or through forms of trust. Whether a State may legally thus discriminate between aliens is not yet settled by the courts, though there are precedents.

Here then is the case in a nutshell. The National Government prohibits Chinese immigration but not Japanese. It restricts Japanese immigration by a roundabout and makeshift method which allows thousands to sift through. The Pacific States are powerless to shut these people out, but are alarmed at their acquirement of lands, as an evidence of intention to form a permanent settlement. The Japanese Government dislikes any restriction, and formally protests against treatment of Japanese which is not precisely the same as that of other immigrants.

This legal side of the question is the lesser part. The authority of the United States to shut out immigrants for any reason that seems good to Congress has been often exercised and cannot be doubted even though it arouses another nation's hostility. The Coast States would like to see all Oriental immigration shut off, and the Japanese Government desires no current of emigration which carries people too far away from the oversight of their



Dutch in Nagasaki.

Painted by a Japanese Artist, Kei-ga Kawara.

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original Government. The offense in the eyes of Japan is that the Japanese should be put in an inferior position because supposed to be a menace to the morals and welfare of the United States.

The Japanese are a proud people, who have much to be proud of. Their civilization began near a thousand years before that of our north European ancestors. They have set up a modern nation which successfully measured itself against Russia. No one who associates with educated Japanese can doubt their high intellectual qualities. The immigrants are of various types, some desirable and some a load on the community. The pro-Japanese books of Gulick and others upset their own apple cart; for they paint such a picture of the domestic and agricultural virtues of the Japanese as to constitute an argument that it would be a good thing for California and the United States if our population were all Japanese. On the contrary, the near neighbors are apt intensely to dislike the Japanese, perhaps in some cases because they are such thrifty and successful rivals.

Leave all that out of account. The real issue is not that of the goodness or badness of the Japanese, but of the permanent effect of bringing in an additional permanent race element. If the Japanese were all that their fondest admirers claim for them, that would only make the matter worse; for their coming would mean the creation of a new community, which by its extraordinary virtues and talents is bound eventually to take possession of State Governments. We must never forget that twenty-one years hence every Japanese child born in this country, who lives that long, will be a citizen and a voter.

The bottom reason for opposing Japanese immigration as well as facilities for permanently settling those who are already here on the land, is that it means a race group which will indefinitely be different from the rest of the community. To this the Japanese answer is always that we are encouraging such race groups all over the United States. They point to the Russian Hebrew settlement in New York, the Bohemians in Cleveland and Chicago, the Poles in Detroit, the Irish in Boston, the Germans in Cincinnati.

If those groups were permanent the argument would be unanswerable. Our immigration, however, has always proceeded upon the theory that the children or at least the grandchildren of immigrants would be conscious of no race but the American. Take the Scandinavians. They are now scattered through many States, and fifty years hence will be nearly merged in the general population. A permanent Jewish population of 800,000 in New York City, speaking mostly Yiddish, a permanent Hungarian quarter in Uniontown would be a menace to both State and nation. In spite of the differences of religion, of race and of imported languages, there is a reasonable expectation that most of these elements will in time fuse into one American race.

The great exception to this hope is the negro race, in which even the considerable fusion that has gone on fails to break up the separation; for the simple reason that the mixed bloods are distinguishable, to the sixteenth or even thirty-second degree. Without any discussion of the moral or intellectual character of the two races, it is a fact that all persons in the United States having negro blood are now combined into one group recognizable by its color, and therefore likely to remain indefinitely separate.

The same thing must happen with any Oriental race settling down in large numbers anywhere in the United States. All descendants of Japanese, whether of pure strain or mixtures, must still be recognized and classed as Japanese; and there-

fore must inevitably be drawn together as a separate group, perhaps a separate community. Whether superior, equal or inferior to their neighbors, they are bound to be separate. Not because of their physical characteristics, but because those characteristics reveal the numbers, the distribution and the probable combination of those who possess them.

Upon this race problem the history of the United States casts an electrical illumination; for this is only one of several difficult race problems, none of which is anywhere near equilibrium. The first is that of the 300,000 American Indians. If they were physically indistinguishable from their neighbors, the race separation would quickly come to an end. They live mostly in communities by themselves and show little disposition to scatter through the country. Notwithstanding the presence of numerous white people among them, there is no likelihood of a thorough race mixture which would extinguish the present separate group.

The second great race problem relates to the negro, and was brought upon this country by the greed and cruelty of the people of all the English colonies. They denied their own traditions and the laws of their home country, by forcibly causing the immigration of a race of unwilling slaves. The immediate result was a terrible wrench to American principles of free government, then bitter sectional rivalry, later the Civil War, and at present an unsettled race question which terribly interferes with the prosperity of the Southern States and the tranquility of the whole Union.

The introduction of this century-long race question might have been prevented by a true idea of the interest of the European settlers. Slave immigration was defended on the same basis as Oriental immigration today. It was said to be impossible to open up the country and develop the natural resources except by cheap and "dependable" labor. Ergo, America must have slaves. Ergo, now it must have unassimilable Orientals. Our fathers ate sour grapes; must we also set the teeth of our children on edge?

A third incursion of a separate race is now going on steadily in the Southwest through the continuous and dangerous importation of great numbers of Mexicans, in defiance of the immigration laws, though with the unofficial sanction of the Department of Labor. These people are substantially all Indians, or half-breeds of a low type, speaking a foreign language and living by themselves in shacks and large cities, by the thousands. Our children's children will be afflicted by this admittance of a race element outside the circle of American spirit and forever distinguishable by their color. We

can stop that process if we will. While it lasts we are throwing away our strongest argument against Oriental immigration.

The Japanese have more capacity to Americanize than some of the three present separate races; but that does not take away the danger of admitting large numbers of any Oriental race, who are certain to gather together in country settlements or city sections by themselves. Many of them prefer to live together. Others are forced to join in these settlements by the hostile sentiment of the rest of the community. The same race distinction is bound to be set up on both sides, just as in the case of the Indian, negro and Mexican.

This is not the result simply of a color prejudice. Brown is as honorable as pink. The average Japanese is well set up in person, keen in business affairs. You may find in a Japanese as wise and trustworthy a friend as in an Englishman or an Italian. Caucasian and Japanese children may go to the same schools, and, as they grow up, vote at the same polls. Yet in the long run race consciousness will show itself wherever the race distinction is visible. It will extend into politics and Government. If the Japanese got the majority, they will look on other races as separate, and therefore inferior. Or else a like prejudice on the other side will keep the Japanese down.

Granted everything that may be said in favor of the quickness and alertness of the Japanese, their readiness to acquire English, their interest in their families, their capacities to take part in a free government—we still cannot get away from the inexorable facts of the situation. The country may read the future in the light of the present condition of the Hawaiian Islands. That beautiful group, nearest of the Pacific islands to our shores, enjoying the climate of heaven and the volcanic scenery of the infernal regions, is at this moment an orientalized country in which the descendants of born Americans are in a relatively small and declining minority.

The old royal government allowed the sugar growers to bring in first Chinese and then Japanese coolies, who were practically bondmen during their term of service. When that expired, many of them remained in the islands, where labor was always wanted. The Republic encouraged the coming of the Japanese and also of some Koreans. The Government of the United States, while rigorously excluding Chinese from the islands, has admitted the "picture brides" and has also allowed 12,000 Filipinos to be brought in.

What is the result? Out of about 260,000 people, nearly one-half are Japanese, including a large number of children born on the soil and therefore citizens and future voters.

The native Hawaiian race is going down hill to extinction. The Americans and Europeans, altogether, are not over 20,000, but they are in large part the capitalists, professional people and directors of the plantations and industrials. There are at present no fierce race hatreds, but it is as clear as noonday that within a few years the Japanese, with their rapid growth of population, aided by the picture bride system, will have a majority of the voters in the islands. They will then elect a majority of the members of the territorial Assembly. They will demand the appointment of a Governor of Japanese extraction. They will be masters of those islands.

Among the Japanese there is a strong racial organization, apparently engineered by the Consuls of the Japanese Empire and the priests of the Buddhist and Shinto temples, for in those islands there are more temples of the Japanese faiths than churches of the Christian religion. The Japanese Government keeps track of the growing young men and expects them at 16 years of age to be enrolled on official Japanese lists. The Japanese like the islands, because they are much better off than the same people could possibly be in Japan; but the road back home is not allowed to be closed for lack of weeding by the Japanese Government.

If the Japanese are allowed to come to the United States at will, or in any considerable number, the eventual fate of California, Oregon and Washington will be the same as Hawaii. But for the barriers put up against the Chinese, forty years ago, there would now be from two to five million of them on the Coast. Unrestricted Japanese immigration would easily bring a million within ten years, and the more industrious, thrifty and capable they proved to be, the more likely they would be to control the Government. To receive a large body of resident foreigners incapable of naturalization under the laws is practically a denial of the principle of free government; and in any case their children will become the governors.

To keep alive the present mutual suspicion between Japan and America is not only unwise but unnecessary. California would quiet down if assured against further Japanese immigration. Japan will be satisfied if the humiliating discrimination between Japanese aliens and other aliens ceases. The plain, easy and adequate solution is a treaty between the United States and Japan under which laborers shall be forbidden to emigrate in either direction.

How long would the Japanese Government endure it if 70,000, or even 700, American farmers were to settle down in Japan, build American houses, continue the English language, wear their home clothes and proceed to compete successfully with the native rice growers? Two hundred and fifty years ago they expelled all foreigners. The last thing that Japan desires or would permit is the free and unrestricted immigration of other races into their empire.

Therefore such a provision as it suggested ought to, and would, satisfy their pride because based on a reciprocal principle. It leaves the present freedom of entry on both sides to the four categories of merchants, diplomats, travelers and students. It is a valuable assertion of the sovereign right of Japan to deal with any insidious immigration which might tend to sap the authority of the Japanese race in their own land. It is a principle which might well be adopted by Australia and New Zealand, which have the same problems as ours. It relieves the United States from a now race group to be made permanent by differences of physical structure.

Unless this controversy is settled soon and settled peaceably, it will, sooner or later, be settled in blood, for it strikes at the principles of national existence and the safety of American civilization.