

## CHAPTER VIII

**I**F we wish seriously to study this situation in the Far East and what is really going on, we should analyze particularly the character of the two peoples—the Chinese and the Japanese, look upon them as a whole and in their lives as nations. To begin with, a careful analysis is bound to give most of us a shock. We have been told at the start that the Chinese is an honest fellow and that the Japanese is not. I will take you back some sixty years to the beginning of that fable. When our grandfathers were children there appeared in the American geographies a simple paragraph or two to the effect that Japanese businessmen employed Chinese to take care of their books and accounts because they, the Japanese, could not trust their own countrymen. The contrary is and has been true. Even to this day, to the start of the war between China and Japan, Chinese houses have Japanese cashiers in many, many instances and Japanese houses seldom, if ever, have Chinese bookkeepers. This silly story appearing in the American geographies and read by our grandfathers when they were children was passed down through generations, and while it

is probably out of print in the school books of today, it is generally believed.

When you are in the Orient and buying from a Chinese merchant you expect many prices for the same thing and you do not, if you have lived in the Orient, give the Chinese what he originally asked. Instead, you bargain and dicker and wrangle with him and he comes down, down in his price until if you buy the article you do so at one third or one fourth the price. Life in China has been a bitter struggle for hundreds of years. Money has become the god to most of its people.

Now if you are in Japan and dealing with a Japanese merchant, you soon learn that he has fixed one price originally for the article he has to sell and that if you wish it you pay it. There is no beating him down, cutting that price. The price has been as a rule fairly fixed with a fair margin of profit. It stands.

If you have a business deal in China you must get reputable signatures affixed and have the deal consummated within the jurisdiction of safe courts, courts within some international territory; otherwise, in your dealing with the average run of Chinaman, your business agreement is worth nothing. It is not enough that you have the right on your side. You must also have the law, if there is a law, or, better, force. Then your point will be won.

With the average Japanese you need on the

whole not even a signature to your contract. His word is as good as the proverbial bond. There are exceptions, of course, as there would even be in China, but in the general run of Japanese, a word given is a word kept with honesty, practically a national characteristic. This can certainly not be said of China.

Take again the personal habits of the Chinese as a whole and the Japanese. A vast majority of the great population of the Chinese do not bathe once a year if then. The Japanese, rich and poor, high and low, noblemen, businessmen, laborers, soldiers, bathe once, if not twice, a day. The Japanese are scrupulously clean; the Chinese are not. Even their homes show it. The average Chinese home is filthy; the average Japanese house is spotless. No matter how humble, it shines. In China, millions never take off their clothes through the winter and when spring comes and the quick heat of summer rises they strip off their padded clothing, pawn it and go half naked. The clothing is piled high in store houses, unwashed and reeking with vermin, until the sharp cold of fall and the sting of approaching winter, when mobs come and buy, willy nilly, the clothing others pawned in the spring.

It is this unsanitary habit of a nation that creates the epidemics of typhus and cholera and other plagues that yearly cost the lives of tens of thousands, yet ancient China breeds on; its children,

born into the world every year by the millions, to die, or to starve on to miserable maturity, old men at 40, old women at 30.

The Japanese have some of the finest doctors and hospitals in the world. With an unsanitary neighbor at their elbow they are waging a constant fight against epidemics, they are vaccinating and inoculating the ignorant Chinese masses who come under the zone of their influence as well as their own people, vaccinating and inoculating them in many cases against their will. At Mukden, the Japanese are training 600 Koreans, Manchurians and Chinese to be doctors in what is probably the largest and finest medical school in the world, preparing to send out an army of medicos behind their own vanguard of physicians and surgeons to save slothful China from herself.

Before I went into plague-infested areas in China where death struck down the westerner as quickly as bullets, I could always find a Japanese hospital or doctor somewhere, who cheerfully inoculated me regardless of whether I was of his own race or not. The Chinese were given the same service. Yet the peoples and nations of the west in their blind prejudice of the Nipponese have never taken the pains to know what Japan is really doing for civilization in the Far East. These nations, aside from some of their missionaries, cared not a whit whether the Chinese or the Manchurians died of cholera or of typhus or of any one of the

numerous ills to which the Orient is heir but dragged on through the years, taking from those countries its gold and trade. The Japanese, however, did care, and they have done more to stamp out these plagues or to hold them in check with their corps of doctors and nurses and their modern medicine and sanitation than any other country in the world.

In China, the child is in hell, the child is given away or sold in slavery if a girl. Japan, on the other hand, is a child's paradise. In Japan it is a crime to strike a child. There are foreign institutions in China devoted to the care of abandoned babes who otherwise would die of heat or cold or starvation. Babies born but a few hours are laid ruthlessly in the road sides or at the doors of charitable institutions or are thrown into rivers when there are too many of them in the family to feed. In Japan where the ambition is to have many children, the poorest family will deny itself that it might care for another little son or daughter. I often wish people whom I hear condemn Japan could see and know this, could witness the lives of children in both Japan and China and compare them. A nation good to children has much to commend it to the world at large.

I have seen little girls led by old women through the streets of China cities and bartered to any man who had the price of a few coppers. I have seen these children stare in wide-eyed wonder at the

men who came to look upon them and shrink in mute terror as they laid their hands upon them. I will never forget the scream of a child of ten or less as a ragged old man with great sores on his body, having paid the child's keeper, clawed her feverishly into a doorway of an evening and there began to maul her like a wolf while the old woman who made a living from her stood in the street and spat angrily, muttering to herself through toothless gums. And this in the day of the so-called enlightened republic and in the zone of influence and under the mayoralty of a henchman of the Chiang Kai-shek who was press-agented into heroic stature in America.

To a large degree the average Chinese you meet in and out of his country is an affable rascal, likeable on the whole, a good mixer when the occasion demands, winning your affection and learning easily your language and therefore the more able to break down the barriers of race. You can never tell just what he is thinking about no matter how long you have lived with him. But you do learn to know that when he smiles he may not mean it. The Japanese in contrast is a poor mixer, is reserved and non-communicative until he knows you and is likely to give the foreigner on first meeting the impression that he is sullen and does not like him. He is by nature suspicious and he must know you before he likes you and trusts you. But you can always, as a rule, depend upon him. He is not

deceptive. Like the average American, the Japanese is a poor linguist and the majority of Nipponese, as with the average American, has a most difficult time in mastering another's language. This defect in Japan, however, is being remedied. There are many English schools in Tokyo and other Japanese cities and the Japanese now use English with which to converse with Chinese, Germans, Italians and Frenchmen. Some of the Japanese, even those who have not been to America or England, and have never left Japan speak excellent English. There are many cases still, however, where the English learned and spoken in Japan is far from perfect and most difficult to understand.

The Japanese is proud. And he is wounded easily. That pride reaches down to the lowest worker. The Chinese may have pride but he does not show it or allow it to interfere with his relations with the foreigner. Westerners in the Orient have openly abused the Chinese and I have seen him take it smilingly. But not so with the Japanese. A harsh word or a blow and the Japanese will retaliate in kind. He will give as good as he will take; he will not brook insult or injury without coming back and defending himself. It is this that has made him unpopular with that type of westerner in the Orient who is fond of lording it over the Asiatics. The Chinese have brought much of this abuse by foreigners upon themselves through the fact that with them kindness and

courtesy to which through generations they have been stranger even among their own people is taken as a weakness or subjection. The Englishman, particularly, has learned this in dealing with them and other eastern peoples, but it does not apply to the Japanese.

The American, with all his faults, is a democrat at heart and extends his democracy to all nationals with whom he comes in contact. When he yields to the average Chinese, is kind and gentle and courteous, instantly he is taken for a weakling, a man with little heart or position or importance in the world and the Chinese takes advantage of him. The Japanese returns kindness for kindness, courtesy for courtesy. He is by nature courteous. He is born to it. It is as natural to him as wearing a hat and he appreciates it if not demands it from others. He must know you and like you and trust you though before you can ever know or like and trust him. Otherwise there is a wall of reserve constantly between you. Of course, where the Japanese speaks your language, has lived in your country, met your kind, the breach between you is bridged the more easily. And both of you come to a comparatively quick understanding. From my observations both in this country and abroad the Japanese gets along better with the American than he does with any other nationality once the two know each other. There is, when they become acquainted, a common bond. Both are alert, both are

aggressive, both are impatient of slothfulness and both are the champion bathers of the world. To begin with, there is that bond of personal cleanliness between them. And the Japanese likes American ways. Tokyo is a super-modern American city where the American instantly is at home.

The Chinese have a contempt for our modern civilization though their own, once great, has crumbled into the dust of misery and despair. The Japanese admires it and has taken from it while retaining and keeping alive his own cultures and traditions. It is the fight now of Japan to balance the two for in the ancient Japanese life there is much that we could take from and benefit by. The Japanese were by no means a lot of primitives when we invited them to come out into the world and do as we were doing. They had an ancient empire, a government and a social and home life, with arts, drama and music and painting which should and will be kept alive. They had a code of honor, a fine and a high honor before we ever fraternized with them. China had hers too but she allowed it to decay. "Squeeze" in China has dominated that nation's life to the detriment of government and of business. There are no trans-oceanic Chinese ship lines. There was one. The United States Government put it out of business because it carried more narcotics smuggled in the holds of its ships than it did passengers. Japan spans the world with the finest ships afloat, the Nippon Yusen Kaisha, with

luxurious passenger and fast freight services reaching into every country touched by the oceans. China is regarded by the world as a nation of peaceful philosophers and scholars, yet, as a matter of fact, the chief business of China even before the coming of the Japanese has been war. China had and has one of the largest standing armies of the world. There is no doubt the vast majority of people in China would prefer peace, but their politicians and war lords will not let them enjoy it. It is these politicians and war lords that Japan warred upon, not the people, a thing our own America and other nations would have done well to have borne in mind.