

WHAT ARE THESE JAPANESE?

JAPAN leads the Orient in industry, trade and shipping, as well as in military power. Back of this leadership lies a marked capacity for learning the practical sides of western life while remaining, I think, much more impervious than the Chinese and the Hindus to western methods of thought.

I once traveled from Fukien Province, in south-western China, to Formosa. The Formosan, the majority of whom are Chinese, are very similar to the Fukienese in racial stock and physical appearance. The contrast between the two regions in such matters as public order, sanitation, town-planning, railway and industrial development was striking and would have been painful to the most ardent Chinophile. To be sure, the cream of Formosa's resources has all been skimmed by the Japanese. But what Japan has made out of this formerly neglected and pirate-ridden island is impressive. It shows that Japanese imperialism is not merely parasitic, but is still in the vigorous, hard-working stage.

Certain qualities of Japanese character also make for imperialism: tenacity of purpose, frugality, national solidarity, stoicism, capacity for disciplined common effort. And some weaknesses in the Japanese intellectual make-up, lack of the gifts of analysis and reflection, an insular oneness of outlook, may well be elements of strength in pushing through a program of imperial conquest. It is a familiar gibe among foreign residents of Tokyo that the average Japanese can only recognize two viewpoints: the Japanese viewpoint and the wrong viewpoint.

I asked a student in one of the best Japanese preparatory schools what the students thought of the war and whether they discussed it very much. His reply was psychologically revealing: "We really don't discuss it very much. Every one is sure that Japan is right. And every one is sure that Japan will win."

A Japanese journalist of long experience in foreign countries was frankly amazed and taken aback

when an America acquaintance said to him: "After all, you should not expect foreign opinion to be favorable. It is you who are going into China's country, bombing its cities, killing its people."

This way of regarding the war had simply not occurred to the Japanese. These psychological blind spots, of which many other illustrations could be given, may give the foreigner in Japan a comforting sense of intellectual superiority. But they are positive aids to morale in a struggle for empire which, however it may turn out, will require great sacrifices during its early stages.

When I look back toward Japan, I think of the endless ranges of green hills, of the peasant villages in the valleys, of old shrines surrounded by groves of cool cryptomerias. I recall the white cone of incomparably symmetrical Fuji emerging from behind the clouds as I view it from high pass in the

surrounding hills and the rugged broken coastline of the Izu Peninsula, with its fishermen, a sturdy weather-beaten race, mending nets and calking boats on the shore.

I think of the "plain people" of Japan, the farmers and fishermen and small handicraftsmen and shopkeepers. I never learned enough of their language to share their lives intimately; but in my rucksack wanderings I never experienced anything but kindness and courtesy from them. And with their gardens, where every stone is a symbol, and their formal bows on meeting in the street, their noteworthy absence of brawling and cursing, they created the impression of having infused some little measure of dignity and grace and beauty into lives that are very much constricted by the limitations of an overcrowded oriental country.—*William Henry Chamberlain, condensed from Asia.*

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BILLS TO FACE?

Hubby: "Don't bring me any more bills, dear. I can't face them."

Wife: "You needn't, darling. I only want you to foot them."