

Thou shalt grow strong again,
Confident, tender, —
Battle with wrong again,
Be truth's defender, —
Of the immortal train
Born to attempt, attain,
Never surrender!

WHO ARE THE JAPANESE?

BY ARTHUR MAY KNAPP

I

AMONG all the surprises which Japan has sprung upon the astonished Occident, by far the most comprehensive is that which is as yet the least comprehended, namely, the manifest differentiation from the Oriental type which she has evinced by her marvelous capacity for progress, a capacity which we had arrogated to ourselves as the peculiar possession of Western civilization.

Among the prime causes which brought the mighty Muscovite Empire to its knees before Japan was the non-recognition by the Russian government of the wide mental gulf which separates the Island Realm from the Asiatic continent. General Kuropatkin, as he clearly reveals in his history of the war, plainly saw what the disastrous result of his nation's ignorance would be. He had spent some time in Japan, and had beheld with his own eyes the evidences that a spirit wholly different from that associated with the Asiatic name animated its people, and had become convinced that, if the trou-

ble came to the issue of war, his own nation would surely find itself confronted by a foe in all essentials comparable to any of the great Western Powers.

This conviction he earnestly sought to impress upon his government, but his counsels were unheeded. The stolid Grand Duke Alexieff, to whom, as Viceroy of the Far East, the whole matter was referred, knew Japan merely as an Asiatic nation and therefore to be treated with the overweening contempt attaching, in his mind, to everything Oriental. It was his counsel, based upon ignorance and contempt, which prevailed; and the blunder of despising one's enemy was repeated on a scale seldom before known in history. Russia's armies were mown down and her fleets annihilated because of her non-recognition of the fact that a western power had arisen in the Far East, made formidable by a capacity for progress which completely differentiated it from the Oriental nations with whom it had hitherto been classed.

This differentiation, notably in view of the fact that the object-lesson fur-

nished by Japan has at last impressed itself upon slow-moving China, gives unusual interest to the puzzling question of the ethnological origin of the people who are to-day arousing Asia from its age-long sleep. Moreover, this interest has a vital bearing upon international considerations. Japan has so far merely won her place among the great powers of the world. Not yet by any means has she surmounted the bar of racial prejudice and thus entered the charmed circle of Western society, to which birth and breeding are the only talismans securing admission. On the score of breeding, indeed, there ought to be no question whatever as to the qualifications of the nation whose age-long training in the courtesies of life has given her preëminence in the practice of what we concede to be the finest flower of civilization. There remains, therefore, only the question of birth to consider.

The trend given to this ethnological inquiry in my own mind was suggested by my first visit to a Japanese theatre. Just prior to my departure from Boston, about a score of years ago, I had witnessed at Harvard a Greek play in which the Hellenic methods and features of dramatic representation had been reproduced with the most careful attention to detail. Imagine, then, my surprise at finding in a Tokyo theatre a native drama staged and performed in all essentials like that which I had just seen on the other side of the globe. There was the Greek chorus, in musical recitative interpreting the motive of the play, its weird strains varying in accord with the changing action of the scene, while the stately demeanor of the actors, who were often masked, and above all, the quasi-religious strain pervading the whole, completed the illusion that I was witnessing a performance of the old Hellenic drama; an illusion which even the quaint Ori-

ental setting of the piece could by no means dispel.

Even more remarkable was the Greek atmosphere of restraint pervading the play. The story, although the bloody and gruesome tale of the Forty-seven Ronins, was put upon the stage with the nearest possible rendering of the Greek idea that nothing repulsive, or calculated to shock refined sensibilities, should find direct expression. In the *hara-kiri* scene the victim, with stately dignity, retired to a room appointed for the consummation of the fearful rite. There followed a few moments of impressive silence, and then — a white plum-blossom fell from a tree overhanging the door to tell that all was over. There was probably no one in the audience who did not recognize the immense suggestiveness of the scene, or who was not deeply moved by it, fully according as it did with the sensitive and gentle nature of a people who ever shrink from even the mention of grief and death. Here again was another distinct and unmistakable classic motive suggesting mental kinship with the ancient leader of the Western world.

After passing some hours thus in an atmosphere permeated with Hellenic ideals, it was not strange that when we left the theatre the passers-by in their graceful flowing robes took on the semblance of a throng of Greek philosophers in a street of old Athens; and when, a moment later, there came into view a band of young men clad in white tunics, their heads encircled by blue fillets with the knots tied in front, proclaiming that they were on their way to their annual carouse under the falling cherry-blossoms, the illusion was complete, for to eye and mind alike the Bacchic procession of ancient days was there surging through the streets of the Japanese capital. Was it a mere passing illusion, or did it not rather supply a hint toward a possible

solution of one of the most puzzling problems which ever perplexed the brain of the ethnologist? Who are the Japanese?

II

Unfortunately, or, it may be, most fortunately for the purpose of this particular inquiry, the science of ethnology, which strictly speaking has to do only with the data of skulls, statures, complexions, and the like, can give us very little help. In fact, we may say that, so far as its own special field of research is concerned, it has accomplished little or nothing of value in any of its inquiries; so little, indeed, that it has been forced to stray into the linguistic realm, and to summon to its aid the sister science of comparative philology in order to win its only commanding triumph; the result of that excursion being Max Müller's now generally-accepted classification of races, based solely on the factor of language.

The outcome of such wandering from its own domain having thus been measurably satisfactory, it might not now be amiss for the ethnologist to go still further afield and essay a search along the lines of the deeper and more abiding features of humanity grouped under the name of character. If comparative philology has so greatly helped him, why not enter the more fascinating and possibly more fruitful realm of comparative temperament? For an inquiry based on the mental qualifications of peoples to be classified in the same racial category, would be a clue to determine racial kinship, of far greater weight than the study of common elements of language, deemed by so eminent an ethnologist as De Rosny to be the unsafest of guides. It is only when such broader and deeper lines of relationship are established, that inquiry into resemblances of lan-

guage, physiognomy, mythology, traditions, and folk-lore can safely be used as corroborating the conclusions of the main line of research.

The curious fact that since their advent in the modern world the Japanese have been variously called the Yankees, the English, and the French of the Far East is of itself an unwitting recognition of their possession of distinctive Aryan qualities. Alert and enterprising as the Americans, sturdy, persistent, self-respecting, and ambitious as the typical Englishman, keen-witted and versatile as the Gallic nation, inquiries as to their mental kinship with some of the dominant peoples of our own time might be fruitful of results; but as our quest is one of birth and antiquity, the resemblances to be noted between this unique people and the best representative of the ancient Aryan type will better serve our purpose.

The striking capacity for progress evinced by the Japanese is now so generally recognized that it would hardly need further mention, were it not for the curious fact that in one important regard the new-found nation has far surpassed its ancient prototype. It has kept its capacity alive, while that of Greece has seemingly perished. Japan, in spite of its Asiatic environment, and notwithstanding its long centuries of political repression, has not only held its own in this respect but has actually become in many ways the leader of the modern world and the teacher of the Occident, as its conduct of its late war has strikingly testified.

Nothing, moreover, could be more admirable than the wise discrimination with which its government has met the problems of its new life, selecting for its internal administration, with a marvelous wisdom and judgment, only those features of Western polity which were easily adaptable to the people's traditions and environment. Even

American progressives might sit at the feet of the modern Japanese, so well-balanced and even-tempered have been the steps of their advance since the dawning of their new day. In this regard, if in no others, they are demonstrating their intellectual and temperamental kinship with the ancient Greeks.

A no less remarkable parallelism exists between the leader of the ancient world and the teacher of the modern Occident in the cultivation of the spirit of refinement, a word which we Westerners need to be constantly reminded is the only synonym for civilization. As were the Greeks in their time, so are the Japanese of to-day, the acknowledged exemplars of the refinements which should mark intercourse between man and man. And here also may be found an evidence, even more marked than that just adduced, not only of the survival of an ancestral trait beyond anything observed in Greece, but also of its survival in greatly increased force.

The chief thing which makes Japan so fascinating a land to dwell in is the consciousness that you are there living in an atmosphere of universal kindness and courtesy. In the modern life of the West and, so far as we know, in that of Ancient Greece, this refinement of manners may be described as belonging to only a few classes or conditions in society, but in the new-old nation the habitual demeanor of even the humblest of its people toward each other gives evidence of an ingrained civilization of its own, surpassing that of any Occidental people of any age. And thus again a temperamental quality in which the Greeks were preëminent is found developed in even greater force among the people of the Island Realm of the Far East.

Closely akin to it and in fact growing out of the demeanor of the people toward each other, was the hospitality

to thought which Greece evinced, and which is even more conspicuously a trait of the Japanese mind. The annals of neither of the two peoples are stained with the blood of religious persecution. Just as Paul found in Athens an altar 'to the unknown God' regarded with reverence, so the common confession of ignorance in which the Japanese have been nurtured by their centuries of training in rationalism has kept them ever free from that evil spirit which in the West has always actuated those who know, or who think they have been informed, as to who or what the Deity is.

This common confession of ignorance among the Japanese has borne its legitimate fruit. Their hospitality to every religious teacher who has come among them from foreign lands, from the most ancient times down to the present day, is perhaps the proudest distinction which any nation can boast. It is not, as many have argued, a sign of indifference to all religion; rather is it an outcome of their ardent desire to welcome any one who might throw light upon their ignorance and thus help their country onward to a higher stage of morality and well-being. That has ever been and is to-day the reason why propagandists of alien creeds have ever been met with the finest of courtesy. Only in a solitary instance, when suspicion was aroused that the spread of the tenet of the Pope's temporal sovereignty might menace the integrity of the nation, have the fires of persecution been kindled. It is entirely safe to say that the Japanese sword, so quick to leap from its scabbard at the least hint of danger to the state, has never once been drawn against any man because of his religious opinions. The unexampled fury which three centuries ago swept every vestige of the Jesuit faith from the land, and sealed its ports from all contact with

the Western world, was inspired not by religious bigotry, but by the deathless patriotism of the nation's soul.

And herein, it will at once be admitted, lies another and even more striking temperamental resemblance between the two peoples under consideration. The name of Greece ever suggests Marathon, Salamis, and Thermopylæ. It was the one land of the ancient West in the hearts of whose people burned with peculiar intensity the fires of patriotism. But now, while those fires have there become mere smouldering embers, the glories of Marathon and Thermopylæ have been almost wholly eclipsed by the deeds of desperate daring before the ramparts of Port Arthur and on the fields of Manchuria, where countless thousands, inspired solely by love of country, rushed onward to certain destruction. In all the annals of warfare and chivalry, it is now conceded, there is naught else which can even bear comparison with the patriotism there put to the test and there crowned with its gory triumph.

Even the uprising of the North in our Civil War, stirring as it was, bore evidence of no such call of the country as that which sounded in the hearts of the Japanese when their beloved land was menaced by the mighty power of the Muscovite. We, it should be remembered, had our draft-riots in the North, and throughout the Western world the word conscript has ever called up the image of a man torn from home and family to fight the battles of ambition and greed. The name bears no such meaning in Japan. There, during the Russian War, I have many a time beheld a festive procession passing along the streets with drums beating and colors flying, escorting to the station a conscript, his family and neighbors vying with each other to evince their great rejoicing that one of

their own had been honored with the vast privilege of dying in the service of his emperor.

Yet another and even more conspicuous evidence of an ancestral heritage shared in common by Japan and Greece is manifest in the unparalleled development of the art instinct in the two peoples. That development in ancient Greece made her the leader of the world in the past in so superlative a degree as to confer upon her a unique glory. But the opening of Japan has revealed to the lovers of art another world of cultured beauty bearing the impress of the same spirit of refinement, the same delicacy of line, the same fidelity to nature, and the same feeling of restraint which characterize the masterpieces of Hellenic art. Quite true is it, indeed, that those masterpieces have not yet been surpassed, or even equaled; but in one respect, and that the most important which can be named, the Japanese have surpassed the Greeks in the development of the art instinct, in that with them it has become the possession of a whole people. As an art critic of our own day has said: 'It is one thing to produce a Phidias or Michelangelo, whose works, isolated by transcendent genius, are above the comprehension of the multitude; and quite another to invent innumerable lovely objects which all can appreciate and enjoy, but which could not have existed unless there were numberless competent artists and a national capacity of invoking their happiest efforts.'¹

Possibly the Greeks may have been endowed with such a universal instinct for art-production and art-appreciation, but certain it is that there is no other nation to-day living in which artistic taste and aptitude are more generally diffused than in Japan. Not only are the commonest kitchen

¹ JARVES. *A Glimpse at the Art of Japan*.

utensils moulded into forms of exquisite beauty by Japanese artisans, but it is also very unusual to find even a coolie who is not in some way a capable artist. To this so competent an authority as Professor Chamberlain¹ bears testimony in saying that it is to the common people that, 'the foreigner in Japan must go for those lessons in proportion, fitness, and sobriety which Greece once knew so well. Do you want flowers arranged? Ask your house coolie to arrange them. Is something wrong in the laying-out of your garden? Call in the cook, or the washerwoman, as counselor. It makes little difference whom you consult, so universal is the development of the art instinct among the common people throughout the entire empire.'

III

Of course, from these manifest evidences of temperamental qualities shared in common by the Greeks and the Japanese, it is by no means to be argued that the unique people of the Far East had their origin in the land of Greece. Such a conclusion would be almost as absurd as the popularly-held impression of the meaning of Darwinism. Doubtless nine people out of ten still think of that theory as teaching man's descent from the monkey, whereas its only claim is that man and the simian were derived from a common ancestor. So, likewise, while the evidences above adduced point to a marked degree of kinship, they by no means answer our question as to the common source from which the ancient leaders of the Western world and the people who are to-day engaged in regenerating the Orient derived the ancestral qualities which have so conspicuously fitted them for their respective tasks.

¹ *Things Japanese*, p. 450.

Upon the solution of this ultimate question so much light has of late been cast, and there is now in regard to it such a consensus of scholarly opinion, that it may be considered as virtually settled, so far at least as the primal habitat of everything we have a right to call a civilization is concerned. As the three dominant religions of the world have originated in the Orient, so every leading civilization, that of the West as well as that so recently revealed in the Farthest East, must needs be referred to a purely Asiatic source, whence great tides of migration, eastward as well as westward, have borne its spirit and its great ideals, practically the same, to the uttermost confines of the earth.

Since Max Müller's day the land which he called Arya in Central Asia has been generally recognized as the ancestral home whence flowed the great westward wave which, lifting upon its crest successively the empires of Persia, Greece, Rome, and Britain, at last, with the Cavaliers and the Pilgrims, crossed the stormy Atlantic and raised up the new Empire of the West.

To-day a scholarly service, similar to that of Max Müller, has been rendered by an Eastern savant who has indicated the course of another great migration in the opposite direction, which, passing through the semi-barbaric hordes of northern and southern Asia, found its final retreat in Japan, where, in safe isolation, undisturbed by the dynastic struggles and barbarian incursions which swept away the old-time civilization of the Orient, the Island Nation became the real repository of ancient Asiatic thought and culture.

In his masterly work on *The Ideals of the East*, Professor Okakura, the foremost living authority on Eastern art and archæology, while not claiming Müller's Arya as the ancestral home of his people, and not presuming to locate

that home, virtually assigns it to the same region, or somewhere thereabout, suggesting the vicinity of northern India as the probable source of his country's civilization. Wholly content with his conviction, so entirely in accord with his national pride and loyalty, — the Japanese having no desire to be assigned to a European race-category, — he rests in his conclusion that his people's origin is purely Asiatic, and that its ancestry had a standing on a par with that from which all European civilization has been derived.

Of the scope of his work and of its bearings upon the resemblances we have noted, one may gather an idea from a comment made upon it by an Indian savant who ascribes to the author the discovery that the reason for such art affinities as have been observed is to be found in the 'existence of a common early Asiatic art which has left its uttermost ripple-marks alike on the shores of Hellas, the extreme west of Ireland, Etruria, Phœnicia, Egypt, India, and China. In such a theory a fitting truce is called to all degrading disputes about priority, and Greece falls into her proper place as but a province of that ancient Asia to which scholars have long been looking as the Asgard background of the great Norse sagas.'¹

As to the purely ethnological evidence in support of this theory, there are many curiously interesting facts derived from students in this special field.

There is first of all a consensus of Oriental traditions in regard to an ancient eastward migration from western Asia. There is also the testimony of a large body of folk-lore common to Europe and Japan. In Volume III of the *Transactions of the Asiatic*

Society of Japan may be found a collection of Japanese legends, manifest replicas of those anciently current in Europe, the most striking being the identity between one of Mitford's *Tales of Old Japan* and the Irish legend of 'Knock-grafton.'

Comparative mythology also reveals numberless examples of similar bearing. Dr. Edkins, in the *Transactions* just mentioned, points out the marked Persian elements in the early Japanese scheme of the universe; while any reader of the *Kojiki*¹ will find in it not only plain versions of the stories of Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel, but also replicas of the Greek myths of Orpheus, Mars, and Venus, the national goddess bearing the closest resemblance to the latter being represented in art as rising from the sea.

The testimony of language is not so strong, because merely negative. Professor Chamberlain points out the sharp line of demarcation between the Japanese and the languages of the neighboring continent, the inference from which would be that the islands were acquired by a migration distinct from that which peopled northern and southern Asia.

The only remaining ethnological field to be considered is that of physiognomy, which it is needful to consider because, while actually the least important, it is held in popular estimation to justify the stolid race-prejudices to which the Western world is still obstinately clinging. The eyelids of the Japanese show the Mongol obliquity. Therefore the nation is of Mongol birth. That may have been the verdict of the ethnologist before he had command of all the data of his science; just as now it is that of those

¹ Introduction to *The Ideals of the East*. By NIVEDITA of Ramrakrishna Vivekananda. Calcutta.

¹ *Records of Ancient Matters*. Complete literal translation by PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, in Supplement to Vol. x, *Transactions of Asiatic Society of Japan*. London: Trübner & Co.

who have never studied it at all. To correct this impression, it is only necessary to consider that the Japanese are a long way from their original home, so long that they may have been centuries on their journey, during which time there could have been ample opportunity for admixture of alien blood. Tradition also assigns to their journey a route trending northward, and it is now known that obliquity of the eyelids merely suggests a long lingering in high latitudes, where nature protects the eyes of animals in the same way.

As to complexion also, on the ground of which ethnologists used to jump at their conclusions, any one who has had opportunity to come into contact with the dominant race in the islands, the descendants of those who drove the aborigines into Yezo, must hold it to be a misnomer to call the race yellow, its complexion being actually as white as that of any of the peoples of southern Europe.

Ordinarily, ethnological inquiries do not enlist popular attention; but, as already intimated, there are in connection with the particular question of the origin of this extraordinary people two

considerations of commanding interest. One is its bearing upon international relations. The framers of our naturalization laws, sharing in the ethnological ignorance of their day, denied the privilege of American citizenship to all except men of Caucasian or Negro blood. The former designation being now absolutely without meaning, opportunity for changing it is manifestly offered; and in making the change it might be well for our legislators, in simple courtesy, to recognize the claims of a people who, if not indeed of our own kin, are far more closely allied to us, by right of their high civilization, than many of the races to whom we are to-day freely granting the privilege of citizenship.

Of an importance even greater than this point of international comity is the question whether Occidental society, so-called, is determined, at the bidding of ignorant race-prejudice, to perpetuate the evidence of its own lack of breeding by excluding from its borders a people who, if not wholly of our blood, can trace back their ancestry to as lofty a plane of ancient civilization as that upon which we are so complacently priding ourselves.

A TRIP TO OHIO IN 1810

BY MARGARET VAN HORN DWIGHT

[The author of this journal was Margaret Van Horn Dwight, born December 29, 1790. She was the daughter of Doctor Maurice William Dwight, a younger brother of President Timothy Dwight. Margaret Dwight was brought up in the family of her grandmother, Mary Edwards Dwight, in Northampton. In 1807 she went to live in the family of her uncle, William Walter Woolsey, in New Haven. Three years later, in 1810, she left New Haven to visit her cousins in Warren, Ohio. The journal was kept in fulfillment of a promise to her cousin Elizabeth Woolsey, to whom it was sent immediately after her arrival in Warren.]

MILFORD, *Friday Eve.* At Capt. Pond's.

SHALL I commence my journal, my dear Elizabeth, with a description of the pain I felt at taking leave of all my friends, or shall I leave you to imagine? The afternoon has been spent by me in the most painful reflections, and in almost total silence by my companions. I have thought of a thousand things unsaid, a thousand kindnesses unpaid with thanks that I ought to have remembered more seasonably, and the neglect of which causes me many uneasy feelings. My neglecting to take leave of Sally, has had the same effect — I hope she did not feel hurt by it, for it proceeded from no want of gratitude for her kindness to me. I did not imagine parting with any friend could be so distressing as I found leaving your Mama. I did not know, till then, how much I loved her, and could I at that moment have retraced my steps! but it was too late to repent. Deacon Wolcott and his wife are very kind, obliging people, and Miss Wolcott is a very pleasant companion; I do not know what I should do without her. We came on to Butler's this afternoon, and I came immediately down to Uncle Pond's and drank tea. Miss W. came

with me and both Uncle and Aunt invited her to stay and sleep with me, which she accordingly did. Cousin Patty has been with me, to say good-bye to all my friends, and to-morrow we proceed to Stamford.

Sat. night. D. Nash's Inn, MIDDLESEX.

We had a cold, unsociable ride to-day, each one of us being occupied in thinking of the friends we had left behind and of the distance, which was every moment increasing, between them and us. We stopt to *eat oats* at a Tavern in Fairfield, West Farms; an old Lady came into the room where Miss W. (whose name, by the way, is Susan, not Hannah, Sally, or Abby) and we were sitting. 'Well! gals where are you going?' 'To New Connecticut.' 'You bant tho' — To New Connecticut? Why, what a long journey! do you ever expect to get there? How far is it?' 'Near 600 miles.' 'Well, gals, — you gals and your husbands with you?' 'No, ma'am.' 'Not got your husbands! Well, I don't know — they say there's wild Indians there!'

The poor woman was then call'd out to her daughter (the mistress of the house), who she told us has been ill five months with a swelling, and she