

An American View of the Orient

Love and Hate in China, by Hans Koningsberger (McGraw-Hill, 150 pp. \$3.95), presents "a close-up look at China through effectively American eyes." David Dodge, author of "The Poor Man's Guide to the Orient," is currently at work on a novel with a Cantonese setting.

By DAVID DODGE

EARLY in his book Hans Koningsberger says, "The American public's idea of China is at least as wrong as the Chinese image of America."

The statement is debatable. China's image of America has been and is being deliberately sharpened and distorted from day to day by effective propaganda and indoctrination imposed upon its people from above, whereas our own picture of China—"Red" China, that is—is a dim one growing dimmer as time passes without news, reliable or unreliable, from the Chinese front. Lacking a single newspaperman of our own on the job in a land of some 700 million people, and without the privilege of entering the country to look it over for ourselves, we in the United States are obliged to rely for information about China on reports like Mr. Koningsberger's.

He is a Dutch citizen who lives in New York but travels on a Dutch passport. He thinks and writes and reacts like an American, which is good. He is a novelist rather than a reporter, which is less good. The situation obliges his publisher to disclaim the objectivity of his writing in a gorgeous jacket blurb for "a very personal experience told in a highly lyrical style" that "captures through intuition a temper and a trend

that objective measurement could never assess."

Mr. Koningsberger himself contends, or has been persuaded to assert, that *Love and Hate in China* is "not a book of interviews and statistics, nor a travelogue; it is a novelist's description of the moods and the atmosphere of the towns, the countryside, and the men and women walking along the roads and streets of China." In the face of this promise, the book is full of statistics about food rationing, rice production, restaurant prices, clothing costs, earning power, taxi fares, train travel, truck manufacture, peasant landholdings, and other matters. And it is a travelogue, in just the sense that Mr. Koningsberger says it is not. It is a Westerner's account of a trip he made, alone and without command of the language of the country in which he traveled, from Peking to Canton and Hong Kong by way of Nanking, Shanghai, and Hangchow, among the limited number of Chinese cities open to foreigners today. It is about as lyrical in style as Russo-Chinese architecture. I found it wholly absorb-

ing for what it purports not to be but is: a close-up look at China today through effectively American eyes. And in spite of any lack of "objective measurement" from which those eyes may have suffered.

The question implicit in the book's title, and posed explicitly in its text, is: Do the Chinese hate America? The answer, in Mr. Koningsberger's opinion, is contained in another, rhetorical, question he puts: "... can anyone in the West fathom how hated foreigners really were [in pre-Communist days], all of us, the sweet missionary and the understanding Pearl Buck-type writer, and how hated we still are—and not the least by those Chinese who need us (always an unforgivable relationship), from the Hong Kong Hilton busboys to Chiang Kai-shek?" This one begs for the obvious answer: No. Nobody in the West can evaluate the collective emotions of three-quarters of a billion Chinese, least of all an observer who does not speak their language, who traveled among them without an interpreter, and who by his own report was cordially welcomed about as often as he was poorly received.

BUT Mr. Koningsberger is entitled to an opinion. He was there, he communicated with some of them at least, he formed his own views from his own observations and experiences. It's more than most of us are permitted to do.

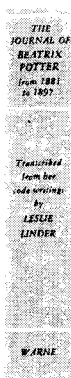
Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich and David M. Glixon

FOOL'S PARADISE

Lorraine Reitano of Hammonton, N. J., gives you a triple choice of words for each of these Biblical quotations. Check your wisdom on page 60.

1. A fool's _____ is his destruction. (*weakness, mouth, greed*)
2. A fool uttereth all his _____. (*plans, thoughts, mind*)
3. The way of a fool is right in his own _____. (*dreams, eyes, heart*)
4. Fools make a mock at _____. (*sin, danger, honour*)
5. Answer a fool according to his _____. (*fate, madness, folly*)
6. It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be _____. (*reproaching, meddling, continuing*)
7. Even a fool, when he holdeth his _____, is counted wise. (*temper, counsel, peace*)
8. He that _____ in his own heart is a fool. (*feareth, trusteth, counteth*)
9. The fool hath said in his heart, "There is no _____." (*Lord, God, Creator*)
10. And how dieth the _____ man? as the fool. (*wise, humble, good*)
11. For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the _____ of the fool. (*flattery, laughter, talk*)
12. The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in _____. (*despair, doubt, darkness*)



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Bitter Memories and Cautious Hopes



—Horace Bristol.

Hirohito in Hiroshima: "There appears to have been considerable damage here!"

Postscript from Hiroshima, by Rafael Steinberg (Random House, 119 pp. \$3.95), delineates the burgeoning new city that has arisen from the ashes of the bomb. Horace Bristol is a professional photographer who has lived in Japan since May 1946.

By HORACE BRISTOL

THE EMPEROR of Japan's first visit to bombed Hiroshima in mid-1946 coincided, but not by mere coincidence, with that of a group of foreign correspondents, of which I was one. We were in fact invited to cover His Imperial Highness's first official tour of inspection outside the confines of his Tokyo palace after the war. It was a momentous occasion, both historically and personally, for never before (or afterward) were foreign newsmen permitted literally to rub elbows with the former Son of Heaven, who had only recently renounced his divinity. Also, it was an unprecedented opportunity to hear from his own lips the reaction of one of the major participants to the biggest single story of World War II, if not of all time.

Standing in the small area cleared of rubble atop the blackened skeleton of one of the few remaining buildings in what had once been the center of downtown Hiroshima, a drawn-faced Hirohito gazed out over the twisted wreckage of a city that had been utterly flattened in one millisecond by a hitherto unknown and mysterious force. Obviously shaken, he turned to his guide and waiting correspondents with the observation, the understatement of this or any year, translated to us as, "There appears to have been considerable damage here!"

However inadequate this may sound, what could he have said that would have done justice to the disaster that floated lazily down from the Enola Gay on August 6, 1945?

Twenty years later Rafael Steinberg, with the benefit of two decades of explicit and detailed knowledge, millions of words written on every aspect of the subject, plus personal research in Hiroshima and the rest of Japan, arrives at fundamentally the same conclusion; and it is still an understatement. Words can never express the full tragedy of Hiroshima.

Whether the "damage" in the city by the Inland Sea was to the bodies, minds,

and property of those who experienced the bomb or to the world conscience is a question each reader must answer for himself, within himself.

Ablly written and documented by interviews with a cross-section of present-day Hiroshima residents, most but not all of them survivors of the blast, *Postscript from Hiroshima* is just what its title claims. Not that it pretends to be the last word, since it gives no answers to the questions each of us over forty must ask ourselves; its very inconclusiveness forces the reader to search his own heart. It is not a tract for or against anything, but a straightforward, journalistic coverage of a story that has too often been twisted and distorted to suit the political or other prejudices of the writer. The horrendous wounds, both physical and psychic, that still torture the minds and bodies of Hiroshima's aging war generation are given their due, but no more. In general, a spirit of progressive optimism permeates the book, although it is certainly no attempt to hide the scars most of us would prefer to forget.

Postscript describes a burgeoning new Hiroshima, both physically and spiritually reborn, a city that is proud to have risen literally from the ashes of the bomb. Whether that city of neon lights and flashy automobiles—and bitter memories—is a better or worse place to live in is left to the reader to decide. It does appear to be a more dynamic and prosperous one, and if there is a slight taint of commercial as well as political exploitation of its tragic memories, the opposite side of the coin may be seen in the stark picture of those maimed and deformed relics who hide their crippled bodies in the back alleys and private retreats of the city.

Rafael Steinberg, who is well qualified to interpret the Japanese mind both by his experience as a journalist and his intimate personal contacts with many aspects of Japanese life, may not make new converts to any of the conflicting causes that are competing for exclusive right to "the tragedy of Hiroshima" as their trademark, both inside and outside Japan. However, while *Postscript from Hiroshima* won't assuage ultrasensitive American consciences, neither does it add too much to the sense of guilt.

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