

## AMERICA AND THE JAPANESE (II)

AMONG the many good changes made by General MacArthur I may mention here the destruction of the military machine and the secret societies, the abolition of legalised prostitution, the breaking of the power of the *Zaibatsu* (the mighty syndicates which controlled Japan's industry, commerce and finance), the abolition of the feudal land system and the complete revision of the educational system. The Japanese school system was probably the most centralised in the world. The textbooks were always prepared by the *Mombusho*, the Ministry of Education, and distributed by the Government even to the smallest village schools in remote mountains. These textbooks really needed an overhaul. And as far as I can see the reform goes on in the right way. A normal Japanese patriotism is allowed. Furthermore Japanese history can be taught from the Japanese point of view as long as the truth is told, in short, MacArthur is determined to preserve what is distinctive and valuable in Japan. Special stress is given to one of Emperor Meiji's rescripts which commands that 'Intercourse with foreign countries shall in future be carried on in accordance with the public laws of the whole world'. It is of course the wish of every Christian that this intercourse may bring them on to the right path and in the end prove to be successful, according to the thought expressed by the Emperor Meiji in one of his famous *waka*:<sup>1</sup>

Yoki wo tori  
 Ashiki wo sutete  
 Totsukuni ni  
 Otoranu kuni to  
 Nasu yoshi mo ga na.

'May my people, taking what is good and rejecting what is bad, be not inferior to any other country in the world.'

The climax of MacArthur's work was reached in the publication of the new Constitution, which supersedes the Meiji Constitution of 1889. The General has expressed his deep satisfaction with the results. It had been drafted 'after painstaking investigation and frequent conferences between the Japanese Government and Allied headquarters'. MacArthur commended in particular the provision

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<sup>1</sup> Short poems of 31 syllables, consisting of five phrases or lines of 5, 7, 5, 7, 7 syllables respectively. Since not only almost all pure Japanese words, like Italian words, end in vowels but also every syllable in them ends in a vowel, *waka* sound smooth and musical

renouncing war, declaring that 'the Japanese people thus turn their backs firmly upon the mysticism and unreality of the past, and face instead a future of realism with a new faith and a new hope'. When this new Constitution was accepted, there were celebrations throughout the country. A holiday was observed everywhere and extra supplies of wine and cigarettes were issued. The Emperor reported the promulgation to the three Shinto shrines within the palace grounds. Later he walked to the House of Lords, where he publicly read the imperial rescript. He wore a simple black court uniform, bearing only the Order of the Chrysanthemum. A photograph of the Emperor and the Empress in civilian clothes was taken as a symbol of Japan's renunciation of militarism. The Ministry of the Imperial Household announced that this would be distributed to Government offices and schools.

A notable absentee—and here one can again admire the tact and fine feeling of the General—was MacArthur.

In the centre of atomic-bombed Hiroshima a special ceremony was also held.

The Constitution consists of ninety-five articles with a preamble and introduces a series of innovations borrowed largely from U.S.A., France and Britain. The most important of these are the abandonment of the 'divinity' of the Emperor and the replacement of that concept by one of limited constitutional monarchy. The words *shinsei*, 'sacred' and 'inviolable' of the Meiji Constitution have been eliminated. Besides we read in the articles the absolute renunciation of war and of the maintenance of any armed forces and it contains moreover a lengthy 'Bill of Rights' for the Japanese people. The preamble reads as follows:

'We, the Japanese people, acting through our elected representatives in the National Diet, determined to secure for ourselves and our posterity the fruits of peaceful co-operation with all nations and the blessings of liberty throughout this land, and resolved that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of Government, do proclaim the sovereignty of the people's will and do ordain and establish this Constitution, founded upon the universal principle that government is a sacred trust, the authority for which is derived from the people, the powers of which are exercised by the representatives of the people, and the benefits of which are enjoyed by the people.'

In reading this preamble one cannot escape the feeling that 'the hands are the hands of Esau but the voice is the voice of Jacob'. And, I am sorry to say, several other articles do not ring truly Japanese. Notwithstanding all the painstaking efforts and the lengthy consultations with the Japanese, one gets the impression that the

Constitution was chiefly written to please America. This is not meant to be severe criticism as it is difficult to see how it could be done otherwise in the present circumstances; but in my opinion this Constitution will not remain as long as its predecessor. As a frame for a period of transition it will no doubt do much good, but the future of a great Oriental nation so different in outlook asks for a more solid and a more Oriental foundation. In this respect I would quote the opinion of one of them:

'Eastern civilization needs to be renewed and reconstructed. We realise also that much of the material for such reconstruction must of necessity be borrowed from the West. We love to think of a new East coming into being by the help of the West, but without the irritating thought of the "alien ruler" and the "native subject". Whatever the East may have to borrow of Western thought must be translated in transmission in order that it may do its beneficent work. Like poetry, when translated from one language into another, the thought of the West must be translated to the East according to the spirit and not the letter. The East should be allowed to borrow from the West on the East's own terms. Its own thinkers and wise men must be its mediums of transmission and agencies of transformation. They must not receive Western thought as they would merchandise, but absorb so far as may be desirable the spirit of the West and re-express it to the East in its own forms of thought'.<sup>2</sup>

The opinion of the Japanese students regarding that other symbol of America, the United States Army, is less favourable. I give here again the Japanese opinion of the students as written in their own English:

#### THE ARMY, WORSE

The reputation of the U.S. Army to become worse and worse among the educated people. We think that the Americans are not worth to respect, and make a jest of them behind their back. For the rationalism and utilitarianism are nor familiar and difficult to become familiar to us. We highly esteem a composure and courtesy to which they have not.

They will not and cannot understand the emotion and customs of other country. They think what they think and do are the best thing in the world. They are quite the same as was Japanese military officers during and before the war. Educated people laugh to their vulga and proud action.

But it is true that U.S. soldiers are more humane than the Japanese one. They are cheerful, gay, and easy-going. They express

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<sup>2</sup> From *Wise Men from the East and from the West* by A. Mitrie Rihbany.

their emotion freely. That is the reason why they got popularity among children and very common people. Especially common girls were never payed attention by the men. Half of very common girls were proud to their associations with the Americans.

The U.S. Army was reguly (regulars) at first. Since that time, boys not soldiering men come to this country. They behave as their will and they showed their inexperienced own nature and their defect.

In the end, there are two fundamental reasons why we do not like the U.S. Army: 1—We have lost our independensy while they are in our country. This would be enough for them to control our deplomasy, economics, police and government. But they don't respect our private lives. They enter our houses, with or without permit. They tell us our clothes are wrong things, our food is not to be eaten stuff, our customs all idiocities. Do these matters have to do with international position? So we cannot think. These smaller things go much to breed a hatred bad for both us futures.

2—When we first welcome them, ready to learn,\* we find only how these despose us. They is showed by trickings and don't care way to do things about us.

So much for the opinion of the Japanese which unfortunately is nothing but the plain truth, as I have heard from several unimpeachable sources. Sinister kinds of entertainment are creeping up everywhere and the number of illegitimate children is distressing. At the end of January General Eichelberger, the commander of the Eighth Army, gave an important radio address to his forces. 'Twelve months ago', he said, 'the American occupation army in Japan disintegrated as a result of public pressure to send combat veterans home, and a new army was formed of unseasoned troops. Those, too, had gone home, and had been succeeded by young men who had received only the bare minimum of training in the United States'. After pointing out to his troops that they were members of the best paid, fed and clothed, and the most elaborately entertained army in the world, General Eichelberger proceeded to admonish them to develop pride in their uniform and a spirit of service for their country. Making a pointed reference to 'nations which are drifting towards ways of life in which the citizen is merely a helpless cog in the machine of State', he called upon his men to make every effort to help the Japanese to build a truly democratic State by setting an example which the defeated people of Japan would admire and respect. 'There is no place here', he said, 'for the drunken bully, racketeer, or slovenly soldier'.

The occupation of Japan will continue for a considerable time, and as a missionary of Japan who speaks the language of the people and

who tried hard and earnestly to understand them, may I be allowed to conclude this article by making some suggestions for the future, which (I humbly think) cannot fail to be for the eternal and temporal benefit of the Japanese people. First of all it can only be to the real interest of both America and Japan to send as occupying forces troops who are morally sound. What is the use of the enormous effort spent in attempting to instil good principles into the Japanese people when the behaviour of the American troops completely nullifies any good effects there may be? From the missionary's point of view I think that the above is of the greatest importance of all, the crucial test of any possible success in the near future. Missionaries in Japan are nowadays on the whole optimistic and for this there is reason enough. Stripped of its official sanction it is unlikely that Shintoism will keep the same influence as before. Buddhism can offer at best only a world-renouncing escapism at a time when every circumstance demands that one should face one's responsibilities with undaunted courage and conviction. Therefore there is a great opportunity for the Church to do magnificent work. Many obstacles to the spread of Christianity have been removed. Selected missionaries are invited by the Japanese episcopate, who of course remain the leaders and guides. And although it is true that spiritual leadership must come from the Japanese themselves, nevertheless anything the foreign missionaries can do to help and especially to inspire them will certainly be worth while. But whether the Japanese will turn to Christianity or not will depend a great deal on the behaviour of the army of occupation, which after all is to the Japanese the occupation force of a Christian nation. Therefore if they show themselves as bearers of Christian values, the occupation might become a blessing; if however they behave in a way unworthy of Christians, there will be a grave danger of the Japanese turning to their own gods with more ardour than before. This being so, it is my firm conviction that at the present moment the work of a brilliant little band of American Army chaplains is of much greater importance than any direct missionary effort, for the influence of the former will be paramount in the presentation of Christianity which their boys can give to the Japanese people. What a tremendous opportunity for the Catholic Church in America to extend her beneficent influence!

The Gospel story of our Lord's account of the last judgment has always deeply impressed me. He says nothing about the condemnation we shall receive for what we have done, but he stresses very strongly sins of omission. On what we have not done, on the opportunities we have let go by, on these we shall be judged. (Matt. 25.)

May the Catholics of America, knowing what they can achieve, seize these golden opportunities and win Japan for Christ!

In the second place may I suggest a speeding up of a generous peace treaty. Uncertainty or darkness as to the future saps the vitality of any nation. The humiliation of Japan—the more intense in view of her supreme belief in her invincibility—however beneficial it might have been already, should not go on for a long time. Such a protracted humiliation would only deepen her profound apathy from which she certainly suffers. How could it be otherwise? Their invincible army no more existent, their industry destroyed, their sacred country scarred and ravaged. As many people testify who have recently visited the country, until one actually sees the huge destruction, it is difficult to account for the feeling of hopelessness which at present affects the Japanese people. One hundred and sixteen cities have been destroyed and worst of them all is Tokyo of which the Japanese were once so proud. There on the night of 9th March, 1945, one hundred thousand people are said to have been roasted to death, or if they took refuge in shallow pools, boiled to death, or, if they leaped into the canal, as they did by the tens of thousands, crushed or drowned. It was because these incendiary bombings at the heart of the Empire were so dreadful that the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki do not seem so epoch-making to the Japanese as they have done to us. In Tokyo it is not a question of repairing the bomb-damage—as in so many towns of Europe—but of building up a completely new city. The traveller who now visits the place where once Tokyo stood, can see nothing but ashes for miles around. The roads alone remain. Those who knew Japan before used to delight in the cleanliness, the artistic dress and the tidy appearance of the people who strolled along the streets, but now standards have gone by the board and people wear whatsoever they can get. Yet most tragic of all is the spiritual devastation of the people. A Japanese told a member of the American Christian delegation to Japan: 'Everything in Japan is crushed, smashed, or diminished, spiritually and materially. She has surrendered completely. She has no sovereignty at present, no diplomacy, no army, no navy or steamers, no honour, no pride, no confidence, no houses, no clothes, no food to live on. I do not want to exaggerate the desperate condition of Japan too much and give you a misunderstanding—but I cannot give you false information'.

What then can the Japanese hope for, except that a way out of their problems will be shown by the conquerors?

And this hope the Japanese certainly have. In fact, recent information goes to show that the Japanese look upon the Americans and also on the British as the people who will and can do something for them. The new Japanese Prime Minister admires very much British ways of life and administration. Japan is America's and England's problem at the present moment, whether they like it or not. If the spirit of

our Lord were to be found in the Anglo-Saxon Governments, how immensely promising would be the future! Let us give some encouragement both to people and ruler. Yes, also to the Emperor, for many Japanese still see in him the one stable element in a disintegrating world. As insiders expected, his own public repudiation of his supposed divinity has not lessened his prestige among his subjects. Recent public appearances have proved this beyond a shadow of doubt. At the present moment he has taken up the rôle of a constitutional monarch in accordance with his private wish—as I am convinced—since he was a young man.

When I suggested the speeding up of a peace treaty I was in no way original, but only repeated the words of the guardian of the Vatican who spoke words of deepest wisdom in his Christmas broadcast, when he said:

‘Instead of advancing along the road towards a real peace, the peoples of vast territories of the globe are living in a state of constant unrest, from which the flames of further conflicts may sooner or later arise. Whoever lives through and meditates upon all this is profoundly impressed with the gravity of the hour. We feel, therefore, compelled to invite the rulers of the nations, in whose hands rests the fate of the world and upon whose decisions depends the outcome, the progress or the failure of the peace, to consider three points.

‘The first condition for fulfilling the expectation of the peoples, for diminishing and finally dispelling their troubles, and for removing the dangerous international tensions, is that all your energies and all your goodwill shall be directed towards putting an end to the present intolerable state of uncertainty, and towards hastening to the utmost, despite difficulties which cannot be denied by any impartial mind, the advent of a definite peace among all States.

‘Throughout the long years of war and the post-war period, human nature, gripped by innumerable and untold sufferings, has given proof of an incredible power of resistance. But that power has its limits, and for millions of human beings the limits have been reached. The spring is already stretched to the utmost; a trifle could break it, with irreparable consequences. Humanity longs to be able to hope again. All those who know that only the early resumption of normal economic, juridical and spiritual relations between the nations can save the world from innumerable disorders, from which only the dark powers of evil would benefit, are truly and keenly concerned that there shall be a rapid and final conclusion of peace. May the year which is now drawing to a close be, therefore, the last year of their vain, unfulfilled hopes. May the new year see the achievement of peace’.

It seems that the statesmen have at last taken heed of the Pope’s advice. At least the meeting of the delegates from the Governments

of the British Commonwealth, which at Australia's suggestion assembles at Canberra, has set some good ideals before it. The Australian Government will oppose, as already reported by *The Times*, the impoverishment of Japan by the exaction of excessive reparations. Ministers have consistently disapproved of the methods applied to Germany, holding that it is a policy of enlightened self-interest to re-establish the economics of former enemies and to put them in a position to work out their own salvation instead of making their ultimate rehabilitation more costly and more difficult by stripping them of the means of existence. The Government believes that the reparations obtainable from Japan will be relatively small.

People of America and of the British Commonwealth, you have a tremendous responsibility. May the future show that this responsibility was laid in the right hands. Thank God, hostility, hatred and suspicion are difficult emotions for most Anglo-Saxons to maintain for a long time. We saw it after the first world war and, please God, we shall see it again. I am convinced that magnanimity in victory has more attraction for the average American and Englishman.

One of the lessons which life presses home is that the only way to make a man trustworthy is to trust him, and the surest way to make him untrustworthy is to distrust him and show your distrust. This holds true for individuals as well as for nations. I mean that the sooner we put Japan on her own feet, the better will be the result. And let us remember that among their many other good qualities, the Japanese on the whole never forget a kindness. Everybody who has lived a considerable time among them will agree. When many foreigners left, shortly before the war or in the exchange during the war, they all knew that, of what they had to leave behind, the utmost care would be taken. And many of those who have returned have found their houses (if spared the destruction of the raids) intact, and as if they had merely been away for the week-end. Shortly before the war, and even during the war, one could still see in the earthquake museum in Tokyo the evidence of Japan's gratitude towards America for what the latter in her usual generosity had done after the great earthquake disaster of 1923.

A short time ago in the great hall of the Louvain University I listened to Count Folke Bernadotte telling of the part he played as representative of the Swedish Red Cross in paving the way for Germany's surrender. The deadly silence of the great audience was broken and the speaker received thunderous applause when he ended his interesting speech with the beautiful words:

*Avant la guerre la charité.*

*Pendant la guerre la charité,*

*Après la guerre la charité.*



May the statesmen of America and the British Commonwealth have the vision, the wisdom and the devotion to live up to these principles!

Lead, kindly Light, lead thou them on.

H. VAN STRAELEN, S.V.D.

*Cambridge, June 1947.*

#### PERSONALITY AND RELATION

**A**S a being, man is dependent on God, the first cause of all things; as a being endowed with mind and will, powers of thought and desire, he is a close reflection of that first cause, in the knowledge and love of which, to the highest of his ability, he must find his perfection and his happiness if he is to find them at all. The first cause has not left man to develop the mere scope of his natural ability, great as that is. God has freely bestowed on him, as an overflow of his goodness, supernatural powers of knowledge and love which leave the natural pattern of human nature unimpaired, but make possible the attainment of a higher kind of perfection and a much greater happiness, consisting in consciously being so like God that man can have the same divine object of his thought and love that is proper to the life of God himself. Whether we think of man, then, as coming from God's creative hand, or as in process of conscious return to him, in either case we see ourselves as conditioned by that relationship, that company, the society of God.

It is interesting to notice how very close the Church and the world are in the subject-matter of their chief preoccupation nowadays. Secular thought is concerned as never before with man's relation to human society, and the Church is particularly concerned to elaborate man's place in a divine society too. This is not purely by way of reaction or correction on the part of the Church. In paying particular attention at this time to the Mystical Body of Christ, i.e., the unity of Christians with Christ, the Church is pursuing a dynamism of her own thought which has gone on for long enough by now for us to be able to trace its rhythms with some clarity. In examining that dynamism we can see also the Church's relationship to the world as she pursues her own course of thought. At first sight it looks like reaction pure and simple to any attack that comes. But the interesting thing is that as the course of history proceeds, her apparent reactions show a pattern all of their own. And as this pattern is most definitely the right one for her, the one we might expect for her thought, therefore the attacks must have followed her lead instead of her defences having followed the secular lead. In fact, ever since the