

THE EMPRESS OF JAPAN

SO SACRED IS HE THAT IT IS UNLAWFUL TO TALK ABOUT HIM



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TOKIO, July 19.—(Special correspondence of The Sunday Oregonian.)—“Give us a personal story about the Mikado,” wrote the editor when arrangements were being made for my work in the Orient. The chief little knew what a task he was laying out for me. The first object to which I mentioned my desire of obtaining information concerning the temperance and habits of the Emperor, said: “If it were known at the palace that you intended to write such an article you would be requested to abandon the idea at once. Please do not refer to it again.”

“But why not?” I insisted, “the request is prompted by the best of motives. Our people have a friendly interest in the Japanese and admire them greatly. They merely want to know the intimate facts about your sovereign in order to become better acquainted. It was no use. Further insistence and repeated assurances of good will would not induce the otherwise polite and obliging official to discuss the subject. My efforts met the same reception, no matter whom I inquired. It is a topic about which no one will converse.”

Unlawful to Discuss Emperor.

The cause of all this reticence is found in the third article of the constitution of Japan, which says: “The Emperor is sacred and inviolable.” Further explanation of this clause is made: “The Emperor is heaven-descended, divine and sacred. His hallowed throne was established at the time when the heavens and the earth became separated. His pre-eminence above all his subjects. The law has no power to hold him accountable to it. Not only shall there be no irreverence for the Emperor’s person, but he shall not be made a topic of derogatory comment, nor even one of discussion.”

Thus it will be seen that the Japanese consider their ruler almost as if he were talked about, and have inculcated in the law of the land the prohibition of his name in ordinary conversation. The difficulty of securing material under these circumstances is apparent. It required weeks of persistent effort to ascertain what is herein contained. Although it was gathered piecemeal from many sources its reliability in most instances is reasonably certain. It should be said in the outset that the mystery which surrounds the Mikado is not because his daily life is such that it will not bear publicity. On the contrary, his acts are invariably tempered by clemency, and his habits are marked by simplicity which is almost frugal.

He has no dissipation and practices the utmost regularity, spending his whole time in the discharge of official duties.



BRIDGE IN PALACE GROUNDS

FIRST GATE TO PALACE GROUNDS

Morning, noon and night he receives his ministers to discuss with them the affairs of state. He is said to resemble the Emperor of Germany in the faculty of being able to choose trustworthy assistants. Although His Majesty cannot read or speak any language other than his own, he is an inveterate reader of newspapers, keeping his interpreters busy translating the utterances of the foreign press for his perusal. Quite in conformity with the idea his subjects have about his being a saint is the claim that he never shows emotion. If there are moments when his anger gets beyond control no reports of such reach farther than the palace walls.

Facts About the Mikado.

The Emperor has absolutely no amusements. When a young man he was quite skillful in the practice of archery, and for a time spent a portion of each day in drilling a company of troops. He is taller than the average Japanese, but his walk is somewhat affected by the ravages of rheumatism. When he appears in public he is always attired in military uniform. He wears a trimmed beard, and his countenance represents the finest type of Orientalism. When he appears in public he is always attired in military uniform. He wears a trimmed beard, and his countenance represents the finest type of Orientalism. When he appears in public he is always attired in military uniform. He wears a trimmed beard, and his countenance represents the finest type of Orientalism.

characterizes the habits of the Emperor, it is remarked that he takes his daily bath in a wooden tub similar to those which his forefathers used, even retaining the old-fashioned bucket and rope which draws the water from a near-by cistern. That he is fastidious in other respects, however, is shown by the statement that the weavers who make white silk underwear for His Royal Highness are kept busy because he never wears a suit but once. Even if it be true that the Mikado clings to the primitive hair-tub and the use of his subjects, and when written had to be left unfinished by omitting the last stroke of the writing brush.

Attitude of the People.

Thus it will be seen that the present attitude of the people toward their sovereign, extravagantly reverent though it may seem, is in reality a great modification of the usage of the past. The sovereign does not have a family name. He needs nothing of the sort to distinguish him from men because he is the Son of Heaven and a relative of the gods. Therefore the only appellation necessary is one to distinguish him from the other deities of his line. He is called Mutsu Hito. When he passes his subjects in the street they do not bow, but bow their heads in silence. If, as you travel in Japan, you meet a member of the imperial family, your hirakiba will be stopped by a policeman, who will request you to get out and take off your hat. The following is a part of the preface to one of His Majesty’s sacred pronouncements to his subjects, which he has caused to be read to his people:

“We the successors to the throne of our predecessors do humbly and solemnly swear to the imperial founder of our house and to our other imperial ancestors, that in pursuance of a great policy co-extensive with the heavens and the earth, we shall maintain and secure from decline the ancient form of government. We now reverently make our prayer to the glorious spirits of the imperial founder of our house, to our illustrious father, and to our other imperial ancestors, and implore the help of their sacred spirits, and make to them the solemn oath never at this time nor in the future to fall by an example to our subjects. May the heavenly spirits witness this our solemn oath.”

Utterances of an Emperor.

Following is a portion of an imperial edict issued by the Emperor to the school children of Japan. The substantial advice it contains shows what manner of man His Majesty really is. It is indeed a strong exhortation in proper form. Copies of this are provided for all schools, and it is frequently read aloud as the children bow their heads in reverence:

“You, our beloved subjects, be filled to your parents, be affectionate to your brothers, be loving husbands and wives and truthful friends. Conduct yourselves with modesty and be benevolent to all. Develop your intellectual faculties and perfect your moral powers by gaining knowledge and by acquiring a profession. Further, promote the public interests and advance the public affairs. Ever respect the national constitution and obey the laws of the country; and in cases of emergency courageously sacrifice yourselves to the public good. Offer every support to our imperial dynasty, which shall be as lasting as the universe. You will then be our most loyal subjects.”

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mean an abstraction of a part of the annual product for governmental purposes, looking at the signature of it. I don’t know this Justice intimately, Smith, I should be tempted to think that he was having a little fun at your expense. You never get a man from burning what is his mind, and which profoundly affect the emphasis of the questions you propose. Very truly yours,

SHADES OF THE FATHERS AT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

Introduction—The shades of Washington, Jefferson and Samuel Adams are pictured by this gifted imaginative writer as having returned for a period to the country they helped to establish. Later at night they visit the library room of Smith, an author, and find him in conversation with his friend Brown, who is a pronounced Radical. These five enter into the ordinary civilities, each and each, who keep this remedy, finds it difficult to realize that they are not mortals. The three shades pose as visitors from England, Washington taking the name of “Mr. George,” Jefferson that of “Mr. Thomas,” while Samuel Adams retains his former name.

“Let us try the efficacy of your postal system,” he proposed one evening after we had made a fruitless search for notables.

“In what way?” I asked.

“We will prepare a list of questions and you mail them to such distinguished characters as will be likely to give them consideration and an answer,” he replied.

“General Washington, Mr. Adams and I will draft these questions, and you and Mr. Brown prepare a list of names to whom they shall be addressed.”

The list prepared by Brown was a distinguished one, and I smiled as I glanced over it and ventured the opinion that few of them would respond.

“Most of our celebrated statesmen, financiers and manufacturers are inclined to be lame on political economy,” ad-

mitted Brown, “but we will give them a chance. We may hear from some of them.”

Our three guests spent considerable time in the preparation of the list of questions, and finally submitted the following:

(1) The worth of several of our American capitalists is only conservatively estimated at from \$100,000,000 to \$200,000,000. Can a man render to his country or to mankind a service which will entitle him to so great a financial reward?

(2) Does the possession of a billion of dollars in the hands of an individual constitute a menace to the Republic?

(3) What, if any, would constitute such a menace in the hands of an individual engaged in business, finances or manufacturing?

(4) Assuming that a man legally acquires a billion of dollars, and that on his death he will be intact to a dishonest, reckless, unscrupulous and depraved heir—should society have any protection against such heir?

(5) Is it practical or advisable to set any limit to the amount of property an individual can hold or bequeath? What should be the limit, if any, and what disposition should be made of the surplus?

(6) The National debt, private and governmental, has taken in an estimated nearly ten billions of dollars, whereas there is only about a quarter of that amount in existence. Most of this bank liability is represented by mortgages, bonds and other securities which are ample in times of confidence and prosperity, but which cannot speedily be liquidated in times of panic and stringency. Do you consider this a safe and scientific system of banking?

(7) By what right does the National Government withdraw money from the treasury deposit it in National banks and permit it to remain in them for indefinite periods without the payment of interest by the banks thus favored?

(8) Postal savings banks are a demonstrated success in Great Britain, France, Germany and other countries. They are a source of revenue to these countries, and they secure to the depositors sure income and absolute security. There is a popular demand for such a system in this country. Should Congress ignore or grant this demand, and why?

(9) Since 1865 the world’s stock of gold has increased from four to six billions of

dollars, or 50 per cent in a decade. The cogent argument against the continued issue of gold is that its continued issue overproduction destroyed its value as a standard. In the past ten years we have produced one-third as much gold as was mined in the preceding four centuries. We now produce in six months as much as was in all Europe when Columbus discovered America. Do you consider gold a fair and scientific standard of value?

(10) To what extent can the production of gold be increased without impairing its usefulness as a standard of value?

(11) Do you favor an income tax? Do you favor a tax on inheritances?

(12) Do you favor or oppose the governmental ownership of railroads and similar utilities, and why?

I mailed copies of the above questions to men whose names are familiar to the reading and thinking public, and in a few days began to receive replies. The first batch was disappointing, and consisted of polite refusals, regrets and excuses from such public men as Grover Cleveland, Admiral George Dewey, John A. McCall, Mayor McClellan, of New York City, Paul Morton, Bishop Potter, Carl Schurz, Secretary William H. Taft, of the War Department, Thomas E. Watson, Governor LaFollette, of Wisconsin, and other busy or cautious men.

The mail of the next day contained a letter written in so peculiar a hand that we had some difficulty in reading it, but the contents more than rewarded our patience. A glance at the signature showed that the writer was a conspicuous member of the Supreme Court of the United States, and I regret that he has deemed it best not to permit the use of his name. The letter read as follows:

“John Smith, Esq. Dear Sir—For reasons which seem to me sufficient, I prefer to say nothing for publication over my name in answer to your questions, but I entertain some opinions which seem to have some bearing on them, although not strictly responsive. I will state them.

“The real problem is not who owns, but who consumes the annual product. The identification of these two very different questions is the source of many fallacies, and misleads many working men. The real evil of \$10,000,000 and other manifestations of private splendor

is that they tend to confirm this confusion in the minds of the ignorant by an error of the imagination, and make them think that Vanderbilt and Rockefeller swallow their incomes like Cleopatra’s dissolved pearls. The same confusion is at the bottom of Henry George’s “Progress and Poverty.” He thinks he is finished the discussion when he shows the tendency of wealth to be owned by the landlords. He does not consider what the landlords do with it.

“I conceive that economically it does not matter whether you call Rockefeller or the United States owner of all the wealth in the country, if that wealth annually is consumed by the body of the people, except that Rockefeller, under the illusion of self-seeking or in the conscious pursuit of power, will be likely to bring to bear a more potent scrutiny of the future in the effort to get a greater return for the next year. If then, as I believe, the ability of the ablest men under the present regime is directed to getting large markets and the largest returns, such ability is directed to the economically desired end.

“I have vainly urged our various statisticians to exhibit in the well-known form the proportions of the products of the many, and those of the few, e. g., expressed in labor hours or in any other convenient way. They would show whether private ownership was abused for the production of an undue proportion of luxuries for the few. I don’t believe the taxes would be 1 per cent.

“It follows from what I have said that the objections to unlimited public ownership are sentimental or political, not economic. Of course, as the site of a private fortune increases, the interest of the public in the administration of it increases. If one man owned one-half the wealth in the country and announced his intention to burn it, such an abuse of ownership would not be permitted. The crowd would kill him sooner than stand it. But it seems to me that if every desirable object were in the hands of a monopolist intent on getting all he could for it (subject to the limitation that it must be consumed, if consumption was, as usual, economic and practical, and that it might not be wantonly destroyed, as, of course, it would not be), the value of the several objects would be set by

the intensity of the desires for them respectively, that they would be consumed as fast as they were able to get them, and that that would be the ideal result.

“The first question put—if I may be permitted to say so—seems to me rather fanciful. I see no way of answering it intelligently, and, if I am right, it appears to imply an acceptance of what I have already tried to show to be a fallacy or confusion. So far as I could answer it, what I should say would be this: All that any man contributes to the world is the intelligence which directs a change in the place of matter. A man does not create the matter he handles or the force he exerts. The force could not get cheap or if the directing intelligence were not needed, and the whole progress of the world in a material way is to put the need of intelligence further back. It is obvious that the intelligence of an architect contributes more to the change which takes place in a house than that of all the laboring hands. How can any one measure the scope and value of remote causes of change? Of a new judicial conception for instance, that is the charming thought is that it will result in a hundred years after the thinker is forgotten.

“I can’t compare the present effect on the lives of men of the speculation of Kant and the empire of Napoleon. I should not think it absurd to assert that you never get a man from burning what is his mind, and which profoundly affect the emphasis of the questions you propose. Very truly yours,

Smith Receives a Remarkable Communication From a Justice of the Supreme Court

mean an abstraction of a part of the annual product for governmental purposes, looking at the signature of it. I don’t know this Justice intimately, Smith, I should be tempted to think that he was having a little fun at your expense. You never get a man from burning what is his mind, and which profoundly affect the emphasis of the questions you propose. Very truly yours,

“Nothing could more clearly show that you are living under unprecedented conditions than this letter. Under the law, Mr. Rockefeller may acquire the ownership of the entire world, and if this Justice of the Supreme Court be right, the courts must refuse their sanction to all new legislation which may tend to interfere with him. The gentleman who wrote this letter believes not only that such is the law, but he also believes that it is right. He argues that complete private monopoly is the ideal condition. On this point the body of which he is a member seems to have differed from him in some recent decisions.

“In the opinion of this Justice, an individual can become greater than this Government,” mused Samuel Adams. “If that be so, the courts should interpret the spirit of the law in a public way, you must expect a new slavery.”

“When a Justice of the Supreme Court writes like that,” indignantly declared Brown, “it gives us reformers a hint of the kind of ammunition which will be used against us.”

“I wish that the Justice could have been present to take part in the discussion which followed.

Insurance.
New York Sun.
Life is real, life is earnest.
And the grave is not its goal;
Rather ’tis to see which party
Shall the surplus funds control.