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Chinese Students in Japan.

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HERE is one item which political economists are apt to leave out of consideration when casting up the balance of trade of the Island Empire of Japan, and that is the sum expended by the Chinese students there. According to the latest report, the total number of such students has reached one thousand three hundred and fifty, and allowing an average expenditure of thirty yen each per mensem, not including the travelling expenses to and fro in Japanese boats, Japan has already some half a million yen to her credit.

Before our war with Japan, that country never held our admiration or respect; in fact no nation of the world realized her strength and the wonderful progress she had achieved till she pricked China's bubble in 1894. Since then the eyes of our people have been fixed on the marvellous advance made by our neighbour and brother, and the analogical position of the two countries has encouraged our younger people much in hoping to effect for our own land what the people of Japan have for theirs. On the other hand, the Japanese, realizing that her peace and prosperity depend to a great extent on the progress and independent existence of China, have warmly welcomed this *entente cordiale* between the two nations, receiving Chinese students and travellers in the most courteous and friendly manner possible.

The *coup d'état* of 1898 drove the principal reformers to Japan, among whom the one who has since made himself most popular and famous through his books and magazine articles being Mr. Liang Chi-ts'ao, M.A. No other personage has infused such an intense pro-Japaness spirit among the younger men and women of China than has this wonderful reformer and writer, who in a few years has revolutionized Chinese thought and style of composition. Whether the success of his writings be only ephemeral or not, there can be no doubt that to him the greatest credit is due for awakening the people of his country to realize the awful danger their country is in, for arousing the spirit of nationalism and patriotism, and for opening the eyes of the people to the necessity of radical reform.

Another circumstance which has impressed the Chinese much in favour of the Japanese has been the humane and exemplary conduct of the Japanese

troops during and after the Boxer uprising, in contrast with those of some European nations, in a way confirming the old adage that blood is thicker than water. At any rate, Chinese who came into contact with Japanese officers and soldiers, during their temporary occupation of the northern ports after the upheaval of 1900, cannot praise them too highly.

However, sentiment alone could not have attracted so many students to Japan; there must be some other reasons, which may be tabulated as follows:

(a) The nearness of Japan compared with Europe or America, the journey to Tokio, the furthestmost point of destination of the Chinese student, taking only one week's time.

(b) The cheapness of living in Japan.

(c) The courteous treatment on the part of Japanese authorities, in striking contrast to the barbarous procedure of the American Custom House people.

(d) The greater ease and rapidity of accomplishing the student's purpose. Japanese and Chinese literature are closely allied to each other, though the spoken languages are quite distinct. With the aid of the brush, the Chinese student is able to converse with his Japanese friend as soon as he lands, and a year's study will enable him to read Japanese books; some have done so only after a three months' stay. When we remember that at least four years' preparation is necessary before a Chinese student can begin to appreciate English literature, while to adopt any profession requires even a still longer period of probation, we can easily understand the eagerness and delight of the Chinese students (many of whom are poor), in rushing to Tokio, finding it a "short cut" to European and American education and civilization. Many of them spend their leisure hours in translation work, and with the proceeds arising from the sale of their manuscripts or published works assist themselves in going through college.

(e) Japan is the only country where a Chinese Students' Association exists, the object of which is "to exchange knowledge and to promote a spirit of camaraderie." Members are deputed to await the arrival of steamers from China and render assistance gratis to new students, such as the securing of hotel accommodation, the introducing to school and college authorities, etc., while a special building is set apart for the meeting of students socially and educationally. In short, the object is to minimise, as much as possible, the unpleasantness and difficulties naturally attending an arrival in a strange land, without understanding a word of the language or knowing a friend.

The students hail from nearly all parts of China, the following being the list of provinces represented (in the order of numerical strength): Kiangsu, Hupeh, Chekiang, Kuangtung, Anhui, Hunan, Fokien, Manchuria,

Chihli, Szechuan, Shantung, Kiangsi, Kweichow, Honan, Kuangsi, Fengtien, and Shansi. The majority are supported by the provincial governments, but the number of those educated at their own expense is increasing rapidly. A few are attached to the Legation, and a dozen or so have their expenses defrayed from the public funds of their native places. Another interesting and encouraging fact is the presence of female students, though the number is insignificant compared with the number of men. In contrast with those who proceed to Europe and America, nearly all the Chinese students in the Empire of the Rising Sun are grown men and accomplished scholars in their own language, very few being under twenty, while it is not uncommon to meet with men over thirty years of age—men who, were they compelled to acquire an education through the vehicle of English, would be forever debarred from success.

The movement is of too recent a date to enable us to make a just or correct estimate of its results. At the same time, there is growing hesitation on the part of officials and parents to send young men to Japan, as in many cases the students have become converts to extreme radicalism and red republicanism, whose motto is "China for the Chinese," preaching revolution or openly fomenting sedition. This is the natural reaction to centuries of an oppressive and repressive policy on the part of the government, and it may, perhaps, after some fifty years or more, lead to the establishment of a constitutional government.

Undoubtedly, these students in Japan have been of inestimable service in introducing modern knowledge into China by their translations and publications, either in magazines or book form, stirring up their fellow countrymen in a manner unknown before. They have helped to effect the renaissance now rapidly passing its period of infancy; they have stimulated the educated classes to take a real interest in Western studies and to know the meaning of "government" and "people"; they have demonstrated to the people that the Chinese Classics do not embrace all that is worth knowing under the sun, and that the "Eight-legged Essay" is by no means the acme of literary composition; and they have proved the power and usefulness of the press in disseminating general knowledge and awakening public spirit. Whatever may be said against his radical ideas and crude ways of executing them, the Chinese student in Japan is one that believes he has a purpose in this world; that he has certain duties to perform toward his country, that loves liberty and hates tyranny, and that hopes himself to be the Washington of China. His sentiments and ideals are admirable, and knowledge and experience will lead him into the right path of realizing them. If he is anything, he is patriotic.