

JAPANESE, DR. STRONG

THINKS, ASSIMILABLE

Pastor of Queen Anne Congregational Church Pleads for Square Deal for Those Now in United States.

ALWAYS WILLING TO MEET OUR OVERTURES

Trip to Island Kingdom Convinces Speaker Orientals Can Be Worked Into Scheme of American Democracy.

The Rev. Sydney Strong, pastor of Queen Anne Congregational Church, last evening preached the third of a series of sermons on "America and Japan" from conclusions the minister arrived at on his recent tour of Japan. Dr. Strong said in part.

"Can the Japanese be assimilated? Among thoughtful Americans, the discussion of the relation of America and Japan has arrived at this stage: Should Americans and Japanese say to each other, 'We like you, we think of you as equals, we will trade with you, we will learn from you, we will cultivate friendly relations,' but so different are our ideals, our home and church and state, that it will be better for both of us to live apart.

"It is said the Japanese cannot be assimilated in our Western civilization, which has a democratic basis and demands homogeneity. To be sure, the question of assimilation at present is largely theoretical; for there are only 80,000 Japanese in America. The Japanese government is holding strictly to the 'gentleman's agreement' and her people are not migrating to America—there are fewer here now than four years ago.

"All that she is asking is that her people who are here shall be treated with courtesy, and justice accorded as to equals and friends. However, in the back of the American mind, there lies the question of assimilation. Americans are also raising the question about other aliens, about Slavs, Italians, Bohemians. Can these be assimilated? If not, then it is better for all concerned that they do not come.

Believes Them Assimilable.

"How about the Japanese? Can they be assimilated? Can they become a part of our big democratic family? Before the right relationship between Japan and America is reached this ground must be thoroughly gone over. For myself, I believe them to be assimilable.

"The nation that has the power of assimilation shown by Japan in her own national life, is sure to be assimilable wherever her citizens go. The two things always are found together.

"Take for example the Japanese colony in and about Seattle. At first thought it would look as if they kept by themselves and took no part in American life.

"The Japanese show distinct but courteous effort to enter into American life. Their merchants join the commercial bodies, subscribe to all civic affairs and go wherever welcome. The Japanese Christian churches in Seattle are prompt to do their part and the pastors modestly but faithfully do their share. Indeed, the majority of the local Japanese would prefer not to build up distinctly Japanese Christian churches, but to scatter in the various American churches of the city, but they receive little encouragement.

Prompt to Meet Overtures.

"The Japanese of Seattle meet every overture looking toward friendly relations with promptness. Where there is a want of assimilation, it usually is not their fault. Their children are in the public schools, they 'rally round' the stars and stripes, they adopt as many American ideas and customs as permitted; they learn English; study American history; are acquainted with Longfellow, Emerson, Washington and Lincoln, and understand and appreciate the American spirit.

"But can the Japanese be worked in to our democracy? Assuming that they are a noble people—that in certain forms of art, in ability to organize to the point of minute details, in courtesy, cleanliness and family discipline, they are our superiors—after all, can they, being Orientals, be worked into our scheme of life? Let me mention a few things:

"They reveal many democratic ideas—they have the open mind, which is fundamental to democracy. They stand for the 'open door' in international politics, quite as much as America. In their village and town life, there is a good natured fellowship between all classes. I was impressed on the steamships by the comradeship shown between officers and sailors. I am informed that the same is true in the army and navy.

"The students in the universities of Japan purposely dress in simple attire to show their disregard for external wealth. In fact, with the majority of the Japanese money is a secondary consideration.

Benevolent Socialism.

"The Japanese government is a kind of benevolent socialism. It is in the labor world, however, that the greatest concern is felt by Americans. Can the Japanese be worked into our industrial scheme of things? It must be said at the outset that the labor world of Japan is quite different from ours. Women are employed by thousands; child labor is common. Labor is not organized as with us. Things are rapidly changing and for the better.

"When we turn to the Japanese question in America, it is fair to say that they do much work, in farming, for example, that would be done by no one else; it is also fair to say that they are rather keen on securing good wages. Those Japanese I have known are good buyers, good liver, and not disposed to lower wages.

"If the Japanese were permitted to join the ranks of organized labor I have the conviction that lowering of the standards of living or wages could not be charged against them. My advice to organized labor is to invite them to join the ranks, for among them would be found some of the ablest champions of the causes dear to the unions.

Displacement Everywhere.

"Of course, the Japanese occasionally displace American workmen. This displacement process, however, is going on everywhere else all the time—among ministers, lawyers, physicians, merchants, teachers, baseball players, farmers, etc. There is no one who is not liable to be displaced; in other words, 'to lose his job.'

"It acts as a spur and aids Providence to provide the best. On the whole, it is a good thing. It is hard on the individual, maybe, but good for the community. If a thousand Japanese enter into our industrial world and displace a few Americans, it must not be overlooked that these same Japanese buy groceries, clothes, books, hammers, autos, etc., and so make places for as many Americans as are displaced.

"The solution of the 'Japanese problem' will be found in our according to Japan full recognition; to treat with her on the basis of sincere friendship and equality, to grant to her people who are in our borders the same privileges we grant to the people of the favored nations, to the English and to the Germans. This is the way Japan treats Americans who come to her shores. If at any time it seems to our nation that too many Japanese are coming, a 'gentleman's agreement' will rectify the situation. But the Japanese who are here should be treated as are those from other favored lands. To do otherwise will be unfair to a noble people and a source of permanent irritation and danger."