

HOW LITTLE JAPS BECOME LITTLE AMERICANS

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"I DON'T want my children to forget that they are Japanese," said a Japanese merchant who does a large business in New York and other American cities; "but at the same time, I want them to become little Americans, too. I want them to have all the advantages of an American training. I want them to get all the benefits of the land to which I belong and the land in which they live."

This is the common feeling of all the Japanese who live in this country with regard to the bringing up of their children. The Chinese in America, thoroughly imbued with the dogged conservatism of their race, bring their children up as they would be brought up in China, and seclude them as far as possible from their American environment.

Not so the Japanese. They do not retain their native costumes and customs, as their Chinese cousins do. They adapt themselves to their surroundings and show the greatest anxiety to make little Americans out of their children.

Many of the Japanese families in American cities are wealthy, their heads being prominent merchants, professional men, diplomats, or consuls. They live in handsome suburban homes or sumptuous city apartments, with surroundings, service, food and dress as typically American as though the land of kimo-

nos, chrysanthemums, and cherry blossoms were not.

Take the case of the Japanese consul-general in New York, Mr. Uchida, who lives on that fashionable thoroughfare, Central Park West. His little girl and boy are being brought up in a thoroughly American way.

The girl, little Moto, a charming peach blossom maiden, is now on her first visit to her grandfather's house in Japan. She is to remain there for two years in order to learn all about her own country, and then she will return to America to be "finished" like any other future debutante.

The boy, 5-year-old Isao—whose name sounds, in his own soft speech, exactly like that of Jacob's hairy brother in the Scriptures—is one of the brightest of the pupils at a fashionable New York kindergarten. His small neighbor, Dishikio Nagasaki, the son of a rich banker on Wall Street, drinks with him from the same fountain of knowledge. In manners, games and general outlook on life, these two little Japs appear to be exactly like any healthy, lively American boy.

The Japanese nurses, who wear the picturesque dress of their native land, and teach them the fairy tales and games of ancient Nippon, are the only distinctively Oriental features in the home life of these children. In other respects it is like that of any well-bred, well-

dressed, well-loved American child. And so it is with scores of other Japanese youngsters in this broad land.

"I should estimate," said the editor of a Japanese newspaper published in New York, "that there are at least 500 Japanese in New York—perhaps more. Most of them are men in good positions—merchants and the like—and many of them are bringing up their families here.

"Whenever they can afford to do so, they send their children to Japan for several years to be partly educated there, and to learn all about their own country. But they take care that they shall be educated also in this country and have a thorough American training.

"They want them to be both Japanese and American. Sometimes the Japanese training comes first, sometimes the American. Many children born here do not see their native land until they are grown up and have 'come out' in American society. But though they may never have seen Japan, you may be quite sure that they have been carefully taught to love their country and reverence their Mikado.

"They are just as patriotic as if they had lived all their lives in Tokyo or Kobe instead of in Washington or in New York. I know of one Japanese youngster, now going to school here, who used to get into daily fights with his playmates because he insisted that Admiral Ito was a greater man than Ad-

miral Dewey, and the battle of the Yalu a more glorious victory than the fight in Manila Bay."

In San Francisco there are considerably over five thousand Japanese, most of whom are of the coolie class or occupational positions. The proportion of wealthy Japanese in that city is not nearly so large as it is in New York. Many of the Japs in the Pacific metropolis marry white women and give up all idea of returning to their native land. They take out their naturalization papers, become thoroughly Americanized, and bring up their children exactly as Americans would do. These denationalized Japs do not, as a rule, mix with their own countrymen, and they do not like their children to learn anything about Japan, not even the fairy tales or the games.

At least 3,000 Japanese work in American families in San Francisco as domestic servants, and a large proportion of them are mere children. Boys come over from Japan at the age of 10, 12 or 14 to get an American education. They are alone, without friends, almost penniless, and they would seem to run a good chance of starving in a strange land. But they always manage to get along all right, and to secure the education for which they crossed the seas.

They take situations as servants without wages. They merely stipulate for their food and clothes and leave of ab-

sence during the day to attend school. In the morning and the evening, they work hard and faithfully to make up for lost time. Faithfulness is the quality in which they outshine all other servants available on the Pacific Coast. They always advertise that "a faithful Japanese boy" needs a situation, and it is no idle boast.

"You might think," said an American woman who has kept house in San Francisco for many years, "that it would be an awkward arrangement in any household to have the servant absent during the morning and the greater part of the afternoon, but it is not. I have employed many of these Japanese boys, some of them only 11 or 12 years old, and have never had any trouble with them. I would not engage any other servant.

"The boy is up at 5 in the morning working like a little hero to get everything in order before he goes to school. He sweeps and dusts the rooms, cleans the boots, washes all the dirty dishes, gets breakfast ready and does twenty other things before 8 o'clock.

"By the time he gets his books together and starts for school, you may look all around the house and not find a single thing left undone. All your needs and wishes during the day have been anticipated. Even afternoon tea has been got ready, all except the boil-

ing of the water and the making of the tea.

"As soon as school is dismissed he hurries home. He does not stop to play with the American boys, for he knows he will be wanted, and he likes to get his work done early so that he can spend a good part of the evening in study.

"It is pleasant to have these boys about the house. Their manners are refined, they always study to please, they are strictly honest and truthful, and they do things without being told. Every housekeeper knows how rare that is in a servant.

"It is wonderful how hard they work to get an American education and learn American ways. Naturally, many of them grow up to be successful and prominent men, either in San Francisco or in Japan.

"The other day I met a Japanese gentleman at the house of a friend, when I was paying a social call. I was told that he was one of the leading doctors of Nagasaki, and had come over for a visit. We had an interesting conversation. His face seemed familiar, and presently I asked him whether we had met before.

"Is it possible that you don't remember me?" he replied. "I was a boy in your house for two years, and left you only nine years ago."

"In his manners and conversation he was exactly like and educated and ac-

complished American gentleman."

Many of these little Japs, when they grow up, marry in San Francisco, either with their countrymen or with white women, attain good positions, and live in America all their lives. They do not always stay on the Pacific Coast. Many of them establish businesses in the other large cities, and prosper exceedingly. If you talk to a rich Japanese merchant in any part of the country.

A man who spent an evening at the house of a wealthy Japanese in Philadelphia, came away enthusiastic in praise of his host's children.

"They were the nicest little shavers you ever met," he said. "Just like American children in many ways, but with a grave politeness and gentle manners that American children do not always possess. They were a queer mixture. In one breath the boy informed me that he was going to Harvard when he grew up; in the next he proudly told me stories of the great deeds of his samurai ancestors. The girl played Mendelssohn's 'Spring Song' like a real musician, and then dressed herself in a kimono and told Japanese fairy tales.

"During the evening they played a Japanese game very much like ping-pong. I charged them with having copied it from us. 'Not at all!' they said. 'This game has been played in Japan for a thousand years. Ping-pong must have been copied from it.'"