Official Education.

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The extent to which national character has been fixed by the discipline of centuries, and the extent of its extraordinary capacity to resist change, is perhaps most strikingly indicated by certain results of social education. The whole nation is being educated, with government help, upon a European plan; and the full programme includes the chief subjects of Western study, excepting the Greek and Latin classics. From kindergarten to university the entire system is modern in outward seeming; yet the effect of the new education is much less marked in thought and sentiment than might be supposed. This fact
is not to be explained merely by the large place which old Chinese study still occupies in the obligatory programme, nor by differences of belief: it is much more due to the fundamental difference in the Japanese and the European conceptions of education as means to an end. In spite of new systems and programme the whole of Japanese education is still conducted upon a traditional plan almost the exact opposite of the Western plan. With us, the repressive part of moral training begins in early childhood: the European or American teacher is strict with the little ones; we think that it is important to inculcate the duties of behavior, — the "must" and the "must not" of individual obligation, — as soon as possible. Later on, more liberty is allowed.
The well-grown boy is made to understand that his future will depend upon his personal effort and capacity; and he is, therefore, left, in a great measure, to take care of himself, being occasionally admonished or warned, as seems needful. Finally, the adult student of promise and character may become the individual or, under happy circumstances, even the friend of this boy, to whom he can look for counsel in all difficult situations. And throughout the whole course of mental and moral training com-
petition is not only expected, but required. But it is more and more required as discipline is more and more relaxed, with the passing of boyhood.
manhood. The aim of Western education is the cultivation of individual ability and personal character, the creation of an independent and forceful being.

Now, Japanese education, though always been conducted, and, in spite of superficial appearances, is still being conducted, mostly upon the reverse plan. Its object never has been to train the individual for independent action, but to train him for cooperative action, to fit him to occupy one exact place in the mechanism of a rigid society. Constraint among ourselves begins in childhood, and gradually relaxes; constraint
Far Eastern training begins early, and, therefore, gradually lighten, and it is not a constant imposition, directly by parents or teachers. This fact, as we shall presently see, makes an enormous difference in results. Not merely up to the age of school-life, — suppose 3 begins at six years, — but considerably beyond it, a Japanese child enjoys a degree of liberty far greater than is allowed Occidental children. Except in rare cases are common, of course; but the general rule is that the child be permitted to do as he pleases, providing...
that his conduct can cause no injury to himself or to others. He is praised, but not constrained; admonished, but rarely compelled. In short, he is allowed to be as mischievous and, as a Japanese proverb says, "even the holes by the road-side have a boy of seven or eight years old." (Namin, yatsu: michi-ba de mo ana deshimo: midami). Punishment is administered only when absolutely necessary; and on such occasions, by ancient custom, the entire household—servants and all—in stead of for the offender; the little brothers and sisters, if any there be, begging in
burn & bear the penalty instead. Whipping is not a common punish-
ment, except among the roughest classes;—the moxa is preferred
as a deterrent; and it is a severe one. To frighten a child by
loud harsh words, or angry
looks, is condemned by general
opinion; all punishment
ought to be inflicted as quietly
as possible, the punisher
calmly admonishing the while.
To slap a child about the
head, for any reason, is
a proof of vulgarity and
gnorance. It is not custom-
punish by retraining from
play, or by a change of diet.
or by any denial of recreations or pleasures. To be perfectly patient with children is the ethical law. At school the discipline begins; but it is at first so very rigid that it can hardly be called discipline: the teacher does not act as a master, but rather as an elder brother; and there is no punishment beyond a public reprimand. Whatever restraint exists is chiefly exercised on the child by the common opinion of his class; and a skillful teacher is able to direct that opinion. Also each clas
is nominally governed by one or two little captains, selected for character and intelligence; and when a disagreeable order has to be given, it is the duty of the captain, the Kyūchō, who is commissioned with the duty of giving it. (These little details are worthy of note; I cite them only to show how early in school life begins the discipline of opinion, the pressure of the common will, and how perfectly his policy accords with the ethical tradition of the race.) In higher classes the pressure slightly increases; and in higher schools it is very much stronger;
— the ruling power always being class-
sentiment, not the individual will of the teacher. In middle schools the pupils become serious: class-
opinion there attains a force to which the teacher himself must bow, as it is quite capable of expelling him for any attempt to override it. Each middle-school class has its elective officers, who represent and enforce the moral code of the majority, — the traditional national standards of conduct. (The moral standard is dehumanizing; but it survives everywhere to some degree.) Fighting or bullying are yet unknown in Japanese schools of this grade, for obvious reasons: there can be little indulgence of personal anger, and no attempt at personal domination, under a discipline in-
forcing a uniform manner of behaviour. It is never the domination of the one over the many that regulates class-life: it is always the rule of the many over the one, and the power is formidable. The student who consciously or unconsciously adheres to class-standards, will suddenly find himself isolated, condemned to absolute solitude. No one will speak to him or notice him even outside of the school, until such time as he decides to make a public apology, when his pardon will depend upon a majority vote. Such leniency—morally illicit—is not unreasonably feared, because it is regarded even outside of student-circles as a disgrace;
and the memory of it will cling to the offender during the rest of his career. However high he may rise in official or professional life in after years, the fact that he was once condemned by the general opinion of his schoolmates will not be forgotten, though circumstances may occur which will turn the fact to his credit... In the great government schools — it is one of which the student many proceed after graduating from a middle-school — class-discipline is still more severe. The instruction are mostly official, looking for promotion; the students are grown men, preparing for the University, and destin...
; with few exceptions, for public office.
In this quiet and coldly ordered world, there is little place for the joy of youth, and small opportunity for sympathetic expansion. There are gatherings or societies, but these are arranged or established for practical purposes—chiefly in relation to particular branches of study;—there is little time for merry-making, and less inclination. Under all circumstances, a certain formal demeanour is required by tradition,—a tradition older by far than any public school. Everybody watches everybody: eccentricities or singularities are quickly marked and quietly suppressed.
The result of this class-discipline, as maintained at some institutions, must seem to the foreign observer discomforting. What most impressed me about these higher official schools was the sinister silence of them. In one where I taught for several years—the most conservative school in the country—there were more than a thousand young men, full of life and energy; yet during the intervals between classes, or during recreation-hours in the playground, the garden, and the gymnastic hall, the general lassitude gave one a strange sense of oppression.
One might watch a game of foot-ball being played, and hear nothing but the thud of the kicking; or one might watch wrestling—contests in the jujutsu-room, and hear no word spoken for half an hour at a time. (The rules of jujutsu, it is true, require total silence, but the total suppression of all visible emotional interest on the part of the spectator.) All this repression at first seemed to me very strange—though I knew that thirty years previously, the training at samurai-schools compelled the same impassiveness and resilience.
He had the University so
reached, — the grand gate of ceremony
in public life. Here the student
finds himself released from the
restrictions previously imposed upon
his private life, though the
class will continues to rule
him in certain directions.

* This release is of recent date; and
the results, by the acknowledgment of
the students themselves, have not been
good. Twenty-five years ago, University
study was so serious, thought about that
a scholar who failed, through his own fault,
would have been considered a criminal. There
was then a Chinese poem in Vogue, which
used to be sung at the departure of youth,
for the University of that time (Daichi no
Namiko) by their friends and relations:—

Danji kokoro zashi wo tatete, kyokwan wo idzu;
Gaku moshi narazunba, shisudomo kaeradzu.

[The young man, having made to firm resolve, leaves his native home.
To be paid to acquire learning, then, even though he dies, he must continue]

— In these years also, it was obligatory upon student to live and
dress simply, and to abstain from all self-indulgence.
As a rule, the student passes into official life after having graduated, married, and becomes the head, or the prospective head of a household. How sudden the transformation of the man at this epoch of his career, or those who have observed the transformation can imagine. It is then that the full significance of Japanese education reveals itself.

Few incidents of Japanese life are more surprising than the metamorphosis of the gawky student into the dignified, impulsive, easy-mannered official. But a little while ago he was respectfully asking, cap in hand, the explanation of some text, the meaning of some foreign idiom;—today, perhaps, he is judging cases in some court, or managing diplomatic cor.
respondence under ministerial supervision, or directing the management of some public school. Whatever you may have thought of his particular capacity as a student, you will scarcely doubt his particular fitness for the position to which he has been called. Success in study was at best a secondary consideration in the matter of his appointment, though he had succeeded. He was put through some special course, under high protection, after having been selected for certain qualities of character, or at least for the promise of such qualities. These may have been favoritism in his case; but, generally speaking, capable men are appointed to positions of trust: the govern-
ment seldom makes serious mistakes. This man has value beyond what mere study could make for him, — some capacity in the direction of management or of organization, — some natural force or talent which his training has served to cultivate. According to the quality of his work, his position was chosen for him in advance. His long hard schooling has taught him more than books can teach, and more than a stupid person can ever learn: how to read minds and motives, how to remain impassive under all circumstances, how to reach a truth quickly, — by simple questioning, — how to live upon his guard (even against the most intimate of old acquaintances).
-dances), how I remain, even now most amiable, secretive and inscrutable. He has produced in the art of world wisdom. He is really a wonderful person, a highly-developed type of his race; and no inexperienced Occidental is capable of judging him, because his visible acquirements count for very little in the measure of his relative value. His undervalued study, his English or French or German knowledge, serves him only as so much oil to make easy the working of certain official machinery; he returns this learning only as means to some administrative end; his real learning, considerably deeper, represents the development of the Japanese soul of him. Be-
hence that mind as any western mind
the distance has become immeasurable.
And now, less than ever before does
the belong to himself. He belongs
to a family, to a party, to a govern-
ment: privately he is bound
by custom; publicly he must
act according to order only, and
submit never the yielding to any un-
prescribed or dangerous will; indeed,
however governed or sensible such
impulses may be. A word may
ruin him: he has learned to use
no words unnecessarily. By silent
submission and tireless obedience
of duty he may rise, he may rise
gradually: he may become governor,
Chief Justice, Minister of State,
Minister of Finance. And to this
and the heavy weight, the victory
Long training in caution
and self-control is indeed an
in dispensable preparation for official existence; — the ability either to keep a position won, or to resign it with honour, depending much upon such training. The most sinister circumstance of official life is the absence of moral freedom, — the absence of the right to act according to one's own convictions of justice. The subordinate, who desires above all things to keep his place, is not expected to have personal convictions or sympathies — save by permission. He is not the slave of a man, but of a system — a system as old as China. Were human nature perfect, that system would be perfect; but so long as human nature remains what it is now, the system leaves much to be desired. Everything
may depend upon the personal character of those temporarily entrusted with higher power; and the only choice left for the most capable servants under a bad master may be to resign or do wrong. The strong man faces the problem bravely and resigns; but for one strong man there are fifty timid ones. Probably the prospect of a broken career is much less terrifying than the ancient idea of crime attaching to any form of subordination. As the forms of a religion survive after the fall of a doctrine has passed away, so the power of government is coerced even conscience with remains, though religion is no longer identified with government. The system of secrecy, implacably enforced,
helps to maintain the vague awe that has always attached to the idea of administrative authority; and such authority is practically omnipotent within those limits which I have already indicated. To be favoured by authority means to experience all the illusory pleasure of a sudden created popularity: an entire community, a whole city, is made by a word to love all the amiable side of its human nature toward the favoured;—to choose him in the belief that he is worthy of the best that the world can give him. But suppose that the moving powers happen, later on, to find the favoured man in the way of some policy—lo! at another whispered
word he finds himself, without knowing why, the public money. None speak i blame or abuse blame or snipe upon him—save ironically. Long, beloved friend passes him by without recognition, or, if pursued, reply to his most earnest questions with all possible brevity and candor.

Most likely they do not know the why of the matter: they only know that orders have been given, and that is the reason of orders. It is not good to inquire. Even the street-children know this much, and would love the respondent within a fortnight—even the dogs seem insincere.

It is I divine the change, an
back at him as he passes by...

such is the power of official displeasure; and the penalty of a blunder or a breach of discipline may extend considerably further — but in feudal times the offender would have been simply told to perform hara-kiri. Demeaning, when the wrong men get into power, the force of authority may be used for malevolent ends; and in such event it requires not a little courage to disobey in order to act against conscience. What savagery Japanese society in former ages from the worst results of this form of tyranny,
was the moral sentiment of the mass,—the common feeling that underlay all submission to authority, and remained always capacious, if pressed upon too brutally, of compelling a reaction. Conditions today are more favourable to justice; but it requires much tact, steadiness, and resolution on the part of a rising official to steer himself safely among the reefs and whirlpools of the new political life.
The reader will also be able to understand the general character, aims, and results of official education as a system. It will be also true that while to consider in detail certain phases of student-life which equally prove the survival of old conditions and new traditions, I can speak about these matters from personal experience as a teacher, an experience extending over nearly nineteen years.
Readers of Goethe will remember the contrast between the student received by Doctor Mephistopheles in the First Part of Faust, and the very different demeanour of the same student when he reappeared in the Second Part, as Baccalan-cre. More than one foreign professor in Japan must have been reminded of that contrast by personal experience, and must have wondered whether some one of the early educational advisers of the Japanese government did not play, without malice, the very role of Mephistopheles. The gentle boy who, with innocent
reverence, makes his visit of courtesy to the foreign teacher, bringing for gift a cluster of iris-flowers or odorous spray of plum-blossoms,—the boy who does service he is does, and charms by an earnestness, a roundness, a grace of manner rarely met with among Western lads of the same age,—is destined to undergo the strange test of transformation. Boy before becoming a baccalaureus, you may meet with him a few years later, in the uniform of some high School, and find it difficult to recognize your former pupil,—now graceless, taciturn, suspicious, and inclined to dummer
as a rogue that could scarcely, with propriety, be requested as a favour. You may find him patronizing, possibly something worse. Later on, at the university, he becomes more formally correct, but also more far away, so very far away from his boyhood that the remoteness is a pain to one who remembers that boyhood.

The Professor is less wise and deep than the invisible gulf now extending between the mind of the stranger and the mind of the student. The foreign professor is now regarded merely as a teaching-machine; so he is more than likely to repel any effort made to maintain
one intimate relation with his pupils. Indeed, the whole formal system of official education is opposed to the development of any such relation. I am speaking of general facts in this connection, not of merely personal experiences. No matter what the teacher may do in the hope of finding his way to be in touch with the emotional life of his students, or in the hope of evoking that interest in certain studies, which renders possible an intellectual tie, he must do it in vain. Perhaps in two or three cases out of a thousand he may obtain something precious, — a lasting and fruitful relation, based upon real comprehension; — but should he wish for more he must remain in the state of the Andesite explorer, seeking month after month in no purpose, ever climbing endless cliffs of everlasting ice.
Now in case of the Japanese professor proves the barrier natural, to a large extent. The Japanese professor can ask for extraordinary effort and obtain them; he can afford to be easily familiar with his students outside of class; and he can get what no stranger can obtain,—their devotion. The difference has been attributed to race-feeling; but it cannot be so easily and vaguely explained.

'Something of race—sentiment there certainly is; it were impossible that there should not be. No inexperienced foreigner can converse for one half-hour with any Japanese—at least with any Japanese who has not journeyed abroad—and avoid saying something
that jars upon Japanese good taste or sentiment; and few—perhaps none—among untravelled Japanese can maintain a brief conversation in any European tongue without making some startling impression upon the foreign listener. Owing to the peculiar understanding between minds so differently constructed, it may be impossible. But the foreign professor who looks for the impossible,—who expects from his Japanese student the same quality of intelligent comprehension that he might reasonably expect from Western student,—is naturally disturbed. "Why can we obtain no confidence, no grateful recognition of effort?" is a question often asked and rarely answered.
One of the reasons should by this time be obvious to my reader; but one among them—and the most curious—will not. Before relating it, I must observe that while the relation between the foreign instructor and the Japanese student is artificial, that between the Japanese teacher and the student is traditionally one of sacrifice and obligation. The attitude encountered by the stranger, due to indifference which chills him at all times, are due in great part to the misapprehension arising from totally opposite conceptions of duty. One sentiment lingers long after old
Some have passed away; so how much of feudal Japan survives in modern Japan, no stranger can readily divine. Probably the bulk of existing sentiment is hereditary sentiment: the ancient ideals have not yet been replaced by fresh ones. 

In feudal times the teacher taught with one salary: he was expected to devote all his time, thought, and strength to his profession. High honour was attached to that profession; and the matter of remuneration was not discussed.

The student was entirely the pupil, the parents or master bound him with a bond that...
could not be broken. Therefore a
general, upon the eve of an assault,
would like very much his former
teacher should have an opportunity
3 escape from the place beleaguered.
The tie between teacher and pupil
was in force second only to the
tie between parent and child.
The teacher sacrificed everything
for his pupil; the pupil
was ready at all times to die
for his teacher. Now, indeed,
the harsh and selfish aspect
of Japanese character are
coming to the surface. But
a single fact will sufficiently
indicate how much of the old
ethical sentiment persists under
the new or rougher surface:—
Nearly all the higher educational work accomplished in Japan represented, though aided by government, the results of personal sacrifice.

From the summit of social to the base, this sacrificial spirit rules. That a large part of the private income of Their Imperial Majesties has, for many years, been devoted to public education is well known; but that every person of rank or wealth or high position educates students at his private expense, is not generally known. In the majority of cases this help is ending prodigious; in a minority of cases, the expenses of the student are advanced only to be repaid by instalments at some future date. The lender is doubtless aware that the daimyo in former
duties need 2 the land of the bulk of their income in supporting or helping their retainers;—supplying hundreds, in some cases thousands, and in some few cases, even two of thousands of persons with the necessaries of life; and exacting in return military service, loyalty, and obedience. Those former daimyo or their successors,—particularly those who are still large landholders,—now vie with each other in assisting education. All who can afford it are educating sons or grandsons or descendants of former retainers; the subjects of this patronage being annually selected from among the students of schools established in the former daimyos. It is arg the rich noble who can now support a number of students gradually, year after year; the poorer men of rank cannot
care for many. But all, or very nearly all, maintain some—and in some cases where the patron’s income is so small that the expense could not be borne unless the student were pledged to repay it after graduation.

In some instances, half of the cost is borne by the patron; the student being required to repay the rest.

Now these aristocratic examples are extensively followed through other grades of society: merchants, bankers, and manufacturers—all rich men of the commercial and industrial classes—are educating students.
Military officers, civil service officials, physicians, lawyers, men of every profession, in short, are doing the same thing. Persons whose incomes are too small to permit of much generosity are able to help students by employing them as doorknappers, messengers, dealers, giving them board and lodging, and a little pocket-money at times, in return for labor services.

In Tokiyo, and in most of the large cities, almost every large house is guarded by students who are being thus assiduously taught. As for what the teachers do — that requires special mention.

The majority of teachers in the public schools do not receive salaries enabling them to
help students with money, but all teachers earning more than the bare necessary give aid of some sort. Among the instructors and professors of the higher educational establishments, the helping of students seems to be thought of as a matter of course, — so much a matter of course that we might suspect a new "tyranny of custom," especially in view of the smallness of official salaries. But no tyranny of custom would explain the pleasure of sacrifice and the strange persistence of feudal idealism which are revealed by some extraordinary facts. For example: — A certain university,
Professor is known to have supported and educated a large number of students by dividing among them, during many years, nearly the whole of his salary. He lodged, clothed, educated them, bought their books, and paid their fees—reserving for himself only the cost of his living, and reducing even that cost by living upon hot-sweet potatoes! (Fancy a foreign professor in Japan putting himself upon a diet of bread and water for the purpose of educating gratuitously a number of poor young men!) I know of two other cases nearly as remarkable; the helper, in one instance, being an old man of
more than seven, who still devote all his means, time, and knowledge to this ancient ideal of duty. How much obscure sacrifice of this kind has been performed by those least able to afford it, never will be known: indeed, the publication of the facts would only give pain. I am guilty of some indelicacy in mentioning even the cases brought to my attention — though human nature is honoured by the misfortune. Now it should be evident that while Japanese students are accustomed to witness self-denial of this sort on the part of native professors, they cannot be much impressed by
any manifestation of interest or sympathy in the part of the foreign professor, who, though receiving a higher salary than his Japanese colleagues, has no reason and small inclination to imitate their example.

Surely this heroic fact of education sustained by personal sacrifices, in the face of innumerable difficulties, is enough to redeem much humbug and wrong. In the spirit of the civilization which has been of late years referred to educational circles,—in spirit of all official scandals, intrigue, and sham,—all needed reforms can be hoped for while the spirit of generous self-denial combines to rule the world of teachers and students.
venture also the opinion that most of the official scandals and failures have resulted from yielding to foreign influences of the worst kind, or from attempting to imitate foreign conventional methods, both at variance with national social experience. Where Japan has remained true to her old moral ideals she has done nobly and well; where she has needlessly departed from them, sorrow and shame have been the natural consequences.
There are yet other facts in modern education suggesting even more forcibly how much of the old life remains hidden under rigorous conditions, and how rigidly race CHARACTER has become fixed in the higher types of mind. I refer chiefly to the results of Japanese education abroad, — a higher special training in German, English, French, or American universities. In some directions these results of foreign observation at least appear to be almost negative. Considering the immense psychological differences between—

- the total opposition of mental structure and habit, — it is
admitting that Japanese students have been able to do what they actually have done at foreign universities. To graduate at any European or American university of mark, with a mind shaped by Japanese culture, filled with Chinese learning, crammed with ideographs, is a prodigious feat; scarcely less of a feat than it would be for an American student to graduate at a Chinese university. Certainly, the men sent abroad to study are carefully selected for ability, and one indissoluble requisite for the mission is a power of memory incomparably superior to the average. Occidental memory, and different altogether as it is, quality, a memory for details; — nevertheless,
The feat is amazing. But with the return of Japan of these young scholars, there is common an end of effort in the direction of the specially studied,—unless it happens I have been a purely practical subject. Does this signify incapacity for independent work upon Occidental lines? Incapacity for creative thought? Lack of constructive imagination? Absence of action or indifference? The history of that terrible mental and moral discipline to which the race was so long subjected would certainly suggest such limitations in the modern Japanese mind. Perhaps these questions cannot yet be answered,—except, I measure, as regards the indifference, which is self-evident and undisguised. But, independently of any question of capacity or inclination, there is
This fact is to be considered, that proper encouragement has not yet been given to home scholarships. The plain truth is, that young men are sent to foreign seats of learning for other ends than to learn how to devote the rest of their lives to the study of psychology, philology, literature, or political economy. They are sent abroad to fit them for higher posts in government service; so their foreign study is but one obligatory episode in their official career. Each has to qualify himself for special duty by learning how Western people study and think as they do in certain directions, and by ascertaining the range of educational progress in these directions; but he is not ordered to think or to feel like Western people—which
would, in any event, be impossible for him. He has not, and proba-
could not have, any deep personal
interest in Western learning outside of the domain of applied science.
His business is to learn how to under-
stand such matters from the
Japanese, not from the Occidental,
point of view. But he performs
his part well, does exactly what
he has been told to do, and rarely
anything more. His value to his
government is doubled or quadrupled
by his allotted experience; but
at home—except during a few
years of expected duty as professor
or lecturer—he will probably use
that experience only as a psycholo-
gical costume of ceremony, a
mental uniform to be donned when
official occasion may require.
It is, otherwise, in the case of men sent abroad for scientific study, requiring not only intelligence and memory, but natural quickness of hand and eye, – surgery, medicine, military specialties. I doubt whether the average efficiency of Japanese surgeons can be surpassed. The study of war, I need hardly say, in one to which the national mind and character have inherent aptitude. But men sent abroad merely to win a foreign university degree, and destined, after a term of educational duty, to higher official life, appears to set small value upon their foreign acquirements. However, even if they could win distinction in Europe by further
effort at home, that effort would have to be made at a serious premium of sacrifice, and could not as yet be fairly appreciated by their own countrymen.

None of us have wondered at times what the old Egyptians or the old Greeks would have done if suddenly brought into dangerous contact with a civilization like our own,—a civilization of applied mathematics, with sciences at every branch—sciences of which the mere names would fill a dictionary. I think that the
history of modern Japan suggests very clearly what any ancient people, with a civilization based upon ancestor worship, would have done. They would have speedily reconstructed their patriarchal society to meet the sudden peril; they would have adopted, with astonishing success, all the scientific machinery that they could use; they would have created a formidable army and a highly efficient navy; they would have sent their young artisans abroad to study alien conventions, and to qualify for diplomatic duty; they would have established a new system of education, and obliged all their children to study many new things; but towards the
higher emotional and intellectual life of that alien civilization. They would naturally exhibit indifference: its best literature, its philosophy, its broader forms of tolerant religion could make no profound appeal to their moral and social experience.