

VOLUME 2/19: H.D. WILSON, MC CLATCHY, V.S. JAPANESE
AMERICAN RELATIONS, SACRAMENTO: JAPANESE
EXCLUSION LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA, 1921.

Japanese American Relations

Causes Which Produce Friction
and the Obvious Remedies

A Frank Statement From Cal-
ifornia Published in Japan

Yomiuri Shimbun, of Tokyo, one of the most prominent newspapers of Japan, issued on May 25th a special edition in Japanese, devoted in large part to translations of articles written for it by Americans on the relations between the United States and Japan, and various problems connected therewith.

Among the articles was the one following, contributed by V. S. McClatchy, who represented the Japanese Exclusion League of California at Washington, in matters before the Committees of Congress and the Department of State. This article was intended as a frank statement for intelligent Japanese readers, of the California point of view on Japanese immigration, and the reasons why both nations are concerned in absolute exclusion of such immigration in future.

Published By
Japanese Exclusion League
of California

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In the latter part of the year 1920 I had several interesting interviews in California and Washington with Mr. M. Komatsu, editor of Chugoku Shinbun, the Japanese Magazine. It was then Secretary of the Japanese Legation at Washington, and later Director of the Japanese Foreign Affairs Bureau and Secretary of the Central Council in Korea. Mr. Komatsu sought me originally, as he explained, because it was understood generally in Japan that I was among Japan's most bitter antagonists and he desired to learn my viewpoint of the so-called Japanese question. He was kind enough to my afterwards in a published interview that my sentiments and actions were entirely misunderstood in Japan, largely through misrepresentation, and that neither my writings nor my speech showed me to be unfriendly to his country. In fact, he thought his viewpoint and mine were practically identical inasmuch as we both respected and admired the people of the other, each desired to maintain permanently the friendly relations which had long existed between the two nations, and each recognized that continuance of existing conditions in this country must lead, in time to racial conflict and international misunderstanding, just as inevitably as similar conditions, if created in Japan, would do so.

Japan has heard of me, so far, only through the writings of those who are not familiar with my views and record in this matter, or who misrepresent in the belief that unpleasant facts can be wiped out by abusing the man who presents them. Fair-minded and intelligent Japanese with whom I have discussed the subject agree that the present misunderstanding between Japan and the United States can be cleared up only through earnest determination on each side to ascertain and frankly consider the facts, without prejudice or feeling, and to encourage misrepresentation, abuse and intemperate discussion. A dangerous sore is not

healed by concealing it from view and ignoring it.

Naturally, therefore, I appreciate the opportunity to present California's views to the intelligent people of Japan through the columns of Yomshu; and feel assured your people will consider the facts fairly and deliberately to the end that an early and amicable adjustment may be reached between the two countries. I ask only that each reader of this article, after obtaining a clear conception of the facts, and himself this question: "What would Japan do if such conditions were suddenly found to exist in Japan?"

Permit me to say that the views presented here are in effect the views of the great mass of Californians who passed the Initiative Land Law by a vote of 5 to 1 in November last, and whose Legislature in January of this year, by unanimous vote in each House, adopted resolutions addressed to Congress in line with these views. They embody, also, the sentiment of the Japanese Exclusion League of California, which authorized me to represent it at Washington before the State Department and the committee of Congress. The Exclusion League speaks officially for the State organizations of American Legion, Native Sons and Daughters, Federation of Labor, Farm Bureau, Women's Clubs, Veterans of Foreign Wars and various patriotic, civic and fraternal bodies.

Two Non-Assimilable Races.

In this matter, from our standpoint there is involved no question of racial superiority; we frankly concede that in certain specific qualities—not in all—the Japanese are our superiors. It is a question, not of inferiority, but of radical difference—a difference in race, heredity, religion, ideals, standards of living, social customs, etc., so great as to make it impracticable, if not impossible for the two races to assimilate, whether the attempt be made here or in Japan.

Assimilation between Japanese and whites through intermarriage is out of the question. There is on each side a natural and proper pride of race which proves a great obstacle; there is next the biological law that intermarriage between races as different induces degeneration; and there is finally the mental ostracism which is visited upon Eurasian progeny of such intermarriage.

Assimilation without intermarriage is not possible. There would grow up in our midst an alien race entirely independent, with its own communities, maintaining the language, the ideals, the religion, the customs and the loyalty of Japan—a government within a government, certain to produce friction and at all times a menace to our own citizenship.

It has been conceded generally by leading Japanese with whom this phase has been discussed that it is most unwise to permit, in this country or in Japan, the development of an assimilable alien element, with certain advantages in economic competition, or commercial increase, which would lead inevitably in time to racial conflict. That is the situation which confronts us to-day in California, and which has already commenced to appear in other States; and it is manifestly in the interests of both countries to put a stop to conditions which continue to threaten to disrupt the existing friendly relations.

Prominent Japanese have acknowledged to me—and at least two have said in print—that if in Japan a proportionate number of Americans had secured control of land and products and communities, with probability of further extension of such conditions (as in the case with Japanese in California), the Japanese would have driven the Americans into the sea. Yet, while our Californians are very determined that these conditions shall cease, no steps by their action along lines provided by law, they have not been guilty of

discourtesy, nor discrimination, against Japanese in public places, nor assault, nor injury to property, nor interference with vested rights. The attitude of the people of Japan has been called to this situation by Mr. E. Kawahara, the recognized agent for publicity for the Japanese on the Pacific Coast, in an article in the New York Nation, February 2nd, and by Mr. Komatsu in interviews, and by others.

Economic Competition and Natural Increase.

Another menace to the white race in this country, from the presence of Japanese in numbers, is found in their superiority in economic competition, induced by greater industry, thrift, willingness to work long hours with less expensive pleasures, difference in standards of living, etc. These characteristics enable the Japanese to pay much more for agricultural land, in purchase, price, or rental, and still make much greater profit therefrom, than can the whites. In our State the Japanese have already secured control of one-eighth of all the irrigated lands—our richest lands—as shown by official report of the State Board of Control.

While we will concede that some of the characteristics which enable the Japanese to accomplish these results might well be copied by the whites, we must accept our citizens as they are and not as we think they should be, and protect them, as Japan protects her people, from conditions against which they cannot, or will not, protect themselves.

The superior birth rate of the Japanese offers still another danger, if they are given a foothold in this country. The report of the California State Board of Health shows that the birth rate per thousand of the Japanese in California in 1915 was three times that of the whites, though the Japanese have only one adult female to three and one-half or four males, while among the whites the proportion is one to one.

In 1920 the birth rate proportion to favor of the Japanese was still greater. In some portions of the State, for instance in Sacramento County, outside Sacramento City, there were in 1915 and 1916 more Japanese births than white births, though the white population outnumbered the Japanese ten to one. The Health Officer of Los Angeles County has estimated that, on the basis of the birth rates quoted, and assuming that all immigration of every kind into the State would be barred for the future, the Japanese already in California would increase so rapidly that in one hundred years they would outnumber the whites.

That is a serious problem to those who regard this as a white man's country. Japan would not tolerate in her own country similar conditions under which the displacement of her own people by an alien race would be possible.

Here again I offer no apology for the Americans in encouraging conditions leading towards race suicide, and I have only commendation for the love of children shown by the Japanese. I have eight sons and daughters. But our citizens must be accepted as they are, and protected, so far as the nation can protect them, against the development of conditions which would in time submerge them.

With the advantages thus indicated, coupled with their perfect methods of co-operation and concentration, the Japanese in some of California's richest agricultural counties have already secured control of the soil, and in some instances control of the cultivated orchard and produce lands amount to from 50 to 85 per cent of the total.

Incidentally, whites have been displaced to greater or lesser extent, in the Fresno district in Sacramento County the American school children have been steadily decreasing and the Japanese increasing within

the past few years, and now among children under six years of age the Japanese outnumber the whites by 50 per cent.

The Japanese population of the State to-day is ten times what it was 25 years ago, and the rate of increase to-day is greater than ever before. The Gentlemen's Agreement, which was to have prevented such a contingency, according to the understanding of California, has permitted an increase in that population of fourfold since it was negotiated, and threefold since Japan put it into operation, and most of that increase is found in the ranks of labor, on farms or elsewhere, against the express intent of the agreement. Be that as it may, if Japan has kept the agreement in good faith, as she claims, it has failed to do what was expected of it.

Not Adapted to Change of Citizenship.

These conditions are sufficiently alarming in themselves, but they become much more so to the Californians and to the Americans when coupled with the results of congressional investigation furnishing evidence of the practical impossibility of assimilating this alien material, and of the determination on the part of the Japanese themselves that they shall not be assimilated, but shall remain loyal citizens of Japan.

Japanese publicists and newspapers and leaders in this country, and in Japan, evidently do not desire the Japanese to lose their identity in American citizenship or even in American residence; they speak continually of "overseas development of the Japanese," and "the permanent establishment on American soil of the Japanese," and "the permanent settlement of the Japanese." They urge that land be secured and many children be begotten as the agent means for accomplishing the object in view. Their American-born children are taught in separate Japanese schools to be Japanese citizens, and as American National Commission, after investigation of those schools in Hawaii, has recommended that they be

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abolished as detrimental to Americanization.

Many of the children born here are sent back to Japan when eight or ten years of age and return when 17 to 19 to use their American citizenship for the benefit of Japan, as openly advocated by the Japanese daily newspaper of Sacramento in its issue of February 4, 1920. According to the Japanese Association of America, about 5,000 California-born Japanese are now in Japan receiving a Japanese education before they return here to use their American citizenship; it is obvious they will be at heart loyal citizens of Japan.

Nor does Japan recognize as American citizens Japanese who are born under the American flag. She claims them as her own citizens and exacts from them full obligations as such. Thirty thousand Japanese have been born in California, and Japan has permitted the expatriation of only twenty, and those within the next two or three years. In 1914, under the American flag, in much greater number of Japanese already here, Japan has permitted expatriation of only twenty-two, and within the past four years, with these American-born Japanese are in fact, as most of them are at heart, citizens of Japan, notwithstanding the grant to them of privileges attending American citizenship.

In their determination to secure land, the Japanese have continually violated or evaded the provisions of the California Land Law of 1913, and it was to prevent further violation of the intent of that law that California last November amended the original law by initiative proceedings.

A Japanese daily newspaper of San Francisco, "The Sun," in protesting against passage of such a measure, openly encouraged defiance of American law, as indicated in the following translation from an issue of October, 1919: "When we, of the Yamato race, arise with a mighty

revolt, American opposition will be as futile as an attempt to sweep the sea with a broom. The day will come when the strength of the Japanese will make a clean sweep of all laws. Even the Kaiser's Empire was destroyed when the time came."

Such expressions from leading Japanese newspapers in metropolitan cities of the Pacific Coast are naturally assumed to reflect the general Japanese sentiment and confirm the belief that nature and inclination combine so that the Japanese "can not, may not and will not" become good American citizens, as explicated at length in my statements before the Congressional Committee.

Roosevelt's Views on the Question. Theodore Roosevelt, the greatest American of the present generation, was a lifelong admirer and consistent friend of Japan.

But he realized that the white and yellow races are not assimilable and pointed out the grave danger of rupture of friendly relations between the two nations if, through immigration, the development of a Japanese community were permitted in this country. In a letter written from the White House, February 4, 1909, to Hon. William Kent, Congressman from California, he said:

"Let the arrangement between Japan and the United States be entirely reciprocal. Let the Japanese and Americans visit one another's countries with entire freedom as tourists, scholars, professors, seafarers for study or pleasure, or for purposes of international business, but keep out laborers, men who want to take up farms, men who want to go into the small trade, or even in professions where the work is of a non-international character; that is, keep out of Japan those Americans who wish to settle and become part of the resident working population, and keep out of America those Japanese who wish to adopt a similar attitude. This is the only wise and proper policy."

"It is merely a recognition of the fact that in the present stages of racial advancement of the two peoples, whatever may be the case in the future, it is not only undesirable, but impossible, that there should be intermingling on a large scale, and the effort is made to bring disaster. Let each country also behave with scrupulous courtesy, fairness and consideration to the other."

Roosevelt was equally outspoken in insisting upon the right of this country to exclude immigration from Japan, as well as from other countries, by our own laws, and pointed out the grave mistake made by his successor in the Presidential office in modifying, through the Treaty of 1911, the terms of effect of the original "Gentlemen's Agreement" made by Roosevelt in 1907. This is what he says on this subject in his autobiography at page 411:

"I secured an arrangement with Japan under which the Japanese themselves prevented any immigration to our country of their laboring people, it being distinctly understood that, if there was such immigration, the United States would at once pass an exclusion law. It was, of course, infinitely better that the Japanese should stop their own people from coming rather than that we should have to stop them; but it was necessary for us to hold this power in reserve."

"Unfortunately, after I left office, a most mistaken and ill-considered policy was pursued towards Japan, compelling irritation and ineffectiveness, which culminated in a treaty under which we surrendered this important and necessary right."

The Chinese Remedies. In this statement I have recounted only facts which were fully verified before the House Committee on Immigration during its Pacific Coast investigation in June and July, 1920, or in public print since. Many of them are verified for by Japanese authorities. It must be conceded that they indicate a very serious situation, and that if there were a similar situation in Japan it would not have been considered with the discrimination and good temper which Californians and Americans have thus far exerted. Clearly that situation threatens the interests of both Nations, and each is equally concerned in securing an immediate adjustment.

The necessary remedies are obvious. They are such as Japan already enforces to protect herself against similar dangers. As explained by Baron Ichida to the Diet on January 20, 1921, Japan does not permit ownership of her land by foreigners. She also protects her people from foreign immigration under Imperial Edict No. 35, and forbids the importing of Chinese and Koreans, whose standards of living and advantages in economic competition would make them a danger to citizens of Japan.

Therefore, there should not be any difference of opinion between Japan and Uncle Sam as to the character of the remedies necessary in the existing situation, and every effort should be made so that, in application of those remedies, the just pride of Japan may not be injured.

California and the American Legion insist that these remedies should include absolute exclusion for the future, under our own laws, of Japanese immigration, with the usual privilege of temporary residence to tourists, students, merchants, diplomats, teachers, etc.; the recognition of the right of each State to enforce laws similar to that of California, which is in harmony with Federal Constitution and the treaty with Japan; or, if preferred, more comprehensive laws applying to all aliens.

To those Japanese already settled here, there should be guaranteed, as is done by the California law, security in personal and property rights already acquired, and the privilege of engaging in any business desired, with the reservation

that they may not hereafter acquire or lease agricultural land unless they hold American citizenship through birth.

The question of naturalization does not figure in the matter since the Federal Statutes do not permit naturalization of any individual of the yellow race. That condition can be changed only by amending the statute.

In discussing application of these remedies, I have always encountered, on the part of leading Japanese, opposition to any plan which would appear to discriminate against their Nation. That is a sentiment with which I am in entire sympathy. Objection on that score should disappear if Japan would enforce against the United States and Americans, without protest from us, such regulations as to all these matters as we now enforce, or propose to enforce, against Japan and the Japanese.

The two Nations would thereby enter into a friendly understanding to the effect that, while nature and man have created insuperable barriers against assimilation of the races, and while colonization or penetration in either country will lead to friction, and should be prevented by rigidly enforced immigration laws on both sides, there is still every reason why the two Nations should remain friends in the future, enjoying advantageous commercial relations and together guarding world peace on the Pacific. I am sincerely striving to that end; and, certainly, the best settlement of the readers of Tomorrow will be eager to promote such a commensuration in any way that is not unfair to Japan.

V. M. MCCLATCHY.
Sacramento, California, February 24, 1921.

Archives
of
British Columbia