

ROUTLEDGE REVIVALS

# Japan To-day

James A. B. Scherer



*Routledge Revivals*

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## Japan To-day

This book, first published in 1904, aimed to provide an overview of the aspects of everyday Japanese life at the beginning of the twentieth century. This book will be of interest to students of history and Asian Studies.

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James A. B. Scherer



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"Japan To Day"  
From a drawing by a native artist

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# JAPAN TO-DAY

BY

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The Growth of a Kingdom "

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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TO  
THE BRIDE OF YAMAGUCHI  
AND  
A LITTLE SAGA MAID  
BESSIE AND ISABEL  
WITH LOVE

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# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE CYNOSURE .....	11
The Hermit becomes a Hero—The Educational Progress of Japan—The Military Progress of Japan and a Comparison with Russia—A View of Japan To-Day.	
II. SUNRISE-LAND .....	27
The Name of Japan—Sunrise means Beauty: The Beauty of Kamakura, Enōshima, Nikkō—Sunrise means Mystery: Earthquakes, Tidal Waves, and Volcanoes—Sunrise means Light: Civilization and Christianity; or, Manners versus Morals.	
III. VIEWS AWHEEL .....	55
Tōkyō in the Rain—A Jinrikisha Ramble—The Wheelman's Paradise—Bishop Potter at Nagasaki.	
IV. GLIMPSES OF HOME LIFE .....	83
In a Japanese Home—The Children—Festivals and Myths—The Women—Christian Wedlock, so-called.	
V. THE AWFUL JAPANESE LANGUAGE .....	117
What it is Not—Honorifics—Chinese Complications—The Blunders of Beginners—"Why I Study English."	

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
VI. SERMONS GARNISHED WITH SMILES .....	143
The Buddhist at Church—A Sermon on the Chief End of Man—Tales from Japanese Folk-Lore—A Specimen of Oriental Humor— Religions Old and New.	
VII. LIFE IN THE SOUTH .....	175
The Island of Kyūshū—A Calm Succeeded by a Storm—The Land of the Unknown Fire— A Sketch of Saga—Life in a Japanese School —Side-Lights on “Demoniacal Possession.”	
VIII. THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTH .....	201
The Aborigines of Japan—Ainu Characteristics —King Penri—Strenuous Pastimes—The Spir- itual Traditions of a Primitive People.	
IX. JAPANESE TRAITS .....	223
Topsy-Turvydom—Negative Traits: The Con- tempt for Time, the Absence of Nerves, Want of Sympathy, and Lack of Confidence—Posi- tive Traits: Frugality, Politeness, and Industry —The Japanese and Chinese contrasted.	
X. AN OPENER OF GATES .....	255
The Personality of G. F. Verbeck—His Life Story the History of Modern Japan—The Need for Men to Succeed Him.	
XI. THE GATES OF ASIA; OR, THE LARGER MEANING OF THE WAR .....	283
Palestine and Japan: “The Circuit of the Heavens”—The Vast Importance of Asia and the Present Problem of China—Russia versus Japan: The Political Argument for Missions —Reasons why Japan may Win this War.	

## ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
"Japan To-Day" .....	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
The Great Buddha at Kamakura .....	16
Land of the Sunrise Beauty .....	30
Peasants Transplanting Rice .....	32
Fuji, the Mountain King .....	34
Mother and Child .....	48
Japanese Landscape Gardening .....	60
Rain-Coats made of Straw .....	62
A Family Journey .....	70
A Walking Conservatory .....	72
Typical Country Scene—a Tea Plantation .....	76
The Mid-day Meal .....	88
The Empress in Western Dress .....	94
Japanese Girls and Women .....	104
A Wedding in Old Japan .....	112
Good-Night! .....	114
Buddhist Priests .....	146
Around the Brazier .....	162
A Nagasaki Buddhist Temple .....	168
Boy Acrobats .....	182
Southern School-girls .....	192
Ainu Man and Wife .....	216
Carpenters at Work .....	226
The Blind Shampooer .....	236
A Scene near Nagasaki .....	262
Two Brothers of Old Japan .....	270
Gates of the Palace at Tōkyō .....	286
Japan at War .....	316

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# I

## THE CYNOSURE

¶ The Hermit becomes a Hero—  
The Educational Progress of  
Japan—The Military Progress  
of Japan and a Comparison with  
Russia—A View of Japan To-  
Day



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# JAPAN TO-DAY

## I

### THE CYNOSURE

It is only a little country, being smaller than the State of California. Only a twelfth of its land is arable,—that is to say, scarcely more than the territory of our own little Maryland. It has a few mines of coal and copper and iron, with less of silver and gold. It lies off the central eastern coast of the vast continent of Asia, a narrow crescent, bent like Diana's bow,—shaped like the rising moon, and named for the Rising Sun,—bending as far as it can towards the west. It is only a little country, filled with forty millions of little brown people, but it is the cynosure of the eyes of all nations. For exactly fifty years has this been true. In 1854 Commodore Perry opened it, a veritable box of curios for the Western world, whose curiosity for its contents has seemed insatiable. In 1894 curiosity deepened into wonder, when this little bow-shaped country

## JAPAN TO-DAY

suddenly pierced the rusty mail of China with the swift, sharp arrow of war, and made that dozing giant rub his eyes. In 1904 wonder has become amazement, as Japan has undertaken to celebrate her fiftieth jubilee of enfranchisement among the nations by a doughty wrestling match with the colossal Slav,—a pygmy gone out against a giant.

How can these things be? How has it been possible for a nation apparently to be born in a day, suddenly emerging from sheer Oriental hermitage to become the cynosure of every eye? What accounts for Japan's rapid development from a curio-box to a world-power, so that to-day she is rightly entitled to be called the gate to the Orient? The answer is in one word: Education.

But education predicates two things: advantages and ability. It is of no use to bring opportunity to a man unless he has the grasp which will enable him to seize it by the forelock. Culture will avail him nothing unless he has capacity, just as land must have native fertility before it will respond to cultivation. The mental soil of the Japanese has had a rapid receptivity without parallel in the history of the world.

For five years I taught Japanese students.

## THE CYNOSURE

Simply as students, they are ideal. I can see them now, as they sat there, apparently so stoical, so Easternly impassive. But those sleepy-looking eyes were wide awake. Their minds were drinking with a thirst that could never be quenched. And when the next day came, they had digested the lesson of the day before, in every atom, and were clamoring with a hundred questions for more. I do not say that they are an origina-tive race; in a subsequent chapter I shall show that they are not. But I repeat that for quick receptiveness and rapid, thorough assimilation of mental food they are un-paralleled.

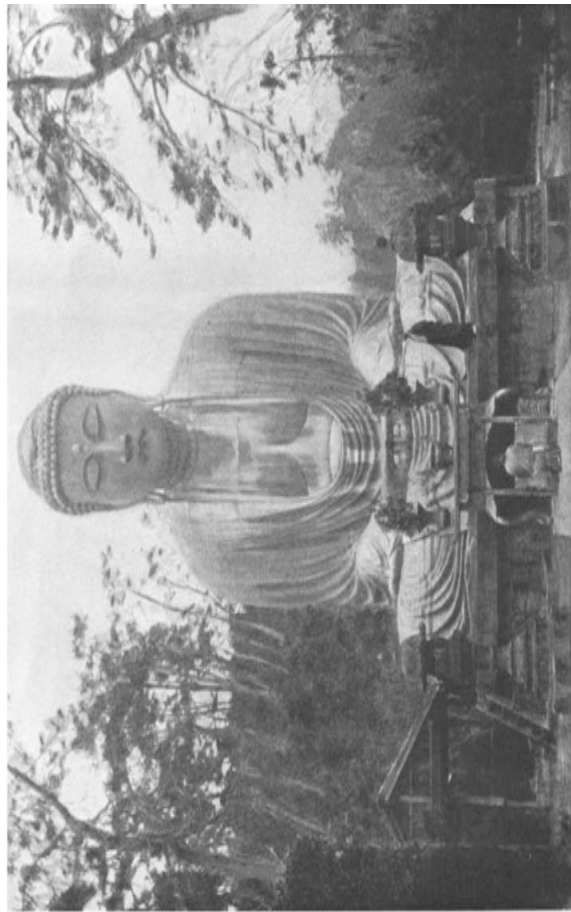
In the seventh chapter of this volume I shall sketch the actual experiences of an American teacher in a modern Japanese school; while in the tenth chapter we shall trace the rapid transition of Japan from the darkness of mediæval feudalism to the en-lightenment of the Western world. For the present we need just a clear notion of the educational methods which have made the Japan of To-Day.

The history of the Japanese people falls into three great divisions: First, the infancy of the race, extending from prehistoric times

## JAPAN TO-DAY

into the third century of the Christian era; secondly, the period of Chinese culture, beginning with the alleged introduction of letters in the year 284, and continuing for fifteen centuries; and, finally, the period of European culture, which began, as has been already noted, so recently as 1854. Until this modern epoch introduced the Japan of To-Day, the educational influences had been directed wholly by Buddhism. "All education," as Professor Chamberlain has said, "was for centuries in Buddhist hands. Buddhism introduced art, introduced medicine, moulded the folk-lore of the country, created its dramatic poetry, deeply influenced politics and every sphere of social and intellectual activity. In a word, Buddhism was the teacher under whose instruction the Japanese nation grew up."

Now, as everybody knows, Buddhism is a singularly impassive and impersonal religion. One has only to study the face of the Great Buddha, as presented in an illustration in this volume, to understand the essence of Buddhistic teaching, which means self-repression, self-effacement, personal nihilism. Lanier sings, in his poem of "The Crystal,"—



The Great Buddha at Kamakura

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## THE CYNOSURE

“ So, Buddha, beautiful! I pardon thee  
That all the All thou hadst for needy man  
Was Nothing, and thy Best of being was  
But not to be.”

Doubtless the greatest conquest, when all the odds are considered, that the great religion of India has ever made was its intellectual conquest of the Japanese. For a race less responsive by nature to such a doctrine can scarcely be imagined. They are intensely active, alert, individual; but, in obedience to the commands of the Great Nihilist, they covered their impetuous, fiery natures with the crust of a repression that ill-befitted them, thorough-going Tatars as they are.

All the more intense for this age-long repression was the activity that immediately ensued when the crust was broken, finally, in 1854. The Japanese is a born Yankee; monastic life does not become him. He had needed, however, precisely that strong self-control that came from the schooling of Buddhism. He now realized with the flash of instinct that he had finally come into his own. The ozone of the West filled his lungs. He breathed full and deep, then leaped with great bounds straight into the thick of things. The first thing that he did was to resolve to



## JAPAN TO-DAY

educate himself in the ways of this new life to which he was so instantaneously responsive. In the tenth chapter we shall see in a general way how this was done. They sent an embassy around the world, to get the best that every nation had to give! In that same year the Emperor gave forth the startlingly ambitious declaration: "It is intended that henceforth education shall be so diffused that there may not be a village with an ignorant family, or a family with an ignorant member." And his intention has been amazingly fulfilled. A distinguished British journalist wrote, a few years ago, "It is so rare a thing to find, even in the lowest class, a man or woman who cannot read and write that I have no doubt the proportion of illiteracy is higher in Birmingham or in Boston than it is in Tōkyō." The figures are almost incredible, but in less than twenty years the number of pupils enrolled in the Japanese schools increased more than three million per cent. There are now enrolled in the various schools of Japan more than four and a quarter million of pupils out of a total population of some forty million. The government expends for this work annually not less than forty million

## THE CYNOSURE

*yen* (twenty million dollars), and the various mission agencies add their thousands. Japan undertook an immense task when the Emperor issued his notable declaration in 1872. "That Japan has not miserably failed, but has succeeded in producing in thirty years a result which Russia, for example, still waits to attempt, marks her as worthy of a great future,"—so writes Mr. Lewis in his recent work, "The Educational Conquest of the Far East."

Mr. Lewis quotes an eminent Japanese educator as saying that when Japan reached out for Western ideas she copied her navy from Great Britain, her army from France, her medical science from Germany, and her educational system from America. But Mr. Henry Norman declares that the educational system of Japan is a characteristic attempt to combine in one system the Board Schools of England, the High Schools of America, the Normal Schools of France, and the Universities of Germany. Both are right. Japan chose America for her general plan, but went to other countries for specifications. The result is an elaborate system embracing five departments: (1) The Kindergartens, for very young children; (2) Elementary

## JAPAN TO-DAY

Schools, which in turn are in several separate grades; (3) Middle Schools, of two classes, the Ordinary and the Higher; (4) Special Schools, the name being self-explanatory; and (5) the great University at Tōkyō, with two thousand five hundred students, the highest standards of scholarship, and famous teachers from every quarter of the globe.

“College faculties know the country boy who enters with insufficient preparation, but has accomplished such results as he could by sheer power of will and force of mind. The progress of such a boy when he finally comes under competent instructors is exhilarating. He advances by leaps, until almost before his class realizes it he is an acknowledged leader. In the great college of the nations, Japan is that boy.” So writes the editor of the *Youth's Companion*. But Japan has done more than that. This rustic, unlettered boy, the minute he caught a glimpse of the world, made a flying visit to all the great schools within reach; then went back home, *built his own school*, and in a trice had caught up with the others. There is nothing like it in the history of the world. Little wonder that Japan is conceited!

## THE CYNOSURE

Japanese progress in military affairs has equalled these civic advances. Mr. Norman classes the military advancement of Japan "among the modern wonders of the world. The arsenal of Koishikawa is Woolwich on a smaller scale, with a hundred rifles and seventy thousand cartridges for its day's work; the dockyard at Yokosuka is not behind Woolwich and Portsmouth in much except size, and first-rate torpedo boats and the most elaborate modern ordnance are turned out there with the regularity of Armstrong or Krupp; the Armstrong cruisers lying off Tōkyō Bay are among the finest vessels of their class afloat, and could make matchwood of many vessels here, and they are manned and officered entirely by Japanese seamen; while the War Department has at least forty thousand men under arms at this moment, and on a declaration of war could put one hundred thousand troops of all arms, and perhaps many more, in the field, with weapons equal to any carried to-day, all of whom would have served at least a year with the colors, and the majority for three years, and who would make a desperate fight against any army in the world. Yet twenty-five or thirty years ago Japanese

## JAPAN TO-DAY

soldiers wore huge, grotesque iron-mask helmets to frighten the enemy, chain and lacquer armor to turn his blows, their great shoulder-cannon would have been antiquated in England at the time of the Armada, and they were led by a man with a fan!"

Mr. Norman wrote those words about ten years ago. No greater proof of the marvellous progress that is being made by the Japan of To-Day could possibly be given than by a contrast of Mr. Norman's figures with those which obtained on the first day of January, 1904, as furnished by the *London Times*. Permanent Army, 273,268. Reserve, 35,000. Territorial Army, 200,000. Grand total, 508,268. The same authoritative journal reports that on January 21, 1904, the Russians could not muster as against this large and well-drilled army more than 150,000 men and 266 guns, and will not be able to muster more than 200,000 men at the most. Yet Russia has been making plans for martial conquests ever since the will of Peter the Great was made cogent in 1725, while Japan is the baby among the nations.

It will be interesting also to compare the naval strength of the two combatants, side

## THE CYNOSURE

by side. For these figures we are indebted to the *London Times*. (See pages 24 and 25.)

The following pages will endeavor to present the multifold aspects of the Japanese life of to-day. I have aimed to make a kaleidoscope. Japan is notoriously complex, and I leave the reader to unify the subject, if he can, from the diverse materials which I have presented as faithfully as I knew how. If my book presents a diversified appearance, then I can only say, so does Japan, and the book is by that measure true. Japan is the key to the Orient, but no one has ever found the key to Japan. What I offer is a sketch-book of views of that country which is to-day the cynosure of nations. "Sunrise-Land" will give a rapid survey of the country and the people as a whole, unified by the name of the country. "Views Awheel" and "Glimpses of Home Life" will take us from the bird's-eye view to glimpses that are caught at closer range. We shall take just a sidewise glance at the awful language, then listen to the humorous sermons of the priests. From the routine of school life in an old Southern town we shall

# JAPAN TO-DAY

## THE JAPANESE NAVY

Battleships	Displacement	Indicated Horse-power	Nominal Speed	Gun Protection	Weight of Broad-side Fire
	Tons		Knots	Inches*	Lbs.
Hatsuse .....	15,000	15,000	18'0	12 (4), 6 (4)	4,240
Asahi .....					
Shikishima .....					
Mikasa .....	15,200	16,000	18'0	12 (4), 6 (14)	4,225
Yashima .....	12,300	13,000	18'0	12 (4), 6 (10)	4,000
Fuji .....					

Armored Cruisers	Displacement	Indicated Horse-power	Nominal Speed	Gun Protection	Weight of Broad-side Fire
	Tons		Knots	Inches*	Lbs.
Tokiwa .....	9,750	18,000	21'5	8 (4), 6 (14)	3,568
Asama .....					
Yakumo .....	9,850	16,000	20'0	8 (4), 6 (12), 3 (12)	3,368
Azuma .....	9,456	17,000	21'0	8 (4), 6 (12), 3 (12)	3,368
Idzumo .....	9,800	15,000	24'7	8 (4), 6 (14)	3,568
Iwate .....					
Nisshin .....	7,700	13,500	20'0	10 (1), 8 (2), 6 (14)	.....
Kasuga .....	7,700	13,500	20'0	8 (4), 6 (14)	.....

Protected Cruisers	Displacement	Indicated Horse-power	Nominal Speed	Gun Protection	Weight of Broad-side Fire
	Tons		Knots	Inches*	Lbs.
Takasago .....	4,300	15,500	0	8 (2), 4.7 (10), 3 (12)	800
Kasagi .....	4,784	15,500	22'5	8 (2), 4.7 (10), 3 (12)	800
Chitose .....					
Itsukushima .....	4,277	5,400	16'7	12.5 (1), 4.7 (11)	1,260
Hashidate .....					
Matsushima .....	4,277	5,400	16'7	12.5 (1), 4.7 (12)	.....
Yoshino .....	4,180	15,750	23'0	6 (4), 4.7 (8)	780
Naniwa .....	3,727	7,120	17'8	10.2 (2), 6 (6)	1,196
Takachiho .....					
Akitsuishima .....	3,150	8,400	19'0	6 (4), 4.7 (6)	780
Niitaka .....	3,420	9,500	20'0	6 (6), 3 (8)	920
Tsushima .....					
Suma .....	2,700	8,500	20'0	6 (2), 4.7 (6)	335
Akashi .....					

\* Number of pieces of each bore is given in parenthesis.

NOTE.—The Japanese navy includes also torpedo gunboats, 20 torpedo-boat destroyers, and 47 modern torpedo boats.

# THE CYNOSURE

## THE RUSSIAN NAVY

Battleships	Displacement	Indicated Horse-power	Nominal Speed	Gun Protection	Weight of Broad-side Fire
	Tons		Knots	Inches*	Lbs.
Poltava .....	10,950	11,200	17'0	12 (4), 6 (12)	3,367
Petropavlovsk ..					
Sevastopol .....					
Peresviet .....	12,674	14,500	19'0 {	10 (4), 6 (12), 3 (20)	2,672
Pobieda .....					
Osliaibia .....					
Retvisan .....	12,700	16,000	18'0 {	12 (4), 6 (12), 3 (20)	3,434
Cesarevitch .....	13,100	16,300	18'0 {	12 (4), 6 (12), 3 (20)	3,516

Armored Cruisers	Displacement	Indicated Horse-power	Nominal Speed	Gun Protection	Weight of Broad-side Fire
	Tons		Knots	Inches*	Lbs.
Gromoboi .....	12,336	18,000	20'0	.....	1,197
Bayan .....	7,800	17,000	22'0	.....	952
Rossia .....	12,200	18,000	20'0	.....	1,348
Rurik .....	10,940	13,500	18'0	.....	1,345
Dmitri Donskoi ..	5,893	7,000	15'0	.....	444

Protected Cruisers	Displacement	Indicated Horse-power	Nominal Speed	Gun Protection	Weight of Broad-side Fire
	Tons		Knots	Inches*	Lbs.
Bogatyr .....	6,750	19,500	23'0	.....	872
Askold .....	6,500	19,500	23'0	.....	772
Varyag .....	6,500	20,000	23'0	.....	510
Diana .....					
Pallada .....	6,630	11,600	20'0	.....	632
Aurora .....					
Boyarin .....	3,200	11,500	22'0	.....	180
Novik .....	3,000	18,000	25'0	.....	180

\* Number of pieces of each bore is given in parenthesis.

NOTE.—The Russian navy includes also upwards of 26 torpedo-boat destroyers and 53 effective torpedo boats, many of which are effective for service in Asiatic waters. In the Black Sea are 5 battleships of the fourth class, 2 of the third class, 1 of the second class, and 1 of the first class, besides a portion of the torpedo flotilla. The fleet cannot pass the Dardanelles except in defiance of the interested Powers of Europe.



## JAPAN TO-DAY

hurry to the interesting Ainu in the North. Then follow the three serious chapters with which the book shall close. We shall study Japanese traits as compared with their Chinese neighbors; we shall see by her past experience of what Japan may be capable in future; and, finally, discuss the larger meaning of the Russo-Japanese war. The Japan of the past is dead and buried. All hail to the Japan of To-Day!

## II

# SUNRISE-LAND

¶ The Name of Japan—Sunrise means Beauty : The Beauty of Kamakura, Enōshima, Nikkō—Sunrise means Mystery : Earthquakes, Tidal Waves, and Volcanoes—Sunrise means Light : Civilization and Christianity ; or, Manners versus Morals

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## II

### SUNRISE-LAND

“WHAT’s in a name?” It is a great mistake to think that names are meaningless, this high intimation to the contrary notwithstanding. For example, take “Japan.” The word comes to us through the Dutch and the Portuguese, two peoples who had dealings with that country in very early times. Possibly the word was first introduced into Europe by a remarkable Venetian traveller named Marco Polo, who resided in China just two hundred years before that other great Italian voyager, Columbus, came to America. Polo heard the Chinese talking of a little country to the east of them, “where gold might be picked up from the streets like pebbles.” They called this land Dschi-pon, and the translation from Dschi-pon to Japan is easy.

While the natives of Japan use the same alphabet as the Chinese, they give to its thousands of letters a different pronunciation. Instead of calling their country Dschi-pon,

## JAPAN TO-DAY

they say "Nihon." So, by a roundabout road, "Nihon" and "Japan" come from the same starting-point. Japan is but a corruption of the native name, Nihon.

Not everybody knows this. One day a student in the government school where the writer was teaching said to me:

"Teacher, please do not call our country Japan. Call it Nihon. That is its name."

"Why?" said I; "what is the difference between calling it Nihon and calling it Japan?"

"Oh," said he, "there is a great deal of difference. The word Japan is an insult. In your country you have a black varnish which you use for veneering tin and iron. Your name for that varnish is Japan. And the reason why you foreigners call our land Japan is because you think we have just a mere varnish of civilization."

Of course I laughed over that, and told the class that there *is* a kind of varnish that we call "Japan," but we give it that name because it originated in Japan. And when I explained that Japan is, by a roundabout road, just the same as Nihon, the boys were mollified, and laughed at the patriotic ignoramus until he was red in the face.



Land of the Sunrise Beauty