

**JAPAN; SUGGESTED OUTLINES
FOR A DISCUSSION OF JAPAN,
HER HISTORY, CULTURE,
PROBLEMS, AND RELATIONS
WITH THE UNITED STATES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649752799

Japan; suggested outlines for a discussion of Japan, her history, culture, problems, and relations with the United States by Kenneth Scott Latourette

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Cover @ 2017

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KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE

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CALIFORNIA

Japan

Suggested Outlines for a Discussion of Japan,
Her History, Culture, Problems, and
Relations with the United States

by

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FOREWORD

BELIEVING that an outline of subjects about Japan with references to reliable sources of information would be of value to members of the Japan Society, to clubs, debating organizations, teachers, students, and writers and speakers on Japan the Townsend Harris Endowment Fund Committee of the Japan Society asked Professor Kenneth Scott Latourette, of Yale University, a student of the Far East, to prepare such a work. The reader should understand therefore that this pamphlet does not necessarily express the views of the Committee, whose opinions on the subjects covered in the compilation were not sought. It is entirely the production of Professor Latourette; the Townsend Harris Committee and the Japan Society act merely as the vehicle for its distribution.

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attain that goal, however, it is highly advisable that as many other organizations as possible aid in the sound instruction of our people about Japan and things Japanese. Informal groups in colleges and universities, business men's organizations, and women's clubs can and should each have its part. It is primarily to meet the needs of such groups that this set of outlines has been prepared. The first and longest syllabus is for the use of those who may wish to devote a series of meetings to Japan. There is no reason, however, why individual sections from it should not be chosen by those who may wish to devote a shorter time to the study. The other and briefer outlines are designed for groups that may wish to take up only one feature of the life and problems of our trans-Pacific neighbor. At the end of each section there are given bibliographical references to four or five of the books that ought most frequently to be found in public or private libraries, and at the close of the pamphlet there is to be found a selected list of the most important works in English on Japan.

KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE.

August, 1921

CALIFORNIA

JAPAN

An Outline for from Six to Ten Studies

A

THE GEOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND OF JAPAN

I. *The geographic components of Japan.*

1. The islands, from North to South: The Kuriles, Sakhalin (Southern half only, although the Northern half is also occupied at present), Hokkaido (Yezo), the Main Island, Shikoku, Kyushu, the Riukius, Taiwan (Formosa). The Bonins, a small group important only for strategic reasons, lie outside this chain. By the Treaty of Versailles, Japan acquired under a mandate the former German islands north of the Equator, i.e., the Marianne or Ladrone, the Pelew, the Caroline (including Yap), and the Marshall Islands.

2. On the mainland of Asia: Chosen (Korca), leased territories in Manchuria, and ~~leased territories in~~ Shantung.

II. *Area.* Somewhat larger than the state of California.

III. *Character of the islands.* Mountainous. The soil is frequently unfertile, and only about a quarter of it is capable of being reduced to cultivation.

IV. *Influence of the islands upon the history of their people.*

1. The insular position encourages national individuality. ✓

2. In the old days this insular position also made possible a kind of isolation from the continent. During historic times there has been no successful invasion from the mainland. ✓

3. The islands, because of their nearness to the continent, were subject to cultural influences from China and the population and civilization of the country are Asiatic.

4. The position of the islands gives Japan the control of all the sea approaches to north-eastern Asia, and so assures her an advantage in the commercial and naval future of China, Eastern Siberia, and the North Pacific.

5. The insular character of the country and the nearness to the continent have been factors in leading the nation to seek to develop its shipping and commerce.

6. The fact that the arable land of the islands is greatly limited has caused the Japanese to turn to industry, commerce, emigration, and imperialism as outlets for surplus population and energy. The islands have very little iron and insufficient coal of first quality, and they are, accordingly, eager to insure to themselves free access to the abundant supplies of both which are to be bound on the neighboring continent.

Bibliography. K. S. Latourette, *The Development of Japan*, Macmillan, 1917, chapter I. W. E. Griffis, *The Mikado's Empire*, New York, 1913, 12th edition; E. B. Mitford, *Japan's Inheritance*. London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1913; E. W. Clement, *A Handbook of Modern Japan*, Chicago, A. C. McClurg, 1905, Chapter I.

B

THE HISTORY OF JAPAN TO THE COMING OF PERRY

- I. *The mythological stories of the origin of the nation.* According to these the islands and their people are the offspring of the gods, and the imperial house is directly descended from the Sun Goddess, the first emperor being Jimmu Tenno, and the traditional date of his accession, 660 B.C.
- II. *The real facts of the case* are, probably, that the Japanese are a mixed race, made up of migrations from the continent and the islands to the south, and that the original center of the Japanese state was Yamato, on a peninsula of the south-eastern part of the Main Island. The people were for many centuries crude, without a highly organized government or a system of writing.

III. *Beginning with the sixth century A.D., there came intimate contact with the civilization of China through Korea, and this contact brought about great changes in Japan.*

1. Buddhism came in, and with it as the vehicle there entered writing, art, architecture, and philosophy.

2. The political machinery of the state was remodeled to make it conform to that of China.

3. Commerce and industry felt the stimulus of contact with the continent.

4. The Japanese were not blind imitators of Chinese culture, but modified it in places to meet their needs.

IV. *The rise of feudalism and the shogunate, with their dual government.*

1. The political machinery introduced from China proved ill adapted to Japan, and in time broke down. After some centuries of struggle and evolution the real power of the government passed into the hands of a military class which came to be organized into a system that in many respects resembled the feudalism of medieval Europe.

2. The head of this military class was the shogun, and while the emperor and his court still existed and were nominally the source of all authority, the actual administration of the country was in the hands of the shogun and his officials. The shogunate began in 1192 A.D.

V. *Japan under the shogunate.*

1. The shogunate was successively in the hands of several military families.

2. In the civil war which followed the fall of the Ashikaga shoguns at the close of the sixteenth century A.D. there arose a commoner, Hideyoshi, who for a time ruled the country and carried out a bloody invasion of Korea.

3. The final dynasty of the shogunate, that of the Tokugawa family, was begun by Iyeyasu in 1603, and ended with the resignation of the shogun and the abolishment of the shogunate in 1867.