

THE EMPEROR OF JAPAN

Popularly Supposed to Have
But One Wife.
KNOWN TO HAVE NINE.

The Other Wives' Children are Recognized as of Full Standing in the Royal Pedigree.—Wives are Sometimes Selected for Political Reasons.—Their Influence.

Mutsuhito, the emperor of Japan, is popularly supposed to have only one wife, the empress, to whom he was married in 1869. As a matter of fact, he has, or has had, nine wives. Of these, however, eight are merely concubines, or consorts, having no social rank and not figuring in any way in the court ceremonies. They were selected for him by the imperial council from among the first families of the nation. The emperor himself, in theory at least, had nothing to say about it.

Referring to these plural wives, W. E. Curtis, in his book "The Yankess of the East," says: "They seem to be a sort of guaranty that there shall be an heir to the throne, as their children are recognized as of full standing in the royal pedigree, and the present heir apparent is the son of one of them. They are selected because of their pure blood, their health and beauty and sometimes for political reasons, for it is considered the highest distinction that can be deferred upon a woman in Japan—to be empress is only nobler. The left-handed wives of the emperor often wield a tremendous political influence, for obvious reasons, and their relatives are supposed to profit thereby. They live in the greatest luxury, are surrounded by multitudes of attendants, and except for their omission in the court codes of etiquette, which do not provide for them, they stand equal to the empress herself."

The emperor, according to the same authority, has had twelve children, of whom only four, three girls and one boy, are living. The Countess Sono was the mother of four children, the Countess Chigusa and the Countess Yanagisawa of three each and Mme. Hashunato and Mme. Hamuro of one child each. Woshihita, the prince imperial, is the son of Countess Yanagisawa, who became one of the emperor's concubines in 1875. She is the daughter of Count Yanagisawa, a respected citizen of Tokyo, and is said to be a woman of ability.

Before her marriage the empress was Princess Haruko, daughter of Prince Ichijo. This man was of noble ancestry and had taken an active part in the revolution against the tycoons. The marriage was popular and the empress is today the idol of the Japanese people. She is much less exclusive than the emperor, is democratic and progressive in her ways and is much interested in educational and charitable affairs. She has had no children. When she was married she was 19 years old and the emperor two years younger. She is described as a delicate and slender woman, with a long, thin face, pointed chin and fat features. Like most of her countrywomen she uses cosmetics freely and these do not enhance her beauty in the eyes of foreigners.

Ernest W. Clement in "A Handbook of Modern Japan," says of the empress: "She was brought up in the old-fashioned way, but she is in hearty sympathy with the ideals of New Japan. As she has no children of her own she has adopted the entire nation and completely won their love; she is, indeed, the mother of millions. She is especially interested in educational and benevolent institutions; she is the active patron of the Peeresses' school, the University for Women, the Red Cross society and other philanthropic enterprises. In times of calamity her purse is always opened for a liberal contribution to the suffering."

Haru No Miya Yoshihito, the prince imperial, was born Aug. 31, 1879, and was proclaimed heir to the throne in 1887. In May, 1900, he was married to Princess Sada, daughter of Prince Fushima, a man of great prominence and a councillor of the emperor. She was born in 1884 and educated in the Peeresses' school until her betrothal when she was placed under private tutors. The prince imperial is even more progressive than his father and when he married the princess he did not merely "appoint" her his wife and have the fact registered in the presence of witnesses, as is the usual custom, but he had a religious ceremony performed by a priest and had a reception and banquet. He treats his wife as an equal in every respect and it is believed that through his influence the status of women generally in Japan will be very much improved and that concubines, which is now practically recognized as legal, will be discouraged. They have two children, Prince Hirohito, born April 29, 1901, and Prince Yasuhito, born June 25, 1902.

Mikados Ancient Ancestry.
Ancient though many European royal houses may consider themselves none can beat the record of the mikado. Mutsuhito is the one hundred and twenty-second wearer of the crown, which his ancestors have borne without interruption since the year 686 B. C. That is to say, the founder of the dynasty was a contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar. Though one may not be guilty of the impoliteness of calling this pedigree in question, it is difficult to believe that the mikado of 2,550 years ago was the son of the sun goddess. Possibly even the present occupant of the throne has doubts about it in private.

LUMBERING IN MANCHURIA.

Russians Likely to Become Our Competitors in Chinese Market.

Many lumbering enterprises are being established in Manchuria, Siberia and Sakhalin, with the idea of competing with American Pacific coast lumber.

The most important is the Russian timber and mining company, of the far east, with headquarters at Port Arthur. This company is organized by some of the most prominent men connected with the Russian government, and is reputed to have a capital of 20,000,000 rubles (\$10,300,000). Its principal operations will be on the Yalu river, where it runs down timber from the forests of Korea as well as the large forests of Manchuria. These forests are said to be very extensive and contain immense quantities of exceedingly fine timber. There is much of the like in this market from that locality, and it has been the source of supply for both this and the Tientsin market for ages.

At the mouth of the Yalu, Russia is to build the third largest sawmill in the world. Whether or not the mill is to come from the United States is not known, but a great mill enterprise is already in progress of construction, located exactly on one of the points now in controversy. In addition to this competition, which is already supplying large quantities of timber and lumber to Port Arthur, Dalny, Niuchwang, and the Chinese Eastern railway, the Russians are shipping quantities of lumber to all of these places by steamer from Vladivostok and vicinity and from the island of Sakhalin.

Another point of Russian competition in the lumber business is developing on the Sungari river, where the Chinese Eastern railway crosses it, about eighty miles south of Harbin. Timber in considerable quantities is run down this river to the point and is being made into lumber by the Chinese method, several hundred men being engaged in the work. Lumber from this source will never reach the sea in competition for the trade of China, but it will be a splendid source of supply for railway use and for the city of Harbin.

It is clear that Russia intends to provide for all the requirements of lumber in Manchuria and Siberia, with a possibility of entering the Chinese market. The Russians are familiar with the lumber, wheat, and flour business, and as they have the natural advantages and the earnest support of their banks, railways and government throughout Manchuria, their development of these industries is likely to close this market to our country in these products, and if they show intense energy and enterprise they will become severe competitors in the great markets of China for flour especially, and possibly for lumber.—National Geographical Magazine.

Scythe as Church Ornament.

At the first sight the scythe is a strange ornament for a church, but there is nothing incongruous in these curious agricultural implements as seen in the parish church of St. Mary's at Horncastle, in Lincolnshire.

Thirteen of these blades are nailed above the door in the north chapel. At one time the blades numbered 40 or 50, but owing to rust and decay many of them have been lost. Each of the scythes is about a yard in length.

The general belief is that these blades were placed in the church in commemoration of the zeal of peasants who wielded them in defense of their faith in the rebellion known as "The Pilgrimage of Grace," which had its rise at Louth in 1536.

When the people saw the ruins of their churches and abbeys, they rose in revolt, and arming themselves with the instruments of husbandry, such as scythes, they went forth to encounter the enemy.

They were beaten and dispersed, but in the eyes of their countrymen they were heroes, and the rude implements with which they fought were deemed worthy of an abiding place in the old church, where the peasants had worshipped.—Christian Age.

Japanese Government.

It is now quite well established that the Japanese government continued for over 2,500 years exactly the same in form as that of the Mahometan caliph and of modern Rome. The chiefs of religion among the Japanese have been the chiefs of the kingdom much longer than in any other nation. The succession of the pontiff kings may be traced with certainty for more than 780 years before our era.

The ecclesiastical emperor was called "Dairi," a name now used by the people for the royal residence of the mikado or for the court itself. Until recently the mikado was regarded as too sacred to be called by his right name. After the overthrow of the pontiffs the dairi was kept in honorable confinement by the mikado and treated with the utmost respect, for the people revered him as if he were an idol.—New York Press.

Stone With a History.

A stone with a remarkable history is kept at the British naval offices in Portsmouth. In the '50s it saved a vessel of the queen's navy. The frigate Pique ran ashore on the Japanese coast, but was refloated in what was thought to be an undamaged condition. It proceeded to Portsmouth and was docked, when it was found that the stone had imbedded itself firmly in the planks of the ship's bottom. The stone prevented leakage, and had it dropped from its position during the homeward run there is little doubt that the Pique would have been lost.

THE "HERMIT KINGDOM."

Brief Sketch of Korea and Its Many Characteristics.

Korea is the country occupying the peninsula between the Yellow sea and the sea of Japan, reaching northward along the coast to latitude 43 degrees. The Tumen river, Shang Pal mountains and Yalu river separate it from Manchuria in an irregular northwest-southeast line of natural boundaries. It is about 600 miles long, north and south, and 135 miles wide, and contains about 75,000 square miles.

The northern half of this territory is mountainous and well wooded, with peaks 6,000 and 8,000 feet high; a range of mountains runs along the eastern seaboard, and another range reaches down to the southwest point of the peninsula and reappears in the extinct volcano (Mt. Auckland, or Hanshan) on Quelpert island. The east coast is abrupt and rocky, with few harbors, the best being Wonsan (or Gensan) and Fusan.

The south and west coasts are low, studded with islands entered by several rivers affording light-draft navigation, and abound in harbors, but the high tides and fierce currents make approaches dangerous. The Na Kong, which empties near Fusan; the Han, flowing into Chemulpo bay and giving steamboat navigation to Seoul; the Taedong, in the northwest, which is navigable 75 miles to Pingyang, and the Yalu, are the only rivers worth mention. The Yalu can be ascended by large vessels for about 30 miles and by boats to Wi-wen, about 175 miles above its mouth.

The northern rivers freeze over in winter, and snowy winters rule there from December to March; but the southern half of the country is much warmer. The climate, on the whole, is healthful and rather dry. The western side of the country is mainly monotonous plains, dry, fertile and nearly denuded of wood.

Wagon roads hardly exist, and interior traffic is by boat, packhorses and human porters, travelers going on pony back or in sedan chairs. A railway extends between Seoul and Chemulpo (26 miles), and is being pushed north toward Pingyang, Wiju and Manchuria. Another line is building under Japanese auspices from Fusan to Seoul.

Korea was conquered by the Manchus in the 17th century, and until 1894 was a vassal of China, but after the China-Japan war Korea became independent. Previous to 1876, when Japan made a treaty of friendship with the country, Korea had been completely closed to foreigners, and was called The Hermit Nation, but in 1876 Wonsan and Fusan were opened to trade, in 1880 Chemulpo, and since then several other ports. The latest opened is Wiju, which will be very important when peace returns. In 1883 a treaty was made with the United States and diplomatic relations were established. Japanese influence has had a persistent struggle against Russian influence; but in the early spring of 1904 Japan placed her armies in Korea without opposition, and made it the seat of their military operations against Russia, proclaiming, however, that they did not intend to annex the country.

The general customs, manners and costumes of the people partake of both Chinese and Japanese characteristics, but the people, as a whole, are very backward, though physically better than the average of their neighbors. A census in 1900 gave 5,608,351 adults liable for imperial taxes. The total population may be 15,000,000.

Peculiarities of Koreans.

The Koreans are said to have Japanese faces, Chinese customs and manners of their own. Next to the Eskimos they are the heartiest eaters in the world. The flesh of young dogs is their favorite delicacy; Japanese beer their favorite beverage. Every Korean house has a collar, called khan, which is used as a furnace. Its mouth is some distance from the house. On a cold night you will see one or more white-clad figures cramming the khan's mouth as fast as they can with twigs, branches and other combustible food. Thus well-fed, the furnace burns for hours and keeps the house warm all night. In Korea, as in China, ancestor worship is the real religion. Fortune tellers, astrologers and sorceresses are in great demand. The Koreans are a nation of poets and painters. Every fairly educated man writes poems and paints pictures. "Gessangs," who correspond to the Japanese geisha girls, are numerous in the larger towns, and especially abound at Pingyang, in the northern mining district. The Korean population is divided into two classes, the workers and the students and officials. The workers are oppressed and abused without mercy and are apathetic, indifferent and lacking in energy.

In the Far East.

Praying in Japan is made very easy. In the streets are tall posts with prayers printed on them, and with a small wheel attached. Any one passing by can give the wheel a turn and that counts as a prayer. The Ainu, residing in Yezo, the second largest of the 3,850 islands of which the empire is composed, worship the bear and reverence the sun, moon, fire and water.

Dog-raising is practiced in Manchuria much as sheep-farming is carried on elsewhere. A Manchurian bride takes her dowry in dogs, six if she be the daughter of poor parents, more if they be wealthy. The brutes serve as meat for human consumption and their magnificent coats are converted into rugs and garments. From 40,000 to 50,000 are slaughtered every year.

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