Mental Differences Between Chinese and Japanese

By "REFLECTOR"

Inside China proper the sanguine struggle for liberty of a proud, independent and freedom-loving nation rages on. "Somewhere" in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia Chinese guerrillas harass Japanese garrisons....Japanese bombers pour rain of death on to the ground....havoc reigns on the battlefields....deadly combat goes on!

For an average foreign observer the struggle is very well understood. What strikes the eye of the Westerner, however, are the basic differences both physical and mental between the two now opposing sides, which, although they both belong to the yellow race, are more marked than any two variations of the white race, the Englishman and the
Spaniard, for example, or the square-headed German or the olive-tinted Italian.

The contradictions are very great indeed. Among these, one had provided the motive power for Japan to meet the white world on its own ground, in everything from industrialization to baseball, whereas the Chinese remained somewhat behind.

This trait is what psychologists had diagnosed to be an inferiority complex. The Chinese, on the contrary, had shown all the symptoms of a superiority complex.

If we carefully compare the two nations we shall immediately observe that the Japanese give the impression of feeling that there is so much to learn and so little time in which to learn it, whereas the Chinese act as if they are satisfied with themselves, while not hesitating to say so.

When one ventures to walk among the working people of Japan, or the leaders of Japanese economic and social life, he immediately observes an acute interest in every movement. Constant questions are poured forth asking explanations on any subject considered to be out of ordinary. Then, if they feel there is something they can use, one is sure to see them do it or hear them say it when the next occasion arises. Pride never seems to interfere with the accumulation of knowledge.

As a distinct contrast, rarely does one meet a Chinese who would submit to what he regards as humiliation of asking for information. He would probably rather do without.

The different caliber of the Chinese and Japanese military machines is due in no small measure to this contrast.

What impresses itself first in to-day’s Sino-Japanese warfare is the Nipponese ability for teamwork and the Chinese instinct for individualism. If it is something that one person can do, but only with initiative and quick thinking, the Chinese are apt to succeed. Man for man the Chinese are quicker on the trigger of thought and more versatile than the Japanese.

In friendly conversation with a Chinese, one often hears that old complaint regarding the national weakness—lack of unity. This fact alone helped to keep China divided at the very moment unity was most needed. Japanese, however, just naturally seem to gather in groups to fulfill their purposes. Anything that has to do with teamwork is sure to meet their favor. Baseball immediately became their most popular sport. The group requirements of army service are keenly enjoyed. The Japanese, however, have never been able to win any marked distinction in aviation. That is because it is quick individual thinking that is required there. The pilot of a plane doing a stunt or a spin hasn’t the time to take out his book of rules or to confer about it. He has to rely on his personal initiative, and this is what the Japanese lack most.

By contrast, if in addition to individual initiative, China possessed a capacity for teamwork and cooperation, it is difficult to see what could prevent her 500,000,000 people from forging to the front as the world’s leading power. China united would automatically make Japan a second rate power in the Orient. Here we have a fundamental principle of Japanese policy on the Asiatic mainland, which is to encourage local movements in China and to oppose the Central government, irrespective of who heads it. This reveals a co-ordinated strategy that otherwise would seem to be merely a policy of spine and envy.

China, that was once the most civilized country in the world, has a continued sorry tale of keen minds put to the service of narrow individualism. It was always for some personal grudge conceived in jealousy or selfishness that the gates of China were opened to the various invaders that overran the country.

That was how the Mongols came in. That was what enabled the Manchus to pour through the Great Wall. That was how the puppet Manchukuo state was formed. The Japanese themselves could not have gone ahead with this ambitious program, even extending it into N. China and Mongolia without using the natives themselves. The Japanese task was mainly to play off one Chinese against the other.

A Japanese trait closely related to their teamwork is their spirit of regimentation. It is this that makes them admire the Germans most among all the people in the world. It is the French attitude toward life, that the Chinese admire most. They shy from regimentation.

The latter permeates all Japanese life. There is no more curious sight than a gang of Japanese workmen on a railway track. The labourers lift their pick axes at one signal, bang away at the next, advance a step with military precision at the next, then resume all over again methodically and repeated. It is labor’s goose-step. A scene like this would be unthinkable in China. The Chinese would break out laughing. The precision would seem senseless to them, cruel and inhuman.

These differences were carried over into their international relations for centuries. Japan and China always got along together just about as well—or as badly as the Germans and French.

Beside these contrasts, we have the Chinese faculty for ingenuity, while the Japanese are fond of imitating. Although keen Chinese minds thought up such world-revolutionary inventions as printing, gunpowder and the compass, something in their makeup prevented them from ever pursuing them beyond their first, self-evident conclusions and uses.

It was in military matters, however, that the Japanese faculty for selecting the best that the world had to offer has been most energetically pursued, giving the island empire an advantage over the Chinese in warfare right from the start.

A psychological factor however that always entered into every Far-Eastern affair of importance had been that veritable instinct for compromise among the Chinese which
CHINA CARRIES ON

LATEST GOLD RESOURCES TAPPED

Under the full impact of the current Sino-Japanese hostilities, the Chinese Government is leaving no stone unturned to tap the country's latent gold reserves in the northwest and southwest provinces with which to finance her war of national resistance.

According to an unofficial Chinese estimate, if 10,000 ounces of pure gold were made available to the Chinese Government today it is replaced by the grim determination to fight to the victorious end.

Compromise is also a Japanese trait, but trimmed so as to conform with Japanese-ization and their paternalistic form of society. Such paradox as an army coup d'etat that was suppressed in Tokyo following by the adoption of the main planks in the insurrectionist program speaks for itself.

The compromise in that case was to inflict the death sentence on the officers who participated out simultaneously to agree to heel demands. What they asked was the subordination of parliament to a military totalitarian government and an iron fist policy towards China. The public had just expressed the contrary desire at the ballots by an overwhelming vote.

Flavor of religious sacrifices permeates both Chinese and Japanese heroics. It was but natural that the latter though up the tactics of making a living torpedo out of a sailor or piloting an explosive plane at mad speed against the Chinese warship. The memorable plight of the Chinese "doomed battalion" in the autumn days of 1937 still lives in the memory of the world. Refusing to obey the orders of the higher command to retreat after the last stand in Chapel, over two hundred combatants flying national ensign entrenched themselves in the "Joint Savings" godown and with grim tenacity and dare-devil determination withstood the siege of surrounding enemy.

Save a few episodes during the recently terminated civil war in Spain such as siege of Alcazar and Toledo foreign generals would consider this a criminal waste of lives and would court martial the officers responsible. The incidents would be classified as an atrocity. In China and Japan they will raise monuments to it.

Observers of Far-Eastern affairs are often so misled by the fact that the Chinese and the Japanese belong to the same race as to envisage a Sino-Japanese alliance of the future. The psychological differences between the two make the alliance unlikely.

government, China would be able to use that amount for her gold reserves to back up the monetary system. The amount of from $4,500,000 to $4,800,000, and thus strengthen her power of resistance by enabling her to purchase increased shipments of foreign arms and ammunition.

Under the present Chinese Government scheme for increasing available gold reserves, gold mining enterprises have been started in a number of provinces, while gold hoardings among the people are being absorbed by the Ministry of Finance is financing the purchasing of gold from the people, while the Ministry of Economics takes an active hand in developing the mining enterprises.

The Chinese Government banks—the Bank of China, the Bank of Communications, the Central Bank of China and the Farmers Bank of China—have now established a "Four Bank Gold and Silver Purchasing Bureau" the amount to absorb all private gold hoardings. Branches of this bureau have also been set up in other parts of the country.

Following the fall of Canton, prices of gold appreciated nervously, and to cope with the situation the Ministry of Finance on December 12, 1938, promulgated new regulations under which private gold hoardings are to be surrendered to the Chinese Government banks. As an inducement, the price of gold has been fixed at Ch. $200 an ounce of pure gold.

To encourage more people to surrender their gold hoardings, those turning in less than 10 ounces of gold to Chinese Government banks are given a premium of three per cent, those surrendering 10 ounces or above, four per cent, and those turning in 50 ounces or above each time, are given an extra five per cent. premium on the total value of the gold.

The present government realized that the Chinese gold and silver smiths, a six per cent. premium is also granted to them for every 10 ounces of gold turned in to the Chinese Government banks.

Under this inducement, according to Chinese reports, the production of gold among the gold-mining companies has increased by leaps and bounds. Commercial banks have also been purchasing gold metal from private mining interests, including them into gold bars and selling them to the Chinese Government banks at a profit, it was further stated.

The present gold-producing belts are located in Yunnan, Kwetchow, Shanhi, Kansu and other Southwest provinces.

During the past few months, a report states, a heavy stock of gold and gold ornaments have been accumulated in Chungking in Chinese Government bank vaults. The Central Bank of China's branch office in Chungking received a monthly quantity of 500 ounces of pure gold each month prior to November, 1938. This quantity has been greatly increased since then, and it is reported that during the month of January this year the bank had received as much as 1,300 ounces.

It is unofficially estimated that by June this year, the aggregate quantity of gold expected to be collected by Chinese Government banks and branches will reach something like 200,000 ounces, excluding that expected to be turned in by private commercial banks.

With a view to increasing the production of gold, the Ministry of Economics has established a "Gold Mining Bureaus" under which technical and administrative facilities are being extended to all mining enterprises. The National Resources Commission of the Ministry has also been prospecting in a number of provinces and has started gold-mining in Sinkiang province, where another "Gold Mining Bureau" has been set up under its auspices.

A "Gold Mining Prospecting Bureau" has also been established in Tsinghai or Kokonor, while intensive and extensive work has been carried on in northeast Sinkiang, particularly around the district of Chiiufantsih, where gold ores with as high a percentage as 9.9 per cent. are reported to have been obtained. Meanwhile, prospecting is also reported along the Hupeh-Honan borders, particularly along the Yangtze and the Yellow river regions. A number of gold-mining enterprises have also been established in Kwangsi and Kansu provinces.

According to an estimate of a member of the National Resources Commission, China may expect, under the present Chinese Government development scheme, to produce a monthly quantity of 1,000 ounces of pure gold, and it is not impossible to increase the yield to 150,000 ounces per year, he stated. Large numbers of Chinese are now working with mining interests along the Chiling River basin in Sinkiang province, and along the Chinsa River in Sinkiang province. Although very crude methods are being used, the report states, each gold miner may expect to turn in from two to four ounces of gold ores a day. Good wages, ranging from $50 to $60 a month are being paid the miners.

In view of the threatening European situation, the report concludes the Chinese Government is sparing no efforts in turning the latest Chinese gold resources into good account as it has been decided that China would prolong the war of resistance.

NEW YORK, GENEVA ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING REFUGEE STUDENTS

At least 10,000 students, who were unable to obtain support from their homes owing to the war, are being financed