

Asian Relations and Intellectual
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ASIAN RELATIONS AND
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by

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AND INTELLECTUAL CO-OPERATION

Nationalism implies the consciousness which nations acquire, once their individuality has been established, of their genius and of their relationship with fellow-citizens. Internationalism connotes a wider consciousness of human relationship, particularly of the interdependence of the nations of the world and of the exchanges necessary between nation and nation for a healthy corporate life. Inter-Asian relationship may be taken to suggest a narrower consciousness. It would seem as though some of the Asiatic nations were contemplating the formation of a solid block against other nations, giving cause for alarm in as much as between group and group disputes may arise and flare up to flames. As, however, there is no intention to form separate groups and as, it is understood, the Conference is intended to exchange ideas regarding the common problems which countries in Asia must face to promote in the first instance better understanding and co-operation among people who could be brought together owing to social homogeneity and cultural affinities, as the first step towards the attainment of the end of internationalism, namely, common humanity, mutual understanding, mutual exchanges, the Conference will be hailed as a step in the right direction towards a new order of better association of peoples and of better social organisation and co-operation. The word Internationalism itself implies the existence of different nations functioning together. It implies also that every common activity, whether social, religious, intellectual or political, for promoting international good-will, must take the form and go through the stage of national expression, reconciling the common international purpose with what is deep-rooted in national temperament and tradition.

Intellectual Co-operation.

International harmony and goodwill can only be secured through fellowship of learning and intellectual operation of peoples, firstly at home and then in relation to other countries. Let us have a clear conception of the meaning of the expression 'Intellectual co-operation'. Co-operation is a stronger expression than 'Collaboration'. It implies not merely concerted effort for the promotion of common interests or objects but also a predisposition of the mind and spirit towards a common ideal, a closer agreement and a more sustained effort to achieve the ideal. The aim of intellectual and cultural co-operation should

merely the sort of collective effort and search is generally associated with conferences of nations for determining the political status or territorial rights of different nations or for other material objects such as economic and financial organisation, transport organisation, labour organisation or health organisation, but also association of the best minds of different countries for the realisation of spiritual values, peace, refinement, harmony and order in intellectual and cultural pursuits. When the League of Nations embarked on its mission of world peace, it found that not only the material life of Europe but also its intellectual life was seriously disorganised. It therefore set up a machinery for intellectual co-operation and through its International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation and several National Committees did considerable exploratory work, laid the foundations of a world organisation for strengthening intellectual relations among nations and for improving working conditions throughout the world. It also evolved special methods for building up a spirit of friendliness among those who were in a position to influence the minds of their contemporaries.

Machinery of Work

UNESCO now contemplates doing similar work on a wider footing. It will have greater chances of success if, unlike the League of Nations, it does not forget that it is a world organisation and devotes more attention to Asian countries than to European countries where many opportunities for intellectual co-operation already exist. Organisations such as the Inter-Asian Relations Conference can further their objects and achieve much in the light of the experience gained of the work of the League's Committee and of the Paris Institute of Intellectual Co-operation worked as its executive. The Conference can set up with difficulty, and with greater chances of success than the League was able to do, an efficient machinery to carry out constructive work for strengthening the ties of friendship between Asiatic peoples and promoting close cultural operation between them.

There might be two Central Committees: (1) Inter-Asian Committee on Educational Co-operation, (2) Inter-Committee on Cultural Co-operation. There should also be National Committees associated with each of the two Committees to further their objects.

There should, moreover, be a central Institute, working as the Executive of the Committees and co-ordinating their activities.

EDUCATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Advice

Educational institutions in several countries in Asia need practical expert advice to put primary, secondary and higher education on a sound footing consistent with the needs of each country. It should be the mission of the Educational Committee to make expert advice available to any country applying for assistance to reorganize and reform its system of education.

Equivalence of University Degrees:

Provision of facilities for students to pursue their studies, without breaking their university course, in institutions outside their own countries is obviously desirable both for the promotion of higher studies as well as for the promotion of international understanding. Contacts should, therefore, be established by the university authorities and meetings of representatives of different universities should be arranged for. Considerable differences exist between types of educational institutions and the place assigned to them in different national systems of education and between the educational standards and levels in different countries. Collaboration between the administrative officers concerned would lead to adjustments mutually beneficial and framing of regulations for equivalence of university degrees.

Interchange of Teachers and Students.

A good deal of useful work can also be attempted concerning exchange of professors and students, travel, differences in organisation, the cost of living for students and the conditions or admission to the universities. Other questions such as that of unemployment might also be taken up with a view to creating employment, distributing the vacancies, placing unemployed students in countries able to absorb them and establishing university statistical, and employment bureau. Arrangements may be made for the collection of information concerning the different national systems of education, for the unification of scientific and archaeological nomenclature, for the protection of copyright of authors, for the publication of scientific publications in less known languages, for the institution of international scholarships for students and for an organisation for giving financial aid to intellectuals, for the development of popular arts, and last, but not the least, for Inter-Asian Convention on Archaeological Research.

ferences

Periodical Inter-Asian Educational Conferences should be arranged for with a view to providing a firm basis for corporate action. There should be a comparison of methods followed at different places and unification of efforts. Joint studies, joint translations, joint publications and joint travel would be greatly beneficial. Interchange of teachers and students would also be helpful.

Study of International Relationship

Training of youth as well as adults in international relationship should be one of the principle objects of the national system of education in each country. The main task of the Committee on Educational Co-operation should be to move each country to encourage through its educational institutions studies in international relation and to set up, wherever necessary, special organisations for supplementing the work of educational institutions and for intensive effort in that direction. It should also ensure constant co-operation and co-ordination of effort between all existing organisations as well as the new organisations that may be set up for the purpose.

No opportunity should be lost to impress on teachers that at no time in human history the teachers of the world were placed under so heavy an obligation as they are to-day to seize every opportunity and to do everything possible to promote international fellowship and co-operation. In the past the efforts of the teacher were directed generally towards the development of the student's personality and his sense of citizenship and public usefulness. Cultivation of world citizenship received little attention. After the awakening brought about by the War of 1914-18 inter-dependence came to be better realised as an important factor in the formation of national policy and programme. But the lesson was soon forgotten and the foundations on which the structure of world peace were to be built were rudely shattered. Care should be taken to see that the peace is not lost again. It is not merely the work of politicians and statesmen. It is the work of the peoples of the world. People everywhere should insist on all governmental policies and actions being based on the principle of international goodwill and co-operation. In the first instance, however, they need to be educated everywhere so that they can make this demand with no uncertain voice.

Co-operation of Universities.

In the year 1925 a proposal was put forward for the establishment of an International University. It did not seem practicable. The object underlying the proposal may, however, be attained by an efficient system of closer contacts and co-operation.

There should be a list of institutions in different countries working for peace through education and for promoting studies in international relationship. Periodical conferences should also be held with the special object of promoting co-operation between such institutions. That Universities should attempt to remove misunderstandings between nations by means of studies in the politico-economic and moral conditions in other countries was a recommendation made by the Committee on Inter-national Intellectual Co-operation in the year 1923. This recommendation was embodied in a resolution on the question of teaching of politics. If they could hold periodically an International studies Conference, they would give a great impetus to these studies.

Scientific Study of Man

Close co-operation of such organisations and of the Universities of the World is especially and essentially needed in the promotion of the study of the common cultural heritage of man and the cultural similarities and dissimilarities of different people. As prerequisite to that study one should have a knowledge of the life-mode of mankind. The proper study of mankind is man, said the poet. To-day the world realises more vividly than ever before the need to interpret these words, whether the poet meant it or not in the anthropological sense. The sooner the youth of each country are introduced to the scientific study of man in his racial aspect, the sooner the fallacious theories propounded by some of the early anthropologists based on their study of races according to their physical peculiarities are eradicated, fallacies which raised impenetrable barriers between men of different races, the sooner people learn that there is only one species of man the world over and that the so-called innate differences between peoples are only skin-deep, the greater the hope for the cure of race-hysteria. Differences in hygienic, economic, educational and ethical standards prevailing among different peoples arise from passing phases. To ascribe them to innate and immutable racial characteristics is to ignore the environmental factor. No scheme of national education can afford

to ignore the need of such studies. Co-ordination of the effort of the Universities in the different countries in the East for the promotion of research in this subject will yield a very rich harvest.

CULTURAL CO-OPERATION

Co-ordination of Libraries

Formulation of a scheme for the establishment of regular collaboration between the libraries and museums of the different countries is an activity common to the proposed Committee on Cultural Co-operation and the Committee on Educational Co-operation. The League of Nations International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation did much valuable work in that direction. The idea of promoting library facilities for the different nations of Europe first gave rise to some quarters to a project for a single international library with a complete outfit of material on every branch of learning. After careful scrutiny the project passed through a modification from centralization to organised co-operation. It was found, in consultation with a group of library experts representing some of the greatest libraries, that international co-operation could only proceed on the basis of effective organisation within individual countries and that this helped the levelling-up of national library systems to the standards of the most advanced countries. National centres to receive and transmit demands for books from abroad came into existence. Side by side with the promotion of contact between national library centres there was the development of international organisation amongst librarians. In 1929 an International Federation of Library Associations was formed and there was soon a network of co-operation between national institutions and the members of the profession concerned with them.

Collaboration between Museums

Similar development took place in regard to museums. As the result of the work of the Art and Letters Sub-Committee and of the Artistic Relations Section of the Paris Institute, an International Museum Office was set on foot in 1926 with a Governing Body consisting of members chosen by invitation from different countries. Its task was to promote and establish regular collaboration between the different museums of the world. Under its auspices exhibitions were organised

and conferences of experts were held on the use of museums for education and other more technical problems. In 1935 a meeting was called for the purpose of co-ordinating the museums. Among the activities in that direction may be mentioned the election of an International Commission on Historical Monuments and the International Centre for Institutes of Archaeology and History of Art. Under the auspices of this Centre the ground was prepared for historical and technical knowledge of the works housed in museums and training was provided for specialised historians who worked on excavation and later taught in universities.

Valuable work may be accomplished on similar lines for the promotion of similar facilities for studies and research at different centres of learning in Asia. A beginning may at least be made to harmonize the demand for supply of books, specimens, manuscripts and other material for research by the exchange of surplus books, magazines and specimens or by mutual arrangement for loan of material, where there is no surplus. Arrangements should be made for supply of Government publications by the Governments of different countries to the central or university library of each country. Exhibitions of books, manuscripts, paintings, drawings etc. be arranged for whenever and wherever feasible. Each country may be asked to maintain a section in its central library of costly, rare and out of print books on cultural subjects, manuscripts, photostatic copies of historical records etc. and arrangements may be made to inform the libraries of other countries of additions made to the collection from time to time.

Co-ordination of Bibliography

A leaf may also be taken from the record of the League's Committees on Intellectual Co-operation in respect of Bibliography to which the International Committee paid considerable attention. Physics, social and economic science, Graeco-Roman antiquity, biology, and general linguistic studies, all formed the subject of deliberation by committees of experts. Among activities in this direction may be mentioned:-

- (1) Code of Abbreviations of titles of Periodicals
- (2) Bibliographies.

Translations of Literary Works

Another important task that lies ahead is to bring within the reach of people of different countries outstanding

books and publications of different countries. Translations of important literary works are always welcome to readers unable to understand them in the language in which they are written. They are all the more desirable in the case of languages with a limited range. Concerted effort and close collaboration are necessary to get important works in each language translated into other languages. A vast field of useful and fruitful work lies before the Inter-Asian Relations Conference in this direction and it would be well to enlist the co-operation of different Universities and learned Societies such as the B.B.R.A. Society, the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, the Cama Oriental Institute, the P.E.N., the Iran Society and the recently established Indian Institute for Educational and Cultural Co-operation for the purpose.