

Digitized by srujanika@gmail.com
www.srujanika@gmail.com

14 = 2.

The Morning Star

Friday, April 20, 1945

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

With the death of President Roosevelt last Thursday there has passed away not only a great figure in American history but a staunch friend of the common man and a most steadfast champion of Democracy. The august head of an enlightened "Government of the people, by the people and for the people," he epitomised the feelings and aspirations of one hundred and thirty millions of the citizens of the U. S., for four consecutive terms, a record unsurpassed in the history of America because no other President had served the United States for more than two terms.

The Presidency of America is in many respects unlike any other political office in the world. "No one can examine American Presidency" says Professor Laski "without being impressed by its many-sidedness. The range of the President's function is enormous. He is the ceremonial head of the State. He is the vital source of legislative suggestion. To combine all these with the continuous need to be at once the representative man of the nation and the leader of his political party is clearly a call upon the energies of any single man unsurpassed by the exigencies of any other political office in the world." That President Roosevelt had grown grey in this office is an indication at once of his energy and the great confidence the people placed on him.

The dauntless leader of a people determined to fight to the end, no man had the cause of America closer to his heart. Upholding Lincoln's expressed opinion against "Swapping horses in mid-stream," he had the courage of his convictions to tell the people during the elections that a change of Presidency during the War was not in their interests. These were the actual words he used "I am running to win this war; I am running to win the peace, I am running to ensure full employment and abundant life for every American after the War. I am doing all this because quite honestly, I cannot see any one better qualified to do it." His words did not fall on deaf ears. Despite the retort of his opponent that while the President was an "indispensable man," he (Dewey) was "the inevitable man," the Americans went to the polls and re-elected the same person who has been occupying the White House since 1933. The Republican rival was defeated with a clear margin of about two and a half million votes.

Men endowed with great power sometimes lose touch with their fellows and are forgetful of the prime essentials of humanity. But it should be said to the undying credit of the President that he has been able to "walk with kings—nor lose the common touch." From that famous White House in Washington he has wielded a power such has been given to few men but he wielded it for the benefit of all mankind. All his principal speeches are illumined by his belief in the people and by his sympathetic understanding of them. His most memorable speech was the one in which he defined the Four Essential Freedoms—a speech worth recalling at this stage of our struggle:

"In the future days which we seek to make secure, we look for-

ward to a world founded upon four essential freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want which means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear which means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbour, everywhere in the world. That is no vision of a distant Millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation." Here is the sincere and impassioned voice of one who loved his fellowmen, of one who was at once a Practical Man, and a Visionary. It is particularly grievous that President Roosevelt has not lived to see the end of the struggle for freedom which has entered its last lap and to see the new world based on his Four Freedoms shaped at San Francisco. But the greatest tribute to his memory will be to continue the work of designing such a world.

THE UNHAPPIEST WOMEN IN THE WORLD

During the three years in which my husband was Polish Minister to Japan, I tried to understand Japanese women. These graceful, often pretty women, resembling butterflies in their brilliant kimonos, looked always happy. They spoke of everything, whether it was flowers or disaster, with the same impenetrable smile. Could it be possible, I thought, that they had no troubles? writes an American woman in the New York *Saturday Evening Post*.

But little by little I began to see that the smile masked the whole range of the emotions. To the Japanese woman—who, I soon discovered, is among the unhappiest in the world—the highest achievement is to bear every sorrow and misfortune with a smile.

From her earliest moments, the Japanese girl is trained in this bright and decorative surface happiness. Intended as either the servant or pretty toy of men, she is bent to their tastes from the start. Each movement of the head or hand is artificial, but is learned so early in life that it becomes second nature. I have seen little girls of five so well trained that their poses and smiles have the timelessness of an old art.

The Japanese man requires that his wife shall know family duties, etiquette and flower arrangement, but he does not want her to be intelligent. Above all, he wants unquestioning obedience, so a girl's entire education impresses on her the fact that she is an inferior being, a piece of property with no rights whatever of her own.

When married

When she marries—and marriage is her only career unless she becomes a geisha—the woman has no legal status. She cannot divorce her husband, but he can divorce her at will by sending her back to her family. "Putting away the woman" is the legal phrase. If she is "put away" because she is childless—one of the most frequent causes of divorce—she is a social outcast.

Whether wealthy or poor, the Japanese wife is always a slave. She is expected to arise in the morning and look to her husband. When the husband comes home late from a gay party, she is

obliged to greet him, kneeling humbly on the threshold. She may never even look displeased. Even in the wealthiest families, the wife serves her husband's breakfast and scrubs him in the bath. She may not sit down on a cushion in his presence—and Japanese floors are like ice in winter. When walking with him, she always follows at a certain distance, carrying his bundles.

On one of our excursions into the mountains I saw a typical example of this relationship. We were a group of Europeans and one Japanese couple. The cold was intense. My husband wrapped me in his coat, and so did the others, but the Japanese husband took not the slightest notice of his shivering wife. She took her own shawl from her shoulders and put it around her husband's neck. He did not even say "Thank you."

After Twelve

Ever the Japanese woman's pleasure in her children is restricted, because, according to law, they belong to her husband. Ambassador Kuru, the special envoy to Washington at the outbreak of the present war, once told me that on his 12th birthday his mother dressed him in his best kimono and led him to a little altar.

"Until this day," she said, "I have cared for you and guided your footsteps. Now you are 12 years old and you must think for yourself. You know what you owe to your country, to your family and to yourself. If you dishonour anyone of them, you know what you must do." With these words, she bowed low and held out to him the harakiri dagger on a tray.

Kuru told the story reverently, totally unaware of its implications. For 12 years the Japanese mother is permitted to guide her child, but from the moment he approaches maturity, she is of no further consequence. It offends the dignity of his manhood to pay a compliment to any woman, held her coat or bag, show her the slightest courtesy.

Once a Japanese gentleman tried to make me some little compliment through an interpreter. The interpreter, as if in the throes of mortal pain, covered his face. He finally managed to come out with it, but he could not help expressing his disapproval of his master's unseemly behavior.

The Japanese world belongs so completely to man that the wife has no place in it except to serve and bear children. Even during child-birth, etiquette permits no anesthetic and forbids her to utter a sound.

The only woman who has the slightest degree of freedom is the geisha. It is an old custom for a Japanese man to take a geisha or concubine, even immediately after his marriage. He makes her his comrade, discusses his business with her and admits her to a companionship from which his wife is generally excluded. Not so long ago, the concubines occupied one wing of the house, and the wife the

other. Nowadays the geisha is not maintained so openly, but the wife must accept her existence and is forced to adopt her children.

The lucky Japanese wife is the one who lives abroad, where the husband is compelled to give her a certain freedom. She very soon becomes accustomed to it, and is desperately unhappy when she returns to the Japanese way of life.

The only pleasure to which a Japanese wife can look forward is the satisfaction of becoming a mother-in-law. When she finally acquires a slave in the person of her daughter-in-law, she, too, often shows no pity, making the girl the scapegoat of her resentment against the world. I remember a young friend of mine, who looked always so pale and exhausted that I warned her to take care of herself.

"Oh, I'm not sick," she said. "It's just that I don't get enough sleep. My mother-in-law wakes me several times each night to give her a massage, and at six in the morning I must bring her breakfast." In Japan, massages are so cheap that anyone can afford them, so I saw that this was just another case of the legalized traditional sadism of the Japanese.

The Japanese woman's only sure release is suicide, and even in this final, desperate act she cannot assert free will. Only certain forms of suicide are a woman's privilege. She may drown herself or leap into a volcano, but she is not worthy to commit harakiri and if she wishes to have the honor of dying with her husband she must obtain his permission.

As I learned these things, I began to understand why the graceful, smiling Japanese women were the unhappiest I had ever known. The reason is summed up neatly in a sentence from an amazing old Japanese book of instructions for diplomats who are about to meet strange customs in foreign lands. "Courtesy and consideration for women," it warns, "are not looked upon by foreigners as a degradation for a man; on the contrary, they are obligatory."

The Sunday Herald.

NORTHERN PROVINCE TEACHERS' PROVIDENT SOCIETY, LIMITED.

Special Concession to teachers over 30 years. Men under 40 and women under 35 can become members till 31st May, 1945.

"Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n."

Further particulars or Application Forms can be obtained from:

S. P. Rasiah.

Hony. Secy., N. P. T. P. Society Ltd. Saras Anandha Giri, Vannarponnai.

13-8.

FOR SALE

A new spiring double bullock cart. Rs 800 or nearest offer.

Miss P. KANDIAEPILLAI, Alaveddy South. Alaveddy.

15-1.

THE SHOP FOR THE BEST BOOKS

General and Regional Geography by Unstead and Taylor.
Geography of Ceylon by E. K. Cook.
Introduction to Tropical Botany by M. J. Legon.
Light and Sound by Stewart.
Heat, Light, Sound and Magnetism and Electricity by Mackenzie.
A Class Book of Physical Chemistry by Lawry and Sagden.
Introduction to organic Chemistry by E. J. Holmyard.
Higher Algebra by Hall and Knight.
Pitman's Shorthand New Era Edition.

THE C. L. S. BOOK SHOP,
First Cross Street, Jaffna.

Digitized by Nodhan Foundation.

Copyright © 2013 Nodhan Foundation.

Printed and published for the American Ceylon Mission by Mr. V. Joseph Ariyasingham, residing at Telipalai, at the American Ceylon Mission Press, Telipalai.