

**ZIGZAGGING IN
THE
ORIENT, 1921-22**

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Zigzagging in the Orient, 1921-22 by Fred L. Gray

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FRED L. GRAY

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Zigzagging in the Orient

1921-22

FRED L. GRAY

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by

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Secretary's Office

of

1-17-1923

GUIDE POSTS ALONG THE WAY

	Page
SOME JAPANESE SNAPSHOTS	9
JAPAN, SEEN FROM KOREA (THE "CHOSEN")..	17
CHAOTIC CHINA	22
JAVA—THE GARDEN OF THE EAST.....	31
THE CROSSROADS OF THE EASTERN SEAS	42
BEWITCHING BURMA.....	52
INDIA—THE INDESCRIBABLE	63
DELHI—INDIA'S NEW-OLD CAPITAL.....	73
SOME TYPICAL NATIVE STATES—.....	
JAIPUR	82
UDAIPUR	86
BARODA	92
RURAL INDIA, NATIVE TRAVEL AND THE RAIL- WAYS	98
CITIES AND TEMPLES OF THE SOUTH.....	106
THE UNCANNY SIDE OF INDIA	110
CAPTIVATING CEYLON.....	118
"MAHATMA" GANDHI—DEMI-GOD OR DEMA- GOGUE?	128
LATER DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NON-COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT.....	143
HOME-COMING RUMINATIONS	146

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HOW IT HAPPENED

BEFORE leaving on a "Round the World" tour, last October, I recklessly promised a number of friends to write them of our "impressions" as we journeyed along. How many another frail, weak human has likewise gone astray!

Very soon it became evident that to carry out this rash promise would leave no time to get impressions. So once or twice a month a general and more formal letter was sent home with instructions that typewritten copies be made for those who were expecting to hear from us.

There my "li'ry" adventures would doubtless have ended had not the editor of *The Minneapolis Journal* happened to see parts of the story and begun running them in his Sunday issues. This unlooked-for publicity proved my undoing. So many of my friends, who missed one or more of the installments, have asked for copies, and so many others have asked for the whole series, that I have been forced to take refuge in the print shop!

Many a globe-trotter before now has inflicted a "privately circulated" volume of travel on his friends, but I submit that none of the tribe ever drummed up a more plausible excuse for the offense than the one here given. Anyhow, here are the letters—the whole batch of them—and with them my promise to sin no more.

All that can be said for these rambling sketches is that they represent a sincere attempt to make the folks "back home" see some of the strange things on the other side of the

Pacific just as the casual traveler sees them, rather than as a professional writer or research student might portray them. And all that I really hope for, in getting them together in this shape, is that they may tempt some good friend of mine to fare forth and see the wonders of the Orient for himself.

F. L. G.

*Minneapolis, Minnesota.
September 1, 1922.*

SOME JAPANESE SNAPSHOTS

November 1921

WE had been accustomed to think of Japan as a land which had been catapulted out of the tenth century into the nineteenth, a land which within the memory of many now living had suddenly abandoned the ways of the East for those of the West. We were aware that both industrially and politically its people had begun to take rank in the modern world and we knew that their naval and military strength had made them a force to be reckoned with everywhere. Hence we were scarcely prepared to find so much of the old Japan, the Japan of our picture-book days, still in evidence on every hand.

The powers that be in this bewildering country are unmistakably modern. Public officials and those who direct the government owned railways as well as the postal, telegraph and telephone services, apparently do much the same things and in much the same ways that similar officials do the world over. Those engaged in "big business" impress one as being fully abreast of the times. But if outward appearances count for anything the rank and file of the population still live in the past. They cling tenaciously to their Oriental traditions, customs and garb.

Automobiles, trolley cars, modern factories, European dress and American movies are not novelties in Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka and other large cities. Yet even in such commercial centers, jinrikshas vastly outnumber flivvers and flowing kimonos are still far more

Some Japanese Snapshots

popular than coats and vests, while the occasional sound of squeaking shoe leather is drowned in the clatter of wooden clogs.

Here and there a steel frame structure audaciously punctures the sky line, but as likely as not its next door neighbor is a Buddhist temple or a Shinto shrine, continuing serenely as a going concern in its ancient location. The occasional European hotel or cafe cuts a lonely and incongruous figure in the midst of a wilderness of tea-houses where apparently 99 per cent of the population still squat on their haunches, eating rice concoctions with chop-sticks, precisely as their ancestors have done for ages.

In Tokyo there is a great department store which would do credit to any American city, yet the throngs that patronize it leave their clogs at the door and shuffle in on clean, noiseless sandals, just as they do when entering a temple, while the salespeople who wait on them add up purchases and compute change with the help of an antiquated Chinese counting board. To see the crowds that pack this store one might imagine it had a monopoly of Tokyo's retail trade, but as a matter of fact the vast majority of the 2,500,000 people of the city continue to buy at the little toy-like shops which for centuries have lined its narrow streets.

The old order is still overwhelmingly in evidence, even in these metropolitan cities, and when one goes to the smaller towns of the interior there is scarcely anything, save the railway and its telegraph and mail accompaniments, which even remotely suggests the world we know today. In these latter places, European