

FUGUESASHI - JAPANESE SPECIALITY

The Japanese cuisine is different from any other cuisine in the world. Its secret lies in the careful choice of products, the beauty of serving and the attitude towards product in whole. Only the best gifts of the land and water deserve being served and the main aim of the cooker is preserving its initial characteristics. The main rule of the Japanese cuisine is as follows. Do not create, but find and discover. Nobody can compete with the things, created by nature indeed. Any glut, concerning the nature of the product is akin to barbarity.

In the Japanese cuisine there is the absolutely special delicacy - fuguesashi - the dish made of Fugue. Fuguesashi is a very beautiful and unique dish. It is cooked using the small fish (needle belly; diodont or fakh). Nacreous peaces of Fugue, fried or fresh, are laid like leaves on a round plate and eaten, throwing the peaces to the ponzue mix (vinegar sauce), asatsuki (onion), momidji-oroshi (grated daikon radish) and red pepper.

Muscles, liver and caviar contain the poison of nervously-paralytic action, which 275 times toxic than cyanic - tetrodotocsyn. Only 1 mm of tetrodotocsyn is the fatal doze for a person. One little fish has poison which kills 30-40 people. An effective antidote against the Fugue's poison doesn't exist. By the way, the main components of the "zombie's powder" - dried and used up Fugue.

Nowadays the cooks who prepare this delicious and expensive dish (250 or 750 US dollars for a kilo) are graduated the special school to receive the license for opening a special restaurant. It's written that in a case of client's death from a poisoning, a cook makes hara-kiri.

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EAST IS EAST AND WEST IS WEST

“Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,” said Rudyard Kipling at the turn of last century. But the day they meet, it shall surely be peace on earth.

Every meeting of strangers is accompanied by misunderstanding and is liable to end up in clashes. It is out of such clashes that the spark of truth appears. The clash of civilization is therefore a historical necessity not a thing to be avoided if the world is going to unite.

What does the East really symbolize in our world? What is the Eastern mind made of? How does an oriental see the world? The Eastern mind had down through the centuries been largely given to mysticism establishing a closer tie with a single powerful and zealous divinity. It has all the time been the producer of seers, sages, visionaries, divines, prophets and messengers of God.

Believing in an absolute God with an absolute message had however its drawbacks. The most ruthless tyrants on earth lived in the East. Remember Cambises and Nebuchadnezzar. No democracy had the chance to grow in such circumstances. The East had to wait for the epiphany of less bloody gods to start imitating them.

Besides, Eastern mentality is subtle, mostly asymmetrical, and mysterious. Such frame of mind has in the past produced mystics and saints who claimed to have a direct knowledge of God. Most encapsulated their gods in their books and rituals and fought those who considered unenlightened, creating blind fanaticism in the process accompanied by intolerance and injustice.

Three times the East knocked on the door of the West to bring it to its fold: When Darius King of the Persians tried to crush the Greeks. When the Moors invaded Spain and tried to proceed to France and lastly when the Turks stood at the gates of Vienna. It is good the attempts failed as they did. The world was not ready for such a meeting of civilizations. The forces of history knew better than to proceed with an untimely world summit.

What would have happened if the three attempts had succeeded? Would we have a Columbus, a Newton or a Shakespeare as we know them today? Who knows, maybe we would have fared much better. Now let's turn to the West (represented by Europe) What does the West really symbolize in our world? What is the Western mind made of? How does a Western see his world? The Western mind began to separate from the East with the advent of Greek civilization. While the Eastern tried to find the laws of God and struggled to make sense of His unreachable wisdom, the Greek thinker focused his mind on explaining physical phenomena and searched to find the physical laws of creation and the universe.

The East's zealous and no-nonsense God was replaced by the Greek's more reason-friendly and tolerant Olympian gods. The Greek gods loved philosophy and the arts, and were so 'democratic' that they did not find it degrading to come down from their thrones and intermingle with the common people. Believing in such demigods had however its drawbacks. It made mockery of divinity and led to all kinds of immorality that abased man to the level of the beasts of the field. With their minds given more to logical thinking than spiritual contemplation, the Greeks set the paths of materialism.

When the West colonized the East, the clash of civilization did not take place. Asians either played dead or fought Western values through apathy. But the West overstayed its welcome and had to be kicked out. Western influence however had a longer role to play. The neocolonial battle kept on raging in the hearts and minds of the Oriental. With Islam used as ideology, the war took a different dimension.

The two cultural blocks are now finally talking to each other. The time is ripe now to talk, for man has come of age. Soon will the two cultural blocks merge into one and live in mutual respect and cooperation for the benefit of civilized world. Some Easterners keep talking about destroying the West and its hedonistic and materialistic values, and replace it with Eastern values. No way. This is not the era of the Crusades. The Hitlers and Sadams of this world had tied their worst and

failed. It is the time for us to put greed and our fanaticism aside and give world peace a chance.

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WHAT IS ENGLISH HUMOUR

Humour is the ability or quality of people, objects, or situations to evoke feelings of amusement in other people. The sense of humour is inherent in the human race. Our life would be much harder without it.

However, some people think that “there is no humour in England”, the English being too serious; but we cannot agree with this statement. The English love irony and expect others to appreciate it too.

We can find humorous passages in many English books. In fact the tradition of English humour dates at least from the Middle Ages. In his *Canterbury Tales* Geoffrey Chaucer portrays a number of characters in an amusing way. The most widely read of the Victorian novelist is Charles Dickens, who created a host of comic characters; some of them are grotesque repugnant, while the others are portrayed with gentle humour. Lewis Carroll also contributed a lot to the “literary of nonsense”. The style of O. Henry is marked by irony, unexpected similes, and periphrases. “Modern” humour somewhat differs from that of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Roald Dahl is noticed for his black humour.

The English are all too often disappointed as foreigners take umbrage at what appears to them to be unbearable rudeness.

Since the English never say what they mean, often the exact opposite, and tend towards reticence and understatement, their humour is partly based on an exaggeration of this facet of their own character.