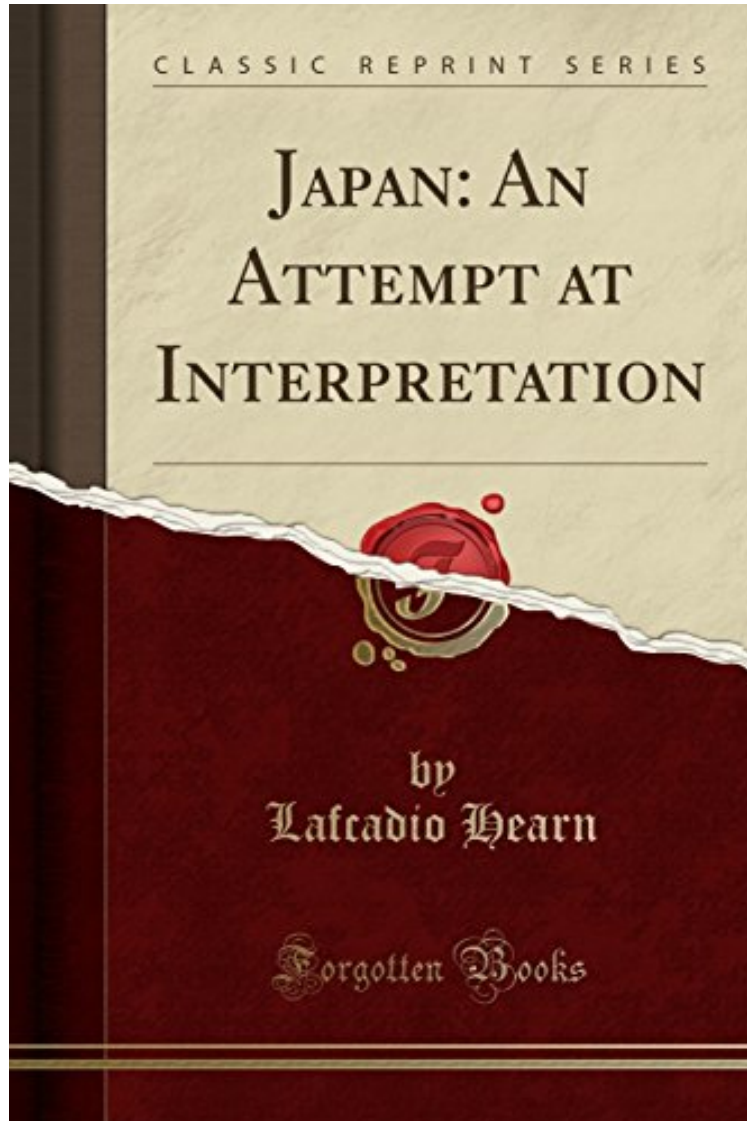


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Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation (Classic Reprint)

Lafcadio Hearn

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Lafcadio Hearn : Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation (Classic Reprint) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation (Classic Reprint):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Insightful but littered with 19th century xenophobiaBy Asdf Asdf
AsdfHe's a bit of an unapologetic racist and the addendum including a letter from Herbert Spencer, the father of Sociology, to the Japanese government should put to rest any debate about his support of Eugenics.Regarding interracial marriage Spencer makes it clear he considers Asians and Caucasians not just different races but different

species: "if you mix the constitution of two widely divergent varieties which have severally become adapted to widely divergent modes of life, you get a constitution which is adapted to the mode of life of neither a constitution which will not work properly" Otherwise, he does have some remarkable insights about the form and nature in which Japanese subscribed to Shinto and Buddhism. At times he's almost prophetically predicting WWII. Unlike even most modern scholars, he's also intelligent enough to notice that Shinto is much broader than the minority elements dedicated to the imperial line. I can't decide if his latent racism is a product of the times or an internal desire to not come off as too appreciative of Japanese culture by juxtaposing his obvious obsession with consistently xenophobic remarks. After the first few chapters one may start to feel that Lafcadio doth protest the superiority of Europeans too much. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. More than just an attempt at interpretation By Elisa M. J. Garza Having been recently in Japan, I read this book while on my trip and after it and I found a lot of truth in Hearn's study of Japanese society. The author relies on the famous Herbert Spencer to explain the sociological aspect of the Japanese and gives a sincere and knowledgeable interpretation of the religious, social, political, and economic reality of these amazing islanders. The most surprising thing is that this book was written at the beginning of the 20th century and yet you still see the same wonderful traits in Japanese society today. There is an extremely interesting letter in the Appendix of this book; a letter written by Herbert Spencer to a policy maker in Japan, where Spencer strongly advises against the Japanese mixing with other races (and, meanwhile, venting his own adamant opposition to interracial relationships in general). Spencer even adds at the end a caution against these views of him ever getting out. You won't want to miss it. I have read other works by Lafcadio Hearn on Japan but I think this one comes closest to explaining the Japanese. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An amazing work, with profound insights By Ruben Simons I was browsing gutenberg.org and wanted to find a few books about Japan to read. I found three excellent titles of which Lafcadio Hearn's "Japan: An attempt at interpretation" was one (the other books were Tales of Japan and Bushido). This book really surprised me, I thought it would be the most tedious of the three but it turned out to be the best and most insightful. In my opinion Lafcadio was a very modern thinker and understood the Japan of a century ago like no other (of course viewed from a western perspective). Highly recommended.

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About the Author Hearn (1850-1904) was born in Levkas, Greece, as the son of Greek and British parents. In 1869 he went to the United States and did various work, finally as a journalist. In 1890 he came to Japan and taught English in Japanese schools, and became a Japanese citizen under the name of Koizumi Yakuma. He died in Tokyo.