

11 *State and Society in Modern Japan*

THE STATE

Immediately after Emperor Meiji had ended the Shogunate, he ordered the drafting of a Japanese constitution. After many deliberations, the work was finally approved and promulgated in 1889. Politically minded observers from the West wondered how the absolutist religious ideology of Shinto could be reconciled with a parliamentary constitution. Any constitutional government, if it is to have meaning, must recognize certain rights of the people and thus, to a degree, be democratic. The Japanese state, however, never gave up its adherence to the principles inherent in Shinto and nipped in the bud, through its police, the shy beginnings of democratic trends.

Is the Japanese constitution compatible with Shinto? Baron Hozumi, late president of the all-important Privy Council and one of Japan's leading jurists, succeeded best in answering this delicate question:

The Emperor holds the sovereign power, not as his own inherent right, but as inheritance from his Divine Ancestor. The government is, therefore, *theocratical*.

The Emperor rules over the country as the supreme head of the vast family of the Japanese nation. The government is, therefore, *patriarchal*. The Emperor exercises the sovereign power according to the Constitution, which is based on the most advanced principles of modern constitutionalism. The government is, therefore, *constitutional*.

In other words, the fundamental principle of the Japanese government is *theocratico-patriarchal constitutionalism*.³

This is a fair enough statement. The Japanese Constitution may well be called "autocratic" and thus said not to change the old order fundamentally. The restoration was hardly more than a revolution of forms. The etiquette of the deteriorated Shogunate was abolished; in its place a modernized court made its appearance.

³ Baron Hozumi, *Ancestor-Worship and Japanese Law*, Tokyo, 1901, pp. 87-88. Quoted by Tatsuji Takeuchi, *War and Diplomacy in the Japanese Empire*, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1935, p. 9.

To be sure, officially, the Meiji regime broke with the ancient feudal tradition, but an objective appraisal of contemporary Japanese society leads to the inevitable conclusion that the social structure has changed little as compared with previous periods. Just as the constitution did not devalue the divinity of the emperors, so the elimination of the outer structure of feudalism did not uproot the spirit of Japanese society. The powerful impact of Western ideas remained limited to techniques and formalities. The average Japanese businessman may spend his working day dressed in Western clothes but he will change immediately into a Japanese kimono upon returning home; this act is symbolic of his attachment to the traditional ways of Japan. In the same way, the Japanese constitution is but a hollow and formalistic imitation of Western constitutionalism in all those parts which make Japan appear a modern nation. She has indeed progressed technologically, but her spirit has never changed.

The first article of the opening chapter of the Japanese constitution says:

The Empire of Japan shall be reigned over and governed by a line of emperors unbroken for ages eternal.

The fourth article of the same chapter supplements:

The Emperor is the head of the Empire, combining in Himself the rights of sovereignty, and exercises them, according to the provisions of the present Constitution.

What are these provisions? The emperor exercises legislative power with the consent of the Imperial Diet. The laws to be accepted by the Diet are the work of the cabinet of ministers. The ministers are the advisors and immediate servants of the crown, and would never suggest a law which is not acceptable to the emperor. The Diet, knowing this, cannot refuse its consent without appearing unpatriotic and blasphemous.

When the Diet is not sitting, the emperor can promulgate ordinances instead of laws, which have to be subsequently approved by the Diet as soon as it is in session again. If the Diet does not approve them, they must be revoked. But this would be an effrontery toward the emperor and, consequently, all the Diet may do is to suggest certain modifications—which seldom happens.

The emperor sees to it that the laws are promulgated through the proper organs; he determines the organization of the different branches of his government and the salaries of the civil servants; he is the supreme commander of the armed forces; he declares war, makes peace, signs treaties; he can declare a state of siege, order amnesties, and issue titles and ranks.

The second chapter of the constitution deals with the rights and duties of subjects. The rights are few, and most of them, as experience has shown, are ignored by local authorities. The right of property is the only privilege granted to every Japanese subject without reservation. But the right of secrecy of letters, of the inviolability of the home, of impartial trial, of presenting petitions, or of changing one's domicile are all subject to "exceptions provided by law." In other words, any emergency decree issued by the government automatically curtails these rights. Since there exists an emergency from the time Japan started her campaign for a "new order" in Asia, present-day Japanese subjects are mainly acquainted with their duties and hardly with their rights under the constitution.

In view of this, Article XXIX strikes the Western observer as not devoid of irony:

Japanese subjects shall, within the limits of the law, enjoy the liberty of speech, writing, publication, public meetings and associations.

There must always have been severe "limits of the law" for the Japanese people because they hardly ever had the opportunity to enjoy the blessings of these basic freedoms. Since the short period during the twenties when liberalism seemed to become more successful than ever before, not one of the promised freedoms has really been granted. The fear of the authorities that the Japanese may develop what the police call "dangerous thoughts," has led to a system of control which sometimes puts to shame the secret police organization of Nazi Germany.

The granting of religious freedom is perhaps one of the very few concessions really made to the subjects. But this promise, as laid down in Article XXVIII, involves no risk for the government. It is regarded as self-evident that every patriotic Japanese is an ad-

herent of the National Faith Shinto. Whether he belongs, in addition, to another religious sect, remains his personal affair inasmuch as it does not change his attitude toward the nation and the government.

The remaining chapters of the Japanese constitution deal with organizational matters. Chapter III prescribes the organization of the Imperial Diet; Chap. IV establishes the responsibility of the ministers and the Privy Councillors; Chap. V sets up the Judiciary; Chap. VI determines the fiscal organization; Chap. VII gives some additional rules, among them a law according to which the provisions of the constitution may not be changed by the Imperial House Law (the constitution of the court) and, conversely, the Diet may not enact any changes in the Imperial House Law.

Under such circumstances, a free political life in the Western sense could not develop. During the two and one-half centuries of the Tokugawa Shogunate, the organization of parties for any purposes whatsoever was ruthlessly suppressed. Immediately after the Meiji restoration, political leaders tried to direct provincial uprisings into the formation of political parties but were completely defeated by the authorities. Count Itagaki tried to bring together many of the dissatisfied men into a Liberal Party during the latter half of the nineteenth century; the Marquis Okuma and the educator Fukusawa founded a Progressive Party representing the moderately well-off middle classes; the editor Fukuchi tried to found a Conservative Party which, however, never gained much support in conservative circles.

The parties were never able to do efficient political work. Their merit lay only in the political education which they attempted to give the uneducated masses of Japanese subjects. Moreover, since the cabinet ministers are not responsible to the Diet (which is allegedly a representation of the people)¹ but to the emperor and,

¹There has been, since 1925, an electoral law, giving all males over twenty-six who were neither criminals nor paupers (financially dependent) the right to vote. Elections were secret, using the Australian ballot. However, campaigning for candidates who did not belong to the government parties was hardly possible. The government would apply all sorts of laws against opponents and accuse them of abusing the electoral law. Consequently, it happened only twice that the government party lost an election—and these cases did not affect the government's strength at all. In 1942, of course, the Imperial Rule Assistance Association took over after the former Premier, Tojo, had put an end to parties and free elections.

therefore, cannot be dismissed by the Diet but only by the emperor, the influence of political parties remained largely fictitious. The emperor, on his part, if in need of advice, would not seek it either from the people or from his ministers. He would bring the matter to the Elder Statesmen, the so-called *genro*, a group of elderly gentlemen of conservative opinions whose activity is not constitutionally legalized but who exist as a quasi-public body on the strength of extraconstitutional tradition. There is a tendency to constitute a *genro* from ex-premiers, possibly in collaboration with the Lord Privy Council and the Ministers of the Imperial Household. The Privy Councillors, a constitutional body, are the legalized replica of the Elder Statesmen. They, too, have wielded tremendous power through their influence on the emperor, but this power has been waning for a number of years and the competition of the *genro* has been heavy.

Party lines and party programs shifted repeatedly since the first attempts were made to influence the Japanese government through party politics. The two biggest political parties, *Seiyukai* and *Minseitō*, were about equal in numbers and influence before the Manchurian war began in 1931. In a very rough way, they corresponded to the major parties in the United States. There were, in addition, smaller groups representing the interests of farmers, tenants, and labor. But the more progressive a party program became, the less it subscribed to the national religion and the more suspicious it was to the authorities. For example, socialist groups were quickly dissolved. So, in effect, the parties were politically powerless. And since the Manchurian war initiated a period of permanent emergency, with the government ruling by decree-laws and purposely ignoring even those few concessions brought about by the Meiji restoration, political parties have become superfluous or outlawed.

The Japanese press may appear to be comparatively free, but the editors receive negative orders instead of positive ones like their Nazi or Fascist colleagues.¹ Knowing what they may not do, they attain a sometimes amazing extent of liberty for a dictatorially ruled country. Perhaps the government tolerates this state of affairs because the real rulers are never directly attacked. Criticism is only

¹ W. H. Chamberlin, *Japan Over Asia*, Blue Ribbon Books, Inc., New York, 1942, p. 272.

directed against the "constitutional" government and some of its powerless representatives.¹

In consequence, it has never been necessary for the Japanese rulers to set up a one-party system. They maintain order and obedience through the age-old ideology of Shinto and *Bushido*; they command a ruthless police, expert in suppressing "dangerous thoughts"; and they have on their side the armed forces as the basis of their unlimited power. Moreover, there exist a number of secret societies such as the notorious "Black Dragon" with ultra-nationalistic programs; these are the prime movers of an aggressive imperialism striving for world conquest.² They are the symbols of the new nationalistic imperialism and are being treated with circumspection if not with respect by the government because they have the backing of the army and navy.

The tendency to revive, in a modernized form, a regime similar in character to that of the Tokugawa period can be observed in many ways. The power of the military leaders has negated all the major policies of civilian governments which tried to keep peace between Japan and the Western world. These military leaders reduced, once more, the actual power of the emperor while giving lip service to his religious and political significance. It seems to be the tragic destiny of Japan to have her national policies inextricably tied to her imperial symbols. The continued dominance of the National Faith Shinto over the Japanese spirit is hard to reconcile with the establishment of peaceful relations between Japan and the outside world. The struggle for the recognition of the fact that only the breaking away from the Shinto ideology can bring peace and prosperity to the Japanese people has made very little headway. Even in the hearts and minds of "progressive" Japanese intellectuals, the balance still leans in favor of Shinto. Inazo Nitobe, who knew the West as he knew Japan and who admired the United States without loving his native country any less, stated the problem in this dramatic form:

This Empire of ours will be wiped off the political map of the world should violent hands touch our ruling House. The history of this nation will lose all significance for mankind should its sons fail to continue in

¹ *Loc. cit.*

² Cf. Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 330ff.

the march of democracy. We should sink into nonentity, should we, through self-complacency, cease to "polish our native gems with stones quarried in other lands." Japan is started on a fair way to prove to the world that Royalism is not inconsistent with Democracy, that it is not incompetent to deal with proletarian problems, and that a king can be an instrument of Heaven for the achievement of social justice.¹

Nitobe's death spared him the disillusion of seeing the utter defeat of his ideals. The third and fourth decades of this century are witnessing the evolution of the Japanese paradox toward a climax which, like that of an ancient Greek tragedy, seems equally tragic and inevitable.

SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

The beginnings of Japanese society present an organization of life centered around the clan. Every clan had its own house gods, ancestors, and type of cult. The clan was ruled by the patriarch, not necessarily the oldest but the most influential man. He and his wife and children stood at the top of the family hierarchy. One rung down the ladder were found the dependents of the family, relatives, who were subservient to the Uji, the rulers of the clan. Farther down the social scale lived those people who were permitted to remain in the "lap of the family" although not related to it. They were free in so far as they could not be sold like slaves, but their freedom of movement was definitely restricted. At the bottom of the social organization came the slaves.

The clan life was strictly regulated in terms of duties, rights, and social behavior. As the clan grew, it developed into large communities. The patriarch, in such cases, was the all-mighty ruler and, in later times, became a *daimyo*. He was given the right to inherit his aristocratic title and his estate like a monarch. The many internal struggles which mark Japanese history originated in the antagonism of rival clans.

The more the country grew into a unified nation with a definite national religious ideal, the more the ideals of the clan became the ideals of Japan in the form of ancestor and emperor worship. The Tokugawa period brought this system to its climax and carried it to the extreme by classifying people according to their status in the

¹ Nitobe, *op cit.*, p. 230.

family of the nation. There were certain cult plays which were reserved for the higher ranking "family" members only; there were shrines for high- and lowborn.

It has already been pointed out that the Meiji restoration broke only superficially with feudalism, leaving Japan's social structure as paternalistic as it had been for many hundreds of years. This paternalism was introduced into modern factories which, in Western eyes, look rather like progressively directed reformatories. On the other hand, entrepreneurs preferred home workers, possibly laboring in the isolation of their villages. Wages could thus be kept low and people held under control more easily. Furthermore, the family patriarch, very eager to become an entrepreneur himself, would defend the interest of the employer and exploit his family to the utmost in order to be able to buy some vital machinery and then become an "independent" agent of the manufacturer for whom he was working. Every home worker would try to keep his land and himself free from the menace of creditors.

One of the cruelest reminders that the restoration did not bring about social changes is the surviving custom that fathers may sell or rent their daughters to factories where the girls have to live as inmates for five years, or to tea houses where they may be trained to be Geishas, or even to ordinary brothels. This usage is still practiced by indebted farmers, by money-hungry small traders, by brothers who have promised to pay a debt of honor; it is used for the education of a male family member whose career, according to the decision of the family head, may elevate him above the standard of his present social position.

A great many farmers or small artisans must either mortgage their property or sell their daughters to a factory, pocketing the daughters' salary for years ahead and using this money as their working capital. This custom, so abhorrent to Western ideas, is regarded as quite normal and honorable in Japan. It is an outstanding proof that Japan's modernization has remained external and that her developing technology has not kept pace with modern ideas of life which have accompanied technical progress in the West. A girl can rarely work off her father's debts. Bills for her daily expenses and for her clothes run high; she is given ample credit because the more money she uses, the fewer opportunities she will have to become

free again. Whether she works in a factory or in a brothel, the principle is the same. Very few girls have the necessary strength of character to avoid an accumulation of debts and then become free again after the expiration of the contract. If, by any chance, the male members of her family should require more money, she can be sold once more—provided she still adheres to the traditional attitudes of the family and believes in the inferiority of the female.

Selling girls, even loved ones, into servitude for the sake of the family's social, economic, or honorable standing has always been regarded as such a "beautiful custom,"—the very expression used in Japanese literature—that a score of dramas and legends, old and new, are woven around this topic. Freda Utley has tabulated the reasons for the sale of daughters in four northern districts. She found that of a total of 50,340 girls sold, as many as 41,422 or 82 per cent were sacrificed for economic reasons; 4,116 for traditional reasons; 2,020 because they themselves or their families lacked moral sense; 1,918 through unscrupulous brokers; and 864 for miscellaneous reasons. By economic reasons, Miss Utley meant "extreme poverty or actual famine."¹ It is abject poverty which causes parents to victimize their daughters most of the time.

Male and female factory workers are almost equal in numbers with a slight preponderance of males. In 1933 there were only 2,050,501 factory workers of the two sexes working in Japanese industries; the remainder worked in their homes. While the authorities have done everything in their power to keep the number of factory workers down and that of home workers up, Japan's growing industrialization and her increasing armament program have tended to defeat this policy. The number of workers in the factories is increasing and the economic importance of home industries will decrease. This, in turn, makes the suppression of "dangerous thoughts" increasingly difficult.²

"Dangerous thoughts" are liable to occur and to grow under an economic system which not only vigorously perpetuates feudal class distinctions and denies equal opportunities to new generations, but also insists on maintaining a capital centralization which

¹ Freda Utley, *Japan's Feet of Clay*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1937, pp. 169-170.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173.

may be called "the greatest on earth." By far the greatest part of invested capital is controlled by giant concerns such as those of the Mitsui and the Mitsubishi families. The accumulation of money and power in the hands of these trusts in Japan is far greater than has ever been the case in the heyday of American capital concentration. Through their absolute control of raw materials, the big concerns dictate their economic will to the banks as well as to the producers' associations. The State forces all the small producers and traders to unite in guilds and associations under government supervision. Out of 212 guilds of small manufacturers 114 are thus connected with Mitsui and 68 with Mitsubishi. These guilds and associations force their members to have their goods inspected, to buy raw material jointly, and to adopt the same specifications, thus facilitating marketing, especially export, for the big merchant firms, in particular Mitsui.¹

Since the early thirties, the four largest trusts have been Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, and Yasuda. These few concerns, with the help of a small number of minor ones more or less dependent on the leading trusts, hold in their hands the economic life of Japan and control the Yen as absolutely as the Shoguns fixed the value of rice during the Tokugawa era. The feudal family system and the home work organization connected with it are the foundations of this type of supercapitalism; the lack of civil liberties and popular rights maintained on religious and national grounds is another reason for its development.

The reason why civil rights in the Western sense do not exist in Japan has been explained before. Under these circumstances, it is interesting to examine labor movements as they have developed since the First World War. A Federation of Labor (*Rodo Domei*) was founded in 1918; a short while thereafter, employers established an Association for Conciliation of Labor and Capital which, according to Nitobe, has been engaged in statistical work and in analyzing labor-capital relations, the distrust of labor having made its active functioning impossible.² The strikes staged by the unions made the employers particularly uncomfortable because most of the strikers did not leave the shops but remained in occupation on

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

² Nitobe, *op. cit.*, pp. 289-290.

the roof. In order to save his face, the employer would in most cases accede to the demands of the strikers but would use the first opportunity to revoke his decision.

With some limited success in the big cities, the unions—there were then several of them—tried to become political factors and associated themselves with the rising political parties. There appeared the Social Democrats, who opposed the existing social and economic order but desired to reach their goal by peaceful evolution; there was the National People's Party which went a few steps further in its demands but still expected to achieve them legally; there was the Japanese Masses Party which, also legally, strove to carry out a reversal of the social, economic, and political organization of the nation. The Party of Laborers and Peasants appears to have been the most aggressive and may have been in contact with the Third International.

The membership and influence of these parties were rather limited. So the results of the struggle for reform by the labor unions were meager and remained as theoretical as the international labor "suggestions," issued by the League of Nations, which were sometimes adopted but more often ignored. However, employers were compelled to improve working conditions and to "restrict" child labor, that is, to limit working hours for youths under sixteen to a mere eleven. An act to protect women and minors was also passed but did not really achieve more than superficial improvement.

Considering all these facts one sees that the masses in Japan are under the rigid control of the state. Not less than 92.5 per cent of the Japanese population are *Heimin*, common people. The gentry who have all the power and all the money constitute about 5 per cent, and the *Eta*,¹ outcasts, number about 2.5 per cent. Although there are some differences in social standing among the *heimin*, they live on the same principles and in similar circumstances. They are all brought up in similar educational institutions and trained in similar moral conceptions. Bound by the National Faith Shinto,

¹ The *Eta* are outcasts mainly for religious reasons. Most of them are butchers and leather workers, a despicable (though necessary) occupation from the Buddhist point of view. According to the Meiji constitution, all Japanese citizens were to be regarded as equal, and the government tried to carry out this imperial prescription. However, as individuals, Japanese citizens still draw the line of discrimination between themselves and the *Eta* some of whom are wealthy and most of whom live in segregated communities.

obliged to revere the emperor as a divine ruler and supreme family father, deprived of the opportunity to improve their economic status and to alleviate their inherited social burdens, the Japanese people are utterly enslaved by the ruling classes whose members reign absolute in the name of the emperor. For the people, there is hardly any difference between the rule of the financial magnates and that of the military clique. Both have the same results: political, social, and economic suppression.

When Japan chose to embark on a policy of aggression on a grand scale, there was no need of a political "movement" or of a strong political party like the National Socialist. No Fuehrer was required to keep the people believing and obedient, for the Japanese tradition provided all the necessary means to insure their docility. It was only years later, almost a decade after the Manchurian aggression, that some military leaders thought of tightening Japan's ideological totalitarianism with a more thorough political organization. Close cooperation with the Nazi-Fascist leaders since the outbreak of the Second World War has no doubt influenced General Tojo to reorganize the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, since 1941, along Westernized totalitarian lines.¹ It was a time of totalitarian successes, and the Japanese leaders apparently believed in the emulation of methods which had given Germany a tremendous headstart in the years 1940 and 1941.

However, it is doubtful whether the introduction of Westernized methods of political control was warranted. Unable to mature politically, owing to the weight of Shinto tradition, the Japanese people have shown no inclination to overthrow the oppression of their rulers despite the steady worsening of their lot since the days when Manchuria was conquered and the doctrine of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere was proclaimed.

Japan has become a police state where every attempt to think in terms other than the traditional is regarded as dangerous. There is no freedom of the spoken or written word; there are daily arrests of liberals, even of the most harmless and moderate ones; there are tortures and mistreatments of the people by a police no less vicious in its methods than the Gestapo of Heinrich Himmler. So brutally and inconsiderately do the police behave that even con-

¹ See also pp. 223-224 ff.

servative elements half-heartedly admit that sometimes "the police are going too far. . . . The police have power not only to carry out the laws but to disregard them and police ordinances have the force of law like other Imperial ordinances."¹

JAPANESE GEOPOLITICS: THE CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE

Japan, too, has had her Haushofer. In fact, she has had several of them. The peculiar institutions which have been analyzed, the combination of emperor worship, Shinto, and the spirit of *Bushido* made fertile ground in which to plant the seeds of an ideology of expansion, such as modern Japan has witnessed.

There are three phases of Japanese expansion which have all been carefully planned and whose ultimate aims have been "documented" by Japanese geopoliticians. The first phase covers the conquest of China, following the acquisition of Korea and Manchuria. The second phase is the creation of a Pan-Asiatic movement under the aegis of Japan, a device for expansion which would comprise, in addition to eastern Asia, all the possessions of the Western powers in the Pacific area, including the Dutch East Indies, Malaya, Indo-China, Thailand, Tibet, Burma, and India. The third phase means nothing less than the final step toward world domination by crushing the power of America, Russia, and the great European nations, whether they belong to the Axis or not.

The First Phase. The growth of Japan since the Meiji restoration has been impressive. According to a census taken in 1872, there were roughly 33 million people in Japan; in 1935 there were almost 70 million. The Meiji budget of 1868, the year in which the emperor assumed the power, was not higher than 33,000,000 yen; in 1935 it was seventy times as large, about 2,300,000,000 yen.² Increases in economic power and political influence have been proportionally large.

As a result, the Island Empire clamored for more space and sought expansion in "self-defense." After Japan had launched her drive against Manchuria in September, 1931, the Lytton Commission of the League of Nations investigated her violation of the pact with China and of the Pact of Paris in which it had been agreed

¹ Utley, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-268.

² Tatsuo Kawai, *The Goal of Japanese Expansion*, The Hokuseido Press, Tokyo, 1938, pp. 17-22.

that the "contracting parties should seek settlement of disputes or conflicts by pacific means only."

The report of the Lytton Commission denied Japan's claim that she had acted in self-defense. Yet from the Japanese point of view, expansion could no longer be avoided. Furthermore, the Japanese government claimed that its military position against the Soviet Union had to be strengthened. The Lytton Commission recognized the importance of this Japanese point of view. As it stated in its report:

Manchuria has been frequently referred to as the "life line" of Japan. Manchuria adjoins Korea, now Japanese territory. The vision of a China, strong and hostile, a nation of four hundred millions, dominant in Manchuria and Eastern Asia, is disturbing to many Japanese. But to the greater number, when they speak of menace to their national existence, and of the necessity for self-defense, they have in mind Russia rather than China. . . .¹

This fear of Russian aggression was increased by the extension of Russian influence in China during the twenties. Japan even sought to pose as the defender of China: "In the twentieth century," a Japanese spokesman writes, "the Japanese nation, as a bulwark against Communism, constitutes a real Great Wall for China. . . ." ²

Japanese writers have made great efforts to conceal the imperialistic nature of the aggression against China. They stated that Japan wanted to unite the Japanese and Chinese races in the "spirit of Musubi" which is a philosophy of harmony and good will. The attempt has not succeeded mainly because the invading Japanese armies behaved like barbarian hordes and because the expansionist aims of Japan were too frankly expounded by many nationalist leaders.

But the "China incident" ³ cannot be regarded as an isolated phenomenon. The conquest of China is but the second step in

¹ Quoted by W. W. Willoughby, *Japan's Case Examined*, The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1940, p. 30.

² Kawai, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

³ Officially, Japan does not regard herself at war with China. The Japanese government is "at peace" with the puppet government of Nanking but has declared its intention to destroy the Chungking government of Chiang Kai-shek which it regards as "bandits" who do not represent China. While the Japanese propaganda has called the war, during its first years, an "incident," it later spoke of it as a "punitive expedition."

the plan of Japanese expansion, the first having been the domination of Manchuria. However, Japan's ambitions would not stop even if her armies should control the whole of China, for the "vital interests" would demand that Japan proceed to the next step: the domination of Greater Asia.

On November 18, 1938, the Japanese government sent a note to the American ambassador in Japan, declaring its intention of creating a "New Order" in East Asia. The note stated that

Japan at present is devoting her energy to the establishment of a new order based on genuine international justice throughout East Asia, the attainment of which end is not only an indispensable condition of the very existence of Japan, but also constitutes the very foundation of the enduring peace and stability of East Asia. It is the firm conviction of the Japanese Government that in the face of the new situation, fast developing in East Asia, any attempt to apply to the conditions of today and tomorrow inapplicable ideas and principles of the past neither would contribute toward the establishment of a real peace in East Asia nor solve the immediate issues.

In order to establish a "New Order" or, as the Japanese like to call it, a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere," their foothold in China must be secured not only militarily but also politically by the proclamation of an Asiatic "Monroe Doctrine." According to repeated Japanese statements, Japan's interests are just as closely bound with China's as the interests of the United States are bound with those of the rest of the Western Hemisphere. But what is perhaps more fundamental, the Japanese government was troubled by the open-door policy of the Western powers as a possible check to Japanese plans for total domination in Eastern Asia.

The attempt to assimilate the Japanese designs of domination in East Asia with America's domination of the Western Hemisphere, just like the comparison between the Monroe Doctrine and Germany's designs for a European "new order," is fundamentally a misrepresentation. The Monroe Doctrine was primarily intended to prevent the extension or the restoration of European controls in the Americas, and while it is true that the doctrine was at times perverted to justify American interference south of the Rio Grande and in the Caribbean, the changed temper of American opinion found expression in the "good neighbor policy" which

may be described broadly as a sound reinterpretation of the Monroe Doctrine under the altered circumstances of the present time. It should be noted, also, that the initial phases of Japanese aggression were almost coincident with the inauguration of the "good neighbor policy."

As a matter of fact, Japan's interest in China has been recognized by American statesmen. Theodore Roosevelt (in 1905) and Secretary of State Lansing (in 1917) admitted a limited Japanese "Monroe Doctrine," and Ambassador Castle, as late as 1930, stated that "Japan must and will be the guardian of peace in the Pacific."¹

The Second Phase. The path of Japanese expansion is clear. Formosa was a convenient jumping off place toward South China, and eventually toward the Philippines, though this last step had to wait until Japan was prepared to face a clash with the United States. Likewise, the occupation of Hainan (an island off the extreme south of China) and of the Spratly Islands (midway between North Borneo and South Indo-China) was a prelude to the invasion of this last possession. The final step came with the attack against the Philippines, Malaya, Burma, the Dutch East Indies, and the South Pacific area. Further conquest was scheduled to bring British India and Eastern Siberia under Japanese domination. Officially this superimperialism is sailing under the flag of *Pan-Asiatic* policies. "Asia for the Asiatics," proclaim the Japanese. They want the whole of Eastern Asia to be purified of Western influence and made a "heartland" of Japanese power. General Sadao Araki, one of the Japanese leaders who has never been afraid of frank statements, declared in 1933:

The various countries now in East Asia are objects of the white race's oppression. The already awakened Japanese Empire can no longer allow them to tyrannize any more. . . . The Japanese people must have the spirit and power to convince the entire world of Europe and America of the true spirit of Asia . . . and, going a step further, make manifest to them the mission of Japan. Let the people of Europe and America recognize, let the whole world recognize, that Japan is here and now shouldering the whole responsibility of Asia.²

According to W. H. Chamberlin, Pan-Asianism "has become in-

¹ Willoughby, *op. cit.*, quoted on p. 135.

² *Documents Illustrative of Japan's National Policy*, published by the Council of International Affairs, Nanking; quoted by Willoughby, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-143.

creasingly popular, especially among high military officers," being "one of the potentially explosive ideas that have contributed to Japan's drive for expansion."¹ He quotes the Japanese publicist, Rin Kaito, who repudiated the Occidental belief in Western superiority of culture and concludes:

For over a century and a half the Asiatics have been pressed down by the whites and subjected to Western tyranny. But Japan, after defeating Russia, has aroused the sleeping Asiatics to shake off the Western tyranny and torture.²

Professor Takeyo Nakatani, secretary of the Asiatic League of Nations, in a pamphlet entitled *Asiatic Asia: What Does It Mean?*, frankly claims that there is a necessity for Japan's hegemony:

To bring order and reconstruction to the present chaotic conditions of Asia is a duty that rests mostly on the shoulders of Japan. . . . She has been asked to put to work all her forces, cultural, political, economic, and, if need be, military, in order to bring about unity and wholesale reconstruction in Asia.³

The so-called Pan movements have rarely had much success outside of the countries of their origin. Pan-Germanism remained an essentially German domestic product. Pan-Slavism, while it found much sympathy throughout the Slavic world, served primarily the political purposes of the Czarist government, as it may one day serve the Soviets. Pan-Asianism, too, is unimportant outside of Japan, as most experts on Asia agree, but it is very useful to the Japanese government in fostering national pride, aggressiveness, preparedness for war, and imperialist expansion.

One of the most striking documents dealing with Japan's far-reaching imperialistic aims is the so-called Tanaka Memorial. Baron Tanaka, then Premier of Japan, is said to have sent this memorandum to the emperor on July 25, 1927. Allegedly, it was prepared during a conference in Mukden, Manchuria, with the collaboration of high military and civil administration officers who discussed the problem of the conquest of Mongolia and Manchuria for almost two weeks in continuous session. The resulting memorandum is reported to have come into the hands of Chinese editors who published it a few months later.

¹ Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

The Japanese have maintained ever since that the Memorial was a forgery designed to discredit Japan in the eyes of the world. However, it does not contain much that was not known before to Japanese nationalists and well-informed outsiders. Moreover, even if the Memorial were a forgery, it was a rather exact preview of things to come. Many of the steps indicated in it have since been taken:

For the sake of self-protection [Baron Tanaka allegedly wrote], as well as the protection of others, Japan cannot remove the difficulties in Eastern Asia unless she adopts a policy of "Blood and Iron." But in carrying out this policy we have to face the United States which has been turned against us by China's policy of fighting poison with poison. If in the future we want to control China, we must first crush the United States just as in the past we had to fight the Russo-Japanese War. But in order to conquer the world, we must first conquer Manchuria and Mongolia. In order to conquer the world, we must first conquer China. If we succeed in conquering China, the rest of the Asiatic countries and the South Sea countries will fear us and surrender to us. Then the world will realize that Eastern Asia is ours and will not dare to violate our rights. This is the plan left to us by Emperor Meiji, the success of which is essential to our national existence.¹

The importance which the Japanese military government attributed to Pan-Asianism can be measured by an appraisal of the "Greater East Asia Ministry" which was created in 1942 and has replaced the Overseas Ministry, thus reducing the influence of the Foreign Office considerably. Since the summer of 1942, the Foreign Office has consisted of four departments only: treaties, research, trade, and general affairs. The department of general affairs has taken over the work of the former divisions for Europe, America, Eastern Asia, and the South Seas on a greatly diminished scale.

The Greater East Asia Ministry has four departments: general affairs, Manchukuo, China, and southern territories. Japan's colonies in Formosa, Korea, and Sakhalin are also under its care. The armed forces have a great influence on the ministry and thus dominate, through it, the Foreign Office as well. Diplomats, too, are to be supervised by this new ministry which symbolizes Japan's quest for Asiatic expansion.

¹ *Japan's Dream of World Empire, The Tanaka Memorial*, ed. by Carl Crow, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1942, pp. 28-29.

The Third Phase. Whether Baron Tanaka wrote his Memorial or not, leading Japanese imperialists have supported for many years the designs expressed in it. The Meiji restoration revived ancient imperialist trends as they were visualized by Hideyoshi almost three centuries before Meiji. It is amazing and significant that the many years of self-imposed isolation under the Tokugawa did not change the imperialistic disposition of Japan's ruling class. "Having China's entire resources at our disposal," says the Memorial, "we shall proceed to conquer India, the Archipelago, Asia Minor, Central Asia, and even Europe."¹

Of equal frankness was Baron Hotta who was Premier at the time when the emperor had to accede to Commodore Perry's treaty between America and Japan. In an accompanying note to the emperor, Baron Hotta pointed out that "among the rulers of the world at present, there is none so noble and illustrious as to command universal vassalage, or who can make his virtuous influence felt throughout the length and breadth of the whole world . . ." and that, consequently, "in establishing relations with foreign countries, the object should always be kept in view of *laying a foundation for securing the hegemony over all nations.*"² Speaking of suitable alliances for the protection of "harmless but powerless nations," he claimed that Japanese "national prestige and position thus insured, the nations of the world will come to look up to our Emperor as the Great Ruler of all nations, and they will come to follow our policy and submit themselves to our judgment."³

Just as revealing of the ultimate aims of Japan is a letter written by General Shigeru Honjo to the Japanese War Minister, and first published by the *China Critic*, Shanghai, on December 3, 1931. The writer pointed to the dangers of a national renaissance in China, of the existence of a strong Red Russia, and of the strongholds of the United States in the Pacific, all obstacles to the national policy of Japan. "Before declaring war on America," stated the General, "we must strive to gain a superior position for our military strength both in China and Russia. We must aim to cripple China and Russia once and for all. . . ." If the resources of these countries could be made available to Japan, the general

¹ Crow, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14. Italics mine.

³ *Loc. cit.*

continued, American influence East of Hawaii would easily be driven out. After vanquishing American influence in the East, British interests in Hongkong and Singapore would not be strong enough to resist. After the first step, the occupation of Manchuria, Mongolia, and the rest of China, Siberia would be penetrated "until we occupied Upper Udinsk and forced Russia to cede to us the great plains east of the Lena River and up to the Behring Strait. . . ." ¹

After describing at length the enormous wealth of these regions, the general continues:

With such wealth and resources at our disposal, we would encounter not the slightest difficulty even should we elect to train an army twice the size of the armies of China and Russia and to maintain a navy equal in strength to the navies of Great Britain and the United States. We would then be in a position to drive away the United States to the east of Hawaii and Great Britain to the west of Singapore and to hold supreme power in the Pacific without any difficulty, while all the islands constituting the South Sea Archipelago now under Dutch rule as well as the British colonies of Australia, New Zealand, etc., would be within easy grasp at our Imperial will. Once we have attained such an influential position, we could proceed to conquer the whole country of China and the whole continent of Asia, and further to subjugate the whole continent of Europe as well as that of Africa by force . . . ²

These superimperialistic visions of a people who long before Hitler believed that their Taiwa Race (also called "Yamato Race" from the original Japanese tribes) was superior to all other peoples, were largely disregarded by the outside world before the entry of Japan into the Second World War, just as German geopolitical designs were brushed aside as Utopian schemes. However, it is now clear that the political and military strategy of Japan followed exactly the pattern and formulas developed since Emperor Meiji and became firmly anchored in the religious ideas of the country. Japan's world imperialism, based as it is not only on economic foundations but on the conception of Japan's divine mission to lead and save the world, may impress Western observers as an improbable fancy. Yet, fantastic as it may seem, its inherent force must be recog-

¹ Quoted in Appendix A by H. J. Timperley, *Japan, A World Problem*, The John Day Company, New York, 1942, pp. 123-124.

² *Ibid.*, p. 126. Italics mine.

nized. Japan's ideological myth compares favorably with or even surpasses corresponding Nazi dreams of world domination. In a pamphlet on the "Mission of Japan under the Reign of Showa,"¹ General Sadao Araki, former Minister of War, wrote:

To fulfill the vision "to conquer the world and embrace the universe as our state" so as to pacify Emperor Jimmu's desire "greatly to nourish and increase" our ambition has been our traditional policy. If the actions of any of the powers are not conducive to our imperialism, our blows shall descend on that power. . . . Our imperial morality, which is the embodiment of the combination of the true spirit of the Japanese state with the great ideals of the Japanese people, must be preached and spread over the whole world. . . .²

Even more fanaticized by Shinto mysticism are the ultranationalistic organizations led by Toyoma Nakano. Otto Tolischus has very clearly explained the stand taken by Nakano:

To them (the Nakano organizations) the Japanese Emperor, as a direct descendant of the Sun Goddess, is by divine appointment both Emperor and god of the mundane world, and therefore entitled to rule the earth as the Sun Goddess rules the heavens. . . . Their doctrine is that Japan can never rest, till that rule becomes an actuality, till every nation receives its "proper place" according to the principle of Hakkō Ichū. . . .³

Perhaps the most significant document on the character of Japanese nationalist ideology is Professor Chikao Fujisawa's book *Japanese and Oriental Political Philosophy*, written in 1935. This book is said to be almost as important in Japan as *Mein Kampf* in Germany. Formerly Japanese representative on the secretariat of the League of Nations and professor of political science at the Kyushu Imperial University, Fujisawa became one of the leading men of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, a body created to disseminate war propaganda among the Japanese people. While

¹ Showa is the official designation of the reign of Emperor Hirohito. Ironically, it means "reign of peace."

² Quoted by Timperley, *op. cit.*, pp. 100 and 128-140, translated from the Chinese version in the *Ta Kung Pao*, May-July, 1933, and included in *Documents Illustrative of Japan's National Policy*, Nanking, October 27, 1937, Vol. V, Nos. 1 and 2.

³ Otto Tolischus, "Japanese Seek World Rule by Divine Appointment," *New York Times*, August 11, 1942. Two of the Nakano organizations are the Black Dragon and the Black Current societies. Membership of these organizations is secret; however, their hold on the Japanese people is said to be extremely strong.

paying homage to Hitler's brand of absolutism, he asserts that the Japanese philosophy of state will soon decisively influence European political trends. For him, the emperor is the "absolute cosmic life center" and the only source of all-embracing moral power capable of reforming the world and of establishing eternal "peace and harmony" under the leadership of the Tenno. The "Way of the Gods" will in the end induce the nations outside of Japan's present sphere of influence to give up their individualism—which Fujisawa defines in social as well as in economic terms—and entrust themselves to Japan's paternal leadership.

Fujisawa goes on to claim in all seriousness that the earnest prayers of the Tenno to his divine ancestress, the sun-goddess, will cause heavy blows to fall upon the nations of the "old order" and curb their "inordinate desire" to dominate the Far East. He predicted in 1935 that a "holy war" would be launched sooner or later which would awaken most nations to the "cosmic truth"; these nations would realize that they cannot find their ultimate destiny and harmony with the world unless they put themselves under the integral guidance of the *Mikoto* (mikado). Professor Fujisawa "piously" insists that one should not consider this noble idea in any sense "in the light of imperialism, under which weak nations are merely subjugated."¹

Distorting and deliberately falsifying history after the manner of the German Nazis, Fujisawa uses what he calls "history" to prove that Japan is the land which has given birth to all human life and civilization. Instead of placing the cradle of the human race on the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris, or on the Pamir Plateau, Fujisawa seeks to prove that the mountainous middle region of Honshu, the biggest of the Japanese islands, saw the birth of life on earth. Just as the Germans claim that all culture came from the "Aryans," so Fujisawa states that world civilization emanated from the Yamato race. The extent of arbitrary handling of history can be judged by Fujisawa's allegation that Japan civilized China. Yet it is well known that it was China and Korea who brought the written language, moral concepts, and higher civilization to crude and primitive Japan as late as the fifth century A.D.

¹ Otto Toltschus, "Japan's 'Holy' War Has Mystic Excuse," *New York Times*, August 14, 1942.

These fanciful interpretations can hardly surprise us when we consider that the Japanese people believe that their emperor is divine, that their country is divine, and that they themselves are a divine people chosen to liberate the world from unrest and, by bringing "the light which comes from the East," to return peace and harmony to the world under the guidance of Japan. The intensity of such belief is so strong that even some of the few Japanese Christians accept it. Had Christ known Japan, they say, He would have gone there and made Japan, instead of Palestine, the center of Christianity in the world.¹

The forces driving toward the ultimate realization of a universal *Hakko Ichiu* are, consequently, very strong in Japan. When Yosuke Matsuoka was still president of the South Manchurian Railway, he stated, in 1931: "It is my conviction that the mission of the Yamato Race is to prevent the human race from becoming devilish, to rescue it from destruction and lead it to the world of light."² This conviction has penetrated the Japanese mind. It will be a gigantic task for the United Nations to convince the Japanese people of the futility and nonsense of such beliefs.

The task is rendered especially difficult by the close identification between political and religious ideology peculiar to Japan. Political ideas may change, sometimes from outside pressure, but religious beliefs are more deep-rooted than political ones. The record of the success of force in imposing religious convictions has been a poor one; religion has in fact been the source of the most bitter conflicts. Only time, not mere defeat in war or even military occupation of the Japanese islands, can bring about a real change in the Japanese view of their nation's place among nations. From the point of view of the outside world, the redeeming feature lies in the meagerness of Japanese resources. Stripped of her possessions, Japan may well sink to the position of a power of the third order.

WAR AND POLITICS

In order to carry out its far-reaching geopolitical aims, the Japanese government has always regarded war as inevitable since it did

¹ Cf. *Christianity in Japan* by Clara Eastlake in Carl Carmer, ed., *The War Against Religion*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., New York, 1943.

² Quoted by Syngman Rhee, *Japan Inside Out*, Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, 1941, p. 17.

not really expect other nations to yield to its persuasion. Through the centuries, the spirit of *Bushido* has served to imbue the descendants of the Yamato race with military ideals. The modern governments of post-Meiji Japan, just like those of the Nazis and Fascists, have taken advantage of this philosophy to glorify war as the "father of creation" and the "mother of culture." For the Japanese, war is not "simply an inevitable outcome of the application of the idea that 'might makes right'"; on the contrary, such principles should be curbed in the "pursuit of righteousness and creative activities." On the other hand, war is a means of "taming, correcting, and directing all evil forces that tend, with baneful will toward the grasping of power for power's sake." This must be done by the Japanese "in such a manner as to cause our endeavors to be transformed into, or to be assimilated with, the benign and magnanimous soul of Japan and to flow into that majestic and all-embracing course of universal justice, or the Imperial Way."¹

If war is the means of leading the world to a condition agreeable to the emperor, then those must rule the country who are, at the same time, leaders of the armed forces and protagonists of Japan's quest for world domination. Any civil government desirous of maintaining friendly relations with other governments is to be rendered powerless by the military and nationalist leaders who pool their influence in certain secret societies. The best known of these societies are the Black Dragon Society, the Black Current Society, and the Black Ocean Society. There are also some semi-Fascist leagues like the Society of the White Wolf, the Federation of Samurai, and the Society of Starbeams. The imperialistic associations have wielded great power for many years and have used the tactics of striking terror into the hearts of liberals or conservatives who favored the maintenance of a reasonably decent status in international relations. Assassinations have been frequent and uprisings of fanaticized junior officers have happened time and again.²

The Imperial Rule Assistance Association is the only official institution of this type. It was originally set up by Prince Konoye to rally the people around a patriotic organization after the political

¹ K. W. Colegrove, *Militarism in Japan*, World Peace Foundation, Boston, 1936, pp. 52-53.

² See Hugh Byas, *Government by Assassination*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1942, Part III.

parties began to deteriorate or were dissolved by the police. It started as a "nonpolitical" league but was soon taken over by the military. Very similar to the Nazi and Fascist parties, the IRAA was regarded by the Japanese nationalists as a nucleus for a one-party system in Japan. After 1941, General Tojo became its leader and did not permit any other party or group to exist. So strong grew the power of the IRAA that practically no candidate for the Imperial Diet was elected unless he had been approved or nominated by the association.

A reorganization of the IRAA along totalitarian lines was effected in June, 1942.¹ Since then, there have been five bureaus functioning: general, practice, training, Asia development, and investigation. In addition there exists a control commission, probably for the purpose of investigating the investigators.

It is difficult for outsiders to ascertain what the individual bureaus conceal under their departmental names, but it seems possible that the IRAA is the first attempt in Japanese history to lay the groundwork for a Westernized brand of Japanese totalitarianism. Some minor Fascist groups have been developed, the best known of which was led by a Buddhist scholar, Ikki Kita, leader of the Society of the White Wolf, who wrote *A Bill for the Reconstruction of Japan*. This book attacked existing economic conditions and was based on anticapitalistic premises which brought about its prohibition. However, it had become rather well known before being taken off the market; it suggests a mixture of national socialism with Shinto principles and Buddhist philosophy.²

However, it seems doubtful whether Japanese totalitarianism can ever become an Asiatic Nazism so long as the emperor remains the highest source of power. His very existence would prevent the rise of a Japanese Fuehrer. There may be men whose dictatorial powers equal those of the Shoguns, and it is not improbable that the reactionary nationalists work for the reestablishment of a modern Shogunate. However, Japanese leaders, with all their worldly power, cannot assume spiritual leadership so long as Shinto retains its hold. These leaders themselves depend on the belief of the

¹ Otto Tolischus, "Japan's Military Has Supreme Rule," *New York Times*, August 27, 1942.

² Cf. Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 286-287.

Japanese people in Shinto as a national religion whose mystical ideology prepares the people mentally for the acceptance of their government's imperialism. Consequently, they must retain the emperor's supreme position. They know that once the magic spell of Shinto is broken, Japanese imperialism will have lost its religious basis and appear as old-fashioned greed before its own people.

With the growing influence of Nazi-Fascist totalitarianism which made itself felt particularly after the conclusion of the Three Power Pact, Japan found herself caught in a perplexing dilemma. On the one hand, her collaboration with the Axis powers and her tendency to develop a new type of Shogunate military dictatorship in Western style may lead to the decay of her ancient ideology. On the other hand, National Faith Shinto, when interpreted as an ultranationalist quest for world rule under the divine emperor of divine Japan, must lead to eventual disaster for Japan cannot win a war against the United Nations nor bear the strain of a "holy hundred-years war." She will rather become the victim of her religious-nationalistic idealism or, as one may say, of her rulers' megalomania.

That Japan had prepared for years her participation in the Second World War is not open to doubt. An account like Kinoaki Matsuo's *How Japan Plans to Win*¹ gives evidence of this, if more were needed, and also shows the extent to which opinion outside of the Axis countries—aided in this by Japan's own picture of her "weakness"—allowed itself to fall victim to its own wishful thinking.²

The following survey of the Japanese system of education and indoctrination will help to understand how Japan succeeded in keeping alive her ancient traditions and maintaining, despite increasing and unending sacrifices, the devotion of her people to her imperial aims.

¹ Kinoaki Matsuo, *How Japan Plans to Win*, translated by Kilsoo K. Haan, Little, Brown & Company, Boston, 1942.

² The United States Foreign Service was well informed about Japan's preparations for war but the Department of State faced Congressional disbelief and a strong disinclination of public opinion to accept the warnings of the government. United States relations with Japan are well documented in *Peace and War*, United States Foreign Policy 1931-1941; Department of State Publication No. 1853, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., Parts I, VII, XIV.

See also Joseph C. Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, Simon and Schuster, Inc., New York, 1944.