

Japan

Past and Present



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PAST AND PRESENT

BY

EDWIN O. REISCHAUER

Foreword by Sir George Sansom

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To *my brother, Bob*



FOREWORD

Few countries have been more copiously described than Japan, and perhaps few have been less thoroughly understood. In the last century there were a number of works dealing with the picturesque or the exotic aspects of that country, most of which, though sometimes a trifle deceptive, were passable books of travel. During the same period there were written a few important studies of Japanese political and social history which are still standard works, though they are used only by a few specialists. But it is a remarkable fact, which I think will be accepted by any teacher who has been responsible for instruction in schools or colleges, that before the outbreak of the war in the Far East there was no single short book which gave a lucid and tolerably complete picture of Japan's early history and her development in modern times. There were plenty of learned treatises on this or that, but nothing to give the average educated reader what he needed.

- After the outbreak of war, there appeared in profusion a flood, or at least a considerable stream, of books about Japan, chiefly of topical interest. Some of these

were interesting and useful. Others, however, were of a different type. Understandably, but regrettably, they belonged to that class of historical work, all too common in the last few decades, of which the purpose is not to discover or expound truth but to promote one of those perversions of systematic thought which are known by the suitably ill-sounding name of 'ideologies.' Now that the war is over, the average reader has a right to expect something more rational, more readable and more reliable.

I think that Dr. Reischauer's book fulfils these requirements. He has excellent qualifications for his task — familiarity with the country he describes, a first-class linguistic equipment, a good training as an historian, and most important of all an approach to his subject which is neither prejudiced nor sentimental. He narrates the leading facts of Japanese history from early times, with just and interesting comment. He explains easily and competently the evolution of modern Japan to the conditions described in his concluding chapters. I can truthfully say that I do not know of any short book on Japanese history which gives so much useful information in so brief and simple a form.

G. B. SANSOM

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In this brief description of the Japanese and their history I have of necessity omitted the great mass of small factual details of which history is made, and have attempted to clarify the picture for the reader by concentrating on salient features and by treating the whole in general and broadly interpretative terms. In doing this, I have been acutely aware of the dangers of oversimplification and of misplaced emphasis. If I have avoided these pitfalls, the credit is in no small measure due to several friends who very kindly read my manuscript and made many extremely helpful and valuable suggestions. Sir George Sansom, whose masterful *Japan — A Short Cultural History* is an inspiration to all students of Japan, not only was kind enough to read my manuscript but also has written a foreword. My special thanks for much valuable aid are also due Professor Serge Elisséeff, under whose excellent guidance I first started my study of Japanese history. I wish to express my appreciation also for the helpful comments and corrections given me by Dr. Hugh Borton, Dr. Edward Kracke, Mr. Richard McKinnon, and by my parents

and my parents-in-law, Dr. and Mrs. George H. Danton. I take this opportunity also to thank my sister-in-law, Jean Reischauer, for her skillful and painstaking work in preparing the maps which accompany the text.

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Japan
Past and Present

日本古今史

[The Japanese title by William R. B. Acker]



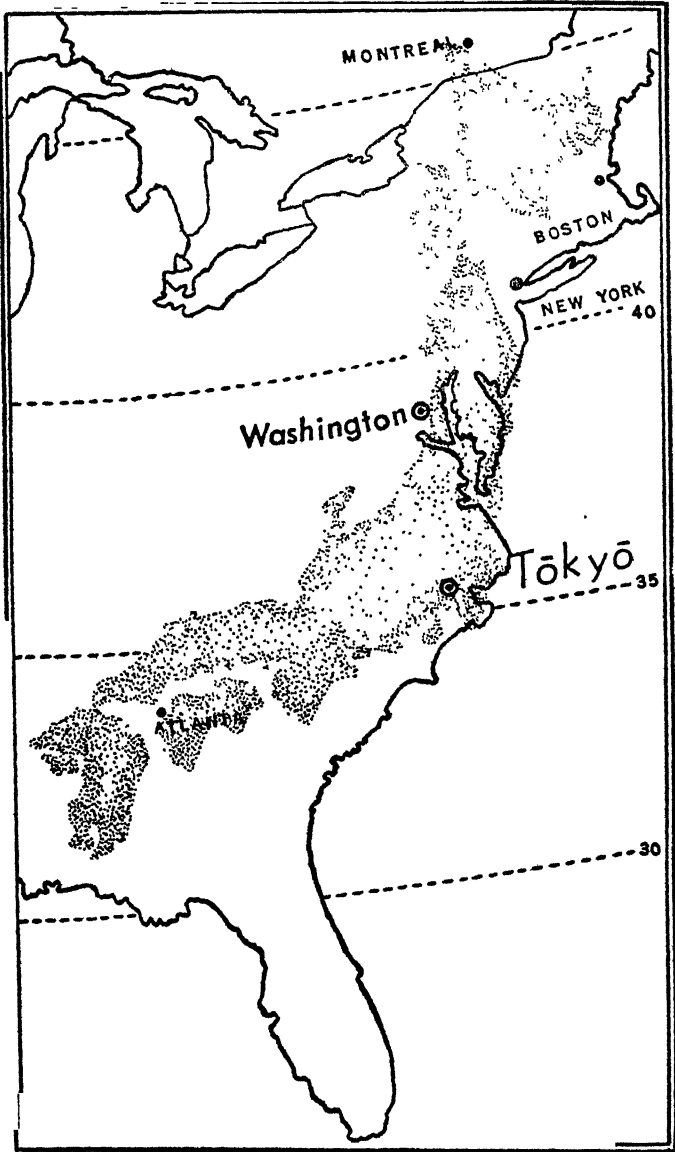
Chapter I

GEOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

In the islands of Japan nature fashioned a favored spot where civilization could prosper and a people could develop into a strong and great nation. A happy combination of temperate climate, plentiful rainfall, fairly fertile soil, and reasonable proximity to other great homes of civilized man predestined the ultimate rise of the inhabitants of these islands to a place among the leading peoples of the world.

The four main islands of Japan, strung out in a great arc along the coast of East Asia, cover the same spread of latitude and the same general range of climate as the east coast of the United States. The northern island of Hokkaido parallels New England; the heart of the country from Tokyo west to the Inland Sea corresponds to North Carolina; and the southern island of Kyushu parallels Georgia.

Americans have often tended to overemphasize the smallness of Japan, contrasting it with the vast stretches of our own country, or to other geographic giants like Russia and China. A more reasonable comparison would be with the countries of western Europe. Japan is smaller than France or pre-war Germany but slightly



JAPAN SUPERIMPOSED AT THE SAME LATITUDE
ON THE EAST COAST OF THE UNITED STATES

larger than the British Isles or Italy, the homes of the two greatest empires our Western world has ever seen.

Like Italy, Japan is a mountainous country. Throughout all four of the main islands are great stretches of towering mountains and jumbled hills. The combination of rugged coast line and precipitous mountainsides makes of the whole country one of the beauty spots of the world, but it leaves little land for the Japanese farmer, who finds only about twenty per cent of the land surface of his islands level enough for cultivation.

The mountains of Japan have pushed the Japanese out upon the seas, making them the greatest seafaring people of Asia. Sea lanes have been great highways within Japan; sea routes have beckoned the Japanese abroad; and the cold and warm sea currents which bathe the shores of the islands have always provided rich fishing grounds for the hardy Japanese fishermen.

Nature has been rather niggardly with Japan in mineral resources. Coal the islands have in some abundance, but few other sub-soil riches in significant quantities. The mountains of Japan, together with the heavy rainfall, have, however, given Japan one great asset in the modern world — water power, all the more important in a land comparatively poor in other respects.

Next to its favorable climate, the geographic factor of greatest importance in shaping the history of Japan has been the factor of isolation. Japan is a part of the Chinese zone of civilization, that zone in East Asia centering around China which has been dominated by the culture developed in ancient times on the plains of North China.

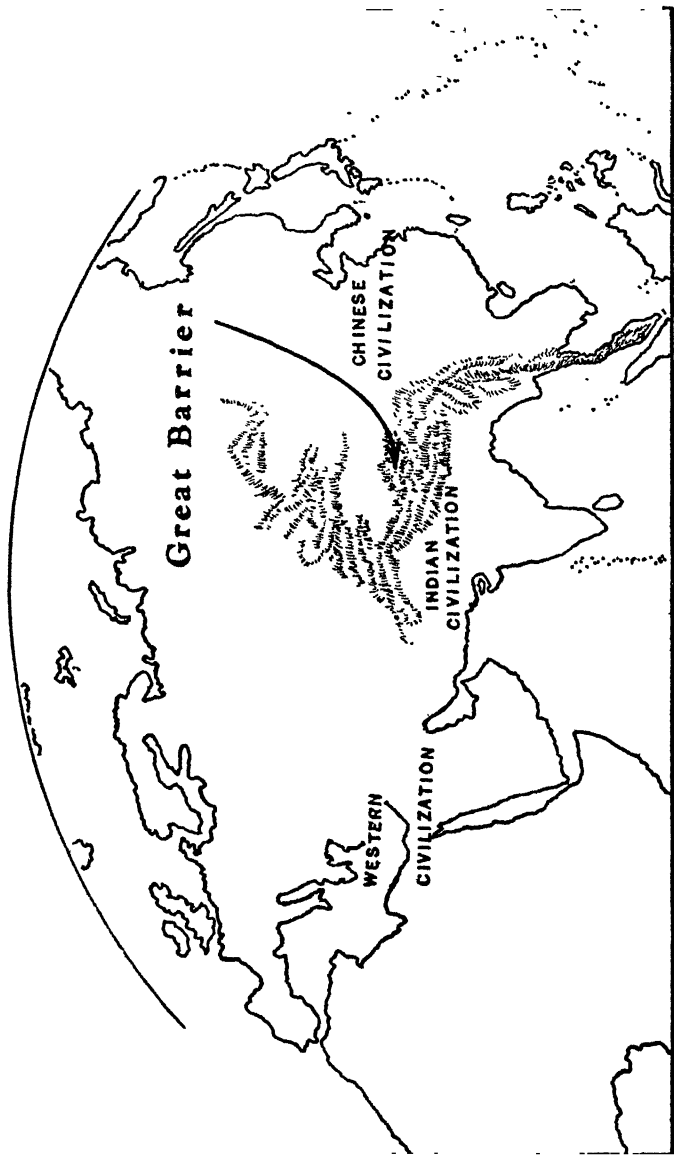
The Chinese sphere of civilization is itself the most

isolated of the great spheres of early civilization, cut off from the centers of early culture in India, the Near East, and the Mediterranean world by the great land barrier of the mountain ranges and vast deserts of Central Asia, and the jungles and rugged terrain of South-east Asia and the Malay Peninsula.

In this relatively isolated zone of Chinese civilization, Japan was in the past the most isolated area of all. Like England, Japan is an island country, but the straits between western Japan and Korea, the nearest continental land, are well over 100 miles wide, many times the width of the Straits of Dover; and some 500 miles of open sea stretch between Japan and China, the home of civilization in East Asia. In days of primitive navigation these water barriers were very broad, and made of Japan the most isolated of all the older countries of the world.

Culturally Japan is a daughter of Chinese civilization, much as the countries of northern Europe are daughters of Mediterranean culture. The story of the spread of Chinese civilization to the alien peoples of Japan during the first millennium after Christ is much like the story of the spread of Mediterranean civilization to the alien peoples of northern Europe during the same period. But the greater isolation of the Japanese from the home of their civilization and from all other peoples meant that in Japan the borrowed culture had more chance to develop along new and often unique lines, and to grow into distinctive patterns of civilization.

One popular concept is that the Japanese have never been anything more than a race of borrowers and imitators. The truth is quite the contrary. Although




ANCIENT CENTERS OF CIVILIZATION IN ASIA AND EUROPE

geographic isolation has made them very conscious of borrowings from abroad, it has also led them to develop one of the most distinctive cultures to be found in any civilized area of comparable size.

Take, for example, things as basic as domestic architecture and the manner in which the Japanese live at home. The thick straw floor mats, the sliding paper panels in place of interior walls, the open, airy structure of the whole house, the recess for art objects, the charcoal heating braziers, the peculiar wooden and iron bathtubs, and the place of bathing in daily life as a means of relaxation at the end of a day's work and, in winter, as a way of restoring a sense of warmth and well-being — all these and many other simple but fundamental features of home and daily life are unique to Japan and attest to an extremely distinctive culture rather than one of simple imitation.

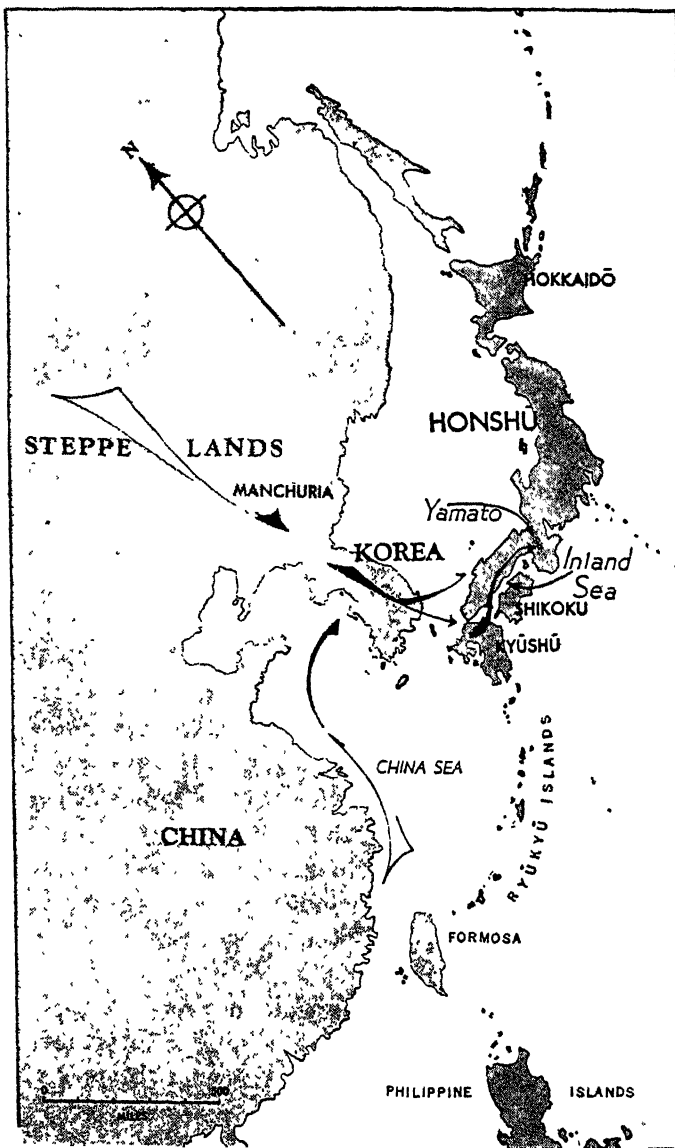
Isolation has also made of the Japanese a highly self-conscious people, unaccustomed to dealing with foreigners individually or as a nation. The Japanese are always strongly conscious that they are Japanese and that all other peoples are foreigners. Isolation has made them painfully aware of their differences from other peoples and has filled them with an entirely irrational sense of superiority, which they are anxious to prove to themselves and to others. Isolation has made it difficult for them to understand the attitudes and actions of other peoples. In short, the factor of geographic isolation during the past two thousand years has helped fashion national traits which eventually, and almost inevitably, led Japan to political isolation and to crushing defeat in war.


Chapter II

THE EARLY JAPANESE

Although the Japanese, like all other modern peoples, are the result of racial mixtures, they are essentially a Mongoloid people, closely related to their neighbors on the continent in Korea and China. According to popular theories the early Japanese came to their islands from the south by way of Formosa and the Ryukyu Islands, but archaeological evidence indicates clearly that most of the early Japanese came to Japan by way of Korea. Some originally may have come from more distant regions in northeastern Asia, and others may have come originally from the coastal areas of South China. There they may have been in contact with the peoples of Southeast Asia and the adjacent islands, which might explain the many close parallels between primitive Japanese institutions and those of the southern areas of the Far East.

Despite the basically Mongoloid origins of the Japanese, the first inhabitants of the islands seem to have been the ancestors of the modern Ainu, a people probably in part of proto-white stock; that is, a group which split off from the white race at such an early time that



MIGRATIONS TO JAPAN IN EARLY TIMES

not all the characteristics of the Caucasian type had as yet developed. The Ainu may once have inhabited all of Japan, but they possessed a neolithic culture inferior in many ways to the neolithic cultures of the early Mongoloid invaders of Japan. As a result they were gradually pushed eastward and northward through the Japanese chain of islands until they now exist only as a fast vanishing people living in primitive settlements in the more remote sections of the northern island of Hokkaido and in smaller islands even farther north.

The Ainu contributed little to Japanese culture, but they may have contributed considerably to Japanese physical characteristics, one of which is the relative hairiness of the Japanese when compared to other Mongoloid peoples. The bristling moustaches of the Japanese officers and business men may well be their Ainu legacy.

Bronze and iron probably first reached Japan about the first century of the Christian era, brought by a wave of Mongoloid invaders from Korea. These invaders clearly had close contacts with the semi-nomadic culture of the steppe lands of northeastern Asia. They were fighting men on horseback, carrying the long straight iron sword of northern Asia, and like the nomads of this region they buried their dead leaders in great mounds. One of their most common symbols was a semi-precious stone curved in the shape of a huge comma, and another was a round bronze mirror, usually considered to be the symbol of the sun. Similar curved jewels are common archaeological finds throughout Korea, and the bronze mirrors obviously were borrowed from the Chinese, showing that these people had

already had some contact with the higher civilization of China before coming to Japan.

These invaders, with their superior bronze and iron civilization, soon became the dominant group among the varied peoples of early Japan. They were the founders of the historical Japanese state. Three of their most important possessions, the sword, the curved jewel, and the mirror, in time became the "Three Imperial Regalia," which even today are the symbols of imperial authority.

The invaders from Korea were organized into petty clans. Chinese traders who visited western Japan around the year A.D. 200 found the country divided into scores of small clan states, each ruled by a high priestess or a high priest. At about that time feminine rule, strongly implied in Japanese mythology, seems to have been giving way to masculine rule.

A feeling of clan solidarity and a belief in the importance of hereditary rights and authority were undoubtedly strong among these people, for these forces have been dominant throughout Japanese history and are still much alive in modern Japan. Probably the figure of the aristocrat soldier, the man on horseback, was already important in Japanese society, for this shadowy figure of early Japan survived the deluge of borrowed Chinese civilization, to emerge at a later day as the backbone of a feudal Japan.

The religion of the early Japanese was primarily a naïve nature worship which, probably under Chinese influence, later came to include a certain amount of ancestor worship. Nameless at first, it was later given the Chinese-sounding name of Shinto, "the way of the

gods," to distinguish it from the continental religion of Buddhism. Shinto was based on a simple feeling of awe in the presence of any surprising or awesome phenomenon of nature — a waterfall, a mountain crag, a large tree, a peculiarly shaped stone, or even some lowly thing awesome only in its capacity for irritation, such as an insect. Anything awe inspiring was called *kami*, a word usually translated as "god" but basically meaning "above," and by extension "superior." This simple Shinto concept of deity should be borne in mind in trying to understand the deification in modern Japan of living emperors and of all Japanese soldiers who have died for their country.

Places where people often felt a sense of awe became cult places and eventually shrines. Today tens of thousands of such shrines dot the landscape of Japan. Some are now great institutions dating back to shadowy antiquity, others merely miniature edifices of stone or wood recently erected in front of an old oak tree or in a deep recess of a cave.

The underlying stream of Shinto today remains little changed since prehistoric times. Much has been done during the past 1,500 years to make an organized religion of this simple nature worship, and, more recently, by emphasizing the early mythology connected with Shinto, to employ it as a force for national solidarity and an inspiration for fanatical patriotism. But despite these imposed superstructures, the true basis of Shinto remains unchanged, a simple and naïve nature worship.

The possessors of the iron and bronze culture first crossed from Korea to northern Kyushu and western Honshu about the first century of the Christian era,

but these migrations from Korea to Japan continued for several centuries longer. As their numbers in Japan increased, they pushed their way up the broad highway of the Inland Sea to the central portion of Japan, conquering and absorbing the earlier inhabitants as they went.

One of the clans which, according to its own misty traditions, moved up the Inland Sea from an earlier home in Kyushu, finally settled in the small Yamato Plain not far from the eastern end of the Inland Sea. There it grew and prospered, establishing offshoots in new areas and absorbing other clans, until it had won a vague suzerainty over all of central and western Japan and even over parts of southern Korea.

Japanese control over southern Korea is represented in traditional Japanese history as the result of a semi-miraculous conquest by a warrior empress. A more plausible explanation would be that clans in southern Korea, feeling themselves more akin to related clans which had earlier crossed to Japan, sought aid from the peoples of western Japan against new invaders from northern Korea. In any case, Japanese power in southern Korea was apparently at its height in the second half of the fourth century and gradually waned thereafter, coming to an end in the year 562.

The suzerainty of the Yamato clan within Japan did not extinguish the autonomous rights of the other clans, but the priest-chief of the Yamato group became the chief among clan chiefs, and the special cults of this clan became the principal cults of the whole land. In this way worship of the Sun Goddess, the mythologi-

cal progenitress of the chiefs of the Yamato clan, became the supreme cult of Japanese Shinto.

From the priest-chiefs of the Yamato clan, who gained supremacy over their fellow priest-chiefs during the third or fourth century, stemmed the Japanese imperial family. This was not so spectacular an origin as the direct descent from a Sun Goddess claimed in Japanese tradition. Nevertheless it was an origin of great antiquity when compared with the origins of other ruling families of the world. And the suzerainty of the Yamato clan was the start of the Japanese state itself, a loose association of clans under one supreme clan — scarcely the empire described in traditional Japanese history, but unmistakably the beginning of a new nation.



Chapter III

THE COMING OF CHINESE CIVILIZATION

The peoples of northern Europe have always been conscious of their double heritage—their primitive Teutonic ancestry and the cultural legacy of ancient Greece and Rome. Similarly, the Japanese have a double historical heritage—the primitive stock of early Japan and the civilization of China. As in northern Europe, true history only started for Japan when the broad stream of a highly developed civilization reached its shores and, in a new geographic setting, combined with the simple native traditions of a primitive people to form a new culture, derived directly from the old civilization but differentiated from it by new geographic and racial ingredients.

The people who formed the early Yamato state in Japan had long had some contact with Chinese civilization, as may be seen from their early use of the Chinese bronze mirror. Fresh immigrants from Korea continued to bring to Japan the arts and sciences of the continent, and some knowledge of writing probably penetrated to the Japanese from China at a relatively early date. However, the first borrowings from China

were made unconsciously and very slowly. Not until the second half of the sixth century did the Japanese become fully conscious of the advantages of the superior continental civilization and the desirability of learning more about it. The result was a sudden acceleration in the rate at which elements of Chinese culture were imported into the islands and absorbed by the Japanese.

Why this spurt in the long process of learning from China should have come at just this moment in Japanese history is not easy to determine. The Japanese people may have reached a level of cultural attainment and political organization then, which for the first time permitted more rapid and more conscious learning from abroad. And the renewed vigor displayed by Chinese culture at that time may have facilitated the process.

China's history as a highly civilized part of the world reaches back to the second millennium before Christ. Its first great period as a colossal military empire came during the period of Rome's greatness, roughly from about 250 B.C. to 200 A.D. An era of political disunion and disruption followed, and came to an end only in the second half of the sixth century, when a new and greater Chinese empire emerged from the chaos of three centuries of civil wars and barbarian invasions. The new Chinese empire was far richer and stronger than the first. In fact, during the seventh and eighth centuries China was, with little doubt, the richest and most powerful land in the whole world. This period was known by the dynastic name of T'ang, a period of unprecedented grandeur and might, and of brilliant cultural attainments. It is small wonder that the primi-

tive Japanese in their isolated island country felt the reflected glory of the new Chinese empire and awoke to a new awareness of the great land across the sea.

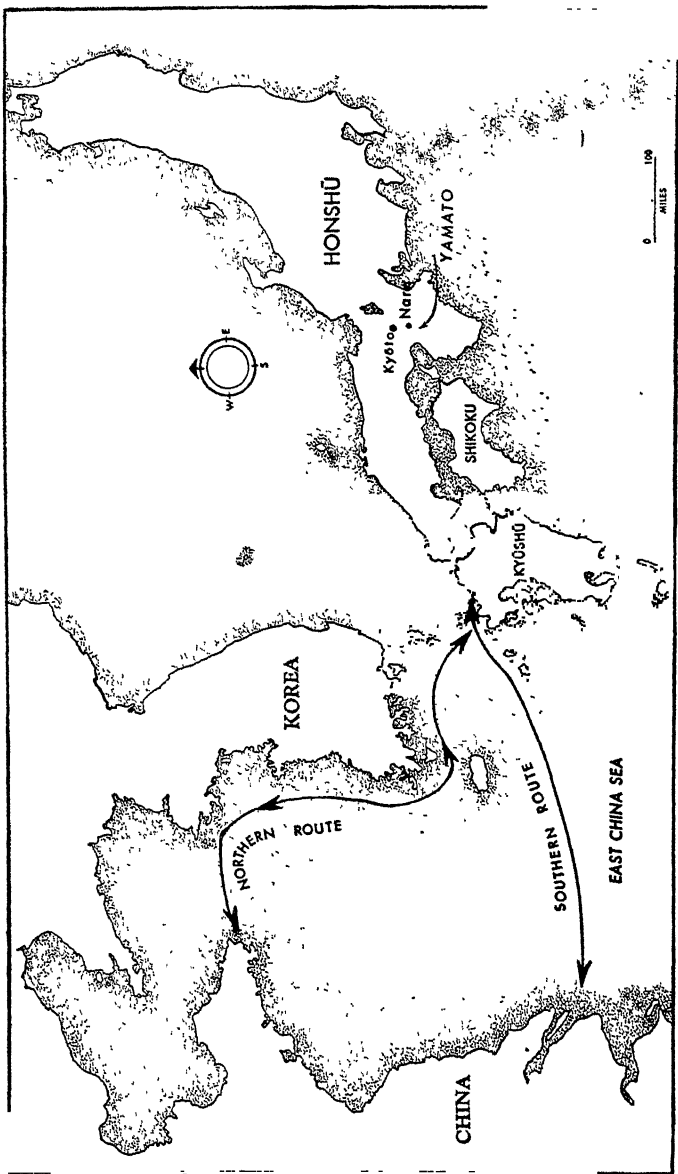
The start of the heavy flow of Chinese influence to Japan is usually dated about 552, the year when the Buddhist religion is said to have been officially introduced to the Yamato clan by a missionary from a kingdom in southern Korea. Actually, Buddhism had probably entered Japan even earlier, but this incident affords a convenient date to mark the time when the Japanese first started consciously to learn from the Chinese.

During the next few centuries Buddhism served as an important vehicle for the transmission of Chinese culture to Japan. Buddhism is by origin an Indian religion. It had slowly spread to China and had won a place of importance in Chinese culture during the troubled era between the two great empires. It was a vigorous missionary religion at that time, and missionary zeal carried it beyond China to Korea and from there to Japan. Korean, Chinese, and even occasional Indian priests came to Japan from the sixth to eighth centuries. In turn, scores of Japanese converts went to China to learn more of the new faith. Returning from the continent, these Japanese student priests, even more than foreign missionary teachers, took the lead in transmitting to Japan the new religion and many other aspects of Chinese civilization. They were the true pioneers in planting and nurturing in Japan the borrowed culture of China.

In the second half of the sixth century Buddhism and other new influences from abroad so affected the Yamato clan that clashes broke out between factions

favoring the acceptance of Buddhism and other continental ideas and opposition groups which resisted the new religion and all change. The victory of the pro-Buddhist faction in about 587 cleared the way for a more rapid importation and acceptance of Chinese ideas and knowledge, and under the able leadership of the crown prince, Shotoku, many startling reforms were undertaken.

One of the most important innovations of Prince Shotoku was the sending of a large official embassy to China in the year 607. This embassy, and many others following its precedent during the next two centuries, played a vital role in the great period of learning from China. Although their immediate political significance was slight, and the economic importance of the exchange of goods carried on under their auspices was limited, the cultural influence of the embassies was tremendous. The Japanese leaders, showing extraordinary wisdom for a people only just emerging into the light of civilization, carefully chose promising young scholars and artists to accompany the embassies in order to study at the sources of knowledge in China. These young men, selected for their knowledge of Chinese literature, philosophy, history, or Buddhist theology and ritual, or for their skill in the arts of painting, poetry, or music, studied in China during the year of the embassy's stay, and some remained in China for a decade or two between embassies. Upon their return to Japan, they became leaders in their respective fields, the men most responsible for the successful transmission to this isolated land of the science, arts, and ideals of the great continental civilization.



EARLY ROUTES BETWEEN JAPAN AND CHINA

Students who had returned from China formed an important element in a clique at the Yamato court which seized power through a carefully engineered coup in 645. From that time on the Yamato state was definitely committed to a policy of trying to create in Japan a small replica of China, a miniature T'ang in the forested islands on the eastern fringes of the civilized world.

With the glory of China before their eyes, it was little wonder that the Japanese made this attempt. Other petty states in Korea, Manchuria, and on the southwestern borders of China, dazzled by the grandeur and might of T'ang, were making the same attempt. Truly amazing, however, were the zeal and energy with which the Japanese approached the problem, displaying an enthusiasm for learning which promised great things for their remote and backward land.

Under the influence of Chinese ideas, the Japanese for the first time conceived the idea of the Yamato state as an empire, and at that, an empire on an equal footing with China. Prince Shotoku even dared to phrase a letter to the Chinese emperor as coming from the Emperor of the Rising Sun to the Emperor of the Setting Sun. With the new imperial concept, the ruler of the Yamato state for the first time assumed the dignity and majesty of an emperor. The priest-chief of the clan became in theory all-powerful, an absolute monarch in the Chinese tradition. But he did not lose his original role as high priest. He retained a dual position. Even today the Japanese emperor is in theory the Shinto high priest of ancient Yamato tradition, and at

the same time the all-powerful secular ruler of Chinese tradition.

Possibly also under the influence of Chinese social concepts and of the Chinese prejudice against ruling empresses, the ancient custom of rule by women came to a definite end in Japan in the first half of the eighth century, after an unfortunate incident between a ruling empress and a Buddhist priest. Only many centuries later, long after the imperial line had become politically insignificant, did women again appear on the throne. Japanese women, who in the earliest times had enjoyed a position of social and political dominance over men, gradually sank to a status of complete subservience to them. Their rights and influence in early feudal society seem still to have been considerable, but in time even these rights were lost, as the women of Japan became socially and intellectually mere handmaids of the dominant male population.

Below the emperor the Japanese created a complex central government patterned after the tremendous centralized administration of T'ang China, one of the most highly developed and complex governments the world has ever seen. Under a Supreme Council of State, with its Prime Minister and Ministers of the Left and Right, were eight ministries, in concept not unlike the departments of our own government. Under the ministries in turn came scores of bureaus and other offices.

This organization was fantastically over developed for the needs of a small and loosely organized state, still close to a primitive clan society. Naturally much of the central government was little more than a paper organization which functioned, if at all, far differently

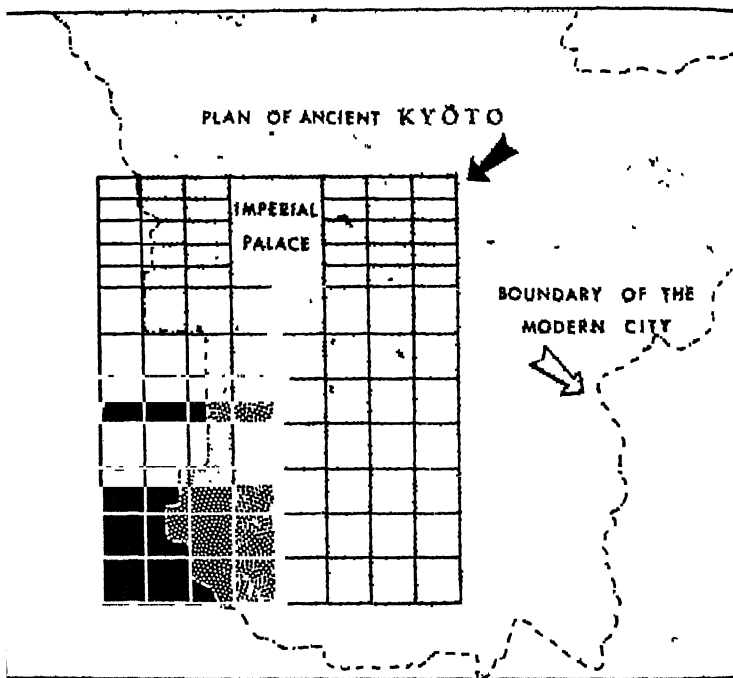
from the Chinese prototypes. But the wonder is not that the Japanese fell short of complete success in creating a Chinese type of central government in Yamato. The surprising thing is that they had the ambition and energy to undertake such a gigantic and grandiose task, and that they already had sufficient understanding of the principles and mastery of the mechanism of Chinese government to create a fair semblance of its complex central administration.

One gains some idea of the scope of the undertaking and the degree of success achieved by considering the capital cities founded by the Japanese as part of their attempt to transform Japan into a little T'ang. In earlier ages there had been no cities, towns, nor even any semi-permanent buildings. Now the Japanese attempted to build a capital city comparable to Ch'ang-an, the great capital of T'ang, a metropolis of close to one million population and very probably the greatest city in the world at that time.

Ch'ang-an was a great rectangle in shape, some five miles by six miles, surrounded by massive walls. A magnificent palace stood at the northern end of the city and broad straight thoroughfares divided it neatly in checkerboard fashion. The first Japanese imitation of Ch'ang-an was undertaken in the year 710 near the modern town of Nara in the Yamato plain. The Japanese naturally reduced the scale, allowing the new capital an area of some two and a half by three miles. They failed to build the customary Chinese city wall, and the population of the capital was so far short of the goal that the western half of the city was never built up at all; but broad thoroughfares were laid out, and

stately tile-roofed Buddhist temples and probably imposing palaces and residences were constructed. Even today several of these Buddhist temples still stand, the oldest wooden structures in the world and the finest remaining examples of Far Eastern architecture of the Tang epoch.

Toward the end of the eighth century, the Japanese court, possibly with a view to escaping the increasing influence of the great Buddhist temples which ringed the Nara capital, decided to abandon this first city and



PLAN OF ANCIENT KYOTO

build a new capital. In 794 this second city was laid out at Kyoto, a few miles north of Nara. Again the scale was grandiose, a rectangle some three by three and a half miles, and again the Chinese city wall and the western half of the city never materialized. But this second capital never disappeared, as did the first. It survived the vicissitudes of the ages, remaining the imperial capital of Japan until 1868, and the checker-board pattern of the principal streets of Kyoto today still reflects accurately the Chinese-style city laid out over 1,000 years ago.

The creation of a central government in Japan based on Chinese models was an easier task than the creation of the Chinese type of provincial administration. Clan spirit and clan autonomy were still too strong to tolerate the direct rule of all parts of the land by a bureaucracy dispatched to the provincial centers from the court. But the Japanese at least created the outward forms of the Chinese provincial system. The land was divided into prefectures and sub-prefectures, and over these were placed officials with high-sounding titles. Since most of these provincial posts, however, were given to local aristocrats, control from the central government remained vague and probably subject to the tolerance of local leaders.

Perhaps the most daring step taken by the Japanese was an attempt to adopt the Chinese system of land-ownership and taxation. In early T'ang China, agricultural land was in theory nationalized and distributed equally among the peasants, so that each adult tax-paying male could carry an equal share of the taxes. This he paid partly in produce and partly in labor, or

in military service, which was considered a form of labor for the state.

Even in well-organized China, with its highly trained bureaucracy, this cumbersome system worked imperfectly, tending to break down completely every few decades. The Japanese wrote the system into elaborate law codes drawn up on Chinese models. To put it into practice in clan-ridden Japan was a different matter. For a century or so, the system did operate after a fashion in the capital area and in localities held directly by the Yamato clan, but in more remote parts of the country it was a dead letter from the start.

Closely connected with the Chinese tax system was the huge peasant conscript army it provided. China, with its long frontiers and warlike nomad neighbors to the north, needed such large levies, but they were quite meaningless in isolated Japan. A so-called army was created from peasant conscripts of the capital areas where the tax system was in force, but these peasant soldiers never constituted anything more than labor gangs. Despite the creation on paper of a foot-soldier army, the aristocrat on horseback remained the true Japanese fighting man.

The process of learning and borrowing from China was of course not limited to the political field. In fact, what the Japanese were learning at this time in cultural and intellectual fields had much more prolonged influence in Japan than did the borrowed political institutions. The latter for the most part decayed rapidly, and eventually disappeared in all but name, but many of the religious concepts, artistic skills, and literary forms learned during these centuries, far from losing

their original vigor, developed and helped form the basic cultural patterns of later ages.

After the triumph of the pro-Buddhist faction at the Yamato court in the second half of the sixth century, this continental religion enjoyed the uninterrupted favor of the central government. Splendid temples were erected at government expense; impressive Buddhist ceremonies were sponsored by the court and the noble families. Many a Japanese emperor retired from the heavy burdens of his dual secular and religious role to the more peaceful life of the Buddhist monk. As was the case with so much else in the newly imported continental culture, the influence of Buddhism was still weak in the provinces, but in the capital district the new religion was supreme, and enjoyed official favor far greater than that afforded even the native cults of Shinto.

With Buddhism came many of the arts and crafts of China. The Buddhist temples were themselves great architectural achievements, and housed beautiful and deeply spiritual bronze and wooden statues of Buddhist divinities, exquisite religious paintings, and other magnificent works of art. Some had been brought from the continent. Others of equal beauty and artistic merit were produced in Japan, showing how readily the Japanese acquired the artistic skills developed during the centuries by the Chinese.

Several temple halls and store rooms dating from the seventh and eighth centuries still stand, filled with the artistic achievements of that age. They attest to the amazing success with which the Japanese transplanted much of the best in Chinese artistic tradition and indi-

cate the early development of a happy combination of artistic taste and superb craftsmanship which ever since has characterized the Japanese.

In art, the Japanese could have had no better teachers than the Chinese, but in the field of writing Chinese influence was less happy. Japanese is a language of simple phonetic structure and highly inflected words. Hence it can be easily written by phonetic symbols, and these are necessary to represent the language properly. The Chinese writing system, on the other hand, leaves little possibility for phonetic transcription or for the representation of inflections. Since Chinese lacks inflection and since in ancient Chinese the words tended to be monosyllabic, the Chinese found it possible to use a writing system in which each monosyllabic word or word-root is represented by a special symbol, called a character or ideograph. These characters range from a simple line, — to represent "one," to more complex characters, such as the monstrosity in twenty-five strokes 灣 representing the word "bay."

The Chinese student has always been faced with the grim necessity of mastering several thousand of these characters before he could be considered literate. The ancient Japanese were faced with this and with the added difficulty that the Chinese writing system was not suitable to the writing of Japanese. Had Japan been the neighbor of some Western country using a phonetic script, such as our own alphabet, the Japanese would have quickly learned to write their native tongue with efficiency and ease. Unfortunately geographic accident decreed otherwise, and the Japanese were burdened with the crushing weight of the most cumber-

some of writing systems. Like the youth of China, the youth of Japan was sentenced generation after generation to years of mentally numbing memory work, simply in order to learn the rudiments of writing.

Because of the difficulties involved and also because of the tremendous prestige of all things Chinese, the ancient Japanese made little effort to write their own language. Proper names and brief poems in Japanese were spelled out laboriously with one Chinese character used phonetically for each syllable, but little else was attempted. Instead the Japanese wrote in pure and often reasonably good classical Chinese. Using Chinese much as medieval Europeans used Latin, they wrote their histories, geographies, law books, and official documents of all sorts. They even attempted to imitate Chinese literary forms, and men of education prided themselves on their ability to compose poems in Chinese.

The most interesting and significant form of literary endeavor at this time was history writing. This was to be expected in a cultural daughter of China, for the Chinese have always been historically minded, prone to take the historical approach to any subject or situation. The writing of history was always an important function of government in China, and as a result the Chinese were inveterate and extremely good historians.

Since Japan was in its own eyes an empire on the Chinese model, obviously she too needed an official history. Several early efforts to write one resulted in two extant works, the *Nihon Shoki*, a great official history compiled in 720, and a smaller work called the *Kojiki*,

which is said to have appeared in 712, and may have been one of the preliminary drafts on which the *Nihon Shoki* was based. Both are extremely important works, for they are fairly reliable historical accounts for the period from about A.D. 400 on, and they contain much naïve mythology and historical tradition from earlier eras which throw a great deal of light on primitive Japanese beliefs and social institutions before they were submerged under the flood of more advanced ideas and institutions from China.

However, the statesmen and historians of the time were not satisfied with a simple, uncolored presentation of the mythology and historical traditions of the Yamato clan as transmitted orally by professional court reciters. They were determined to prove by their work that the rulers of Yamato were and always had been true emperors, unique rulers of Japan, and that Japan was a great and old country, worthy of standing beside China. Strengthening their mythology and scanty historical traditions with elements from Chinese philosophy and history, they wove the whole into an impressive pseudo-history. The Sun Goddess, one of the chief objects of worship by the ancient Yamato clan, was cast in the role of progenitress of the imperial line. Her grandson was described as descending to Japan from heaven, his grandson, in turn, as becoming the first emperor, ascending the throne in 660 B.C. This date, like so much else of this pseudo-history, is of course pure fantasy, possibly arrived at in the early seventh century simply by counting back 1,260 years, a major time cycle according to Chinese reckoning.

The place of the *Nihon Shoki* and *Kojiki* in the his-

toriography of Japan is fundamental, but unfortunately that is not their only claim to fame. They were to be lifted from comparative obscurity many centuries later by narrow-minded patriots and ultra-nationalists seeking in the primitive pre-Chinese periods of Japanese history native virtues which would justify their own belief in the superiority of Japan. Despite the extraordinary naïveté and occasional indecency, according to Western standards, of the early mythology preserved in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*, the modern Japanese have in a sense made these two books into bibles of ultra-nationalism; and in recent years official policy has even forced upon the Japanese people the acceptance of their historical absurdities as sober facts.



Chapter IV

THE GROWTH OF A NATIVE CULTURE

The period of greatest learning from China lasted from the late sixth century until the early ninth century, when a subtle change began to take place in the attitude of the Japanese toward China. The prestige of all things Chinese remained great, but the ninth century Japanese were no longer so anxious to learn from China or so ready to admit the superiority of all phases of Chinese civilization over their own.

One reason for this slowly changing attitude toward Chinese culture was the political decay of T'ang, which became marked as the ninth century progressed. Perhaps even more fundamental was the intellectual growth of the Japanese themselves, resulting in a gradual reassertion of a spirit of cultural independence. Three centuries of assiduous learning from the Chinese had created, at least in the capital district, a cultured society with its own political and social institutions, patterned of course after Chinese models but changed and adapted to fit Japanese needs by over two centuries of conscious experimentation and slow unconscious modification. The Japanese were no longer a

primitive people, overawed by the vastly superior continental civilization and eager to imitate blindly anything Chinese. Japan was reaching a state of intellectual maturity and was ready to develop a culture of its own.

One sign of the changing attitude in Japan was the ending of official contacts with China. The last of the great embassies left Japan for T'ang in 838 and returned the next year. Later embassies were proposed but were argued down by courtiers who felt their value no longer warranted the decided risks of the trip across the East China Sea. Some private traders and student monks continued to travel between the two lands, but for the most part Japan lapsed into its earlier state of virtual isolation from the continent, and this isolation in turn made the Japanizing of imported Chinese civilization all the more inevitable and rapid.

The slow rise of native Japanese culture is perhaps best observed in the development of an adequate means of writing the native tongue. This writing system was developed slowly during the ninth and tenth centuries by the process of using certain Chinese characters in greatly abbreviated form as simple phonetic symbols devoid of any specific meaning in themselves. Since the Chinese characters each represented one monosyllabic word or word-root, the phonetic symbols derived from them normally stood for a whole syllable, such as *ka*, *se*, or *mo*. The result was a syllabary and not an alphabet, such as our own system of writing.

The Japanese syllabary, or *kana* as it is called, was at first a confused affair. For one thing, the Chinese characters used were abbreviated in two different ways. In one system, called *hiragana*, the whole char-

acter was written in a very stylized or cursive form. Thus, the Chinese character 奴 meaning "slave" became the *hiragana* symbol ㇰ standing for the sound *nu*. In the other system, called *katakana*, some element of the character was chosen to represent the phonetic value of the whole. Thus, this same Chinese character for "slave" became the *katakana* symbol ㇱ also standing for *nu*. Another complexity was that the choice of characters for abbreviation as *kana* was at first quite haphazard, and usually several were used for any one syllable. In fact, both *hiragana* and *katakana* have only been standardized in recent decades, and variant *kana* forms are still commonly used in every day correspondence.

The Japanese syllabaries formed more clumsy systems of writing than alphabets, but they were, nevertheless, reasonably efficient systems for writing Japanese, and with their development appeared a growing literature in the native tongue. As stated previously, poems had been composed in Japanese even at the height of the Chinese period, and had been laboriously written down by the use of unabbreviated Chinese characters to represent each syllable phonetically; but these poems were usually extremely brief, following a strict pattern of thirty-one syllables, merely enough to suggest a scene or an emotion. The classical Japanese poem was delicate and beautiful within its narrow bounds, but it was distinctly limited as a literary form.

The *kana* syllabaries made possible more extensive literary work in Japanese, and in the tenth century stories, travel diaries, and essays appeared, written in Japanese which sometimes achieved considerable liter-

ary distinction. For the most part educated men, much like their counterparts in medieval Europe, scorned the use of their own tongue for any serious literary purpose and continued to write histories, essays, and various official documents in Chinese; but the women of the imperial court, who usually had insufficient education to write in Chinese, had no other medium for literary expression than their own language. As a result, while the men of the period were pompously writing bad Chinese, their ladies consoled themselves for their lack of education by writing good Japanese, and created, incidentally, Japan's first great prose literature.

The golden period of the first flowering of Japanese prose was in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Most of the writers were court ladies living in ease and indolence, and their commonest form of literary expression was the diary, liberally sprinkled with poems of thirty-one syllables to commemorate moments of deep emotional feeling. Some of the diaries told of travels, but more often they concerned the luxurious life and constant flirtation and love-making which characterized the court at this time.

The outstanding work of the period, however, was not a diary but a lengthy novel — the *Tale of Genji*, written by Lady Murasaki early in the eleventh century. This is an account of the love adventures of an imaginary Prince Genji, made slightly tedious to a modern reader by the similarity of his many experiences, but unquestionably a distinguished piece of writing and one of Japan's outstanding contributions to world literature.

The diaries and novels by court ladies were clear evidence of the existence of a true native Japanese culture. They had no clear prototypes in Chinese literature. Everything about them was distinctly Japanese. The transplanted Chinese civilization had flowered into a new culture, and the Japanese, a people but recently introduced to the art of writing, had produced a great literature of their own.

One may wonder why Japanese writing is still burdened with Chinese characters, if a thousand years ago the Japanese had already developed a phonetic script which was satisfactory for writing their language. The only explanation is the continued prestige of the Chinese language, and still more of the Chinese characters themselves. Learned writers inevitably tended to slip Chinese characters standing for individual uninflected words, such as nouns, into a Japanese text written in *kana*. From the twelfth and thirteenth centuries on, this became standard procedure, and eventually it became customary to write as many uninflected words and the roots of as many inflected words as possible with characters, leaving for *kana* only the tag ends of words, such as inflections which could not be represented conveniently by characters.

The natural complexities of such a mixed system of writing were increased by two other factors. Since thousands of Chinese words were gradually incorporated into the Japanese language, most of the characters stood not only for the Japanese version of the original Chinese word, but also for the corresponding Japanese word. It is as if the Chinese character for "water," 水, were to be used in English to represent

the word "water" in "water wheel" and also to represent the element *aqua* in "aquatic."

The second factor was that many Chinese characters stood for Chinese words which corresponded in meaning to several different Japanese words. For example, the Chinese word *shang*, written by the character 上, has Japanese equivalents variously read as *ue*, *kami*, *agaru*, *ageru*, and *noboru*, to list the commonest, just as it has such English equivalents as "on," "above," "upper," "to mount," and "to present." This multiplicity of Japanese readings for many characters and the coexistence of both Japanese and Chinese readings for most of them means that every line of modern Japanese presents a series of little problems in reading and interpretation. The result is a writing system of almost unparalleled difficulty and cumbersomeness, which has been a serious impediment to the intellectual and technical development of modern Japan.

The obvious cure for this situation would be to abandon the use of Chinese characters and to return to the pure phonetic writing as it existed around the year 1,000 — or, still better, to adopt the Latin alphabet. But this would be no easy task. In modern times tens of thousands of technical and scientific words have been borrowed from Chinese or coined in Japan by joining two or more Chinese characters and pronouncing the resulting compound in the Chinese way. Unfortunately, Chinese type words in the Japanese vocabulary run very strongly to homophones. A standard dictionary lists no less than twenty distinct words, mostly of Chinese type, pronounced *kōkō*, and an exhaustive list of more specialized scientific terminology would probably add

several dozen more. Because of these homophones, many, if not most, modern scientific terms, to be understood, must be seen as they are written in characters. Consequently, the dropping of Chinese characters from modern written Japanese would entail a wholesale modification of the technical and scientific vocabulary. Thousands of Chinese type words would have to be dropped, and new ones based on native Japanese roots or on words from Western languages would have to be substituted for them. It would be a tremendous undertaking, but in the long run probably well worth the attempt.

Although the appearance by the tenth and eleventh centuries of a new and distinctive Japanese culture was perhaps best seen in the literature of the time, it was evident in other fields also. The arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture all showed definite and sometimes marked signs of Japanese characteristics quite distinct from the original Chinese patterns, and political and social institutions changed so radically as to bear little resemblance to the Chinese prototypes.

The key figure of the Chinese political system was the bureaucrat, the scholar-civil servant who operated the complicated central government and went out to the provinces to collect taxes and maintain order. Thousands of these bureaucrats were required, and the recruiting of wise and capable men for the higher posts was a matter of crucial importance to the whole state. For this purpose, the Chinese had developed a system of civil service examinations. It centered around the great central university at Ch'ang-an where periodic examinations were given on classical subjects. Candi-

dates who succeeded best in the examinations went directly to high government posts. In this way, men of scholarly talents from all walks of life could reach positions of responsibility, and among the educated classes a vital tradition of public service was built up.

The Japanese borrowed only the outward forms of this system. With their strong traditions of clan loyalty and hereditary rights, they could not bring themselves to accept its spirit. They created a central university where the Chinese classics were studied and examinations were held, but only in rare cases did scholars with little family backing attain positions of much responsibility. In the provinces, political authority remained in the hands of local aristocrats masquerading as civil servants appointed by the central administration, while at the capital courtiers of noble lineage held most posts of importance, leaving to the scholar bureaucrats the humbler clerical jobs.

In China, the central government was constantly kept busy fighting the natural tendency for the tax-paying peasants and their lands to gravitate into the hands of powerful families with sufficient influence at court to protect their holdings from the encroachments of tax collectors. In Japan, this tendency was even stronger, for there was no powerful civil servant class to protect the interests of the state, and local aristocrats, in key positions as provincial officers, joined with court nobles in despoiling the public domain.

The nationalized land system had probably been a dead letter from the start in more remote parts of the country. During the late eighth and ninth centuries it decayed rapidly even in the capital district. Local men

of influence slowly built up tax-free estates, usually by illegal means, and court aristocrats acquired in their own names large tracts of land as rewards for their services or through political manipulations of a less honorable nature.

On the one hand, the local gentry needed protection for their holdings from the tax collectors of the central government. On the other hand, powerful court families and great monasteries were acquiring large tax-free estates, and needed local men to represent their interests on these lands. From these reciprocal needs a pattern of land-holding gradually developed in which provincial manors and estates were controlled and operated by local aristocrats but were owned, at least in theory, by influential court families or monasteries. The peasant, who came to have definite proprietary rights to his own little tract of land, gave to the local aristocrat, acting as estate manager, a generous portion of his produce; and the estate manager, in turn, passed on to the noble court family or great monastery a share of his income in payment for protection from the central government.

Tax-free manors grew and expanded during the eighth and ninth centuries until, by the tenth, the national domain had virtually disappeared. With its disappearance, the income of the state from taxes, the economic basis for the Chinese form of centralized government, dwindled to almost nothing. As a result, provincial governmental agencies, which had never been strong, withered away almost completely, leaving behind imposing but meaningless administrative titles, such as Governor or Vice-Governor. Even the central

administration became largely an empty shell, a great paper organization with court nobles sporting high titles but with little working personnel, scanty funds, and greatly reduced functions of government. The complex system of rule through eight ministries was for all practical purposes abandoned, and new and simplified organs of government were developed to handle what few political duties the central government still had.

The net result of all this was that centralized government ceased to exist for most parts of Japan. Each estate, freed from encroachment by tax collectors and other state agents, became a small autonomous domain, a semi-independent economic and political unit. The contacts it had with the outside world were not with any government agency but with the great court family or monastery which exercised a loose and distant control over it.

The noble court families and monasteries became, in a sense, multiple successors of the old centralized state. Any centralizing forces in the economic and political life of Japan were represented largely by them and not by the bureaus of the central government. These families and monasteries became to a certain degree states within the hollow framework of the old imperial government, each supported by the income from its own estates and, through family government or monastery administration, exercising many of the functions of government in its widely scattered manors throughout the land.

The imperial family, though retaining great prestige because of its past political role and its continuing position as leader in the Shinto cults, became in fact simply

one among these central economic and political units. It exercised a theoretical rule over a shadow government, but in reality it controlled only its own estates and lived on the income from them, and not from government taxes. In time, even control over its own private affairs was lost, as one of the court families, the Fujiwara, gradually won complete mastery over the imperial family by intrigue and skillful political manipulations.

The Fujiwara were a prolific family of many branches, descended from a courtier who had taken the lead in the pro-Chinese *coup d'état* of 645. The family had come to control many estates throughout the land and thus enjoyed an income probably greater than that of any other family, not excluding the imperial family itself. Its method of winning unchallenged dominance at the capital was to gain direct control over the imperial family through intermarriage. A daughter of the head of the family would be married to a young emperor, and the emperor, bored with the endless ceremonies required by his double role as secular and religious leader, would be easily persuaded to abdicate and retire to a simpler, freer life as soon as the son the Fujiwara girl had borne him was old enough to sit through these ceremonies in his place. This would leave a Fujiwara girl as empress dowager, and her father, the powerful head of a large and rich court family, as the grandfather of the new child emperor.


By such tactics the Fujiwara gained complete control over the imperial family during the middle decades of the ninth century. From that time on, it became cus-

tomary for the head of the Fujiwara family, instead of an imperial prince, to act as regent for a child emperor or to occupy the new post of Civil Dictator when an adult was on the throne. During the course of the ninth and tenth centuries, appointment to these two alternating posts, as well as to that of Prime Minister and to most of the other high offices in the central administration, became the hereditary right of members of the Fujiwara family, and the successive family heads completely overshadowed the emperors not only as the real holders of the reins of government but also as the openly recognized arbiters of taste and fashion at court.

In later centuries, the dominant role in the dwindling court aristocracy was from time to time regained by strong emperors, and the various official posts of the Fujiwara in time became almost meaningless, as all political power slipped away from the imperial court. However, the Fujiwara and offshoots of this great family retained their virtual monopoly of all high court posts almost without interruption from the late ninth century until the early nineteenth century.

In another country such a long and almost complete dominance exercised by one family over the imperial family would probably have resulted in a usurpation of the throne. Not so in Japan. Hereditary authority was so strong a force that outright usurpation was not to be contemplated. Instead, the Fujiwara set the time honored Japanese pattern of control from behind the scenes through a figurehead. Throughout most of Japanese history, it has probably been the rule rather

than the exception for the man or group in nominal political control to be in reality the pawn of some other man or group. This factor has in recent times tended to conceal the realities of Japanese politics, and has often confused and baffled the casual observer of the Japanese scene.


*Chapter V*THE DEVELOPMENT OF A
FEUDAL SOCIETY

During the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Fujiwara held the spotlight on the stage of Japanese history, but, despite the brilliance of the literary and artistic accomplishments of the court they dominated, others off stage were preparing the next acts in the drama. The capital aristocrats had transformed the borrowed civilization of China into a native culture, but they had lost control over the political and economic life of the country.

While the courtiers were going through the forms and ceremonies of little more than a sham government, and devoting their energies more to the arts of poetry-writing and love-making than to governing, the provincial aristocrats were gaining practical experience, managing their estates and ruling the peasants on these estates with hardly any control or direction from the capital. The decadent, effeminate courtiers at Kyoto were producing a literature and an art that future generations were to look back to with pride, but their less sophisticated and hardier country cousins were laying the foundations for an entirely new Japan.

The gradual decline of Chinese political institutions at the capital and the weakening of the central government's control over the provinces have made the period of Fujiwara supremacy appear to be one of unmitigated political decline. In reality the political decay at court was more than offset by the rapid growth of the once backward provincials in political experience and in general sophistication. During the height of the Chinese period they had participated but little in the brilliant culture transplanted from T'ang to the capital district, and they had been completely overshadowed by the noble families at court, but at the same time they were slowly absorbing much of the basic knowledge and many of the essential skills of the continental civilization. By the tenth and eleventh centuries they had reached a stage of cultural development which permitted them to start laying the broad foundations of a new society and a new political structure, entirely independent of the old patterns established by the court.

The central figure in this new society, as in the earlier clan society of the provinces, was the aristocratic fighting man on horseback. In ancient times he had been the soldier leader of the clan. Now he was the manager of a tax-free estate, defending his lands from marauders by his skill as a horseman and his prowess with the bow and sword. He had become a knight, resembling to a surprising degree his counterpart in the early feudal society of Europe.

Individual knights usually owed allegiance to court families or central monasteries which were the nominal owners of their estates, but this relationship, which had been the outgrowth of an early need for protection

from the tax collectors of the central government, afforded them no protection from their local enemies. For this, they needed the aid of other fighting men, the knights on other local estates. Quite naturally these warrior aristocrats began to form small local cliques for their mutual protection.

These cliques were held together by common interest, ties of marriage and of old friendships, and sometimes the qualities of leadership displayed by a local warrior hero. Particularly in the eastland did such associations of knights flourish, possibly because the greatest concentration of estates in the whole land was to be found on the Kanto Plain around the modern city of Tokyo, and also because the continuing campaigns against the retreating Ainu in northern Honshu made the need for such associations all the more evident.

The tenth and eleventh centuries saw many clashes and small wars between different groups of knights in the provinces. These contests are often described in histories as revolts against imperial authority, for one faction would resist domination by another faction which enjoyed the backing of the central government. The provincial knights, however, for the most part showed little desire to assume the governmental prerogatives of the Kyoto court. They were content to leave the central government undisturbed as long as they themselves could continue to rule the peasants on their own estates and to organize their cliques for local defense without interference from the capital.

The court aristocrats, rather than the knights themselves, eventually brought these provincial warriors onto the capital stage. The courtiers, lacking all knowl-

edge of the arts of war themselves, would from time to time bring knights from their provincial estates to the capital to help protect their interests or to overawe their enemies. Sometimes the knights were used to defend the court from the great local monasteries, which often attempted to force their will upon the effete courtiers by a joint display of Buddhist relics and armed might drawn from the warriors of the monastery estates. At other times, the knights were brought in to settle, by a show of force or by actual conflict, factional disputes over the imperial succession and the headship of the Fujiwara family.

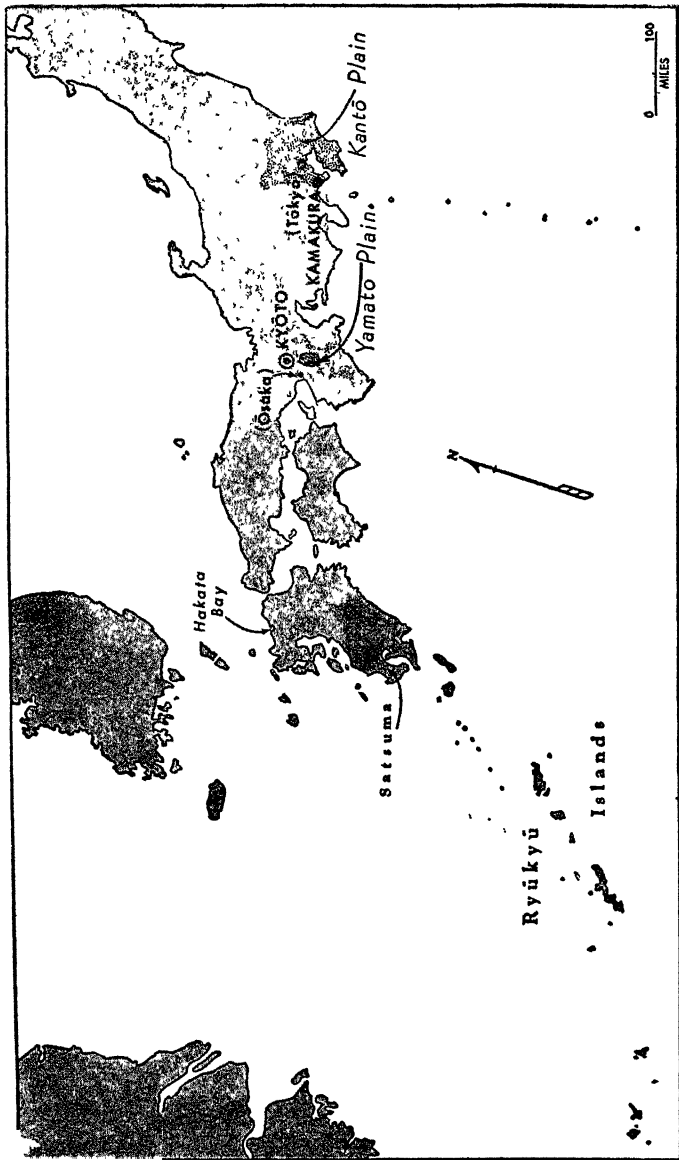
In the middle of the twelfth century disputes of the latter type led to fairly large scale clashes between the two strongest warrior cliques of the time in support of two quarreling court factions. The warrior cliques centered around two great provincial families, the Taira and the Minamoto, both of whom claimed descent from cadet branches of the imperial family which, because of declining income, had been forced to seek their fortunes in the provinces. There they had merged with the local aristocrats and had risen to leadership among them because of their prestige as descendants of emperors.

As a result of two small wars in 1156 and 1160, one of the court factions won out over the other. A far more significant outcome was the sudden realization on the part of Taira Kiyomori, leader of the victorious Taira clique of warriors, that he and his band now formed the paramount military force in the land and that the emperor and his court were powerless in his hands. To the consternation of the courtiers, Kiyomori

and his leading knights settled down in Kyoto and took over control of the court, Kiyomori taking for himself the title of Prime Minister and adopting the old Fujiwara trick of marrying his own daughter to the emperor and putting her son on the throne.

By settling in Kyoto and becoming in effect a new group of courtiers, Kiyomori and his henchmen weakened their hold over the knights of their clique who remained on their estates in the provinces and who tended to resent the position and pretensions of the court aristocracy. Meanwhile the remnants of the Minamoto family slowly recouped their fortune in their old family stronghold in eastern Japan. Eventually the Minamoto felt themselves strong enough again to challenge Taira supremacy, and in a bitterly fought war between 1180 and 1185 they completely crushed the Taira faction. The Taira leaders either were killed or committed suicide, and the new boy emperor who was the grandson of Kiyomori perished with his Taira relatives in the final battle of the war.

Minamoto Yoritomo, the leader of the triumphant Minamoto faction, profiting from the mistakes of the Taira, left Kyoto and the court alone and settled down at the small seaside town of Kamakura, near the estates of his relatives and his partisans in the Kanto region of eastern Japan. In typically Japanese fashion, he decided to permit the emperors and Fujiwara to continue their sham civil government unmolested. He took for himself only the title of Shogun, a term perhaps best translated as "Generalissimo," and he rewarded his men not with government posts but with the more lucrative positions of estate managers in manors formerly con-



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trolled by members of the Taira faction. Although personally commanding the only strong military force in all Japan, Yoritomo was content to permit the continuation of the fiction that an emperor and his civil government ruled the land and that he himself was merely the commander of the emperor's army. Yoritomo and his band, however, constituted the only effective central government Japan possessed, and Kamakura became the true political capital of the land. Thus Japan's first military dictatorship was established.

The administration which Yoritomo and his successors set up at Kamakura was not in theory or in outward form a national government. It was merely a simple but efficient organization designed to control the relatively small band of knights that owed personal allegiance to the Minamoto. It was, in fact, nothing more than a "family" government, not of a single clan as had been customary in ancient times, but of a loose association of knights held together by bonds of family relationship or by long-standing ties of friendship and traditions of mutual support.

Under the Shogun, three small offices were created as the chief organs of this "family" government — an office to watch over and control the affairs of the individual knight members of the clique, an administrative board, and a final court of appeal, making legal decisions based upon the customary law which had gradually developed among the provincial warrior aristocrats during the preceding two centuries and which the Kamakura administration issued in codified form. The provincial organization of this government was even simpler than its central administration. It consisted only

of the individual knights themselves, free to manage their individual estates as each saw best, but organized for mutual defense under a constable in each province.

The whole "family" government of the Minamoto may have been designed simply to control the private affairs of the clique and not to administer the nation as a whole, but by controlling the members of this group, who had now been spread throughout the whole land as the key class of estate managers and local knights, the government at Kamakura effectively controlled all classes of society throughout Japan. Its member knights ruled the peasants, who were serfs on their estates, and they also controlled the purse strings of the court aristocracy, which derived its income from these same estates. Although it maintained the fiction of being a private organization, the Kamakura regime had become the most effective central government Japan had yet known; and the people of all classes, realizing that Kamakura alone had the power to enforce its decisions, went there rather than to Kyoto for justice and looked to the Shogun's administration rather than to the emperor's court for leadership.

An ambitious retired emperor in 1221 dared challenge this indirect and unannounced control of national life by Kamakura, but found himself overwhelmed by the Minamoto cohorts. The incident revealed conclusively that imperial rule was at an end. The imperial family and the noble families around it continued to receive their income from the estates they nominally owned, but as far as political realities were concerned, the emperor and his court had become anachronistic survivals of an earlier age, with no valid place in the

political order of feudalism. Yet the prestige of the imperial line and its continuing religious functions kept alive the fiction of imperial rule during the following six centuries of feudalism, until new conditions made possible its reappearance as a significant element in the political life of the nation.

The Kamakura system centered around the Shogun, the leader of the clique, and in theory the only unifying force was the personal loyalty of each individual knight to the Shogun. In practice, however, the person of the Shogun soon became an unimportant factor, and the system proved to have amazing strength of itself.

Yoritomo, the first Shogun, jealously rid himself of his hero brother and other leading members of his family. After the death of Yoritomo factional strife among his descendants, fostered by his wife's relatives, who had the family name of Hojo, soon led to the elimination of his heirs. In 1219 an assassination ended the Minamoto line, and thereafter the Hojo, who in typical Japanese fashion contented themselves with the title of "Regent," ruled through a puppet Shogun, first chosen from the Fujiwara family and then from the imperial family.

Thus, one finds in thirteenth century Japan an emperor who was a mere puppet in the hands of a retired emperor and of a great court family, the Fujiwara, who together controlled a government which was in fact merely a sham government, completely dominated by the private government of the Shogun — who in turn was a puppet in the hands of a Hojo regent. The man behind the throne had become a series of men, each one in turn controlled by the man behind himself.

The rise of the provincial warrior class to a position of dominance produced a new culture as well as a new political system. The literature and art of the tenth and eleventh centuries had been an expression of the culture of the narrow court society under Fujiwara leadership. The new culture naturally inherited much from this glorious period, but the most significant and, in time, dominant elements in it came from the warrior class of the provinces.

The knight brought with him his own concepts and attitudes, which were in some respect similar to those of his counterpart in medieval Europe. In contrast to the effete courtier at Kyoto, he gloried in a life of warfare, in the Spartan virtues, and in the ascetic practices of self-discipline and physical and mental toughening. He made a cult of his sword, and this cult, revived in recent years, accounts for the extraordinary pride of the modern Japanese officer in his old-fashioned, long, curved sword. The warrior reemphasized personal loyalties and the importance of family ties, and his two outstanding virtues, Spartan indifference to suffering or death and a great capacity for unswerving personal loyalty, became characteristics of the Japanese people as a whole.

The warrior's tastes in literature produced a whole new type of prose writing — the heroic tale of warfare, quite different from the diaries and novels of the court ladies. These martial tales usually centered around the conflicts between the Taira and Minamoto factions, which became the central themes of much of later Japanese literature.

The successive triumphs of the Taira and Minamoto

marked the commencement of 700 years of unbroken rule by warrior aristocrats. Small wonder that the impress of feudalism lies so heavily upon the nation and that the attitudes and ideals of the feudal warriors have sunk so deeply into the consciousness of the Japanese people. Accustomed for so long to rule by wearers of the sword, even in recent times the Japanese have looked instinctively to their military men for leadership and have been prone to assume that military men *per se* were always honest and sincere. Seven centuries of domination by the feudal military class has left patterns of thought and behavior which have not been easy to discard in recent times and which will not be easily erased even today.

Accompanying the political transformation of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was a great religious awakening. Significant new currents appeared in Japanese Buddhism, and these currents became the main flow of Buddhism as it has existed in Japan ever since. The appearance of new trends in religion at this time was unquestionably connected with the increasing spread of culture and knowledge to classes outside of the old court aristocracy — to the provincial gentry, the townspeople, and even to the peasantry; and the rapid triumph of the new Buddhism over older forms of the religion was certainly in part the result of the rise of new classes to prominence in national life.

The Buddhist awakening of early feudal times was also partly the outgrowth of new influences from China, as contacts with the continent, fostered by a growing international trade in Far Eastern waters, became more frequent and increasingly significant. Bud-

dhist monasteries themselves led in establishing these new contacts with China, sponsoring trading ventures overseas with a view to obtaining funds for the erection of new buildings. Many fine thirteenth and fourteenth century temples were to some extent paid for by such trading ventures, as was also the beautiful "Great Buddha" at Kamakura, erected in the second half of the thirteenth century and said still to be the largest bronze statue in the world.

Buddhism came to China as a highly intellectualized philosophy with rich and colorful religious ceremonials that appealed to the upper classes, but during the T'ang and post-T'ang periods a growing emphasis on the less austere and more popular philosophic concepts of Buddhism led to a general philosophic reorientation and popularization which made it increasingly a religion of the people.

Early Indian Buddhism stressed the evil and vanity of human existence. It held out little hope for improving man's lot in this world but centered its interest primarily on what it called "release from the cycle of rebirth." The Buddhists accepted the common Indian belief that the individual is born again and again into this world. He may be born into a better state or a worse one, depending on the sort of life he lives in each successive rebirth. This process goes on endlessly unless the individual realizes that his own desire for things that cannot really satisfy him brings about his repeated rebirth into an incurably evil world: the only way to escape "the cycle of rebirth" is to overcome all desire. One who has done this has attained *nirvana*, a state of mind in which one is indifferent to life's trials and

the individual ego loses its identity in the cosmos, much as a single drop of water loses its identity in the vastness of the ocean.

Such a pessimistic attitude toward life had little appeal for the Chinese and other East Asiatic peoples, who have always tended to regard human life as essentially good. When Buddhism first came to China, the beautiful art, sacred literature, colorful ceremonies, broad learning, and peaceful monastic life, which had all become integral parts of the Buddhist religion, recommended it to the Chinese as much, if not more, than the type of philosophy embodied in original Buddhism. In fact, Buddhism could have had no broad philosophic appeal to the masses in China and Japan until a philosophic reemphasis and reorientation had taken place.

Perhaps the most startling development in this reorientation was the change in the concept of *nirvana* itself. For the common believer it became a Paradise where the individual soul went for an after-life of bliss, while innumerable hells, rivaling Dante's creations, became the deserts of the wicked. Arguing that the degenerate age in which they lived made enlightenment and salvation by one's own efforts impossible, popular preachers of the time put forth the doctrine that salvation now was possible by the grace of another — through the intervention of one of the host of gods and demi-gods with which the Buddhist pantheon had become peopled. Belief, not philosophic enlightenment or exemplary conduct, became the chief emphasis, and calling on the name of Buddha became the most meaningful act of faith.

These doctrines found vigorous expression in Japan

in the tenth and eleventh centuries and eventually resulted in the development of new sects of Japanese Buddhism, quite different from the earlier sects established in Japan in the eighth and ninth centuries, which had emphasized for the most part fine points of metaphysics and theology. The first of the new popular sects in Japan was founded by the monk Honen in 1175. It quite understandably took the name of Pure Land Sect, for the Pure Land was a term for Paradise. In true reforming fashion, Shinran, one of the disciples of Honen, split away from his teacher, and in 1224 founded the True Pure Land Sect. This sect in time outstripped in popularity all other Japanese Buddhist sects. Even today it is the largest and strongest Buddhist group within Japan and the only one with a significant missionary movement abroad.

Both of these Pure Land Sects were definitely expressions of the religious feelings of the lower classes, which were assuming importance for the first time in the intellectual life of the nation. These sects taught a simpler way to salvation for less sophisticated minds, and from the start they won much of their strength by direct street-corner preaching to the poor.

Shinran showed his opposition to the intellectual aristocracy of the earlier monastic sects by at first forbidding the founding of monasteries, and he preached the "equality of all in Buddhism." In an effort to bring the clergy closer to the people and nearer every day life, he permitted his priests to marry, a custom which gradually spread to most types of the clergy in all sects. One of Shinran's successors started a movement to translate into Japanese certain of the Buddhist

scriptures, which had been transmitted to Japan in classical and often very difficult Chinese. This same priest also founded discussion groups among the lay believers, which in time evolved into large, influential lay congregations.

These congregations were perhaps the chief organs of intellectual life for the lower classes during the feudal period. In time some even became the agencies through which the people asserted themselves in politics. Congregations of the True Pure Land Sect killed their feudal leaders in two west coast provinces of Japan in 1488 and thereafter controlled this area themselves. During the sixteenth century the great temple-castle of the sect, located in a town which later became the commercial city of Osaka, was able to defy siege by the strongest feudal faction in Japan for a period of ten years.

Side by side with the two Pure Land Sects, there soon developed a third popular sect, founded in 1253 by the priest Nichiren and usually known by his name. Basically much like the other two, it relied even more on street-corner preaching, but differed radically from them in its religious fanaticism, which was the legacy of its dynamic but bellicose founder. Nichiren, in sharp contrast to the pacifistic, tolerant, and all-embracing spirit which Buddhism had always shown, was an intolerant fighting man of religion, who openly attacked other Buddhist sects as leading men only to damnation. His sect became a fighting church, often engaging in acts of open warfare with the members of other sects during the turbulent feudal period. Nichiren, again in contrast to the dominant international spirit of Bud-

dhism, was himself a narrow nationalist, a forerunner of the nationalistic movement of modern times. To him Japan was the land of the gods and the center of the universe, and Japanese Buddhism was the only true Buddhism.

It is, indeed, a curious fact that the popular Buddhism of feudal Japan had in many ways come to resemble Christianity more than historic Buddhism. Reversing the basic pessimism of the early faith, it had come to stress a real after-life and salvation through faith. And the early feudal religious reformers, in their translations of the scriptures, their creation of lay congregations, their marriage of the clergy, their militant sectarianism, and their nascent nationalism, resembled to a surprising degree the Protestant reformers of Europe. These religious trends, coupled with the development of a feudal system which found much closer parallels in medieval Europe than in East Asia, make the early feudal period in Japan a time for startling comparisons with Europe and strong contrasts with other countries in the Far East.

While the lower classes were turning to the popular Buddhist sects for religious and intellectual expression, the warrior caste found a different answer to its religious and philosophic needs in still another Buddhist sect brought to Japan in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries by Japanese monks returning to their homeland from study in China. This sect was known as Zen, a word meaning "meditation," and it derived perhaps as much from native Chinese schools of mysticism as from the early Buddhist emphasis on meditation.

In Zen the emphasis was on being in harmony with

the cosmos — on achieving oneness with nature. Zen was anti-scholastic and anti-rational. Its adherents sought sudden intuitive insight as a result of extreme physical discipline and mental concentration, rather than wisdom through book learning or through logical thought. As a means of training in Zen, the master would pose a seemingly trivial or irrational problem, such as the nature of the sound caused by a clapping motion made with only one hand instead of with two. The student would meditate upon this problem for days, but any answer describing the nature of sound or the reasons for the absence of sound would not be tolerated by the master. The train of meditation started by this problem was intended to result in a flash of sudden enlightenment regarding the nature of the Buddha, the oneness of the universe, or other problems equally profound.

The anti-scholasticism, the mental discipline — still more the strict physical discipline of the adherents of Zen, which kept their lives very close to nature — all appealed to the warrior caste, with its predilection for the Spartan life. Zen rapidly became the philosophy of the military men of feudal Japan, giving them a philosophical foundation on which to base their lives. With their support, it rose to a position of wide influence and great prestige. Zen contributed much to the development of a toughness of inner fiber and a strength of character which typified the warrior of feudal Japan; and Zen has continued to play its role in recent years by giving spiritual strength and firmness to many members of the officer caste.

*Chapter VI*GROWTH AND CHANGE IN THE
FEUDAL SYSTEM

The Kamakura system, however well it worked at its inception, was peculiarly susceptible to the ravages of time and change. It was effective as long as its member knights remained a small and well-knit group, loyal to each other, but as the generations passed, loyalties based on family friendships and comradeship in half-forgotten campaigns wore thin. Scattered as they now were through the estates of the whole land, the descendants of the old band of knights from the Kanto region, who had won control of Japan in 1185, felt less and less the oneness of spirit of the original clique or the old sense of personal loyalty to Kamakura.

Another factor in the dissolution of the clique was its growth in numbers. The class of knights grew rapidly with each generation, but the number of positions as estate managers could not increase correspondingly. The natural tendency was for each knight to divide his feudal income from the estate he managed among all his sons. As a result of this process, many a knight in the latter part of the thirteenth century re-

ceived so small an income that he had difficulty in maintaining his status as a mounted warrior, able to answer the call of his lord fully equipped with horse, armor, and weapons.

Despite these weakening factors, the Kamakura system lasted a century and a half. During this time it withstood the most dangerous threat of aggression from abroad that Japan was to experience prior to recent years. This threat was the attempted Mongol invasions of 1274 and 1281.

The Mongols, a nomadic people of the steppe lands north of China, in the first half of the thirteenth century conquered all of Central Asia, southern Russia, and much of the Near East, and their armies penetrated to Silesia and through Hungary to the Adriatic Sea. At the eastern end of this vast empire, they completed the subjugation of Korea in 1259 and crushed the last organized resistance in China itself in 1276.

In the east only Japan remained free of their rule, and the Mongol emperor, Kublai Khan, probably looking for more worlds to conquer, sent emissaries to Japan, demanding the capitulation of the island kingdom. The terrified courtiers of Kyoto were ready to accede, but the staunch warriors of Kamakura refused, making their stand unmistakably clear by beheading some of the emissaries.

Such a direct affront could not go unpunished, and in 1274 a strong Mongol force set out on Korean ships to subdue Japan. Certain small islands were seized and a landing was made at Hakata Bay in northern Kyushu, but before any decisive engagement had been fought, the Mongols decided to withdraw to the continent be-

cause of the threat to their fleet of inclement weather. That they would return was a foregone conclusion. For the next several years Kamakura kept many of its knights from the western part of the country on guard in northern Kyushu, busy constructing a wall around Hakata Bay to contain the vaunted Mongol cavalry in the event of a second landing there.

The Mongols came again in 1281, this time on a great joint armada of Korean and Chinese ships, and again a landing was made at Hakata Bay. The invasion forces numbered some 150,000 men, the greatest overseas expedition the world had as yet seen. The Mongols were accustomed to large scale cavalry tactics which had met no match anywhere in the world, and they had superior weapons at their disposal, such as the gunpowder bomb hurled by a catapult.

Against this overwhelming force, the Japanese had a mere handful of knights, accustomed only to single combat. But the Mongols were slowed by the wall the Japanese had built and by the attacks of smaller, more mobile Japanese boats in the narrow waters of the bay. Before they could deploy their full forces ashore, a typhoon descended upon the fleet and destroyed it, bringing the invasion to a spectacular and disastrous conclusion. To the Japanese the typhoon was the *kamikaze*, the "Divine Wind," protecting the land of the gods from foreign invaders. The incident has of course loomed large in Japanese historical tradition and has contributed much to the irrational conviction of most Japanese that their land was sacred and inviolate.

The danger to Japan was past, but dissatisfaction and unrest on the part of the warrior class of western Japan

remained as an aftermath of the invasions. Many knights had become impoverished during the long months and years away from home in the service of Kamakura, and there were no spoils to divide among the victors. The wavering loyalty of the knights had suffered a serious blow; yet the Kamakura system was strong enough to survive another fifty years.

The final blow came from a new and surprising source, a retired emperor who is known by his posthumous name of Daigo II. This ex-emperor was an historical misfit who had the antiquated idea that the imperial line should really rule. Gathering a force of discontented warriors from the capital district and soldiers from local monastery estates, he led a revolt against Kamakura in the year 1331. The revolt in itself would have meant little if the whole Kamakura system had not been ripe for dissolution. The warriors of western Japan for the most part declared for the imperial cause, and Ashikaga Takauji, the general sent from eastern Japan to subdue the uprising, suddenly switched sides in 1333. A second force was raised in the Kanto region, but this time the general in command did not even march on Kyoto. Instead he seized Kamakura itself, destroyed the Hojo family, and thus brought to an end a century and a half of centralized rule.

Daigo II, who naïvely assumed that the way was now open for the resumption of imperial rule as it had existed five or six centuries earlier, was in for a rude awakening. Ashikaga Takauji was a realist who knew where power lay, and he soon deserted Daigo II, driving the unhappy monarch from Kyoto in 1336 and putting a

member of a collateral line of the imperial family on the throne. Daigo II and his followers withdrew to the mountain fastnesses south of the Nara Plain and there set up a rival imperial court. From this vantage point they and their successors continued the hopeless struggle against the Ashikaga family for almost sixty years. In the year 1392, they were induced to give up and were lured back to Kyoto by the promise that the line of Daigo II would alternate on the throne with the line set up by Takauji. No one who had observed the Ashikaga family's past record of treachery could have been surprised that they did not live up to their agreement. No member of the line of Daigo II ever sat on the throne again.

Daigo II had failed completely in his fantastic attempt to restore imperial rule in feudal Japan, but Ashikaga Takauji, who had had himself appointed Shogun in 1338, was little more successful in his attempt to recreate the unity of Kamakura. He set up a line of Ashikaga Shogun at Kyoto who managed to retain the title until 1573, but no Ashikaga Shogun ever exercised effective control over all the military leaders and powerful Buddhist monasteries of the land. During a large part of these two and a half centuries, the government of the Shogun was almost as much of a political sham as the imperial court itself. The third Ashikaga Shogun came as close as any member of his family to ruling the whole country for a brief period after the surrender of the imperial faction of Daigo II in 1392, but Ashikaga power declined rapidly thereafter. From 1467 on, civil wars were chronic throughout Japan. Strong feudal lords drove Ashikaga Shogun

out of Kyoto and set up puppet Shogun in much the same way that the earlier Shogun had done these same things to the imperial family.

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries presented a picture of increasing political disruption and confusion, as all central control slowly disappeared. The basic cause for the growing political disunity was that the warrior class had grown so fast during the Kamakura period that a united government based simply on ties of personal loyalty was no longer possible. New forms of political organization were necessary before unity could be restored.

The restoration of unity proved to be a slow process. The first step actually was the creation of new feudal units smaller than the old nation-wide warrior clique. The constables, who in the early feudal age had acted as leaders for the defense of each province, gradually assumed the role of local feudal lords in the late Kamakura period. In the wars that marked the end of the Kamakura regime it became evident that the individual knight felt a primary sense of loyalty to his local lord and not to the Hojo and their puppet Shogun. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the dominant figure in the political system was more and more the feudal lord, not the individual knight, as the land became divided into a large number of virtually independent feudal domains.

As the feudal lord, or Daimyo rose to power, the knight began to sink into insignificance and finally disappeared from the scene. One reason for this was that the old estates gradually lost their identity in the domains of the various Daimyo, and the position of estate

manager became a thing of the past. Also, large bodies of foot soldiers began to replace the individual knight as the backbone of the fighting forces of Japan. Thus the knight lost his favored place both as a military man and as a key figure in the political and economic order.

Some descendants of the old warrior families became themselves Daimyo. Others became part of a new petty aristocracy of military and administrative officials serving in the domains of the Daimyo and supported by fixed salaries or by the income from small tracts of land assigned to them by the Daimyo. But there was no longer a clear-cut line between these knights as fighting men and the peasantry, who were as capable of serving as foot soldiers as the best of the warrior class. For this reason the congregations of the True Pure Land Sect could challenge the supremacy of the feudal leaders. Peasants in time of war were now soldiers, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries many men of very humble origin unquestionably pushed their way into the upper ranks of the new feudal aristocracy, while many members of the old warrior class sank to the status of peasants.

The gradual disappearance of the estates into the domains of the Daimyo was an unfortunate development for the imperial family and the old court aristocracy at Kyoto, which had for centuries derived their income from these estates. Revenues from this source had been dwindling, and finally they ceased altogether. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the imperial line, various branches of the Fujiwara, and other old court families eked out a miserable and precarious existence; but they managed to survive, earning their

living by serving as patrons of trade and manufacturing guilds in Kyoto and by exploiting the few arts and aptitudes permitted them by aristocratic tradition.

One emperor was even reduced to selling his calligraphy on the streets of the city, writing out in his beautiful hand a poem or motto requested by some patron and receiving in exchange a small gift. Lack of funds to pay for proper funeral services or coronation ceremonies forced the imperial family to get along without a properly invested emperor during three different periods in the sixteenth century. At one time there was no duly enthroned emperor for a period of twenty-one years. The fortunes of the imperial line had indeed sunk low. Only the force of historical tradition kept it and its satellite court aristocracy from disappearing entirely.

The political chaos of the Ashikaga period and the sad state of the imperial court have left behind a traditional picture of these two and a half centuries as a dark age in Japanese history. This picture is far from accurate, for the political confusion was but a sign of rapid growth, and in the turmoil the Japanese as a whole were making great strides forward culturally and economically.

With the financial eclipse of the court aristocracy, cultural leadership in the capital city of Kyoto naturally passed to the Shogun's court. In fact, some of the Ashikaga Shogun are far better known to history as patrons of art than as political leaders. Gathering about them some of the finest artists and literary men of the day, they at times presided over a culturally brilliant if politically ineffective court.

As was to be expected in this turbulent age, the artists and men of letters usually were Buddhist priests and monks, and the great monasteries more than ever became the repositories of learning and the centers of creative art. The Zen monks in particular dominated the cultural life of the time. This was not so much because they received official patronage as because they were in much closer contact with China than any other group and were consequently the first to learn of new cultural trends on the continent. Actually, the predominantly Zen culture of the Ashikaga period was a rich blending of the native culture with many new cultural elements from the continent.

Despite their traditional anti-scholasticism, the Zen monks reintroduced the use of pure Chinese as an important literary medium, and at the same time they led in the development of Japan's first true dramatic form, the so-called *Nō* drama. The major purpose of *Nō* was to teach concepts of Buddhism. Since it had evolved originally from early religious dances, symbolic dances quite naturally remained one of its most important features. But perhaps the greatest merit of the *Nō* was the fine poetic recitations chanted by the actors and an accompanying chorus. The texts of the *Nō* drama still remain one of the great literary expressions of the Japanese people, and a small band of devotees even today keep the *Nō* alive as a highly formalized and completely outmoded dramatic form.

In the field of architecture, fresh influences from China made for significant new forms, but the Zen culture of the Ashikaga period found its fullest expression in painting. Zen monks, living simple lives close to na-

ture, took with enthusiasm to the Chinese style of monochrome landscape painting, often rivaling the skill and depth of feeling of the Chinese masters. The richness of the artistic work of the time is seen in the fact that side by side with this Chinese school of painting existed a vigorous native school specializing in picture scrolls portraying the history of some temple or the incidents of a famous campaign, such as that against the Mongols.

The medieval Zen monks also brought from China three other arts which became so characteristic of Japanese culture that they are now considered to be typically Japanese. One was landscape gardening, which the Japanese developed to a perfection unexcelled in any other land. The second was flower arrangement, which started with the placing of floral offerings before representations of Buddhist deities but eventually became a fine art which is now part of the training of every well-bred Japanese girl. The third was the tea ceremony, an aesthetic spiritual ritual in which a beautiful but simple setting, a few fine pieces of old pottery, a slow, formalized, extremely graceful ritual for preparing and serving the tea, and a spirit of complete tranquillity all combine to express the love of beauty, the devotion to simplicity, and the search for spiritual calm which characterize the best in Zen.

Increased trade contacts with the continent, which had brought many new cultural impulses from China, also served as an impetus to an unprecedented and rapid expansion of Japanese trade and industry. Another impetus may have been the decline and disappearance of the estates. As long as these had existed, they tended to

be self-contained economic units, but their going allowed a wider exchange of goods and greater specialization in production by localities or by groups within each locality. Because of the need for protection from the many restrictions and fees in a feudal society, this new economic specialization usually resulted in the formation of guilds of merchants dealing in certain commodities and guilds of manufacturers producing various types of wares.

Under the guilds, trade and manufacture expanded steadily, and centers of paper-making, metal-working, weaving, and the like grew up all over the land. Small market places developed into little trading towns. Kyoto remained the largest city of Japan, but gradually a rival city of purely commercial and industrial origin grew up at the eastern end of the Inland Sea. This town, later to be called Osaka, was until the late sixteenth century a type of free city outside the domains of the feudal lords, dominated only by the local merchants and the great temple-castle of the True Pure Land Sect.

The true measure of the economic growth of Japan during the feudal period is perhaps best seen in foreign trade. There had been some trade with the continent ever since Prince Shotoku sent the first official embassy to China, but overseas trade began to assume significant proportions only in the late twelfth century. From that time on, it grew steadily until by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it was a tremendous factor in the economic life of Japan.

The Japanese imported from the continent tropical products, which had originally come from Southeast

Asia or even from India, and manufactured goods from China, such as silks, porcelains, books, manuscripts, paintings, and copper cash. The last loomed largest in bulk and value, because from the thirteenth century on, money increasingly replaced rice and cloth as the chief medium for exchange in Japan, and the Japanese depended almost entirely on China as the source for their currency.

In the early feudal period, Japanese exports were limited for the most part to raw goods, such as sulphur, lumber, gold, pearls, mercury, and mother of pearl. However, by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Japan itself was exporting large quantities of manufactured goods to China and the continent. Chief among these were swords and painted folding fans and screens. Folding fans and screens apparently were inventions of either the Koreans or the Japanese and were highly prized in China. The curved swords of medieval Japan, made of the finest laminated steel and unexcelled even by the famous blades of Damascus or Toledo, were in great demand throughout East Asia and were exported by the thousands.

In the early days, the Koreans were the chief mariners and traders in the waters between Japan and the continent, but slowly the Japanese themselves took to the sea. In the late eleventh century, Japanese traders were crossing to Korea; in the twelfth, some were venturing as far as China; and by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, they were beginning to dominate the shipping and commerce of the whole East China Sea.

Various groups in Japan participated in this lucrative trade with the continent. As mentioned previously,

many Buddhist monasteries sponsored trading ventures in order to raise funds, as did various families of feudal lords, including the Ashikaga themselves. In fact, the Ashikaga, in order to secure some of the profits of this trade for their shaky regime, accepted the Chinese theory that international trade was simply the bringing of tribute to the Chinese court by barbarian peoples and the beneficent bestowal of gifts upon the barbarians by the court in return. To fit this pattern, some of the Ashikaga Shogun, with complete disregard of the theory of imperial rule, permitted themselves to be invested as "Kings of Japan" by the emperors of the Ming dynasty of China and then sold credentials to private Japanese traders, to give them legal and official status in their trading ventures in China.


Despite the interest in foreign trade on the part of the monasteries and the Shogun in central Japan, leadership in overseas trading was taken primarily by the small feudal lords, the ordinary warriors, and the merchants of western Japan, who merged to form a class of adventurous and hardy mariners. Like their counterparts in Europe, these men of the sea were primarily traders, but they were not averse to piracy when opportunity offered. Credentials from the Ashikaga or trading permits from the Chinese court meant little to them. Already in the thirteenth century piratical acts by Japanese warrior-merchants had become frequent in Korean waters, and during the fourteenth century, Japanese pirates became a menace to the very existence of the kingdom of Korea. Emboldened by their successes in Korean waters, they shifted their activities more and more to the coast of China. As the Ming dy-

nasty declined in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Japanese pirates ravaged the great coastal cities of China almost at will, contributing greatly to the final collapse of the dynasty during the middle decades of the seventeenth century.

The so-called Japanese pirates of the sixteenth century were not always pirates, however, nor were they always Japanese. Many Chinese joined them in preying on the coastal trade and cities of China. One of the most important elements in this mixed group of Chinese and Japanese, who were both traders and pirates, was furnished by the natives of the Ryukyu Islands. Closely related to the Japanese and speaking a variant form of the language, they owed a dual allegiance in the seventeenth century to China and to the great Daimyo domain of Satsuma in southern Kyushu.

When the European merchant-adventurers rounded the Malay Peninsula and entered Far Eastern waters early in the sixteenth century, they found the seas dominated more by Japanese than by Chinese. In the course of the century, thousands of Japanese established themselves as traders and adventurers in the towns and colonies of Southeast Asia; and the Spanish and Portuguese, recognizing the martial traditions and fine fighting qualities of the Japanese, frequently employed them as mercenaries in their campaigns and wars in the Far East. In a typical colonial city like Manila, the Japanese community grew large and strong, and in the early seventeenth century, Japanese adventurers were influential enough at the Siamese capital to engineer a successful revolution there and to put a friendly faction in power.

During the "dark ages" of political confusion in Japan, the people had developed industrially to a point where they equalled or even excelled their Chinese teachers in many fields of manufacturing. Despite the feudal political framework, they had built up a far stronger commercial system than they had achieved in previous ages; and in a burst of new physical power and vitality, their warrior-traders had come to dominate the waters of East Asia. Japan entered the feudal period in the twelfth century, a small, weak, economically backward land on the fringes of the civilized world. It emerged in the sixteenth century from a prolonged period of feudal anarchy, an economically advanced nation, able in many ways to compete on terms of equality with the newly encountered peoples of Europe and even with the Chinese.


*Chapter VII***THE REESTABLISHMENT OF
NATIONAL UNITY**

The vigorous Japan of the early sixteenth century still showed no signs of recreating an effective central government, but the foundation of a new form of political unity had been laid. This foundation consisted of the Daimyo domains, into which almost all of Japan was now divided. Since each domain was an effective political unit in itself, national unity could be achieved simply by establishing some form of association or accepted leadership among the Daimyo.

The realms of the Daimyo varied greatly in size, but they tended to be compact, well-defined political units, perhaps subordinate to some other feudal domain, but in any case entirely independent of the emperor or Shogun. The Daimyo himself was a paternalistic but absolute monarch within his own realm. Aiding him in his rule over the soldiers, peasants, and merchants of the principality was a class of officials and military officers, who formed the little court at the central castle of the Daimyo and lived on the hereditary salaries he assigned them and their families.

With their military heritage, most of the Daimyo were intent upon developing the military strength of their domains. Some of the more powerful Daimyo, who ruled over several provinces, built up efficient fighting machines, with the peasantry as the backbone of the economic life of the realm and as the reservoir for military manpower, with the feudal aristocracy furnishing administrators and officers for the army, and with the merchants providing a transport corps in time of war.

The natural tendency was for the larger and stronger realms to swallow up or win dominance over weaker neighbors. In the second half of the sixteenth century, this process resulted in the creation of a single paramount power in Japan. The first great figure in the reunification of the country was Oda Nobunaga, a Daimyo who ruled over three provinces around the modern city of Nagoya east of Kyoto. By seizing the capital in 1568, he became the virtual dictator of central Japan, and he proceeded to consolidate his power by breaking the military might of the powerful central monasteries and by capturing the great temple-castle of the True Pure Land Sect in Osaka after a ten-year siege. But Nobunaga never achieved his goal of winning hegemony over all Japan. His career was cut short when a treacherous vassal murdered him in 1582.

Nobunaga's place as undisputed ruler of central Japan was soon assumed by his ablest general, Hideyoshi, a man of lowly birth who had risen to power by sheer ability. Within a few years of Nobunaga's death, Hideyoshi had eliminated the remnants of the Oda family and had established his supremacy over the re-

maining vassals of Nobunaga. He reconstructed the great castle at Osaka as the seat of his military government, but he gave evidence of a reviving interest in the imperial court at Kyoto by taking for himself the old Fujiwara posts of Prime Minister and Civil Dictator.

In 1587 Hideyoshi crushed the power of the great Satsuma realm of southern Kyushu and thereby won control over all western Japan. Three years later, all of eastern and northern Japan submitted to him after he had eliminated the chief Daimyo realm in the Kanto area. The restoration of political unity in Japan had at last been completed, and peace came to the land suddenly after more than a hundred years of incessant civil war.

Hideyoshi found himself in control of a superabundance of professional warriors who knew nothing but warfare. Possibly in order to drain off some of their excess fighting spirit, and probably because he himself, like many successful generals before him, fell victim to the world conqueror complex, Hideyoshi decided to embark on a program of world conquest, which for him meant the conquest of China. To do this he needed passage through Korea, and when the Koreans refused, he invaded the peninsula from the south in 1592. The Japanese armies rapidly overran almost all of Korea, but were eventually checked when they over-extended their lines of communication and met the armies of China, which had come to the aid of its Korean satellite. The Japanese were forced back to southern Korea, where they held on for several years despite a gradually deteriorating situation and difficulties in maintaining their communications by sea. The death of Hideyoshi

in 1598 gave them a welcome excuse for abandoning the whole venture, and their armies streamed home. Japan's first organized attempt at overseas conquest had ended in complete failure.

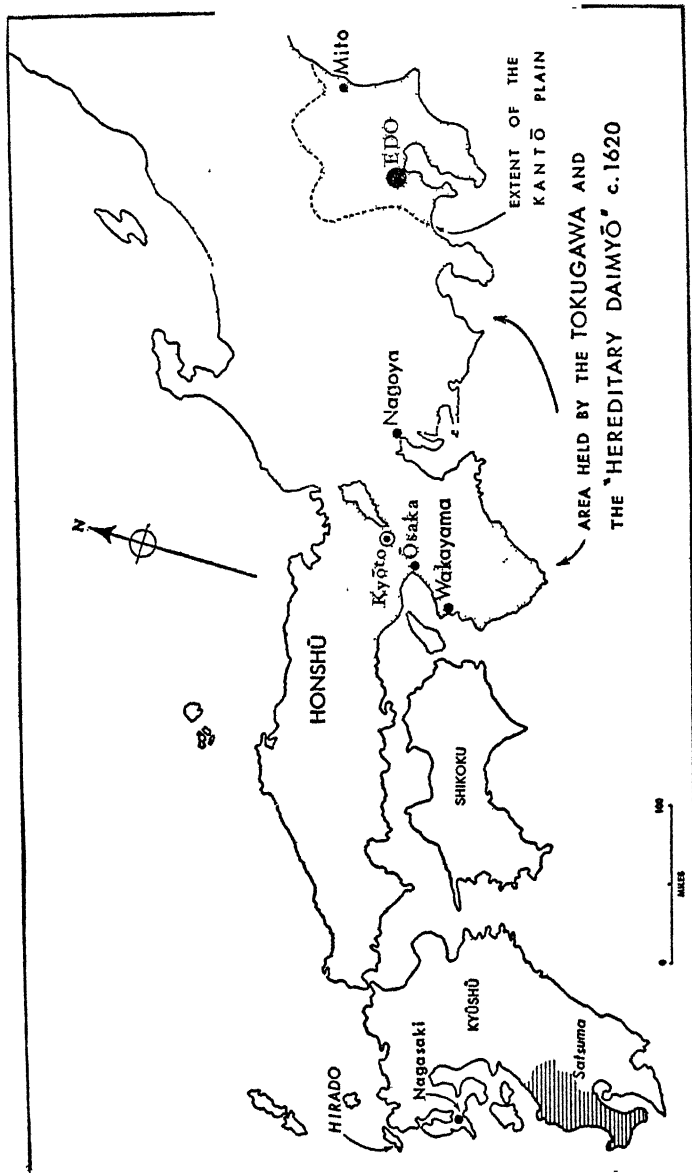
The political vacuum created by the death of Hideyoshi was soon filled by one of his foremost vassals, Tokugawa Ieyasu, who had been Hideyoshi's chief deputy in eastern Japan, where he had built himself a castle headquarters at the small village of Edo, the future Tokyo. In 1600, Ieyasu decisively defeated a coalition of rivals, and fifteen years later he destroyed the remnants of Hideyoshi's family when he captured the great Osaka castle by trickery and overwhelming might.

Ieyasu, impressed by the inability of the heirs of Nobunaga and Hideyoshi to keep the reins of government in their own hands, was obsessed with the idea of building up a political system strong enough to survive his death. Political stability became his primary goal, and it was equally sought and maintained by his successors. There is no doubt that the Tokugawa created political stability. During the first half of the seventeenth century they created a political system which was to endure almost unchanged for two and a half centuries, and which was to establish a state of domestic peace as complete as that enjoyed by any people at any time. Unfortunately, they secured peace and stability by a series of rigid controls over society, by ruthless suppression of many of the most creative tendencies in the Japan of that day, and by a return to many of the outmoded forms of feudalism — in short, by resorting to what was essentially a reactionary

policy even in the early decades of the seventeenth century.

The Tokugawa, like the Minamoto before them, rejected the idea of rule from the old central district around Kyoto and established their new military capital at their castle in Edo, which they expanded into one of the greatest fortresses man has ever created. It was protected by wide moats, high embankments, and massive castle walls, arranged in a series of concentric circles with an overall diameter of slightly more than two miles. Today, the inner circles of the great castle form the beautiful imperial palace grounds in the heart of Tokyo.

The central part of Japan, including the Kanto Plain on the east and the old capital district in the west, was held directly by the Tokugawa themselves, by various branches of the family, and by the feudal lords and warriors who had backed Ieyasu in the great battle for supremacy in 1600. This central area was strategically the heart of the country. It contained most of the larger plains and much of the best agricultural land of Japan, and also a large proportion of the commercial towns and cities. Three great cadet families of the Tokugawa were established at three key points, the town of Mito, east of Edo; Nagoya, near the geographic center of the Tokugawa domains; and Wakayama, a few miles south of Osaka in the west. Most of the remainder of the central area was divided into fiefs held by other members of the family and by old and loyal allies of the Tokugawa. Holders of large fiefs were called "hereditary Daimyo," signifying their early support of Ieyasu, and the lesser vassals were



AREA HELD BY THE TOKUGAWA AND THE "HEREDITARY DAIMYŌ" c.1620

JAPAN IN THE TOKUGAWA PERIOD

called "standard bearers." Beyond the central area to the north and west stretched the realms of the Daimyo who had recognized Ieyasu's rule only after his victory in 1600. These lords were called "outer Daimyo," and their control was the most difficult problem of Tokugawa rule.

Both categories of Daimyo were allowed virtual autonomy within their realms, but the Tokugawa worked out a careful system of checks and controls to prevent any of them from becoming a military menace to the new central authority. Severe restrictions were placed on the construction or repair of castles, marking the end of a century of castle building which has left many picturesque old fortifications scattered around Japan. Each Daimyo was forced to leave in Edo, as hostages, members of his own family, such as his wife and sons, and he himself was compelled to maintain a permanent residence there and to spend alternate periods in residence at Edo and at his fief. A close watch was kept at important barriers on the highways of the land to look for "women leaving Edo and firearms entering Edo," for the departure of hostages or the smuggling in of weapons would have indicated a planned revolt.

Perhaps the most interesting measure taken by Edo to insure its control over the Daimyo was the creation of a group of officials known as *metsuke*, who acted on the one hand as censors in ferreting out cases of misrule and maladministration on the part of Tokugawa officials, and on the other hand as secret police spying on all men or groups who could be a menace to Tokugawa rule. The Edo government has the dubious dis-

tion of being one of the first governments in the world to develop an extensive and efficient secret police system and to make of it an important organ of state. With three centuries of experience in such practices, it is not surprising that the secret police should have loomed so large in the political make-up of Japan in recent years.

The Tokugawa left the age-old fiction of imperial rule undisturbed. They actually helped reenforce it by fairly generous economic treatment of the emperors and their courtiers, while keeping them under close surveillance and strict control. Iéyasu in 1603 took for himself the old title of Shogun, indicating that in theory he was merely the generalissimo of the emperor's armies. To insure that his death would not upset the supremacy of his family, he abdicated two years later in favor of one of his less gifted but more dependable sons. As a result of this move, Ieyasu's death in 1616 produced no political repercussions.

The early Edo leaders were determined to do everything they could to insure that the ineptness or stupidity of some future Shogun should not bring disaster to the regime. They created a strong, complicated central administration quite capable of ruling the land with or without the Shogun, many of whom proved to be little more than figureheads. This central administration consisted of a Prime Minister — a post often left vacant — a council of state made up of four or five "elders," a group of "junior elders" who controlled the affairs of the petty vassals of Edo, a large body of civil administrators, and the *metsuke*.

The membership of the administration was recruited

on a basis of natural selection from among the members of the rapidly expanding Tokugawa family, the "hereditary Daimyo," the "standard bearers," and all the petty gentry of the central area. When first Japan had needed a large bureaucracy in the seventh and eighth centuries, it was lacking, but by the seventeenth century, education and learning had become so widespread that there was no dearth of educated men or capable administrators for the Edo government.

In support of the prime objective of political stability, the early Tokugawa adopted a policy of social stability. Nobunaga, by crushing the military power of the True Pure Land Sect and by taking over control of the commercial city of Osaka, had struck a severe blow at the rising political power of the middle and lower classes. Hideyoshi, the common foot-soldier, lacking even a family name, who had risen to become the virtual ruler of all Japan, had typified in himself the complete breakdown of the clear class cleavages of early feudalism, but it was he who struck the second great blow against the political aspirations of the lower classes. Wishing to reduce the overly large military establishments of Japan, which were unnecessary in a unified land, he drew a sharp line between the peasants and the aristocratic warrior class of officers and demanded that all peasants surrender their swords and other weapons to the government and forsake their past role of peasant-soldiers.

The Tokugawa simply followed and developed this policy. Adopting the social theories of Confucianism, which had developed some 2,000 years earlier in China, they created a hierarchy of four social classes — the

warrior-administrator, the peasant, the artisan, and the merchant. The top class of warrior-administrators was to a large degree an artificial creation in imitation of the true warrior class of early feudalism. The members of this new fixed aristocracy were known as *samurai*, meaning "feudal retainers," and their badge was the long and the short sword each *samurai* wore at his side. The merchants, despite their real intellectual and cultural status in society and in complete disregard of their high economic position, were placed last in the social order because, according to Confucian theory, they were an unproductive class. This unnatural stratification of social classes was reactionary even in seventeenth-century Japan, but the Tokugawa and the favored *samurai* class as a whole enforced it rigidly and blindly for two and a half centuries.

The early Tokugawa not only borrowed the antiquated social theories of early Confucianism; they encouraged the study of the whole philosophy of Confucianism, perhaps in the hope that it would be a stabilizing factor in the intellectual life of the land. Confucianism, with its emphasis on proper relationships between the ruler and the ruled, seemed admirably suited to be a state philosophy fostering a deep sense of loyalty to the regime.

As early as 1608 Ieyasu appointed a prominent Confucian philosopher to be "attendant scholar" at his court. From this small beginning grew a strong school of Confucianism at Edo, teaching the orthodox interpretation as it had been formulated in China in the twelfth century by a group of philosophers, who had added to the ethical doctrines of the early Confucian-

ists a ponderous superstructure of metaphysical speculation. Soon groups of thinkers grew up in opposition to the orthodox Edo school, representing various unorthodox schools of Confucianism which rejected the rigid interpretations of the twelfth century masters. One of the best results of this scholarly interest in Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan was the development within the *samurai* class of a body of trained students and thinkers who as statesmen contributed greatly to the efficient administration of the Tokugawa and as teachers helped keep Japan intellectually alive, despite the stultifying effects of the basically reactionary political and social system.

The long period of interest in Confucianism also served to imbue the people as a whole with many of the high ethical and moral standards of this Chinese philosophy. Buddhism remained the dominant religion of the masses and enjoyed a status of official patronage, but Confucianism slowly became the strongest intellectual and ethical force in Japan. Buddhism began to show signs of slow inner decay, which has in modern times robbed it of much of the vigor it possessed in the Ashikaga period, but Confucianism grew in influence and strength. It became perhaps the dominant philosophy in Japan and a major source for the unwritten ethical code of the *samurai*, which recent scholars have described in romantic terms as *Bushido*, the "way of the warrior."

Perhaps the most drastic measures taken by the Edo government in order to insure political stability were in the field of foreign relations, which, with the coming of Europeans to Far Eastern waters, assumed more

significance than ever before in Japanese history. The first Europeans to reach Japan were Portuguese mariners who landed on an island off the southern tip of Kyushu in 1542 or 1543. Trade relations soon sprang up between the Portuguese and the feudal lords of western Kyushu, who learned the use of firearms from the European traders.

Contacts with the Portuguese took on a new aspect when St. Francis Xavier, the famous Jesuit missionary, introduced Christianity to Japan during a two year stay there from 1549 to 1551. He and many other Jesuits who followed in his footsteps met with considerable success in their proselytizing. The Buddhist churches soon recognized Christianity as a dangerous rival and opposed it bitterly, but several of the petty lords of Kyushu favored the missionaries, realizing that Portuguese traders tended to bring their ships to ports where the Jesuits had been welcomed. A minor Daimyo, who himself had earlier embraced Christianity, managed with the aid of the Portuguese to build the fishing village of Nagasaki in western Kyushu into the chief port for foreign trade in all Japan. Many small lords had already become Christians, when in 1578 one of the great Daimyo of Kyushu was converted. Japanese of all classes in western Japan and particularly in Kyushu were beginning to embrace the new faith. It is estimated that there were some 150,000 Christians in Japan around the year 1580 and twice that number in the early seventeenth century.

Hideyoshi and the Tokugawa who followed him had no particular objection to Christianity on religious grounds, but they looked upon it with deep suspicion

as a political menace to their rule. The Christians, as a sizable group of Japanese owing some sort of vague allegiance to a remote European "ruler," the Pope, were in their eyes a group which could not be trusted and a possible threat to the reestablished unity of Japan. Furthermore, Hideyoshi and the early Tokugawa were fully aware of the colonial expansion of the European powers in Southeast Asia, where the Christian missionaries had seemed to serve as forerunners of military penetration and conquest. The Japanese leaders were desirous of retaining profitable trade relations with the Europeans, but they gradually came to the conclusion that for reasons of national safety and political stability, Christianity must go.

In 1587, the very year Hideyoshi completed the subjugation of western Japan, he issued a decree ordering all Christian missionaries banned from Japan. However, he made little effort to enforce this decree until ten years later, when irritated by the bickering between the Portuguese Jesuits and the Spanish Franciscans, who had started missionary activities in Japan in 1593, he executed nine European priests and seventeen native Christians.

Ieyasu at first reversed this stern policy, befriending Spanish missionaries in an unsuccessful attempt to persuade Spanish merchants to establish direct trade contacts in the Edo region. The arrival at this time of Protestant Dutch and English traders, who had no interest in proselytizing, convinced Ieyasu that it was not necessary to tolerate Christianity in order to retain trade relations with European countries. The Dutch established a trading post at Hirado, an island off the

northwest coast of Kyushu in 1609, and the English, too, set up a trading post there in 1613. At about the same time Ieyasu reverted to Hideyoshi's policy of persecuting Christianity, and his successor in 1617 returned to the extreme measure of executing European missionaries and native believers. In the next few years all the missionaries were either killed or forced to leave Japan, and thousands of Japanese Christians either apostatized or else suffered the death of martyrs. A common practice of the time was to order people suspected of being Christians to tread upon a cross or some other sacred symbol, and to kill those who refused to comply.

The persecution of Christianity came to a dramatic conclusion in the years 1637 and 1638, when the long Christianized peasantry of a region near Nagasaki rebelled in desperation over economic and religious oppression. Some 37,000, basing themselves on an old dilapidated castle, withstood for almost three months the assault of the assembled might of the central government, supported by the fire power of certain Dutch vessels. The Christian rebels were eventually slaughtered almost to a man, and with this final catastrophe Christianity ceased to exist as an organized religion in Japan.

Meanwhile, the successors of Ieyasu, with increasing suspicion of all foreigners and a growing zeal to preserve the *status quo* at all costs, had started to close the doors of Japan to virtually all foreign intercourse. The English had already given up their trading post at Hirado as an unprofitable venture, and all Spaniards were expelled from Japan in 1624. The Portuguese in

turn were expelled in 1638 for suspected complicity in the Christian rebellion, and when they sent an embassy to Japan two years later to seek the reopening of trade relations, the Japanese answered emphatically in the negative by executing the envoys.

The Tokugawa treatment of its own overseas traders and adventurers was just as severe as its treatment of foreign traders and missionaries in Japan. Fearing that overseas Japanese and traders traveling to foreign ports might bring back to Japan the Christian religion or dangerous foreign ideas, Edo decreed in 1636 that henceforth no Japanese was to go abroad and no Japanese resident abroad was to return to Japan. Two years later this decree was followed by another prohibiting the construction of large ships suitable for overseas trade, and as a result the native merchant marine was limited to small vessels for coastal commerce among the Japanese islands. The overseas expansion of the Japanese merchants was thus brought to an abrupt end, and thousands of Japanese abroad were permanently cut off from their homeland and left to lose their racial identity in the native population of the towns of South-east Asia.

Despite this extremely reactionary policy of national isolation, the Tokugawa were wise enough not to cut off all contact with other nations. They preserved Nagasaki as a window looking out on the rest of the world. Chinese merchants were allowed to visit and trade there under careful supervision, and the Dutch trading post at Hirado was moved to a small island in Nagasaki harbor, where the Dutch merchants were kept in virtual year-round imprisonment.

The measures the early Tokugawa took to insure the continuance of their regime were indeed drastic. They stifled the normal social and economic development of the land, laid a heavy hand upon the initiative of the people, and so isolated Japan from the rest of the world that she dropped far behind Europe in scientific and industrial achievements. Even Japan's population stopped growing after about 1700 and remained relatively static at about 30,000,000 during the remaining century and a half of Tokugawa rule. And yet, it must be admitted that the Tokugawa were supremely successful in establishing the political stability they sought. Between the middle of the seventeenth century and the middle of the nineteenth, no revolution, disturbance, or incident in any way threatened the rule of the Tokugawa. The peace of the land was broken only by occasional and sporadic outbursts of man and nature — a great fire at Edo, a destructive earthquake, the last great eruption of the now extinct volcano of Fuji, an occasional rice riot by impoverished city-dwellers, scattered riots by still more impoverished peasants demanding a greater share of their own produce — but nothing on a national scale and nothing which could shake the existing political or social order.

Perhaps the best idea of the carefully guarded political tranquillity of this time can be gained from the story of the only political incident that at least emotionally shook the nation during these two hundred years. It has become the favorite literary and dramatic theme in modern Japan. This was the incident of the "Forty-Seven *Ronin*," which took place between 1701 and 1703.

A minor feudal lord was so grievously insulted by a more important lord that in rage he drew his sword and wounded his tormenter. To have drawn his sword within the castle grounds of Edo was an offence punishable by death, and the Edo authorities ordered the unlucky man to commit suicide and confiscated his fief. His feudal retainers lost their status as full-fledged *samurai* and became *ronin*, which was a term for a masterless *samurai* who had lost his normal place in society.

Forty-seven of these *ronin* vowed to take vengeance upon the lord who had caused their master's downfall, but realizing that the police would be watching for just such a move on their part, they decided first to lull the suspicions of the authorities. They bided their time for two years, while their leader took up a life of debauchery and degradation to prove that nothing was to be feared from him. Then, on a snowy winter night, they assembled at Edo, broke into the residence of their lord's old enemy, and avenged themselves fully by taking his head and the heads of several of his *samurai*. By this act they of course flouted the authority of Edo, but their self-sacrificing loyalty to their master made them at once national heroes, living up to the best traditions of personal loyalty of the warrior class. After much debate the government finally permitted them to atone for their crime by the honorable death of *seppuku*, commonly called *harakiri*, which is suicide by the painful method of cutting open one's stomach. This they did, and today the simple graves of the forty-seven *ronin* stand side by side in a quiet little temple compound in Tokyo.

The two centuries of strictly enforced peace under

the watchful eye and firm hand of the Edo government have left an indelible mark upon the people. The bellicose, adventurous Japanese of the sixteenth century became by the nineteenth century a docile people looking meekly to their rulers for all leadership and following without question all orders from above. They grew accustomed to firmly established patterns of conduct. A thousand rules of etiquette, supplementing instructions from their rulers, governed all their actions.

As a result of this rigid regimentation of society, the Japanese have become a people who live together in their cramped islands with relatively few outward signs of friction. Nowhere in the world is proper decorum more rigorously observed by all classes in all situations than in Japan, and nowhere else is physical violence less in evidence. At the same time, few people are more dependent upon orders from above and on long established rules of conduct. The Japanese when thrown on their own judgment away from their normal environment seem to be more at a loss than peoples accustomed to greater freedom of action at home. They are as emotionally excitable as any people, and when they meet a situation to which their accustomed patterns of courteous conduct no longer apply, they are likely to react more violently than other people. This may be one explanation for the amazing contrast between the courtesy and docility of the modern Japanese at home and his cruelty and excesses as a conqueror abroad.

The long peace of the Tokugawa era was, of course, in many ways a blessing to the land. Yet by holding back the wheels of normal social and economic progress and fixing on the nation an antiquated political and

social order, the Tokugawa preserved in Japan an outdated feudal structure and mentality far longer than they could have lasted in a freer society. What had been essentially a reactionary political and social system when founded in the early seventeenth century was preserved almost intact until the middle of the nineteenth century. Then a Japan still intellectually and socially bound down by an antiquated political system was suddenly confronted again by the Europeans, who during the intervening two centuries had made tremendous strides forward in almost all fields of human endeavor.

*Chapter VIII*SIGNS OF CHANGE BEHIND
THE FEUDAL FAÇADE

Despite the best efforts of the Tokugawa to prevent any change that might undermine their safely isolated political system, it was, of course, impossible to stop all natural processes of evolution and growth within Japanese society. Outward political forms were relatively simple to maintain, but the internal working of the society and economy could not be held to a rigidly unchanging pattern. During the sixteenth century, Japanese society and economy had developed beyond the bounds of a strictly feudal system. Even the ruthless Edo regime could not force a return to simple feudal patterns.

Actually the unity and long peace under Tokugawa rule made the perpetuation of a feudal economy all the more impossible. With national unity established, many of the petty economic restrictions and limitations that had existed in the days of the Ashikaga were brushed away. Trade was possible on a greater scale than ever before, and despite the division of the land into many Daimyo domains, Japan became essentially a single eco-

nomic unit. Relieved of the feudal fees and restrictions of earlier ages, the merchants no longer needed the protection of closed guild organizations. Guilds gradually disappeared, and independent merchants and firms of merchants or manufacturers took their place in a freer economic order.

The prolonged, complete peace of the Tokugawa period brought to Japan years of unprecedented prosperity, and industrial production and trade grew rapidly. Although the Tokugawa, the Daimyo, and the whole *samurai* class clung tenaciously to the concept that agriculture was the only true source of wealth, and continued to measure their incomes in terms of bushels of rice, in the cities and towns of Japan a vigorously expanding merchant class was creating a commercial economy far beyond anything to be expected in a politically feudal land. Paper credits of all sorts were developed and commonly used in normal transactions, and great rice exchanges with daily fluctuating price quotations grew up at the two economic capitals, Osaka and Edo.

The ruling class had placed the merchants at the bottom of the social scale, but the merchants, with their control of the nationwide rice market, came increasingly to dominate economic life. In an expanding money economy, the Daimyo and *samurai* felt a growing need for money, and as the Tokugawa period progressed many of them fell hopelessly in debt to rich city merchants. In time, Daimyo and *samurai*, despite their social disdain for the merchant class, sometimes married daughters of rich merchants in order to improve their own economic status.

By the early nineteenth century, several merchant families had amassed great fortunes. One family, the Mitsui, which in recent times built the greatest economic empire in Japan, was even then an important factor in the nation's economic life. A genuine capitalist class had appeared, and a large group of experienced business men. The stage was set for the amazing economic modernization of Japan which was to take place once the doors of the country were thrown open again to trade and intercourse with the rest of the world.

The merchants, not the warrior-administrators, obviously dominated Japan economically, but their real supremacy in Tokugawa times is perhaps best seen in the cultural field, for the arts and literature of the period were more an expression of a city bourgeoisie than of a feudal warrior class. The cities clearly dominated Tokugawa culture, and in the cities the gay amusement quarters were the centers of social life. Here the *geisha*, a professional female entertainer, carefully trained in the arts of singing, dancing, and amusing conversation, reigned supreme. To her came the tired business man and the "slumming" warrior-aristocrat for the free social contact with women, denied them by the overly formalized patterns of society, which confined women of breeding strictly to their own homes.

To a surprising degree the art and literature of the time revolved around the *geisha* and the amusement quarters. Artists of the Tokugawa period loved to portray the streets of these quarters and the famous *geisha* beauties of the time; and the great seventeenth century novelist, Saikaku, made the demimonde the normal

subject of his risqué, somewhat pornographic novels. The authorities, fearful lest the works of men like Saikaku corrupt public morals, often attempted to suppress them. But with the increased use of printing in the Tokugawa period, this was not an easy task even for the well-organized Edo police, and the novels of Saikaku continued to have a great vogue with city dwellers.

The drama of the age, like the novel, reflected the tastes of the city merchant class. Starting with a puppet drama in the seventeenth century, there developed in the course of the Tokugawa period a new dramatic form known as *Kabuki*, which is still the most popular form in Japan. *Kabuki* stressed realism of action and of setting. It utilized the revolving stage with great success, and the settings it developed were in many respects far superior to those of the Occidental theater. In sharp contrast to the slow moving and sedate *Nō* drama of the Ashikaga period, the *Kabuki* maintained a high degree of emotional tension and dealt freely in scenes of violence and melodrama.

Possibly the influence of the city dwellers may be seen also in the field of poetry, in which there appeared a new and excessively brief poetic form, the *haiku* — a reduction of the classical thirty-one syllable poem to a mere seventeen syllables. In the hands of a master like the seventeenth-century poet, Basho, the *haiku* was a superbly clever creation, conjuring up a whole scene with all its emotional overtones in a simple phrase or two. But its brevity made it even more limited as a literary form than the old classical poem, and the thousands of faddists who took up *haiku* writing during the

Tokugawa period often reduced it to little more than an amusing word game.

Art in the times of Hideyoshi and the early Tokugawa showed in many respects a radical departure from the major trends of Zen art in Ashikaga days. The calm and serenity of the simple landscape paintings were lost in a burst of magnificence and splendor — fitting expression of the military and political might of the age. Primary emphasis was put on erecting and decorating magnificent palaces. Gorgeous decorative screens and panels, with brightly colored scenes and designs laid on backgrounds of gold leaf, were the most typical artistic creations of the time. By the late sixteenth century the deep religious spirit, which earlier had produced supremely beautiful statues of Buddhas and fine portrait-statues of Buddhist monks, was lost; and sculptors for the most part confined their efforts to ornamenting palaces and temples with a superabundance of elaborate, detailed carvings.

The increased industrial output of this period of peace and unification also resulted in a great gain in semi-industrial arts. The making of fine pottery and beautiful porcelain ware, at first under the guidance of Korean potters, became a great industry with high artistic standards. Gorgeous silk brocades were produced by the expanding textile industry, and lacquer ware of great decorative distinction was made in quantity. In pottery making, weaving, and lacquer work the Japanese maintained their aesthetic standards despite increasing production during the Tokugawa period. In these fields and in many other minor industrial arts they have continued up to the present day to

hold a balance between large-scale production, technical excellence, and aesthetic value which is almost unmatched in the modern world.

The art of the early Tokugawa period was in many ways already a popular art as contrasted with that of Ashikaga times, but as the Edo age progressed it grew even more markedly popular. The work of the sculptor became largely the production of small, often amusing trinkets for popular use, and the subject matter of the graphic arts became increasingly the city people and their life. Great artists, instead of working to beautify the palaces of rulers, produced pictures to fit the tastes and pocketbooks of the bourgeoisie. This was particularly evident in the development of the technique of wood-block printing, which made it possible to reproduce hundreds of copies of a single colored picture and to sell them at reasonable prices. This art for the masses reached a glorious culmination in the early nineteenth century in the work of two great masters, Hokusai and Hiroshige. The wood block print, as exemplified in their works, has become the form of Japanese art best known in the occidental world.

The development of a complicated commercial economy and a strong merchant class were not the only ways in which the foundations for a modernized Japan were being laid during the Tokugawa period. Interest in Europe and things European was reviving. Christianity and possible foreign aggression had become such dead issues by 1720 that Edo removed a long-standing ban on the study of the West and the importation of European books — with the exception, of course, of anything dealing with Christianity. Soon a

small but intellectually vigorous group of students of the European sciences arose, working through the medium of the Dutch language, which they learned from the Dutch at Nagasaki. Within a few decades, a Dutch-Japanese dictionary was compiled and a text on anatomy translated into Japanese. By the middle of the nineteenth century Japanese scholars were well versed in such Western sciences as gunnery, smelting, ship-building, cartography, and medicine. Few in number, they formed a valuable nucleus of scholars to take the lead in scientific work on a much larger scale when opportunity finally offered itself.

The development of a strong national consciousness during the Tokugawa period was another element in setting the stage for Japan's modernization. By the nineteenth century the Japanese were definitely a nationalistic people, and their possession of a fully developed spirit of nationalism perhaps best explains the success and speed with which they transformed their country into a modern nation-state.

As in western Europe, nationalism in Japan was the result of long, slow growth. Why it should have appeared so early and developed so fully in Japan, long before it became significant in other Asiatic lands, is an interesting question. The main reason may have been that the Japanese throughout their history felt themselves to be completely overshadowed by China but still distinct from it. There was no denying that China was the cradle of civilization in the Far East, a far older and greater country than Japan, and that Japan was no more than a small and, for long, a backward offshoot of Chinese civilization. The Koreans and

some other East Asiatic peoples stood in much the same relationship to the Chinese as did the Japanese, but the prestige of Chinese civilization, coupled with occasional rule of their lands by the Chinese, persuaded them at certain times in their history to identify themselves with the Chinese, and to look upon themselves as members of the Chinese cultural empire.

The Japanese were saved from surrendering their cultural independence and national initiative by their greater isolation and their freedom from Chinese political control. Living in their own land and speaking their own language, they remained fully aware that they were Japanese, not Chinese. Yet they realized their insignificance when compared with the Chinese. Perhaps in compensation for a sense of inferiority, they early developed a strong consciousness of their national identity and a deep sense of pride in all things Japanese.

Such an attitude was already clearly observable in the Kamakura period, when Nichiren and other religious leaders injected a strong nationalistic note into their teachings. It was clearer in the political writings of the early Ashikaga period. A scholar of this time who supported the cause of Daigo II wrote a history to prove the validity of Daigo II's claim to rule. He gave this history a strong nationalistic tinge by stressing the unique virtues of the Japanese political system, which he attributed to the fact that Japan was a land of divine origin, ruled by an imperial line of divine ancestry.

Shinto priests, who again began to play a part in the intellectual life of Japan during the feudal ages, did

much to build up national consciousness. For many centuries Shinto had been completely overshadowed by Buddhism. Its many deities had been given humble recognition as local manifestations of universal Buddhist deities. But during the feudal period Shinto began to free itself gradually from Buddhist domination and to take on new intellectual vigor. Shinto philosophers, by adopting many Buddhist and Chinese concepts, developed their simple cults into a religion suitable to a more advanced people. In the process, Shinto priests came to claim superiority for their religion over Buddhism. They even reversed the old theory of relationship, terming the Buddhist deities foreign, and therefore inferior manifestations of supreme native Japanese gods. Quite naturally these nationalistic Shinto priests felt that native things were superior to foreign importations, and they looked back to the period of Japanese history which antedated Buddhist and Chinese influences as a golden age.

During the Tokugawa period, political unity and complete isolation marked by strong anti-foreign policies made for a rapid growth in nationalism. Strangely enough, even the Tokugawa patronage of the Chinese philosophy of Confucianism did much to strengthen nationalism, for interest in Confucianism led to a revival of historical studies; and the study of Japanese history took scholars back to the myths and legends of ancient Japan, as related in the early histories, the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*. One important school of historians was founded by the second head of the great Tokugawa branch family at Mito. This group, in the

seventeenth century, started a monumental history of Japan which was not finally completed until the early years of the twentieth century.

A group even more responsible for the growth of nationalism consisted of certain Shinto scholars who studied the old myths and traditions and reintroduced them to the educated public. In the latter part of the eighteenth century one of these Shinto scholars produced a commentary to the *Kojiki*, which did much to make this early history the primary text of Japanese nationalism. He and other Shinto scholars studied the primitive pre-Chinese period of Japanese history, searching for native virtues which would explain to their own satisfaction the superiority to China which their unreasoning nationalism now led them to feel. What they often found was simply naïve myths and historically absurd traditions, but in their blind zeal they accepted these as true and foisted them on a nation which should have been too sophisticated to have taken them seriously.

One sidelight of the intellectual revival of Shinto was the sudden appearance in the first half of the nineteenth century of popular Shinto sects. Some were founded by women, and several stressed faith healing. All these sects added many Buddhist concepts and practices to basic Shinto principles, but generally they were strongly colored by nationalism. The popular Shinto sects were not only a sign of growing national consciousness; they also indicated that Buddhism was no longer able to meet all the spiritual needs of the lower classes. Converts flocked to the new sects in great num-

bers, and today, after about a century of existence, the thirteen chief Shinto sects count over 17,000,000 adherents.

The interest of historians and Shinto scholars in the early days of Japanese history naturally revealed the high place the imperial family had held in Japan, and nationalists tended to emphasize the divine ancestry of an unbroken imperial line as one of the unique virtues which accounted for Japan's supposed superiority to other lands. The people in general again became aware that there was an emperor in Kyoto, and that in theory he was the supreme ruler of the land. In the late sixteenth century there had been signs of increasing interest in the imperial family, and this interest was fostered by the Tokugawa historians and Shinto scholars. In the eighteenth century, a certain scholar at Kyoto so boldly expounded the right of the emperor to rule that Edo was forced to take disciplinary action against him and his courtier pupils. The emperor and his court of course remained politically impotent, but the imperial line emerged again from obscurity; and the emperor again became a figure of such nationwide importance that many people began to wonder why a Shogun was actually ruling.

During the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, Tokugawa rule continued serene and unchallenged, but beneath an unchanging surface, forces were at work remaking the foundations of the nation. Until the middle of the nineteenth century the Tokugawa were able to preserve an antiquated political system and an absurdly outdated political and social philosophy. However, rapid economic growth

had produced behind the feudal façade an advanced commercial economy, capable of ready transformation into a modern economic order. Despite the division of the land into a large number of feudal fiefs, the people had developed a strong sense of national consciousness. Japan had become spiritually a modern nation, ready to take over and adopt the more efficient political forms of the modern nation-state.



Chapter IX

THE CREATION OF A MODERN STATE

By the middle of the nineteenth century, political and social changes were long overdue in Japan. Since the political system had been basically reactionary even in the early seventeenth century, it was by now more than two hundred years out of date. The growth of nationalism and the development of a full-fledged commercial economy had made Japan ready for an entirely new political and social order. But so well had the early Tokugawa succeeded in creating a system capable of preserving political stability that the machine was still running relatively smoothly. It took an outside force to disrupt it. This force was provided by the Europeans, who came not only from Europe but also from their newer homes in America.

In the last years of the eighteenth century the Russians, who had crossed the vast land expanse of Siberia and reached the Pacific, began to attempt to establish contacts with the Japanese. At about the same time the English, who had supplanted the Portuguese and Spanish as the chief mariners and traders in Far Eastern

waters, began to try to rein entry into Japan. But the Americans were most interested of all in opening Japanese ports. Their whaling vessels frequented the North Pacific and the waters around Japan, and American clipper ships, bound for China on the great circle route across the Pacific, passed close to the shores of Japan. The Americans wanted permission for their whalers and clipper ships to enter Japanese ports to take on water and replenish their stores, and when steamships came into use, the desirability of a coaling station in Japan became obvious.

Not infrequently, also, American and European sailors were wrecked on the shores of Japan. The laws of the land decreed death for any foreigner entering the country, and although this was not always enforced, those unlucky mariners stranded in Japan who eventually got out by way of Nagasaki usually had tales to tell of extremely cruel treatment.

In the first half of the nineteenth century the Americans, English, and Russians repeatedly sent expeditions to Japan in efforts to persuade the Japanese to open their ports to foreign ships, and the Dutch urged them to accede to these demands. But Edo stood firm on its old policy. A few scholars among the native students of Western science bravely advocated the opening of Japan, but the vast majority of the people, long accustomed to isolation from the rest of the world, were bitterly opposed to permitting foreigners to enter their land. It was obvious that Japan would not voluntarily open its doors.

The American government eventually decided to delay matters no longer, but to force the doors of Japan

open. For this purpose, it dispatched a considerable naval force under Commodore Matthew C. Perry. Perry steamed into Tokyo Bay in July 1853. After delivering a letter from the President of the United States to the ruler of Japan, demanding the inauguration of trade relations, he withdrew to the Ryukyu Islands for the winter, with the promise that he would return early the next year to receive a reply.

Edo was thrown into a state of complete confusion over this sudden crisis. The Japanese were appalled by the size and guns of the American "black ships," as they called them, and they were amazed by the steam-powered vessels which moved up the bay against the wind. They realized that their own shore batteries were almost useless against the American warships, before which Edo, too, lay defenseless.

The government split into two factions — conservatives who blindly advocated the expulsion of the foreigners, and realists who saw that Japan could do nothing but bow to American demands. In their own indecision, the Edo authorities did a most unusual thing. For the first time in over 600 years of military rule, the Shogun's government asked the opinion of the emperor on an important problem of state and invited counsel also from the Daimyo. Conservative Kyoto and the Daimyo of the land were of course strongly in favor of expelling the foreigners.

The Edo government was indeed caught on the horns of a dilemma when Perry's fleet returned to Tokyo Bay in February 1854. The emperor and the nation as a whole demanded a policy which Edo was quite incapable of carrying out. Under the threatening

guns of the American ships, the Tokugawa had no choice but to sign a treaty with the United States, opening two ports to American ships and permitting a certain amount of closely regulated trade.

Once the door had been pushed open a crack, there was no closing it. Within two years Edo had signed treaties with England, Russia, and Holland, and in 1856 Townsend Harris, the first American consul general, arrived in Japan to negotiate a full commercial treaty. This he concluded two years later, and the European powers soon made similar treaties with Japan. The door was now wide open. Foreigners were permitted permanent residence at five ports and also at the great cities of Osaka and Edo, and free and unrestricted trade relations were sanctioned. Foreign merchants began to set up their business concerns at the fishing village of Yokohama, which grew rapidly and within a few decades developed into one of the great ports of the world.

The Tokugawa realized that because of their own military impotence they could do nothing to check the foreigners. Rather belatedly they initiated reforms designed to modernize their military establishment, starting with the building of a small occidental-type navy. However, the Kyoto court and the vast majority of the feudal domains, which still had seen nothing of the overpowering military might of the Westerners, showed little interest in military modernization and remained completely unreconciled to Edo's action in opening up the land to foreigners. The cry of "expel the barbarians" grew in all quarters of the land.

The Tokugawa branch family at Mito led the oppo-

sition within the Edo government, and men from Mito in 1860 assassinated the Prime Minister who had concluded the new commercial treaties. Other irreconcilable conservatives from Satsuma murdered an Englishman near Yokohama, and the forts of the great western Honshu fief of Choshu fired on American, French and Dutch vessels passing through the narrow Straits of Shimonoseki at the western end of the Inland Sea. The Kyoto court, rising to a new sense of authority, began to demand that Edo expel the foreigners. The emperor even took the unprecedented step of summoning the Shogun to Kyoto, and the Shogun, showing how far Edo had already gone in surrendering authority to the emperor, meekly complied.

All the dissident elements in Japan and particularly the *samurai* of the great "outer Daimyo" domains of western Japan, which had been forced to recognize Tokugawa supremacy for two and a half centuries, without ever becoming reconciled to it, now saw the widening cracks in the hitherto impregnable armor of the Tokugawa. Edo had been compelled by the Western powers to adopt the unpopular policy of opening the land to foreign intercourse, a policy that ran counter to the expressed wishes of the emperor. The Tokugawa were at last vulnerable to attack. Their opponents, summing up their stand in the double slogan, "honor the emperor — expel the barbarians," pressed the attack by intrigues at Kyoto and by military preparations, which led to pitched battles between Edo and the western Honshu fief of Choshu. The great Edo regime, still the paramount military power of the land, was foundering, not because the machinery of govern-

ment had broken down, but because it had lost the confidence of the nation. Even the supporters of Edo had been persuaded by historians and Shinto propagandists to admit the right of the emperor to rule.

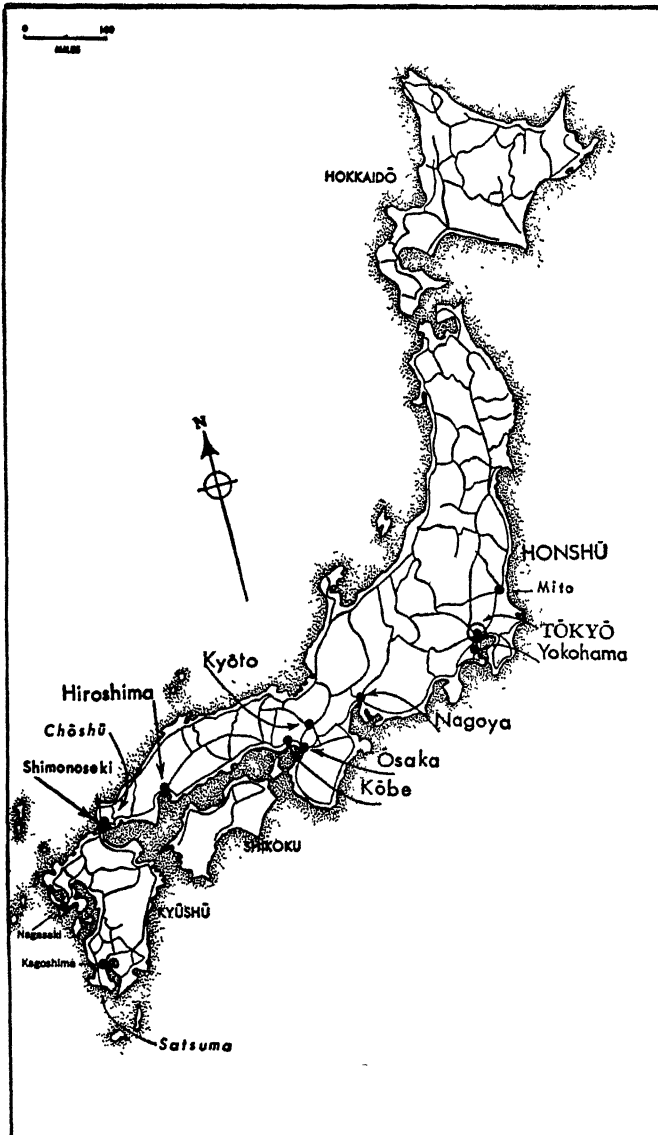
The end of the Edo regime came in a surprising way. A son of the Tokugawa Lord of Mito became the new Shogun in 1867, and, as befitted a scion of the family that had championed Japanese historical studies for the past two centuries, he voluntarily surrendered the actual rule of the country to the emperor in the autumn of that year. The year 1868 saw some desultory fighting at Edo and in northern Japan between the supporters of imperial rule and die-hard adherents of the Tokugawa regime, but the end of Tokugawa rule cost surprisingly little bloodshed. Despite its continued efficiency, the Edo system had become so hopelessly unsuited to the mentality of the Japanese nation that, once it started to crack, it collapsed suddenly and completely.

The new imperial government naturally centered around the person of the emperor, for it had been the revived theory of imperial rule which had made the overthrow of the Tokugawa possible. The *coup d'état* came to be referred to as the "Restoration" of imperial rule, but this did not mean that the emperor himself was to be in control. A boy of fifteen had recently ascended the throne, and although this young emperor grew to be a strong figure in the central government of Japan, eventually being recognized as one of the great men of Japanese history, in the early years of his reign he was too young and inexperienced to be a dominant force.

The court aristocracy around the emperor included a few capable men and in time produced some important statesmen, such as Prince Saionji and, later, Prince Konoye, two descendants of branches of the ancient Fujiwara family who were to become Premiers of the new Japan. But for the most part the Kyoto courtiers lacked the experience and the drive to become forceful in the new government. Some of the "outer Daimyo" participated in its work, but few of them were truly important political figures. High posts of government were largely held by imperial princes, court nobles, and Daimyo, but the leadership of the new regime actually was taken by a group of young and often relatively poor *samurai* who had come to dominate the politics of Satsuma, Choshu, and other "outer Daimyo" fiefs in western Japan, and for a decade had been intriguing against the Tokugawa at Kyoto and in the capitals of their own domains.

By tradition these young *samurai* of western Japan were all hostile to the Tokugawa, and they rallied to the imperial cause as the best way to attack Edo. At first they were also bitterly anti-foreign, and until the Tokugawa collapse they echoed the popular cry, "honor the emperor — expel the barbarians." But long before they came to power in the final months of 1867 they had come to realize that it was impossible to "expel the barbarians."

In 1863 a British squadron had bombarded Kagoshima, the capital of Satsuma, in retribution for the murder of an Englishman by unruly Satsuma warriors. The next year American, British, French, and Dutch warships bombarded Shimonoseki in reprisal for the attack



MAJOR RAILWAY LINES OF MODERN JAPAN

by Choshu on Western merchant vessels. The young aristocrats of Satsuma and Choshu saw how helpless their fiefs were against Western naval strength. They learned their lesson at once, and demonstrating an amazing ability to reorient their thinking, they dropped all thought of a narrow policy of isolation and immediately began to study the techniques of warfare that had made the West so strong.

Satsuma soon launched its own small navy along modern lines, and the young officers who began their naval careers in Satsuma were to become the men who created and dominated the Imperial Japanese Navy until well into the twentieth century. Similarly, Choshu, abandoning the concept of a small warrior class, started to create from its peasantry a modern army trained in the techniques of European military science. The success of this attempt was clearly demonstrated in 1866, when Edo dispatched forces to chastise Choshu for its anti-Tokugawa intrigues. The aristocratic warriors of Edo were fought to a standstill by the peasant recruits of Choshu, led by a group of young *samurai* officers who were to become the dominant element in the officer corps of the Imperial Japanese Army. The *samurai* of Satsuma and Choshu, far from remaining champions of anti-foreign conservatism, had ushered in the military and social revolution that would sweep away the last vestiges of the feudal order in Japan.

Finding themselves in virtual control of the new imperial government in the late autumn of 1867, the young *samurai* of western Japan embarked on a daring course of rapid modernization, which amounted to a

revolution in Japanese society and government. This revolution did not, like those in nineteenth-century Europe, boil up from below. It was carefully planned at the top and forced upon the people by a relatively small but extremely vigorous group in control of the government. The leaders had the advantage of coming for the most part from the same *samurai* background, and they had arrived at a similar point of view through similar experiences and influences. Since they were young, they were mentally and emotionally more eager for sweeping changes than their elders. And they were extremely talented, having achieved their leadership by demonstrating superior abilities and a capacity for adjustment to new situations in the confused politics of their individual Daimyo realms, and in the intrigues and counter-intrigues of the Kyoto court.

The leaders of the new regime also had another advantage — they inherited the strong and reasonably efficient Tokugawa government almost intact. The central administration had not been eaten away by decay and corruption, as had often been the case in other countries when revolutionary governments came into power. Japan entered its great revolutionary period a unified, centralized nation, unravaged by any prolonged period of political disruption and disunity.

The contrast with China and Korea, Japan's only neighbors, was marked. Both these countries, during the nineteenth century, suffered prolonged periods of political decline. The Manchu dynasty of China, after two hundred years of strong rule, was slowly dying from inner decay, and China was to fall into a sad state of political disruption before Republican revo-

lutionaries seized the disintegrating reins of government in 1911. The contrast between the political unity and efficient administration the Japanese revolutionaries inherited from the Tokugawa, and the political disunity and disrupted central government the Chinese revolutionaries inherited from the Manchu dynasty, does much to explain the more rapid progress the Japanese made in modernizing their country, and the entirely unprecedented economic and military supremacy Japan was soon to win in the Far East.

The leaders of the new imperial regime had all been deeply impressed by the helplessness of Edo, Satsuma, and Choshu in the face of occidental military power, and the humiliation they had been forced to suffer because of their military backwardness. Quite naturally, they were obsessed with the idea of creating a Japan capable of holding its own in the modern world. Since they were military men by tradition and early training, they thought primarily in terms of military power; but they were surprisingly broad-minded in their approach to the problem, realizing that to achieve military strength Japan needed economic, social, and intellectual renovation. They set out to make Japan strong, and they showed a willingness to do anything necessary to achieve this goal.

Early in January of 1868, the new government had the young emperor officially assume direct rule over the nation. The new era was given the name of Meiji, and the transfer of power from the Tokugawa to the group around the emperor came to be known as the Meiji Restoration. Meiji remained the official title for

the rest of the emperor's long reign, which lasted until 1912, and the name was then given to the emperor as his personal posthumous title. Two and a half centuries of rule from Edo had made the city so definitely the administrative center of Japan that the young reformers moved the imperial capital from Kyoto to Edo in the autumn of 1868 and renamed the city Tokyo, meaning "eastern capital."

In the early spring of 1869, only a little over a year after they had come to power, the bright young *samurai* started the task of doing away completely with the feudal system under which they had grown up and which had given their class a dominant place in society. They persuaded the Daimyo of Satsuma, Choshu, and other leading fiefs in western Japan to offer their domains to the emperor, and the other Daimyo of Japan felt morally obliged to follow suit. Thus, at one bold stroke the division of Japan into feudal principalities came to a sudden end, in theory at least. Actually, however, during a brief period of transition, the Daimyo were appointed governors of their old fiefs, with one-tenth of their former revenues as personal salaries. Two years later, in 1871, the fiefs were entirely abolished, and the land was divided into a number of new political divisions called *ken*, or "prefectures." This marked the definite end of the Daimyo as feudal lords. The government eventually made an economic settlement with them, giving them fairly generous lump sum payments in the form of government bonds, which helped insure their support of the new regime. The old Daimyo, who had produced few

strong political figures in the new government, gradually left the political scene and became merely an element in the growing capitalist class of Japan.

In settling with the Daimyo, the government also gave them titles of nobility in the new peerage it was creating. The old Daimyo were divided into five noble ranks in accordance with the size of their old fiefs, with the last Tokugawa Shogun becoming a Prince and the lesser Daimyo receiving the lowest rank of Baron. Another large element in the nobility was composed of the former courtier families from Kyoto, who had little political influence and were relatively poor. The dominant role in the new aristocracy was in time actually taken by the bright young *samurai* from the western fiefs, who rewarded one another for their services to the nation with titles of nobility.

Freeing Japan from the control of a small and relatively weak group of Daimyo was a far easier task than stripping the many and vigorous *samurai* of the social, economic, and political privileges which had made them the dominant class of feudal Japan. Choshu had already pointed the way toward depriving the *samurai* of their status as an aristocratic caste of warriors, and the new government felt itself strong enough in the winter of 1872-73 to introduce universal military service. Under the able leadership of young officers, such as Yamagata of Choshu, an army of peasants was recruited, first on the French and then on the German model because of the military superiority Germany demonstrated in the Franco-Prussian War.

The loss of his cherished position as a warrior-aristocrat was hard enough on the *samurai*, but a more seri-

ous blow was the loss of his privileged economic status. At first the government had assumed the responsibility of paying pensions to the *samurai* in place of the hereditary stipends they had received from their feudal lords. However, the government reduced these pensions to only half the original stipends, which had never been generous. Then suddenly in 1876, the authorities demanded that these pensions be commuted into relatively small lump sum payments. This order, together with one of the same year prohibiting the *samurai* from wearing their traditional two swords, meant the end of the *samurai* as a class with feudal privileges. They had been reduced to the level of ordinary subjects of the emperor and had been cast forth to fend for themselves as individual citizens of the state.

Many of the abler *samurai* were already rising fast in the new government. Some were making careers for themselves in the professions. Others used their lump sum payments to start successful business enterprises. A large proportion of the *samurai* were attracted to the officer corps of the new army and navy, or became policemen, entitled to wear swords, a fact which may account for the prestige and authority of the ordinary Japanese policeman today.

Many of the *samurai*, however, found themselves unable to learn new methods of livelihood, or incapable of adjusting themselves mentally to the new world in which they lived. Irreconcilable conservatives among them from time to time defied the authority of the new government. The most serious of these *samurai* revolts occurred in Satsuma itself, where discontented conservatives rallied around Saigo Takamori, one of the young

samurai of western Japan who had helped establish the new government, but had returned to Satsuma in protest against the policies of his colleagues. Saigo and his followers found themselves in open rebellion against Tokyo in 1877. The peasant army was dispatched against them, and the Satsuma conservatives soon learned that *samurai* armed with swords were no match for peasant soldiers, well-armed and well-drilled. The Satsuma rebellion of 1877 was the last gasp of a fast dying feudal society. In less than ten years the young reformers had rid themselves of this antiquated social and political system and had cleared the ground for more modern and more efficient political institutions.

The leaders of the new Japan realized full well that they could not stop merely at removing the old system. Theoretically, they had engineered a "Restoration" of the imperial rule of the seventh and eighth centuries, and they actually did revive many of the ancient names of offices and of governmental organs, but they knew that this was only theory and nomenclature. What they really desired to do was to establish a strong nation like the leading Western powers, and so naturally they looked to the West for new patterns of society and government.

The Tokugawa in their last years had been sending envoys and students abroad to learn the techniques and sciences of foreign lands, and the new government greatly expanded this program for studying the occidental world. The forty-five years of the Meiji period were essentially a time when the Japanese studied, borrowed, and gradually assimilated those elements of Western civilization which they chose to adopt. This

period of learning from abroad was comparable only to the great period when the Japanese imported Chinese civilization over a thousand years earlier, but this time the process of learning from abroad was carried out on a larger scale and much more systematically. Students were chosen with care on the basis of their knowledge and capabilities, and the countries where they were to study were selected with equal care. The Japanese determined to learn from each Western country that in which it particularly excelled. They went to England to study the navy and merchant marine, to Germany for the army and for medicine, to France for law, and to the United States for business methods. The world was one vast school room for them, and they entered it determined to learn only the best in each field.

With its predominant interest in military strength, the new government naturally paid great attention to the creation of a strong army and navy along Western lines, but the young reformers knew that to be truly strong the new army and navy needed behind them an efficient and stable political system, a physically strong and technically competent people, and a sound and industrially advanced economic system. While building up the army and navy, therefore, they by no means neglected the other requisites for national strength.

The new government was in essence an oligarchy in the hands of fewer than one hundred young men. They had no reason to be dissatisfied with their own form of rule, but they saw the advantages of many Western political concepts and institutions as essential adjuncts

of government in any strong state. These features of the West they borrowed in rapid succession. They created ministries on Western models in one administrative field after another; and they organized a prefectural system of rule which kept the control of each prefecture in the hands of the Tokyo government. They adopted the Western calendar, but held to the old Chinese system of counting years by "year periods," which beginning with the Meiji "year period" became identical in duration with the reigns of the emperors. They adopted a policy of religious toleration, permitting the propagation of Christianity once more; they modernized the police, the currency, and organized a modern postal system; they revised and standardized the tax system, and created a national banking system, first on American and then on European lines; they established a civil service; and they revised the legal system and courts on French patterns. Finally, they established a Cabinet on the German model, and even drew up a Constitution for Japan, providing for a parliament called the Diet.

The last step showed that the oligarchy was at last broadening the basis of its rule. But unlike the constitutions and parliaments of Western lands, which had usually been the result of popular demand and pressure, the Japanese Constitution and Diet were the gift of the ruling oligarchy to the people. Of course, there was a growing demand on the part of a small segment of the public for a share in the government. This politically conscious group consisted largely of the *samurai* who had not won their way into the oligarchy and had taken lesser posts in the new government or

become business men. It also included other members of the business community who, as legal equals of the old *samurai* class, felt that they were entitled to a voice in the government. However, the oligarchy was not forced to make concessions to the public. It did so primarily because influential members of the ruling group had reached the conclusion from their study of Western political institutions that a constitution was essential to a strong westernized state, and that some form of parliamentary government was also a necessary part of the political machinery which helped make Western powers strong.

In 1868, the emperor had made a so-called "charter oath" in which he had given rather vague promises of forming a deliberative council and allowing public opinion a voice in government decisions. In 1879 the government actually experimented with elective bodies when it created Prefectural Assemblies, chosen by the higher tax-payers within each prefecture. Two years later the oligarchy promised to convene a National Assembly by 1890. Ito, a former *samurai* from Choshu, who was eventually to become a Prince in the new nobility, had been a leading advocate of constitutional and parliamentary forms of government, and he was assigned the task of studying Western constitutions and drafting one for Japan. He toured Europe to study the political institutions of the leading powers and was most impressed by the German, which seemed to him best adapted to Japanese needs. The Japanese Constitution was finally promulgated in 1889 in the form of a gracious gift to the people by the emperor. It stated clearly that the emperor was the fountain-

head of all authority in the state, and carefully protected his right to rule. This was natural, for the oligarchy had come to power as champions of imperial rule, and the only basis in theory for their continued authority was their status as spokesmen of the emperor, who in a sense had himself become one of the more influential oligarchs.

The great innovation of the Constitution was the bicameral Diet. There was to be a House of Peers, similar to the British House of Lords, made up of elected and appointed members of the new nobility and of a few other privileged groups, such as the highest tax-payers of the land. The lower house was to be elected by males over twenty-five who paid an annual tax of fifteen yen or more. This meant an initial electorate of 460,000, slightly over one per cent of the population at that time.

The first elections were held in 1890, and Japan got off to a belated start in the established occidental path of representative government. In 1892 the new Diet demonstrated that it was beginning to function as an important organ of government when the Cabinet resigned following a defeat in the Diet. However, it should not be assumed that Japan had suddenly become a true democracy. A group larger than the original oligarchy now participated in the work of government, and a little over one per cent of the population had the right to vote, but the young founders of the new government, now grown to solid middle age, still controlled Japan. They had become "elder statesmen," the surviving leaders of early Meiji days, who added the prestige of long years of rule to their native political talents.

They controlled the Privy Council and thus spoke for the emperor. Parties were formed, but they were dominated by the personalities and views of the old oligarchs. Cabinets came and went in rapid succession, but until 1918 the Premiers all came from the same small group of oligarchs or from their political protégés, who kept revolving in office in a veritable political merry-go-round. There was Ito from Choshu; Kuroda, the Satsuma *samurai* who had played a leading military role in the "Restoration" and also in the Satsuma Rebellion; Yamagata, the army builder from Choshu; Matsukata from Satsuma; Okuma, a *samurai* from an important fief in northern Kyushu; Katsura, a Choshu general; Saionji, the old court aristocrat; Yamamoto, a Satsuma admiral; and Terauchi, another general from Choshu. Although the oligarchy had moved from the closed committee room to the open floor of the Diet, it still held the reins of government. Japanese administration had been westernized, but in spirit the government had hardly departed from the traditions of a paternalistic, authoritarian state.

The early Meiji leaders showed great perspicacity in discerning the importance of education in the modern state. They saw at once that a technically competent populace was a prerequisite for a modern power. The army and navy needed soldiers who could read and who knew the rudiments of Western science. Business and industry, in order to build the sinews of war, needed thousands of trained technicians.

In 1871 a Ministry of Education was formed, and Japan embarked on an ambitious program of universal education. It took time to build the thousands of

schoolhouses required and to train the tens of thousands of teachers, but within a few years the Japanese had set up a broad educational system, embracing virtually all children of school age. Primary schooling of six years became compulsory for all. This led to Middle Schools of five years or to special technical schools for boys, and for girls to Higher Schools of four or five years. The boys' Middle School led to various higher technical schools or to the men's Higher School, which in turn prepared them for a University course of three or four years, producing doctors, lawyers, scientists, scholars, and candidates for higher government posts. The system was well adapted to Japanese needs, teaching the general populace to read, training a large group of technicians of various degrees of competence, and producing a small body of highly educated men for the professions and for government service.

Universal education made Japan the first country of Asia to have a literate populace. A high degree of literacy explains, as much as industrial strength and military power, the dominant role Japan was to gain in East Asia in the first half of the twentieth century. Universal education had been applied with brilliant success in Japan, but Japan, while borrowing the techniques of the West, injected into them certain strong native tendencies quite at variance with the ideals of democracy and equality which lay behind universal education in occidental countries. To Japanese leaders, education meant not the development of young minds for participation in a fuller life but rather the training of a technically competent citizenry to help build a strong state. Education was essentially a tool of government,

training obedient and reliable subjects who could serve as technically efficient cogs in the complicated machinery of the modern state.

In the early years of Meiji, private Japanese educators and Protestant missionaries from America took an important part in developing schools for boys and girls above the primary level, but the Ministry of Education more and more asserted its authority over all schools and gradually forced them to conform to a strict pattern. The schools became increasingly a medium for teaching the people what to think rather than how to think. Thus Japan pioneered in the modern totalitarian technique of utilizing the educational system for political indoctrination and was, in fact, decades ahead of countries like Germany in perfecting these techniques.

The educational system coupled with military conscription, which fell primarily on the peasants, permitted a thoroughgoing indoctrination of the young Japanese, especially peasants, who were less likely than their city cousins to be subjected to outside influence. The peasants in late Tokugawa times, ground down by crushing poverty, had at times rioted against tax-collectors and usurers, but the heavy Tokugawa rule had made them on the whole a docile and obedient lot, perhaps even less conscious politically than their forbears of the more turbulent sixteenth century. They were easy subjects for the indoctrination they were given in schools and in the army.

In classrooms and army barracks the young Japanese was taught to glory in Japan's military traditions. He came to believe that death on the battlefield for the

emperor was the most glorious fate of man, and to believe in the unique virtues of a vaguely defined "national structure" and an even more vague "Japanese spirit." Together the government and army succeeded in a few decades in creating in the average Japanese the fanatical nationalism already characteristic of the upper classes, and an even more fanatical devotion to the emperor, which had been cultivated by historians and Shinto propagandists and fostered by oligarchs around the throne. They even succeeded in convincing these descendants of peasants, who for almost three centuries had been denied the right to possess swords, that they were not a downtrodden class but members of a warrior race. Japanese political and military indoctrination was indeed thorough and spectacularly successful.

In economic life, the merchant class of late Tokugawa days naturally played an important role in developing private industrial and commercial firms. In these they were joined by the old Daimyo, whose lump sum payments had made them capitalists, and also by many *samurai* who had chosen business as their new means of livelihood. Japan as a whole, however, was lacking in sufficient private capital to develop adequately all the new industrial and commercial fields demanding exploitation. For this reason and probably because the government was not content with the slower and more haphazard course of private economic development, the Tokyo administration led the way in building up many of the industries and economic organs of Japan, particularly those considered essential for a strong military power.

The government directly developed and controlled certain services, such as the railways, the telegraph system, and other public utilities, which usually proved extremely profitable from the very outset. It opened the first railway between Tokyo and its port at Yokohama in 1872. Although many other lines were built by private enterprise, the main network of railways has been in the hands of the government. The government aided many new enterprises and industries by loans or by various other means. It constructed papermills and cotton-spinning plants, assisted in the development of a modern merchant marine and shipbuilding industry, helped build up the silk industry, and gave aid and direction to many other essentially private enterprises.

Government financial aid and patronage for the few private capitalists of the early Meiji period contributed to a phenomenal growth of certain financial and commercial interests. Relatively small fortunes skyrocketed into great economic empires, which branched out in all directions, forming mazes of interlocking cartels and companies, all controlled by a single parent company or by a small group of financiers. The Mitsui, which in late Tokugawa times had become a wealthy merchant family, created the largest of these economic empires. Next to the Mitsui came the Mitsubishi interests, developed by a *samurai* family, the Iwasaki, from a merchant firm of the Edo period.

Government interest and aid in the expansion of commerce and industry also resulted in greater governmental control of the economic life of Japan than was to be found in most other lands in the nineteenth cen-

ture. When government control of business became more common during the twentieth century, Japan proved to be in the vanguard of this world-wide economic trend; and, because of long experience, the Japanese government was better prepared than most others for periods of war in which modern governments take over complete control of almost all economic life.

As the first Asiatic land to adopt the industrial and commercial techniques of the West on a significant scale, Japan found itself in a unique position in the economic world. Western science and cheap oriental labor made an excellent combination for low-priced production. The rest of East Asia had cheap labor but as yet lacked scientific knowledge. Europe and America had scientific knowledge and far greater natural resources than Japan, but also much higher standards of living and therefore correspondingly higher wages. This discrepancy between Eastern and Western standards of living, and the lag in the industrialization of other Asiatic lands, gave the new Japanese industries and commercial enterprises an exceptional chance for rapid growth. Japanese factories and business concerns soon became adequate for the essential economic needs of the country, and Japanese business men began to push out into the markets of Asia, where the inexpensive goods made possible by cheap labor were welcomed by all the natives.

Industrialization and scientific progress slowly raised the standard of living of the average Japanese well above that of his Asiatic neighbors, but this improvement was scarcely commensurate with the rate of industrial and commercial development. This was proba-

bly in part because the ruling group was interested in developing a powerful nation rather than a prosperous people, but a much more basic reason was the economic drag of an impoverished peasantry and the counter-current created by a rapidly expanding population. Japan as a nation was growing rapidly in wealth, but as a result of increasing economic opportunities and improved health conditions and medical care, the population of Japan shot up from 30,000,000 in the middle of the nineteenth century to over 70,000,000 by 1940. Because of this phenomenal growth, the per capita gain in wealth remained relatively small.

Japanese peasants at the beginning of the Meiji period eked out a pitifully meagre existence by intensive cultivation of tiny plots of land. Better seed, scientific rotation of crops, and improved fertilizers brought some increase in crop yields in modern times, and careful planning and hard labor squeezed from the soil about as much food as it could yield, but there was no spectacular increase in the per capita production of the individual farmer. In the West, mechanization of farming had made the individual farmer a large producer, but this called for an abundance of land and a minimum of labor, while in Japan there was a minimum of land and an abundance of labor. As long as the ratio of farmers to acres went unchanged, the Japanese peasant of necessity remained poor.

A large and fast growing peasantry created a superabundance of labor for industry, and the expanding labor market was always amply fed from this source. New needs for labor could be met by fresh recruits from villages and farms. Consequently, the laboring

class kept close in spirit and often in family ties to the docile peasantry. Unemployed workers returned home to the farm, and farm girls spent years in the spinning mills, living almost like industrial serfs in company-owned dormitories. The worker endured a life of dire poverty, but the cheap labor he performed for highly efficient cartels made Japan one of the leading industrial nations of the world, unchallenged in the mass production of cheap goods.

The young reformers, who started in 1868 to make Japan into a modern nation able to hold its own on terms of equality with the Western powers, saw their ambitions realized within their own lifetimes. With the aid of a strong army and navy, an efficient government, an obedient and technically competent citizenry, and vigorous industry and commerce, they made Japan within a few short decades a world military power and won recognition of equality from the occidentals, who had in the past tended to look upon all Asia as essentially "barbarian" and outside the family of civilized nations.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the European powers were engaged in a mad scramble to build up colonial empires by carving out new domains in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Overseas expansion and colonial possessions were the mark of the successful power. Japanese leaders, with their *samurai* backgrounds, enthusiastically embraced the current imperialism of Europe and soon outstripped the Western imperialists in their determination to win colonies. They saw that poor and small Japan needed more natural resources to become a first-class world power,

and they believed that control of adjacent territories would yield many of these resources and strengthen the defenses of Japan.

The political decay and military weakness of China and Korea made these lands ripe for foreign aggression, and Japanese leaders eagerly joined Europeans in the game of winning territories and economic privileges from the weaker regimes of Asia. In 1872, the Japanese tried out their armed forces and the European techniques of forceful diplomacy by sending a punitive expedition to China's island dependency of Formosa to chastise the natives for having killed some sailors from the Ryukyu Islands, which were now recognized as belonging to Japan. The expedition was successful, and Japan forced the Chinese to pay an indemnity.

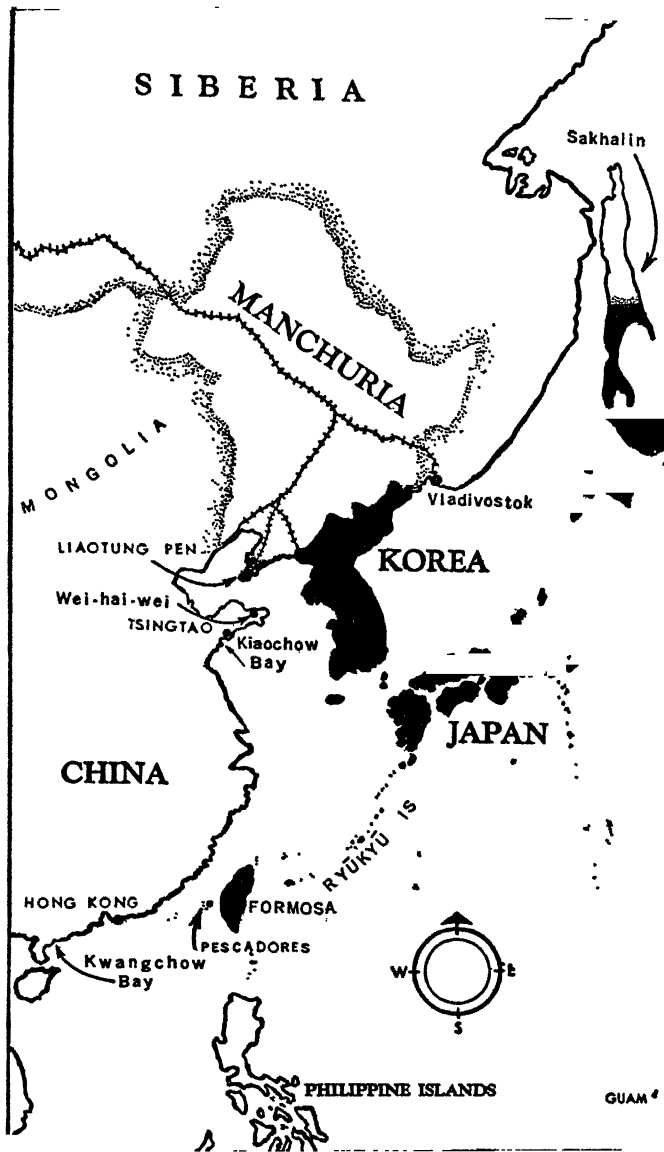
Two years later Japan used the same tactics in Korea that the Americans had employed against the Tokugawa. By a show of naval might, the king of Korea was forced to open his land to foreign intercourse and to sign a treaty granting to Japan the special privileges usually demanded by European powers from Asiatic states. For the next two decades the new government contented itself with intrigues in Korea to gain control of the peninsula and to force the Chinese to give up their claim to suzerainty. Men like Saigo, the Satsuma rebel, had advocated a policy of immediate military expansion, but the dominant group in the government insisted that internal reforms must come first.

Not until 1894 did Japan feel strong enough for a real test of arms. In that year she precipitated a war with China over the control of Korea. The Japanese

easily seized Korea, destroyed the Chinese naval forces, over-ran Southern Manchuria, and even captured the port of Wei-hai-wei in China proper. The war ended in 1895. In the peace treaty China agreed to pay a large indemnity to Japan, recognized the full independence of Korea, and ceded to Japan the rich island of Formosa, the strategically placed Pescadores Islands between Formosa and the coast of China, and the Liaotung Peninsula at the southern tip of Manchuria. Japan had demonstrated that she had indeed become a modern military power, and had made a successful start in building an empire.

At about the same time Japan finally won recognition from the occidental powers as a true equal and a full-fledged member of the family of nations. Impressed by the rapid and efficient reorganization of Japanese political institutions in conformity with Western patterns, and satisfied that the new legal system was up to occidental standards of justice and humaneness, the British in 1894 agreed to surrender their right to extraterritoriality, the right exercised by most Western governments throughout Asia to have their nationals tried by their own rather than by native laws. Other Western powers followed the British example, and in 1899 Japan became the first Asiatic land to free itself of extraterritoriality. The Western nations also began to relinquish the treaty rights under which they had restricted Japanese tariffs since the late days of the Tokugawa. By 1911, Japan had resumed complete control of her own tariffs.

For the most part, Americans and Europeans were favorably impressed with the rapid strides in modern-



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ization that Japan was making, and greatly admired the Japanese for the ease with which they defeated China. But some European powers regarded with grave misgivings the appearance of a new competitor in the game of cutting up the "Chinese melon," as they sometimes called it. Russia, Germany, and France, banding together, forced Japan to return the Liaotung Peninsula to China. In 1898, however, these powers cynically extorted pieces of Chinese territory from the tottering Manchu dynasty. The French took Kwangchow Bay in South China; the Germans, the city of Tsingtao and the adjacent Kiaochow Bay area; and the Russians seized the Liaotung Peninsula which Japan had been forced to give up two years earlier. Britain, not to be outdone by European rivals, expanded her foothold at Hongkong in South China and occupied the port of Wei-hai-wei in the north.

Although the Japanese were infuriated by the duplicity of Germany and France, they clearly realized that Russia, dominant in Manchuria and interfering more and more in Korea, was the chief enemy that must be defeated before Japan could resume its own program of expansion in Asia. The Japanese knew that Russia standing alone would be a dangerous foe for Japan to face and that a coalition of European powers would be disastrous for Japanese ambitions. Of this realization was born the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902, a military pact between Japan and the greatest naval power of the day, in which each country agreed to come to the aid of the other if its ally, while engaged in war with one power, should be attacked by another. The British were not averse to seeing their

old rival, Russia, embroiled in a war in the Far East, and the alliance set the stage for war by giving Japan a free hand to fight Russia alone.

The Japanese, choosing their time in February 1904, set a new pattern for modern warfare by first crippling Russian naval strength in the Far East, and then declaring war. Russia was far stronger than Japan, but suffered the disadvantage of having to fight the war at the end of a single-track railway several thousand miles long. Her military operations were further hampered by revolutionary movements at home. The Japanese were consistently victorious, bottling up the Russians in the Liaotung Peninsula ports, which fell after costly assaults, and driving their other armies northward through Manchuria. Russia sent her European fleet from the Baltic Sea to the Far East, but the entire Japanese navy fell upon it in the straits between Japan and Korea and annihilated it. Although Russia was being soundly trounced, Japan was so exhausted that she welcomed the peace arranged in 1905 by President Theodore Roosevelt, who greatly admired Japanese efficiency and pluck.

In the peace treaty, Russia acknowledged Japan's paramount interests in Korea, transferred to Japan her lease of the Liaotung Peninsula and the railways she had built in Southern Manchuria, and ceded the southern half of the island of Sakhalin, north of Hokkaido. Japan, the military ally of Great Britain, the victor over Russia, and the possessor of expanding colonial domains, had become a true world power.

Relieved of Chinese and Russian competition in Korea, Japan quietly annexed the whole of Korea in

1910. There, as in Formosa, she embarked upon an ambitious program of economic development and exploitation, which brought railways, factories, and other outward aspects of the modern world to these lands. The Koreans and Formosans, however, were subjected to the repressive rule of an efficient but often ruthless colonial administration and an omnipresent and usually brutal police force. The natives had even less opportunity for personal economic gain than the lower classes in Japan, and their intellectual and spiritual oppression was severe.

The First World War gave Japan another chance to expand, this time with little risk or effort. As the ally of England, Japan at once declared war on Germany. Little interested in the outcome of the war in Europe, Japan happily proceeded to pick up German colonies in the East, taking Tsingtao and all the German interests in adjoining areas of China, and seizing German islands in the North Pacific, the Marianas, Carolines, and Marshalls — later given to Japan in the form of a mandate by the peace treaty. With the eyes of the rest of the world turned toward Europe, Japan also found this a good time to win more concessions from the Chinese, and in 1915, presented China with the so-called "Twenty-one Demands," which would have made China a virtual colony of Japan. The Chinese Republican government resisted the more sweeping of these demands, but Japan managed to acquire many valuable economic concessions during the war years. The war in Europe also cut off the cotton mills of England and the factories of continental Europe from the markets of Asia. Japanese business men took full ad-

vantage of this golden opportunity and made deep inroads into rich markets previously monopolized by the Europeans.

War in Europe permitted Japan to expand both her economic and political empire, and brought unprecedented prosperity to the land. Only fifty years after the "Restoration," Japan went to the peace conference at Versailles in 1919 as one of the great military and industrial powers of the world and received official recognition as one of the "Big Five" of the new international order.



Chapter X

THE APPEARANCE OF LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC TRENDS

The success of the carefully controlled revolution of the Meiji leaders was tremendous. In a few decades the oligarchs had made the strong Japan they wanted. They had no detailed plans when they started, but they did have a clear idea of the general objective, and this objective they had attained by firmly leading their people through a series of amazing reforms and changes.

Accustomed to severe feudal rule, the docile populace expected to be led. The oligarchs had no difficulty in controlling the people, and remained the masters of each new situation. Minor set-backs and endless personal quarrels occurred among the leaders, but all major issues turned out as they wished. Nothing got out of hand. Yet, in a country open to influences from all over the world, with an educated citizenry becoming aware of the ideas and ideals of other lands, strict control by a small oligarchy of the actions and thoughts of all the people became increasingly difficult.

It was in the intellectual field that new and divergent currents first made themselves felt. In the early days of

Meiji, there had been many able young Japanese leaders who, while no less anxious than the Satsuma and Choshu *samurai* to make a new and better Japan, were not thinking primarily in terms of military strength. There were men like the young *samurai*, Fukuzawa Yukichi, who as a student of Dutch in the last years of the Tokugawa, had become aware of Western concepts, and later under the influence of American ideals became a prolific writer, established a great newspaper, and founded an educational institution which was to become Keio University — one of the several great universities of modern Tokyo.

There were also foreigners in Japan, particularly the Christian missionaries, who came largely from America, and they helped found many of the early schools. Here they taught the Christian ideals of the West which, although tolerated by the early Meiji leaders, were quite at variance with their aims and beliefs. Christianity as an organized religion did not spread quickly in modern Japan, but it won a few hundred thousand converts who were drawn largely from the intellectual classes. Through them the ethics and ideals of Christianity had a much more profound influence on Japanese thought and life than one might assume from the fact that less than one per cent of the population became professing Christians.

The culture of the early Meiji period was a strange conglomeration of undigested borrowings from Western civilization mixed with many elements remaining intact from feudal times. In the late years of Meiji, however, the birth of a completely modern and yet indigenous culture was presaged by the appearance of an

entirely new literature. This literature was, of course, deeply influenced by Western models. It was so decidedly modern that many of its ideas might have been those of contemporary Russians, Frenchmen, or Englishmen. At the same time, this literature was too good and too sincere to be simply imitative. It was a distinctly Japanese creation, telling the story of the average middle class people with realism, sometimes with deep psychological analysis, and often with considerable humor. In the hands of a master like the novelist Natsume Soseki, a university professor of English, it was a great literature, worthy of standing beside the finest literary works of the Western world. Its appearance toward the end of the Meiji period clearly indicated that, even while the oligarchy ruled, an intellectual class was growing up which was free of the feudal mentality inherited from the Tokugawa and was thinking in terms quite foreign to the oligarchs.

Side by side with the new intellectual class and to some degree merging with it was a second group, also developing opinions divergent from the ruling oligarchy. This group consisted of business men and financiers, who, although in large part made up of former *samurai* and Daimyo, tended to be more interested in taxes and profits than in military strength and colonial expansion.

The business men had joined with the lesser government officials excluded from the oligarchy in clamoring for a larger voice in the government, and the creation of the Diet in 1890 gave them a place in politics which they gradually improved. Political parties at first had centered completely around the old oli-

garchs, but as time passed the small ruling circle found it increasingly necessary to win the support of this new politically conscious public. Gradually the great financial and industrial interests began to take control of the parties, although the oligarchs still remained their nominal leaders. At the same time the electorate was expanded by lowering the tax requirement for voting. At the end of the First World War, the tax qualifications stood at only three yen, and the electorate had risen to 1,500,000, thus including the bulk of the middle classes, but not the peasantry and urban proletariat.

Despite these political gains of the middle classes and the appearance of new intellectual trends, Japan entered the First World War apparently under the firm control of a small oligarchy, and then, as the war ended and Japan entered the post-war world, it suddenly became evident that there was no longer a small, clear-cut ruling group, but instead, thousands of bureaucrats, military leaders, business men, and intellectuals, all contending for control of the government. There was even a growing demand that all classes be allowed to participate in politics. Within a few years it also became evident that the intellectual life and even the social patterns in the cities of Japan had become strongly westernized. A new Japanese culture, hinted at in the writings of men like Natsume Soseki, seemed to be emerging.

One reason for this rather sudden change was the disappearance of the original oligarchs. The Meiji emperor died in 1912, leaving the throne to his mentally deficient son, who ruled in name until 1926 under the reign title of Taisho. The Taisho emperor was incapable

of participating in the direction of government, and in 1921 he had to relinquish even his ceremonial functions to his son, who became the Prince Regent. The death of the Meiji Emperor meant the disappearance of one of the greatest figures in the oligarchy and the elimination of the throne from Japanese politics, except as a symbol, and a tool for those in control of the government.

Ito, framer of the Constitution and four times Premier, had been assassinated by a Korean in 1909. Yamagata, father of the army and himself twice Premier, died in 1922. Two years later only one of the great "elder statesmen" of the Meiji period remained, Prince Saionji, the old court noble and perhaps the least typical member of the whole group.

Meanwhile, a new generation was coming into power. A majority of the generals, admirals, bureaucrats, business men, and intellectuals of the time had been born or at least had grown up since the "Restoration." These men, for the most part, were the sons of former *samurai* who had become army officers, government officials, or business men, but they, themselves, had never been *samurai*. No one group had the prestige or power of the old oligarchy, and on the whole they lacked the common background and singleness of purpose of the Meiji leaders.

Another significant factor was the First World War. It gave a tremendous impetus to commercial and industrial expansion, which helped make the business classes, and particularly the great commercial and industrial interests, increasingly important in Japanese life and politics. They became the heroes of a prosperous new

Japan. In addition, the overwhelming success of the Western democracies in the war strongly influenced Japanese thought. The most democratic Western powers, Great Britain, France, and the United States, had emerged victorious, and the least democratic, Germany, Russia, and Austro-Hungary, had collapsed completely. It seemed obvious that democracy made stronger states and was therefore superior to autocracy. This argument was convincing to the average Japanese. There was an upsurge of enthusiasm for real democracy, and the business men of Japan, riding a wave of economic prosperity and responding to a popular demand for democratic government, became the dominant group in politics.

Military officers, professional bureaucrats, and rural landowners all remained extremely influential, but the business men, particularly the representatives of great economic empires like Mitsui and Mitsubishi, dominated the post-war political parties, and these in turn controlled most of the Cabinets. Some of the Premiers were titled men, others were admirals without party connections; but for more than a decade after the First World War the Cabinets were largely party Cabinets, dependent for their authority upon party strength in the Diet. Thus, at last, the Diet became the key organ of government. Political parties often acted as tools of small but powerful private interests, and Japan had its full share and more of political corruption; but democracy, however imperfectly, was becoming the dominant force in Japanese politics.

The new system of party government got its start as early as September 1918, when Hara, the leader of a

major political party, was the first commoner and the first professional politician of the new generation to become Premier. Following his assassination by a fanatic in 1921, cabinets came and went with bewildering rapidity, some backed by one economic empire or another, some more influenced than others by army and navy interests and more inclined to a strong foreign policy. But until the sudden collapse of party government in 1932, the general tendency was for the government to reflect the dominance of business interests over the other groups that constituted the ruling elements in Japan.

The Japanese business men of the 1920's, influenced by the philosophies of the victorious Western democracies, tended to look with disfavor on the high taxes required for large naval and military establishments. They were also inclined to believe that economic expansion — building up a great export trade and acquiring economic concessions abroad through diplomacy — was less costly and more profitable than colonial expansion by war and conquest. This seemed particularly true in China, the chief field for Japanese expansion. The Chinese, with a newly awakened sense of nationalism, were beginning to boycott foreign merchants whose governments were considered to be pursuing an aggressive policy against China. Consequently, military intervention in China cost the double price of lost markets and increased military expenditures.

The business men, acting through the government they now controlled, soon started a reversal of the old policy of colonial expansion through military force.

In 1922, the Japanese withdrew from Siberia the last of their troops, which together with British and American forces had landed at Vladivostok, Russia's principal Far Eastern port, in 1918, shortly before Hara had come to power. On this expedition the Japanese had sent far more than their share of troops in an obvious effort to fish for possible rewards in the troubled waters of the Russian Revolution, but the new government considered the venture unprofitable and withdrew completely.

In the winter of 1921-22, at the Washington Conference, Japan joined the United States and the principal European powers in recognizing the territorial integrity of China and renouncing the generally accepted policy of cutting up the "Chinese melon." Japan also agreed with other members of the "Big Five" to limit their respective naval establishments. The ratio of capital ships was set at five for Great Britain and the United States, three for Japan, and 1.67 for France and Italy. This ratio, it was thought, would give Japan definite naval supremacy within her own waters but confine her fleet to the western Pacific.

This same winter, by a separate treaty with China, Japan restored to China the area around Kiaochow Bay and the economic concessions in contiguous parts of northern China once held by Germany. Japan also agreed to withdraw all her military forces from these areas. In 1925, the civilian government forced through a reduction of the standing army, and four of the twenty-one divisions were eliminated — a considerable cut in military strength and a saving to the tax-payer.

Thus the Japanese business men called a halt to colonial expansion and asserted their right to limit and even to pare down the national military establishment.

From 1927 to 1929, the cabinet of Baron Tanaka, an army general and leader of a major political party, reversed the trend away from militarism. He used Japanese forces in North China to block the northward advance of the new Chinese Nationalist government, but eventually he had to withdraw these troops. His successors returned to the dominant business man's policy of conciliatory diplomacy with a view to further expansion of a lucrative export trade.

While a greatly enlarged ruling class of military leaders, bureaucrats, and business men, under the dominant influence of big business interests, controlled the democratic post-war regime, other classes were beginning to come on the political scene. With the intelligentsia and underpaid office-workers in the van, city dwellers of lower economic status were waking to a new political consciousness. These men, too, belonged to the new generation and were the products of the new education. University professors, teachers, writers, doctors, lawyers, and office-workers, usually with from fourteen to eighteen years of formal education, were thoroughly conversant with the intellectual and political trends of the Western world. Even the city laborers, with their elementary education, could read the newspapers, which exposed them to influences from all quarters. The educated populace demanded a share in government, and with the democratic tide of the day, this demand could not be denied. In 1919, the electorate was doubled, increasing from 1,500,000

to 3,000,000; and in 1925, a universal manhood suffrage bill was passed, making a total electorate of 14,000,000 voters. Now the whole adult male population of Japan, peasants and city workers along with the middle and upper classes, could vote.

Since the lower classes, however, were politically untutored, they took little interest in politics. The peasantry seemed almost untouched by the strong democratic trends in the cities, and only a small element in the city proletariat, largely under the leadership of middle class intellectuals, expressed itself in political action. With the backing of white collar workers and some laborers, intellectuals founded liberal and left wing parties, such as the Social Democratic and the Farmer Labor, and later the Social Mass Party, born of a union of the two earlier parties. Even a Communist Party was organized, embracing a few radical thinkers and very small groups of laborers and peasants, but it was early liquidated by the thorough and ruthless Japanese police. Of the other parties, only the Social Mass made any impression in the Diet, and that was not until the 1930's, after the Diet had relapsed into relative insignificance.

Although the new parties were not too influential in practical politics, they were significant. During the 1920's, the city intellectuals and white collar workers became a strongly liberal group, not unlike the liberals in the United States who stood slightly left of center. In the 1930's, when the rest of Japan was disowning democracy and liberalism, and the business men were weakly surrendering leadership to the militarists, the intellectuals and white collar workers in the middle

class districts of the large cities rolled up huge majorities for the few liberal politicians who were allowed to run for election.

The peasantry had not yet awakened to politics, and the urban proletariat was hardly strong; but without doubt the city workers were on their way to becoming a force in Japanese society and politics. Their medium of expression was more the labor union than the political party. Japanese labor unions, which had grown rapidly during the prosperous war years, were strong enough by 1919 to exert considerable pressure through strikes, and strikes became a definite part of the Japanese scene in the 1920's. By 1929, union membership had grown to well over 300,000 and promised to keep on growing. It seemed but a matter of time before the proletariat would join with city intellectuals and white collar workers to form a strong, possibly dominant political force in Japan.

Paralleling these political changes in Japan during the 1920's were even more startling changes in Japanese society and culture. The rural areas and small towns were being modernized only very slowly, but a whole new social structure and life were beginning to appear in the cities. Tokyo naturally took the lead in cultural as well as political changes, for it was both the capital and the greatest city of Japan, with a population which reached about 7,000,000 in 1940. The great earthquake and fire of September 1, 1923, accelerated the speed of social change in the Tokyo area. This tremendous cataclysm, which in three days took close to 100,000 lives and completely destroyed about one-half of Tokyo and almost all of Yokohama, helped to sweep

away old, outworn modes of life, and cleared the ground literally for a new city, and figuratively for a new culture.

Downtown Tokyo became a city of wide thoroughfares and of many great steel and reinforced concrete buildings, resembling in sections the cities of Europe and America more than those of Asia. The Marunouchi district around the main Tokyo railway station was the pride of the nation and a symbol of the new modernized Japan. Other cities followed Tokyo's lead, and soon modern office buildings of steel, school buildings in concrete, large movie houses, an occasional great stadium, and sprawling railway stations were the typical architecture of Japanese cities.

Family solidarity, paternal authority, and male dominance remained the salient features of Japanese society, but increasingly the younger generation in the cities joined the world-wide revolt of youth and began to question time-honored social customs. College students, attracted to liberal or radical political philosophies, embraced the freer social concepts of the West, and there was a growing demand on the part of youth to be allowed to make marriages of love rather than marriages arranged by families through go-betweens. Women office workers became a feature of the new social system, and under occidental influence, many middle class Japanese men began to treat their wives almost as social equals. The women of Japan began slowly to free themselves from their traditional position as domestic drudges.

The symbol of the 1920's in Japan, as in the United States, was the "flapper," called by the Japanese the

moga, a contraction of the English words "modern girl," and the male counterpart of the *moga* was naturally called the *mobo*. Moving pictures, either from Hollywood or made in Japan on Hollywood patterns, had a tremendous vogue, and American jazz and Western social dancing were popular with the more sophisticated. Taxi-dance halls appeared; all-girl musical comedy troupes rivaled the popularity of the movies; Western style and Chinese style restaurants became numerous; and there was a mushroom growth of so-called "cafés" — small "beer joints," where cheap victrolas ground out American jazz and emancipated young men enjoyed the company of pretty young waitresses of doubtful morals.

The Japanese threw themselves into Western sports with enthusiasm. Baseball and tennis were already extremely popular. Now they concentrated on track and field sports as well, with a view to making better showings at the Olympic games, and they actually came to dominate the Olympic swimming events. Golf links were built for the rich, and the middle classes took up skiing. Baseball, however, remained the great national sport, and university and middle school baseball games drew crowds comparable to those attending major college football and big league baseball games in the United States.

There were many other less striking but even more significant aspects of the new culture of the Japanese cities. The great literary movement started in the time of Natsume Soseki continued with growing vigor. Thousands of books poured off the Japanese presses, and the literature of the whole world became available

in cheap translated editions. Great Tokyo and Osaka newspapers grew to have circulations in the millions, and popular magazines of all varieties were published. Higher education was sought by more and more young men from all classes, and higher education for women finally achieved a slow start. There was much and often brilliant scholarly activity in many scientific fields and in the humanities. A growing taste for good Western music was seen in the organization of symphony orchestras and in huge audiences for visiting Western musicians. The city people of Japan were beginning to share in the rich intellectual and cultural life of the Western world.

The leaders of the early Meiji period had transformed Japan into a strong military and industrial power, but the democratic political concepts, the broad intellectual life, and the liberal social trends which flowered spontaneously from the state they created were something they themselves could never have imagined or understood. The carefully controlled revolution of the Meiji period was developing into a runaway liberal movement of the urban middle classes.



Chapter XI

NATIONALISM, MILITARISM, AND WAR

The political and intellectual liberalism of the 1920's was for the most part limited to the cities. Peasants and residents of the thousands of villages and small towns, who still constituted the bulk of the population, looked on at what was happening in the cities with wonderment and often with disapproval; and certain elements among the more educated classes regarded the liberal and sometimes radical political theories of the city intelligentsia and the antics of the *moga* and *mobo* with growing hostility and resentment. Army and navy officers, rural landowners, lower middle class citizens of the smaller towns, and many petty government officials found it quite impossible to accept or even to tolerate the growing challenge to established political and social authority.

(These men, too, were members of the new generation and products of the new education, but with them the heavy nationalistic and militaristic indoctrination of the school system had weighed more heavily than the opening of new horizons and the influences from

abroad. They were in complete sympathy with the authoritarian rule at home and the strong expansionist program abroad of the Meiji leaders, and the post-war liberalism and internationalism seemed to them signs of weakness and perversion.) From the Meiji leaders they had inherited a compelling nationalistic urge to make Japan even stronger, but too much nationalistic and militaristic indoctrination had robbed them of the breadth of view of the Meiji leaders they sought to emulate.

Ultra-nationalist and militarist sentiments from time to time found expression in political parties, but these essentially reactionary elements, with their inherent distrust of representative government, leaned more to direct action through private pressure groups and extra-legal cliques than to political action by means of the ballot-box. Ultra-nationalistic secret societies quite naturally developed as one of their major forms of political expression. Some of these exerted considerable influence on Japanese politics by terroristic activities and virulent propaganda directed against their opponents. (The best known of these ultra-nationalistic secret societies was formed by anti-Russian propagandists who, believing that the Amur River in Siberia should be Japan's frontier, named their group the Amur Society. A literal translation into English has given us the very sinister sounding name of Black Dragon Society.)

The reactionaries all tended to look to the armed forces as their idols and champions, for the army and navy were less tainted with the prevailing democratic views and business man's ideals of the 1920's. The

army and navy, furthermore, were the natural organs for the continued military expansion advocated by these reactionaries. The officer corps reciprocated by leaning heavily toward the expansionist and nationalistic views of the reactionaries. Older generals and admirals were often men of broad outlook, who from long and intimate association with business leaders had come to accept much of the business man's point of view, but the younger officers were mostly of a different breed.

The new officer caste was largely composed of sons of officers or of rural landowners, or sometimes even of peasants. Coming from such conservative backgrounds, they were given an even more conservative education. The army recruited most of its future officers at about the age of fourteen, and from that age on the young cadet was subjected to a narrow militaristic training which often made him incapable of understanding democratic concepts of government, or even the civilian mentality. Since these young officers were victims of over-indoctrination, it is not surprising that they increasingly found themselves in violent opposition to the trends of the time and completely out of sympathy with the more moderate and broadminded generals and admirals.

From the start the army had relied on the peasantry as its chief source for enlisted men, and a very special relationship had grown up between the army and the peasants. On the one hand, the army in general and army officers individually had a paternalistic interest in their men and saw to it that they were well cared for while in service, and thoroughly indoctrinated with

fierce national pride and a fanatical sense of devotion to the emperor — and to the army as the visible symbol of imperial might and authority. The peasants, on the other hand, denied their share of economic prosperity and still too untutored to take their part in politics, found army life far less onerous than did the city youths, and looked upon the army and the reservist organization for discharged soldiers as their only means of achieving personal glory and prestige in an otherwise humdrum, miserable existence. (As peasants they were insignificant members of a poor and downtrodden class. As soldiers they were honored members of a mystic elite corps, participating directly in all the glories of Japan as a world power.)

The army officers, with predominantly rural or small town family backgrounds and an intimate and paternalistic relation with peasant soldiers, came to have a deeper understanding of the peasant and a more genuine interest in his welfare than did the representatives of big business interests or the city intellectuals, who more often looked upon the peasant as hopelessly backward and outside the pale of the new Japanese culture. Younger army officers, resenting the political and economic domination of business men, doubtful of the ethical or even the economic value of the whole capitalistic system, and distrusting deeply the liberal philosophy of the intelligentsia, gradually came to champion the economic interests of the peasantry against the big city groups, particularly the capitalists. In return, the peasantry gave the army and its officer corps blind but inarticulate support. Many young army officers, moving toward an almost revolutionary hatred of

urban capitalism, were beginning to advocate vague but definitely radical programs to better the economic status of the underprivileged peasantry.

These tendencies grew slowly and almost unnoticed during the 1920's, as the new generation of younger officers was developing. Then in the early 1930's, the blatant militarism, fanatical nationalism, and anti-liberal and anti-democratic prejudices of the younger army and navy officers, and of other reactionary groups, swept over Japan in a sudden, startling reversal of the dominant trends of the 1920's. (Big business, with more or less active support from the urban middle classes, had been the first successor of the Meiji oligarchy. Now it was pushed aside by the militarists, with the noisy backing of ultra-nationalistic societies and the tacit support of the rural population.)

The basic reason for this reversal of political and social trends was, of course, the gradual rise to influence of the younger officer group along with other nationalistic and militaristic elements. But the time and speed of this reaction against democracy, internationalism, and freer social forms were to a certain degree determined by influences from outside Japan. For one thing, the world-wide disillusionment with democracy, which followed the democratic triumph of the First World War and contributed to the creation of fascist totalitarian regimes in many parts of the world, did not go unnoticed by the Japanese. Many of them were impressed by the vaunted "superiority" of totalitarian governments and their points of similarity with traditional Japanese concepts of authoritarian rule.

Another outside influence was the world-wide

depression of 1929 and the resultant collapse of international trade. Japan started its own depression with a bank crisis in 1927, (but it was of little consequence compared with the raising of protective tariffs throughout the world as an aftermath of the 1929 depression. This seemed to spell ultimate disaster for Japan's foreign trade. The business man's program of continued economic expansion and prosperity through a growing export trade was suddenly revealed to be no more than a vain dream. Huge political units like Russia, the United States, and the British Empire could ride the storm of world depression, for they had their own sources of supply for most raw materials and their own consuming markets. But a smaller unit like Japan, which depended on other lands for much of its raw materials, and on China, India, and the Occident for a vital part of its consuming market, was entirely at the mercy of the tariff policies of other nations.)

(The problem was all the more acute for Japan because of the tremendous increase in population.) There were now more than 60,000,000 Japanese, far more than could be supported by a simple agricultural economy, and with government encouragement the rate of increase was about 1,000,000 persons a year. For the maintenance of this expanded population in the narrow islands of Japan, foreign markets were essential for Japanese exports. Consequently, the Japanese viewed any threat to their overseas economic enterprises with concern.

In the early 1930's many Japanese believed that the only answer to rising protective tariffs in other lands was for Japan to resume its old program of colo-

nial expansion and win for itself the sources of raw materials and the markets needed to make it self-sufficient and invulnerable as a world power. Such reasoning seemed obvious to the reactionary and militaristic groups. Those business men and intellectuals who remained moderate and international in their views were not able to refute these arguments to the satisfaction of the Japanese public.

There was a gradual swing of popular support to the militaristic reactionaries.) They did not wait, however, for a victory at the polls, because it would have come slowly and might never have come at all. They simply seized power by direct action, murdering or intimidating their leading political opponents and embroiling the nation in foreign wars of conquest which, by stirring up the nationalistic emotions of the people, won their support for imperialist and military policies.

The manner in which the militaristic reactionaries were able to seize power by direct action is a point of special interest, for it revealed a basic flaw in the Japanese political system, which the business men and bureaucrats had not attempted to mend. Indeed, they had deliberately preserved it until it contributed to their own undoing. This flaw was the mystic position of the emperor as a demi-god who stood above the government and whose personal desires took precedence over all law.

The Meiji leaders, who had come to power by championing the right of the emperor to rule, had created and fostered this tradition, for it gave them, as the men who surrounded the throne and spoke for the emperor, far greater authority over the people than they could

have achieved otherwise. By building up an elaborate state cult of Shinto, centering around the person of the emperor and the imperial line, and by indoctrinating school children with fanatical devotion to the emperor and blind faith in all statements said to represent his will, they secured for themselves the unquestioning loyalty and obedience of the people. The business men and bureaucrats who followed the Meiji leaders chose to perpetuate this system, for it seemed to give them, too, an unassailable position of authority as spokesmen for the emperor. Consequently, they permitted the wildest sort of utterances by members of the lunatic fringe of ultra-nationalists and militarists, because they were couched in terms of devotion to the emperor; but they vigorously and ruthlessly suppressed all radical thinkers who challenged the validity of the emperor concept.

In 1925 a law was passed which resulted in a program to stamp out so-called "dangerous thoughts." Any thought was considered dangerous which questioned the position of the emperor, or was unsympathetic to the system of private property on which capitalism was based. Although anti-capitalist prejudices were perhaps most prevalent in extreme militaristic circles, the business men and bureaucrats were far more afraid of communistic intellectuals, and the victims of this thought purge were largely students of liberal or radical tendencies. The embryo communist group was completely crushed, and many students who had nothing more than vague radical leanings were thrown into prison and forced to recant their "dangerous thoughts."

(The business men and bureaucrats made their fatal

error in failing to see that the reactionary ultra-nationalists and militarists presented the most immediate threat to their continued supremacy.) These groups neatly turned the tables on the civil government by claiming that they, not the government, represented the true imperial will. Since the army, as the personal army of the emperor, had always borne a special relationship to him, and had been partially independent of the civil government, this claim in the case of the army as a whole had a certain validity; but individual reactionaries went even further and claimed imperial sanction and approval for their personal views and deeds. Acts of aggression abroad, and at home, acts of civil disobedience, political murders, and open mutiny were all justified as being in accord with the true will of the emperor, whose views were misrepresented by corrupt politicians around the throne.

Confronted with this monstrous perversion of their own policy, the weak-kneed business men and bureaucrats failed to take drastic measures or even to stand firm and united. Liberal intellectuals and office-workers, while dismayed, were too weak politically and for the most part too timorous to fight back. The general rural and small town population accepted these acts of supposed devotion to imperial will at their face value, and created an atmosphere so sympathetic for political assassins and other extremists that they were usually given only absurdly light punishment.

Throughout the 1920's some men high in government circles had advocated colonial expansion and a strong military policy. There was, for example, Baron General Tanaka, who has been accused of drawing up

an extraordinary memorial recommending a policy of conquest and empire in East Asia. The authenticity of this particular document is definitely open to question, but there can be no doubt that such views as it expressed were advanced by some government officials during the 1920's. These men had tried, however, to win acceptance of their program by normal political procedures, and they had usually been overruled by the business men.

(The turning point between the liberal 1920's and the reactionary 1930's came in 1931, when certain military forces, without the approval of the civil government and possibly even without the specific approval of higher military authorities, started their own war of territorial aggrandizement. In September, Japanese Army units stationed in Manchuria to protect the great South Manchurian Railway and other Japanese interests, embarked upon the conquest of all Manchuria on the flimsy pretext that Chinese troops had tried to blow up the railway. Within a few months, Manchuria had been overrun by Japanese forces, and troops had been landed at Shanghai in central China. After a very sanguinary fight, they seized the Chinese portions of this key city and some surrounding territory. Early in 1932, Manchuria became a puppet state called Manchukuo. The League of Nations and the United States looked with strong disfavor on this outburst of military aggression in the Far East. But since neither did more than censure Japan verbally and withhold recognition of Manchukuo, Japan found their policies all bark and no bite. Her answer to their criticism was simply to withdraw from the League of Nations.)

There could be no doubt that the Japanese army in Manchuria had been eminently successful. At relatively small military cost, and with only a temporary loss in exports to China because of boycott activities, the army had brought a vast new area under Japanese control, rich in natural resources and inhabited by some 30,000,000 industrious Chinese. It was a promising first step toward the creation of the self-sufficient economic empire which would make Japan invulnerable to economic or military attack.

(The people as a whole accepted this act of unauthorized and certainly unjustified warfare with uncritical admiration. Many of the business men and bureaucrats, instead of denouncing the militarists for acting against the will of the government and therefore against the will of the emperor as interpreted by the government, happily accepted this expansion of the national domain and attempted to justify the acts of the military before a critical world public. The Japanese government, in fact, steadfastly maintained the fiction that there had been no war and called the whole conquest of Manchuria simply the "Manchurian incident.")

Meanwhile, other military extremists at home had brought a sudden end to party rule by another form of direct action—political assassination. A group of young army and navy officers, claiming they were attempting to free the emperor from evil advisers, assassinated the Premier on May 15, 1932. The government leaders, while condemning this act, tacitly accepted it as judgment against party government, and set up a compromise "National Government" with a cabinet made up of a central bloc of professional bureaucrats, with other

contingents from the political parties and the armed forces balancing each other.

This compromise government became typical of the rest of the 1930's. The military element in succeeding cabinets tended to grow and party representatives slowly dwindled in number, but the professional bureaucrats retained the central and, theoretically, the dominant position throughout the decade. However, the militarists definitely took the lead in creating new policies of government. With the success of their Manchurian venture assured and supported by sporadic acts of terrorism committed by individual extremists, they forced as much of their program as they could on the compromise governments.

By simply refusing to recognize the authority of the Diet over the Cabinet, the militarists robbed the Diet of one power after another, and by the end of the decade they had reduced it to little more than an impotent and very timorous debating society. They did not dare to do away with the Diet entirely, because in theory it had been a gift from the Meiji emperor, but they made it meaningless as a parliament.

The militarists also increased the already strong imperialistic and militaristic indoctrination of the people, and they did their best to whip the masses up to a frenzy of nationalistic fervor. General Araki and his colleagues invented an undefined state of "national crisis," with the strong implication that war was imminent. There was open encouragement of anti-foreign prejudices, and the people were taught to look upon all foreigners as possible spies.

The Japanese had for long hated Russia. Now bit-

ter anti-American and anti-British propaganda was permitted to grow and to increase in virulence.) Frequent reference was made to the abrogation in 1924 by the United States of a "gentlemen's agreement" with Japan, by which a small trickle of Japanese immigrants had been allowed entry into the United States. In its place, the American Congress had passed a bill classing the Japanese with the other Asiatics entirely excluded on the grounds of race. The Japanese took this as a direct insult. This old sad story was revived in the 1930's, coupled with much talk and speculation about a great naval war with the United States.

At the same time, the attention of the Japanese public was also focused on the Asiatic colonial possessions of Britain and other European powers. Japanese leaders, coveting these rich territories, began to speak of freeing colonial Asiatics from oppression by the white races. Since it was obvious that the Japanese merely wished to substitute their own rule for that of the European powers, not many of the peoples of the Far East were deceived by this new line of propaganda. (The Japanese themselves, however, accepted it completely and came to believe that Japan was the champion of the downtrodden peoples of Asia, and some day would free them from their white oppressors.)

On the home front, all things not to the liking of the reactionary militarists were termed un-Japanese and, if possible, suppressed. Dance halls were banned; and golf and other luxury sports were frowned on. Labor unions were deprived of all influence. An effort was made to stop the use of English scientific and technical words in conversation and writing, and street and rail-

way signs, which had once been bilingual, were re-made with the English omitted. Students in the men's higher schools and universities, which had been noted for their independence of thought, were forced into the same patterns of rote memorizing as pupils in lower schools; participation by women in the intellectual life of the nation was discouraged; freedom of expression in newspapers and journals was curbed even more rigorously than before; and a rather successful attempt was made to have the people replace rational thought on political and social problems with the use of almost mystic phrases, such as "national crisis," "Japanese spirit," and "national structure."

The militarists also sanctioned and encouraged a veritable witchhunt for all persons whose slightest word or deed could be construed to be *lèse majesté*. Liberal educators were forced to resign their academic positions on the grounds that they had handled the imperial rescript on education improperly, and leading statesmen were driven out of political life because of some unfortunate historical allusion involving an emperor. Professor Minobe, a leading authority on constitutional law and a member of the House of Peers, was sent into dishonorable retirement because he had described the emperor as an "organ" of the state. Social scientists, liberal educators, and moderate politicians soon learned to remain silent if they could not express themselves in the mystical terms of ultra-nationalism and abject devotion to the emperor.

Party politicians, of course, fought bitterly to preserve their hold on the government, but the only method they knew was through the ballot-box, and

with the decline of the Diet, elections meant less and less. Whether they won elections or not, the party politicians were gradually losing all control of the government. (Some cabinets even excluded party men altogether, and those politicians who did not swing around to timid support of the extreme militarists found it best to abandon political life, or at least to keep silent.) Even the Social Mass Party of city intellectuals and white collar workers, swayed by the dominant currents of the day, developed certain fascist leanings. Eventually, the parties were dissolved completely, and the only opposition the Cabinet then had to fear from the Diet was an occasional pointed question from some brave liberal politician left over from an earlier age.

(The big business interests, which had stood behind the party politicians, soon made their own compromise with the militarists. Business meant far more to them than ideals. The militarists, in seizing Manchuria, had provided them with a vast new field for economic exploitation, and the wars and rearmament programs of the militarists led to a rapid development of heavy industry and of certain other specialized war industries.) The average business man remained afraid of the risks and expense of a major war, but he was not averse to cooperating with the militarists in minor colonial wars and in the profits of building an empire.

At the same time, under militarist pressure the government increasingly took over the direction and control of business and industry in preparation for an unspecified "national crisis." Control of private capital and profits grew exceedingly stringent, and the great economic empires, like Mitsui and Mitsubishi, which

were coming to be run by competent managers rather than by their owners, became in some ways merely economic branches of the government. In fact, the militarists, who had long been unfriendly to capitalism, appeared to be taking the first step toward a curious sort of state socialism.

Throughout the 1930's the bureaucrats kept up the appearance of being in the political saddle, balancing the party politicians and big business interests against the militarists; but as the politicians and big business interests lost power, it was more and more evident that the militarists, if not in the saddle, were at least leading the horse. (All the bureaucrats could do was to exert a restraining influence on them. The bureaucrats were not liberals in the sense of being ardent supporters of democracy, but they were at least moderates.) They had faith to some degree in parliamentary forms of government; they believed in the capitalist system, which the more extreme militarists were ready to discard; and they were apprehensive about the ultimate outcome of the aggressive foreign policy the militarists were pursuing.

This group of moderates included some of the older army and navy leaders, who in contrast to the younger officers believed that the civil government rather than the army and navy should determine foreign policy. But the chief strength of the moderates was to be found in the Privy Council and other groups around the throne. One moderate stood out in particular. He was the old court aristocrat, Prince Saionji, the last of the "elder statesmen" from the Meiji period, who served as a definite moderating influence until his death in

1940. Prince Saionji's chief political protégé, drawn from the same old court aristocracy, was (Prince Konoye, who as Premier apparently attempted to keep the militarists somewhat in check but who finally stepped aside to make way for a Cabinet favoring war with the United States.)

Another figure who might be classed with the moderates was the emperor himself. In 1921, he had become Prince Regent for his mentally incompetent father, and in December 1926, he had ascended the throne, with the reign title of Showa. The political views of a person so sheltered from all normal contact with the outside world as the Showa emperor cannot be described with any degree of certainty. But it seems not improbable that he was and is at least a moderate and possibly even a liberal at heart. He grew up at the time of the First World War, when democratic trends were strongest; he traveled in Europe in 1921, and was always surrounded primarily by liberals or at least moderate men. He appears to be a man of scholarly tastes, and he has a deep interest in marine biology, which would make literal belief in his own divinity seem rather improbable. However, the views of the emperor meant relatively little in practical politics. What counted was not what was in his mind, but what the people were led to believe was in his mind, and this the militarists determined with no reference to the emperor himself.

(The moderates could exert a restraining influence on the militarists, but they could not control them.) The army and navy had a position of semi-independence from the civil government. Moreover, they exercised

a negative control over any Cabinet or candidate for the Premiership. Army and navy ministers were chosen from the list of active generals and admirals, and the armed forces could thus make a Cabinet fall or prevent a newly appointed Premier from forming a Cabinet by refusing to let any general or admiral serve in these key posts. The use of this veto power at certain crucial points in the 1930's aided the militarists greatly in their attempts to gain control of the government.

An even more decisive factor was that direct action on the part of the army or of individual extremists always resulted in an increase in the influence of the militarists. The general public, reverting to the feudal tradition of rule by military men, accepted the claims of military extremists at their face value and judged these men to be "sincere," while accusing their opponents of "insincerity" as scheming politicians and selfish capitalists.

The fight was not only between the armed forces and the civil government. Much of the struggle for power between extremists and moderates took place within the army itself. In 1935, a lieutenant colonel, representing the younger officer faction, murdered one of the leading generals of the War Ministry, because he was thought to be carrying out a sweeping program of re-assignment of high officers in an attempt to rob the extremists of influence.

In the general election of February 1936, the voting public definitely endorsed the more liberal candidates, indicating very strong support still for parliamentary government. Military extremists, startled by the recalcitrant attitude of the public, struck swiftly.

Before dawn on February 26, a group of young officers from a Tokyo regiment, leading fully armed enlisted men, went to the homes of several liberal statesmen and slaughtered them. The Premier and Prince Saionji narrowly escaped the assassins; but General Watanabe, the inspector general of military education, Takahashi, the venerable and able finance minister, and Admiral Saito, keeper of the privy seal and one of the closest advisers of the emperor, were all murdered.

The conspirators had hoped to seize the government by this bold move, and for a while Tokyo was divided into two armed camps. Within a few days, however, the rebels were persuaded to capitulate in the face of overwhelming military might brought against them by the group around the throne, which for once took a determined stand. The ringleaders of the revolt were severely punished, but the militarists as usual emerged from the incident nearer their goal of complete domination.

‡The next step in the extremist policy of direct action was to start another supposedly local war of conquest.¶The Japanese militarists, on one pretext or another, had been pushing from Manchuria into North China and Inner Mongolia, slowly winning control over the war lords and the business interests of these regions; but during these years the Chinese Nationalist government had been steadily growing stronger in Central and South China and even gaining influence in the north. The Chinese Nationalists were bitterly opposed to the special privileges of all foreign powers, and it was becoming evident that the old days of happy hunting for concessions and territories in China were

fast coming to an end. If Japan were to consolidate her gains and seize additional territory from China in another cheap local war, she would have to move fast before China became too determined or strong.

In July 1937, following the precedent of the "Manchurian Incident," military extremists provoked a new "incident" near Peking in North China. Again the grounds for conflict were extremely flimsy, and again it seems that the local Japanese units were acting without the knowledge or the expressed approval of the government and possibly without the knowledge of higher army authorities. But again the Japanese civil government meekly supported the war brought on by the militarists. Japanese troops quickly seized the two principal cities of North China, Peking and Tientsin, and overran large parts of North China and Inner Mongolia. Fighting again broke out around Shanghai as it had during the conquest of Manchuria.

The aim of the militarists was obviously to bite off as much of North China and Inner Mongolia as possible before Chinese Nationalist authority over that region became too strong. But the militarists had miscalculated; it was already too late to seize North China by a localized war. The Chinese were determined to wage a full scale war to protect themselves from foreign domination.

Chinese resistance irritated the Japanese militarists, but it did not worry them. They would accept the challenge and crush all opposition by capturing the capital at Nanking. The campaign around Shanghai, although costly, was pushed to a successful conclusion, and Japanese armies marched on to Nanking, which fell



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December. When the Chinese government withdrew up the Yangtse River to Hankow, in the geographic center of China, the Japanese realized that they were in for a hard fight, but they pushed on and captured Hankow in October 1938. The indomitable Chinese then withdrew their government farther inland, past the rugged gorges of the Yangtse to Chungking, which lies in a great mountain-rimmed plain, almost impregnable to attack even by vastly superior military forces.

The Japanese now saw that their "incident" was becoming a protracted war. They held the cities and rail lines of most of northeastern China and Inner Mongolia, the major ports of the southern coast of China, and the great central cities along the Yangtse River, which constitutes the main artery of China's trade and commerce. Yet the war had reached a stalemate because the Chinese, although pushed into the more remote and backward parts of the country and cut off from foreign aid and the industrial production of their own cities, simply refused to surrender.

Even so, the Chinese military and economic position appeared hopeless in the long run. The Japanese, holding the richest parts of China and strangling the rest of the land economically, decided to wait the Chinese out. Alternating between acts of terrorism and conciliatory gestures to the puppet government they had created at Nanking, the Japanese forces settled down to wait for the collapse of the Nationalist government.

But Japan had miscalculated again. The Chinese government did not collapse, and the fighting spirit of the supposedly pacifistic Chinese people fed upon the blunders the Japanese militarists themselves committed.

Their narrow-minded and domineering attitude toward the Chinese made cooperation with them almost impossible, and the excesses they permitted their troops, as in the mad orgy of rape and murder which followed the capture of Nanking, made even the politically apathetic Chinese peasants determined and irreconcilable foes of Japan.

The outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 must at first have looked like a fortunate event to the Japanese. In 1936, Japan had joined with Germany in an anti-communist pact, to which Italy also subscribed the following year. Now Japan's European allies seemed on the point of crushing her potential European enemies. The eyes of the world were diverted from close scrutiny of the Far East, and the collapse of France in 1940 permitted Japan to start upon a gradual military and economic penetration of French Indo-China in the heart of the European colonial domains of Southeast Asia.

The war in Europe, however, aroused the American public to a consciousness of the true significance of Japanese aggression in China. It came to be realized that the militaristic regimes of Germany and Japan, if victorious, would constitute a perpetual menace to the peace and freedom of America, and of the world. While gradually swinging to the aid of Britain against Germany, the United States also began to take a more positive stand against Japanese aggression. The old policy of verbal protests and non-recognition of Japanese conquests was slowly supplemented by economic sanctions, which hurt Japan far more than a thousand verbal protests. Valuable shipments of scrap iron were

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eventually stopped; Japanese assets abroad were frozen and with the cooperation of the British and the Dutch shipments of oil were cut off. Imports of scrap-iron and oil were vital to the Japanese economy and war machine.

By the summer of 1941, Japan was confronted with a most difficult and momentous decision. Four years of war in China had strained her economy, and the tightening blockade imposed by the Western democracies would, if permitted to continue long enough, seriously impair Japanese economic strength and greatly reduce her military effectiveness. The Chinese war would become increasingly difficult to wage, and Japan would eventually lose her military supremacy in the Far East. Obviously the policy of waiting for China to collapse was no longer feasible, and action was called for.

Two choices were open to Japan. One was to withdraw her forces from China, as the United States demanded, and be content with whatever economic concessions the Western democracies would make. The other was to break the economic blockade by war on the Western democracies. The moderates, appalled by the danger of war against a coalition of foreign powers but aware that the army would never be willing to withdraw empty-handed from China, desperately sought some compromise which would satisfy both the United States and the militarists at home. The United States, however, refused to compromise with aggression.

As the year 1941 wore on, it became obvious that war was inevitable. Although the activities of certain extremists in the past had threatened to embroil Japan in

war with the West, the moderates had always managed to stop short of it. The crisis caused by the wholly unwarranted sinking of the *Panay*, a United States Navy gunboat bombed by Japanese planes flying over the Yangtse River in December 1937, had been settled. Numerous clashes with Russian troops on the Manchurian-Siberian border, culminating in a month-long battle in 1938, had never been permitted to develop into war. But now the government saw war with the West staring it in the face. In the autumn of 1941, Prince Konoye resigned the Premiership, making way for General Tojo and his war Cabinet.

The Japanese did not enter the war in a spirit of wild bravado. The decision on the part of the militarists, who were now definitely in the saddle, was cool and calculated. They knew how weak the American, British, and Dutch forces in the western Pacific were, and how easily the Japanese could overrun the rich lands of Southeast Asia. There they would find the minerals and oil so desperately needed. These, it was hoped, would soon make the Japanese economy stronger than ever. Russia, apparently on the verge of collapse, seemed to be out of the picture. Britain was in far too critical a situation at home to do much in the Far East, and the United States could never dare concentrate all its power in the Pacific as long as Germany was undefeated.

Germany was thus the first line of Japan's defense. If she won, Japan was safe. If she lost, she would at least have fought a rear-guard action in behalf of Japan, tiring their mutual enemies and giving Japan time to bring China to her knees and to build an invulnerable

economic and military empire, containing enormous natural resources and many hundreds of millions of industrious people, protected from attack by the vast expanse of the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

It was a fateful decision. As the result of small initial wagers in 1931 and in 1937, Japan was now forced into a position in which she either had to withdraw ignominiously from the game and lose what was already won, or else make a win-all, lose-all play. In Tokyo in the autumn of 1941, the chances for success seemed good, and the rewards of victory promised to be the creation of the most populous and perhaps the richest empire the world had ever seen.

But again the Japanese miscalculated, not so much on geographic, economic, or military as on human factors. They counted heavily on their own moral superiority, the famed "Japanese spirit," and the supposed degeneracy and pacifism of the Western democracies, particularly America, which they believed to be corrupted by too many luxuries. They were convinced that Americans did not have the will to fight a long and costly war. In this delusion the Japanese showed themselves to be so blinded by their own nationalistic and militaristic propaganda that they were unable to evaluate the spirit of other peoples or to judge their reactions correctly. They entirely misread the character not only of the Americans, but of the British and Russian peoples too. The Russians did not collapse; the British continued a valiant struggle with growing determination and strength; and the Americans entered the war with a resolution and vigor the Japanese had not dreamed possible.

The Japanese even failed to judge correctly other Far Eastern peoples. Japan had developed a telling propaganda technique, and phrases such as "East Asia for the East Asiatics," "A New Order in East Asia," and "The East Asiatic Co-Prosperity Sphere" had a ready appeal for other Asiatics. However, warned by Japanese actions in China and disillusioned by the brutality and arrogance of their conquering troops, the native populations gave the Japanese little support. The Chinese, encouraged by the appearance of powerful allies in their war against Japan, took new heart in the stubborn fight against the invaders. The Filipinos, far from welcoming the Japanese, fought stoutly alongside the Americans; and other peoples of Southeast Asia either stood by indifferent to the outcome or gave only lukewarm aid to their new masters.

Repeating the tactics used against Russia in 1904, the Japanese started the war with a brilliantly successful surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, which crippled the American navy at one blow, virtually eliminating it for the time being, and cleared the way for an easy conquest of Southeast Asia and the islands north of Australia. The attack on Pearl Harbor was indeed an unqualified military success for Japan. But it was also a psychological blunder, because it united the American people, who had been bitterly divided over the question of participating in the wars in Europe and Asia, and they took up arms determined to crush Japan and Germany.

With a speed that must have appalled the Japanese, the Americans rebuilt their navy, created an air force against which the Japanese were no match, and dispatched strong army and marine units to the Pacific to

hold the line against Japan. In the summer of 1942, the Americans stopped the Japanese advance at Midway and at Guadalcanal, and in 1943 they took the offensive.

The vast natural resources and tremendous productive power of America were pitted against the meagre resources and relatively feeble productive power of Japan, already weary from four years of war and needing far more time to benefit from the rich territories conquered in Southeast Asia. The United States, while making a major contribution to the war in Europe, could still spare enough to win control of the skies and seas in the Pacific. Her ships, submarines, and planes drove the Japanese navy back to its home waters and virtually destroyed it; they cut the life-line of Japan to Southeast Asia, and eventually to China; and they isolated the islands of the Pacific, both from one another and from the home base in Japan, so that these enemy outposts could be attacked singly and their garrisons destroyed piecemeal.

The Japanese fought with a fanaticism born of long indoctrination. Taught to believe that surrender would mean disgrace for their families, and torture and death for themselves at the hands of the enemy, the soldiers in the field usually fought on doggedly to the last man. Even civilians commonly chose death rather than surrender. But the Japanese were to learn that blind fanaticism was not enough in the face of superior weapons in the hands of a determined foe. The Americans broke through the island barriers of the central Pacific; they knifed their way along the New Guinea coast and recaptured the Philippines; and they established them-

selves in the heart of the Japanese Empire by seizing Okinawa, the main island of the Ryukyu chain.

By the early summer of 1945 it was clear that Japan had lost the war. Her cities were being wiped out one by one; her factories were fast being destroyed; her navy and merchant marine were largely gone; her overseas armies, though on the whole intact, were almost isolated from the homeland; and the final collapse of Germany meant that the entire strength of the United States and Great Britain could be turned against Japan. The Americans were obviously poised for an assault upon the home islands of Japan. With the crushing superiority of American arms, and the blind determination of Japanese soldiers and civilians to fight to the death, as they had been trained to do, a terrible massacre of the people and complete destruction of the nation seemed inevitable.

The Japanese people themselves, fatalists by long tradition, and victims of militaristic and nationalistic propaganda which taught them to obey orders without question, stoically watched their homes burned by incendiary raids and their friends and relatives killed. They appeared to be either unaware of their impending doom or else resigned to it. But fortunately for Japan there were men in the government who could comprehend the situation and who preferred the disgrace of defeat to national suicide.

The growing disasters brought on by the war had tended to discredit the leadership of the militarists, and the government had been slowly gravitating again into the hands of the more moderate bureaucrats. These men were spurred into immediate action by the drop-

ping of two atomic bombs, which all but wiped out the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and by the Russian declaration of war against Japan. They accepted the "unconditional surrender" formula of the Allied Powers on August 14, 1945, bringing to an abrupt end a war which had wrought havoc on the nation. For the first time in its long history, Japan came under the direct control of foreign conquerors.



Chapter XII

THE DAWN OF A NEW AGE

The one thing that can be safely said about the period since August 14, 1945, is that it is the beginning of a new age for Japan. The coming of Perry to Japan in 1853 resulted in profound changes in Japanese life. The much more dramatic coming of General MacArthur to Japan in 1945 may bring equally profound changes. Crushing military defeat, the disruption of normal life caused by eight years of war and the devastation of most of the larger cities of Japan, the crippling of Japanese economy, first by bombs and then by the loss of her colonies, the presence of an army of occupation, the enforced abandonment of militarism and many other major features of the Japanese system, and most of all, the realization that Japan is not a divine land protected by the gods and that the Japanese are not a race of supermen — these factors are having and will continue to have a tremendous impact upon the Japanese people. Inevitably they will produce a new and different Japan. But what this new Japan will be, no one can predict with certainty.

The results of decades of militaristic and ultra-nationalistic propaganda will not be easily wiped away. The army and navy have been abolished, war criminals have been tried, and reforms designed to eliminate the political pitfalls of the old order are being made, but changing the mentality of a people is a slower and more difficult task.

The natural resentment of people who have suffered defeat and whose land has been occupied by foreign invaders is not to be overlooked. The tremendous destruction of the physical assets of Japan and the disruption of her economy have resulted in a serious lowering of the standard of living, and this in turn will cause deep-seated unrest. There is much spiritual confusion among the Japanese, for after long being accustomed to close supervision and rigid patterns of thought, they are now witnessing the collapse of their old world and the repudiation of many of its most cherished values. This spiritual confusion may well result in considerable social and political instability.

Despite these problems, however, remarkable progress has been made since the surrender toward the creation of a peaceful and democratic Japan, which is the primary objective of the Allied Powers. The vanquished have joined the victors in this task with amazing good will and trust. The wisdom and justice shown by General MacArthur and his forces, matched by the industry and cooperation of the Japanese, appear to be accomplishing the seemingly impossible — a military occupation satisfactory to the victors and popular with the vanquished.

The most surprising factor in the post-surrender situation has been the freedom of most Japanese from rancor and resentment against the conquerors. This has been in large measure due to the fact that the surrender was made in the name of the emperor. Because the militarists had taught the people to believe blindly in the emperor, he was able not only to assure acceptance of the capitulation by the army as well as by the civilian population, but also, by assuming responsibility for the decision, to free the individual Japanese from any personal sense of shame over defeat or guilt at having surrendered. Learning for the first time the true story of recent events in Japan and the Far East, the average Japanese realized that he had been the dupe of his own army and political leaders. With admirable objectivity, he saw that Japanese militarists, rather than American soldiers, were to blame for Japan's sorry plight. Unquestionably, many Japanese will never be reconciled to defeat, but the great majority are showing an astonishing readiness to cooperate sincerely with their conquerors and to establish relations of friendship with their former foes.

Another important factor in the rehabilitation of Japan has been the energy and resourcefulness of the people. Under the guidance of the occupying forces, they have set themselves to the rebuilding of their stricken land with determination. Despite a critical food shortage during the late spring and summer of 1946, they have done much to check the forces of economic disintegration, which came as an inevitable aftermath of defeat. The devastated cities of Japan are being rebuilt; attempts are being made to remedy the

long-standing ills of a depressed peasantry and the industrial cartel system; and the reappearance of a vigorous labor movement gives promise of continued economic reforms.

Political reform has been the chief focus of interest since the surrender. Here the Japanese have had the advantage of considerable experience in democratic ways. The parliamentary government of the 1920's was far from perfect, but it did operate with success, and most members of the Japanese electorate are familiar with the meaning and procedures of voting. Liberal elements at the time of the surrender were weaker than they had been in the 1920's, but among older political leaders and urban intellectuals and white collar workers there remained a solid core of liberal thinkers, who, freed from the restrictions and fears of the old regime, emerged as proponents of a new democratic order in Japan.

Assisted by a sweeping purge of all leaders identified with militarist or ultra-nationalist policies, these men have taken over the government of Japan. Baron Shidehara, who had distinguished himself as a liberal leader in the 1920's, became Premier in October 1945. He was followed in this post the next May by Yoshida, another leader with the same liberal background. The emperor lent his assistance to a program of reducing the imperial institution to the status of a constitutional monarchy. On New Year's Day 1946 he issued a rescript denying his own supposed divinity, and he has taken the necessary steps to permit the framing of a new Constitution, designed to make the emperor little more than a symbol of national unity. The mass of

Japanese have readily accepted these startling changes, while retaining a loyalty to the throne little impaired by the disastrous outcome of the war.

On April 10, 1946, the first post-war elections for the Diet were held, with the women of Japan voting for the first time in history and winning thirty-nine of the 466 Diet seats. Swinging back to the political trends of the 1920's, the city dwellers gave a strongly leftist vote. The Socialists, the successors of the pre-war Social Mass Party, won one-fifth of the seats, and the reborn Communist Party, under leaders recently released from prison or returned from exile, received four percent of the total vote. The country as a whole, however, returned to the Diet a large majority of members best described as politically indeterminate rather than definitely conservative or moderate. The vagueness of their political views reflected the confusion and political immaturity of the peasants and the residents of the small towns who had elected them.

Remarkable progress has indeed been made since the surrender toward the creation of a peaceful and democratic Japan, but there is no assurance that progress toward this goal will remain rapid or even steady. The future course of events in Japan depends to a large extent on the success of the principles of democracy and international cooperation elsewhere in the world. And even in Japan there are many questions that becloud the future. What will be the attitude of the demobilized soldier when he recovers from the shock of defeat? Will the brittle glory of militarism again come to have an appeal for the Japanese? What road will the peasants take once they awaken to a realization of

their potential political power? Are the Japanese strong enough to endure the long years of economic hardship that lie ahead without seeking refuge in some shallow panacea? And most important of all, can the Japanese masses, so accustomed to believing what they are told, learn in time the healthy skepticism and independence of judgment upon which freedom depends?

Despite these many uncertainties, there is, however, one very good reason for optimism — the adaptability of the Japanese. They are pragmatists, and in the past have shown themselves capable of abandoning old customs and habits of thought when convinced that there was something better. The leaders of the early Meiji period, when they realized that their feudal political and military system was inferior to the nation states and citizen armies of the West, made a startling about-face and did away with feudalism. It now appears that the Japanese are making another abrupt about-face. As in Meiji days, many will undoubtedly be incapable of changing their ways of life and thought, but even among Japanese the one irrefutable argument against the old order will be that militarism and ultra-nationalism led Japan into the worst national disaster she has ever suffered.

No one can yet tell what the new age in Japan will mean in the long run — democracy or authoritarianism; liberalism, fascism, or communism; international cooperation or blind nationalism. The outcome is of concern to the whole world, for the success or failure of the attempt to create a peaceful and democratic Japan inevitably will influence the cause of peace and democracy in other parts of the world. What we do in Japan,

both as a nation and as individuals, will undoubtedly have a strong bearing on the eventual outcome there. In this, we have a grave responsibility — one calling for wisdom and understanding. Yet, no matter how long the occupation of Japan may last, the ultimate answer will be written by the Japanese people themselves. We and our allies can choose the initial direction they are to take, but only they can determine where Japan will go.

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