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HEADQUARTERS
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE LANGUAGE SCHOOL
SAVAGE, MINNESOTA

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS IN JAPANESE NATIONALISM

By

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Instructor

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1. Introduction
2. Shinto
3. Confucianism
4. Buddhism
5. Bushidō
6. The Political Theory of the Japanese State
7. The Family System
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INTRODUCTION

The dominating feature of modern Japan is her nationalism. This nationalism is deeply rooted in the elements that constitute the Japanese nation and Japanese people. The Japanese feel they are of divine origin; hence, they consider themselves a superior, chosen people. They believe their Emperor to be a living god, a direct descendant of the gods that founded their empire. These gods are thought to watch over the welfare of their nation. So the Japanese know their political system to be unrivalled. This entails a responsibility of the race to the Emperor and the gods. The end or purpose of the Japanese state becomes the fulfilment of a divine mission - the establishment of peace and order in the world.

Geographical isolation kept the race relatively pure and fostered a provincialism and a touchy pride. The history of Japan is a glorious fiction of the rule of an unbroken dynasty. It contains ample material for the strengthening of nationalism when unity is desired. And the modern history of Japan has been the struggle of a proud people to gain recognition. Once they had pulled themselves up by their boot straps, their remarkable success caused them to strike for still higher stakes.

In short, qualities which foster nationalism permeate Japanese life to such an extent that it can be considered the Japanese philosophy of life.

A study of its background requires an understanding of a people and a culture radically different from those of the West. In this set of lectures, some of the institutions and the methods which are utilized to maintain and strengthen nationalism will be inspected.

When Japan came into contact with the international community in the latter half of the last century, modern imperialism had already started. Japanese civilization consisted of elements which were easily adaptable to the idea of state power and its expansion. These were consciously and deliberately systematized in policy and in law to create an intense nationalism in the Japanese people.

Consequently, today the Japanese are very conscious of these fundamental ideals. Since these contribute toward a common end, they are necessarily intricately related and interwoven. Among the more prominent spiritual forces are Shinto, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Bushido. The social force of the family system operates with them to constitute a real part of Japanese life. As a nation with a long military tradition and constantly at loggerheads or war with her sister nations since becoming a member of their community, her martial spirit exemplified in the samurai has found glory in victory. And most important is the political theory that the Emperor is the divine father of the Japanese people, from which springs faith in the guardianship of the state by the gods and the belief in a divine mission. These establish the basis for the most intense nationalism in

history. Through conformity to the state religion, Shinto, the national educational system, the universal conscription system and the controlled press, the beliefs, ideals, and morality of these institutions is constantly inculcated in the minds of old and young. A single term, though far from adequate, which may be used to synthesize the depth of this nationalism, is Yamato Damashii.

SHINTO

Shinto, the way of the gods, is the original religion of Japan. Shinto explains the creation of the Japanese nation and gives authority to the Imperial House. For over two thousand years, it has tied together religious, political, and racial thought in Japan. It is the principal characteristic of the individuality of Japan.

According to Shinto belief, the Japanese descended directly from the gods. The ideals and ideas of right and wrong in Shinto spring from the deeds of the gods in Japanese mythology. They still maintain a primitive concept of gods who have human forms and represent ancestors, the dead, virtues, ideals, and supernatural and natural forces. So Shinto is a combination of divinity and humanity. It is so fundamental to Japan that it can be called the Soul of Japan.

The chief characteristic of this soul is loyalty. It is given highest expression in reverence for and service to the Emperor. The will of the Emperor is considered the will of

the gods; so, in him is centered everything good in Japan. Only in reference to the Emperor and gods does this universe have significance to the Japanese.

The Emperor is revered because he is supposed to be the direct lineal descendant of the sun goddess, Amaterasu Ōmikami, the great ancestress of the nation. She rules over the gods of the Shinto world who in turn watch over the living world. The Japanese believe that their dead enter this world, that is they believe their dead become gods and watch over the living. Notable figures and soldiers dying in the service of the Emperor are deified by Shinto rites. So death in Japan is not regarded as something final. The personal relation between the dead and the living does not end with death, but takes on a spiritual and real relation. Graves and the household shrine play concrete parts in everyday life.

This consideration for the dead constitutes ancestor worship. Though originally it was not a part of Shinto, it is very much so today and cannot be separated from it. The world of the gods, Amaterasu Ōmikami and her descendants, the unbroken line of emperors, and all the dead are a source of reverence to the Japanese.

The Japanese feel a heavy debt to the gods and the dead. From this arises a responsibility to them which must be expressed by perpetuating their blessings to posterity. Gratitude for, dependence on, and responsibility to the gods constitute a foundation of Japanese morality. When new premiers are

appointed and new cabinets are formed or when ministers or envoys start on their respective missions, they go on pilgrimages to the awesome shrine of the Sun Goddess at Ise to get the blessing of Amaterasu Ōmikami. This may seem ridiculous, but in actuality these are conducted in all sincerity.

The Japanese do not doubt that the gods watch over their land. During Japan's long history, events have occurred which have substantiated and strengthened this belief. The most spectacular of these is the miraculous way the vast forces of the Mongol conqueror, Kublai Khan, were destroyed by devastating typhoons, not once, but twice, in 1274 and 1281.

Through Shinto, patriotism is made an integral part of Japanese life. Reverence for the Emperor, representative of the national life is synonymous with patriotism. This combination of religious belief and political allegiance is unlike any Occidental notion or feeling. It binds together the group life of the nation into a powerful unit. In times of crisis and on formal religious occasions the Emperor leads the people in prayer to the gods and ancestors. As the people bow in humbleness and gratitude, a feeling of awe, of oneness, and faith thrills them.

Outstanding sovereigns have been enshrined. Three emperors under whom noteworthy unification and progress in the land occurred, Jimmu who founded the historical nation, Kammu under whom occurred the Taika Reform, and Meiji who modernized Japan are especially revered at large shrines. Also Imperial

princes who have displayed noteworthy loyalty to the state or performed great military service to the throne are enshrined.

The martial spirit is further exalted in the deification of outstanding loyalists like Kusunoki Masashige. At the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo which ranks third in importance in Japan, the spirits of all those who died in military service to the Emperor since 1853 are enshrined. The Japanese soldier knows that his reward for death on the battlefield will be deification.

Hero worship is very strong and the people strive to emulate the actions glorified in legends which they love to repeat. In wartime much more than in peace time, people visit these shrines and pray. This is noticeable at large shrines like Yasukuni Jinja. But the earnestness and childlike sincerity of the people's dependence on the gods is more concretely revealed in the way the small rural shrines are cleaned, watched and prayed at day and night by the local peasantry and villagers.

Prior to the influx of Chinese culture, the original cult seems to have been nameless. National consciousness that arose with the coming of Confucianism and Buddhism caused the Japanese to name it Shinto. After being enriched by Confucian ethics and Buddhist philosophy, and undergoing a long period of comparative oblivion, Shinto was revived in the eighteenth century.

Edo peace depended on a strict maintenance of Tokugawa power. Political action was tied down by law, causing the

turning of able minds to problems of thought and to research in history. The result of studying Confucianism, history, and Shinto was the dawning of realization that the Tokugawas should be forced to return ruling power to the Emperor. The Restoration of 1868 had its moral and intellectual justification in the study of ancient Japanese ways.

The Tokugawa Bakufu had encouraged the pursuit of literary arts, in particular, the study of Confucianism because it stressed loyalty of a limited sort. As a result of the study of the classics, the Kojiki and the Nihongi (ancient histories), Shinto was revived and together with development of different schools of Confucianism, the proper focus of loyalty was restored to the Emperor.

The inherent veneration of the Japanese for the Emperor was aroused to burning loyalty by the teachings of brilliant scholars. It was discovered that Amaterasu Ōmikami, according to the Kojiki, had proclaimed the rule of her descendants over Japan as long as heaven and earth should endure. Opposition to the Bakufu for political, economic and social reasons was expressed in anti-foreignism as it became increasingly involved with the Western nations. The cry of the opposition was "Sonno Jō-i" - respect the Emperor and oust the foreigner. The throne became the unifying force in the arising national consciousness during the critical period of Japan - when she had to sink or swim in the tide of modern power politics and pass through a drastic transition from a medieval group of provinces to a modern nation.

Since the Restoration, the state has endeavored to cement the bonds which tie Shinto to national life. It was necessary for changing feudal Japan into a modern unified nation, to establish the rule of the central government and to create a strong national feeling.

In 1900 sectarian Shinto as an organized religion and state Shinto as a national cult were separated. Henceforth, State Shinto was to promote good citizenship, encourage respect and loyalty to the state by maintaining national customs and preserving shrines of notable emperors and loyal subjects. But the distinction was only temporary and academic. The creeds and teachings of sectarian Shinto had to conform to State Shinto. The religious side of State Shinto remains. Shinto is the State religion and the only religion of Japan today. The creed of unquestioned obedience to Imperial authority and intense loyalty to the state subordinate the individual and magnify and deify the state.

The dynamic course of Japanese thought and policy for the past few decades is the expression of State Shinto ideology, deeply rooted in Japanese culture. Forced curtailing of its propagation, activities, and organization together with the subordination of Christianity and even Buddhism to Shinto in the last two years, is good evidence that Shinto is the only accepted religion of Japan today.

Waicsei itchi - the unity of worship and government - has been the expressed objective of the builders and leaders of

modern Japan. A recent publication of the Department of Education (Kokutai no Hongi, 1937) declares that religion, government and education in Japan are one and same thing.

The principal tenets of Shinto expounded to promote nationalism are belief in the unbroken rule of a divine dynasty, faith in the protection of the gods over the state and people and the mission to establish Hakkō Ichiu or the eight corners of the world under one roof. These tenets are not arbitrarily concocted to suit the requirements of propaganda. They have come down from the ancient past, through holy writings and in the psychology of the people.

Shinto then may be considered unparalleled as a means through which nationalism can be fostered. Shinto is inseparable from the Japanese state. It is a unifying faith containing no elements which lead to controversy and divisions as do western faiths. Nature and ancestor worship cannot be surpassed for inspiring love of country. The history of the land inspires loyalty to the Emperor. Shinto creates a confidence of their worth and superiority in the people. From Shinto comes the thankfulness for the blessings of the gods, inspiring traditions of heroes who now watch over the destinies of the nation, the impulse to serve the Emperor, and the desire to fulfill the destiny of the state. It is the core of the unity of the Japanese and explanation of their psychology and actions.

CONFUCIANISM

Confucianism is a system of ethical teachings based on family and ancestor worship. As a conservative social and political philosophy, it supplied a deficiency in Shinto morality and in Japanese life. Being in harmony with the character of the Japanese, it was welcomed from the first and has been of profound influence in moulding and refining that character as well as enriching the culture of Japan.

The Confucian classics are said to have been first brought into Japan from Korea about 285 A.D. by Wani. Wani was a Chinese who became naturalized in Japan. He tutored the Japanese crown prince in things Chinese. In this way, Confucianism was introduced to the Japanese court. The court readily adopted the teachings because they stood for a conservative system of government and were applicable to the existing structure of society.

In the original Chinese system, filial piety was stressed over loyalty to the prince. But the Japanese characteristically reversed them to accord with Shinto.

Confucianism is based on the natural relationship of the family. Therefore, in its simplest form, it is a family cult. Filial piety then is its primary teaching. The expansion of this is ancestor worship. It is not certain whether ancestor worship was originally a part of Shinto. But as an influence in firmly establishing it as a fundamental factor in Shinto and in Japanese life, the role of Confucianism was not slight.

Confucianism did much to systematize and elaborate on the relations and ideas concerning the ruling of the people by the Japanese Imperial Court. This importation went far in solidifying Japanese society by presenting a worked-out theory of government and social behavior. Because Confucianism was conservative, it helped to establish firmly the rule of the Imperial Court. It built up a pyramid-like relation from the people as the base to the Emperor as the apex. Little room was left for individuality. Every person is made to believe the group is more important than any individual. In Japan, the group is personified in the living god, the Emperor.

Confucius considered the state to be a grand reproduction of the family. The ruler was to be considered as the father of his people. He was to rule by kind instruction and example. Loyalty of his children to him should be a natural result.

Interest in Confucianism in ancient Japan became so intense that a special university was founded for its study at Kyoto. Here government officials were trained in the Confucian classics after which they were sent out to administer the laws of the land.

One empress believed so much in the teaching that she ordered every home in the land to get a copy of the Teachings on Filial Piety.

In this way Confucian ideas had become a part of Japanese life by the ninth century. Social and political relations were rigidly set. Duties were put before rights, of which absolute

obedience to one's superiors was considered the most important. Between emperor and subject there was to be loyalty; between parent and child, filial piety; between brothers, order; and between friends, faithfulness.

During the Kamakura period, Confucianism contributed to Bushidō, but otherwise was not actively studied.

With the establishment of the Tokugawa Bakufu in 1603, literary arts were encouraged and again the study of Confucianism was taken up. Various schools arose and out of them, the demand for loyalty to the Emperor instead of to the Shogun became the cryword for the Restoration.

Since then, though not specifically called as such or referred to, its teachings have been stressed in national education and morality. The ideas of Confucianism have been with the Japanese for fifteen hundred years and are very much a part of the Japanese outlook on life.

BUDDHISM

Confucianism contributed toward social and political deficiencies in ancient Japan. Buddhism contributed in the spiritual field. This more sophisticated and formalized importation was needed to refine the simple and crude native Shinto.

Buddhism was officially introduced into Japan in 552 A.D. in the shape of gifts of Buddhist images and holy literature

from a king in Korea to the Emperor of Japan. An early reformer, Prince Shōtoku, was attracted by the humanitarianism of the new religion. He combined its new ideas with the old into what is known as the Constitution of Seventeen Articles of 604, an early document in the development of Japanese political theory.

The Japanese were hungry for some religion that had ritual and explanation. But they took over only the exterior aspects of what really is a pessimistic and fatalistic belief. In 685, Buddhism was nationalized. Heretofore it had been restricted to court and aristocratic circles. About 750 Buddhism reached its peak in Japan. The Emperor Shōmu declared himself a servant of the three treasures, the Buddha, the Buddhist scriptures, and the priesthood. Temples were erected in every part of the land and the great image of Buddha was cast at Nara.

It is possible that these centuries of Buddhist prosperity were years of Sinofication. But one drive in the adoption of foreign cultures by the Japanese was the desire for equality. A consciousness of backwardness, a sense of individuality or nationalism urges the Japanese to adopt benefits of new ways wholesale. In the long run, new ideas are invariably fitted to strengthen and perpetuate the indigenous character.

So despite this enthusiasm for Buddhism, the native Shinto was not forgotten. Conflict between the two was compromised by uniting the two religions. Court-sponsored studies resulted

in the creation of sects teaching that Buddhist gods were merely Shinto gods under different names. These sects were started with the object of uniting religion, the state, and the people. Therefore, centering around the Emperor, a mixed national religion including various rationalized forms of beliefs and ideas was formed. Japanese Buddhism is therefore different from the original Indian. The main difference is that the Japanese characteristically changed the emphasis from Buddhist virtues of charity and love to the Shintoist virtues of loyalty and obedience.

These early forms of Buddhism were sponsored by the aristocracy and emphasized ritual and form. When bad time came to Heian Japan and the people looked for spiritual help, a sort of reformation swept the land in the form of the creation of Buddhist sects which stressed faith and action. Jōdo and Jōdo Shinshū required only the repetition of the holy words "Namu Amida Butsu" for the faithful to be saved.

The corruption and maladministration of the Imperial court had also led to the rise of the military class and the establishment of the Bakufu at Kamakura. The military, too, required a new, more rigid and simple faith. Zen Buddhism was the answer to the needs of the times.

To a certain extent Zen Buddhism has moulded Japanese character, but it is also the expression of this character. No other form of Buddhism is so thoroughly Japanese. Zen has influenced every aspect of Japan's life, especially the spirit-

ual. As yet the significance of the Ashikaga period in Japanese history when Zen was at its height has not yet been fully recognized.

Zen is a difficult teaching to grasp. Therefore, although its followers were many, its masters comparatively few in number. But the effects of Zen are to be found in the life, work and influence of individuals and small groups of men who inspired the mass, created standards and ideals and led the people. The teachings of Zen, it is said, are impossible to express in speech or in writing. Logic and reason are not applicable to Zen. It must be felt. By harsh spiritual training, particularly in self control under any circumstance, a state of mind which rises above mere life is reached. In short, it is a way of living, a strict discipline of the mind and an attitude of mind towards life. Action was to be unhampered by selfishness, complexities, calamities, or changes.

It is easy to see why the Bakufu adopted Zen. Samurai were trained to remain loyal, with indifference to life or death, and undergo any hardship without complaint.

Also during this turbulent period in Japanese history, Nichiren, a priest, preached his Buddhist doctrine. His was a nationalistic, militant belief. He was a great prophet. Today his followers comprise a conspicuous denomination, exercising influence out of proportion to their number, appealing particularly to chauvinists.

The development of Buddhism in Japan was dependent upon relations with the continent and was accompanied by importation of other cultural influences. Literature, art, architecture and other aspects of Japanese life are intimately linked with ideas, customs and practices related to Buddhism. Therefore the influence of Buddhism as a cultural force has been profound.

In fact the exterior aspects and the culture that came in with it are more evident in Japanese life than the deeper religious side. For Buddhism preaches universalism and humanitarianism. These are diametrically opposed to Shinto's nationalism and martial virility.

The Chinese characters with which the Buddhist text and Chinese books were written were adopted to express Japanese ideas and objects. What is more significant, they were broken down to create an alphabet for the hitherto unwritten Japanese. This was in spite of the fact that the grammatical structure of the two languages is quite different. A written language is a fundamental requirement for a national consciousness. It is characteristic that the Japanese utilized the Chinese characters and many Chinese ideas to create their nationalism.

Buddhism as an organized religion is totally unlike any to which we are accustomed. The devout chant their rosaries even on street cars, they pause to enter whenever passing a temple. Crowds generally gather at temple compounds only on festival days, when a mushroom growth of merchant stands turn them into a village fair, for the exchange of produce and

gossip. New kimono are in evidence and so are leprous beggars. A festival day is a social holiday and a charitable spirit flourishes, but except for this charity, there is little in common in present day Buddhism in Japan and the faith proclaimed by its founder in India.

BUSHIDŌ

Bushidō means the "Way of the Samurai" or warrior. Its essence was loyalty and self-sacrifice for one's liege lord, and finally, the Emperor. Around it have been handed down the fondest traditions of the Japanese people. And today it is a vital force of Japan at war, explaining much of battlefield behavior.

The sources of modern Bushidō are varied. Its roots are, of course, in the Shinto principle of the sacredness of the Emperor and the reverence and loyalty due him as the living representative of the gods. With assistance from Confucian social and political philosophy, this idea of loyalty was systematized.

The growth of Bushidō as a conscious idea was slow. The first recordings of it in literature date back to the eighth century. It grew with the rise of the military and blossomed during the feudal ages when the warrior was all-important.

Since Zen Buddhism was the predominant cultural and religious force in Japan at this time, it exerted great influence

on the warrior class. It was adopted by the samurai, because it strengthened them in self-control and courage. It taught them to scorn materialistic gain and worldly honor, and to perform their duties undiscouraged by difficulties or the opinions of others. It taught the samurai to disdain life and death, making him a perfect fighter.

In the training of a feudal warrior, the emphasis was always on character. Intelligence came second, and material considerations were utterly disregarded, in fact scorned. Self-control, fortitude, and endurance were instilled by stern methods. Children were often deprived of food or exposed to the elements. Spartan methods like compulsory pilgrimages to unholy places such as graveyards and execution grounds in the dark of the night were commonly employed. Rigid etiquette was demanded as a means of maintaining composure regardless of the emotions. Buddhist fatalism taught that things were inevitable. This enabled the samurai to face his destiny without regret,

The sense of honor was placed above life and led to the practice of seppuku, or disembowelment. Legalized and ceremonialized, it gave samurai the opportunity to die with honor. If circumstance no longer permitted their living with honor or if they had betrayed their trust, in their last worldly act, they died according to a formal, recognized procedure to prove their worth as samurai.

Bushidō was not confined to the fighting sex alone. The family system and sense of social solidarity of the Japanese

required that women of samurai families uphold a similar code of honor. These regulations were in some respects sterner and more severe than the demands made upon men. Women were not to hamper their husbands, fathers or sons by weakness of will or emotions. They were not to express or show their grief or sorrow, no matter how intense. They were trained in the use of weapons to protect themselves and their children in time of peril. When circumstance required, there was a formalized method whereby they were to take their own lives. Thus individual personality was subordinated to loyalty. The recipient of this loyalty held a powerful weapon in Bushidō. Possessions, family and life were willingly sacrificed. It is a source of unsurpassed nationalism.

So, whereas, Bushidō has a number of similarities to European chivalry of the middle ages, other features are distinctly Japanese. The ancient Spartan ethics are often claimed to be similar, but they were set in a much simpler and less intricate culture complex.

It was during the Tokugawa era that Bushidō was systematized by Yamaga Sokō, out of military practices, Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Despite this, the common notions of Bushidō are general and romantic rather than formal. Yamaga Sokō was the teacher of the leader of the Forty-seven Ronin. The moral influence of the revenge taken by Forty-seven Ronin was enormous. Chikamatsu, the Shakespeare of Japan, dramatized this event for theatre-adoring populace. Though the

samurai did not commonly associate with the mass, in many ways such as the theatre, legend and literature, ideals and traditions of Bushidō filtered down to the people to create a standard of ideals for the entire nation.

Yoshida Shōin, a follower of Yamaga Soko, did much to bring about the Meiji Restoration, by training many active leaders of the Bakufu opposition. These leaders naturally carried their ideals into new Japan and made them the standard of good citizenship. With the start of international relations and the sense of nationalism, the feeling of loyalty to the emperor and the nation was stimulated. The sense of honor, the will to stand equal with the more advanced nations became a challenge to Japan.

With the establishment of the military conscription system in 1873, Bushidō's spiritual ideals were incorporated into the military training program and constituted the greatest force in perpetuating the ideal of loyalty to the emperor.

Also in the Imperial Rescript on Education, the most widely quoted writing on national morality, the ideals of Bushidō are included. At ceremonies attending national holidays, on festivities like New Year's, and at every school exercise, the document is handled with awesome respect and humbleness and read to a hushed crowd. There have been cases of suicide for having misread a single word of the Rescript.

In 1872, the samurai as a social class was dissolved, but this has made no difference in the following of its strictest

codes by many descendants of samurai stock and many admirers of feudal ways. When Emperor Meiji died in 1912, his general Nogi, hero of Port Arthur, and his wife ceremonially committed suicide because of an intense loyalty that death could not sever. This is a classic example which proves that Bushidō still lives in Japan. The "Three Human Bombs" of the Shanghai Incident were deified as present-day examples of fighting men following the ancient codes of Bushidō in sacrificing their lives for their Emperor.

THE POLITICAL THEORY OF THE JAPANESE STATE

In the Japanese concept of the state, the relations between the people, the Emperor and the state are not so much political as they are moral and spiritual. From the religious ideas of Shinto, strengthened by Confucianism and Buddhism, the state is thought of as consisting of personal relations between the people, the Emperor, and gods. Therefore, the psychological basis from which the Japanese view their country and its relations with the rest of the world is much more personal and intense than that of a more practical, or shall we say, a realistic people. The deep religious basis of political thought makes the Japanese political system unique.

Compared to the reaction evoked in the minds of Western people when they regard their state, the sense of individuality and superiority instinctively, unreservedly, and continuously felt by the Japanese is a vital factor in understanding the Japanese at war. The state as a holy object is an idea foreign

to the West. At times the western state has been closely identified with race, dynasty, and religion, but today, in the democracies, that has been lost. The Japanese have felt themselves a chosen people since the dim and misty days of antiquity. This sense is prevalent at all times and during war rises to a high pitch. Western observers and Japanese themselves cannot conceive of their nation bowing before another. It is easier to imagine, if worst comes to worst, that the race should be wiped out to the last man rather than surrender. These attitudes and psychology come directly from Shinto beliefs.

Shinto and political concepts are inseparable to the Japanese. From the theory of ancestor worship and Shinto mythology, arises the belief in the divinity of the Emperor, the sacredness of the islands and the common descent of the race. In the concept of Kokutai exists everything of importance to the Japanese--moral, religious, legal, political, economic, cultural, and social. There is no distinction between politics and society. Japan means the Emperor, the people, the land and everything Japanese.

This feeling of the solidarity, the inseparability of everything, the sacredness of the land and everything in it, is not conscious as a set of ideas put down in black and white. It is more an instinct than a theory. So the designation of the term kokutai to this principally political and all-encompassing, closely related set of ideas is largely academic. The mass of people live, think and talk the synthesis of loyalties assembled in the theory of kokutai. For our purposes, however,

we can do well to inspect this for in it lies the theory of the Japanese State.

The concept of the state to the Japanese is at all times a warm, personal and intense loyalty to the Emperor. This can be seen in some of the ideas associated with kokutai:

1. Divine ancestry of the Japanese Emperor.
2. Eternity of the Imperial line.
3. Priority of the Imperial line.
4. Relation of ancestor worship to the state.
5. Existence of a collective family system with the Emperor at the head.
6. Unchangeable and absolute relationship between ruler and subject.

So kokutai is built up mainly from the idea and practice of regarding the Emperor as the living representative of the gods. The purpose of the Japanese state, the purpose for which the people of Japan are born is considered by them to be for the perfection of kokutai. The idea that the state exists to protect the individual has no place in Japan. To the Japanese, the state is not a means, but an end in itself. Everyone in Japan lives for the Emperor and the state.

Historical stimuli to kokutai, crises in the past and present, build up and intensify loyalty to the Emperor. The maladministration in early Japan that necessitated the Taika Reform under the great Shōtoku Taishi was the first. The urgent need of Japan at that time, unification and centrali-

zation of the political power of the theocracy, was fulfilled. During the Civil wars of the fourteenth century, the inspiring deeds of loyalists provide thrilling traditions to later generations. The Restoration of 1868 brought about basic changes and accomplishments by Japan which are unparalleled in history. On this wave of nationalism, they fought and defeated the colossus of the north, Russia. Today when they have challenged the power and might of the United Nations their faith in kokutai must indeed be sublime.

Originally the function of the Emperor was that of a high priest in worship of the gods and ancestors. The residence of the Imperial family was the main national shrine as well as the seat of government. The same Chinese character was used for both shrine and palace. The idea that government is an expression of the will of the gods has always been a belief of the Japanese. And the Emperor is thought of as the living representative of the gods. So it is impossible to separate religious ideas and political ideas. The Emperor even today leads the people in worship and prayer at specified holidays and in times of danger to the land. A Western importation serves to increase the effectiveness of this. By means of the radio, the exact moment when the Emperor prays is broadcast over the entire nation. Every Japanese throughout the empire regardless of where he is or what he is doing joins in prayer at precisely the same moment. Streetcars, buses and taxis halt and their occupants bow together in the direction of the Imperial Palace.

Probably the strongest factor in the development of kokutai has been the aspect of ancestor worship in Shinto. Through belief in common ancestry and its worship, a social and political unity has been preserved. Families were tied to the land, to each other, to the Emperor and to the gods. The belief theoretically cements allegiance of the people by blood.

The nature of the Emperor's position in the political system can be seen in the nature of his ascension. Because he is considered supreme, no one has the power or authority to crown him except himself. Alone in a sacred hut, new emperors go through an ascension ceremony in which they receive their divine right to rule from the gods themselves.

These factors give to kokutai an unshakable solidarity and result in a political, social and religious system different from that of any other country in the world. It inspires an intense patriotism, a loyalty and willingness to self-sacrifice because of the strong element of spiritual and religious feeling attached.

Japan has never experienced a revolution. Shifts in political influence and power between families close to the Imperial house have been frequent, but there never has been a change in the fundamental idea of the inviolability of the Emperor. In 759, Dōkyō, a Buddhist priest, exercised an evil influence over the Empress Shōtoku and dared to contemplate marrying his way into the Imperial Family. An envoy sent to consult the oracle of Hachiman in Kyūshū returned with a reply

that Dōkyō, not being of Imperial blood, was ineligible. This precedent established once and for all the principle, "Once a subject, always a subject" in Japan.

The Restoration of 1868 was not a revolution as were the changes in power and governments of Europe. No organized peasantry or bourgeoisie wrested power from the feudal lords to institute a fundamental change in the form of government. The political parasite, the Tokugawa Shōgun, was ousted without any change in the Imperial system. In fact, under Emperor Meiji, the Imperial system was strengthened as never before.

The traditional position of the Emperor was clearly stated in the Constitution of 1889. This document was not forced from the Emperor, but was granted by him to the people with the sincere belief that it would benefit the state. The constitution is necessarily Imperialistic; the unlimited powers of the emperor were clarified and put down in black and white. Article Four reads, "The Emperor is head of the empire combining in himself all powers of the state". Sacredness and inviolability are also attributed to him. He can do no wrong. So the original Imperial system was in no way altered. To the contrary, these powers were confirmed for the first time in a document. The absoluteness, contrasted to the flexibility in Western constitutions, can be seen in that the amendment power rests solely in the Emperor. War, peace and treaty power obviously are his. He is the source of the judiciary power, and every law requires his sanction, which means

an absolute veto power over every bill drawn up by the Diet.

At times in the ebb and flow of history, contrary influences have been brought to bear on the system and especially with the advent of western ideas, dangerous thoughts have been harbored. But whenever it seemed as if basic elements might disintegrate and be destroyed by the impact of new and radical ideas, reactions set in to counteract them. In the early twenties, in the heyday of democracy and relatively slight political tension, Professor Minobe of the Tokyo Imperial University developed and defended for a number of years the interpretation that the Emperor was merely an organ of the state. Later, the times changed. Suddenly a patriotic movement revealed the menace of this blasphemy. The charge was debated in the Diet. Minobe retracted to no avail. He was put on trial and found guilty.

In recent years the theory of Hakkō Ichiu, or the whole world under one (Japanese) roof, has been revived from ancient sources. It is a vague concept as are so many Japanese ideas. The dynamic aspect of it is that they believe Japan has a divine mission to bring peace, order, and happiness to the entire world under the leadership of the Emperor and the gods.

So the Japanese state today is not much different from that which Japanese of earlier times knew. Political thought still consists of moral relations between the Emperor and subject. Loyalty is the most important of them. It is almost a passion with the Japanese and constitutes patriotism. The

very idea of Japan means more than a geographical name or a country, it is everything, extending into eternity.

THE FAMILY SYSTEM

In the unity of Japan, the family assumes an all pervading influence and importance. The Japanese have an idea of a national collective family system (Sōgō Kazoku Seido) composed of all the separate individual families of the nation with the Imperial House as the chief and original family. The idea that the Emperor is the father of the national family comes from this as much as from religious ideas.

Confucianism strengthened the concept of the importance of the family as a social unit. Japanese moral philosophy arose from the idea that the family, the group was of more importance than the individual. To the Japanese, right and wrong are considered from the point of view of whether actions will benefit the group. Naturally, duty comes before right. Individual interests and abilities must conform to the group policy. Obedience, patience and sacrifice are highly regarded virtues. Respect for old age and authority is stressed.

The family system is the social manifestation of ancestor worship. In primitive days, it was the worship of common ancestors that drew distant relatives around the common altar. The family system and ancestor worship work together in solidifying the nation. In times of sorrow and trouble, families come to one another's help. This group spirit draws larger

social units together when unity is needed. And in times of national peril, the feeling which can be produced is a tremendous force, in many ways different from, and much more intense than, the emotion evoked by western patriotism.

The existence of a strong family system makes a people more conservative and respectful of the past. A strong obligation persists that customs and teachings which are handed down must be observed, because from generation to generation, a spiritual tie links the family and individuals in it with the past.

Under a family system, individuals have significance first as members of families. Good families have a very important position in the society. Individuals are taught to keep the name of their families unsoiled and to increase its prestige. Strange practices accompany the effort to continue families. Yōshi or adoption is one. We see the peculiar phenomena of a family of celibates, the Saionji, continuing for centuries.

Though in Japan, men come first, the mother is a source of inspiration for the ideals which the family system requires. She submerges her life completely into that of the family. She completely renounces herself for the good of the family. She therefore is a strength in the family system and in a larger sense, the nation.

FEUDAL TRADITIONS

The Japanese have always cherished the martial spirit, a feudal heritage, because to them it stands for righteousness and fidelity. It is a fact that heretofore, the activities of the military have been blessed with success. The long independence of Japan and more recently her position as a great power in the world are considered dependent upon her military power.

The warrior's appeal to the Japanese is strong because he best characterizes the spirit of Japan in his unquestioning loyalty to the Emperor.

For seven hundred years, military men dominated Kamakura and Edo society as leaders of the government and of the cultural life of the nation. Events following the entrance of Japan into the community of nations saw men, imbued with the samurai ideal, play a dominating role in the modernization of Japan. The two hundred and fifty years of Tokugawa peace and the ninety-odd years following the opening of the country have seen this exert great influence on the national life. Hence in Japan, the soldier represents something more than mere fighting prowess; he has been admired in peace as well as in war.

Even in the admiration of the military spirit, the moral ideals involved are glorified rather than mere feats or exhibitions of courage. It is the beauty of self-sacrifice impelled by loyalty or filial piety that appeals to the Japanese.

Therefore the military tradition in Japan is little more than the idealization of the spirit of Bushidō. Traditions of loyalty and courage in drama, story, and song are identical for both, most of which are based on occurrences during the feudal period.

Feudalism in Japan is still within the memory of the living. A people as conservative as the Japanese have not forgotten the features of a system which moulded life for seven hundred years in the formative period, and legally ended only seventy years ago. The interpretation of Japan today requires a knowledge of Japanese feudalism because of the deep impression it has made on the life, character and organization of the nation.

The samurai, flower among men, was a product of feudalism. To the hero-worshipping nature of the Japanese, memory of those warriors is bright with thrilling and romantic traditions. In the moral standards of the nation, the manly virtues of the samurai still remain a great influence in governing the life of the people and directing the policy of the state in international affairs.

Establishment of the Tokugawa Bakufu started a long period of peace. Possibilities of foreign conflicts were precluded by the policy of isolation. But the leadership of the samurai in society was continued with a shift in emphasis from military arts to cultural arts. The preservation of the supremacy of the Bakufu, however, required the maintenance of

status quo and rigid regimentation became the order of the day.

Prior to feudalism, the family system had already established the principle of obedience to superior and authority, the sacrifice to duty and loyalty to the group. Feudalism trained the individual along the same line on a larger scale in preparation for the culmination of social cohesion in nationalism through loyalty and devotion to the emperor in modern Japan.

Much of the strength of Japan at war comes from the samurai ideal, the martial spirit, and group psychology - the heritage of feudalism.

SYNTHESIS: YAMATO DAMASHII

Examination of a few institutions of the Japanese reveals an interrelation between all of them. They all work toward one purpose, the glorification of the Emperor and the state, which stand for the same thing to the Japanese. The very nature of their civilization creates a strong nationalism. So nationalism may be considered a living philosophy of these people.

The highest ideal in Japanese life, institutions and thinking is loyalty. It is not only the highest ideal, but is the life and blood of their existence. It is deeply rooted in their mental makeup and everything in their lives is consciously and unconsciously made to increase it.

A Western philosopher defines loyalty as the will to

believe in something eternal and to express that belief in practical life. With true loyalty, life is given unity, purpose, and stability. To the Japanese loyalty is the greatest duty and virtue and gives significance to their lives. This is centered in veneration of the Emperor who stands for everything good.

Through Confucian, Buddhist and Bushidō additions with proper alterations to the indigenous Shinto ideas, there has been built up in Japan a remarkable system of morality. Loyalty is the basis of religion, social institutions and the political system. Therefore, to the Japanese, loyalty is not an abstract principle nor a mere idealism. It is their way of life, and when necessary is gladly expressed in fanatical sacrifice.

The concepts, ideals and institutions described, the racial characteristics upon which they are based and the ideals which they perpetuate are evidence of Yamato Damashii. Yamato Damashii literally means Soul of Old Japan. Here again to the individual Japanese the concept is not too clear. Nevertheless the term has a noble and challenging association to him. So it is most expressive of this attitude and psychology when he regards other people and international relations. Another term used synonymously with it is Nippon Seishin - the Japanese Spirit.

The greatest force, a superb means by which all this has been consciously implanted on the people is the national

education system. Japan has one of the highest literacy rates in the world because of the vigor with which Meiji leaders established schools. But this education is not solely for the sake of knowledge. It is controlled in the interest of the state. Education cannot be separated from government and religion in Japan. Thought considered detrimental to state welfare is condemned as dangerous and is suppressed. The avowed purpose of the national school system is to create loyal citizens.

In this way, religion, morality, political thought, education, and the social system all work toward making the Japanese feel distinct and apart from other people. The attitude and psychology thus instilled is contained in the concept of Yamato Damashii. That is the spirit with which the Japanese are now fighting the democracies.

Shinto

Buddhism

Confucianism

Family System

Yamato Damashii
made up from at least 7
wh. find virtues of each