

by the communication of new ideas." Free choice has made Japan reject Chinese astronomy, surgery, medicine, and jurisprudence. The early choice to admit foreigners to Japan to trade may have been made entirely through fear, but is now accepted and justified by reason and choice.

The true explanation, therefore, of the recent and rapid rise of Japan to power and reputation, is to be found, not in the externals of her civilization, not in the pressure of foreign governments, but rather in the inherited mental and temperamental characteristics, reacting on the new and stimulating environment, and working along the lines of true evolution. Japan has not "jumped out of her skin," but a new vitality has given that skin a new color.

## II

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

HOW many of the stories of the Kojiki (written in 712 A. D.) and Nihongi (720 A. D.) are to be accepted is still a matter of dispute among scholars. Certain it is, however, that Japanese early history is veiled in a mythology which seems to center about three prominent points: Kyushu, in the south; Yamato, in the east central, and Izumo in the west central region. This mythological history narrates the circumstances of the victory of the southern descendants of the gods over the two central regions. And it has been conjectured that these three centers represent three waves of migration that brought the ancestors of the present inhabitants of Japan to these shores. The supposition is that they came quite independently and began their conflicts only after long periods of residence and multiplication.

Though this early record is largely mythological, tradition shows us the progenitors of the modern Japanese people as conquerors from the west and south who drove the aborigines before them and gradually took possession of the entire land. That these conquerors were not all of the same stock is proved by the physical appearance of the Japanese to-day, and by their language. Through these the student traces an early mixture of races—the Malay, the Mongolian, and the Ural-Altaic. Whether the early crossing of these races bears vital relation to the plasticity of the Japanese is a question which tempts the scholar.

Primitive, inter-tribal conflicts of which we have no reliable records resulted in increasing intercourse. Victory was followed by federation. And through the development of a common language, of common customs and common ideas, the tribes were unified socially.



and psychically. Consciousness of this unity was emphasized by the age-long struggle against the Ainu, who were not completely conquered until the eighteenth century.

With the dawn of authentic history (500-600 A. D.) we find amalgamation of the conquering tribes, with, however, constantly recurring inter-tribe and inter-family wars. Many of these continued for scores and even hundreds of years—proving that, in the modern sense of the word, the Japanese were not yet a nation, though, through inter-marriage, through the adoption of important elements of civilization brought from China and India via Korea, through the nominal acceptance of the Emperor as the divinely appointed ruler of the land, they were, in race and in civilization, a fairly homogeneous people.

The national governmental system was materially affected by the need, throughout many centuries, of systematic methods of defense against the Ainu. The rise of the Shogunate dates back to 883 A. D., when the chief of the forces opposing the Ainu was appointed by the Emperor and bore the official title, "The Barbarian-expelling Generalissimo." This office developed in power until, some centuries later, it usurped in fact, if not in name, all the imperial prerogatives.

It is probable that the Chinese written language, literature, and ethical teachings of Confucius came to Japan from Korea after the Christian era. The oldest known Japanese writings (Japanese written with Chinese characters) date from the eighth century. In this period also Buddhism first came to Japan. For over a hundred years it made relatively little progress. But when at last in the ninth and tenth centuries native Japanese Buddhists popularized its doctrines and adopted into its theogony the deities of the aboriginal religion, now known as Shinto, Buddhism became the religion of the people, and filled the land with its great temples, praying priests, and gorgeous rituals.

Even in those early centuries the contact of Japan with her Oriental neighbors revealed certain traits of her character which have been conspicuous in recent times

—great capacity for acquisition, and readiness to adopt freely from foreign nations. Her contact with China, at that time so far in advance of herself in every element of civilization, was in some respects disastrous to her original growth. Instead of working out the problems of thought and life for herself, she took what China and Korea had to give. The result was an arrest in the development of everything distinctively native. The native religion was so absorbed by Buddhism that for a thousand years it lost all self-consciousness. Indeed the modern clear demarcation between the native and the imported religions is a matter of only a few decades, due to the researches of native scholars during the latter part of the last and the early part of this century. Even now, multitudes of the common people know no difference between the various elements of the composite religion of which they are the heirs.

Moreover, early contact with China and her enormous literature checked the development of the native language and the growth of the native literature. The language suffered arrest because of the rapid introduction of Chinese terms for all the growing needs of thought and civilization. Modern Japanese is a compound of the original tongue and Japonicized Chinese. Native speculative thought likewise found little encouragement or stimulus to independent activity in the presence of the elaborate and in many respects profound philosophies brought from India and China.

From earliest times the government of Japan was essentially feudal. Powerful families and clans disputed and fought for leadership, and the political history of Japan revolves around the varying fortunes of these families. While the Imperial line is never lost to sight, it seldom rises to real power.

When, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Japan's conquering arm reached across the waters, to ravage the coast of China, to extend her influence as far south as Siam, and even to invade Korea with a large army in 1592, it looked as if she were well started on her career as a world-power. But that was not yet to be. The hegemony of her clans passed into the powerful and



shrewd Tokugawa family, the policy of which was peace and national self-sufficiency.

The representatives of the Occidental nations (chiefly of Spain and Portugal) were banished. The Christian religion (Roman Catholic), which for over fifty years had enjoyed free access and had made great progress, was forbidden and stamped out, not without much bloodshed. Foreign travel and commerce were strictly interdicted. A particular school of Confucian ethics was adopted and taught as the state religion. Feudalism was systematically established and intentionally developed. Each and every man had his assigned and recognized place in the social fabric, and change was not easy. It is doubtful if any European country has ever given feudalism so long and thorough a trial. Never has feudalism attained so complete a development as it did in Japan under the Tokugawa régime of over 250 years.

During this period no influences came from other lands to disturb the natural development. With the exception of three ships a year from Holland, an occasional stray ship from other lands, and from fifteen to twenty Dutchmen isolated in a little island in the harbor of Nagasaki, Japan had no communication with foreign lands or alien peoples.

Of this period, extending to the middle of the present century, the ordinary visitor and even the resident have but a superficial knowledge. All the changes that have taken place in Japan, since the coming of Perry in 1854, are attributed by the easy-going tourist to the external pressure of foreign nations. But such travelers know nothing of the internal preparations that had been making for generations previous to the arrival of Perry. The tourist is quite ignorant of the line of Japanese scholars that had been undermining the authority of the military rulers, "the Tokugawa," in favor of the Imperial line which they had practically supplanted.

The casual student of Japan has been equally ignorant of the real mental and moral caliber of the Japanese. Dressed in clothing that appeared to us fantastic, and armed with cumbersome armor and old-fashioned

guns, it was easy to jump to the conclusion that the people were essentially uncivilized. We did not know the intellectual discipline demanded of one, whether native or foreign, who would master the native language or the native systems of thought. We forgot that we appeared as grotesque and as barbarous to them as they to us, and that mental ability and moral worth are qualities that do not show on the surface of a nation's civilization. While they thought us to be "unclean," "dogs," "red-haired devils," we perhaps thought them to be clever savages, or at best half-civilized heathen, without moral perceptions or intellectual ability.

Of Old Japan little more needs to be said. Without external commerce, there was little need for internal trade; ships were small; roads were footpaths; education was limited to the samurai, or military class, retainers of the daimyo, "feudal lords"; inter-clan travel was limited and discouraged; Confucian ethics was the moral standard. From the beginning of the seventeenth century Christianity was forbidden by edict, and was popularly known as the "evil way"; Japan was thought to be especially sacred, and the coming of foreigners was supposed to pollute the land and to be the cause of physical evils. Education, as in China, was limited to the Chinese classics. Mathematics, general history, and science, in the modern sense, were of course wholly unknown. Guns and powder were brought from the West in the sixteenth century by Spaniards and Portuguese, but were never improved. Ship-building was the same in the middle of the nineteenth century as in the middle of the sixteenth, perhaps even less advanced. Architecture had received its great impulse from the introduction of Buddhism in the ninth and tenth centuries and had made no material improvement thereafter.

But while there was little progress in the external and mechanical elements of civilization, there was progress in other respects. During the "great peace," first arose great scholars. Culture became more general throughout the nation. Education was esteemed. The corrupt lives of the priests were condemned and an effort was made to reform life through the revival of a



certain school of Confucian teachers known as "Shin-Gaku"—"Heart-Knowledge." Art also made progress, both pictorial and manual. It would almost seem as if modern artificers and painters had lost the skill of their forefathers of one or two hundred years ago.

Many reasons explain the continuance of the old political and social order: the lack of a foreign foe to compel abandonment of the tribal organization; the mountainous nature of the country with its slow, primitive means of intercommunication; the absence of all idea of a completely centralized nation. Furthermore, the principle of complete subordination to superiors and ancestors had become so strong that individual innovations were practically impossible. Japan thus lacked the indispensable key to further progress, the principle of individualism. The final step in the development of her nationality has been taken, therefore, only in our own time.

Old Japan seemed absolutely committed to a thorough-going antagonism to everything foreign. New Japan seems committed to the opposite policy. What are the steps by which she has effected this apparent national reversal of attitude?

We should first note that the absolutism of the Tokugawa Shogunate served to arouse ever-growing opposition because of its stern repression of individual opinion. It not only forbade the Christian religion, but also all independent thought in religious philosophy and in politics. The particular form of Confucian moral philosophy which it held was forced on all public teachers of Confucianism. Dissent was not only heretical, but treasonable. Although, by its military absolutism, the Tokugawa rule secured the great blessing of peace, lasting over two hundred years, and although the curse of Japan for well-nigh a thousand preceding years had been fierce inter-tribal and inter-family wars and feuds, yet it secured that peace at the expense of individual liberty of thought and act. It thus gradually aroused against itself the opposition of many able minds. The enforced peace rendered it possible for these men to devote themselves to problems of thought and of his-

tory. Indeed, they had no other outlet for their energies. As they studied the history of the past and compared their results with the facts of the present, it gradually dawned on the minds of the scholars of the eighteenth century, that the Tokugawa family were exercising functions of government which had never been delegated to them; and that the Emperor was a poverty-stricken puppet in the hands of a family that had seized the military power and had gradually absorbed all the active functions of government, together with its revenues.

It is possible for us to see now that these early Japanese scholars idealized their ancient history, and assigned to the Emperor a place in ancient times which in all probability he has seldom held. But, however that may be, they thought their view correct, and held that the Emperor was being deprived of his rightful rule by the Tokugawa family.

These ideas, first formulated in secret by scholars, gradually filtered down, still in secrecy, and were accepted by a large number of the samurai, the military literati of the land. Their opposition to the actual rulers of the land, aroused by the individual-crushing absolutism of the Tokugawa rule, naturally allied itself to the religious sentiment of loyalty to the Emperor. Few Westerners can appreciate the full significance of this fact. Throughout the centuries loyalty to the Emperor has been considered a cardinal virtue. With one exception, according to the popular histories, no one ever acknowledged himself opposed to the Emperor. Every rebellion against the powers in actual possession made it the first aim to gain possession of the Emperor, and proclaim itself as fighting for him. When, therefore, the scholars announced that the existing government was in reality a usurpation and that the Emperor was robbed of his rightful powers, the latent antagonism to the Tokugawa rule began to find both intellectual and moral justification. It could and did appeal to the religious patriotism of the people. It is perhaps not too much to say that the overthrow of the Tokugawa family and the restoration of the Imperial rule to the Imperial



family would have taken place even though there had been no interference of foreign nations, no extraneous influences. But equally certain is it that these antagonisms to the ruling family were crystallized, and the great internal changes hastened by the coming in of the aggressive foreign nations. How this external influence operated must and can be told in a few words.

When Admiral Perry negotiated his treaty with the Japanese, he supposed he was dealing with responsible representatives of the government. As was later learned, however, the Tokugawa rulers had not secured the formal assent of the Emperor to the treaty. The Tokugawa rulers and their counselors, quite as much as the clan-rulers, wished to keep the foreigners out of the country, but they realized their inability. The rulers of the clans, however, felt that the Tokugawa rulers had betrayed the land; they were, accordingly, in active opposition both to the foreigners and to the national rulers. When the foreigners requested the Japanese government, "the Tokugawa Shogunate," to carry out the treaties, it was unable to comply with the request because of the antagonism of the clan-rulers. When the clan-rulers demanded that the government annul the treaties and drive out the hated and much-feared foreigners, it found itself utterly unable to do so, because of the formidable naval power of the foreigners.

As a consequence of this state of affairs, a few serious collisions took place between the foreigners and the two-sworded samurai, retainers of the clan-rulers. The Tokugawa rulers apparently did their best to protect the foreigners, and, when there was no possible method of evasion, to execute the treaties they had made. But they could not control the clans already rebellious. A few murders of foreigners, followed by severe reprisals, and two bombardments of native towns by foreign gunboats, began to reveal to the military class at large that no individual or local action against the foreigners was at all to be thought of. The first step necessary was the unification of the Empire under the Imperial rule. This, however, could be done only by the overthrow of

the Tokugawa Shogunate; which was effected in 1867-68 after a short struggle, marked by great clemency.

We thus realize that the overthrow of the Shogunate as also the final abolishment of feudalism with its clans, lords, and hereditary rulers, and the establishment of those principles of political and personal centralization which lie at the foundation of real national unity, not only were hastened by, but in a marked degree dependent on, the stimulus and contribution of foreigners. They compelled a more complete Japanese unity than had existed before, for they demanded direct relations with the national head. And when treaty negotiations revealed the lack of such a head, they undertook to show its necessity by themselves punishing those local rulers who did not recognize the Tokugawa headship.

With the establishment of the Emperor on the throne, began the modern era in Japanese history, known in Japan as "Meiji"—"Enlightened Rule."

But not even yet was the purpose of the nation attained, namely, the expulsion of the polluters of the sacred soil of Japan. As soon as the new government was established and had turned its attention to foreign affairs, it found itself in as great a dilemma as had its predecessors, the Tokugawa rulers. For the foreign governments insisted that the treaties negotiated with the old government should be accepted in full by the new. It was soon as evident to the new rulers as it had been to the old that direct and forcible resistance to the foreigners was futile. Not by might were they to be overcome. Westerners had, however, supplied the ideals whereby national, political unity was to be secured. Mill's famous work on "Representative Government" was early translated, and read by all the thinking men of the day. These ideas were also keenly studied in their actual workings in the West. The consequence was that feudalism was utterly rejected and the new ideas, more or less modified, were speedily adopted, even down to the production of a constitution and the establishment of local representative assemblies and a national diet. In other words, the theories and practices of the West in regard to the political or-