UNIVERSAL EDUCATION OF JAPANESE CHILDREN, PRE-SCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY

By
Tori Takaki

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By

Tori Takaki

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Oriental Civilization of the University of Michigan in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1936, I came to the United States from Japan as a student. I was born in Japan, and had gone to school in Tokyo up to the last year of high school. I was reared in a family who had once lived in the States; yet, as an individual, I was a typical Japanese girl in thinking, and in the ideals I held. Though I could read and write English, I was far from proficient in it -- especially in speech. I entered a private high school for one year mainly for the sake of learning the language, then went to a College the next year, where I registered as a boarding student. The adjustments I had to make, not only in language but in all ways, were tremendous. The following incident, which occurred very early in my first year of schooling in the United States, not only typifies the extent of adjustment -- mostly purely mental -- which I had to make as a Japanese-educated girl now coming to an American school, but is one of the most influential experiences in my life which I cherish as being the cause of later enrichment in my educational experiences. In an assembly I attended at the school, the topic was "independent thinking." To my Japanese mind, the assembly was a shock. For, up to that time, all I knew was the virtue of obedience -- obedience to the will of the Emperor, to the wishes of parents, teachers, etc., and obedience or conformity to the established ways of thinking and doing things. And,

here, I was encouraged to think for myself! The experience itself might have been a simple one, yet it was a profound one to me: because, through what was taught in that assembly, I was awakened to the value of man as an individual and independent thinker rather than a mere subservient member of a family as it is taught in Japan. Hence, in choosing the topic for my Master's thesis -- many years after that period in my life when I needed so much adjustment, and still being a student in America -- I felt impelled to write something that would contribute towards the work of bringing the light of individual freedom to the Japanese people. I chose to present the Japanese education of the past, however, because I felt that the age-old influences in Japan conspire to make the present educational task in Japan (which the Allied powers, and especially the American nation, have been engaged in since the summer of 1945) a tremendous one; and secondly because having had that Japanese education up to the last year of high school, then experiencing American education ever since, I am eager to present what came clear to me as characteristics of Japanese education of the past which must be made clear before any educational reform can effectively take place.

Thus, this thesis, which is called Universal Education of Japanese Children, Pre-school and Elementary is an analysis of the education which every child in Japan received up to the beginning of the World War II. Sekiya, in the preface to the thesis on the Japanese educational system, says: "If we look at the

great work of the Meiji Restoration rather superficially, it looks as if our nation has been totally invaded by the Western civilization; but if we look at it more carefully, it merely is a reconstruction with the garment of the Western civilization of the Japanese spirit, which has been nurtured solidly during the Tokugawa's three hundred years."[1] What this statement says -- that the influences of tradition and customs of Japan have survived through the period of Westernization in the Meiji era and that they continue to exist as under-currents or even main currents of Japanese life -- shows the paramount importance of bringing to light those things in Japan which, strongly perpetuated, will become deterrents to the accepting of democratic ideals.

In this thesis, I have taken the word "education" in its broadest sense: the totality of influences including those of the family, its ethical foundations, traditions, and customs to the extent that they had important bearings on the children's lives as well as formal training, discipline, instructions and activities in which they participate in the process of growing up. Throughout, I have striven to bring out how the children's lives actually are in Japan as the result of this education. The first chapter deals with the family, the basic social unit in Japan, which, sustained by Japan's religions, is the center of the ethical and philosophical doctrines that form the child's thinking. I have given

1. Ryukichi Sekiya, A Thesis on Japanese Educational System, p. 1.

the whole chapter to it, because in Japan every individual is considered basically a member of his family and is under the control of the family system from the date of his birth to the end of his life. Also he is considered a member of the largest family in Japan, called the nation with the emperor and empress as its father and mother. In a nation like Japan, moreover, where social and political considerations have tended to make education more of a training of children to act according to tradition and customs than aiding them to think independently, the influence of the general mental atmosphere of the family is ever-present. The next two chapters deal with the practices that have grown out of this ethical system in pre-school and elementary stages, both of which are universal, the former being rooted in the family system and the latter being the compulsory education of the Japanese people. The second chapter deals specifically with the pre-school education of Japanese children. This education or influence upon them is first informal in its nature and is mostly rooted in the tradition and customs of Japan. Thus it is the education which is not subject to quick change. The elementary school education of Japanese children with which the third chapter deals, on the other hand, is formal in nature, and its outward aspects subject to change, much of it being the adoption of the Western educational systems since the time of the Meiji Restoration; but it, too, as we shall see later, is a continuation of education in Japanese traditions and

customs as far as its spirit is concerned. Then the fourth and final chapter presents something of a criticism of the Japanese education in the past based upon experience and study. I have been tempted to present in this chapter suggestions in relation to universal elementary school in Japan which will be capable of transplanting ideas of democracy in the Japanese soil but have deferred this to a later work; for this is an undertaking of great importance which cannot be dismissed lightly in a chapter or two.

In preparing for this thesis, especially in its initial stages, I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Mischa Titiev of the department of anthropology at the University of Michigan. For help in the organization of this thesis, I am deeply indebted to Dr. Frank L. Huntley, secretary to the Barbour Scholarship Committee of the University, who most generously offered me guidance and assistance. For criticism of my work I am indebted to Dr. Robert B. Hall for his insight and understanding of Japan. Then to Mrs. Joseph K. Yamagiwa, and many Japanese friends in and around Ann Arbor, I owe a great deal of thanks for the information given me regarding various phases of Japanese customs and traditions.

Tori Takaki
December 5th, 1947
Ann Arbor, Michigan

CHAPTER I

THE ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE FAMILY SYSTEM

Gulick in his book called Evolution of the Japanese says, "The chief sins of Old Japan...were sins of omission and commission against the individual."[1] He also states that "Japanese social and religious philosophy had not yet discovered that the individual is of infinite worth in himself, apart from all considerations of his rank in society."[2] This old philosophic idea directly influenced by Confucianism but no less strengthened by Shintoism and Buddhism, that one born in Japan is primarily not an individual with his own personality, rights and privileges, but is an impersonal and integral part of the family in Japan continues to hold sway over the Japanese national thinking, and is the fundamental influence on the education of the Japanese child. It is, therefore, the purpose of this chapter, first, to see what constitutes the family system in Japan and, then, to make a brief study of its religious and ethical ideas which surround the child from the time of its birth.

A. The Family System

Embree states that the Japanese family into which a child is born consists of the family head and his wife, the eldest son of this couple and his wife and children,

1. Sidney I. Gulick, Evolution of the Japanese, p. 283.
2. Ibid, p. 258.

and any unmarried children of the head. Thus the normal Japanese family living in one household includes two elementary family units. In addition to this basic or immediate family there is the extended family group consisting of the brothers and sisters of all male members of the house, and children of the family head who may have married or been adopted out."[3] Moreover, a child born in Japan -- and, incidentally, he is considered legally as a child ("ko") as long as his parents are alive -- invariably is regarded as a member of the largest family group in Japan, which is the nation with the emperor and empress as its father and mother.

The Japanese family system is patriarchal, the head of the family being the father. He exercises authority over all its members while the mother serves him and takes care of the children. Within the family there is a definite principle of hierarchy. Briefly, the females must obey the males and the young, the old. Grandparents, if they are still living, hold honorable places in the family and are consulted on important family matters. The eldest son has a special place in the family in view of the fact that he is the successor to the headship. When there is no son in the family, the eldest daughter becomes the heir; and upon marriage, her husband takes on her family name. But adoption is common where there is no son nor daughter. On this subject, Embree writes: "The primary function of adoption

3. John F. Embree, The Japanese Nation, p. 152.

is to insure heirs, but an associated function is to insure the prosperity and good name of the family; hence the prospective son is carefully chosen, frequently from among the children of one's relatives."[4] The functions of marriage also are to insure heirs and to keep the family name shining. Thus marriage in Japan is a family affair, not individual matter, and is arranged by the families concerned and their friends.

As already stated, the Japanese family system includes not only the "immediate" family but the extended family group. Within the latter group there is a head who has authority over the heads of the "immediate" families which constitute it. This head rules over the family council, which is established in every extended family group in order to insure the collective responsibility of all its members. The family council gives consent to marriage and adoption, protects the interests of a minor when there is a special need, or discusses such matters as education of the minors. Above all things, it seeks to preserve the family tradition and to keep the family name always shining.

Thus, each member of the family having a definite place in the system and controlled by the system which is patriarchal and is headed by the council, the family in Japan is a closely knit unit in which individual members are parts of the whole but not recognized as individuals. Moreover, family ties are reinforced by

4. Ibid, p. 155.

the performance of family rites, most of which emanate from ancestor worship. As Hearn says, "ancestor worship" regards the dead as continuing to form a part of the household life, and needing still the affection and the respect of their children and kindred...They are not thought of as dead: they are believed to remain among those who loved them. Unseen they guard the home, and watch over the welfare of its inmates..."[5] Family rites are performed in the presence of ancestral tablets which are found in the Shinto altar called "kamidana" or Buddhist altar called "Butsudana" either or both of which is found in almost every household in Japan. Especially as the performance of the rites often calls forth the assembling of the extended family group, ancestor worship definitely contributes toward the solidarily of the family system.

"If proof were needed," as Gubbins says," that society in Japan centers around the family, and not the individual, it would be supplied by the institution known as family registration..."[6] This family registration called "Koseki" in Japanese is a complete record of each family in Japan -- including the birth, marriage, occupation, etc., of each member and is kept in local governmental offices. This custom of the government keeping family records testifies to the closeness of the family tie within the nation.

5. Lafcadio Hearn, Japan an Attempt at Interpretation, p. 52.
6. John H. Gubbins, The Making of Modern Japan, p. 290.

Thus the Japanese family system as described above protects each member of the family within the system and affords to all its members support and guidance at the same time that it exerts a great deal of pressure on family members as individuals. We must now enquire into what differences exist, if any, in the amount of pressure the system can exert.

Various family ways, though, all are built on the family system, differ according to different elements in the Japanese society. In the first place they differ according to different classes in the society which are as distinct and set as the places of members in the family are. For example, family ways of the upper class consisting of nobles and well-to-do, are likely to be very traditional; for they have both the time and money to cling to their family traditions and to the "forms and ceremonies" of the old Japan, while the middle class and the lower class don't. At the same time, among the upper class are the most Westernized people, again because of the means they have to take travel abroad, or to send their sons abroad for the purpose of education. Family ways of the middle class, ranging from professors and smaller business-men to white-collar workers and teachers, are very often more liberal and progressive. Majority of them have come away from many old Japanese customs. Family ways of the lower class, including shop-keepers, laborers, other manual workers and farmers, are the most unprogressive as a whole; for people in

this class, not having much opportunity for education and enlightenment, naturally hold on to traditional beliefs and superstitions which have been handed down from generation to generation. In the second place, family ways differ, according to city people and country people. City people -- being in a closer touch with the Western civilization -- naturally have dispensed with more traditional customs than the country people, and have taken in more new ideas than the country people. Lastly family ways differ in the homes of Shinto believers, those of Buddhists, and those of Christians. It is in the latter group of people which consists mostly of middle-class people in cities and who have inevitably taken in the Western idea of individualism that the pressure of the family system is the least.

Thus though the pressure it exerts is less in one group than in others and the amount of pressure is different according to various elements in the society, the cult of the family in Japan is very strongly entrenched in the nation as a whole. It is, moreover, so infused with the ethical principles of the three major religions of the nation that even a cursory view of them is necessary before we can explain the informal influences that actually help to train the Japanese child.

B. Common Religions

Confucianism, Shintoism, and Buddhism are the common

religions of the Japanese people whose ethical principles are closely interwoven with the family system. Confucianism is the basis of the family relationship so firmly set in Japan. Shintoism in the forms of Popular and State Shinto is the foundation of the Japanese nation, and as such influences the family system. Then Buddhism is inseparable with the everyday life of the Japanese people, for it has made great contributions to the civilization of Japan not only through religion but through art and has contributed much to the philosophy of the Japanese people.

We shall now enquire into each of the three common religions, with emphasis on the ethical influences on the Japanese family system.

Confucianism

Among the three common religions comprising the ethical foundations of the Japanese family system, it is natural that we first take up Confucianism. For it is the teachings of Confucius which disregards individual rights and privileges but regulates the relationships among the members as integral parts of the family, and thus solidifies the system as a whole. What Lowell says concerning Confucianism in China holds true in Japan: "...since the sage (Confucius) set his seal upon the system no one has so much as dreamt of changing it. The idea of confuting Confucius would be an act of impiety such as no Chinaman could possibly commit. Not that the inadmissibility of argument is due really to the authority of the philosopher, but that it lies

ingrained in the character of the people."[7]

Confucius was born in 551 B.C. in China when that nation was in political chaos. As a political reformer, he advocated looking back to the Golden Age of China as the remedy for the chaos of his time. Disappointed in his effort as a reformer, however, he studied old Chinese writings, edited some, and was particularly impressed by Chinese code of ethics on the subject of filial piety. In due time, drawing ideas from the Golden Age, he worked out a system of proper conducts in society. He believed that man by nature is good, and argued that reciprocal behavior between men in certain definite relations will bring harmony to society.

The teachings of Confucius was first introduced to Japan around the year 395, when a Korean scholar, Wani, came to Japan as a tutor of an imperial prince. He introduced Confucian annalects and caused the Chinese language, especially the writing, to be adopted as the official language in Japan. However, it was in the early part of the 17th century, when Tokugawa Ieyasu caused the Confucian classics to be printed in Japan for the first time, that the influence of Confucianism began to be felt in the nation. During the two hundred years that followed, when the leaders of Japan kept the nation closed from foreign interference and tried to establish peace within the nation, Confucianism became the very basis of the social system of Japan. As Chamberlain

7. Percival Lowell, The Soul of the Far East, p. 38.

writes: "...his (Confucius) main doctrine of unquestioning submission to rulers and parents fitted in perfectly with the feudal issue of Japan..."[8], and is the most conservative influence in the Japanese society today.

The five basic relationships which Confucianism advocates are between emperor and subject, parent and child, elder brother and younger sister, friend and friend, and husband and wife, the last of which was added by one of the disciples of Confucius. It is taught that the relationship should be always reciprocal--though stations in life and methods of service different, that emperor should serve his subject even as subject serves his emperor, parent should serve his child even as child serves his parent, elder brother should serve his younger brother even as younger brother serves his elder brother, friends should serve each other, and husband should serve his wife even as wife serves her husband. And the great virtues emanating from above relationships are loyalty, filial piety, conjugation, primogeniture and faithfulness, which are to be practiced at different levels of relationships. As woven into the social system of Japan, which was feudalistic, however, the concept of the five basic relationships and their virtues experienced some changes. In China, loyalty of inferior had to be earned by the superior; but in Japan it need not be earned but

8. Basil Chamberlain, Things Japanese, p. 93.

is given to the superior. Then the virtues of loyalty and filial piety are given the first importance in Japan, and much emphasis is placed upon the duty of the inferiors and its virtues. Gulick brings out this point when he says: "...Japanese moralists have placed the emphasis of their ethical thinking on loyalty; subordinated to this has been filial piety. These two principles have been the pivotal points of Japanese ethics. All other virtues flowed out of them, and were intimately dependent upon them."[9] Thus loyalty in Japan not only means worship of the emperor but loyalty to everything Japanese which is interwoven in the national body. And filial piety in Japan means not only the duty of children to parents and grownups but obedience to everything which is interwoven in the family system of Japan. Moreover, the terms loyalty and filial piety are practically interchangeable in their concepts, both virtues emphasizing obedience to a great body of traditional beliefs and practices of the nation.

Woman in Confucianism exists for the family and only as she begets an heir is she held in honor. Knox writes: "...It is as mother that she is venerated. For the rest she ranks with the inferior part of creation, and her great duty is unhesitating obedience to her incarnate "Heaven," father, elder brother, or husband."[10] Knox goes on further to explain that woman in

9. Gulick, op.cit., p. 283.
10. George W. Knox, Development of Religion in Japan, p. 158.

living a secluded life at home, lost herself in others, and her sole virtues became those of gentleness, self-effacement, and careful training in feminine accomplishments. She thus became a symbol of propriety. And this virtue to propreity, fitting well into the Japanese genius for organization and for minute detail, in time became the great virtue of the Japanese not only of women but of men.[11]

Confucianism, then, conceives of man not as an individual but as an integral part of the family or the society. And it is in his relationship with others that his worth as a human being is recognized. As Knox says, "In himself he is nothing, for his relationships constitute his being."[12] Moreover, his place in the family and in the society is firmly fixed and it is in the fulfillment of the duties of his station that constitutes his very life. The following quotation summarizes the underlying concept of Confucianism: "...man is simply the chief part of nature, and has his own highest place in it...he is an integral part of it and the highest...there is a 'way' for all things, which they follow when nature is supreme and content; thus naturally it is cold in winter and warm in summer, and peace and quietude are normal. So is it with men: they exist in ranks and in relations, and when all is right all is peace and content. When we strain and

11. Ibid, p. 159.
12. Ibid, p. 152.

strive, it is sign that nature has given place and that the unnatural obtains. Society is normal and natural when each one is in his rightful place and performs its duties."[13]

When asked about gods, Confucius is reported to have said that men should respect them but have nothing to do with them in daily life. In other words, Confucianism does not deny the existence of gods, but is entirely secular in its precepts, teaching men the virtues of everyday life for the purpose of regulating the society. The following excerpt from Anezaki's History of Japanese Religion brings out this point: "The Confucian influence in Japan was always more conspicuous in the sphere of legal and educational institutions than in the domain of religious sentiment; civic institutions and moral teaching were the Chinese contributions to Japan."[14]

Shintoism

The Kamidana, Shinto altar, which has already been mentioned as having a place in almost every Japanese household symbolizes the influence of Shintoism within the Japanese family. Its influence as a national religion is indicated in the following quotation from National Faith of Japan by Holtom:

"...from childhood the Japanese are taught that attitudes and usages connected with the shrines of Shinto are vitally related to good citizenship. To be a

13. Ibid, pp. 146-7.
14. Masaharu Anezaki, History of Japanese Religion, p. 71

worthy subject of the realm requires loyalty to certain great interests for which the shrines are made to stand."[15]

In the words of Anezaki:

> Shinto was originally an unorganized religion, having hardly any system or doctrine; but its cult well embodied the nation's ideas and sentiments, and its influence has persisted throughout the vicissitudes of the nation's history. National unity and social solidarity were always maintained by the reverence towards the ruling family, belief in the divine origin of the Throne being inseparable from the worship of the Sun-Goddess...The idea of family perpetuation and the importance of communal life played no less important parts; the virtues of valour and fidelity, as well as the faithful observance of family tradition, were always integral factors of the indigenous religion.[16]

The first written record of Shinto showing its basic philosophy was written in 712 A.D., when Yasumaro wrote down what Hieda-no-are, a scholar especially talented in memory, told him of ancient matters. This record which is called Kojiki sets the accession to the throne of the first emperor of Japan, Jimmu, to 660 B.C. It shows the unbroken lineage of emperors ever since, and seeks to solidify Yamato clan, the clan from which Emperor Jimmu came, by identifying itself with ancient myths the people believe in. Thus the unbroken lineage of emperors since Jimmu -- as written down in Kojiki -- is the essence of State Shinto, while the ancient myths recorded therein not only supports the State Shinto but form the Popular Shinto together with Japanese beliefs

15. D.C. Holtom, National Faith of Japan, p. 4.
16. Anezaki, op.cit., pp 6-7.

in nature and various superstitions.

Shintoism is often called "the way of the gods" and it has a pantheon of numberless "kami" or gods. The deity of greatest importance, however, is Amaterasu-Omikami or the Sun-Goddess. She is the great grandparent of Jimmu, and thus is considered the great ancestress of the unbroken lineage of Japanese emperors, and, therefore, of the nation and the people. Emperors in general, especially the three preceding ones to the reigning emperor and several outstanding emperors in history, are considered as gods. Then, national heroes and some other personalities in history, numerous objects in nature such as trees and shrubs, and animals, and even functions of nature such as lightning and storm are represented as gods. Of the Shinto pantheon as a whole, Holtom writes: "Tradition commonly refers to eight hundred myriads of kami (Yao-yorozu no kami), sometimes to eighty myriads. There is at least one reference to eight hundred myraids of thousands of myriads of deities. In all these cases the idea seeking expression is manifestly that of a vast and indefinite host of superhuman beings. If we include all the local, and frequently unnamed, spirits known to the general folklore, then of course the number does become immense and unknown."[17]

One of the most important myth in Shinto concerns Amaterasu, the Sun-Goddess, when she hid herself in a

17. Holtom, op.cit., p. 171.

cave, being angry over the misconduct of his brother, Susanowo. Embree records this myth as follows:

> Shocked and angry, the Sun Goddess hid herself in a cave and the world became dark.
>
> Hereupon the voices of the myriad Deities were like unto the flies in the fifth moon as they swarm and a myriad portents of woe arose. Therefore did the eight hundred myriad Deities assemble in a divine assembly in the bed of the Tranquil River of Heaven, and bid the Deity Thought-Includer,...think of a plan.
>
> He then made arrangements for a special ceremony, calling for the making of an eight-foot string of curved jewels, a special mirror, the use of a stag's shoulder blade, and the sacred 'sakaki' tree. Offerings were made and liturgies recited. Then as a climax a dance was performed by Her Augustness Heavenly-Alarming-Female hanging (round her) the heavenly clubmoss from the Heavenly Mount Kagu as a sash, and making the Heavenly spindle-tree her head-dress, and binding the leaves of the bamboo-grass of the Heavenly Mount Kagu in a posy for her hands, laying a sounding-board before the door of the Heavenly Rock-Dwelling, and stamping till she made it resound and doing as if possessed by a Deity, and pulling out her genitals. Then the Plain of High Heaven shook, and the eight hundred myriad Deities laughed together. Hereupon the Heaven-Shining-Great-August-Deity was amazed, and, slightly opening the door of the Heavenly Rock-Dwelling, spoke thus from the inside: "Methought that owing to my retirement the Plain of Plains would all be dark: how then is it that the Heavenly-Alarming-Female makes merry, and that likewise the eight hundred myriad Deities all laugh?" Then the Heavenly-Alarming-Female spoke, saying: "We rejoice and are glad because there is a Deity more illustrious than Thine Augustness." While she was thus speaking, His Augustness Grand-Jewel pushed forward the mirror and respectfully showed it to the Heaven-Shining-Great-August-Deity, whereupon, more and more astonished, she gradually came forth from the door and gazed upon it, whereupon the Heavenly-Hand-Strength-Male-Deity, who was standing hidden, took her august hand and drew her out, and then His Augustness Grand-Jewel drew the bottom-tied rope along her august back, and spoke saying:--"Thou must not go back further

> in this." So when the Heaven-Shining-August-Deity had come forth, both the Plain of High Heaven and the Central Land of Reed Plains of course again became light.[18]

The jewels and the mirror mentioned in this myth, together with the sword which Susanowo found in the tail of a serpent, are the three sacred treasures of Japan, which are said to be handed down from one generation of emperor to another as a symbol of one lineage of emperors in Japan. And the ceremony recorded in this myth is the origin of Shinto rituals of today.

Just as there are numberless gods, there are countless Shinto shrines scattered throughout the land. Holtom says: "The Shinto shrine may be a small god-house of wood or stone casually met with by the wayside. It may be a Grand Imperial Shrine of Ise or a Great Meiji Shrine of Tokyo, including in its appointments extensive landed holdings and numerous costly buildings along with various objects of ceremony and art, with a total valuation of millions of yen."[19] Shinto shrine is always a replica of the primitive house of ancient times such as we find today in Indonesia. It is always built of wood, and usually a thatched roof on top of it. Torii, a gateway to this shrine, which -- in some shrines -- stands in a raw leading to the shrine proper, on its original significance was not merely a decorative gateway but "a magical, protective device which guarded the opening in the shrine fence against the entrance of

18. John Embree, The Japanese Nation, pp. 170-171.
19. Holtom, op.cit., p. 8.

evil and contamination of all sorts."[20]

Purity is the keynote for Shinto ethics, just as it is represented by the simplicity of the Shinto shrine structures. Shinto priests are robed in white and those attending a Shinto ceremony or even those just worshipping at Shinto shrines are required to wash hands and rinse mouth in order to be purified before approaching the gods. Of Shinto ceremonies, Anezaki writes:

> In the shrine there is no image but a symbolic representation of the deity called "spirit-substitute" (Mitama-shiro), usually a mirror or a "nusa." The offerings consists of food-stuffs, such as fish, fowl, cereals, vegetables, always uncooked - arrayed together with sake drink and some other objects. No flower is offered but green leaves of the tree "sakaki" ... [21]

Anezaki further says:

> The ceremony proper consists of bringing offerings one after another, reciting a ritual, and then taking away offerings. Private prayers may be offered, but the regular ritual is always public. The priests serving in these ceremonies glide in and out of the sanctuary with quiet footsteps, silence being strictly observed.[22]

Sometimes dances depicting scenes from early mythology are performed with songs and musical accompaniments, and periodical festivities are performed in front of a shrine.

An important activity of every comparatively large shrine is the sale of charms. In the book called Foundations of Japan, Robertson-Scott says: "On the

20. Ibid, p. 9.
21. Anezaki, op.cit., p. 42.
22. Ibid, p. 43.

gables of one or two houses near the roof I noticed ventilators which were cut in the form of the Chinese ideographs which means water, a kind of charm against fire. At the door of one rather well-to-do peasant house I saw several paper charms against toothache...Every home I went into had a collection of charms."[23] This description of charms in country houses typifies Japanese belief in charms and symbolizes the importance attached to charms sold at shrines. The Japanese word for charms, "Mamori," is derived from the verb "to protect"; and they are supposed to ward off various evil spirits and to bring good fortune in the future. The most common form of charms which people carry around in their pockets is in the form of a small flat paper folder, two to three inches long and five-eighths of an inch wide, within which is a small, thin wooden tablet.

Thus whether in the form of State Shinto with its emphasis on emperor worship or in the form of Popular Shinto with its beliefs in gods of nature, charms, etc., Shintoism -- as the indigenous religion of Japan -- forms the basis of national thinking of Japan and therefore of the family. It derives its continuity largely from its function as a communal cult and helps to perpetuate the customs and traditions of Old Japan.

The following quotation from Holtom is significant: "...no other great nation of the present shows a more vital dependence on priestly rituals and their concomitant beliefs than does modern Japan...It is an

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23. J.W. Robertson-Scott, Foundations of Japan, p. 47.

extraordinary fact of contemporary civilization that among the great powers of the world one can find a nation which is attempting to secure social and political cohesion through the strength of a ceremonial nexus that was normal in occidental culture between two and four thousand years ago."[24]

Buddhism

Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, is said to have been born in India in the fifth century B.C. He was the son of a king of the Sakyas -- a people of a warrior caste in India. But, as it was prophesied at the time of his conception, he renounced the world: he left his home at the age of twenty-nine, and after six years of effort, attained enlightenment. He then formed an Order of monks and later nuns and spent the rest of his life wandering, preaching his newly discovered doctrine. Gradually Buddha's teaching found its way to China, then to Korea, and thence to Japan. Thus Buddhism was first introduced to Japan in the year 552 A.D., when one of the Korean kingdoms, Paikche, sent over an image of Buddha and sutras. The great patron of Buddhism in Japan early in its introduction was Prince Shotoku, who became an ardent student of Buddhism and left commentaries on the Lotus sutra and some other writings. In 604 A.D., he promulgated the great Taiho Code, which helped to spread the Buddhist teaching. In relation to the propagation of Buddhist teaching,

24. Holtom, op.cit., p. 3.

Anezaki writes: "The new religion imported arts and sciences, letters and philosophy, all working as instruments of its propagation, and through the astounding progress of its missionary work the whole country was almost transformed into a Buddhist land in the course of the seventh century."[25]

While, in this chapter, we have to confine ourselves to the subject of Buddhism as comprising the ethical foundations of the Japanese family system, it is well to remember the fact that painting, sculpture, and architecture, as well as engraving and printing and even writing were all introduced to Japan in connection with Buddhism. Of the profound influence -- especially of Zen sect of Buddhism -- on the aesthetic experience of the Japanese people, Anezaki writes: "Spiritual attainment in Zen training served also to foster a peculiar sense of the affinity of man's soul with nature, not her active and agitated aspects but the purity and serenity pervading the universe and absorbed into the heart of the Zennist. This mood of air-rhythm (fuin), as it was called, namely the sentiment and temper of transcendental calmness, found its expressions primarily in poetry and then in painting, which was but a graphic representation of poetic inspiration."[26] Thus, the hanging scrolls of poetry or painting found in the Tokonoma, the alcove of a Japanese living-room,

25. Anezaki, op.cit.,
26. Ibid, p. 212.

the houses built close to nature and as a part of the garden which is a miniature representation of nature, the garden itself with trees and rocks and streams so carefully placed according to Zen philosophy -- all these comprise the very environment of Japanese family life which is saturated with the influence of Buddhism.

Each of the fifty or so sects of Buddhism in Japan treats a special doctrine of Buddha as the whole of the religion. So the teaching of Japanese Buddhism cannot easily be summarized. However, Tripataka is the Buddhist Scriptures in three divisions known as three baskets, the first consisting of rules of discipline, the second being discourses, and the third metaphysics. Briefly stated, the fundamental teaching Tripatika inculcates is that suffering is evil, that the principal cause of suffering is desire, that to suppress suffering we must suppress desire, and that when one successfully does so, he enters Nirvana, the Buddhist paradise. The teaching of selflessness or self-renunciation which is so valued in Japanese family life or Japanese life in general directly emanates from this main teaching of Buddhism.

That doctrine of Buddhism which appears to be most vitally linked to our subject of the ethical foundations of society is Kharma. "Human life" according to this doctrine is an endless continuity of deeds and retributions extending to the infinite past and to the future far beyond the ken of any mortal being,

and including the existences in all possible realms, celestial, human, bestial, infernal, and so on. Moreover, the bond of Kharma is not limited to the continuity of one's individual life, but extends to the ties of association binding fellow beings together in a group or realm of existence. The relationship of parents and children, of husband and wife, of any social, racial, or national groups, all are manifestations of Kharma working to perpetuate the inherited links of deeds and disposition."[27] The teaching of the bond of Kharma in one's individual experience causes the Japanese to feel, for example, that the suffering or any misfortune that overtakes one in the present life is the result of one's sin in the past and that therefore it is inevitable. Of this aspect of the influence of the doctrine, Anezaki writes: "The belief in Kharma...induced the people to submit themselves to the necessity of fate or to renounce self in face of irremissible retribution. It amounted, in its extreme, to a teaching of non-resistance towards any ill, because every occurence in life, whether human or physical, was considered to be an irresistable consequence of one's own kharma."[28] The teaching of the bond of Kharma from the point of view of the ties of association binding fellow beings, however, brought to the Japanese something which neither Confucianism nor Shintoism

27. Ibid, p.72.
28. Ibid, p. 73.

could offer them. This teaching is explained in the following quotation by Anezaki: "There are in the world, Buddhism teaches, manifold existences and innumerable beings, and each of these individuals deems himself to be a separate being and behaves accordingly. But in reality they make up one family, there is one continuity throughout, and this oneness is to be realized in the attainment of Buddhahood on the part of each and all, in the full realization of the universal communion...To save oneself by saving others is the gospel of universal salvation taught by Buddhism."[29] It is easy to understand, therefore, that this particular teaching of Buddhism brought the idea of humanitarianism which was a great contribution to the Japanese thought. Of this, Eliot writes: "Modern as well as ancient history testifies that the Japanese character has a severe as well as a kindly side, and if this kindly side has become the more usual and conspicuous that is mainly due to Buddhist influence. Reluctance to kill animals and the general use of a diet restricted to fish and vegetables are direct results of Buddhist teaching."[30]

As for the Buddhist pantheon, while the existence of a Universal Buddha mind is recognized, it is manifested in various forms. Some of the most popular Buddhas are: Amida, who is regarded as a savior by

29. Ibid, p. 66
30. Sir Charles Eliot, Japanese Buddhism, p. 191

Shinshu and Jodo followers; Jizo, who is a male figure often seen on the roadside and who is considered the helper of all in trouble and, particularly, the protector of children; Kwannon, who is a feminine diety and is the goddess of mercy, worshipped especially by women about to become mothers; and Shaka, a representation of Gautama Buddha, the central figure of such Japanese sects as Zen and Nichireh. Further, all sects except the Shinshu reverence a great number of Bodhisattvas.[31] Of these, Eliot writes: "The simple Shinto view that great men are supernatural beings is practically the same as subtle Indian theories about incarnations, and a religion which recognized the Hindu fathers of the Church as Bodhisattivas felt no difficulty in extending the same honor to the pillars of the faith in Japan. Shotoku Taishi, Kobo Daishi, Honen, Shinran, and many others receive a veneration hardly inferior to that accorded to deities...Buddhist and Shintoist ideas thus coalesced and the title of Bodhisattva was conferred on departed Emperors and statesmen -- on those, for instance, who are described as Hachiman, the patron of soldiers, and Tenjin, the God of calligraphy, and even on so recent a personage as Ieyasu."[32]

One of the most important functions of Buddhism as a religion of the people is the service it renders to the dead. Until the Meiji era all funerals were

31. Bodhisattvas are those who have been deified but who have not as yet attained Buddha-hood.
32. Eliot, op.cit., p. 183.

performed by Buddhist priests; and even now the majority of the people go to Buddhist temples for funeral rites. For anniversaries for the dead, people have Buddhist priests perform rites either at temples or in their homes, while offerings of all sorts are continually dedicated in the family Butsudan -- Buddhist altar. Anezaki explains the philosophy behind this Japanese cult of the dead or ancestor worship as follows:

> ...it was quite natural that the spiritual communion taught by Buddhism was made to embrace the souls of ancestors, and the practice of dedication was adapted to the cult of the dead. This was an accommodation of Buddhism to the animistic religion of the people, but it nevertheless elevated their spiritual level to a higher plane, the ideal of universal fellowship. The cult which had been performed as a request for favor or for propitiation was now combined with the new conception of spiritual fraternity. Japanese Buddhists even nowadays observe strictly the periodical services in memory of the deceased members of the family. This is a family cult and ancestor-worship, as it is called, but the spiritual communion intended in the cult may be extended indefinitely to the whole cosmos.[33]

In this chapter we have seen that the three common religions of Japan -- Confucianism, Shintoism and Buddhism -- which comprise the ethical foundations of the family system respectively contribute to it a system of human relationship which is the most conservative and stabilizing influence in the Japanese society, a basis of the national thinking of Japan founded on myths, ceremonies, beliefs in charms, etc., and the virtue of selflessness together with a more

33. Anezaki, op.cit., p. 69.

universal philosophy of life. Each and all help to bind individuals to the family system and thus to negate individual personality, rights, and privileges for the sake of the family and of the nation. Combined, they foster the national spirit of Japan and to preserve the tradition and customs of Japan, including the family system, intact.

It is interesting to note what Anezaki records in regard to the important places those religions have in the Japanese life, as a whole. He says:

> A saying ascribed to Prince Shotoku, the founder of Japanese civilization, compares the three religions and moral systems found in Japan to the root, the stem and branches, and the flowers and fruits of a tree. Shinto is the root embedded in the soil of the people's character and national traditions; Confucianism is seen in the stem and branches of legal institutions, ethical codes, and educational systems; Buddhism made the flowers of religious sentiment bloom and gave the fruits of spiritual life. These three systems were moulded and combined by the circumstances of the times and by the genius of the people into a composite whole of the nation's spiritual and moral life."[34]

There is, in addition, a morality in Japan which derives its constituents from all the above three religions and helps to strengthen their hold on the Japanese mind. This is Bushido, or "the way of the warriors" as it is sometimes called. It appeared in the thirteenth century as a reaction to the corruption of the previous century which was an era of peace. It is a product of the Kamakura period in which warriors such as Minamoto-no-Yoritomo reigned and is "characterized

34. Ibid, p. 69.

by austere simplicity of life, defiant endurance of hardship, love of truthfulness, and disinterested devotion to one's lord"[35] as Hastings says. While, as noted above, this is a mere off-shoot of the three common religions which comprise the ethical foundations of the family system, it is mentioned here as its spirit is often said to characterize the Japanese mind.

35. Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, p. 486.

CHAPTER II

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Now that we have seen what ethical and philosophical doctrines subserve the family system, we are in a better position to consider some of the pre-school influences which in its daily living by these ethical precepts the family exerts upon the pre-school child. These pre-school influences within the family group are arranged as nearly chronologically as they can be.

A. Before Birth

Prenatal care for mothers is given much importance in Japan. For example, for a pregnant mother to see a frightful scene or listen to terrifying stories is considered to have bad effects on the child mentally and physically. She is supposed to spend days peacefully and happily, caring both for her physical and mental health. Members of her family cooperate in giving her comfort and ease.[1]

Pregnant Japanese mothers are often seen praying at Shinto shrines to cleanse their thinking from evil spirits and thus to bless their babies. It is thought in Japan that pregnant mothers should look at beautiful pictures or sceneries, also in order to cleanse their thinking for their offspring.

1. In some parts of the country, there are such superstitions as the following in regard to child-birth: if a pregnant mother drinks dark tea, dark-faced child will be born. If a robber comes during her pregnancy, a fearful child will be born.

The prominent place given to men in the Japanese family leads the mother as well as the whole family to await anxiously for the birth of a son, especially if it is in the case of a first child of the family. It is interesting to note that, in order not to be downcast or the family pride hurt in case a daughter is born instead of a son, the family usually have clothings and beddings in red baby-girl's color in preparation for the birth, while secretly wishing for the birth of a son.

B. Birth and the First Year

According to Shinto tradition, child-birth is a time of uncleanness and, therefore, shame for the mother. Yet it is a time of great rejoicing for the family as a whole. Relatives and friends send gifts of toys and kimono materials for the baby.[2]

A midwife is on hand at a birth, who comes again a few days later to give the baby his first bath. If the child is a first child, especially a first son, he enjoys the most favored position in the family. According to Embree, his birth "gives the new wife added status in the eyes of her husband's family and also makes her now a full-fledged member of her husband's community."[3]

For two or three days after birth, the child eats nothing. Then almost always in Japan, mother's milk is given to the child. When there is no mother's milk,

2. In some remote villages, neighbors call on the new mother generally with a gift of "ame" -- candies which are considered to be good for the mother.
3. Embree, The Japanese, p. 22.

however, a nursemaid is hired to feed the baby. Again, he sometimes is fed on rice water, water in which raw rice has been cooked. The custom of feeding children on cow's milk is of recent origin in Japan. As Gorer says, "The Japanese baby is, if anything, overfed. It is not only given the breast whenever it shows any sign of wanting it, but the breast is also often offered to it before it shows any signs of hunger...From a very early age, the child is given a little solid food, at first premasticated by the mother and spat into the baby's mouth; a little later finely ground rice and gruel are given directly."[4]

Japanese child is very early trained in cleanliness. Embree explains this fact as follows: "The strong emphasis on the daily bath can be best understood by considering the general emphasis of Shinto ritual cleanliness."[5] Furthermore with the rule that no shoes may be worn inside the house and the necessity of keeping the floor mats clean, the child is trained at an early stage not to wet or dirty either himself or the mats. The frequent use of the word "kitanai" (dirty) to stop the child from eating or touching prohibited objects shows the measure of the training in cleanliness the Japanese child receives. On this point Gorer further writes: "In the life of Japanese children

4. Geoffrey Gorer, "Themes in Japanese Culture," Transactions of New York Academy of Sciences, 1942-44, p. 109. The premastication of food no longer takes place generally.
5. Embree, op.cit., p. 23.

the most consistent and most severe aspect is cleanliness training, training in control of the sphincter. For about the first four months the child has a heavy cloth diaper ...which is changed relatively rarely, though the child is regularly washed in hot water. After four months the child is held out over the balcony or road at frequent intervals, either when it cries, or when its guardian considers the time is ripe; any lapse from cleanliness is punished by severe scolding, the mother's voice expressing horror and disgust, and often also by shaking or other physical p punishment. The training is meant to be complete by the time the child can toddle on to the balcony..."[6]

The Japanese baby is very restricted in his movement. First of all, the layers of kimonos which he is obliged to wear do not allow him much freedom. For the first month, he may be left in bed, but more often, he is held in the arms of his mother. After the first month, he is often carried spread-eagled on the back. As Gorer says, "In winter, a special kimono covers mother and child; such fresh air as the child gets is obtained by bending its head sideways."[7] If the family is poor and has no one special to take care of the child, the child is on the back practically all its waking hours. He "has to learn to adapt itself passively to the often violent movement of its carrier; a mother will do arduous household tasks, or a sibling

6. Gorer, op.cit., p. 111.
7. Ibid, p. 109.

play tag or hopscotch while burdened with a baby."[8]

The first introduction of a baby in Japan into the society is held at the time of his naming ceremony which comes within one week of the birth. It is a very general custom among the Japanese to have the newborn introduced to relatives and friends. Embree describes this occasion thus: "...the infant dressed in dull blue garments if a boy, bright red if a girl, is passed from guest to guest as part of the ceremony."[9] Often at this time the parents deliver a token of appreciation to those who sent gifts to the baby at his birth. Sometimes, however, they later deliver to the homes of relatives and friends bright colored "fukusa" (a scarf-like material used for gift-giving) or other felicitous gifts to share the joy of having a new member in the family and to respond to their earlier congratulatory gifts.

A few days after the naming ceremony, the father or his representative goes to the governmental office nearby and records the birth of the child. This is the family registration spoken of in the first chapter, and may be thought of as the official introduction of the baby into the Japanese society.

8. Ibid, p. 109.
9. Embree describes the naming ceremony in a remote village as follows: "It is held three or five days after birth. Usually one member from each neighboring household and relatives living not too far away come to a little party given by the parents in honor of the baby. The midwife and the man who was the go-between for the wedding of the baby's parents are invited. On that day, the midwife usually arrives first and bathes the baby. Guests

The next ceremonial occasion for the child comes at the end of thirty-one days if a boy, and thirty-two days if a girl, and is called Hiaki. The child is taken to the local Shinto shrine for a ceremonial introduction to the patron deities of the locality. On this day, the mother with the child and often one or two other relatives, dress in their finest clothes and also dress the child in his best silk. At the shrine, the mother claps her hands for the god's attention, and a copper and some wine are offered. The child, by this ceremony, is introduced to the deity whose good will allowed him to be born and to survive his "first thirty odd dangerous days." If not taken to the Ujigami-local deity for the family, the child is taken to some local village Shinto shrine and is also sometimes taken to the Kwannon Do. Kwannon, as it was mentioned in the last chapter, is regarded as a deity of mothers and so is often prayed to for children. Again, the mother sometimes takes the child to the native home to visit

9. (continued) have tea in the kitchen, then are invited into the living-room where the mid-wife is seated in the place of honor next the Tokonoma -- the alcove of the room. The baby, dressed in dull blue garments if a boy, bright red garments if a girl, is passed from guest to guest as a part of the ceremony. When everyone is served with a special meal, the selection of the name is performed. Sometimes the father selects a name. The customary way, however, is for all present to suggest names and write them on paper. These papers are rolled up into small wads and put in a paper basket made from a square piece of writing paper. Then the midwife takes a Buddhist rosary from the altar and dips the tassel into the wine that has been offered to some deity, then into the paper-basket. After a few attempts, one of the wads clings to the tassel. It is taken out, opened,

the Ujigami there.

At the time of the above celebration, too, "sekihan"- the red ceremonial rice - may be cooked in order to be distributed to all those who came to the naming ceremony and who gave gifts at the time of the child's birth. This is often replaced by some wheat or rice cakes and completes the reciprocal obligations incurred by the family at the time of the child's birth.

C. Learning to sit, talk, and walk

Japanese baby is taught how to sit. Gorer says: "The correct Japanese sitting position is almost certainly painful for young children (some people consider it the chief cause of the very general Japanese bandy-leggedness), especially when it has to be maintained without any fidgeting or unnecessary movements of the hand or head; but the absolute standard is aimed at and nearly attained in very early life, partly by reward, partly by positively-phrased exhortation, and partly by shocking, pinching and other punishments."[10]

9. (continued) and the name on it ready by the midwife. The name is discussed and if everyone seems to approve it, it is accepted; but if for some reason, it is not liked, the midwife may try for another. Even so, if the father has his heart set on some name, he is likely to insist on it regardless of wads and rosaries. After the naming ceremony, the local group now recognizes the baby as a new member, with a name and a real, if limited, personality. However, it is not the individual concerned who counts, but the event for the family. The parents gain status through aiding another member of their family to the community. (Embree, Suye-Mura, pp. 180-181)

10. Gorer, op.cit., p. 110-111. This last statement sounds exaggerated but serves to denote the importance attached to the matter of correct sitting.

From the age of about six months, Japanese baby is supposed to be able to make salutation spontaneously, or at a word from its guardians. As Gorer records further, "The mother or carrier puts her hand behind the baby's neck or upper back and pushes the top part of the baby's body forward, with the appropriate expressions. There is a considerable aura of fear and anxiety about the etiquette of sitting and bowing. Parents are anxious to avoid the criticism which will be made to them if the child does not behave appropriately; and the child is frightened that it will be punished by its parents if they are criticized."[11]

The Japanese baby learns to say "papa" and "mama" as babies of so many countries do. Parents praise him "iiko" ("a good child") as the baby succeeds in talking to a measure. Encouraged, he tries again and again. He learns words mostly by imitation, thus acquiring his vocabulary from his family and his neighbors. Baby-talks are even encouraged in Japan. Grown-ups imitate them as they talk with the babies.

Crawling is more or less restrained in Japan. Gorer states: "The Japanese house is dangerous for a baby, and is conceptualized as even more dangerous than it is, for a baby can break through the paper walls or burn itself on the open charcoal burner...Then he has to learn to avoid stepping on the joints between the mats and to step on the sill."[12] Thus he is constantly interrupted in his crawling until he has learned his home

11. Ibid, p. 110-11.
12. Ibid, p. 110.

well enough not to risk stepping where he should not.

After crawling, most children learn to stand by leaning on something. A child walks with hand held by grown-ups or holding on to or pushing something like a large basket put upside down. As in any other country, for the child to learn to walk is the time of great rejoicing for the mother and the family. It is a usual scene for two older members of the family to be standing on their knees some distance apart with both hands stretched forward and to be letting the child walk the distance from one member to the other.

D. Weaning

- Weaning takes place in Japan later than in Western countries. In general, it takes place only as the next child is born. According to Gorer: "It is done gradually and is accomplished by verbal prohibitions and exhortations. Some children are allowed artificial pacifiers, if they desire them. Many children are allowed to put any loose objects into their mouths. Thumb-sucking is not interfered with."[13]

Embree writes, "Almost inevitably his mother bears another baby, and the child fares his first hard knocks. While the mother devotes her attention to the new-comer, the child is turned over to an older sibling or nursemaid who carries him about on her back or sits him somewhere to play. When he cries, he may not be listened

13. Ibid, p. 110.

to, for his mother no longer gives him first attention. This rapid weaning from milk and maternal attention results in several weeks of temper tantrums. Occasionally the tantrums are effective, especially if they last long enough but eventually the child readjusts himself; he gets acquainted with other children and is soon a member of a new age group of the two-and three-year-olds of the neighborhood."[14]

E. Discipline

Of the general conditions in relation to the discipline of pre-school children, Gorer writes: "In infancy and babyhood, boys and girls are treated alike or nearly alike...they are the center of attention, constantly played with and gratified and talked to, provided they follow scrupulously the rules of cleanliness and politeness and respond passively to the adults around them."[15] The frequency with which one meets toy-shops in any Japanese town is a good indication of the fact that the Japanese children are spoiled on the whole. One frequently comes across scenes of Japanese child begging for certain toys and the parent responding passively to the child's wish. On the other hand, it is true, too, that the training in the tradition and customs of Japan including the rules of etiquette inculcated early in their lives as well as the Japanese kimonos the children wear -- especially with the wooden clogs that go with them -- do not give children much

14. Embree, Suye-mura, p. 184.
15. Gorer, op.cit., p. 112.

sense of freedom such as American children enjoy, and naturally keep children on the quiet side.

Gorer writes on sex education: "...Japanese parents are extremely permissive toward infantile expressions of sexuality. Even when these are directed toward adults, they are usually treated good-naturedly, as funny; the only negative sanction used is mockery, but for the Japanese this has very considerable emotional importance."[16]

Mockery or being laughed at, as it is indicated above, seems to be the most drastic sanction of all in Japan. It is more dreaded by most, including children, than the greatest physical pain and deprivation. The reason for this is that being laughed at or ridiculed is to lose face or to lose dignity -- the worst thing most Japanese can ever think of. The term "haji o kaku" meaning "to be ashamed" or "to be humiliated" is of daily use in Japan, because people think of their behaviors in terms of keeping their dignity, their family name, or their family pride. Gorer says in relation to this point: "...If a baby makes any lapse from the proper behavior for its age -- lapses from cleanliness, from politeness, mistake in speaking -- the onlookers laugh, half-amused, and subsequently the parents punish the child. In this way, hostile laughter would become a cue for subsequent punishment and withdrawal of love by the parents; and, although the punishments are

16. Ibid, p. 111.

subsequently forgotten in their concrete form, the fear of some vague and excessively terrifying punishment remains, for which the hostile laughter of others becomes the premonitory symptom."[17] As Gorer himself admits in his article, this interpretation may not be exact, but it does help to show how the Japanese distaste for being laughed at can become Japanese parents' tools for disciplining their children to conform to the etiquette of Japanese life.

In addition to the lessons of cleanliness and politeness in which Japanese children are trained from very early in their lives, virtues of thrift and that of enduring hardship are taught either verbally or otherwise. Constant stress of thrift in food being told not to leave not one grain in his rice bowl, in thinking about the labor of the farmers, etc. -- gradually cultivates in a child's thinking the virtue of thrift. Again, when the child is apt to complain of the cold in the winter, he gets scolded. He may be told to go outdoors and play, because -- as a common saying states -- he is "a child of the winds," or he may be admonished never to complain cold again by thinking about the hardships of the soldiers in battlefields. The spirit of Bushido, mentioned in the last chapter as permeating still the Japanese mind, has much to do with this discipline for enduring hardships.

Physical punishments, such as putting the child

17. Ibid, pp. 115-116.

into a closet or spanking him, however, do occur, especially in the discipline of Japanese lower-class children. Mothers sometimes are even seen beating their children's heads. The application of "moxa," the very severe physical punishment that was frequent in olden times, persists to this day to some measure. However, it now persists more in a mere verbal scare when parents tell their children, "If you do so and so again, I shall give you a moxa treatment!"

Differential demands on boys and girls are insisted upon as they grow older. According to the Confucian idea of hierarchy governing the family system, boys are preferred over girls. Gorer says: Boys, especially first sons, learn that they may obtain almost anything from their mothers and sisters if he wants it. He is permitted to show much aggression; and he has always preferred treatment over his younger brothers. He must learn to adopt differentially to two contrasting worlds. He must show complete obedience and compliance to males superior to him in age or status; but he has a position of dominance over all women, practically without respect to age or status. He has an automatic precedence over all the females in his household."[18] Then, "In a dispute with a sister, both parents will insist on the girl giving way; in a dispute with the mother, the father will back up the son. It is only the boy's physical strength which limits the aggression which he

18. Ibid, p. 112.

may display toward his mother, nurse, or sister. The child learns that aggression, directed toward the proper persons, always pays. If the boy wants something that the mother refuses...he will go into a temper tantrum, lying on the floor, kicking and screaming. The mother will first try to calm him by calling his pet names and giving words of praise. If this fails, she will offer candy. Next she will try to cajole him with promises of future indulgences. But none of these devices may be successful; the boy may refuse to be diverted; and thus he may strike and insult his mother, may kick her and punch her and bite her. The mother begs for mercy, begs not to hurt her; she may not use her greater physical strength to resist her son...for then her husband may punish her. As a final humiliation, the boy may destroy his mother's hair-do, and break her precious ornaments-but usually she will have given in to the little fellow before such a pitch is reached."[19] This interpretation of Gorer seems to speak of extreme cases, but it shows the Japanese custom of male-superiority and its influence on the training of Japanese boys. It seems good to remember with Embree, however, that "A strong emotional tie of affection usually develops between a child and his mother which persists throughout life."[20] And this, of course, includes both boys and girls.

Girls must remain passive and are severely punished for any lapse therefrom, for any gesture of self-assertion

19. Ibid, p. 113-114.
20. Embree, The Japanese Nation, p. 129.

The best compliment on girls is described by the word "otonashii" which means gentle, passive and quiet. She has to give way unquestioningly to a demand or request made by any male. She has to be obedient to all older females. She has many duties such as taking care of her little brothers and sisters or helping her mother in her housework. But she has only a few rights and privileges.

In relation to the subject of discipline in Japan, the following observation of Embree is revealing: "Child learns her ways of society not through discipline but through example and instruction patiently and endlessly repeated by his mother."[21] While, as it has been indicated above, discipline in the usual sense of the word does exist in Japan, it is superceded by the training and instruction the children receive in the traditions and customs of the country, that is, in the ethical and religious precepts interwoven in the family system as explained in the first chapter. This latter emphasizing selflessness, there is no theoretic need for discipline as such in Japan.

F. Instruction and play

The general but inherently religious attitude of the Japanese people toward nature is felt by their children and the latter live close to nature. Japanese children love dearly such activities as picking cherry-blossom petals and making them into wreaths, picking

21. Embree, The Japanese, p. 31.

shells on beaches, or gathering red maple leaves in autumn. Then, they love to play with sands, making miniature garden in a sand-box, or play house outdoors with friends. They sometimes go around with their brothers and sisters to catch dragon-flies or cicadas on hot summer days or catch fireflies on summer evenings. The general custom of putting a cricket or some such insect in a small bamboo cage, feeding it with slices of cucumber or putting several fire-flies in a cage fixed with miniature mountains and streams and enjoying the light they emit at night...these must have unconscious influences on the children to love nature and prize everything to do with nature.

Japanese children love to play jumping ropes, hide-and-seek, and tug-of-war. Boys play soldiers. Indoor plays especially for girls consist of "otedama" - playing at dibs and "ohajiki" - playing house with dolls and friends. While toys abound in Japan as afore-mentioned, sometimes grandmothers and aunts or other relatives make beautiful "otedama," or colorful balls or dolls, and bring them over as gifts for children. Sisters may sew kimonos for the younger child's dolls.

Illustrated magazines for children are many in Japan, though the qualities of most of them are inferior. Mothers or grandmothers tell their children tales that have been told to generation after generation of Japanese children. The most popular of these tales is called "momotaro" or "The Peach-ling," the translation

of which often appears in English books.

Such tales as "Momotaro" teach a moral lesson or two which are usually in line with the ethical precepts abounding in the family. "Momotaro" teaches children to be true to their parents and to be good and strong and great. This story as well as the one called "The Tongue-cut Sparrow" show respect to aged people, both stories representing an old couple. "The Tongue-cut Sparrow", "The Monkey and the Crab" and "The Old-man who Made Withered Tree Blossom" not only teach children the concept of filial piety and loyalty but the idea that good has its reward and bad has its consequence, thus teaching them to be always good and obedient. There is, however, often expressed the concept of revenge in these tales which seems too bad. In "Kachi Kachi-yama", the badger who did a wrong act is pursued from all sides by many friends of the victim of his wrong act -- until he is finally drowned in the ocean. The idea of revenge may spring from a too strong concept of face-saving already discussed in relation to the subject of mockery. Lessons on gratitude, kindess -- especially to the poor and to animals -- charity, and so on, are also taught in such famous stories as "Urashima" and "The Hare of Inaba." Some of these stories appear in the elementary school text-books, too; but children usually are acquainted with them by the time they learn to read them at school.

Japanese children have many favorite songs, of

which "Hatopoppo" or "Song of the Temple Doves" is one of the best known:

> "Come, little doves, come little doves!
> Sing your song 'Hato Poppo!'
> Come down from the temple roof!
> Here are beans for you, little doves!
> Feed yourself with all the beans I have,
> But don't leave me soon,
> Play with me little doves, singing 'Hato Poppo!'"[22]

A Surprising number of children's songs deal with nature, again indicating Japanese children's closeness to nature. Following are some of the titles of songs Japanese children love to sing: "The Butterfly," "The Nightgale," "The Pine Tree," "Cherry-blossoms," "In The Field," "Fireflies," "The Song of a Bird," and "The Fuji Mountain." In chasing butterflies, in playing in the field, in watching dragon-flies flying against the blue sky, and in admiring cherry-blossoms and trees and mountains, Japanese children have a special song or tow to fit the occasion.

Frequent reference in the family life to symbolism and superstition still prevalent in the Japanese mind must be of considerable importance in influencing the child. Especially on such special occasions as the New Year, almost everything that is in sight symbolizes something; for example, a pine-tree decoration designating longevity, an orange, family prosperity for generation after generation, and each of the various kinds of food used in the occasion mean something. When a grandparent or grandparents are still living, they

22. Shidzue Ishimoto, Facing Two Ways, p. 43.

help to perpetuate instruction in both symbolism and superstition.

In a sense the life of a Japanese pre-school child consists of a series of instructions in the family way and in the tradition and customs of the Japanese nation; for, as it has been explained in the first chapter, the family in Japan is a closely knit unit in which members including the smallest child are integral parts of the whole, trained and expected to uphold the traditions and customs of Japan grounded on the three common religions.

G. Festivals and other ceremonial occasions

At no definite age, but important to the informal education of the pre-school child, finally, are the many festivals and other ceremonial occasions in which the child, as a member of his family, takes part.

The New Year's celebration is the biggest of all the celebrations in Japan and everyone in Japan, all families, various groups, and all schools participate. At this occasion, the child, as any other member of the family will be dressed in his best and enjoys the general atmosphere of felicitations. Incidentally, it is at this time that everyone in Japan adds one year to his or her age, instead of on individual birthdays. Even if the child was born towards the end of the year, having been one-year-old on the day he was born, he becomes two-years-old as the first New year in his life comes. From January first to the third, the New Year

celebration is enjoyed by high and low as the nation's greatest event. Every house is decorated inside and out. The people in most cities and towns are gay and lively, making calls on relatives and friends, and offering the greetings of the season. Outdoors, boys play flying kites and girls, battle-door and shuttle-cock, while, indoors, the grown-ups play special poetic cards for the occasion. The thorough cleaning of the house in preparation for this occasion, the traditional and symbolic food prepared for it, as well as special "forms and ceremonies" of the occasion create an atmosphere in which qualities of cleanliness, thrift and politeness peculiar to Japanese tradition are felt throughout.

March third marks the doll festival especially for girls. The first March third for a newly born girl is very important. Relatives and friends join her parents in providing her with a set of dolls representing the Imperial court life, which she will keep as her own during her lifetime and which she will display every March. Many interpretations are given to the festival. Families observe it to encourage loyalty, ancestor worship, and filial piety, but above all else to express parental love for the children, their joy and pride in them, and their desire to please them. It is sometimes considered that this occasion is used to further cultivate gentleness and other womanly qualities in girls.

May fifth marks the celebration for boys and a newly born baby boy is given a set of warrior dolls to

keep year after year and to display. Outside the house, the presence of a male child is publicized by the presence of carp streamers. If there are five boys in the family, five carps will be flown! They are made of either paper or cloth and some of them are over eight feet in length. The carp has been chosen because that fish is noted for its courage to swim up against streams; and parents want their sons to be as courageous as the carp.

It is interesting to note that whether the family is rich or poor, whether the dolls are very expensive ones or simple ones, the custom of providing children with these ceremonial dolls is practiced, so long as family finance can possibly afford. This is due to the fact that it is a historical custom to provide children with these dolls -- the celebration of which teach the children Japanese heritage and customs.

Festivals are observed for children at the age of three, five, and seven which are not simply expressions of parental affection or gratitude for the growth of the little ones, but are the definite markings of the states in their growth. On November 15th of every year, parents and children throughout the country who reached the ages of three, five or seven are seen visiting their local Shinto shrines dressed in their best clothes, boys sometimes in miniature army or navy uniforms.

The periodic festivals which occur in nearby towns and villages afford many opportunities for good times

for children. "Omikoshi", a miniature shrine, carried by hosts of children comes around various households at this time...to bring good luck to families. Children receive allowances at those festivals and shop and eat with friends near shrines. There are shops of balloons, clay figures and so forth, especially designed for children. People in Japan go to shrines even without faith. For example, to Hachiman and Enoshima in and around Kamakura, one sees hordes of people going there for exercises of play combined with praying.[23]

In addition to the above festivals, there are such ceremonial days as the Emperor's birthday, ex-emperor's anniversary, and other national holidays with which pre-school children are concerned mainly through their sisters and brothers in school.

More important, however, are those ceremonies connected with funerals and ancestor-worship in general which were already mentioned in the first chapter. For, as Embree writes: "The funeral service, the periodical memorial services for particular recently deceased members, and the annual ceremony for the dead serve to bring together the extended family...The bonds of kinship are strengthened by these reunions, the interdependence of family members is reemphasized."[24]

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23. Embree speaks of "do" which has much to do with the children's activities in countrysides. "Do" is "a public building where children may play or adults stop for a visit or a night's rest -- a familiar homely little building looked after by the local group and housing a deity...Each hamlet is subdivided into groups of two or three houses called "kumi." The members of one group are responsible

Thus, in Japan, as Embree states, "...those things which are of greatest social value to the community enter into its religious beliefs. Further, the religious life serves to strengthen the social relations of the group involved and to emphasize the interdependence of the individual and the group."[25] In other words, the daily social life of the people in Japan including their smallest children, is very closely knit together with religion; and religion, whether Shintoism or Buddhism, expressed very often as festivals or rites in relation to ancestor worship serves to strengthen the group solidarity of the Japanese people, influencing and educating its children according to national tradition and customs.

23. (continued) for looking after the "do" celebration one year, those of another group the next year, and so on. During the day of the festival the group in charge serves tea and beans for visitors and exchanges gossip. Someone from each house in the hamlet comes during the day to make an offering to the deity and to drink tea. Sometimes during the day or in the evening under the full moon, there is a general gathering of neighborhood people to drink together. Thus once a year, the local group renews its social solidarity by means of the local "do" festivals. (Embree, "Some Social Functions of Religion in Rural Japan," The American Journal of Sociology, September, 1941, p. 186, 187)
24. Embree, op.cit., pp. 188-9. On the same page (p.188) Embree writes: "In rural Japan, there is an interesting dichotomy which manifests itself at a funeral. The local group, the neighborhood, comes to the aid of the stricken family by assisting in the funeral preparations, calling the priest, digging the grave. The extended kin group, on the other hand, assembles from far and near to mourn and participate in the funeral rituals..."
25. Ibid, p. 184.

In this chapter we saw how the three common religions which comprise the ethical foundations of the Japanese family system manifest themselves in the daily life of the Japanese pre-school child and influence his life from the time of his birth onward. We also saw something of the training he receives, both physically and mentally, as well as the different trainings boys and girls receive as they grow older. Above all, we saw that the whole life of the Japanese child is enveloped in the tradition and customs of Japan, as it takes place almost wholly within the family and its activities. There are kindergartens and day-nurseries but in the pre-war Japan only about ten per cent of the children in Japan attended them.

Thus the pre-school education of Japanese children, taking place within the family, is informal in its character. The more formal education takes place in their next stage of experience, in the elementary school. Here we need to remember, however, that the informal education based on the tradition and customs of Japan which has been discussed in this chapter continues to exist in the background or is even supplemented by formal indoctrination along the same line when the children go to elementary school. Also we need to be aware of the fact that this informal education grounded in the family system not only continues to influence the Japanese child but is not subject to quick change,

as it is interwoven in the national body of Japan with its more than two thousand years of history behind, and therefore in the Japanese mind.

CHAPTER III

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

We have seen in the last chapter that the pre-school education in Japan mainly takes place in the family and, therefore, that education is informal and slow to change-emanating from the family system which is the age-long basis of the Japanese nation. Now we come to the elementary school education in Japan and find that, while that education is necessarily formal in nature because it takes place outside the family circle and easy to change simply because it is the adoption of the Western educational system since the Meiji era, it nevertheless continues to influence Japanese children in the same direction that the family and its ethical foundations did in their pre-school years. For, as we shall see in this chapter, Japanese elementary school education up to the end of the World War II was wholly based on the Imperial Rescript of Education, which is, in reality, the legalized form of the teachings in Confucianism, Shintoism and Buddhism in the family which the children received in their pre-school years.

A. Educational Rescript

The Imperial Rescript on Education promulgated in 1880 by Emperor Meiji says:

> Our Imperial Ancestors have founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting and have

> deeply and firmly implanted virtue. Our subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory of the fundamental character of Our Empire, and herein also lies the source of Our education. Ye, Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious; as friends true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all; pursue learning and cultivate arts; and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; furthermore advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth. So shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers.
>
> The Way set here forth is indeed the teaching bequeathed by Our Imperial Ancestors, to be observed alike by their Descendants and the subjects, infallible for all ages and true in all places. It is Our wish to lay it to heart in all reverence, in common with you, Our subjects, that we may all thus attain to the same virtue.[1]

The Shinto teaching of Emperor worship is evident at the outset of this Rescript. It goes on to emphasize and elaborate that teaching when it speaks of offering oneself courageously to the State in times of emergency and when it, in the last paragraph, says: "The Way set here forth is indeed the teaching bequeathed by our Imperial Ancestors, to be observed alike by their Descendents and the subjects..." The Confucian teaching of harmonious relationship is seen in the substance of the Rescript showing the need for filial piety and loyalty and explaining more specifically the teaching

1. Embree, op.cit., p. 141. Rather than draw in detail upon the easily available books which recount the technical aspects of Japanese elementary education, in this chapter I have thought rather to review the elementary education largely in terms of my own learning experience which was fairly typical.

by advising to "be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters, etc." Then the sentence which says"...render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers" is significant in that it, in summarizing the foregoing teachings, reminds the children that the all-important thing in life is to obey and preserve the traditions and customs of Japan which had been handed down from generation to generation. The Rescript lacks any encouragement toward originality and initiative -- the qualities which anything to do with modern education in Western countries no doubt would include. This fact reveals the basic influence of all ethical teachings in Japan -- including Buddhism -- which combine to influence and train children to lose their individual selves in the service of the family and of the nation.

In "Confucius and the Japanese Schoolboy," Huntley says: "The Rescript on Education of 1890 represents a conspiracy to fasten totalitarian concepts on an age-old family sense of Confucian loyalty and a rather recently revived Emperor worship."[2] In the same article he speaks of the fact that "In 1938, General Sadao Araki (and a series of army generals who had been appointed ministers of education) declared: 'The purpose of a Japanese educational system is to train useful subjects of the Emperor, not so much to search for truth. As a consequence, graduates of Japanese schools are Japanese first and then scientists or scholars thereafter.'"[3]

2. Huntley, "Confucius and the Japanese School Boy," Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review, July 25, 1947, p. 298.
3. Ibid, p. 295.

Here is the essence of the ultra-nationalistic education that went on in Japan in the recent past. While we have no space in this thesis to deal in detail with the indoctrination of the Japanese children previous to and during the World War II, we want to remember that the Japanese education of the past was in such a nature as to enable that kind of ultra-nationalistic and even fanatic training to come to pass during the past several years.

We shall now enquire into the general conditions of the Japanese elementary school education of the past in order that we may not only see the formal side of the education but the age-old influences that underlie it to perpetuate the traditions and customs through the adherence to the admonitions in the Educational Rescript.

B. Elementary School System

Just as it is in the United States, Japanese children go to elementary school around the age of six, but they remain there only for six years, until they are about twelve. Only very recently was the number of years in the elementary school extended to eight years, but the War interrupted the effective execution of the law concerning this matter. All public schools are coeducational in the elementary school level as compared to all the other levels of education in which even private schools that are coeducational are only rarely to be found.

The elementary school education in Japan is

compulsory; and as Myers writes, "'Compulsory' education in Japan means just what it says, as is evidenced by the fact that in 1938, and for the four preceding years, 99.58 percent of all children of compulsory school age were actually enrolled in school."[4]

That the elementary school education in Japan is universally effective is seen in the fact, too, that school year in Japan is very long. Myers compares this situation with those in the United States as follows: "...Japanese schools are permitted to be out of session not more than ninety days each year, excluding Sundays. Thus they have a school year of 233 days. In our best school systems, we have about 190 days of school. The average for the United States is 171, with many thousands in session 140 or less."[5]

There is no compulsory uniform for elementary school children unless in the cases of private schools. But boys often wear jacket and trousers of blue felt or kokura and cloth cap with a brass insignia of the school in front. The frequency with which boys wear the above "uniform" seems to show that as long as their families can afford it, boys prefer wearing what many others wear. Girls often wear a blouse and a middie or a sailor-suit. This is not compulsory either in public schools, but it, too, is worn so frequently that they may be considered as girls' uniforms. In cities only a very

4. A.F.Myers,"The Japanese Take Education Seriously," National Education Association Journal,Vol.XXXII, April, 1943, p. 101.
5. Ibid.

small number of boys wear native costume while a little greater number of girls wear their native costume. Even as they wear Hakama, a Japanese skirt-like trouser for boys and Japanese skirt for girls, native costumes give them so little freedom of action that less and less number of children wear them especially in school.

As Kikuchi says: "Great care is exercised in the selection of sites for schools, that it may be fit from the points of view of morals, of pedagogy, and of hygiene. School buildings are very plain, mostly of wood; but in modern time, the best buildings in the cities are elementary schools."[6] And as Yoshida says, "Many city schools have, in addition to their regular class-rooms, other large and well-equipped rooms, such as lecture halls, music-rooms, gymnasium, and special rooms for the care of those children who are physically weak."[7]

While it is true that "Most elementary schools are established and maintained by the public funds of the local government, towards which a certain subsidy is granted by the national government,"[8] they are all controlled by the central government through the Ministry of Education. And as Kikuchi says: "The entire educational system of the country being under the Minister

6. Baron Dairoku Kikuchi, Japanese Education, p. 105.
7. K. Yoshida, Japanese Education, p. 35. Yoshida goes on to explain that "There are very few 'one-room school houses' in Japan. Excepting those in the remote mountain districts, or the distant lands, all the schools are completely graded schools."
8. Ibid, p. 33.

of Education, no school can be opened without his permission, direct or indirect."[9]

Thus it is understandable that text-books used in those schools are highly nationalistic, the Ministry of Education compiling and requiring their use. They compile textbooks in morals, language, history, science, household management, drawing, etc. Myers says: "Even the words in songs must be those selected by the Department of Education or by the prefectural government."[10]

C. Instruction

As it was shown in the last section, the government, or the Ministry of Education, controls all essential aspects of education; and this is evident in curriculum, the methods of teaching, and discipline. In this section, we shall deal first with curriculum in the old sense or the course of study as it is taken in Japan, then with method of instruction, and lastly with discipline. In all this, we shall strive to see how the education which is based on the Imperial Ordinance of 1890 specifically manifests itself.

Course of Study

The subject which best promotes the purpose of Japanese elementary school education as recorded in the Educational Rescript is that of morals or "Shushin." This course on morals is taught not only along with

9. Kikuchi, op.cit., p. 109.
10. Myers, op.cit., p. 101.

other subjects such as geography, history, and art, but is considered the most important among all the courses taught. It is often given on Mondays in the first period. The textbooks for the course on morals, which are published by the Ministry of Education are very attractive in their look. The first volume for first graders published in 1937 consists mostly of colored illustrations by which the teachers teach such virtues as respect for teachers, parents and elders -- emanating from the Confucian ideas of harmonious relationship explained in Chapter I -- as well as such virtues as politeness, cleanliness, and honesty. The complete absence of interpretations, partly because of the lack of the knowledge of characters on the children's part, reminds us of the existence of the handbooks for the teachers published by the Ministry, directing them exactly what and how to teach each chapter of the textbook in order that the teaching will conform to the ideals set forth in the Educational Rescript. It is significant that the first two-page-illustration in this first volume which comes even before the table of contents is that of the Emperor's procession coming out of the palace. By 1937 when this volume was published, the need for impressing upon the minds of the children the Shinto teaching of Emperor worship had become pressing. The second volume of the same edition also starts out with a colored picture of an Emperor, this time - Emperor Jimmu, the founding father of Japan.

The third starts out with a picture of a Shinto shrine; and the fourth, fifth, and sixth with the Educational Rescript itself. There are chapters especially in the volumes for higher grades on Columbus, Nightingale, Socrates, and other great individuals of other lands each teaching a good virtue or two. There are chapters on inventors and inventions, encouraging children to be creative. Yet, in looking through the volumes of the text-books one becomes aware of the fact that underlying all and various teachings in morals is the idea of educating the children to become good Japanese as emphasized by the teaching on Confucian ideas and Emperor-worship. It is significant from this point of view that the teaching of patriotism to the nation deepens in accord with the growth of children grade by grade. The third, fourth, and fifth volumes end with a chapter called "Good Japanese," different in actual content but the same in spirit, which is a summary of the teaching given in each volume. A translation of that chapter in the Fourth volume gives us the basic idea not only of the teachings in the Fourth volume but in the instruction in the course on morals at least in the fourth grade.

> Emperor Meiji loved his subjects just as if they were his sons and daughters.
>
> The present Emperor, following in the footsteps of Emperor Meiji as well as Emperor Taisho, loves his subjects as his sons and daughters, and causes our country to prosper more and more. That we were born as subjects of the Great Japanese Empire and are given such blessed Imperial Family is a supreme fortune. We, as subjects, must

respect the Imperial Family with sincerity and pray for their everlasting glory.

Festival days and national holidays are the important ceremonial occasion for our country. As subjects, we must all understand the significance of these holidays and on festival days with the idea of celebration and national holidays with reverence we must pray for the prosperity of the nation. Again, looking up to the spirit of Prince Yoshihisa who with his august station in life served the country, emulating the spirit of those who are enshrined in the Yasukuni shrine who in service to the Emperor and to the country gave up their lives, we must adhere to the way of loyalty and patriotism (in times of national emergency). Loyalty is the most important duty for us subjects.

In the family, we must be dutiful to our parents and as brothers love each other. To be filial to our parents together with loyalty to our Emperor is the important thing for the Japanese.

In human relationship, it is important that we are courteous, modest, tolerant and that we honor others. Again, it is our important duty to love our native land, serve the public good, and endeavor for the way of benevolence.

It is important that we are always orderly, healthy, diligent in study, know the reason of things, do not believe in superstition, and strive towards creative activities. Again, we must restrain from selfish motives, form good habits, progressively mold high ideals, seek independence, even in meeting disaster be poised, and be diligent in work.

According to the above rules, we must endeavor to become good Japanese. But in order to become good Japanese, it isn't enough to have those rules in mind. It is important that we practice them with sincerity. Even if our act looks good, unless it is an act emanating from sincerity, it is like lifeless artificial flowers.

It is evident from the above translation that the chapter is strikingly similar to the Educational Rescript in its precepts. It is especially interesting to note the importance given to the ceremonial occasions of festival days and national holidays. It shows the

continuing educational influences since pre-school days of communal affairs symbolized in Shinto shrine and Buddhist temples scattered throughout the nation. Even as reason, creativity and independence are encouraged in words, the whole article is based on the idea that children must be subjects of Japan first in spirit and in truth, and only afterwards individuals, if at all. Speaking of the deep influence of the moral lessons during elementary school years, Sekiya writes: "As we try to recall in what period of our life our sense of respect to the Imperial family, our patriotism, etc., were implanted in our thinking, it is definitely during our elementary school period."[11]

In Japanese elementary schools, there is practically no choice of subjects on the part of children. Besides morals, native language, Japanese history, geography, sciences, arithmetic, drawing, singing, gymnastics, and sewing for girls are taught to every child throughout the country as ordered by the Ministry of Education. In some localities, however, such special subjects as farming or agriculture in general are taught. These subjects are taught according to a week's schedule of learning and the amount of material to be covered in every class during the year is decided upon and strictly adhered to.

Before considering the various subjects taught, we need to give even a brief thought to the matter of

11. Sekiya, op.cit., p. 69.

Japanese characters. The first grade children learn "Katakana" or the stiff kind of seventy syllable Japanese "alphabet," and the first grade children towards the end of the year and the second grade children learn "hiragana" or the cursive kind of seventy syllable Japanese "alphabet"; then they and the children of higher grades keep on learning more difficult "kanji" or Chinese characters, until they learn about 1800 of them by the time they graduate from the elementary schools. This emphasis on the national language is further stressed by courses on calligraphy. Children with the help of their teacher are trained in how to hold the brush properly, how to make ink out of water and a solid piece of ink on a special slate for this purpose, then how to produce with the brush the master strokes for each character on a white sheet of paper. It is considered from the beginning that it takes a life-long practice and training to become proficient in calligraphy. At the same time it is considered that one's brush-writing expresses one's character so everyone must perfect his brush-writing for his own sake and for the sake of his family. So children whose parents can afford it, take extra private lessons in it at home and keep on taking them for years. All this means that an enormous amount of time is spent in both learning characters and learning to write them well even during the short period of six years in the elementary school. It is true that more than half of the time in

elementary schools is spent in teaching children to read and write their own complicated language. This fact in itself speaks of the time taken away from such activities as gaining information, and creative writing. But the influence this time-consuming matter of Japanese characters have on the children in the way of pinning their mentality to the scrupulous following of old traditional way of doing things seem most wasteful.

In the national language course, the matter of learning characters is of prime importance, then the content of the Elementary School National Language Text-books. The latter deals with nature, history, human activities, sciences, literature, military affairs, and so on. Translations of some chapter titles are as follow: "Sea," "Sun-set," "Moon-viewing," "Fuji-mountain," "Ototachibana-hime" (a historical figure), "Tada-ie" (the same,)"Jumping rope," "Riddles," "The Wit of a Mouse,""Life of a Cicada," "Automobiles," "Excerpts from Genji Monogatari," "A letter from a Military Camp," "The Childhood of General Nogi," etc. Because of the scarcity of outside reading books considered suitable for educational purposes, and because the schools do not especially encourage wide reading for fear of "dangerous thoughts" in them, the content of these national Readers are about all that children get in the way of general knowledge. It is carefully studied chapter by chapter;

yet at least half of the time spent is for learning the characters -- reminding themselves of the already learned ones, learning their new radings or their new combinations, or learning entirely new ones. In recent years, practice books helping to facilitate the learning of characters and to enrich the subject content have appeared. Yet when we think of these text-books in comparison to Readers in American grade schools, we realize the difference in teaching emphasis; the Japanese on the mechanics of their langua e and the Americans on vocabulary and ideas.

We must remember that even in the classes on history and geography, which usually start in the fifth year of elementary schools, children have to first deal with new characters or new combinations of characters before they can actually study the facts in these subjects. The following regulations with regard to the teaching of Japanese history, issued in 1900, still appear to be adhered to in the modern times. They again are in accord with the fundamental precepts of the Educational Rescript.

> The essential aim of teaching Japanese history is to make children comprehend 'the Fundamental character of the Empire' and to foster in them the national spirit. Children should be taught the outlines of the establishment of the Empire, the 'Continuity' of the Imperial dynasty, the illustrious works of successive Emperors, deeds of the loyal, the good and the wise, the origin and progress of civilization, relations with foreign countries, etc., so as to acquire a general knowledge of what the Empire has passed through from its establishment to the present. Drawings, pictures, specimens, etc.,

> should be shown as much as possible, so that the children may be able to form a vivid conception of the actual state of the old times. It is above all important to keep in touch with the teaching of the Morals.[12]

Of course, the fundamental character of the Empire implies the belief in the Shinto myths one of which was quoted in the first chapter, the belief in one lineage of emperors throughout the Japanese history, the belief which is inculcated almost strenuously, as well as the belief in the sacredness of the Imperial family. Kikuchi summarizes the fundamental purpose of teaching history in Japanese schools: "...children are to be taught through history to know what constitutes Japanese nationality, and to appreciate the beauty of loyalty and patriotism and the privilege of being a Japanese subject."[13]

The regulations with regard to the teaching of geography issued in 1900 are as follows:

> The essential object in the teaching of geography is to give children a general knowledge of the life of the inhabitants, and to make them understand in a general way how our country stands in the world, and to instil into their mind the love of the country. The general physical features of the country, the climate, the division, chief cities, productions, means of communication, etc., are to be taught in the geography of Japan, as well as the form, motion, etc., of the earth. Then according to the length of the course, physical features, climate and division of continents, means of communication; chief cities, productions, etc., of countries important in their relations with our country; the political and economic conditions of our country, its position vis-a-vis foreign countries, etc., are to be taught. In teaching geography, observation of

12. Kikuchi, op.cit., pp. 181-2.
13. Ibid.

> actual things should be made the basis as much as possible, globes, maps, specimens, photographs, etc., should be shown, so that children may acquire real knowledge. Care must be taken to keep up continual connection with the teaching of history and science.[14]

In connection with the teaching in geography, school journeys which will be mentioned later in this chapter are taken advantage of to give practical examples for the class-room teaching.[15]

Sekiya writes: "There is no question concerning need for cultivating children's sense of beauty and for nurturing their genuine sentiment; and the main purpose of such subjects as drawing, craft, and singing lie in it."[16] Arts and crafts are given much importance in Japanese schools. In the drawing classes, children use colored pencils or chalks. Drawing by copy-books used to be the common practice in Japanese drawing classes; and the practice is still kept to a considerable degree. Drawing from real objects, drawing from memory, and making of designs both in form and color are more and more taught. Yet the tendency still is for teacher to draw examples, and the students to draw after them. In craft, too, copying of what teacher makes seems still to be in practice. Skill in making beautiful things, not creativity, is the all important thing in Japan, just as in Japanese painting and calligraphy artists imitate the brush-strokes of old masters.

14. Ibid, pp. 182-183.
15. The subject of instruction in sciences is omitted in this thesis, because the regular instruction in sciences usually starts in the higher elementary school after the compulsory schooling of six years.
16. Sekiya, op.cit., p.

Japanese children's songs are sung in the Japanese language but with Western music with Oriental flavor. As in the songs of the pre-school children, there are many in relation to nature; there are also many in relation to festivals and national holidays, such as the New Year and the Emperor's birthday. Children gather in the assembly hall on these days and attend the ceremony in which are occasions to give obeissance to the Emperor's portrait, listen to a lecture by the principal, and to sing such songs as above in unison. The song which is sung in all these occasions is the national anthem called "Kimi-ga-yo", celebrating the eternal reign of the Emperors.

Gymnastics is counted among one of the courses that make up the week's schedule of Japanese children and come at any time of the day. By far, regular gymnastics, solid physical exercises, under teacher's leadership is given the greatest importance in gym classes. For the rest, children do running, and play such games as baseball, basket-ball, and volley-ball. Girls do much group dancing to the accompaniment of a piano, while they, too, are trained in gymnastics, do running, and play such sports as basket-ball and ballet-ball. The main purpose behind the giving of classes in gymnastics in Japanese schools is for physical health and fitness, not so much enjoying various sports. The day opens with a whole school group gymnastics including the teachers. This is usually done under the leadership

of "radio gymnastics" -- a national gymnastics for all Japanese citizens broadcasted each morning through the radio. The main idea behind the gym classes is the training of children to become physically fit citizens of the country.

Method of Instruction

As it can probably be guessed from all that has been presented already, the method of instruction in Japanese schools is "traditional." The teacher is interested in covering certain amounts of material each day and in finishing up the assigned textbook within the time allotted to do so by the central authority. Moreover, in whatever subject he undertakes to teach, there is the problem of new characters and new combinations of characters which not only take away a considerable amount of time before any material can be taught for its content but which serves, consciously or unconsciously, to take away the interest of the children from the content itself. Lastly but not in the least, the teacher has to keep in mind the purpose of all education in Japan which has been thoroughly discussed in this chapter and which necessarily binds his freedom to teach, in whatever way he may feel fit to teach to benefit the individual child. In other words, even if the real content of teaching material may be valuable and interesting to the individual child, the very nature of the educational system in Japan leads teachers to use the cut-and-dry traditional method of

instruction. The following is an excerpt from the Report of the United States Educational Mission to Japan:

> It (the Japanese educational system) held that at each level of instruction there is a fixed quantum of knowledge to be absorbed, and tended to disregard differences in the ability and interest of pupils. Through prescription, textbooks, examinations and inspection, the system lessened the opportunity of teachers to exercise professional freedom. The measure of efficiency was the degree to which standardization and uniformity were secured. To acquire an understanding of Japanese education, it would almost suffice to examine the regulations, the prescribed courses of study and the text-books and teachers' manuals...[17]

The same report comments further:

> We have seen that the effects of the old regime are manifest in the teaching practices. Teachers have been told exactly what to teach and how to teach it. Teaching has been, by and large, formal and stereotyped. To prevent any deviation from the prescribed content and form, inspectors have been charged with the duty of seeing that printed instructions were followed to the letter. Such a system has the effect of putting teaching in a straitjacket.[18]

As the above quotation indicates, from the first year up grades are given much importance. And if a child does not measure up to the standard of his grade, even if flunking causes loss of face of not only the child but his family, he will be required to repeat the grade for another year.

Japanese parents are often seen consulting the teacher of their children. Sometimes they are seen observing classes where their children are learning. Oftentimes when children, for example, are sick and are unable to attend school, some of their parents visit

17. Report of the United States Educational Mission to Japan, p. 4.
18. Ibid, p. 23.

their classes in order that home instruction can be given. Since home-work assignments even for elementary school children are heavy in Japan (it is given during the very short summer vacation, too), the cooperation of parents in the children's study is expected by the teachers.

Thus it is that Japanese method of instruction is carried on effectively by the teachers with the assistance of the parents of the children. Moreover, it is the kind that preserves and promotes the education which the central authority wants to give to every child in Japan.

Discipline

A teacher is usually responsible for a group of children in the same grade. He keeps watch over their physical and mental health. He also hands out report cards which, incidentally, are given much importance even on the elementary school level in Japan. From the first grade up, children are given the equivalent of "A," "B," "C," or "D" for each class attended. Then they are ranked among those in the same grade. Often they are even seated according to their ranks in the class.

Of discipline Kikuchi says: "The director of a school is responsible for the maintenance of discipline among pupils; for this purpose, he has the power to punish an offender. No corporal punishment, however, can be imposed, in fact it has never been found

necessary. The forms of punishment are: reprimand, detention after school, prohibition to go out of school grounds, "Kinshin' (that is putting the delinquent in a state of 'respectful attention or introspection' and may and does generally involve the last mentioned punishment as well), suspension and expulsion. For slight offenses, a teacher is allowed to make a pupil stand in a corner of a room...In most cases, children would feel the disgrace of the punishment more than anything else, so that a public reprimand is a very severe punishment indeed."[19]

While disciplinary problems arise at different times in Japanese elementary schools, they are comparatively small in number. In the last chapter it was pointed out that there was no theoretic need for discipline. Further reason for this must lie in the effectiveness of indoctrination in regard to Confucian ideas of hierarchy and harmonious relationship in school. In Japanese schools, teacher is the master, the superior, and the leader, very kind and benevolent but high in status above the reach of pupils. No word of opposition to the teacher is ever tolerated in class or out of class. It is a regular practice that when pupils meet a teacher or the principal of their school in a hall or on the campus, they pay respect to him by stopping and bowing; before classes, children stand waiting until their teacher comes into the room, and

19. Kikuchi, op.cit., p. 108.

after paying respect to him or after he is seated, they sit down. This rigid etiquette in relation to pupil-teacher relationship keeps the children from freely enjoying the school which sometimes may include quarrels among themselves. Then among pupils in their relationship with each other, too, the general tendency is to behave and to be quiet at least on the surface because of the lack of freedom manifested in all school activities. In other words, as Kikuchi in the last quotation indicates, disciplinary problems do not come up so easily in Japan; because not only are children early trained in etiquette and in politeness and are used to be submissive to older people in the family, but they are further indoctrined in the same direction in schools by their teachers and the principal.

D. Extra-curricular activities

After school, children often remain on the school ground, playing various sports such as what they call "kyatchi-boru" or catch-ball, and other group sports.

There are also field days during the school year when the whole school spend the day outdoors and enjoy various sports participated by all and according to a previously made program. The ground is decorated with red and white ribbon; and there are marches, athletic contests especially in running, group games, and group dances by girls. Every class or every

pupil participate in one sport or another; but non-participants together with parents and teachers sit encircling the ground and watch. With the music for marches and group dances together with frequent cheers, the day is a happy gay occasion for all.

There are also literary exhibitions and literary exercises during the year. For the former, calligraphy, drawing, composition, are exhibited for the encouragement of children. Often this is held at the end of a term to exhibit the work that was done during the term. At times outstanding work is exhibited in special places. For the literary exercise, representative pupils from every grade give performances in reading or speech or singing of all kinds for the whole school. Both the above activities are intended to encourage children to be better students through competition and emulation and for the parents to have occasions for seeing the accomplishments of the children.

The most important and common extra-curricular activities for Japanese elementary school children, however, are field trips and excursions. It has been mentioned already that the instruction in geography classes is supplemented by actual visits to the places of geographical interest. For this purpose and for the purpose of visiting the places of historical interest children are often seen mounting on

a train or marching along the road under the leadership of their teacher. But just as the teaching of history in Japan is not a mere study of historical events but is an indoctrination of Shinto mythology and the national ideals, the field trips often take the form of indoctrination. Groups of children are always seen in front of the Shinto shrines such as Yasukuni (Soldiers' memorial) and Meiji. At Ise where the ancestress Amaterasu is enshrined and whose shrine the Japanese speak as having to visit at least once in one's life time, there is a continuous stream of school children coming to worship the diety from all parts of the country. Since the Ministry of Education approves of those excursions, the government fixes a special train rate for school children for these occasions. With the explanation of the shrines and deities given, this practical experience in worshipping them as a group gives a finishing touch to the Shinto indoctrination at school given at every possible opportunity.

As it was mentioned in the section on moral lessons, attending ceremonies on festival days and national holidays is another important phase of the children's extra-curricular activities. On these days which include the Emperor's birthday, the memorial day for the Emperor Meiji, Army day celebration of the Japanese victory in Sino-Japanese War of 1890's, children are clothed in their best

and come to their school for the sole purpose of attending the ceremony. In the center front of the assembly-room, there is always an Emperor's portrait protected behind a curtain. With the singing of the national anthem by the whole school the curtain is withdrawn by the principal and thence the ceremony starts. Usually the Principal reads the Educational Rescript, gives a lecture fit for the occasion, then student representatives read words of celebration, after which all sing appropriate song for the occasion. They sing the national anthem again at the end of the ceremony,- this time to shelter the Emperor's portrait behind the curtain. Such occasion again serves to teach Emperor-worship, to be conscious of educational aims given in the Educational Rescript, and to train the children to be good, obedient and patriotic Japanese. When we think of those ceremonial days coming many times during the year and the effectiveness of such group activities in the influence they bring, we see their great significance in the program of indoctrination in the elementary school.

We have seen then in this chapter how the teachings of Confucianism and Shintoism legalized as the Educational Rescript of 1890 have effectively organized themselves in all phases of the elementary education and how the Rescript accomplishes its purpose

through the whole system whether curricular or extra-curricular. We have seen also something of the working of the system itself, the course of study, method of teaching, and discipline, and the important place the teaching of the Japanese characters and the teaching of morals take. In giving consideration to all these factors, we need to remember that the informal influence of the family with its ethical foundations in the three common religions continues to exist in the background of the formal school training of the elementary school children and that both these influences which every child in Japan inevitably receives help to educate children to become "good Japanese" -- that is, good members of their family and good citizens of the nation, but not individuals with their own personalities, rights, and privileges.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Individuals in Japan, we have seen, are primarily considered as members of their families and then of the Japanese nation; and their individual rights and privileges are not recognized. This fact -- in all its implications -- brings many disadvantages as far as the progress of the nation is concerned, and this, to my mind, is the fundamental defect of the Japanese education of the past.

The family system in Japan has, as its ethical foundations, Confucianism, Shintoism, and Buddhism. Confucianism teaches harmonious relationships to be based on keeping the status quo of the members of the family. It thus discourages individual progress and ultimately the progress of the society. The virtue of filial piety stemming out of Confucianism -- coupled with the idea of patriarchal society -- gives a great deal of importance to the family head and again helps to disregard the individual and equal rights of members of the family. Shintoism with its beliefs in superstition and myths, including the divinity of emperors, keeps people in ignorance of facts of life and blocks intelligent thinking. And Buddhism with its teaching of selflessness coupled with its influence towards fatalism contributes nothing in the way of recognizing

individuals as individuals. The family system includes also ancestor-worship which tightly binds the members to the family as a social unit. It has a static influence on the society in that it makes the members of the family unduly look back towards their ancestors rather than to fix their gaze on the present progress of the world or on the future. Ancestor-worship also fosters respect for the traditions and customs of Japan, which in themselves contain innumerable elements opposed to the recognition of individual rights and privileges.

The religious influences of the family summarized above, which keep the Japanese from the recognition of themselves as individuals and thus from progress, constitute the atmosphere in which pre-school children grow up. These influences are continued for the children of elementary school age at home and at school. At school, those influences are legalized in the form of the Imperial Rescript of 1890, and govern and control all their activities. The influence of State Shinto seems to be particularly strong. As Anderson says: "'morals'... in the case of Japanese education means the consideration of right and wrong purely from the standpoint of loyalty to the Emperor. All foreign ideas which conflict with the national 'morals' are barred."[20] Thus in Emperor-worship and extreme nationalism, the Japanese children are kept in ignorance, ignorance even of the truth that

20. Ruthven Anderson, "On Japanese Education," Nebraska Educational Journal, May 1945, p. 171

they are individuals with certain rights and privileges.

At school, moreover, Japanese children receive the kind of instruction which teaches them to obey the traditions and customs of their nation, to memorize its classics, and to accumulate knowledge of all sorts in order to become "good Japanese." This instruction gives or encourages nothing in the way of scientific methods of reasoning and independent thinking as individuals.

Concentration on the mechanics of the national language detracts from accomplishments in scientific methods of reasoning as well as in creative thinking. The classes in history and geography are given in such a way that the learning is a mere accumulation of knowledge or even rote-learning. The laboratory exercises in science courses are planned to increase the factual knowledge of students rather than to develop scientific thinking. Too much emphasis on skill in art prevents the children from enjoying it and cultivating imaginative and artistic expression. All these stifle thinking -- active thinking on the part of students to question, to criticize, to create, and to make learning meaningful to themselves as individuals.

In addition to the above, the whole Japanese educational system is government-controlled, and the government can use the schools to accomplish whatever it wants to do with the education of Japanese children, just as it did during the recent past. It is far from giving consideration to the fact that the children are individuals

with their own rights and privileges; and what is more, it inculcates extreme nationalism to the point where the children in the past have been kept from realizing that they have thinking abilities of their own -- that they are not mere tools of the government.

The whole picture of family and national influences on Japanese children is brought even closer to them by continual training, discipline or indoctrination, instruction and activities to make these influences effective. Individuals are submerged in those influences and the fundamental human rights and privileges not recognized.

A well-known liberal educator of Japan, Yukichi Fukagawa, has written:

"In the education of the East, so often saturated with Confucian teaching, I find two points lacking: that is to say, the lack of studies in 'number and reason' in material culture, and the lack of the idea of independence in the spiritual culture."

"No one can escape the laws of 'number and reason,' nor can anyone depend on anything but the doctrine of independence as long as nations are to exist and mankind is to thrive."[21]

From my own experience in the United States, I found that the one word "thinking" characterizes the education American children receive. It is quite in contrast with the education Japanese children receive,

21. Yukichi Fukuzawa, The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi, pp. 229-230.

about which I have written in this thesis. It seems that at home and at school, Japanese children need the fundamental thing the Western civilization proves to have: the recognition of men as individuals. For how can they learn to think with intelligence without the realization of their own individualities?

It is interesting to note what Yoshishige Abe, who was the first professional educator ever to hold the position of Japanese education minister, is reported to have said in the winter of 1945. He points out the need for the recognition or the respect for individuality and goes on to indicate a further need.

"In the mad reaction against wartime hardships and restraints put on freedom, the people (Japanese) are now rushing from one extreme to another and are facing the danger of falling into either a state of vacuity or anarchy. The cause for this lies in the lack of education, based on a right view of life and the lack of a clear consciousness of personality and respect for individuality."

"It is my conviction that democracy has to be the basis of our post-war social, political and economic life and therefore also the basis of education, since education is the foundation of all this. The right democracy should be naturally founded upon a right sense of relationship between the individual and society."[22]

22. "Japanese Bids Us Ease Re-education," The New York Times, March 16, 1946.

In other words, when the realization of man as an individual and independent thinker is realized and when the educational system in Japan serves to train children to think on their own, therein is the basis from which Japan can really progress, retaining the good of family solidarity but giving freedom to members as individuals, retaining the wisdom of many Confucian teachings but freeing the society from its conservative influence, retaining all that is enriching and beautiful of Buddhism in philosophy, art, and literature, but keeping away from the adverse influences of Buddhism which Buddha himself probably did not think of including in his teaching. And when the recognition of individual thinking is established, there will be freedom of learning at school, also, loosening of the rigid government control that has obtained in the past, and the instruction will be that kind which ever trains its pupils to be sound, independent, and even original thinkers.

Thus, it is that when the Japanese children are helped to realize the fundamental human rights and privileges not only of themselves and of their elders, but of other peoples in the world, as democratic ideals inevitably though gradually would teach them, the extreme nationalism of Japan will be replaced by a right sense of nationalism and patriotism with which they shall live peacefully, happily and freely within the family of nations.

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