

I - 5. Article - Foreign Affairs - sent to Miss Haru Matsui,
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I-5

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Haru

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Foreign
affairs

~~The American people~~ are being taught a fable about
the Japanese people. They are being told that the Japanese people accept
as historical fact the myth of the Emperor as God-descended and are,
consequently, a mysterious, fanatical, and primitive race. *The Japanese
Emperor, the American people are being told, occupies a position in
Japan similar to that of the Pope.*

This fable represents the triumph of decades of
propaganda spread by the Gumbū, or Japanese militarists who, together with
the Zaibatsu, or big monopoly capitalists, are the fountain-head of
this fable as well as of the Emperor-cult in Japan. It was they who
fabricated this cloak of sanctity of the Emperor and behind which they
were able to extend their own power for foreign conquest and for the
suppression of their own people. It was not the people who created the
myth of the Emperor's divinity nor, despite it, do they worship him as a
God.

A brief glimpse of developments within Japan for the past
quarter century, as well as in previous decades, bears out these statements.
According to this myth, created and spread by the militarists and monopoly
capitalists, the Japanese Emperor ruled the nation from the very beginning
of its history. In reality, however, the Emperor became ~~an~~ ^{the} absolute ruler
only after the fall of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1868. Before ~~the~~ 1868,
the Emperor's ~~xxxx~~ existence was forgotten for seven hundred years. He
~~lived~~ received a small sum of money for living expenses, but this was not
~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ lived in an abandoned Kyoto palace, and the pittance
given him annually by the Tokugawa Shogun was ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~

Neighborhood children with bare, muddy feet ran back and forth through the surrounding broken-down fence and played on his porch. The Tokugawa Shogun sent him an annual pittance which was too small even for his bare living ~~expended~~ expenses, so that he had to peddle his hand-written poems to earn his living.

and With the birth of modern Japan, a new
a new role given the Emperor.
role was given the Emperor. and, for the first time in Japanese
history, the Emperor was given a new role and his divinity emphasized.
by the ruling classes. history

~~With the birth of modern Japan~~ A new role was given the Emperor with the birth of modern Japan, and, for the first time in Japanese history, his "divinity" was mentioned and emphasized.

Why this sudden change? In the Tokugawa period there had been no necessity for an Emperor-cult. But when the anti-Tokugawa forces overthrew the established authority of the Tokugawa Shogunate, the other feudal lords needed imperial authority to establish their new power. For more than two hundred years the feudal Tokugawa ~~closed~~ ~~Japan's doors to the outside world and~~ had sealed Japan's doors ~~to the outside world and~~ enjoyed a long, tyrannical rule. But in the early 19th century, this power began to rot. The peasants suffered from heavy taxes, famines and plague, and the cost of living soared heavenward. ~~There were peasant uprisings in many provinces~~ ~~There was widespread unemployment, the lower class of the Samurai were driven into deep poverty, and~~ ~~there were peasant uprisings in~~

Peasants suffered ^{ing} from heavy taxes, famine, and plague, arose in many provinces. The cost of living soared, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ unemployment increased, and the lower class of the Samurai were driven into deep poverty. ~~The~~ ~~merchant class began to get power with money.~~ Accumulating wealth, the merchant class began to gain power. ~~and social decay~~ Unrest ~~XXXXXX~~ was so widespread that ~~XXXXTokugawaXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXX~~ the foundations of the house of Tokugawa cracked before the coming storm.

Four American warships
This storm broke in 1853 when ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Commodore Perry requested Japan to open her doors to trade. The smoke from huge black warships startled the the people of Japan, but in its long dream of peace ~~and~~ ^{ful} tyrannical power the Tokugawa Shogunate could do nothing but pray to the gods for divine winds. This was a golden opportunity for the anti-Tokugawa clans. ~~XXXX~~ Their movement gained in strength, and thirteen years after Perry's visit, the Tokugawa Shogunate was overthrown and the whole course of Japanese history changed.

~~The victorious Satsuma and Choshu clans~~
~~With the rise of the Satsuma and Choshu clans to power, new~~
~~ideas~~ ~~With the rise to power of the Satsuma and Choshu clans~~
~~new ideas swept Japan~~

New ideas swept Japan with the rise of the Satsuma and Choshu clans to power, but their rule was as tyrannical as the previous master. In order to establish a powerful autocratic government they resurrected the Emperor, ~~and~~ put him in the place of old Tokugawa, and utilized the old mythology to create ~~the~~ illusion of divinity about him.

~~XXXXXX~~ utilized the old mythology to create the idea of ~~XXXX~~ his divinity--which must have ^{been a great surprise to the Emperor} ~~amazed him as much as it did the people.~~ ^{his family!}
The ^{myth} ~~idea~~ of divinity was deliberately ~~XXXXXX~~ created, and cultivated as a powerful weapon to suppress opposition, to keep the people in eternal slavery, and to drive Japan into one war after another.

as the most powerful weapon ~~not because of religious sentiment, but as a~~ ^{built up,} powerful weapon with which to suppress opposition, keep the people in ~~eternal~~ eternal slavery to the rulers, and to drive Japan into one war of conquest after another. The Emperor's "divinity" was ~~not~~ ^{built up,} not ~~out of or for religious sentiment, but for this~~ very definite political purpose.

~~Accordingly, the degree of the Emperor's "divinity"~~

Accordingly, the degree of the Emperor's "divinity" has changed from ~~time to time~~ time to time, drifting along with the current of thought. ~~For example, in the 1920's, when Japan was comparatively liberal, the fanatical cry of his divinity could not be heard at all. During this period the militarists retreated and the moneyed business class came to the fore. Democracy was on everybody's lips. Peasants struggled militantly for a better living, and the upsurge of the labor movement checked reaction to a certain extent. But after the Manchurian invasion of 1931 when the militarists arose to power, the Emperor's divinity was again suddenly emphasized and drilled into people's ears with drums and trumpets. Prominent professors were expelled from Universities for refusing to dance to the new tune, liberal newspapers were terrorized, and "thought offenders" were rounded up and thrown into jail by the thousands.~~

These events demonstrated what the Emperor's God-head meant to the people. When the cry of his divinity was ~~high~~ highest ~~the people lost even the smallest concessions to liberty, suppression~~ suppression and terror reigned and the people lost even ~~small~~ small concessions to liberty. Next came war. ~~When there~~ ^{When there} Emperor's divinity was ~~low~~ when there was the slightest freedom of thought, nominal though it was, the cry of the Emperor's divinity was at its lowest.

~~After 1868, when the Emperor was put on the throne and~~ and the dark curtain of isolation ~~had been lifted, and~~ ^{had been lifted, and}

until 1880, the people enjoyed considerable liberty ^{to discuss} ~~to discuss the~~ Monarchy. There was even agitation ~~xxxxxxx~~ against the Monarchy and for a republican Japan. Democratic thought of the western world awakened the mind of Japanese youth, ideas of liberty and the people's rights movement swept the country, and there was even agitation against the Monarchy and for a republican Japan. The amazing development of science and industrial technique in the ^{western world} ~~xxxx~~ aroused deep concern for the need to modernize the country. ~~Western inventions flowed into Japan.~~ With railways, electric and factory machinery, the philosophy of the French and American revolutions also flowed into Japan. Democratic thought awakened the mind of Japanese youth, ideas of liberty and the peoples' rights movement swept the country, and there was even agitation against the Monarchy and for a republican Japan.

The government tried to stem this flow of liberal thought, but the dam had been ~~xxxxxxx~~ broken and it could not control the flood. Liberty became ~~xxx~~ a burning fire in the mind of youth of the age. This situation caused Prince Iwakura to make this grave statement to the Emperor Meiji:

"Radical political ideas of Europe penetrated into cities and villages alike. Our youth, drunken with this new novelty and led astray, are running rampant everywhere. If this present trend is ~~xxxx~~ allowed to continue, the whole situation will be led to ruin."

Using the "sanctity" of the Emperor as a "front", the autocratic government tried to suppress the freedom movement. The Emperor's "divinity", however, had not yet been accepted by the public and there were no strict laws to enforce it. Capital punishment for the crime of "undermining the sanctity of the Emperor" had not yet been set up, ^{so that} ~~^~~ The Akabono daily of Tokyo could denounce the Emperor myth by saying:

"The first Emperor, Jimmu, was not the descendant of God. He was merely a son of the largest clan of Hyuga Province."

Another ^{challenging} ~~xxxxxxxx~~ similar opinion was voiced by a scholar, Hiroyuki Kato, educational aid to Emperor Meiji ^{when he wrote} ~~^~~ in his famous book, New

Theory on National Constitution (1884):

"The Emperor is also a man. So are the people. They are not different creatures, but the same human beings. But on the matter of right, there are ~~the great difference~~ between the Emperor and the people, as wide as heaven and earth. ~~What is all this about? It is wretched misfortune for the people.~~ What does this mean? It is wretched misfortune for ~~xxxxxx~~ the people who are born in such a base and low position of a nation. . . . There should be no reason to justify the Emperor, even with his power, to treat us, the people, as if we were horses or cows."

This book created a ~~xxxxx~~ sensation and its influence was very great. Although the author later became an ardent imperialist ^{yet} and tried to buy up all copies of his book, /in that first upsurge of democratic struggle of Japan, men even like him were swept up by it and advocated the rights of the people.

In 1880 a big movement for popular assemblage and a constitutional government began. Petitions piled up on government desks and local representatives streamed into the capital and stood in endless lines before government buildings. Political meetings were organized everywhere and fierce battles waged with local police. Any city or village that did not join this movement was on the list of shame. For nearly ten years the whole nation was swept by political agitation.

Before this rising tide the government could not avoid the issue any longer, and was forced to announce an imperial rescript promising a constitution and a Diet in ten years time. This reluctant move was the result of ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ the hard, untiring struggle of the people in the early Meiji period.

The government of the Satsuma and Choshu clans ~~xxx~~ consisted of hard-boiled Samurai. In their eyes the common people were no better than cats and dogs. They were the same Samurai who used to kill peasants at will in order to test their swords, ~~and~~ They had no intention of giving rights to the people, but merely wanted to keep them quiet by promises. Thus, for the next ten years after a Diet and a Constitution were promised, the Government plotted to form the most despotic Constitution possible, and with the idea of the Emperor's deification embedded in it.

During the preparation of the Constitution the Government ~~xxxxxxx~~ ignored the will of the majority and refused the participation of the people, ~~xxx~~ This is the reason the Japanese Constitution of 1889, which has remained in force until today, is so extremely autocratic. The seeds of suffering and sorrow of the people were planted in it. The system which breeds war was set up. Had the Constitution been made by the people, it would have been entirely different, and the Emperor's divinity would never have been mentioned in it. They people would never have permitted the Emperor to use his "prerogative" to deprive them of liberty.

In preparation for this Constitution,
~~Prince Hirobumi Ito had been previously sent to Europe to study~~
~~western Constitutions~~ Prince Hirobumi Ito was sent to Europe to study western constitutions. In Germany he met Bismarck personally and decided that the Prussian Constitution was the best fitted for the Monarchical system of Japan. When the people learned of this decision, they violently protested, and agitated instead for a Constitution on the English model. Printe Ito rejected the English Constitution as one in which "Kings reign but do not rule," ~~and upheld instead the idea of personal~~
~~rule by the Emperor of Japan.~~ and instead of a representative government upheld instead the idea of personal rule by the Emperor. The ~~xxx~~ angry voices of the people grew louder and attacks on the government became violent. But the government remained adamant on the Emperor's divinity, knowing it would serve as a formidable fort against democracy.

However, out of fear of the people, the government created the "Bureau for Investigation of the Constitutional System", which was placed under the Imperial Household and the Emperor's supervision. By this trick the people could not criticize the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ proposed Constitution without risking great danger.

Moreover, the Constitution was drafted in deep secrecy. Fearing that the contents of the document would leak out to the public if it were drafted in Tokyo, ~~a lonely island was selected for the job.~~

the tiny, lonely Natsuijimi Island off the northwest coast of Japan was selected as the place for the job. The drafters secretly left Tokyo for Natsuijimi, after which all communications were cut off from the ~~mx~~ mainland. There they confined themselves ~~for several months~~ secretly for several months until the work was ~~finished~~ finished in the spring of 1888.

Meanwhile there had been great speculation about the contents of the Constitution, and demands to make it ~~mx~~ public ~~raged like~~ ~~mx~~ a surging sea. Knowing this was the last chance ^{representatives of the people} to protest before it would be enacted, ~~the people~~ ^{representatives of the people} proposed to the government that a special conference ~~be held for discussion of the document.~~ ~~Representatives of the public proposed that the public and the government should attend the conference and amend the draft C~~

~~of their representative~~ of their representative of ~~representatives of the people and of the government~~ be held for amending the drafted document. This fair proposal was even supported by some officials, but the government did not want to make it public before enactment. They planned to make it the "gift of the Emperor" and to force the people to accept it. Participation of the people at the last ~~moment~~ moment would spoil the whole plan.

~~After serious consideration, the as~~

As stated by Kentaro Kaneko in his History of Enactment of the Imperial Constitution, the government announced after serious ~~consideration~~ consideration:

"If both the government and the people participate in making the Constitution, it would be ~~the~~ a Constitution similar to that of western countries. This cannot be allowed in Japan, since it runs against the spirit of the nature of our Constitution. The Japanese Constitution is provided by the Emperor and given to the people as his gift. The Cabinet, after careful study, decided to create the Privy Council to which veteran statesmen and Constitutional experts would be invited. ~~Under the~~ At the Emperor's call, the Privy Council will open the conference. ~~the~~ In the ~~presence~~ presence of the Emperor, the Constitution should be enacted at this conference."

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was imposed.
from 1890 to Sino-Japan War of 1894-05,
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from 1900 to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05,
For the next four years the Diet fought hard ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

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The militarists have been guaranteed a special position by the Constitution in that the Army and Navy are directly under the command

the Constitution in that the Army and Navy are directly under the command

The military have been guaranteed a special position by

Government a most powerful financial weapon.

previous year's budget can be applied. This has given the

place of law. If the Diet refuses to pass the proposed budget, the

In emergencies, the Emperor can always issue Imperial Ordinances in

the course of the nation. Furthermore, the Diet is given only limited

about him. The military have no power in deciding

to him alone, and his opinion in turn is decided by groups of men

Diet. The Emperor appoints the Ministers of State, and they are responsible

policy-making section of the Government, is not under the control of the

democratic movement of the Japanese people. The Cabinet, the most important

This Constitution has been the great barrier against the

nothing even should he have the desire to do so.

autocratic government. Without these orders he could do

the people realized that in reality the Emperor's hands were tied by the

power to alter it. Nevertheless the Diet nor the people could revise it. And

against one great obstacle: the Emperor alone had the legislative

Constitution in an effort to amend this Constitution, but always came up

for the new law. The Diet found the Emperor's hands were tied.

"divinity" was imposed.

to the ruling class, and none known to the people. The Emperor

were amazed at its autocratic nature. Practically all power was given

when the Emperor's hands were tied.

After the official enactment, the people studied it, they

demands of the people were rejected, and they were finally forced to

finally promulgated in 1889. It was the first time in the history of the

In this high-handed manner, the Emperor's hands were tied.

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of the Emperor. This has enabled them to declare and wage war without the consent of the Diet or the Cabinet.

In the name of the Emperor, the democratic demands of the people have been suppressed. In the early Meiji period the powerful group behind the Emperor consisted of the Satsuma and Choshu warriors. In these past fifteen years, the militarists occupied this position, and they ignored the functions ~~of the Diet~~ of the Diet guaranteed by the Constitution. Only during the brief period in the ~~Twenties, xxxxxxxxxxxx Party Cabinet~~ and Twenties did a Party Cabinet exist, ~~and~~ this was the only time that Japan seemed able to follow a representative ~~government~~ government on the western model. During this period, even with its limited power, the Diet put up a remarkable fight against creeping militarism. The flower of democracy did not blossom long, for the leaders of the two major parties, the Seiyukai and the Minseito, were soon under the dictatorship of the powerful Zaibatsu, or monopoly capitalists. After that these parties became the willing servants of moneyed interests, ignoring the people's welfare, human rights, and the mounting discontent. This opened the way for the militarists to ride to power without difficulty. If the Japanese Constitution had guaranteed a real representative government, the people would have been able to check the unbridled ~~war-makers~~ war-makers.

There are many other provisions to show why this Constitution was so vigorously opposed by the people. Its most cunning section concerned the peoples' rights. When the people anxiously examined this provision, they found it to be a mirage. Freedom of speech and assembly were granted "within the limits of the law". They thought this a big ~~joke~~ joke for there were and have been hundreds of ~~despotic~~ despotic laws spread out like a spider's web. When one moves in any direction, he is caught in this web. "The peoples' rights" in this Constitution is like saying to a man whose hands and feet are bound: "You are free to go anywhere."

This Constitution has been the core of evil that had prevented the democratic development of Japan. Under the "Peace Preservation Law", it is a capital offense to alter, ~~xxxx~~ or even to think of altering, this Constitution. The Emperor's "divinity" has been used to block every democratic institution or even the people's demand for peace. Thousands of anti-militarists have been thrown into prison and tortured ruthlessly, ~~xxxxxx~~ and many are still behind cold iron bars today, because they opposed war.

The promise of freedom of speech, press, and thought is not enough either ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ in the past, or today, under Allied occupation of Japan, for the people are chained by this "Peace Preservation Law". So long as this national Constitution stands as a strong fort of reaction and tyranny, any advance of the people's movement could be killed, as it was killed when the people struggled for democratic rights in the Twenties.

1945
1989
46
The first step toward a democratic Japan is the complete revision of this Constitution. The Emperor's "divinity" should be taken out and all powers given to the people. As the grandfathers of the present generation demanded, elected people's assemblies should be called to draw up a democratic Constitution. The people of Japan are anxiously waiting for the aid extended by the Allied occupation forces to cut off the heavy chains of the "Peace Preservation Law", ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ the autocratic national Constitution and the Emperor's so-called "divinity".

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