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THE JAPANESE MENTAL OUTLOOK ON LIFE

By Prof. CHIKAO FUJISAWA

Cognizance must be taken of the existence of the two mental outlooks on life. The one is what philosophers are used to define as the self-centered attitude, which places ego or man above all else and makes the Universe subservient to human needs. The other is, on the reverse, the universe-centered attitude which repudiates the idea of the primacy of ego or individual man and enjoins human beings to act humbly and modestly in obedience to the cosmic law, eternal and inviolable.

It may be largely argued that, entrenched stubbornly in the self-centered attitude, the Western people have been proud of their "conquest of nature" heretofore carried out in intense application of the modern science and technique, and that the modern concept of progress expressive of an endless advancement of human knowledge and power over nature is the corollary of this particular ego-centered mentality. The disciples of the unfailing principle of modern progress will look forward but to the future and deprecate the past as something unworthy and discreditable. Considering himself the pivot of the Universe, a modern man will rely but on his own reason and reject any sort of philosophy or metaphysics, tending to sanction the priority of nature over man.

The severance of man with nature or cosmos is a marked feature of modern civilization whose decaying symptoms are however now revealed in manifold ways and many people are
speaking of the imminence of “the end of civilization”.

Despite the determined policy of Westernisation strenuously pursued by the Meiji and Taisho Governments, the greater bulk of the Japanese have scarcely deviated from the universe-centered outlook on life, implanted deeply in their hearts. What we understand by the universe-centered attitude is no other than the Sun-Goddess-centered attitude, since the universe is in Japan believed to be presided over by the Sun Goddess. They cannot but feel intuitively the Way of man being dictated by the Way of Cosmos, which is synonymous with the Divine Edict of the Sun Goddess. One knows that this Edict constitutes the keystone of Kōdō. The metaphysical primacy of the Way of the universe which manifests itself as the circulatory dynamic process of Nature’s evolution as exemplified by the perpetual revolving of the four seasons does not harmonize with the modern principle of progress destructive of the past and tradition. Now that the Way of Man is governed implacably by the Way of Heaven or Cosmos, Man’s life will pursue a circulatory course being of the same nature as the alternating course of the seasonal change.

Thus, the self-centered mental outlook on life cannot be dissociated from the modern concept of progress any more than the universe-centered mental outlook on life can be disunited from the Japanese concept of Fukko (the revival of the ancient ideal of the Japanese State).

In the pursuit of both natural and social science, the modern West is ever anxious to replace the old theories by the new in striving to keep pace with progress, while the Japanese will but accept the fundamenta conception of Onkochishin (溫故知新: to learn the new by inquiring into the old) so far as our politico-moral philosophy is concerned. Our celebration of the sixty-first birthday which is philosophically founded on the conception of the sexagenary cycle (還暦: the return of the calendar) may be likewise traced to the same cosmo-centric outlook on life.
Delighted at this result, the couple deities descended forthwith from the Floating Bridge of Heaven to reach this miraculously created island. In this land, they thenceforth dwelt and made it the basis of their subsequent task of procreating this country. First the island of Awaji was born, next Shikoku (四国), then, the Island of Oki, followed by Kyushu (九州); after that, the island of Tsushima came into being and lastly Honshu (本州) the main island of Japan. The name of Oyashima-no-kuni (the Country of the Eight Great Islands) was given to these islands. Afterwards, the two deities became also the parents of numerous smaller islands destined to surround the larger ones.

Subsequent to the procreation of this country, Izanagi-no-Mikoto and Izanami-no-Mikoto set about begetting those deities called upon to preside over the land, sea, mountains (Oyamatsumi-no-Kami) rivers, trees, and herbs. The descendants of these deities are supposed to be the present-day Japanese. The Kojiki narrates further, how the Goddess Izanami died after the birth of the deity of fire who burnt severely her body and how the God Izanarni filled with painful sorrow decided to go down to the Nether Regions in order to seek for Izanarni and to bring her back to this world. After a hard travel, God Izanagi could not find his beloved consort, but on account of the breach of an important oath, Izanagi-no-Mikoto had to flee back to this land. When he returned to this country, he felt as if he himself were steeped in putrefaction, owing to his stay in the polluted Land of Hades. He said himself, “it behooves me now in some way to purify myself”. Thus, he purified himself in a stream of clean water. Undoubtedly this significant legend contributed much towards fostering the innate tendency of the Japanese for purity and cleanliness physical and spiritual alike. Then, he wiped his left eye, when a light of dazzling brilliance emanated from it and at the same time there appeared a Goddess as pure as a gem and unsurpassed in beauty and nobility by any of the other deities. She is called Amaterasu-Omikami (the Heavenly-Shining-Great-August-Deity) or the Sun-Goddess who embodies in herself the whole universe and is regarded as the Celestial Ancestress of the Tennos. It is to be recalled that Ninigi-no-Mikoto, the Grand Son of the Sun Goddess, was sent by her solemn injunction to reign over this Luxuriant-Reed-Plain-Land-of-Fresh-Rice-ears, this appellation making allusion of the exuberant verdure of rice fields. It is interesting to note that rice is the principal food of the Japanese in the remotest past as at present quite unchangingly. In connection with the descent of Niniginomikoto on this land, a few words must be said as to Okuninushi-no-Mikoto; he is the most powerful descendant of Susano-no-Mikoto, who is the impetuous brother of the Sun Goddess; however, he was banished from the Plain of High Heaven owing to his wild misdeeds and exiled in despair to the land of Izumo (出雲). After he has slain the Eight-Forked Serpent, he married a beautiful maiden he rescued, built a splendid palace (Izumo-Oyashiro or the Great Shrine of Izumo is traced back to this palace) and dwelt in it with his beloved wife who bore him several children. Okuninushi-no-Mikoto or the Deity of the Great Land, as the mighty descendant of Susano-no-Mikoto was called, reigned over this country for long years, but the Sun Goddess sent him her divine message to the effect that the Central Land should be surrendered to the Heavenly Grand Son Ninigi-no-Mikoto (Prince-Rice-Ear-Ruddy-Plenty).

Being of an exceedingly generous and broad-minded disposition, Okuninushi-no-Mikoto renounced his sovereignty over the land and moreover, he presented a treasure called Hiro-Hoko (the broad-bladed halberd) to the Heavenly Grand Son. This weapon had been used by Okuninushi-no-Mikoto in the pacification of his domains. All this done, the Grand Ruler of Izumo retired to a place unknown.
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It was in pursuance of this lofty spirit of Okuninushi-no-Mikoto that, in the early years of the Meiji era, the feudal lords were prompted to return ungrudgingly their fiefs and titles to the Meiji Tenno (Hanseki-Hokan: 萬祿本還) and there are now popular thinkers who, in evoking this traditional legend, are admonishing the wealthy capitalist magnates to surrender their larger portion of profit for the benefit of the whole nation.

The foregoing will account for the vicissitudes through which the national conviction as regards the trinity (whose direct descendant is Tenno, called “the Actual Human Deity”), the People and the Land was instilled into the Japanese people.

It is due to this peculiar national tradition that the Japanese people call their country, not only Shin-Koku 神國 or the Divine Land, but also believe themselves to be under divine protection. This deity-centered mental attitude warrants the Japanese a moral calm and enables them to act courageously and unselfishly in the face of grave danger. The Japanese soldiers are quite free from moral anxiety on the battlefield, for they give their life entirely to Tenno who is considered to incarnate the divine deities with the qualification of Arahito-Gami 現人神 or the Actual Human Divinity. By the same reason, our loyalty towards Tenno is bound up indissolubly with our pious love for this country (忠君愛國).

The sublime heroism of Mr. Kometaro Murakami of the Civilian Administration Ministry of the Manchukuo Government illustrates very impressively the vivid display of the Japanese spirit. His attitude cannot be fully understood without the preliminary knowledge on the Japanese non-self-centered mental outlook on life. Mr. Murakami is an exceedingly pious man worshipping the Omishima Shrine in the Inland Sea and Konpira Shrine in Shikoku: the one consecrates Oyamatsumi-no-Kami (the mountain deity) who is considered as one of the war deities, while the other consecrates Okuninushi-no-Kami as well as the Sutoku Tenno.

My brother, who was kidnapped by bandits together with Mr Murakami and others (among whom there were two Americans) on the 30th of August, told me how Mr. Murakami became emboldened by the divine revelation he received in a dream and how he dared to cry out, “Here we are” even at the risk of his life. It is utterly thanks to his voluntary sacrifice that the whole international party of captives was rescued. Otherwise, they could not have been discovered by the Japanese sailors who were searching for them, because the bandits, together with the captives, were concealed under the dense foliage of willow trees. Mr. Murakami was however shot by the bandit ringleader, the bullet striking him in the right shoulder and entering his jaw, whereas the others, to whose neck the pistol was pressed, were miraculously unhurt, for the bandits were so overwhelmed by Mr. Murakami’s spiritual valour that they instantly jumped into the river without pulling the trigger.

The golden precept of Confucius “to sacrifice your life for the sake of others” was faithfully accomplished by this dauntless man; his subconsciousness deeply rooted in the Japanese mythical tradition abruptly came to the surface, when his integral personality was strained to the utmost degree.

Thus, the ancestral deities, the Tenno, (their direct successor in this world) the people and the land constitute an organic whole being tied together with the same destinies. The individual ethics are bound up with the community ethics in this country and this attitude is set forth in many a passage of the Kojiki. When Izanagi-no-Mikoto was nearly overtaken by the hideous fiends of Hell, he found by chance a peachtree which bore an abundance of ripe fruits. These he quickly plucked and when his pursuers drew near, he hurled the peaches at them with such force that they fled back, cowed and crest-fallen. As soon as he was out of danger, the thankful deity tenderly caressed...
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the peach tree, observing: “Thanks to thy help, I have been saved. Just as thou hast helped me, so must thou help all people in the Central Land of Reed-Plains, whosoever they shall be harrassed or fall into troublous circumstance,” and to the tree he gave the title of “Great Divine Fruits”.

It appears that the famous fairy tale of Momo-Taro (Momo is a Japanese word for peach) who conquered the Island of demons has reference to this legend in the Kojiki.

It is for this reason that any thought likely to favour only the self-centered outlook on life will hardly be accepted by the Japanese people.

The democratic principle underlying the law-governing modern State that was largely adopted by new Japan has happened to clash with the Japanese traditional spirit which bitterly condemns economic exploitation of one class by another as well as undue political predominance of one faction over another. One must remember that this land was begotten by the Divine Couple like a beloved child born of a happy marriage. So, this—land Japan is believed to possess a divine Soul anxious to serve the entire nation (headed by the Tenno) with deep affection so that a veritable family-State may evolve out of it. Hence, this land Japan is believed to possess a divine Soul anxious to serve the entire nation (headed by the Tenno) with deep affection so that a veritable family-State may evolve out of it. Hence, this land and all what pertains to it shouldn’t be monopolized by a privileged minority of the nation. In incarnating the very soul of his Heavenly Ancestress, reigning over the eight billions of deities, Tenno deigns to take the lead in showing the Way to his people; political administration conducted by Tenno is called “Shirasu” which signifies “to fulfil the aspirations of the people by his ego-emptied policy”. “Shirasu” has little to do with “Government” of the modern state whose original meaning is “to steer a ship with the rudder,” (gouvernail in French), because the Japanese State, which is the same as our land politically organized, is neither an instrumental mechanism utilized for the advancement of private interests nor a class-exploiting organ

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being operated by the bourgeoisie.

It is the natural basis, upon which the Japanese folk as a whole unfolds its peculiarly creative life. The Japanese word for State is Kokuka 国家 composed of Koku 国 (the country) and Ka 家 (the house). Now, Kokuka means to “regard our country as our congenial dwelling house”. So, it is obvious that Kokuka 国家 expresses the same idea as Koku 国, which is dearly cherished by the folk living within it. Koku, 国 (which is originally a classical chinese pronunciation) should be pronounced in the original Japanese language as Kuni, 木 and Kuni is supposed to be derivative of Kine 木根 which means “the root of the tree”. In this case, “the tree” is taken as a symbol of the creative entity of the Japanese folk and “the root” is the base of folk’s life, connected with the land-earth.

Accordingly, Kuni interpreted as the root of life’s tree is quite consonant with the Japanese mythology penetrated with the Weltanschauung which places emphasis on the creative nature the cosmic movement.

The Kojiki 古事記 says: The High-Tree-Deity 高木神 (Taka-Ki-Kami) is another name for the High-August-Producing-Wondrous-Deity 高御産日神 (Takami-Musubi-no-Kami) who is one of the most important heavenly Deities. According to the Nihonshoki 日本書紀, 高御産日神 is transcribed as 高皇産靈尊, meaning the High-August-producing-Soul (life)-Deity. The Kogoshui 古語拾遺, another important book referring also to the Japanese myths calls the Same Deity “高御産靈尊 to be pronounced as Kisaki-Miki-no-Mikoto. Kisaki, which implies the consort of Tenno (the Queen), is supposedly of the similar meaning as the tree (Ki) which blossoms (Saki), for the queen gives birth to the Crown prince similar to the tree that sets forth fresh bud and beautiful flower. Miki means the main trunk of the tree and Mikoto is the embodiment of universal creative life. Beside the Shinto-Shrine, or Jinja 神社 = the deity-dwelling-place, one will
find generally an aged big tree, called Go-Shin-Boku 御神木 = the August-Divine-Tree.

From these mythological sources, it may be gathered that the wonderful-soul (life)-producing-genius of our nation which turns to be what we now call “the Japanese Spirit,” = 日本精神 has been significantly symbolized by the tree. In fact, the tree may be looked upon as a materialization of creative life ever growing and expanding.

With reference to the tree, which is symbolical of the soul-producing-power ingrained in “the Japanese Spirit”, the metaphysical nature of our language must be clarified. The language is called in Japanese, Kotoba = 言葉 which means “the leaves of words” and “the leaves of words” are suggestive of a tree from which they have gradually grown. Such a tree being imagined to be the fountain-head of soul-producing-vitality, there evolved what is generally known as Koto-Dama-no-Gaku or Gen-Rei-Gaku 言霊學 = The word-soul-learning. According to this Japanese specific science of language, every Japanese word enshrines an intensely creative soul, bent on metamorphosing the ideal into the real. Koto = 言 (the word) should become absolutely Koto = 事 (the thing). The Japanese spirit is often called Yamato-Damashii 大和魂. Yamato is a contracted form of Iya-Ma-Koto: Iya = 用力, 彼や (the intensity)-Ma = 異 (Truly)-Koto 事 (the thing as the substantiation of the idea contained in the word). Dama-Shii is a derivative of Tama that means a soul. Therefore, Yamato-Damashii is the creative Japanese soul, by virtue of which our cherished ideal shall become truly the actual fact. So, the Japanese think this country is “blessed by the soul of the words”. It is mainly due to this high estimation of our language that we Japanese should refrain from indulging in meaningless talkativeness. On the same ground, we wish to avoid such an expression and thing as Mikire 三切れ = three slices: Mikire means simultaneously 身切れ = tearing of the body. We fear lest these words would become an actuality. Anyhow, our national tongue that is officially termed Kokugo = 国語 manifests distinctly the traditional spirit of our folk and any attempt to understand the Japanese culture would be fore-doomed to failure, unless the profound bearing of Kokugo on our national moral life is brought to light.

As this country has grown out of “the divine seeds” so our language has evolved from its marvellous nuclei which operate creatively like human souls. To take a vivid example, the Japanese root-verb Sumu = すむ is, as it were, the lingistic kernel from which many meanings radiate. Otherwise stated, Sumu = 澄む = to become limpid, Sumu = 住む = to dwell harmoniously, Sumu = 濃む = the matter settled, Ya-Sumu = 休む = to repose, Su-Sumu = 進む = to progress or to march, Simu = 湧む = to permeate, Subu = 統ぶ = to control, Mu-Subu = 結ぶ = to bind or to unite, Mu-Subu = 産ぶ = to create or to procreate, etc., all emanate from the single root-verb Sumu = すむ.

The root-substantive Shin = しん, which is organically linked with Sumu = すむ, produced a multitude of meanings.

Shin = the deity, Shin = 真 = the truth, Shin = 信 = the sincerity, Shin = 心 = the heart or the nucleus, or the centre, Shin = 新 = new, Shin = 深 = profound, Shin = 進 = to advance, Shin = 親 = affectionate, Shin = 揺 = to shake, Shin = 臣 = the Japanese subject, Shin = 身 = the body etc. have radiated from the original Shin = しん.

The Shin (the central pivot) of the Japanese State is Tenno, whose dynasty unbroken in lineage will last to all eternity and Tenno is called Sumera-Mikoto = all-synthesizing-wonderful-creative-soul. In making an attempt to criticize modern democracy in the light of Japanese State Theory, it would be worth while to refer to the case of “5.15” event which has changed greatly the course of Japanese politics in recent times.

This epoch making event which occurred on May 15th in
1932 was ventured upon by a handful of young officers of the Navy and Army. Mr. Inukai, premier and leader of the Seiyukai party was assassinated in his official residence.

They avowed they plotted the affair with the express object of restoring the traditional principle of Tenno-rule which, according to their views, was trampled underfoot by the rampant ascendency of party politics imbued with anti-national individualism.

Dr. Kiyosé who pleaded for the accused as their principal advocate published a pamphlet called “the key to the cosmic creation”. I shall cite part of this pamphlet which states how the law-governing formal regime of modern democracy came to ruin the moral basis of the traditional principle of Tenno-rule.

Dr. Kiyosé summarizes the matter nearly as follows: “The signal weak point of party politics resides in the canvass for election. In order to win many of its members, any political party will manoeuver the election campaign utterly from a selfish point of view and a huge amount of money is squandered as the sinews of war for the purpose of securing its ultimate victory over others. Although universal suffrage was nominally enforced in this country, nobody provided with twenty thousand yen will have the chance of being elected. Now, where does this financial help come from? It is after all influential plutocrats who furnish the candidates with expenses involved in election. Consequently, any party cabinet that owes its existence to those members of parliament elected thanks to the financial support of plutocracy, will be morally compelled to pursue such a policy as proves largely beneficial to the privileged minority of society and this will naturally turn to be detrimental to the welfare of the greater bulk of the nation. What weighs particularly on the meagre budget of the farmers is the payment of fertilizer; they would like to buy cheap fertilizer imported from abroad. However, the importation of cheap foreign fertilizer often impedes the business of the Japanese fertilizer firms which sell the farmers the same kind of fertilizer with much a higher price. Under these circumstances, the party politicians will proceed to protect the endangered interests of the directorate of the firms concerned by raising the high wall of custom tariff. Such unfair political and economic measures were virtually taken by the successive party cabinets formed in the course of the Taisho and Showa periods.

“Needless to say, the powerful directors of big commercial concerns and banks have been thus far guided by economic individualism initiated by the Manchester School. It follows that wealth was heaped in the hands of a few of the nation while its masses came to sink in the depth of misery. Class antagonism became visible everywhere and Marxism availed itself of the anomaly of social conditions to poison the rising vigorous generation”. “In the meantime, many a serious man made endeavurs to revise the law of election on the ground that a fair execution of election would lead to a sweeping expurgation of corrupt political air. However, one knows that a bill which aims at the revision of the existing election system must first be deliberated upon by those members of parliament elected mainly thanks to the present election law.

“Then, these members of parliament would but reject this bill, apt to counter their personal interests. It is as if one would advise a tiger to cut off its claws. Therefore, the accused thought, it would be well-nigh impossible for them to make a revision of the election law through legal procedure. It is in this political perspective that the significance of the affair of “5.15” will be grasped. Although we abhor so direct a method as resorted to in this affair, we should be wise enough to acknowledge frankly a fundamental defect in the party politics which attaches paramount importance merely to the formal procedure of election, taking the actual discrepancy of social realities scarcely into account.
The Japanese State as "Kuni" (Kuni=Kine=木根=the root of tree=the source of folk’s life) is thus incompatible with the notion of the modern State conceived of as a mechanism to be utilized by individuals, who are primarily impelled by selfish interests.

Liberalism brought over here from the West should be distinguished strictly from Kodo (The Way of Tenno) that is genuinely indigenous to the Japanese nation. Had it not been for the extravagances of the Western monarchical tyranny, liberalism, which upholds the modern democratic principles of individual liberty and equality, wouldn’t have been advanced. Being a vehement reaction to tyranny, liberalism differs intrinsically from Kodo, for the latter is in principle utterly extraneous to any form of despotism.

The Japanese Constitution is not a contract between the ruler and the ruled. Nor is it a product of extortion, as in some other countries, from the Throne by the people. It was the Meiji Tenno who gifted the Japanese nation the present Constitution. When the Constitution was promulgated on the day of 2,549th anniversary of the accession of the first Jimmu Tenno (February 11, 1889), His Majesty the Meiji Tenno took a solemn oath before his divine Ancestors at the Sanctuary of the Palace. He said among other things: "The Tenno's House Law and Constitution come to be only a new exposition of the grand precepts for the Shirasu rule, bequeathed by the Divine Founder of our House and by our other divine Ancestors".

Again, in his Speech on the promulgation of the Constitution, The Meiji Tenno declared as follows: "While We make it the joy and glory of Our heart to behold the prosperity of Our Country and welfare of Our subjects, We do hereby promulgate the present immutable fundamental law for the sake of Our subjects and We doubt not that they will share them with Us". However, particular attention is called to the fact that the Tenno made no pledge to the people on this occasion.

Hence, in Japan, it is not the people but Tenno himself who established the Constitution: The Meiji Tenno framed it in order to revive in a new form the traditional principle of Shirasu, in consideration of the progressive tendency of the course of human affairs and in parallel with the advance of civilization.

Our country has had from the beginning an unwritten Constitution (we refer particularly to the Divine Edict of the Sun Goddess), according to which our Tenno shall reign over their subjects eternally.

It is now clear that the codification of the New Constitution was not the creation of a new thing, but it was primarily a fresh manifestation of the ancient ideal in a written form.

In the United States, the people ordained and established the Constitution to be construed as the authoritative formulation of the general will of the people. In Great Britain, the Constitution was served to secure the individual right against oppression from the government of the kings. Various rights are enumerated in the instruments recognized by the Norman kings, especially in the Magna Carta.

I regret I cannot agree altogether with Dr. Nitobé on the interpretation of the fundamental character of our politics. In his address before the Institute of Politics in Williamstown, 1932, he attempted to make analysis of some basic principles of Japanese politics with particular reference to what is known by the Charter Oath, consisting of the Five Articles.

We remember that the enactment of this Charter Oath by the Meiji Tenno constitutes the prelude to the promulgation of the Constitution. Dr. Nitobé said: "This Charter Oath opens a new era for Japan, filling a position similar to that occupied by the Magna Carta in England or the Declaration of Independence in America; these five articles were a covenant formed with Gods, a contract, albeit one-sided on the part of the ruler,
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with his subjects. They mark a break for Japan with the political doctrines and traditions of the ancient East and her alignment with those of the modern West."

I imagine this sort of interpretation about our political principles is based on the preconception that the ancient political principle of Japan Kodo is much inferior to modern democracy in its moral implications. I wish however to stress the point that modern democracy is supported by those who assume the self-centered attitude, while the Japanese Kodo is based on the universe-centred attitude. This universe-centered attitude will be identified with the Sun-Goddess-centered attitude. On account of the visible decline of the self-centered attitude in general we wish the Western peoples to investigate seriously the universal aspect of Japanese culture based upon the universe-centered attitude.

The universe-centered world view gives to understand that an irresistible vital force, which works as the alternation of the advance and retrogression, pervades the Great Cosmos. The oriental sages said: "Heaven (Universe) in its motion, gives the idea of strength and the accomplished man, in accordance with this, nerves himself to ceaseless activity."

This celebrated passage in the Book of Changes=$^\text{5j@}$ hints that man should try his best to live faithfully in conformity with the rhythms of the Way of Heaven. The meaning of the Way =道 is succinctly explained in the same Book: "The successive movement of the inactive (Yin) and active (Yo) operations constitutes what is called the Way. That which ensues as the harmonious result of their advancing and retrogressive movement is goodness; that which exhibits it in its completeness is the nature of men and things."

The Book of Golden Mean which derived its spiritual inspiration from the Book of Changes says: "What Heaven confers upon us is what we call Sei=性. Now, this ideograph consists of 心, which is same as 心, meaning "the heart" and 生, which means "to be born". So, Sei=性 is the genuinely pure consciousness found in a new-born child.

Then, the text follows: "To act conforming to Sei is what we call the Way (the human Moral law)=道. The Way when reduced to a system is what we call the Teaching=教."

All these texts show that the subtle operation of our human consciousness in its abstruse profundity is metaphysically related to the Cosmic Movement, which is exhibiting the alternation of the advance and retrogression as typified by the seasonal rotation. In other words, human consciousness is innately swayed by the alternating movement of a self-assertive tendency revealed in our claim for individual freedom and a self-submissive tendency revealed in our readiness to kneel down before the true authority. According to the Oriental ideal, when these two mental tendencies, relatively antagonistic to each other are harmoniously synthesized into the supreme virtue of the Golden Mean=中, there will be accomplished goodness. The human nature, interpreted as Sei =性 is a tiny universe, or microcosm where this original dialectic of the advance and retrogression of our consciousness is spontaneously in rotative operation. Unlike the universe-centered or the self-emptied outlook on life, the ego-centered outlook on life only persists in the maintenance of the narrow self-assertive attitude tending not only to deteriorate the moral foundation of the true authority, but also to thwart the natural growth of society. So long as we stick to the self-centered attitude, any pressure or restraint liable to counter the individual assertiveness may be considered as unexceptionally condemnable and it will not require much thinking to understand that this bigoted mentality generates a strong tendency for disintegration and anarchy in society. On the contrary, in assuming the universe-centered attitude, we shall be led to mitigate voluntarily our otherwise incurable proneness toward an ever advancing arbitrary
self-assertiveness by means of the duly regressive virtue of self-reflexion; in this manner, our life will be not only kept from degrading into selfish individualism but also it will be given fresh and healthy impetus. The regressive self-reflexion may be compared to the stimulating chilliness of autumn, which purifies the stifling atmosphere exhaling from the relaxed late summer. Just as the regression of the autumn-winter gives birth anew to the advance of the spring-summer, the self-restraint by deep reflexion is absolutely required for our moral rejuvenation. This is the secret of both Ishin=新維 and Onkochishin=温故知新. The unharmonizable conflict between pacifism and militarism in the West will be conceivable only from an ego-centered point of view, whereas the Japanese universe-centered mental outlook on life will render the martial spirit=武 necessarily complementary to the civil spirit=文.

In approaching the thorny problem of the disarmaments, one must be well aware that any western power, leaning on the ego-centered attitude tends to regard the martial conducts as always counteracting the cause of peace, but that this country, being actuated by the universe-centered mental outlook on life can hardly conceive of any durable peace without taking into consideration its complementary action: the martial spirit. I insist that, in the forthcoming naval disarmament conference, in addition to the technical, financial and economical questions, the basic aspects of cultural conflict between the United States and Japan should be contemplated with the candor and courage, characteristic of both nations. Moreover, such must be the key-note of our future cultural diplomacy, drawing now the keen attention of the Japanese people at large.

THE PRINCIPLE OF "ÔDÔ"

By MASAATSU YASUOKA

The conceptual thought of the political philosophy of the modern Japanese is entirely different in its fundamentals from that of Oriental philosophers of the classical ages. This change is due to the influence exerted by the Western system of education we introduced into Japan. Today, in the study of political science, for example, theory is given the largest amount of attention, neglecting the study of the spiritual elements in which lies the very essence of political philosophy. In dealing with the practical problems of social economics and of politics, the usual approach is a discussion of some such subjects as the construction of bridges and public highways, the farm relief and foreign trade. In comparing the present day Japanese statesmen with the ancient wise rulers of the East in their attitude toward politics and the administration of the affairs of government, we realize the vastness of the gap that separates the two.

Oriental political philosophy includes a very profound system of thought and theory in the interpretation of spirit, the fundamental of politics which constitutes the basis of administration. The study of "ôdô" philosophy should begin with the realization of this basic differentiation between modern and ancient political philosophy.

Oriental classic literature contains a rich store of political episodes; such as these: When Yao revealed to Yuyu his intention of assigning him government, Yuyu declined the offer and said, "Do not disturb me with political talk, for I am indulged in the holy meditation of a problem concerned with