

VI.

SŪJIN, THE CIVILIZER.

FROM the death of Jimmu Tennō to that of Kimmei, in whose reign Buddhism was introduced (A.D. 571), there were, according to the *Dai Nihon Shi*, thirty-one mikados. During this period of twelve hundred and thirty-six years, believed to be historic by most Japanese, the most interesting subjects to be noted are the reforms of Sūjin Tennō, the military expeditions to Eastern Japan by Yamato Daké, the invasion of Corea by the Empress Jingu Kōgō, and the introduction of Chinese civilization and of Buddhism.

The *Nihongi* details the history and exploits of these ancient rulers with a minuteness and exactness of circumstance that are very suspicious. It gives the precise birthdays and ages of the emperors, who in those days attained an incredible longevity. Takénouchi, the Japanese Methusaleh, lived to be over three hundred and fifty years old, and served as prime minister to five successive emperors. Twelve mikados lived to be over one hundred years old. One of them ruled one hundred and one years. The reigns of the first seventeen averaged over sixty-one years. From the seventeenth to the thirty-first, the average reign is little over twelve years. In the list there are many whose deeds, though exaggerated in the mirage of fable, are, in the main, most probably historic.

Sūjin, also called Shūjin or Sunin (B.C. 97-30), was, according to the *Dai Nihon Shi*, a man of intense earnestness and piety. The traits of courage and energy which characterized his youth gave him in manhood signal fitness for his chosen task of elevating his people. He mourned over their wickedness, and called upon them to forsake their sins, and turn their minds to the worship of the gods. A great pestilence having broken out, and the people being still unrepentant, the pious monarch rose early in the morning, fasted, and purified his body with water, and called on the kami to stay the plague. After solemn public worship the gods answered him, and the plague abated. A revival of religious feeling and worship followed. In his reign dates the building of special shrines for the adoration of the gods.

Hitherto the sacred ceremonies had been celebrated in the open air. Further, the three holy regalia (mirror, sword, and ball) had hitherto been kept in the palace of the mikado. It was believed that the efficacy of the spirit was so great that the mikado dwelling with the spirit was, as it were, equal to a god. These three emblems had been placed within the palace, that it might be said that where they were dwelt the divine power. A rebellion having broken out during his reign, he was led to believe that this was a mark of the disfavor of the gods, and in consequence of his keeping the emblems under his own roof. Reverencing the majesty of the divine symbols, and fearing that they might be defiled by too close proximity to his carnal body, he removed them from his dwelling, and dedicated them in a temple erected for the purpose at Kasanui, a village in Yamato. He appointed his own daughter priestess of the shrine and custodian of the symbols—a custom which has continued to the present time.

The shrines of Uji, in Isé, which now hold these precious relics of the divine age, are always in charge of a virgin princess of imperial blood. Later, being warned by the goddess Amaterasū to do so, she carried the mirror from province to province, seeking a suitable locality; but having grown old in their search, Yamato himé* continued it, and finally, after many changes, they were deposited in their present place A.D. 4. Copies of the mirror and sword were, however, made by Sūjin, and placed in a separate building within the palace called the "place of reverence." This was the origin of the chapel still connected with the mikado's imperial palace.

From the most early time the dwelling and surroundings of the mikado were characterized by the most austere simplicity, quite like the Shintō temples themselves, and the name *miya* was applied to both. In imagining the imperial palace in Japan, the reader on this side the Pacific must dissolve the view projected on his mind at the mention of the term "palace." Little of the stateliness of architecture or the splendor and magnificence of the interior of a European palace belongs to the Japanese imperial residence. A simple structure, larger than an ordinary first-class dwelling, but quite like a temple in outward appearance, and destitute of all meretricious or artistic ornamentation within, marks the presence of royalty, or semi-divinity, in Japan. Even in Kito, for centuries, the palace, except for its size and slightly greater el-

* The suffix *himé* after female proper names means "princess." It is still used by the ladies of the imperial family, and by the daughters of the court nobles. *Maye*, with *no*, was also added to names of ladies of rank.

evation, could not be distinguished from the residences of the nobles, or from a temple. All this was in keeping with the sacredness of the personage enshrined within. For vain mortals, sprung from inferior or wicked gods, for upstart generals, or low traders bloated with wealth, luxury and display were quite seemly. Divinity needed no material show. The circumstances and attributes of deity were enough. The indulgence in gaudy display was opposed to the attributes and character of the living representative of the Heavenly Line. This rigid simplicity was carried out even after death. In striking contrast with the royal burial customs of the nations of Asia are those of Japan.



The Mikado's Method of Travel in very Ancient Times.

All over the East, the tombs of dead dynasties are edifices of all others the most magnificent. The durable splendor of the homes of the departed far exceed that of the palaces of the living. But in Japan, in place of the gorgeous mausoleums and the colossal masterpieces of mortuary architecture of continental Asia, the sepulchres of the mikados seem monuments of chaste poverty. Nearly all of the imperial tombs are within the three provinces of Yamato, Yamashiro, and Settsu. A simple base of stone, surmounted by a low shaft, set upon a hillock, surrounded by a trench, and inclosed with a neat railing of timber, marks the resting-places of the dead emperors. All this is in accordance with the precepts of Shintō.

The whole life of Sūjin was one long effort to civilize his half-savage subjects. He ordained certain days when persons of both sexes must lay aside their regular employment, and give the Government his or her quantum of labor. The term for the labor of the men means "bow-point," and of the women "hand-point," implying that in the one case military service was the chief requirement, and in the other that of the loom or the field. He endeavored, in order to secure just taxation, to inaugurate a regular periodical census, and to reform the methods of dividing and recording time.* He encouraged the building of boats, in order to increase the means of transportation, promote commerce, and to bring the people at the extremities of the country in contact with each other. Communication between Corea and Kiushiu was rendered not only possible, but promised to be regular and profitable. We read that, during his reign, an envoy, bringing presents, arrived from Mimana, in Corea, B.C. 33. Six years later, it is recorded that the prince, a chief of Shiraki, in Corea, came to Japan to live. It is evident that these Coreans would tell much of what they had seen in their own country, and that many useful ideas and appliances would be introduced under the patronage of this enlightened monarch. Sūjin may be also called the father of Japanese agriculture, since he encouraged it by edict and example, ordering canals to be dug, water-courses provided, and irrigation to be extensively carried on. Water is the first necessity of the rice-farmer of Asia. It is to him as precious a commodity as it is to the miner of California. Rice must be sown, transplanted, and grown under water. Hence, in a country where this cereal is the staple crop, immense areas of irrigated fields are necessary. One of the unique forms of theft in rice-countries, which, in popular judgment, equals in

* The twenty-four divisions of the solar year (according to the lunar calendar), by which the Japanese farmers have for centuries regulated their labors, are as follows:

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| "Beginning of Spring".....February 3. | "Beginning of Autumn".....August 7. |
| "Rain-water".....February 19. | "Local Heat".....August 23. |
| "Awakening of the Insects".....March 5. | "White Dew".....September 8. |
| "Middle of the Spring".....March 20. | "Middle of Autumn".....September 23. |
| "Clear Weather".....April 5. | "Cold Dew".....October 8. |
| "Seed Rain".....April 20. | "Fall of Hoar-frost".....October 23. |
| "Beginning of Summer".....May 5. | "Beginning of Winter".....November 7. |
| "Little Plenty".....May 20. | "Little Snow".....November 22. |
| "Transplanting the Rice".....June 5. | "Great Snow".....December 7. |
| "Height of the Summer".....June 21. | "Height of the Winter".....December 22. |
| "Little Heat".....July 6. | "Little Frost".....January 6. |
| "Great Heat".....July 23. | "Great Frost".....January 20. |

iniquity the stealing of ore at the mines, or horses on the prairies, is the drawing off water from a neighbor's field. In those old rude times, the Japanese water-thief, when detected, received but little more mercy than the horse-robber in the West. The immense labor necessary to obtain the requisite water-supply can only be appreciated by one who has studied the flumes of California, the tanks of India, or the various appliances in Southern Asia. In Japan, it is very common to terrace, with great labor, the mountain gulches, and utilize the stream in irrigating the platforms, thus changing a noisy, foaming stream into a silent and useful servant. In many cases, the water is led for miles along artificial canals, or ditches, to the fertile soil which needs it. On flat lands, at the base of mountains, huge reservoirs are excavated, and tapped as often as desired. In the bosom of the Hakoné Mountains, between Sagami and Suruga, is a deep lake of pure cold water, over five thousand feet above the sea-level. On the plain below are few or no natural streams. Centuries ago, but long after Sūjin's time, the mountain wall was breached and tunneled by manual labor, and now through the rocky sluices flows a flood sufficient to enrich the millions of acres of Suruga province. The work begun by Sūjin was followed up vigorously by his successor, as we read that, in the year A.D. 6, a proclamation was issued ordering canals and sluices to be dug in over eight hundred places.

The emperor had two sons, whom he loved equally. Unable to determine which of them should succeed him, he one day told them to tell him their dreams the next morning, and he should decide the issue by interpretation. The young princes accordingly washed their bodies, changed their garments, and slept. Next day the elder son said, "I dreamed that I climbed up a mountain, and, facing the east, I cut with the sword and thrust with the spear eight times." The younger said, "I climbed the same mountain, and, stretching snares of cords on every side, tried to catch the sparrows that destroy the grain." The emperor then interpreted the dream, "You, my son," said he to the elder, "looked in one direction. You will go to the East, and become its governor." "You, my son," said he to the younger, "looked in every direction. You will govern on all sides. You will become my heir." It happened as the father had said. The younger became emperor, and a peaceful ruler. The elder became the governor of, and a warrior in, the East.

The story is interesting as illustrating the method of succession to the throne. Usually it was by primogeniture, but often it depended

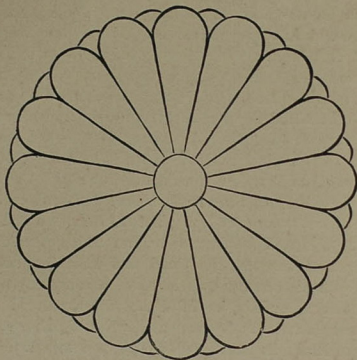
upon the will or whim of the father, the councils of his chiefs, or the intrigues of courtiers.

The energies of this pious mikado were further exerted in devising and executing a national military system, whereby his peaceably disposed subjects could be protected and the extremities of his dominions extended. The eastern and northern frontiers were exposed to the assaults of the wild tribes of Ainōs who were yet unsubdued. Between the peaceful agricultural inhabitants who owned the sway of the ruler in Yamato, and the untamed savages who gloried in their freedom, a continual border-war existed. The military division of the empire into four departments was made, and a shōgun, or general, was appointed over each. These departments were the Tō, Nan, and Sai kai dō, and Hokūrokudō, or the East, South, and West-sea Circuits, and the Northern-land Circuit. The strict division of the empire into dō, or circuits, according with the natural features and partitions of the country, which is still recognized, was of later time; but already, *b.c.* 25, it seems to have been foreshadowed by Sūjin.

One of these shōguns, or generals, named Obiko, who was assigned to the Northern Department, lying north of Yamato and along the west coast, holds a high place of renown among the long list of famous Japanese warriors. It is said that when, just after he had started to join his command, he heard of a conspiracy against the mikado, returning quickly, he killed the traitor, restored order, and then resumed his duties in the camp at the North. His son held command in the East. In the following reign, it is written that military arsenals and magazines were established, so that weapons and rations were ready at any moment for a military expedition to repel incursions from the wild tribes on the border, or to suppress insurrections within the pale of the empire. The half-subdued inhabitants in the extremes of the realm needed constant watching, and seem to have been as restless and treacherous as the Indians on our own frontiers. The whole history of the extension and development of the mikado's empire is one of war and blood, rivaling, if not exceeding, that of our own country in its early struggles with the Indians. This constant military action and life in the camp resulted, in the course of time, in the creation of a powerful and numerous military class, who made war professional and hereditary. It developed that military genius and character which so distinguish the modern Japanese, and mark them in such strong contrast with other nations of Eastern Asia. The long-sustained military operations also served to consolidate the empire.

In these ancient days, however, there was no regular army, no special class of warriors, as in later times. Until the eighth century, the armies were extemporized from the farmers and people generally, as occasion demanded. The war over, they returned to their daily employments. The mikados were military chiefs, and led their armies, or gave to their sons or near relatives only, the charge of expeditions.

It is not my purpose to follow in detail the long series of battles,

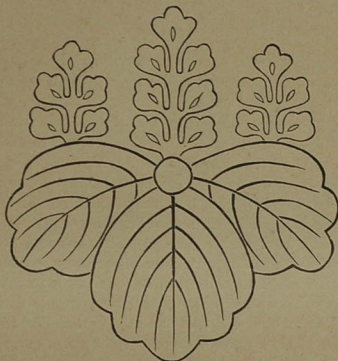


Imperial or Japanese Government Seal for Public Business. The Chrysanthemum.

or even court conspiracies and intrigues, which fill the Japanese histories, and lead some readers to suppose that war was the normal condition of the palace and empire. I prefer to show the condition of the people, their methods of life, customs, ideas, and beliefs. Although wars without and intrigues within were frequent, these by no means made up the life of the nation. Peace had its victories, no less renowned than those of war. A study of the life of the people, showing their progress from barbarism to civilization, will, I think, be of more interest to the reader than details concerning imperial rebels, poisoners, or stabbers.

In the Japanese histories, and in official language, literature, and etiquette of later days, there exists the conception of two great spheres of activity and of two kinds of transactions, requiring two methods of

treatment. They are the *nai* and *guai*, the inner and the outer, the interior and exterior of the palace, or the throne and the empire. Thus the *Nihon Guai Shi*, by Rai Sanyo, or "External History of Japan," treats of the events, chiefly military, outside the palace. His other work, *Nihon Seiki*, treats rather of the affairs of the "forbidden interior" of the palace. In those early days this conception had not been elaborated.



Imperial Crest, or the Mikado's Seal, for Private or Palace Business. Leaf and Blossoms of the *Paulownia imperialis* (kiri.)

The mikado from ancient times has had two crests, answering to the coats of arms in European heraldry. One is a representation of a chrysanthemum (*kiku*), and is used for government purposes outside the palace. It is embroidered on flags and banners, and printed on official documents. Since the Restoration, in 1868, the soldiers of the imperial army wear it as a frontlet on their caps. The other crest, representing a blossom and leaves of the *Paulownia imperialis* (*kiri*), is used in business personal to the mikado and his family. The ancient golden chrysanthemum has, since 1868, burst into new bloom, like the flowering of the nation itself, and has everywhere displaced the trefoil of the parvenus of later feudalism—the Tokugawas, the only military vassals of the mikado who ever assumed the preposterous title of "Tycoon."