

loyalty, with its duties of absolute obedience and wholehearted service. But the circle of duty for each individual did not extend beyond the clan group to which he belonged. A retainer was, for example, ready to die for his feudal lord, the head of the clan group, but not for the Shogun, unless he belonged to his special military following. Thus the religion of loyalty, until the Restoration of 1868, was limited by the constitution of Japanese society. Under such conditions that larger loyalty—the love of king and country—could not fully evolve. Any duty to the nation, outside of that to his chief, had no place in the mind of the vassal.

This limited conception of loyalty the Shogun found politically valuable. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we find orders forbidding the Daimyo (feudal district overlords) to approach the Imperial palace on their way to the



Shogun's court at Yedo (Tokyo). They were also forbidden to make any direct appeal to the Emperor. There were additional regulations designed to stop communication between the Emperor and the Daimyate. This policy, by paralysing intrigue, kept the country at peace for more than 200 years, but it also stopped the growth of real patriotism.

With the arrival of Admiral Perry, the closed doors were forced open, and after two centuries of seclusion Japan was suddenly exposed to Western civilization. At the same time the centralized military government of the Shogunate was tottering, its authority recognized less, its administration more despised. If the clan Daimyos were to cause trouble, civil war would rend the country. Such danger needed the union of all social units. Clan and tribal groupings must be dissolved, and all authority centred in the



one representative of the national religion. The feudal duty of loyalty and obedience to the territorial lord must be replaced by the duty of loyalty and obedience to the divine Emperor. This religion of loyalty, evolved through one thousand years of the ancestral cult, must be diverted and transformed. It could, if properly utilized, prove itself to be a national heritage of incalculable worth.

It is impossible to give details of that great event in Japanese history known as the Restoration of the Emperor Meiji (1867). It is enough to say that the Daimyos were induced to return to the Emperor their governing powers and authority. Gradually the new conception permeated the ranks of the people. The different loyalties were united; the former limited sense of duty expanded into the new national sentiment of trust in, and obedience to, the Emperor and the country. The modern conception of patriotism came into being. The domestic and communal cults did not suffer. Such cults now became lesser circles, contained in the vast circumference of the national religion, but each in its limited sphere exerted as powerful an influence as before. This is the chief influence that has formed the Japanese of to-day. This great religion of loyalty, so vast in its potentialities for good or evil, is the parent soil in which are embedded the roots from which the Japanese character has sprung.

