The Religion of Loyalty.
"Militant societies," says the author of The Principle of Sociology, "must have a patriotism which regards the triumph of their society as the supreme end of action; they must possess the loyalty whence flows obedience to authority; and, that they may be obedient, they must have abundant faith. The history of the Japanese people strongly exemplifies these truths. Among no other people has loyalty ever assumed more impressive and extraordinary forms; and among no other people has obedience ever been nourished by a more abundant faith."
faith derived from the cult of the ancestors.

The reader will understand how filial piety, the domestic religio of obedience, evidences in tune with social evolution, and eventually distinguishes both the direct political obedience required by the community, and that military obedience exacted by the warlord, obedience implying not mere submission, but affectionate submission, not merely the sense of obligation, but the sentiment of duty. In its origin in the dutiful obedience is essentially religious; and, as expressed in loyalty, it retains the religious character,
becomes the constant manifestation of a recollection of self-sacrifice. Loyalty is developed early in the history of a militant people; and we find glorious examples of it in the earliest Japanese chronicles. We find also terrible ones, — stories of self-immolation.

To his divinely-descended lord, the retainer owed everything — in fact, not less dear in theory: goods, household, liberty, and life. Any or all of these he was expected to give up without a murmur, on demand, for the sake of the lord. And duty to the lord, like the duty to the family ancestor, did not cease.
with death. As the ghosts of parents were to be supplied with food by their living children, so the spirit of the Lord was to be worshipfully served by those who, during his life time, owed him direct obe-
diance. It could not be per-
mitted that the spirit of the ruler should ever unattended in the world of shadows; some, at least, of those who served him living were bound to follow him to death. Thus in early societies arose the custom of human sacrifices,—sacrifices at first obligatory, afterwards voluntary. In Japan, as related in a former chapter, they remained an indispensable feature of great funerals, up to
the first century, when images of
baked clay were first substituted
for the official victims. I have
already mentioned how, after this
abolition of obligatory junshi, or
following of one to lord in death,
the practice of voluntary junshi
continued up to the sixteenth
century, when it actually became
a military fashion. At the
death of a daimyo it was
down common for fifteen or
twenty of his retainers to dis-
-embowel themselves. Sugiyama
determined to put an end to
this custom of suicide, which
is thus considered in the 16th
article of his celebrated Legacy:

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"Although it is undoubtedly
the ancient custom for a vassal
(t.) follow his lord in death,
there is not the slightest reason
in the practice. Confucius
has ridiculed the making
of 业 [effigies buried with
the dead]. These practices
are strictly forbidden, more
especially to primary re-

ducers, but to secondary
reductions to Rewire, - even
of the lowest rank. He
is the reverse of a faith-
ful servant who disregards
this prohibition. This pos-
dent shall be impoverished
by the confiscation of his
property, as a warning for
those who disobey the laws."
Išiyasu's command ended the practice of jinshū among his own vassals; but it continued, or revived again, after his death. In 1664 the Shōgunate issued an edict proclaiming that the family of any person performing jinshū should be punished, and the Shōgunate was in earnest. When this edict was disobeyed by one Uyémon no Hyogé, who disentombed himself at the death of his lord, Okudaira Tadamasa, the government promptly confiscated the lands of the family of the suicide, executed two of his sons, and sent the rest of the household into exile. Though cases of jinshū have occurred even within this present era
of Meiji, the determined attitude of the Tokugawa government so far checked the progress that even the most fervid loyalist daimyo made its sacrifices through religion, as a rule. Instead of performing hara-kiri, the retained shaved his head at the death of his lord, and became a Buddhist monk.

The custom of jinshi represents but one aspect of Japanese loyalty: there were other customs equally, if not even more significant, — for example, the custom of military suicide, not as jinshi, but as a self-inflicted
penniless exaction by the samurai of

Against

harakiri, as punishment suicide,

there was no legislative enactment, for obvious reasons.

It would seem that this form of

self-destruction was not

known to the Japanese in

early ages; it may have been introduced from China,

with other military customs.

The ancient Japanese usually

performed suicide by strangu-

lation, as the Nebongi

bears witness. It was

the military class that estab-

lished the harakiri

as a custom and privilege.

Previously, the chiefs of a
A ded army, or the defenders of a castle taken by storm, would thus end their selves to avoid falling into the enemy's hands—a custom which continued to the present era. About the close of the fifteenth century, the milizau custom of permitting any samurai to perform harakiri, instead of submitting to the shame of execution, appears to have been generally established. Afterward it became the recognized duty of a samurai to kill himself at the word of command. All samurai were subject to this disciplinary law, even lords of provinces—and in samurai families, children of both sexes were trained how to perform suicide whenever personal honour
or the will of a large lord, misprison require it. Women, I should observe, did not perform harakiri, but jigai, — that is to say, piercing the throat with a dagger so as to sever the arteries by a single thrust, and one movement. The particulars of the harakiri ceremony have become so well-known through Milford's handbook of Japanese lives on the subject, that I need not touch upon them. The important fact to remember is that honour and loyalty require the samurai man or woman be ready at any moment to perform self-destruction by the sword. As for the warrior, any breach of duel (voluntary or involuntary), failure to
execute a difficult mission; a clumsy mistake, and even a look of displeasure from one's lord, were sufficient reasons for harakiri, or as the Emissaries preferred to call it, by the Chinese term, seppuku. Among the highest class of retainers, it was also a duty to make protest against misconduct on the part of their lord by performing seppuku, when all other means of bringing home a reason had failed, which heroic custom has been made the subject of several remarkable dramatic poems founded upon fact. In the case of married women of the samurai class, directly responsible to their husbands, not to the lord,
jigai was resorted to most often as a means of preserving honour, in time of war, — though sometimes performed merely as a sacrifice of loyalty to the spirit of the heart and, as by this melancholy death. * In the case of girls, it was not uncommon for other reasons, — samurai maidsens often entering it to the service of noble households, where the smell of indigene might easily bring about a suicide, or where loyalty to the wife of the lord might exact it. For the samurai maiden in service was bound by loyalty to her mistress not less closely.

* The Japanese moralist Yekken wrote: — "A woman has no personal love: she must reverence and obey her husband."
Now the warrior is no more; and the heroes of Japanese feudalism were many.

In the early ages it appears to have been the custom for the wives of officials condemned to death to kill themselves; the ancient chronicles are full of examples. But this custom is perhaps partly accounted for by the ancient law, which held the household of the offender equally responsible with him for the offense, independently of the facts in the case. However, it was certainly also common enough for a wife to perform suicide, not through despair, but through the wish to follow her...
husband into the other world, so
there I wait upon him as in
life. In accordance of female
suicide, representing the old
ideal of any of a dead husband,
have occurred in recent times.
Such suicides are usually performed
according to the feudal rules,—
the woman bidding herself in
while for the occasion. At the
time of the late war with China
there occurred in Tokyo one re-
nmarkable suicide of this kind;
the victim being the wife of
Lieutenant Asada, who had
fallen in battle. She was
only twenty-one. On hearing
of her husband's death, she
at once began to make pre-
parading for her own, writing letters of farewell to her relations, putting her affairs in order, and carefully cleaning the house, according to old-time rule. Thereof she donned her death-robe; laid mattrasses down opposite to the alcove in the guest-room; placed her husband's portrait in the alcove, and set offerings before it. When every thing had been arranged, she stood herself before the portrait, took up her dagger, and with a single skillful thrust divided the arteries of her throat.
Besides the duty of suicide for the sake of preserving honor, there was also, for the samurai woman, the duty of suicide as a moral protest. I have already said that among the highest class of retainers it was thought a moral duty to perform harakiri as a renunciation against shameless conduct on the part of one's lord, when all other means of persuasion had been tried in vain.

Among samurai women—daughters to consider their husbands as their lords, in the feudal meaning of the term—it was held a moral obligation to perform jisai, by way of protest against disrespectful behaviors upon the part of a husband who would not listen to advice or reproof. The ideal of wife's duty, which in feudal such sacrifice still survives is an
more than one recent example seems to be cited of a generous life thus laid down in rebellion of some moral wrong. Perhaps the most striking occurrence occurred in 1892, at the time of the district elections in Nagano prefecture. A rich man, named Ishijima, after having publicly pledged himself to aid in the election of a certain candidate, transferred his support to the rival candidate. On learning of this breach of promise, the wife of Ishijima, robed herself in white, and performed jingai after the old samurai manner. The grave of this brave woman is still decorated with flowers by the people of the district; and incense is burned before her tomb.
To kill oneself at command — a duty which no loyal samurai would have dreamed of calling in question — appears no much less difficult than another duty, also fully accepted: the sacrifice of children, wife, and household for the sake of the lord. Much of Japanese popular tragedy is devoted to incidents of such sacrifice made by retainers or dependents of daimyō — men or women who gave their children to death in order to save the children of their masters. * Now have we any reason to suppose that the facts have been exaggerated in these

* See, for a good example, the translation of the drama *Tezakura*, published, with admirable illustrations, by T. Hasegawa (Tokyo).
dramatic compositions, most of which are based upon feudal history. The incidents have, of course, been rearranged and expanded to meet theatrical requirements; but the general pictures have given off the ancient social; are probably even less grim than the vanished reality. The people while love these tragedies; and the foreign critic of their dramatic literature is wont to point out only the blood-spots, and to comment upon them as evidence of a public taste for gory spectacles, as proof of some innate ferocity in the race. Rather, I think, is
this love of the old regime, proof
of what foreign critics try always
to ignore as much as possible,—
the deeply religious character of
the people. These plays con-
continue to give delight,—not be-
cause of their horror, but be-
cause of their moral teaching,
—because of their exposition
of the duty of sacrifice and
of courage, the religion of loyalty.
They represent the many-sided
of feudal society for its
noblest ideals.

All down through that
society, in varying forms, the
same spirit of loyalty has its
manifestations. As the Samu-
i to his liege-lord, so the apprentice
was bond to the patron, and the clerk to the merchant. Everywhere there was trust, because everywhere there was love. The like sentiment of mutual duty between servant and master. Each industry and occupation had its religion of loyalty, requiring, on the one side, absolute obedience and sacrifice at need; and on the other, kindness and aid. And the rule of the dead was over all.

Not less ancient than the duty of dying for parent or lord was the social obligation to avenge the killing of either. Even before the beginnings of settled society, this
...duty is recognized. The ancient chronicles of Japan deem with instances of obligations, vengeance. Confucian ethics more than affirms the obligation — forbidding a man to live "under the same heaven" with the slayer of his lord or parent or brother; and fixing all the degrees of kinship, or other relationships, within which the duty of vengeance was to be considered imperative. Confucian ethics, it will be remembered, became at an early date the ethics of the Japanese ruling classes, and so remained down to recent times. The whole system, as I have remarked elsewhere, was founded upon ancestor worship, and represented...
searcey more than an amplification and elaboration of the doctrine of filial piety: it was therefore in complete accord with Japanese moral experience. As the military power developed in Japan, the Chinese code of vengeance became universally accepted; so it was sustained by law as well as by custom in later ages. Kyōsan himself main-
tained it, exacting only that preliminary notice of an intended vendetta should be given in writing to the district criminal court. The depth of this article on the subject is interesting. —
In respect of avenging injury done to master or father, it is acknowledged by the wise and virtuous [Confucius] that you and the injurer cannot live together under the canopy of heaven. A person harbouring such vengeance shall give notice in writing to the Criminal Court, and although no check or hindrance may be offered to the carrying out of his design within the period allowed for that purpose, it is forbidden that the chastise-ment of an enemy be attended with riot. Fellow
who neglect to give notice of
their intended revenge are
like wolves: their punish-
ment or pardon should
depend upon the circums-
stances of the case.

Indeed, as well as parents; teachers
as well as lords, were to be revenged.
A considerable proportion of popular
romance and drama is devoted to
the subject of vengeance taken by
women; and, as a matter of fact,
women and even children sometimes
became avengers when there were
no men of a wronged family left
perform the duty. Apparenti es
avenged their mothers; and even

* Or “hypocritical wolves.”—That is to say, brutal murderers
seeking to excuse their crime on the pretext of justifiable
vengeance. (The translation is by Brooks.)
sworn friends were bound to avenge each other.

Why, the duty of vengeance was not confined to the circle of
natural kinship is explicable, of course, by the peculiar organiza-
tion of society. We have seen
that the patriarchal family
was a religious corporation; and
that the family bond was not
the bond of natural affection, but
the bond of the cult. We have
also seen that the relation of
the household to the community,
and of the community to the
clan, and of the clan to
the tribe, was primarily a
religious relation. As a necessary
consequence, the earlier customs of
vengeance were regulated by the
bond of the family, communal,
or tribal cult, rather than by the
bond of blood; or with the intro-
duction of Chinese ethics, and
the development of militant con-
ditions, the idea of revenge as
da duty took a wider range. The
son or the brother by adoption
was in respect of obligation the
same as the son or brother by
blood; and the teacher stood
to his pupil in the relation of
father & child. To strike one's
natural parent was a crime
punishable by death; to strike
one's teacher was, before the law,
an equal offence. This notion
of the teacher's claim to filial
reverence was of Chinese inter-
est: an extension of the
duty of filial piety to "the
father of the mind." There
were other such extensions; a

The origin of all Chinese or Japanese, may be traced alike to ancestor worship.

Now, what has never been properly insisted upon, in any of the books treating of ancient Japanese customs, is the originally religious significance of the kataki-uchi.

That a religious origin can be found for all customs of vendetta established in early societies is, of course, well known; but a peculiar interest attaches to the Japanese vendetta in view of the fact that it preserved its religious character unchanged down to the present era.

The kataki-uchi was essentially an act of propitiation, as is proved by the side with which it always terminated: the placing of the enemy's head upon the tomb of the person avenged, as an offering.
ing of a monument. And one of
the most impressive features of this
rite, as formerly practised, was
the delivery of an address to the
ghost of the person avenged. Some-
dimes the address was only spoken;
sometimes it was also written, and
the manuscript left upon the tomb.
Here is probably none of my readers
acquainted with Mr. Ford's inter-
delighted "Tale of Old Japan,
and his translation of the true
story of the "Ford's Seven Ronins."
But I doubt whether many persons
have noticed the significance of
the washing of Kira Kōtsuké-no-
Suké's severed head, or the signi-
ificance of the address inscribed
in their dead lord by the brave
men who had so long waited an
still we, who have eaten of your food, could not without blushing repeat the verse,

"Thou shalt not live under the same heaven, nor tread the same earth, with the enemy of thy father or
lord," nor could we have dared to leave hell [Heads]
and present ourselves before you in Paradise,
unless we had carried out the vengeance which you began. Every day that we waited seemed as three anon under us,
Verily we have brooded the snow for one day, may, for two days, a
have hasten from but once.
The old are decrepit, the
sick and the ailing, have
come forth glad, to lay
down their lives. Men
might laugh at us, as at
game of play, and when
blasphemous heat; but we
could not halt in our
deed of vengeance.

Having taken counsel
of the last night, we
have recorded my how
Kantek-no-Duke-killer
of your Punt. This
part, by which our hon-
ourable Lord set great
store last year, and
in search of our own, we now bring back. If your
noble spirit be now present before this tomb, we pray
you, as a sign, I take the dark, and, striking
the head of your enemy with it a second time,
I dispel your hatred forever. This is the res-
pectful statement of
four-seven men."
It will be observed that the
Lord Asano is addressed as if
he were present and visible.

The head of the enemy has been
carefully washed, according to
the rule concerning the presenta-
tion of heads to a living
superior. It is laid upon the
tomb together with the nine-
inch sword, or dagger, origin-
ally used by the Lord Asano
in performing hara-kiri by or
government command, and
afterwards used by Oishi Kira-
monoké in cutting off the
head of Kira Kotomuké no Suké;
—and the spirit of the Lord
Asano is requested to take up
the weapon and to strike
the head, so that the pain of
ghostly anger may be dissipated forever. Then, having been themselves, all sentenced to perform harakiri, the forty-seven retainers join their lords in death, and are buried in front of his tomb. Before their graves the smoke of incense, offered by admiring visitors, has been ascending daily for more than two hundred years.*

One must have lived in Japan, and have been able to feel the true spirit of the old Japanese life, in order to com-

* It has been long the custom also for visitors to leave their cards upon the tombs of the forty-seven Rōnin. When I last visited Sengakuji, the ground about the tombs was white with visiting cards.
- pretend he wrote of this romance of loyalty; but I think that whoever carefully reads Mr. Medford's version of it, and his translation of the authentic documents relating to it, will express himself more truly. That address especially touches—because of the affection and the faith in which it testifies, and the sense of duty beyond this life. However much revenge must be condemned by our modern ethics, there is a noble side in many of the old Japanese stories of loyal vengeance; and these stories affect us by the expression of what has nothing to do with vulgar revenge, by their exposition of purity and self-denial, courage in facing death, and readiness to die unseen. Which is only another way of saying that we are conscious, or unconscious,
impressed by their religious quality.

Pure individual revenge—the post-
poser retaliation for some personal
injury—repels our moral feeling:
we have learned to regard the
emotion inspiring such revenge as
simple, brutal—something shared
by man with lower forms of
animal life. But in the story
of a homicide executed by the
sentiment of duty or gratitude to
a dead master, there may be
circumstances which can make
appeal to our higher moral sym-
pathies, to our sense of the
force and beauty of unselfish-
ness, unswerving fidelity, un-
changing affection. And the
story of the Forty-Seven Rōnin
is one of this class...
Yet it must be borne in mind that the old Japanese religion of loyalty, which found its supreme manifestation in these three terrible customs of junshi, harakiri, and katakiuchi, was narrow in its range. It was limited by the very constitution of society. Though the nation was ruled, through all its groups, by notions of duty, every man had his own circle of that duty, for each individual, and not extended beyond the group in which he belonged. For his own lord the samurai was always ready to die; but he felt himself in various bounds to sacrifice himself for the government, unless he happened...
bely in the special military following of the Dōjin. His fatherland, his country, his world, extended only to the bounds of his chief's domain. Outside of that domain he could be only a wanderer, a rōnin, or "wave-man", as the masterless samurai was termed.

Under such conditions, that loyalty which identifies itself with love of king and country, which is patriotism in the modern, not in the narrower antique sense, could not fully evolve. Some common patrie, some danger to the whole race, such as the attempted Tartar conquest of Japan — might temporarily arouse the true sentiment of patrio-
-ism; but otherwise that sentiment had little opportunity for development. The Isé cult represented, indeed, the religion of the nation, as distinguished from the clan or tribal worship; but each man had been taught to believe that his first duty was to his lord. One cannot adequately serve two masters; and feudal government practically suppressed any tendencies in that direction. The lordship so completely owned the individual, body and soul, that the idea of any duty to the nation, outside of the duty to the chief, had neither time nor chance to define itself in the mind of the vassal. To the ordinary samurai, for example,
an imperial order would not have been law: he recognized no law above the law of his daimyō. As for the daimyō, he might either disobey or obey an imperial command according to circumstances: his direct superior was the Chōgūn; and he was obliged to make for himself a political distinction between the Heavenly Sovereign as deity, and the Heavenly Sovereign as a human personal lord. Before the ultimate centralization of the military power, there were many instances of lords sacrificing themselves for their emperor; but there were even more cases of open rebellion by lords against the imperial will.
Under the Tokugawa rule, the question of obeying or resisting an imperial command would have depended upon the attitude of the Shōgun; and no daimyō would have risked such obedience to the court at Kyoto as might have signified disobedience to the court at Yedo. Not at least until the Shōgunate had fallen into decay. In Iyémi's time the daimyō were strictly forbidden to approach the imperial palace on their way to Yedo, — even in response to an imperial command; and they were also forbidden to make any direct appeal to the Mikado.

The policy of the Shōgunate was to prevent all
direct communication between the Kyōto court and the daimyō. This policy
paralysis in intrigue for two hundred years; but it prevented the devel-

opment of patriotism.

And for that very reason, when Japan at last found herself face to face with the unexpected peril of Western aggression, the abdication of the daimyō was felt to be a matter of para-
mount importance. The supreme danger requires that the social units
should be fused into one coherent mass, capable of uniform action.
— that the clan and tribal popu-

lations should be permanently dis-

solved, — that all authority should

immediately be centered in the rep-

resentative of the national religion,
— that the duty of obedience is
The Heavenly Sovereign should replace, at once and forever, the feudal duty of obedience to the territorial lord. The religion of loyalty, evolved by a thousand years of war, could not be cast away; properly utilized, it would prove a national heritage of incalculable worth—a moral power capable of miracles if directed by one wise will to a single wise end, discovered by reconstruction. Nor could it ever be; but it could be diverted and transformed. Diverted, therefore, to nobler ends, expanded to larger needs, it became the new national sentiment of trust and duty; the modern sense of patriotism. What wonders it has wrought, within the space of three years, the world is now obliged to confess:
what more it may be able to ac-
compish, remains to be seen.
One thing at least is certain,—
that the future of Japan must
depend upon the maintenance
of this new religion of loyalty,
evolved, through the old, from
the ancient religion of the
dead.