

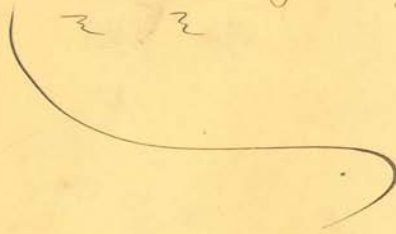
~~Wagler~~

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The Religion of Loyalty.

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"Militant societies," says the author of the Principles 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,— that

faith derived from the cult of the ancestors.

The reader will understand how filial piety — the domestic religion of obedience — widens in range with social evolution, and eventually differentiates both in its kind and political obedience required by the community, and that military obedience exacted by the war-lord, — obedience implying not only submission, but affectionate submission, — not merely the sense of obligation, but the sentiment of duty. In its origin such dutiful obedience is essentially religious; and, as expressed in loyalty, it retains the religious character, —

becomes the constant manifestation of a religion of self-sacrifice. Loyalty is developed early in the history of a militant people; and we find touching examples of it in the earliest Japanese chronicles. We find also terrible ones, — stories of self-immolation.

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 To his divinely-descended lord, the retainer owed every-thing — in fact not less than 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. To 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 lifetime, owed him direct obedience. It could not be permitted, that the spirit of the ruler should enter unattended into the world of shadows: some, at least, of those who served him living were bound to follow him in death. Thus in early societies arose the custom of human sacrifices, — sacrifices at first obligatory, afterwards voluntary. In Japan, as stated 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 the
 abolition of obligatory junshi, or
 following of one's 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 daimyō it was
 then common for fifteen or
 twenty of his retainers to dis-
 embowel themselves. Iyēyasu
 determined to put an end to
 this custom of suicide, which
 is thus considered in the 76th
 article of his celebrated Legacy:—

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Chun-ling

Sinsien Ti-pai-tsun

"Although it is undoubtably the ancient custom for a vassal to follow his Lord in death, there is not the slightest reason in the practice. Confucius has ridiculed the making of Yō [effigies buried with the dead]. These practices are strictly forbidden, more especially to primary retainers, but to secondary retainers likewise, - even of the lowest rank. It is the reverse of a faithful servant who disregards this prohibition. It is possible; shall be impoverished by the confiscation of his property, as a warning for those who disobey the laws."

Iyeyasu's command ended the practice
 of jinsi 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 per-
 -forming jinsi should be pun-
 -ished; and the Shōgunate was
 in earnest. When this edict
 was disobeyed by one Uyémon
 no Hyogé, who disemboweled
 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 jinsi have occurred
 even within this present era

of Meiji, the determined attitude of the Tokugawa government so far checked the practice that even the most fervid loyalty, leading made its sacrifices through religion, as a rule. Instead of performing harakiri, the retainer shaved his head at the death of his lord, and became a Buddhist monk.

1/2 line >

The custom of jūshi 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 jūshi, but as a self-inflicted

penalty exacted by the traditions
of samurai discipline. Against
harakiri, as punitive suicide,
there was no legislative enact-
-ment, 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 Nihongi
bears witness. It was
the military class that es-
-tablished the harakiri
as a custom and privilege.
Previously, the chiefs of a

rounded army, or the defenders of a castle taken by storm, would thus end themselves to avoid falling into the enemy's hands, — a custom which continues into the present era.

About the close of the fifteenth century the military custom of permitting any samurai to perform harakiri, instead of subjecting him to the shame of execution, appears to have been generally established. Afterwards 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

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or the will of a liege-lord, might require it. . . . Women, I should observe, do 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-cut movement. . . . The particulars of the harakiri ceremony have become so well-known through Midford's translation of Japanese texts on the subject, that I need not touch upon them. The important fact I remember is that honour and loyalty required the samurai man or woman to be ready, at any moment to perform self-destruction by the sword. As for the warrior, any breach of trust (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 aristocrats 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 him to reason had failed, — which heroic custom has been made the subject of several ^{popular} remarkable dramas 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 ^{it was} sometimes performed merely as a sacrifice of loyalty to the spirit of the husband, after his untimely death.* In the case of girls it was not uncommon for other reasons, — samurai maidens often entering into the service of noble households, where the cruelty of intrigue 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 feudal lord: she must reverence and obey her husband".

than the warrior & the lord; and
the heroines of Japanese feudalism
were many.

~~p. 164~~ In the early ages it appears
& 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 to be 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 ^{bereaved} wife to perform
suicide, not through despair, but
through the wish to follow her

husband into the other world, and there I wait upon him as in life. Instances of female suicide, representing the old ideal of duty to a dead husband, have occurred in recent times.

Such suicides are usually performed according to the feudal rules, - the woman robing herself in white for the occasion. At the time of the late war with China there occurred in Tokyo one remarkable 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-

-paradise for her own, - writing letters of farewell to her relatives, putting her affairs in order, and carefully cleaning the house, according to old-time rule. Thereafter she donned her death-robe; laid matting 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 seated herself before the portrait, took up her dagger, and with a single skillful thrust divided the arteries of her throat.

R. B. B. B.

Besides the duty of suicide for the sake of preserving honour, 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 remonstrance against shameless conduct on the part of one's lord, when all other means of persuasion had been tried in vain. Among samurai women — taigai is considered their husbands as their lords, in the feudal meaning of the term — it was held a moral obligation to perform jigai, by way of protest against disgraceful behaviour upon the part of a husband who would not listen to advice or reproof. The ideal of wifely duty which impelled such sacrifice still survives; and

more than one recent example might be cited of a generous life thus laid down in rebuke of some moral wrong. Perhaps the most touching instance occurred in 1892, at the time of the district elections in Nagano prefecture. A rich voter 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 jigai 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.

McGhalis

To kill oneself at command — a duty which no loyal samurai would have dreamed of calling in question — appears to us 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.* Nor have we any reason to suppose that the facts have been exaggerated in these

* See, for a good example, the translation of the drama Terakoya, published, with admirable illustrations, by T. Hasegawa (Tōkyō).

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 thus given of the ancient social, are probably even less grim than the vanished reality.

The people still 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

his love of the old stage, proof
of what foreign critics by always
to ignore as much as possible, —
the deeply religious character of
the people. These plays con-
- tinue to give delight, — not be-
- cause of their horror, but
because of their moral teaching,
— because of their exposition
of the duty of sacrifice and
courage, the religion of loyalty.
They represent the martyrdoms
of feudal society for its
noblest ideals.

As down through that
society, in varying forms, the
same spirit of loyalty had its
manifestations. As the samurai
to his liege-lord, so the apprentice

was bound to the patron, and the clerk to the merchant. Everywhere there was trust, because everywhere there existed 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.

$\frac{1}{2}$ line

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 oldest chronicles of Japan seem with instances of obligatory vengeance. Confucian ethics more than affirm 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 ^{Confucian} system, as I have remarked elsewhere, was founded upon ancestor-worship, and represented

scarcely 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; and it was sustained by law as well as by custom in later ages. Iyeyasu himself maintained it, - exacting only that preliminary notice of an intended vendetta should be given in writing to the district criminal court. The text of his article on the subject is interesting: -

#2117

Dans

Smaller Type - Less

" In respect to avenging injury done to master or father, it is acknowledged by the Wise and Virtuons [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 chastisement of an enemy be attended with riot. Follows

smaller type
- lead

who neglect to give notice of their intended revenge are like ^{of pretext*} wolves: their punishment or pardon should depend upon the circumstances of the case".

3 eds

Kindred, 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 to perform the duty. Apprentices avenged their masters; 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 Howden.)

sworn friends were bound to avenge each other.

#2147 Why the duty of vengeance was not confined to the circle of natural kinship is explicable, of course, by the peculiar organization 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; and with the intro-
 -duction of Chinese ethics, and
 the development of feudal con-
 -ditions, the idea of revenge as
 a 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: & strike
 one's teacher was, before the law,
 an equal offense. This notion
 of the teacher's claim & filial
 reverence was of Chinese impor-
 -tance: an extension of the
 duty of filial piety to "the
 father of the mind". There
 were other such extensions; and

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

~~Word~~ Now, what has never been properly insisted upon, in any of the books dealing of ancient Japanese customs, is the 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 conserved its religious character unchanged down to the present era.

The kataki-uchi was essentially an act of propitiation, as is proved by the rite with which it always terminated: the placing of the enemy's head upon the tomb of the person avenged, as an offer-

-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. Sometimes the address was only spoken; sometimes it was also written, and the manuscript left upon the tomb. There is probably none of my readers unacquainted with Mitford's ever-delightful Tales of Old Japan, and his translation of the true story of the "Forty-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 significance of the address inscribed to their dead lord by the brave men who had so long waited and

watched for the chance to avenge
him. This address, of which I
quote Midford's admirable trans-
-lation, was laid upon the tomb
of the Lord Asano. It is still
preserved at the temple called
Sengakuji :-

[1703]

" The fifteenth year of Genroku
the twelfth month, the fifteenth
day. — We have come this day to do
homage here: forty-seven men in
all, from Oishi Kuranosuké down to
the foot-soldier Terasak Kichiyémon,
— all cheerfully about to lay down our
lives on your behalf. We reverently
announce this to the honoured spirit
of our dead master. On the four-
-teenth day of the third month of
last year, our honoured master was
pleased to attack Kira Kôtsuké no
Suké, for what reason we know not.
Our honoured master put an end to his
own life; but Kira Kôtsuké no Suké lives.
Although we fear that after the decree issued
by the Government, his plot of ours will
be displeasing to our honoured master,

Onasen 7/21 - 1667

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 [Hades]
 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 annus to us.
 Verily, we have trodden
 the snow for one day,
 nay, for two days, and

In answer to the
 same

have tasted food but once.
 The old and decrepit, the
 sick and the ailing, have
 come forth gladly, & lay
 down their lives. Men
 might laugh at us, as at
 grasshoppers bustling in
 the strength of their arms,
 and thus shame our
 honoured lord; but we
 could not halt in our
 deed of vengeance.

Having taken counsel
 together last night, we
 have recorded my Lord
 Kōzuke-no-Duke's wishes
 to your Tomb. This
 dirk, by which our hon-
 -oured lord set great
 store last year, and

Small type
 faint

entrusted to our care, we
 now bring back. If your
 noble spirit be now present
 before this Tomb, we pray
 you, as a sign, to take
 the dirk, and, striking
 the head of your enemy,
 with it a second time,
 to dispel your hatred
 forever. This is the res-
 -pectful statement of
 forty-seven men."

Smaller type
 least

3 eds

McGulloch

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 presentation of heads to a living superior. It is laid upon the tomb together with the misericord sword, or dagger, originally used by the Lord Asano in performing harakiri by government command, and afterwards used by Oishi Kira-no-suké in cutting off the head of Kira Kôtsuké 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 lord 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 Ronin. When I last visited Sengakiji, the ground about the Tombs was white with visiting-cards.

-pretend the whole of this romance of loyalty; but I think that whoever carefully reads Mr. Midford's version of it, and his translation of the authentic documents relating to it, will confess himself moved. That address especially touches — because of the affection and the faith to 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 to 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 gratitude, self-denial, courage in facing death, and ~~reverence~~ ^{faith in} the unseen. Which is only another way of saying that we are, consciously or unconsciously,

impressed by their religious quality.
 Mere individual revenge — the post-
 -posed retaliation for some personal
 injury, — repels our moral feeling:
 we have learned to regard the
 emotion inspiring such revenge as
 simply brutal — something shared
 by man with lower forms of
 animal life. But in the story
 of a homicide exacted by the
 sentiment of duty or gratitude to
 a dead master, there may be
 circumstances which can make
 appeal to our highest 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 Ronin
 is one of this class...

Embelt

Yet it must be borne in mind that the old Japanese religion of loyalty, which found its supreme manifestation in those three terrible customs of junshi, harakiri, and kataki-uchi, 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 everywhere similar in character, the circle of that duty, for each individual, did not extend beyond the ^{clan} group to which he belonged. For his own lord he remained always ready to die; but he felt himself in no wise bound to sacrifice himself for the ^{military} government, unless he happened to

belong to the special military following
of the Shōgun. His fatherland,
his country, his world, extended
only to the boundary 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 larger
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 peril, some danger
to the whole race, — such as the
attempted Tartar conquest of
Japan, — might temporarily
arouse the true sentiment of patriot-

-ism; but otherwise that sentiment had little opportunity for development. The Ise 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 com-
 -mand according to circumstances
 : his direct superior was the
 Shōgun ; and he was obliged
 to make for himself a politic
 distinction between the Heavenly
 Sovereign as deity, and the
 Heavenly Sovereign as a human
 personality. 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 Kyōto as might have signified disobedience to the court at Yedo. Not at least until the Shōgunate had fallen into decay. In Iyémitsu'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 paralyzed intrigue for two hundred years; but it prevented the development of patriotism.

~~Dakin~~ And for that very reason, when Japan at last found herself face to face with the unexpected peril of Western aggression, the abolition of the daimiāto was felt to be a matter of paramount 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 groupings should be permanently dissolved, — that all authority should immediately be centered in the representative of the national religion, — that the duty of obedience to

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. Destroyed by reconstruc-
 -tion it could not 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 thirty years, the
 world is now obliged to confess:

what more it may be able to accomplish, 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.

