

Survivals.

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Chickering

In the gardens of certain  
Buddhist temples there are  
trees which have been famous  
for centuries, — trees trained  
and clipped into extraordinary  
shapes. Some have the form  
of dragons; others have the  
form of pagodas, ships, um-  
-brellas. Supposing that one  
of these trees were abandoned  
to its own natural tendencies, it  
would eventually lose the queer  
shape so long imposed upon it;  
but the outline would not be  
altered for a considerable time,  
as the new leafage would at first

unfold only in the direction of least  
 resistance: that is to say within  
 limits originally established by  
 the shears and the pruning-knife.  
 By sword and last the old  
 Japanese society had been pruned  
 and clipped, bent and bound,  
 just like such a tree; and  
 after the reconstructions of the  
 Meiji period, — after the abolition  
 of the daimiats, and the sup-  
 -pression of the military class, —  
 it still maintained its former  
 shape, just as the tree would con-  
 -tinue to do when first abandoned  
 by the gardener. Though deliv-  
 -ered from the bonds of feudal  
 law, released from the shears  
 of military rule, the great bulk  
 of the social structure preserved  
 its ancient aspect; and the  
 rare spectacle bewildered and  
 delighted and deluded the Westerners

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observer. There indeed was Elf-land,  
 — the strange, the beautiful, the  
 grotesque, the very mysterious, —  
 totally unlike any of strange  
 and attractive ever beheld elsewhere.  
 It was not a world of the nine-  
 -teenth century after Christ, but  
 a world of many centuries before  
 Christ: yet this fact — the  
 wonder of wonders — remained  
 unrecognized; and it remains  
 unrecognized by most people  
 even to this day.

~~And~~ Fortunate indeed were  
 those privileged to enter this  
 astonishing fairyland thirty odd  
 years ago, before the period of  
 superficial change, and to observe  
 the unfamiliar aspects of its  
 life: the universal urbanity,  
 the smiling silence of crowds,  
 the patient deliberation of toil,  
 the absence of misery, and struggle.

Even yet, in those remainder districts where alien influence has wrought but little change, the charm of the old existence lingers and amazes; and the ordinary traveller can little understand what it means. That all are polite, that nobody quarrels, that everybody smiles, that pain and sorrow remain invisible, that the new police have nothing to do, would seem to prove a morally superior humanity. But for the trained sociologist it would prove something different, and suggest something very terrible. It would prove to him that this society had been moulded under immense coercion, and that the coercion must have been exerted uninter-ruptedly for thousands of years. He would immediately perceive that edicts and custom had not

yet become dissociated, and that the conduct of each person was regulated by the will of the rest. He would know that personality could not develop in such a social medium, — that no individual superiority dare assert itself, that no competition would be tolerated. He would understand that the outward charm of his life, — its softness, its smiling silence as of dreams, — signified the rule of the dead. He would recognize that between those minds and the minds of his own epoch no kinship of thought, no communion of sentiment, no sympathy whatever could exist, — that the separating gulf was not to be measured by thousands of leagues, but only by thousands of years, — that the psychological interval was hopeless as the distance from

planet & planet. Yet this know-  
 ledge probably would not — certainly  
 should not — blind him to the  
 intrinsic charm of things. Not  
 to feel the beauty of this archaic  
 life is to prove oneself insensible  
 to all beauty. Even that Greek  
 world, for which our scholars  
 and poets profess such loving  
 admiration, must have been in  
 many ways a world of the  
 same kind, whose daily mental  
 existence no modern mind could  
 share.

#1 line

Now that the great social tree, so wonderfully clipped and cared for twenty centuries or more, is losing its outward shape, let us try to see how much of the original design can still be traced.

Under all the outward aspects of individual activity, that modern Japan presents to the visitor's gaze, the ancient conditions really persist to an extent that no observation could reveal. Still the immemorial cult rules all the land. Still the family law, the communal law, and (though in a more irregular manner) the clan-law, control every action



of existence. I do not refer to any written law, but only to the old unwritten religious law, with its host of obligations deriving from ancestor-worship. It is true that many changes — and, in the opinion of the wise, too many changes — have been made in civil legislation; but the ancient proverb, "Government-laws are only seven-day laws," still represents popular sentiment in regard to hasty reforms. The old law, the law of the dead, is that by which the millions prefer to act and think. Though ancient social groupings had been officially abolished, re-groupings of a corresponding sort have been formed, instinctively, throughout the country districts. In theory the individual is free; in practice

he is scarcely more free than were his  
 forefathers. Old penalties for  
 breach of custom have been abro-  
 -gated ; yet communal opinion  
 is able to compel the ancient  
 obedience. Legal enactments  
 can nowhere effect immediate  
 change of sentiment and long-  
 -established usage, — least of  
 all among a people of such  
 fixity of character as the  
 Japanese. Young persons are  
 no more at liberty now, than  
 were their fathers as mothers  
 under the *Shōgunate*, to marry  
 at will, to invest their means  
 and efforts in undertakings not  
 sanctioned by family approval,  
 to consider themselves in any way  
 enfranchised from family authority.

;— and it is probably better for the present that they are not. No man is yet complete master of his activities, his time, or his means.

~~The~~ **Doms** — Though the individual is now registered, and made directly accountable to the law, while the household has been relieved from its ancient responsibility for the acts of its members, still the family, practically, remains the social unit, retaining its patriarchal organization and its particular cult. Not unwisely, the modern legislators have protected this domestic religion: to weaken its bond at this time were to weaken the foundations of the national moral life, — to introduce disintegrations into the most deeply-seated structures,

of the social organism. The new codes forbid the man, who becomes by succession the head of a house, to abolish that house: he is not permitted to suppress a cult. No legal presumptive heir to the headship of a family can enter in another family as adopted son or husband; nor can he abandon his own family in order to establish an independent family of his own.\* Provision has been made to meet extraordinary cases; but no individual is allowed, without good and sufficient reason, to free himself from those traditional obligations which the family-cult imposes. As regards adoption, the new law maintains the spirit of the old, with fresh provision

Note to  
preceding page.

\* That is to say, he cannot separate himself from the family in law; but he is free to live in a separate house. The tendency to further disintegration of the family is shown by a custom which has been growing of late years, — especially in Tokyo: the custom of demanding, as a condition of marriage, that the bride shall not be obliged to live in the same house with the parents of the bridegroom. This custom is yet confined to certain classes, and has been adversely criticized. Many young men, on marrying, leave the parental home to begin independent housekeeping, — though remaining legally attached to their parents' families, of course... It will <sup>perhaps</sup> be asked, What becomes of the cult in such cases? The cult remains in the parental home. When the parents die, then the ancestral tablets are transferred to the home of the married son.

for the conservation of the family religion, — permitting any person of legal age to adopt a son, on the simple condition that the person adopted shall be younger than the adopter. The new divorce-laws do not permit the dismissal of a wife for sterility alone (and divorce for such cause had long been condemned by Japanese sentiment) ; but, in view of the facilities given for adoption, this reform does not endanger the continuance of the cult. An interesting example of the manner in which the law still protects ancestor-worship is furnished by the fact that an aged and childless widow, last representative of her family, is not permitted to remain without

an heir. She must adopt a son if she can: if she cannot, because of poverty, or for other reasons, the local authorities will provide a son for her, — that is to say, a male heir to maintain the family-worship. Such official interference would seem to us tyrannical: it is simply paternal, and represents the continuance of an ancient regulation intended to protect the bereaved against what Eastern faith still deems the supreme misfortune, — the extinction of the home-cult. . . . In other respects the later codes allow of individual liberty unknown in previous generations. But the ordinary,

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person would not dream of attempting  
to claim a legal right opposed  
to common opinion. Family and  
public sentiment are still more  
potent than law. The Japanese  
newspapers frequently record tragedies  
resulting from the prevention or  
dissolution of unions; and these  
tragedies afford strong proof  
that most young people would  
prefer even suicide to the  
probable consequence of a success-  
-ful appeal to law against  
family decision.

#  $\frac{1}{2}$  line



~~body~~ — The communal form of coercion  
 is less apparent in the large cities;  
 but everywhere it endures to some  
 extent, and in the agricultural  
 districts it remains supreme. Be-  
 -ween the new conditions and the  
 old there is this difference, that  
 the man who finds the yoke  
 of his district hard to bear can  
 flee from it: he could not  
 do so fifty years ago. But  
 he can flee from it only to  
 enter into another state of subor-  
 -dination of nearly the same  
 kind. Full advantage, never-  
 -theless, has been taken of this  
 modern liberty of movement:  
 thousands yearly throng to the  
 cities; other thousands travel

over the country, from province to province; working for a year or a season in one place, then going to another, with little more hope for than experience of change. Emigration also has been taking place upon an extensive scale; but for the common class of emigrants, at least, the advantage of emigration is chiefly represented by the chance of earning larger wages. A Japanese emigrant community abroad organizes itself upon the home-plan\*; and the individual

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\* Except as regards the communal cult, perhaps. The domestic cult is transplanted;—emigrants, who go abroad accompanied by their families, take the ancestral tablets with them. To what extent the communal cult may have been established in emigrant communities, I have not yet been able to learn. It would appear, however, that the absence of Ujigami in certain emigrant settlements is to be accounted for solely by the pecuniary difficulty of constructing such temples and maintaining competent officiants. In Formosa, for example, though the domestic ancestor-cult is maintained in the homes of the Japanese settlers, Ujigami have not yet been re-established. The Government, however, has erected several important Shinto temples; and I am told that some of these will probably be converted into Ujigami when the Japanese population has increased enough to justify the measure.

emigrant probably finds himself as  
 much under communal coercion  
 in Canada, Hawaii, or the Philippine  
 Islands, as he could ever have been  
 in his native province. Needless  
 to say, but in foreign countries  
 such coercion is more than com-  
 -pensated by the aid and protec-  
 -tion which the communal organi-  
 -zation ensures. But with  
 the constantly increasing number  
 of restless spirits at home, and  
 the ever-widening experience of  
 Japanese emigrants abroad, it  
 would seem likely that the  
 power of the commune for com-  
 -pulsory coöperation must be-  
 -come considerably weakened in  
 the near future.

# 1/2 in 7

- as for the ritual or clan law, it survives to the degree of remaining almost omnipotent in administrative circles, and in all politics. Voters, officials, legislators, do not follow principles, in our sense of the word: they follow men, and obey commands. In these spheres of action the penalties of disobedience to orders are endless as well as serious: by a single such offense one may array against oneself powers that will continue their hostile operation for years and years, - unreasoningly, implacably, blindly, with the weight and persistence of natural forces, - of winds or tides. Any comprehension of the history of Japanese politics during the last fifteen years is not possible without some knowledge of clan-history.

A political leader, fully acquainted with the history of clan-parties, and their offshoots, can accomplish marvelous things; and even foreign indignees, with long experience of Japanese life, have been able to chess-play with clan-interests, & exercise a very real power in government circles. But to the ordinary foreigner, Japanese contemporary politics must appear a chaos, a disintegration, a hopeless flux. The truth is that most things remain, under varying outward forms, "as all were ordered, ages since,"—though the shiftings have become more rapid, and the results less obvious, in the haste of an era of steam and electricity.

*McGee*

The greatest of living

Japanese statesmen, the Marquis  
 Ito, long ago perceived that  
 the tendency of political life  
 to agglomerations, to clan-groupings,  
 presented the most serious obstacle  
 to the successful working of  
 constitutional government. He  
 understood that this tendency  
 could be opposed only by consid-  
 erations weightier than clan-  
 interests, considerations worthy  
 of supreme sacrifice. He  
 therefore formed a party of  
 which every member was pledged  
 to pass over clan-interests,  
 clique-interests, personal and  
 every other kind of interests,  
 for the sake of national interests.  
 Brought into collision with a  
 hostile cabinet in 1903, this  
 party achieved the feat of con-

-rolling its amonities even to the extent of maintaining its force in power; - but large fragments broke off in the process. So profoundly is the grouping-tendency, the clan-sentiment, identified with national character, that the ultimate success of Marquis Ito's policy must still be considered doubtful. Only a national danger, - the danger of war, - has yet been able to weld all parties together, to make all wills work as one.

Not only politics, but nearly all phases of modern life, yield evidence that the disintegration of the old society has been superficial rather than fundamental. Structures dissolved have recrystallized, taking forms

dissimilar in aspect to the original forms, but inwardly built upon the same plan. For the dissolution really effected represented only a separation of masses, not a breaking up of substance into independent units; and these masses, again cohering, continue to act only as masses. Independence of personal action, in the Western sense, is still almost inconceivable. The individual of every class above the lowest must continue to be at once coerced and coercer. Like an atom within a solid body, he can vibrate; but the orbit of his vibration is fixed. He must act and be acted upon in ways differing little from those of ancient times.

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As for being acted upon, the average man is under three kinds of pressure:— pressure from above, exemplified in the will of his superiors;— pressure about him, represented by the common will of his fellows and equals;— pressure from below, represented by the general sentiment of his inferiors. And this last sort of coercion is not the least formidable.

Individual resistance to the first kind of pressure,— that represented by authority,— is not even to be thought of; because the superior represents a clan, a class, an exceedingly multiple power of some description; and no solitary individual, in the present order of

things, can strive against a combination. To resist injustice he must find ample support, in which case his resistance does not represent individual action.

Resistance to the second kind of pressure — communal coercion — signifies ruin, loss of the right to form a part of the social body.

Resistance to the third sort of pressure, embodied in the common sentiment of inferiors, may result in almost anything — from momentary annoyance to sudden death — according to circumstances.

In all forms of society these three kinds of pressure are exerted to some degree; but in Japanese society, owing to

inherited tendency, and traditional sentiment, their power is tremendous.

Thus, in every direction, the individual finds himself confronted by the despotism of collective opinion: it is impossible for him to act with safety, except as one unit of a combination.

The first kind of pressure deprives him of moral freedom, exacting unlimited obedience to orders;— the second kind of pressure denies him the right to use his best faculties in the best way for his own advantage (that is to say, denies him the right of free competition);— the third kind of pressure compels him, in directing the actions of others, to follow tradition, to forbear innovations,

to avoid making any changes, however beneficial, which do not find willing acceptance on the part of his inferiors.

These are the social conditions which, under normal circumstances, make for stability, for conservation; and they represent the will of the dead. They are inevitable to a militant state;— they make the strength of that state;— they render facile the creation and maintenance of formidable armies. But they are not conditions favourable to success in the future international competition,— in the industrial struggle for existence against societies incomparably more plastic, and of higher mental energy.