

THE SUN RISES FOR JAPAN

The shining sun that had been for centuries the banner emblem displayed by the Japanese as a symbol of their empire, became more than a symbol when the empire became a republic under American auspices in May 1947. One who had at least a modest part in seeing that the stage was well set for the change over of the official machinery of a mighty nation was a few years ago on the staff of this publication and held a high position in the State Historical department, became an eye witness to the drab but eventful ceremonies of inaugurating the new world republic. Kenneth E. Colton, left the department in November, 1942 to serve in the army of the United States, and was one of those who marched into Japan soon after the atomic bomb ended World War II. Instead of returning by first vessel he was assigned as one of the many young Americans to assist General MacArthur in organizing Japan for a democratic way of life. Mr. Colton was engaged during the transition period in assisting leaders of one of the political parties that had been formed in organizing and formulating policies and teaching the people how to best use their new responsibilities.

Constitution Day for the new Japan is May 3. Accounts sent by magazine and newspaper correspondents agree that from a physical standpoint it was a very disagreeable day. They agree, also, in that many of the Japanese people felt that the cold and rain was a bad omen for the new republic. The officials in charge had planned a great and momentous occasion, but the people stayed away and laid the blame on the weather. The banzai cheers came from shivering crowds. A chorus sang the national anthem and loud speakers blared the music of classic composers. The big cheers were for Hirohito, the Emperor, who went through the form of wafting aside his scepter, and gave to the ceremonies only a few minutes of his useless time. The fireworks

were dampened and sputtered. The streetcars decorated as floats were dragged along the streets of Tokyo bearing the names Dawn, Prosperity, Peace, Music and National Glory. General MacArthur granted the Japs the right to fly their old national flag over the building in which the Diet met and some other public buildings. The Emperor held a little get-together inside his palace and went through the motions of dissolving the Privy Council and the Imperial Family Council. Previously the elections had been held. The Japanese tossed their ballots into the boxes like children learning a new game. Thus it was that an old empire became a new republic.

In the years to come Constitution Day for Japan may be recognized as of great significance, or it may be forgotten; but we take pleasure in making of record the personal impressions of the event by an Iowan, one of the staff of this magazine. In a letter to the editor, Mr. Colton tells in a very informal way of the events of that critical day in history. His letter, not written for publication, is as follows:

Tokyo, 3 May 1947, Eventide:

In the First Day, of the Year One, of the Democratic Era, Nippon.

Last evening at about five o'clock a drizzling rain began to fall, which, emptying from leadened skies, portended but a poor day for 3 May, Constitution Day in Japan. On 3 May the new constitution which was promulgated in the public ceremonies of 3 November 1946 takes effect. A special committee on the popularization of the constitution has been at work in the interim. Today, therefore, was to be Der Tag.

All night long the skies emptied their burdens of water upon a supposedly rejoicing people. At dawn this morning anxious eyes searched the four corners, the eight corners, and even sought in one of the sixteen corners for evidence of a brake in the dampening cloak of rain. In vain. Nevertheless the people came to the outdoor ceremony in the Imperial Plaza. By eight o'clock figures bent under umbrellas and garbed in old clothes or raincoats were making their way to the palace grounds. A reporter for INS later told me that he thought they were marching in approximate units as they had two days before for the May Day celebration, under order from their block associations. If so, the response was in accordance with the weather. Small.

By nine-thirty I had tidied up the desk a mite, had borrowed the office jeep, and taken along our interpreter, and hied away for a sight of democracy descending as the dew of heaven upon the waiting throng below. Most of the crowds were under umbrellas. Some tents were erected for the members of the Diet and other high dignitaries. Prince Takamatsu was there, as was Baron Shidehara, Premier Yoshida and Ashida, who had been chairman of the House of Representatives Constitution Committee, and president of the popularization committee. The only Communist member of the Diet I saw was Nozaka Sanzo, the former resident of Yen-an, China.

The morning ceremony was witnessed by about 10,000, perhaps. Not much more. After Ashida had delivered himself a few well chosen words, old aged Ozaki Yukio, who had been a member of every parliamentary Diet in Japan since the very first one was seated, spoke stoutly and firmly, dressed in a warm topcoat and muffler, and fully belied his 90 years. The Prime Minister followed, in turn succeeded by Yasui, present Governor of Tokyo Prefecture. A new song, "Our Nippon", preceded the main event. Which was guess! The Emperor, himself, old Charlie, no less. As usual, Charlie was a wee bit late, arriving in a limousine at approximately eleven o'clock. The first evidence of any enthusiasm greeted the stiff-legged sovereign, dressed for the occasion in a light brown top coat and the usual light gray fedora of some nondescript shape.

The attending hosts, after a moments hesitation, tossed their hats and their collective lungs in a vibrating "banzai." Premier Yoshida then offered an official "banzai" cheer leading, which produced some genuine results. After an additional moment of doffing his hat, the Emperor turned and departed. He had been on the platform no more than four minutes at the most. His usefulness having been expended, he was ready to depart, without one single word. Ashida who had stood bareheaded in the drizzling rain waiting for his sovereign on his arrival, led his ruler back to his red-trimmed foreign designed limousine. Strong cordons of Japanese raincoated policemen stood in serried ranks to keep back a throng which might have aspired to repeat the performance of November 1946, when the 75,000 or so swept around Charlie's carriage and in a most amazing demonstration of imperial enthusiasm, blocked the progress of his carriage for minutes to a string of fifteen or more. This time the cordon stood like the Swiss guard, but an end run around the side flanked them, and before the limousine had progressed twenty feet, a growing crowd

had arrived on the spot, reflecting in their faces a delighted surprise and expression as of a crowd of college men swooping down upon a goal post at the close of a hard fought game.

We then left. We had met most the political figures we knew; we had observed only about three or four correspondents known to us in attendance about the platform; we had observed only one other brass-hatted GHQ person present, a colonel of some sort unknown to me personally. I was glad I had gone. I was wet, shoes damp, but the occasion was worthwhile. One of the politicians asked to come in to see me Monday A. M. from the Cooperative Democrats—and since that party is the bellweather of the current unrest in coalition cabinet plans, I know something is brewing.

In the afternoon a special Constitution Ceremony was staged in the Imperial Theatre for Japanese and "high allied guests". I had a special invitation from Ashida's secretary, so was all set. We arrived half hour before the services, and found ourselves in fortunate hands when Sakakibara met us and ushered us to a special seat in the balcony. Across the aisle from us was the section reserved for the imperial princes and princelings. The section beyond that was reserved for Diet and Japanese governmental figures. We sat in the diplomatic section and "high allied guests" section. Our echelon was very high, about as high as it has been since I arrived in Tokyo in February '46. One could feel the eye of Japanese upon one, wondering "who is that, I wonder if . . .", and a nudge here and there seeking an occasional answer from their more "fortunate neighbor." More seriously, it was a fine spot. Prince Takamatsu came in at the last minute, flanked, rather followed by the Crown Prince and what I took to be the two daughters of Charlie. The Crown Prince, incidentally, surprised me by his presence, self possession and facial appearance of intelligence. Those of you who know Dr. Norman, Canadian Minister of Legation, will be pleased to know he was there, just in front of Home Minister Nehara. Dr. Norman is to call on me Wednesday, and we are then to go out to see General Kagesa whom he has wanted to meet for some time.

The ceremony in the afternoon began at three, and ended at about five-thirty. It consisted exclusively of western music written especially for the occasion, closed by a kabuki dance, one of the nondramatic numbers.

The evening, still damp, although the misting rain had ceased, was to be marked by a display of fireworks. Fireworks, they said. That they had. But the display would have made a small Iowa community blush. Many an Iowa territorial centennial town have I seen better arrayed, and fire works displayed at the state fair would have been an unfair comparison. The rockets were almost

exclusively of two patterns, and the equipment used was such that only one rocket could be fired at a time. We walked to the "launching site" in the imperial palace grounds, found one "trench mortar" apparatus in operation, with the rockets under a tarpaulan, and the consequent delay of a minute or three between each flare. There was no "picture art," such as many of us have been accustomed to see at public celebrations in the states.

Several pertinent observations seemed called for at the conclusion of the day, 3 May, 1947, Constitution Day in Japan.

First. Unquestionably there will be many a Japanese who will in his heart view the steady unremitting downfall of misting rain as a heavenly portent of the ill-omened source of the new constitution, and the portent it offers for the future of Japan. Black! This is something which can not be statistically proved. But like electricity, those of us here take it "on faith."

Second. The marked lack of any spontaneous enthusiasm or evidence of a gala spirit. The reasons for this may have been several, including the rain. Not least, of course, was the close of a concentrated month of elections, when Japan had four national election days, electing men to eight different offices, national and local. This sapped energies, competed for publicity and propaganda, and blanketed much "enlightenment." A third reason for this second cause, lack of enthusiasm, must rest in the Japanese themselves, I believe, and the lack of imagination in the committee to devise ways and means to put on a gala face for the occasion.

A third feature of the day's events was the strange nature of the ceremony. We must grant first of all that possibly the ceremonies meant more to the Japanese than I think they did, but I'll argue that a bit too, based upon comparable situations in the past. For instance, an afternoon program to celebrate the auspicious occasion of a new era in Japan, devoted solely and exclusively to the "arts" and music! I was struck by the total absence of any pledge by representatives of various elements of the public, the labor unions, education representatives, political parties, declaring their wholehearted support of the objectives and purposes enshrined in the document. One missed any feeling of personal dedications, or organizational commitment. One felt a dead matter of form. There was no enthusiasm in the morning, none in the afternoon. So far as I know, there are no general follow-up programs utilizing such aspects of a public event, momentous for Japan, as suggested immediately above.

A fourth feature was the reaction of the imperial family. Charlie got the only enthusiastic spontaneous response of the morning.

And by the constant attentions of the photographers who aimed at the imperial group in the afternoon, it was clear where the news interest lay. Incidentally, I may appear in some Japanese history journal in the by and by, because we were so close to the Prince that I fear we may have been caught in some of the fringes used for backgrounds. This attention was notable for several aspects. It would have seemed to me that the Imperial household would have been well advised to try to identify the imperial house as much as possible with this new document, which regardless of any other aspect of it, will remain in Japan for many years to come. An instance of an omission which I think a good personnel man would never have permitted was the photographing of the Prince in the lobby during intermission alone with members of his entourage. I would have had him grouped with some of the State Ministers who had helped to formulate the constitution, would have had him taken while talking to Ashida or some others identified with the "democratization" of new Japan. No. None of that.

Then, as for the evening, 'spite the rain, the fireworks could have been better, could have shown an evidence for larger planning, more scope, a greater grandeur of mind for the occasion. Quite visibly the Japanese alone had the management of this phase of the affair. SCAP would have been well advised to have spent some \$10,000, and to have helped Japan to a really effective pyrotechnic display.

But it was an eventful day. It brings to a full circle the events that began in the Diet 25 June 1946, which included the ceremonies in the plaza last November. The new era has come. In a way, it is perhaps well that its launching, while earnest and conscientious as I am sure it was, was less than perfect. It may give some folks an opportunity for "self reflection," to use a phrase beloved by the Japanese.

I go now to listen to the late evening news, to scan some more Japanese "kanji," to read a recent book loaned to me, and as I go, I offer you all a mythical cup of the sake distributed as extra rations to the Japanese today, in a "Skol" to the Day and the occasion, hoping, it may prove truly the opening of a new epoch in Japan.

As I prepare to leave, I glance up and notice the Tokyo version of the "iron curtain," the real iron curtain that descends each night over our windows on the ground floor facing the street. This lowering the curtain began two nights ago, for the first time including the first days of the occupation. I think it was a most mistaken idea of some wild-eyed officer's concept of "security." It is bad at this time in "view of the international situation," to borrow another Japanese phrase. With the arrival of eleven B 29's on a "training flight" to Japan, with the existence

of unfounded rumors amongst the Japanese public and Russian difficulties, such a gesture is stupid. It fosters that which it should seek to prevent. It but further demonstrates the wisdom of civilian administration wherever possible. I'll bet that item might well have not been said.

Democratically, KEN.

FOR THE GREATEST GOOD OF ALL

When Iowa was 25 years old and every county had been marked off and named, the cornerstone of the new state capitol was laid, and on that occasion the then governor of Iowa, Samuel Merrill, reviewed Iowa history, noted the marvellous progress already made, and in closing said:

"And what of her future? Who shall measure its capabilities or confine its possibilities? With our vast extent of excellent soil, with millions of untouched acres awaiting the pioneer plow, with immense treasures of mineral wealth stored away for the use of countless generations to come, with a delightful and invigorating climate, with an intelligent and liberty loving people, with a beneficent system of common schools, the nursery of freedom and the dread of tyrants, the prospect before us bewilders while it enchants.

"It behooves us and those who shall come after us, to build worthy of these grand opportunities, and to use well the means a kind providence has placed at our disposal. Let us see to it that to the extent of our power we securely fashion the fabric of the commonwealth, that freedom and equality, justice, intelligence, and public virtue shall ever be its characteristics; that ours shall not be

'A land to hast'ning ills a prey,

Where wealth accumulates and men decay;'

but one whose material triumphs, while enriching the whole, shall yet not impoverish any; and that the laws to be promulgated from the edifice soon to crown this fair height, while looking to the suppression of crime, the removal of poverty, and the dissipation of their causes, shall ever tend to the true object of righteous legislation—the greatest good of all the people."

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