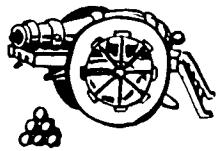
CHAPTER XXIV



THE DEBATE OVER SECLUSION AND RESTORATION

After 1739 Russian ships were seen in Japanese waters with increasing frequency. A report was brought home by waifs that the Russians had established a school of navigation at Irkutsk in 1764, and that a Japanese language department had been added in 1768. The Russian government was not alone in its persistent efforts to open Japan's closed door; in 1808 the English ship *Phaeton* humiliated the shogunate by forcing its way into the port of Nagasaki; and the commissioner of the port had to commit suicide as a result of the disgrace. The country was already in turmoil when Commodore Perry of the United States arrived in 1853 at Uraga Bay near the shogunal capital to demand that Japan be opened to navigation and trade. This was only five years after the United States had annexed California. Literally defenseless, the shogunate had no choice but to accept a treaty stipulating that two ports be opened. This was a complete reversal of the long established shogunate policy of excluding foreigners, and provoked an uproar from one end of the country to the other. The mounting discontent and agitation pointed unmistakably to the downfall of the tottering shogunate. From the raging debate on the open-door three main points of view emerged. The Mito schoolmen, headed by Lord Nariaki and eloquently spoken for by Fujita Tōko and Aizawa Seishisai, came to be known as the group which advocated "reverence to [meaning eventually "restoration of"] the emperor and repulsion of foreigners" (*sonnō-jōi*). A more conciliatory group advocated "union of the civil authority [Kyoto Court] and military authority [Edo Shogunate]" (*kōbu gattai*) in order to strengthen the nation politically; in the cultural sphere it called for the adoption of Western science and art while preserving Oriental ethics. The most important spokesman for this view was Sakuma Shōzan (1811–1864), later victim of assassination at

the hands of a political opponent, who set forth the shogunal policy of opening the country in order to learn Western techniques indispensable for the defense of the country. There was a third group which believed that the salvation of the country would come not from the mere adoption of certain techniques or tactics, but only from a complete renovation of national life through a system of education based on Western civilization and science. This group had as its predecessors such leaders as Sugita Gempaku and Takano Chōei. In the latter half of the nineteenth century Fukuzawa Yukichi was its foremost leader and spokesman, with "independence and self-respect" (*dokuritsu jison*) as his slogan.

THE LATER MITO SCHOOL

"Revere the Emperor, Repel the Barbarian"

The Mito school, as we have already seen, was inaugurated in the seventeenth century by Tokugawa Mitsukuni for the purpose of compiling an official history of Japan. This work, however, remained in preliminary draft during Mitsukuni's lifetime, and was not in fact put into final form until the early years of the present century. Meanwhile, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Mito branch of the Tokugawa family rose steadily in influence, partly owing to the great prestige acquired through its sponsorship of a project in which many illustrious scholars participated. Its political fortunes rose especially after Nariaki succeeded to leadership of the family, and his son became a candidate for the office of shogun in the absence of an heir in the main Tokugawa line. But the rising political power of Mito was also due in no small measure to the simple and forceful doctrines disseminated by its leading schoolmen. These were dramatized in the slogans: "Shinto and Confucianism are one!" (*Shinju-funi*), "Literary and military [training] are not incompatible" (*Bumbu-fugi*), and "Loyalty to sovereign and loyalty to parents are one in essence" (*Chūkō-ippon*).

Here was a program designed to conciliate and unite the principal religious, intellectual, and political elements in the country against the threat from outside. But what answer had these men to the great question of the moment: "How are the foreigners to be dealt with?" To under-

stand their answer we must review Japanese history as the Mito men themselves were doing in their compilation of the *Dai-Nihon-shi*. The office of shogun, which the Tokugawa held, had its inception in the subjugation of the Ainu, then called the "Northern Barbarians." Generals commissioned by the imperial court to undertake campaigns of suppression were designated "Barbarian-subjugating Generalissimo" (*Sei-i tai shōgun*), subsequently abbreviated to simply Generalissimo (*Shōgun*). The original function of the shogunate was, then, to cope with the barbarians. But the Tokugawa were obviously unable to discharge this responsibility. By yielding to the demands of the barbarians from America, the shogunate had abandoned its trust and forfeited its authority to rule. In this predicament the Mito branch of the Tokugawa, one of three specially appointed to guard the interests of the ruling house, was in a logical position to take the lead in salvaging the situation. Its solution, as set forth by Aizawa Seishisai (1782–1863) and Fujita Tōko (1806–1855), was to deal with the new barbarians as vigorously and contemptuously as earlier barbarians had been dealt with.

In his *New Proposals* (*Shinron*) Aizawa puts the issue in this form: "In the defense of the state through armed preparedness, a policy for peace or for war must be decided upon before all else. If there is indecision on this point, the people will be apathetic, not knowing which way to turn. Morale will deteriorate while everyone hopes for peace that cannot materialize. The intelligent will be unable to plan; the brave will be unable to stir up their indignation. Thus day after day will be spent allowing the enemy to mature his plans. Waiting until defeat stares one in the face is due to an inner sense of fear that prevents resolute action. In the days of old when the Mongols were insolent, Hōjō Tokimune stood resolute. Having beheaded the Mongol envoy, he ordered his generals to summon the army for war. Emperor Kameyama, majestic as he was, prayed at the Ise Shrine and offered his life for the salvation of the country. Thereupon the men who were called upon to sacrifice themselves responded by defying death in a body, as if the entire nation were of one mind. Their loyalty and patriotism were such as to bring forth a storm and hurricane that smashed the foe at sea. 'Put a man in a position of inevitable death, and he will emerge unscathed,' goes the saying. The ancients also said that the nation would be blessed if all in the land lived as if the enemy were right on the border. So I say, let a

policy for peace or for war be decided upon first of all, thus putting the entire nation into the position of inevitable death. Then and only then can the defense problem be easily worked out."[1]

This is what came to be known as the policy of "repelling the barbarians" (*jōi*). But Aizawa felt, even though he could not openly declare it, that the shogun lacked the authority to make a final decision in favor of such a policy. The historical studies of the Mito school had already established that the descendants of the Sun Goddess were the ordained rulers of the Land of the Rising Sun. So with Aizawa, as with Nariaki and Tōko, reverence for and loyalty to the sovereign (*sonnō*) must be the rallying cry for the entire nation in putting up a unified front against the growing threat of the Western barbarians. On this point the Mito spokesmen joined hands with the Neo-Shintoists. Aizawa mentions the special features of Japanese geography and history; that the country was created by Heavenly forebears and is located at the center of the world; that ever since the descent of the Sun Goddess the country has been ruled by a single line of her descendants; that in Japan loyalty to the sovereign and filial piety to parents form the basis of all morality, so that the people will live happily and die happily for the sake of the emperor and their parents. This is the nucleus of the Japanese nationalistic ideology that later came to be known as the "national polity" (*kokutai*).

Because of the introduction of Buddhism in earlier times, the people had lost sight of the basic truths of history and had become lax in the observance of the fundamental duties of loyalty and filial piety. Throughout the medieval period confusion and disorder became almost the rule, until Hideyoshi and Ieyasu pacified the country. "Thus the whole land and the entire population came under a single control and all as one paid respect to the benevolence of the Heavenly court while at the same time obeying the commands of the shogunate. Peace reigned supreme over the nation. Because of the prolonged peace, however, signs of weakness and sluggishness have appeared: the rulers of fiefs are easygoing; they make no provision for times of need and destitution; reckless people are left to themselves and go unpunished; foreign barbarians stand by off our coasts awaiting their chance. . . . But all the people, high and low, are intent only upon their own selfish gain, with no concern for the security of the nation. This is not the way to preserve our national

[1] Takasu, *Shinron kōwa*, p. 253.

polity. When a great man assumes leadership, he is only concerned lest the people be inactive. Mediocre leaders, thinking only of easy peace, are always afraid of the people's restlessness. They see to it that everything appears quiescent. But they let barbarians go unchecked under their very eyes, calling them just 'fishing traders.' They conspire together to hide realities, only to aggravate the situation through half-hearted inaction. Standing on high and surveying the scene in order to practice delaying tactics with an intelligent air seems to me a sure way of carrying us all to an inevitable catastrophe. . . . If instead the shogunate issues orders to the entire nation in unmistakable terms to smash the barbarians whenever they come into sight and to treat them openly as our nation's foes, then within one day after the order is issued, everyone high and low will push forward to enforce the order. . . . This is a great opportunity such as comes once in a thousand years. It must not be lost." [2]

Such is the clarion call of Aizawa's *New Proposals* (*Shinron*), which before the Second World War was acclaimed as one of the two immortal essays on militant loyalty and patriotism, the other being Yamaga Sōko's *Historical Evidence of the Central Kingdom* (*Chūchō jijitsu*).

AIZAWA SEISHISAI

Preface to the *New Proposals* (*Shinron*)

The *New Proposals* of Aizawa Seishisai, written in 1825, represents the first declaration of the creed of the Mito school, which until that time had confined itself to the writing of history and avoided political controversy. The crisis brought on by the appearance of Western ships in Japanese waters, and in particular the detention of crewmen from a British whaler in the Mito domain (1824), called forth this explicit statement of doctrines which had a powerful impact on their times.

[From Takasu, *Shinron kōwa*, 1–10]

Our Divine Land is where the sun rises and where the primordial energy originates. The heirs of the Great Sun have occupied the Imperial Throne from generation to generation without change from time immemorial. Japan's position at the vertex of the earth makes it the standard for the nations of the world. Indeed, it casts its light over the world, and the distance which the resplendent imperial influence reaches knows no limit.

[2] Takasu, *Shinron kōwa*, pp. 71–72.

Today, the alien barbarians of the West, the lowly organs of the legs and feet of the world, are dashing about across the seas, trampling other countries underfoot, and daring, with their squinting eyes and limping feet, to override the noble nations. What manner of arrogance is this!

The earth in the firmament appears to be perfectly round, without edges or corners. However, everything exists in its natural bodily form, and our Divine Land is situated at the top of the earth. Thus, although it is not an extensive country spatially, it reigns over all quarters of the world, for it has never once changed its dynasty or its form of sovereignty. The various countries of the West correspond to the feet and legs of the body. That is why their ships come from afar to visit Japan. As for the land amidst the seas which the Western barbarians call America, it occupies the hindmost region of the earth; thus, its people are stupid and simple, and are incapable of doing things. These are all according to the dispensation of nature. Thus, it stands to reason that the Westerners, by committing errors and overstepping their bounds, are inviting their own eventual downfall. But the vital process of nature waxes and wanes and Heaven may be overcome by the collective strength of men in great numbers.[1] Unless great men appear who rally to the assistance of Heaven, the whole natural order will fall victim to the predatory barbarians, and that will be all.

If, today, we should discuss a far-sighted program in the public interest, the public will stare at one another in astonishment and suspicion, for the public has been weakened by time-worn tales and become accustomed to outdated ideas. In [Sun Tzu's] *Art of War* it says: "Do not rely on their not coming upon you; rely on your own preparedness for their coming. Do not depend on their not invading your land; rely on your own defense to forestall their invasion."

Let, therefore, our rule extend to the length and breadth of the land, and let our people excel in manners and customs. Let the high as well as the low uphold righteousness [duty]; let the people prosper, and let military defense be adequate. If we proceed accordingly and without committing blunders, we shall fare well however forceful may be the invasion of a powerful enemy. But should the situation be otherwise, and

[1] According to Confucian theory Heaven, Earth, and Man form a harmonious Triad, the balance of which may be temporarily upset by the evil actions of men.

should we indulge in leisure and pleasure, then we are placing our reliance where there is no reliance at all.

Some say that the Westerners are merely foreign barbarians, that their ships are trading vessels or fishing vessels, and that they are not people who would cause serious trouble or great harm. Such people are relying on the enemy not coming and invading their land. They rely on others, not upon themselves. If I ask such people about the state of their preparedness, about their ability to forestall an invasion, they stare blankly at me and know not what to say. How can we ever expect them to help save the natural order from subversion at the hands of the Western barbarians?

I have not been able to restrain my indignation and my grief for this state of affairs. Thus, I have dared to set forth what the country should rely on. The first section deals with our national polity, in which connection I have called attention to the establishment of our nation through the loyalty and filial piety of our divine forbears. I have then emphasized the importance of military strength and the welfare of the people. The second section deals with the general situation, in which I have discussed the trend in international affairs. The third is on the intentions of the barbarians, in which I have discussed the circumstances of their designs upon us. The fourth is on defense, wherein I have discussed the essentials of a prosperous and militarily strong nation. The fifth presents a long-range plan wherein a method for the education of the people and the uplifting of their customs are mapped out. These five essays are written with the fervent prayer that in the end Heaven will triumph over man. They represent the general principles to which I have pledged my life in the service of Heaven and earth.

The National Polity

The opening portion of Aizawa's work presents his central conception of the national polity (*kokutai*), probably the most potent concept in modern Japanese nationalism because it so effectively brings together Shinto mythology and Confucian ethics of the *bushidō* variety. Note how, from beginning to end, Aizawa identifies the Sun Goddess with Heaven, which presides over the moral order of the Confucian universe, attributes to her the promulgation of the moral law and political order among men, and equates the Confucian virtues of loyalty and filial piety with Shinto worship and thanksgiving. For this reason *kokutai* has simultaneous religious, moral, and political overtones. It embraces the "national structure," especially the imperial institution; the "national basis" as found in the divine origins of the country and the dynasty; and the "national character" as embodied in those moral virtues which were considered indispensable to social unity and order.

[From Takasu, *Shinron kōwa*, pp. 13–20]

The means by which a sovereign protects his empire, preserves peace and order, and keeps the land from unrest is not the holding of the world in a tight grip or the keeping of people in fearful subjection. His only sure reliance is that the people should be of one mind, that they should cherish their sovereign, and that they should be unable to bear being separated from him. Since Heaven and earth were divided and mankind first appeared, the imperial line has surveyed the four seas generation after generation in the same dynasty. Never has any man dared to have designs on the imperial position. That this has been so right down to our own time could scarcely have been by mere chance.

The duty of subject to sovereign is the supreme duty [2] in Heaven and earth. The affection between parent and child is the quintessence of kindness (*on*) [3] in the land. The foremost of duties and the quintessence of kindness pervade everything between Heaven and earth, steadily permeating the hearts of men and enduring forever without change. These are what the sovereign relies upon above all in regulating Heaven-and-earth and maintaining order among the people.

Of old, when the Heavenly progenetrix [Amaterasu] established the state on a foundation as broad as Heaven, her position was a Heavenly position, and her virtues were Heavenly virtues, and with these she accomplished the Heavenly task of bringing order into the world. All things great and small were made to conform with Heaven. Her virtue was like that of the jewel, her brightness was like that of the mirror, and her awesome power was like that of the sword.[4] Embodying the benevolence of Heaven, reflecting the radiance of Heaven, and showing forth the awesome power of Heaven, she beamed majestically over the whole realm. When she bequeathed the land to her imperial grandson and personally bestowed the Three Regalia on him, these were taken

[2] Or principle of righteousness.
[3] Implying especially a strong sense of indebtedness for favors received.
[4] The Three Imperial Regalia.

to be symbols of the Heavenly office, giving form to the Heavenly virtue, and taking the place of Heaven's own hand in the performance of the Heavenly functions. Subsequently they were handed down to unbroken generations; the sanctity of the imperial line being such that no one dared violate it. The status of sovereign and subject was clearly defined, and the supreme duty [of loyalty to the Throne] was thereby made manifest.

When the Heavenly progenetrix handed down the Divine Regalia, she took the treasured mirror and giving her benediction, said: "Looking at this is like looking at me." Countless generations, bearing this in mind, have revered the mirror as the divine embodiment of the Heavenly progenetrix. Her holy son and divine grandson looked into the treasured mirror and saw in it a reflection. What they saw was the body bequeathed to them by the Heavenly progenetrix, and looking at it was like looking at her. Thus, while reverently worshiping her, they could not help feeling an intimate communion between gods and men. Consequently how could they not but reverence their ancestors, express their filial devotion, respect their own persons [as something held in trust], and cultivate their own virtue? Even so, as the love between parent and child deepens, the quintessence of kindness becomes fully manifest.

The Heavenly progenetrix, having thus established human morality on these two principles, imparted her teachings to endless generations. The obligations of sovereign and subject, parent and child—these are the greatest of Heaven's moral obligations. If the quintessence of kindness is achieved within and the highest duty is manifest without, loyalty and filial piety will be established and the great Way of Heaven and man will be brilliantly shown forth. By loyalty honor is done to those worthy of honor; by filial piety affection is shown to parents. It is truly by these means that the hearts of the people are made as one, and high and low are made to cherish one another.

But how is it that these superlative teachings are preserved without being propagated in words and how is it that the people practice them daily without being conscious of them?[5] As the Heavenly progenetrix resides in Heaven and beams majestically upon the earth below, so

[5] The question implies that these truths have a mysterious power so that they may be perpetuated in the life and experience of the people even though they have not been committed to writing. The subsequent passage explains how this mysterious power operates.

Heaven's descendant below manifests to the utmost his sincerity and reverence in order to repay his debt to the Heavenly ancestor. Religion and government being one,[6] all the Heavenly functions which the sovereign undertakes and all the works that he performs as the representative of Heaven are means of serving the Heavenly forebear. Revering the ancestor and reigning over the people, the sovereign becomes one with Heaven. Therefore, that his line should endure as long as Heaven endures is a natural consequence of the order of things. And thus, in expressing their supreme filial piety, successive sovereigns have maintained the imperial tombs and performed ceremonies of worship to their ancestors. They have manifested to the full their sincerity and reverence by observing the whole system of rites, and have fulfilled their duty of repaying the debt to their progenetrix and of reverencing their ancestors by performing the Great Thanksgiving Ceremony. This ceremony consists in the first tasting of the new grain and the offering of it to the Heavenly god[s].

The Danger from the West

The following excerpt from the *New Proposals* is preceded by a discussion of the principle known as "retracing the descent and repaying the original debt" (*hanshi hōhon*) which affirms the divine descent of the imperial house and the gratitude of the Japanese people for the blessings of the gods. According to Aizawa this principle was inculcated by the original Shinto teaching and reinforced by Confucianism from China. Later, however, it declined owing to the spread of superstitious beliefs identified as Shamanism, and of Buddhism, unorthodox Confucian teachings and Christianity.

[From Takasu, *Shinron kōwa*, pp. 90–95]

Thus, our ancestral teaching has been muddled by the shamans, altered by the Buddhists, and obscured by pseudo-Confucians and second-rate scholars who have, through their sophistries, confused the minds of men. Moreover the duties of sovereign and minister and of parent and child have been neglected and left undefined in their teachings. The great Way of Heaven and man are nowhere to be found in them.

In the past those who have attracted popular attention and confused the thinking of the populace with their improper teaching have only been

[6] The early Japanese word for government (*matsuri-goto*) is a compound based on the word for religious rite (*matsuri*), indicating a close association of political and religious functions.

people of our own realm. But now we must cope with the foreigners of the West, where every country upholds the law of Jesus and attempts therewith to subdue other countries. Everywhere they go they set fire to shrines and temples, deceive and delude the people, and then invade and seize the country. Their purpose is not realized until the ruler of the land is made a subject and the people of the land subservient. As they have gained momentum they have attempted to foist themselves on our Divine Land, as they have already done in Luzon and Java. The damaging effects of their heresies go far beyond anything done by those who attack from within our own land. Fortunately, our rulers were wise and our ministers alert, and thus were able to perceive their evil designs. The barbarians were killed and exterminated, and there has been no recurrence of this threat. Thus, for two hundred years, the designing and obstinate fellows have been prevented from sowing their seeds in our soil. That the people have been free from the inflammatory teaching of the barbarians has been due to the great virtue of our government. . . .

Recently, there has appeared what is known as Dutch Studies, which had its inception among our official interpreters [at Nagasaki]. It has been concerned primarily with the reading and writing of Dutch, and there is nothing harmful about it. However, these students, who make a living by passing on whatever they hear, have been taken in by the vaunted theories of the Western foreigners. They enthusiastically extol these theories, some going so far as to publish books about them in the hope of transforming our civilized way of life into that of the barbarians. And the weakness of some for novel gadgets and rare medicines, which delight the eye and enthrall the heart, have led many to admire foreign ways. If someday the treacherous foreigner should take advantage of this situation and lure ignorant people to his ways, our people will adopt such practices as eating dogs and sheep and wearing woolen clothing. And no one will be able to stop it. We must not permit the frost to turn to hard ice. We must become fully aware of its harmful and weakening effects and make an effort to check it. Now the Western foreigners, spurred by the desire to wreak havoc upon us, are daily prying into our territorial waters. And within our own domain evil teachings flourish in a hundred subtle ways. It is like nurturing barbarians within our own country.[7] If confusion reigns in the country, and depravity and obsequiousness among the people, could this land of ours still be called the Central Kingdom? Would it not be more like China, India, or the Occident? After all, what is the "basis"[8] of our nation?

[7] Lit. the "Central Kingdom," the usual Chinese name for China.

The Source of Western Unity and Strength

[From Takasu, *Shinron kōwa*, pp. 198, 215]

The Western barbarians have independent and mutually contending states, but they all follow the same God. When there is something to be gained by it, they get together in order to achieve their aims and share the benefits. But when trouble is brewing, each stays within his own boundaries for self-protection. So when there is trouble in the West, the East generally enjoys peace. But when the trouble has quieted down, they go out to ravage other lands in all directions and then the East becomes a sufferer. Russia for instance, having subjugated the Western plains, turned eastward to take over Siberia and penetrate the Amur River region. But as the Manchus were still strong in China, the Russians could not attain their objectives and had to turn their aggressive designs toward the land of the Ainu. [p. 215]

. . . .

As to the Western barbarians who have dominated the seas for nearly three centuries—do they surpass others in intelligence and bravery? Does their benevolence and mercy overflow their own borders? Are their social institutions and administration of justice perfect in every detail? Or do they have supernatural powers enabling them to accomplish what other men cannot? Not so at all. All they have is Christianity to fall back upon in the prosecution of their schemes. . . . When those barbarians plan to subdue a country not their own, they start by opening commerce and watch for a sign of weakness. If an opportunity is presented, they will preach their alien religion to captivate the people's hearts. Once the people's allegiance has been shifted, they can be manipulated and nothing can be done to stop it. The people will be only too glad to die for the sake of the alien God. They have the courage to give battle; they offer all they own in adoration of the God and devote their

[8] Refers to the "national polity" (*kokutai*), especially as found in the divine origins of the country and the dynasty, and as embodied in those moral virtues which are considered indispensable to social unity and order.

resources to the cause of insurrection.[9] The subversion of the people and overthrowing of the state are taught as being in accord with the God's will. So in the name of all-embracing love the subjugation of the land is accomplished. Though greed is the real motive, it masquerades as a righteous uprising. The absorption of the country and conquest of its territories are all done in this fashion. [p. 198]

THE OPENING OF JAPAN FROM WITHIN

In the atmosphere of impending crisis which pervaded Japan in the mid-nineteenth century, the Mito slogan, "Revere the Emperor, Repel the Barbarian" was to prove remarkably effective in rallying nationalistic sentiment around a single center, the imperial house. Yet the very simplicity and generality of this appeal rendered it susceptible of conflicting interpretations and left many questions unanswered, which, as events brought nearer the final crisis in foreign relations, were to be resolved in an unexpected manner. Thus for some of the Mito leaders, themselves prominent members of the Tokugawa family and desirous of strengthening its position rather than abandoning it, the expression "Revere the emperor" had represented a call to national unity, and not what it later became to proponents of the imperial Restoration: a call for surrender to the emperor of functions long performed by the shogunate. Similarly, the cry "Repel the barbarian," which at first gave vent to a xenophobic rejection of all intercourse with the West, was in a few years' time sufficiently moderated to allow for "opening of the country" as the only practicable way of building up Japan's strength against the West. In the rapid evolution of Japanese thinking about these questions, Sakuma Shōzan (1811–1864) and his disciple Yoshida Shōin (1830–1859) stand as important links between the old order and the new.

SAKUMA SHŌZAN: EASTERN ETHICS AND WESTERN SCIENCE

A samurai from mountainous Shinano province, Sakuma Shōzan (or Zōzan) completed his Confucian classical studies at Edo under Satō

[9] Referring to the uprising of Christians at Shimabara, near Nagasaki, in 1637–38.

Issai, a noted scholar and literary stylist who taught under the aegis of the orthodox Hayashi school but was deeply influenced by the intuitionist philosophy of Wang Yang-ming. Sakuma's own writings, and those of his disciple Yoshida, betray this same influence in their stress upon the inseparability of knowledge and action. Sakuma nonetheless felt that his master had gone too far in the direction of subjectivism, to the neglect of Chu Hsi's objective "investigation of things." That he subsequently became interested in Western science and technology, however, was not a purely logical development from this early concern for Chu Hsi's "investigation of things." He devoted himself mainly to the teaching of classical studies until suddenly thrust into a situation requiring much more practical knowledge than he possessed. In 1841, his lord, Sanada Yukitsura, who had considerable influence in shogunate circles by reason of both his family connections and his personal talents, was appointed to its highest council of advisers and put in charge of Japan's coastal defenses. As a trusted counsellor of his lord, Sakuma found himself confronting squarely the most difficult and fateful question of the day; how to deal with the threat of Western naval power in Japanese waters.

Though a believer in "Revering the Emperor and Repelling the Barbarian," Sakuma was not blinded by this antiforeignism to the realities of the situation, but immediately launched into the study of Western gunnery as it was taught by two Japanese pioneers in this field, Takashima Shūhan and Egawa Tan'an. The eight-point program which he subsequently submitted to Lord Sanada as the basis for shogunate policy reveals both his firm adherence to the seclusion policy and his espousal of technical developments from the West.

1. Fortifications must be erected at all strategic points on the coast and equipped with adequate artillery.
2. The export of copper through the Dutch must be suspended and the metal used for casting thousands of guns for distribution to all points.
3. Large merchant ships must be built, so as to prevent the loss of rice through the wreck of small coastal vessels which are all that the exclusion edicts allow.
4. Maritime trade must be supervised by capable officials.
5. Warships of foreign style must be constructed and a force of trained naval officers built up.
6. Schools must be established throughout the country and a modern education provided, so that "even the most stupid men and women may understand loyalty, piety, and chastity."

7. Rewards and punishments must be made clear, and government must be conducted benevolently but firmly, so as to strengthen the popular mind.

8. There must be established a system of selecting and employing men of ability in official posts.[1]

While noting Sakuma's bold advocacy of Western military methods, we must not regard his references to Confucian virtues and precepts as mere lip service to tradition. To him they represented the indispensable basis for any program of reform, since support for this stupendous national undertaking could only be guaranteed by intensifying the moral indoctrination of the people and improving the quality of government so as to insure popular backing.

Sakuma's proposals met with strong opposition, however, and when his lord was finally forced to relinquish his high place in shogunate councils, Sakuma found himself free to devote his full energies to Western studies. This involved learning Dutch, so as to have direct access to sources of knowledge made available only through the Dutch trading mission at Deshima. Following an encyclopedia in Dutch translation, for instance, he experimented in the making of glass and the refining of certain chemicals. By 1848 he had become proficient enough to cast cannon and small arms. These activities, and the steps he also took to improve animal husbandry in his native region, were supported by Lord Sanada to develop and strengthen his own fief of Matsushiro. They also served to make Sakuma more widely known as a leader in the adoption of Western methods.

Meanwhile, through his lord and others high in the Edo government, Sakuma continued to press for the building up of land fortifications and a Western-type navy. Unsuccessful in this, he still had the satisfaction of seeing his hopes for a modern navy carried forward by one of his disciples, Katsu Awa (or Kaishū, "Sea-vessel"), who later studied naval science and construction in the United States, and as first Navy Minister in the Meiji regime became known as "the father of the Japanese Navy."

Another disciple of Sakuma during these years was the aforementioned Yoshida Shōin, who met a far different fate in his attempt earlier to go abroad for study. With the encouragement of his teacher, Yoshida had tried to stow away on one of Perry's ships in 1854, only to be turned over to the shogunal authorities and be imprisoned for violating the Seclusion

[1] As summarized by Sansom in *The Western World and Japan*, p. 254.

Laws. Sakuma himself would probably have been punished far more severely for his part in this "crime" had not influential persons interceded to avert the death penalty for both him and his disciple. After less than a year in jail, each was released in the custody of his clan for domiciliary confinement.

Undeterred and irrepressible, Sakuma continued to take an active part in the debate on political and military questions. His prison diary had ended with this statement, echoing a famous utterance of Confucius:

> At twenty I realized I had a part to play in the life of my state.
> At thirty I realized I had a part to play in the life of the entire nation.
> At forty I realized I had a part to play in the life of the entire world.[2]

Up to this time Sakuma's advocacy of Western methods had still not implied that Japan itself should be opened to the West. In 1858, however, the signing of a commercial treaty with the United States brought to an end the seclusion policy of the shogunate. Accepting this state of affairs, Sakuma eventually became known as an active proponent of the new policy of "opening the country" (*kaikoku-ron*), to which the Tokugawa were now unavoidably committed. Meanwhile, opposition to the shogunate and to intercourse with the West centered increasingly around the emperor at Kyoto, and Sakuma, fearing the effects of this cleavage on Japan's capacity to resist Western encroachment, devoted his efforts to bridging the gulf between the two courts. In the early 1860s a compromise party appeared in both Edo and Kyoto calling for collaboration between the shogunate and the imperial court under the slogan "Union of Civil and Military [Government]" (*Kōbu gattai*). The aim of this movement was on the one hand to uphold the policy of "opening the country," and on the other to grant a greater voice in government to the imperial court and its supporters among the so-called "outer daimyō." In the interests of such a compromise, Sakuma offered his services as an emissary from the shogunate to the Kyoto court, convinced that he could persuade the emperor of the necessity of "opening the country." It was on this mission to Kyoto that Sakuma suddenly met death at the hands of assassins from the southwestern fief of Chōshū, who were bitterly opposed to the Tokugawa and any move toward reconciliation.

Beside being identified with the policy of "opening the country" to the

[2] *Analects*, II, 4.

West and the movement for "Union of Civil and Military Government," Sakuma's name is remembered especially in connection with a slogan he made famous, "Eastern ethics and Western science" (*Tōyō no dōtoku, Seiyō no gakugei*). In these few words Sakuma summed up his faith in the compatibility of the Oriental (mainly Confucian) ethical heritage with the new technical knowledge of the West. No doubt, in so acclaiming the respective virtues of East and West, Sakuma failed to sense the latent contradictions between them, the frictions which might develop, and the difficulty of keeping each to the sphere of influence he had assigned it. Nevertheless his simple formula was more than just the hasty contrivance of a desperate man, hoping, in the face of overwhelming Western superiority, to salvage something from the wreckage of his own civilization. It satisfied at least two of the basic conditions for Japan's survival in the modern world: the need for developing military power sufficient to hold off the West, while at the same time preserving that unity of national purpose and action which, under the circumstances, could only spring from common and well-established traditions. Thus the formula proved workable enough to serve a whole generation of leaders during the Meiji Restoration, and to provide the basis for a modernization program of unparalleled magnitude in the late nineteenth century. What is noteworthy in this is not that the pursuit of these two aims brought them into continual conflict, but that Japan's leaders and her people, adhering as much to traditional values as they were guided by the vision of a modernized nation, should have managed to hold these contradictions and conflicts sufficiently within limits so as not to disrupt the whole enterprise.

It should be mentioned in passing that Sakuma was not the only man of this era in world history to hit upon such an answer to the predicament of Orientals suddenly confronted with the power and expanding energy of the West. In China, during the last half of the nineteenth century, essentially the same solution was advanced under the slogan "Chinese learning to provide the [moral] basis, Western learning to provide the [technical] means" (*Chung-hsüeh wei t'i, Hsi-hsüeh wei yung*).[3] This is not the place to enter into a general comparison of these

[3] See Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, Ch. V and XVII. Wei Yüan (1794–1856) is probably the first exponent of this point of view in China, though it was not formulated in these terms until much later. Sakuma Shōzan, in his work *Seiken-roku*,

two movements which sought to encourage the adoption of Western technology (especially the production of modern arms) while reaffirming traditional moral teachings. Still we cannot fail to observe that the attempt made in China was to be far less successful in promoting rapid modernization than in Japan. Whatever the reasons for this, it is significant that in neither case do we find the claims of tradition so incompatible with the requirements of modernization that the one could be advanced only at the direct expense of the other. In China, while it is true that the weight of certain customs and traditions impeded reform, there is no evidence that the marked lag in modernization was linked to a strong reassertion of native traditions in thought and conduct; on the contrary, Confucianism itself seems to have ebbed in vitality and influence in the midst of a general trend toward the disintegration of Chinese society. In Japan, on the other hand, as the nation took giant strides toward Westernization, far from abandoning her most cherished ideals, she seemed for a time to gain new strength from them. At least this is so of the men who were to guide Japan's destinies in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Retaining a vital faith in their national heritage, they were able not only to perpetuate it but even to extend in some ways its hold on the people, employing for this purpose the very techniques of modern mass education and improved means of communication adopted from the West. For leaders such as these, who made a place in the modern world for the Land of the Rising Sun, there was probably no single figure in recent history who provided a more inspiring example of traditional virtues than did Sakuma's pupil Yoshida Shōin.

SAKUMA SHOZAN

Reflections on My Errors (Seiken-roku)

This book was written as if to record Sakuma's reflections while in prison, though it was actually committed to writing after his release. Ostensibly a piece of self-examination, it is in fact a vigorous self-defense, dealing in turn with his fundamental Confucian beliefs, the need for pursuing Western studies, and the justification for his political activities. Because of his outspoken criticism

mentions having read a work of Wei's on China's defense policies in 1850–51, and asserts that each of them had arrived at the same general conclusion independently. Sakuma's memorial on Japanese maritime defense was drawn up in the winter of 1842–43, while Wei completed his *Sheng-wu chi* in the summer of 1842.

of the existing regime, it was not published until after the author's death and the fall of the shogunate.

[From Terry, *Sakuma Shōzan and His Seiken-roku*, pp. 58–86]

In the summer of Kaei 7, the fourth month (May, 1854), I, Taisei, because of an incident, went down into prison. During my seven months of imprisonment I pondered over my errors, and, as a result, there were things that I should have liked to say concerning them. However, brush and ink-stone were forbidden in the prison, and I was therefore unable to keep a manuscript. Over that long period, then, I forgot much. Now that I have come out, I shall record what I remember, deposit the record in a cloth box, and bequeath it to my descendants. As for publicizing what I have to say, I dare do no such thing.

. . . .

2. Take, for example, a man who is grieved by the illness of his lord or his father, and who is seeking medicine to cure it. If he is fortunate enough to secure the medicine, and is certain that it will be efficacious, then, certainly, without questioning either its cost or the quality of its name, he will beg his lord or father to take it. Should the latter refuse on the grounds that he dislikes the name, does the younger man make various schemes to give the medicine secretly, or does he simply sit by and wait for his master to die? There is no question about it: the feeling of genuine sincerity and heartfelt grief on the part of the subject or son makes it absolutely impossible for him to sit idly and watch his master's anguish; consequently, even if he knows that he will later have to face his master's anger, he cannot but give the medicine secretly.

. . . .

16. Although my family branch was poor, I grew up with plenty to eat and with warm clothing to wear. I never underwent the tempering of cold and hardship. I was therefore always afraid that in the event of a national emergency I would have difficulty bearing the attendant difficulties in everyday living, such as privations in food and drink. However, last summer, when the American ships suddenly arrived, and Edo was put on strict guard, I managed military affairs in the mansion belonging to my *han*, and, although I got no sleep for seven days and nights, my spirits grew higher and higher. This year, I was condemned and sent to prison. For several weeks I have eaten meager food, licked salt, and received the same treatment as men under heavy punishment.

However, I have kept calm and have managed to become content with my lot. Moreover, my spirit is active, and my body is healthy. To have tried myself somewhat on these two points is of no small profit. My ordeal can thus be called a heavenly blessing.

. . . .

20. The gentleman has five pleasures, but wealth and rank are not among them. That his house understands decorum and righteousness and remains free from family rifts—this is one pleasure. That exercising care in giving to and taking from others, he provides for himself honestly, free, internally, from shame before his wife and children, and externally, from disgrace before the public—this is the second pleasure. That he expounds and glorifies the learning of the sages, knows in his heart the great Way, and in all situations contents himself with his duty, in adversity as well as in prosperity—this is the third pleasure. That he is born after the opening of the vistas of science by the Westerners, and can therefore understand principles not known to the sages and wise men of old—this is the fourth pleasure. That he employs the ethics of the East and the scientific technique of the West, neglecting neither the spiritual nor material aspects of life, combining subjective and objective, and thus bringing benefit to the people and serving the nation—this is the fifth pleasure.

. . . .

27. All learning is cumulative. It is not something that one comes to realize in a morning or an evening. Effective maritime defense is in itself a great field of study. Since no one has yet thoroughly studied its fundamentals, it is not easy to learn rapidly its essential points. Probably this fact explains why even if you take hold of a man's ear and explain these essential points to him, he does not understand.

28. The principal requisite of national defense is that it prevents the foreign barbarians from holding us in contempt. The existing coastal defense installations all lack method; the pieces of artillery that have been set up in array are improperly made; and the officials who negotiate with the foreigners are mediocrities who have no understanding of warfare. The situation being such, even though we wish to avoid incurring the scorn of the barbarians, how, in fact, can we do so?

. . . .

30. Of the men who now hold posts as commanders of the army, those who are not dukes or princes or men of noble rank, are members of

wealthy families. As such, they find their daily pleasure in drinking wine, singing, and dancing; and they are ignorant of military strategy and discipline. Should a national emergency arise, there is no one who could command the respect of the warriors and halt the enemy's attack. This is the great sorrow of our times. For this reason, I have wished to follow in substance the Western principles of armament, and, by banding together loyal, valorous, strong men of old, established families not in the military class—men of whom one would be equal to ten ordinary men—to form a voluntary group which would be made to have as its sole aim that of guarding the nation and protecting the people. Anyone wishing to join the society would be tested and his merits examined; and, if he did not shirk hardship, he would then be permitted to join. Men of talent in military strategy, planning, and administration would be advanced to positions of leadership, and then, if the day should come when the country must be defended, this group could be gathered together and organized into an army to await official commands. It is to be hoped that they would drive the enemy away and perform greater service than those who now form the military class.

. . . .

35. Mathematics is the basis for all learning. In the Western world after this science was discovered military tactics advanced greatly, far outstripping that of former times. This development accords with the statement that "one advanced from basic studies to higher learning." In the *Art of War* of Sun Tzu, the statement about "estimation, determination of quantity, calculation, judgment, and victory" has reference to mathematics. However, since Sun Tzu's time neither we nor the Chinese have ceased to read, study, and memorize his teachings, and our art of war remains exactly as it was then. It consequently cannot be compared with that of the West. There is no reason for this other than that we have not devoted ourselves to basic studies. At the present time, if we wish really to complete our military preparations, we must develop this branch of study.

. . . .

40. What do the so-called scholars of today actually do? Do they clearly and tacitly understand the way in which the gods and sages established this nation, or the way in which Yao, Shun, and the divine emperors of the three dynasties governed? Do they, after having learned the rites and music, punishment and administration, the classics and

governmental system, go on to discuss and learn the elements of the art of war, of military discipline, of the principles of machinery? Do they make exhaustive studies of conditions in foreign countries? Of effective defense methods? Of strategy in setting up strongholds, defense barriers, and reinforcements? Of the knowledge of computation, gravitation, geometry, and mathematics? If they do, I have not heard of it! Therefore I ask what the so-called scholars of today actually do.

. . . .

42. Learning, the possession of which is of no assistance and the lack of which is of no harm, is useless learning. Useful learning, on the other hand, is as indispensable to the meeting of human needs as is the production of the light hemp-woven garment of summer and the heavy outer clothing of winter.

. . . .

44. We say that this nation has an abundance of gold, and of rice and millet. However, our territory is not large, and after the internal needs of the country have been met there is hardly any surplus of the materials produced here. Such things as the need for coastal defense arise from without. To install several hundred defense barriers, to construct several hundred large warships, and to cast several thousand large artillery pieces, will call for vast expenditures. Again, all these things are not permanently durable: every ten or twenty years they will have to be repaired, reconstructed, or improved. Externally, there will be the need for funds with which to carry on relations with foreign countries, and, internally, the expense of necessary food supplies for our own country. Where can money for these sorts of things be obtained? If a family in financial distress receives many guests, and frequently prepares feasts for them, its resources will be dissipated to the point where it can no longer continue to carry on these activities. How does the present position of the nation differ from the plight of this poor family? With what tactics can such a situation be overcome? Those who sincerely wish to conduct the affairs of state well must make careful plans in advance.

. . . .

46. At the time when my former lord assumed office in the government, and later, when he took charge of coastal defense, the English barbarians were invading the Ch'ing empire, and news of the war was sensational. I, greatly lamenting the events of the time, submitted a plan

in a memorial. That was, actually, in Tempō 13, the eleventh month [December, 1842–January, 1843]. Later I saw the *Sheng-Wu Chi* of the Chinese writer Wei Yüan.[1] Wei had also written out of sorrow over recent events. The preface to the book was composed in the seventh month of the same year [August–September, 1842]; and while Wei thus wrote only four months before I submitted my memorial, the two of us, without having had any previous consultation, were often in complete agreement. Ah! Wei and I were born in different places and did not even know each other's name. Is it not singular that we both wrote lamenting the times during the same year, and that our views were in accord without our having met? We really must be called comrades from separate lands. However, Wei says that China from ancient times until the present has had naval defense, but has had no naval warfare; therefore, as the method of defense against attacks from the sea, she should strengthen fortified towns and clear fields, in order to be able to push back the landing invaders. I, on the other hand, wish to promote to the full the teaching of techniques for using armored warships and to form a plan of attack whereby an enemy could be intercepted and destroyed, in order that the death sentence may be given to the plunderers before they have reached the country's shores. That is the only point of difference between Wei and me.

47. In order to master the barbarians there is nothing so effective as to ascertain in the beginning conditions among them. To do this, there is no better first step than to be familiar with barbarian tongues. Thus, learning a barbarian language is not only a step toward knowing the barbarians, but also the groundwork for mastering them. When the various nations on one pretext or another began sending ships frequently to the territory around Sagami and Awa, I thought it genuinely difficult to find out facts about them. As a result, I felt the desire to compile a lexicon in several volumes, translating other languages into Japanese, in order to teach the tongues of the various European countries. Also, since we have long had trade relations with Holland, and since many of us already know how to read the books used in that country, I wished to publish the Dutch section first. Before this, there had been an order from

[1] Scholar and associate of Commissioner Lin Tse-hsü, whose attempt to suppress the opium trade at Canton led to the war with the British. Wei's book, *Sheng-wu Chi* (*Record of Imperial Military Exploits of the Manchu Dynasty*) was finished just after the signing of the Treaty of Nanking ending the Opium War. [Ed.]

the government to the effect that all books to be published must undergo official inspection. Therefore, in the winter of Kaei 2 [1849–1850], I came to Edo, submitted my manuscript, and requested permission to publish it. The affair dragged on for a year, and I was ultimately unable to obtain permission. During the time I was in the capital I first secured Wei's book and read it. He also wished to set up schools in his country primarily for the translation of foreign documents and the promotion of a clear understanding of conditions among the enemy nations, in order to further the cause of mastering the enemies. In this too his opinion concurred with mine. I do not know, however, whether or not his country has put his words into effect.

48. The main requirement for maritime defense are guns and warships, but the more important item is guns. Wei included an article on guns in his *Hai-kuo T'u-shih* [*sic*].[2] It is for the most part inaccurate and unfounded; it is like the doings of a child at play. No one can learn the essentials of a subject without engaging personally in the study of it. That a man of Wei's talent should fail to understand this is unfortunate. I deeply pity Wei that in the world of today, he, ignorant of artillery, should have unwittingly perpetrated these errors and mistakes on later generations.

49. Last summer the American barbarians arrived in the Bay of Uraga with four warships, bearing their president's message. Their deportment and manner of expression were exceedingly arrogant, and the resulting insult to our national dignity was not small. Those who heard could but gnash their teeth. A certain person on guard in Uraga suffered this insult in silence, and, having been ultimately unable to do anything about it, after the barbarians had retired, he drew his knife and slashed to bits a portrait of their leader, which they had left as a gift. Thus he gave vent to his rage. In former times Ts'ao Wei of Sung, having been demoted, was serving as an official in Shensi, and when he heard of the character of Chao Yüan-hao, he had a person skillful in drawing paint Chao's image. Ts'ao looked at this portrait and knew from its manly appearance that Chao would doubtless make trouble on the border in the future. Therefore Wei wished to take steps toward preparing the border in advance, and toward collecting together and examining men of

[2] Correct name *Hai-kuo t'u-chih* (*Illustrated Gazetteer of the Maritime Countries*), compiled by Lin Tse-hsü and Wei Yüan, 1841.

ability. Afterwards, everything turned out as he had predicted. Thus, by looking at the portrait of his enemy, he could see his enemy's abilities and thereby aid himself with his own preparations. It can only be regretted that the Japanese guard did not think of this. Instead of using the portrait, he tore it up. In both cases there was a barbarian; in both cases there was a portrait. But one man, lacking the portrait, sought to obtain it, while the other, having it, destroyed it. Their depth of knowledge and farsightedness in planning were vastly different.

. . . .

52. Formerly, with one or two friends, I took a trip to Kamakura; at length, we sailed over the sea past Arasaki to Jōgashima; we lodged at Misaki, continued on past Matsuwa, and stopped over at Miyata. Then, having stayed a time at Uraga, we went up to Sarugashima, viewed Kanazawa, went out to Hommoku, and returned to Edo. In the course of this trip I stopped at about ten places where barricades had been set up in preparation against an invasion from the sea. However, the arrangement of them made no sense, and none of them could be depended on as a defense fortification. Upon discovering this, I unconsciously looked up to Heaven and sighed deeply; I struck my chest and wept for a long time. Edo is the throat of the nation, and, while Futtso-no-su, as its lip, may be called a natural barrier, the mouth opening into the sea is still broad. From the outset, it would be difficult without warships and naval troops to halt an enemy transgression or attack. Now, without any real effort, these foolish walls and mock parapets have been thrown up high above the surface of the sea, only to display to the foreign nations our lack of planning. If during these times the nations to east and west sent ships to pay us a visit, how could they take us seriously? There is no point in criticizing the mediocrity of the lower officials. But what is to be done if even those who ride on golden saddles with ornate saddlecloths, who wear brocade and feast on meat, and who call themselves high class, fail to recognize the great plan for the nation, but instead use up the country's wealth on this useless construction work. If barbarian ships arrived in force, how could we either defend against them or defeat them? After my trip, I felt the urge to write a petition discussing the things that should and should not be done in maritime defense, with the hope that I might be of assistance in this time of emergency. I completed my manuscript and requested my former lord for permission to submit

it. He refused, and I gave up my plan. This was in the early summer of Kaei 3 [1850]. Four years later, as I had predicted, the affair of the American barbarians arose. At the time when my former lord stopped my memorial, he was probably acting out of the fear that I might be punished for impertinence. His benevolence in protecting me was truly great. If he were in the world today and were informed that I have been imprisoned, his grief would be profound!

YOSHIDA SHŌIN AND THE VALUE OF DEATH

Torajirō — Torajirō—
Nijū-ikkai mōshi — Twenty-one times a death-defier!

Yoshida Torajirō (better known by his pen-name, Shōin), whose heroism drew such acclaim as this from young Japanese of the Meiji Restoration and even won admiration abroad through the writings of Robert Louis Stevenson, was born in the southwestern fief of Chōshū and adopted into the family of a samurai in rather humble circumstances. His father, a military instructor, found it necessary to divide his time between teaching and cultivating the soil in order to earn a frugal living, and Yoshida, who succeeded to the direction of his father's school at a very young age, always remained a peasant at heart—earnest, unsophisticated, and alive with the raw energy of the earth. From his father, also, he inherited a deep devotion to the precepts of Yamaga Sokō, whose teachings on the code of the warrior (later known as *bushidō*) had been handed down in the family school. He also acquired a close acquaintance with the principles of military science as set forth in the ancient Chinese classic, Sun Tzu's *Art of War*. Perhaps an even more decisive influence on Yoshida was the book of Mencius, whose high idealism, strong assertion of the inherent worth of the individual, and staunch opposition to arbitrary authority instilled in Yoshida a lively sense of his own mission in the world and an impatience with all external restraints.

An avid learner, and impressed by Sun Tzu's *Art of War* with the importance of military intelligence, Yoshida traveled about picking up what information he could about the West in Nagasaki and from such progressive teachers as Yokoi Shōnan and Sakuma Shōzan. On a trip to northern Japan he also visited the school at Mito which was proclaiming Japan's divine mission to turn back the West and found a world

empire under the legitimate imperial dynasty. After the failure of Yoshida's ill-planned attempt to stow away on one of Perry's ships, which ended in his being confined to his native fief, Yoshida was permitted by his indulgent feudal lord to resume teaching. With Mencius as his main text, he stressed the latter's implicit justification of revolt against an unworthy and incompetent ruler, and pointed to the shogun's failure to fulfill the function indicated by his title of "Barbarian-subduing Generalissimo" (*Sei-i tai shōgun*). Throughout the ranks of the aristocracy, however, he found a similar incapacity to assume the responsibilities of leadership in the crisis facing Japan. Yoshida became convinced that only among those close to the soil and untainted by the corruption of wealth and high office could be found men selfless and fearless enough to overthrow the regime. To arouse these stalwarts of the countryside only dedicated leadership and an inspiring example of the true warrior spirit were needed.

Yoshida's call to action had in it the essential ingredients of a modern revolution: the overthrow of the hereditary feudal aristocracy and the raising up of the Japanese common man to a role of vital importance. Here were the seeds of epochal changes to be brought about by the Restoration—the abolition of feudalism, emancipation of the serfs, the arming of the peasantry in modernized forces—changes initiated by such youthful leaders and former disciples of Yoshida as Kido Kōin, a key figure in the dismantling of feudalism; Itō Hirobumi, framer of the Meiji Constitution; and Yamagata Aritomo, father of the modern Japanese army. But theirs was a revolution aiming more at the revitalization of national leadership than at the correction of social injustice or overturning of the social order. If Yoshida's dissatisfaction with the status quo was inspired by class consciousness at all, it did not concern the rights of any economic group but the heavy responsibilities and high destiny of the true samurai.

Typically, therefore, Yoshida's mind ran not to planning and organizing for political action, but to some spectacular act of bravery which would dramatize the need for selfless leadership. Thus he conceived the idea of assassinating the shogun's emissary to the imperial court, whose mission was to secure the emperor's approval for a treaty with the United States. Considering his impetuosity and the previous failure of his ill-considered plans, it is not surprising that this daring plot should have been detected and smashed. Sent a prisoner to the shogunate capital at Edo, Yoshida was beheaded in 1859 at the age of thirty. But in death his dreams were fulfilled: he became a hero to a whole generation and his self-sacrifice the spark which fired the minds and hearts of Japan's new revolutionary leaders. Reverently his patriotic disciples, including Itō and Kido, bore home his last remains, and with deep emotion young Japanese of the new era repeated the two poems which were his last testament in prison:

Oya wo omō	The son's solicitude for his mother
Kokoro ni masaru	Is surpassed by
Oyagokoro	Her solicitude for him.
Kyō no otozure	When she hears what befell me to-
Ika ni kikuran	day,
	How will she take it?
Kaku sureba	That such an act
Kaku naru mono to	Would have such a result
Shiri nagara	I knew well enough.
Yamu ni yamarenu	What made me do it anyhow
Yamato damashii	Was the spirit of Yamato.

YOSHIDA SHŌIN

On Leadership

[From *Zenshū*, II, 25–26; III, 145; V, 239, 334; VIII, 146]

What is important in a leader is a resolute will and determination. A man may be versatile and learned, but if he lacks resoluteness and determination, of what use will he be? [VIII, 146]

. . . .

Once the will is resolved, one's spirit is strengthened. Even a peasant's will is hard to deny, but a samurai of resolute will can sway ten thousand men. [V, 239]

. . . .

One who aspires to greatness should read and study, pursuing the True Way with such a firm resolve that he is perfectly straightforward

and open, rises above the superficialities of conventional behavior, and refuses to be satisfied with the petty or commonplace. [II, 26]

. . . .

Once a man's will is set, he need no longer rely on others or expect anything from the world. His vision encompasses Heaven and earth, past and present, and the tranquility of his heart is undisturbed. [III, 145]

. . . .

Life and death, union and separation, follow hard upon one another. Nothing is steadfast but the will, nothing endures but one's achievements. These alone count in life. [V, 334]

. . . .

To consider oneself different from ordinary men is wrong, but it is right to hope that one will not remain like ordinary men. [II, 25]

On Being Direct

[From *Zenshū*, III, 239]

In relations with others, one should express resentment and anger openly and straightforwardly. If one cannot express them openly and straightforwardly, the only thing to do is forget about them. To harbor grievances in one's heart, awaiting some later opportunity to give vent to them, is to act like a weak and petty man—in truth, it can only be called cowardice. The mind of the superior man is like Heaven. When it is resentful or angry, it thunders forth its indignation. But once having loosed its feelings, it is like a sunny day with a clear sky: within the heart there remains not the trace of a cloud. Such is the beauty of true manliness.

Arms and Learning

These excerpts mark two important stages in Yoshida's intellectual development: first, when he was led by his studies in military science to seek a deeper knowledge of classical philosophy; and second, when he realized the vital importance of first-hand knowledge of the West. It is characteristic of him that this latter realization should be expressed in typically Confucian terms.

[From *Zenshū*, II, 145; IV, 115]

Those who take up the science of war must not fail to master the [Confucian] Classics. The reason is that arms are dangerous instruments and not necessarily forces for good. How can we safely entrust them to any but those who have schooled themselves in the precepts of the Classics and can use these weapons for the realization of Humanity and Righteousness? To quell violence and disorder, to repulse barbarians and brigands, to rescue living souls from agony and torture, to save the nation from imminent downfall—these are the true ends of Humanity and Righteousness. If, on the contrary, arms are taken up in a selfish struggle to win land, goods, people, and the implements of war, is it not the worst of all evils, the most heinous of all offenses? If, further, the study of offensive and defensive warfare, of the way to certain victory in all encounters, is not based on those principles which should govern their employment, who can say that such a venture will not result in just such a misfortune? Therefore I say that those who take up the science of war must not fail to master the Classics. [II, 145]

. . . .

What I mean by the "pursuit of learning" is not the ability to read classical texts and study ancient history, but to be fully acquainted with conditions all over the world and to have a keen awareness of what is going on abroad and around us. Now from what I can see world trends and conditions are still unsettled, and as long as they remain unsettled there is still a chance that something can be done. First, therefore, we must rectify conditions in our own domain, after which conditions in other domains can be rectified. This having been done, conditions at court can be rectified and finally conditions throughout the whole world can be rectified. First one must set an example oneself and then it can be extended progressively to others.[1] This is what I mean by the "pursuit of learning." [IV, 115]

Facing Death

[From *Zenshū*, I, 101; IV, 238; VIII, 299]

From the beginning of the year to the end, day and night, morning and evening, in action and repose, in speech and in silence, the warrior must

[1] This type of reasoning follows the opening text attributed to Confucius in the *Great Learning*.

keep death constantly before him and have ever in mind that the one death [which he has to give] should not be suffered in vain. In other words [he must have perfect control over his own death] just as if he were holding an intemperate steed in rein. Only he who truly keeps death in mind this way can understand what is meant by [Yamaga Sokō's maxim of] "preparedness." [IV, 238]

. . . .

If the body dies, it does no harm to the mind, but if the mind dies, one can no longer act as a man even though the body survives. [VIII, 209]

. . . .

If a general and his men fear death and are apprehensive over possible defeat, then they will unavoidably suffer defeat and death. But if they make up their minds, from the general down to the last footsoldier, not to think of living but only of standing in one place and facing death together, then, though they may have no other thought than meeting death, they will instead hold on to life and gain victory. [I, 101]

Selfishness and Heroism

Through the following passages runs a strong undercurrent of antagonism toward the idle rich, which is inspired by the traditional disapproval of self-indulgence found in Confucianism and Buddhism. Here Yoshida stands as a link between the old samurai ideal of frugality and self-sacrificing service, and these same virtues as exemplified by peasant soldiers in the service of the twentieth-century Japanese nationalism.

The first passage is a commentary on a poem by the Chinese poet Li Po, who points out that the most beautiful things in the world, the beauties of nature, are no one's private possession and may be enjoyed by all free of charge.

[From *Zenshū*, IV, 175; V, 315; VI, 164; IX, 239, 286, 297]

Nowadays everyone lives selfishly and seeks only the leisure in which to indulge his own desires. They look on all the beauties of nature—the rivers and mountains, the breeze and the moon—as their own to enjoy, forgetting what the shrine of the Sun Goddess stands for [i.e., that everything is held in trust from Heaven]. The common man thinks of his life as his own and refuses to perform his duty to his lord. The samurai regards his household as his own private possession and refuses to sacrifice his life for his state. The feudal lords regard their domains

as their own and refuse to serve King and Country. Unwilling to serve King and Country, at home they cherish only the objects of desire and abroad they willingly yield to the foreign barbarian, inviting defeat and destruction. Thus the scenic beauties they enjoy will not long remain in their possession. [IV, 175]

. . . .

As things stand now the feudal lords are content to look on while the shogunate carries on in a highhanded manner. Neither the lords nor the shogun can be depended upon [to save the country], and so our only hope lies in grass-roots heroes.[2] [V, 315]

. . . .

When I consider the state of things in our fief, I find that those who hold official positions and receive official stipends are incapable of the utmost in loyalty and patriotic service. Loyalty of the usual sort—perhaps, but if it is true loyalty and service you seek, then you must abandon this fief and plan a grass-roots uprising. [IX, 239]

. . . .

It seems hopeless, hopeless. Those who eat meat [at public expense] are a mean, selfish lot, and so the country is doomed. Our only hope lies in the grass-roots folk who eat our traditional food [i.e., rice]. [VI, 164]

. . . .

If Heaven does not completely abandon this land of the Gods, there must be an uprising of grass-roots heroes. [IX, 297]

. . . .

If the plan [to intercept the shogunate emissary to the Kyoto court] is to be carried out, it can only be done with men from the grass roots. To wear silk brocades, eat dainty food, hug beautiful women, and fondle darling children are the only things hereditary officials care about. To revere the emperor and expel the barbarian is no concern of theirs. If this time it should be my misfortune to die, may my death inspire at least one or two men of steadfast will to rise up and uphold this principle after my death. [IX, 286]

[2] *Sōmō eiyū*, lit. "grass-clump heroes."