

THE
Chrysanthemum
and the
Sword

Books by Ruth Benedict

PATTERNS OF CULTURE

RACE: SCIENCE AND POLITICS

THE CHRYSANTHEMUM AND THE SWORD

Patterns of Japanese Culture

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Repaying One-Ten-Thousandth

ON IS A DEBT and must be repaid, but in Japan all repayments are regarded as falling into another category entirely. The Japanese find our morals, which confuse these two categories in our ethics and in our neutral words like obligation and duty, as strange as we would find financial dealings in some tribe whose language did not separate 'debtor' from 'creditor' in money transactions. To them the primary and ever-present indebtedness called *on* is worlds apart from the active, bowstring-taut repayment which is named in a whole series of other concepts. A man's indebtedness (*on*) is not virtue; his repayment is. Virtue begins when he dedicates himself actively to the job of gratitude.

It will help Americans to understand this matter of virtue in Japan if we keep in mind the parallel with financial transactions and think of it as having behind it the sanctions against defaulting which property transactions have in America. Here we hold a man to his bond. We do not count extenuating circumstances when a man takes what is not his. We do not allow it to be a matter of impulse whether or not a man pays a debt to a bank. And the debtor is just as responsible for the accrued interest as he is for the

on itself is virtue

See Befr. Harumi "Japan on Pathology of Debt"
Introduction, 497. pp 166-8.

Lebra, Takuo Suzijima "Japanese Pathology of Debt"
1976. pp 90-109

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original money he borrowed. Patriotism and love of our families we regard as quite different from all this. Love, with us, is a matter of the heart and is best when freely given. Patriotism, in the sense of putting our country's interests above everything else, is regarded as rather quixotic or certainly as not compatible with fallible human nature until the United States is attacked by the armed forces of an enemy. Lacking the basic Japanese postulate of great indebtedness automatically incurred by every man and woman born, we think that a man should pity and help his needy parents, should not beat his wife, and should provide for his children. But these things are not quantitatively reckoned like a debt of money and they are not rewarded as success in business is. In Japan they are regarded quite as financial solvency is in America and the sanctions behind them are as strong as they are in the United States behind being able to pay one's bills and the interest on one's mortgage. They are not matters that must be attended to only at crises such as a proclamation of war or the serious illness of a parent; they are one's constant shadow like a small New York farmer's worry about his mortgage or a Wall Street financier's as he watches the market climb when he has sold short.

The Japanese divide into distinct categories, each with its different rules, those repayments on *on* which are limitless both in amount and in duration and those which are quantitatively equivalent and come due on special occasions. The limitless repayments on indebtedness are called *gimu* and they say of it: 'One never repays one ten-thousandth of (this) *on*.' One's *gimu* groups together two differ-

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SCHEMATIC TABLE OF JAPANESE OBLIGATIONS AND THEIR RECIPROALS

I. *On*: obligations passively incurred. One 'receives an *on*'; one 'wears an *on*,' i.e., *on* are obligations from the point of view of the passive recipient.

ko on. *On* received from the Emperor.

oya on. *On* received from parents.

nushi no on. *On* received from one's lord.

shi no on. *On* received from one's teacher.

on received in all contacts in the course of one's life.

NOTE: All these persons from whom one receives *on* become one's *on jin*, 'on man.'

II. Reciprocals of *on*. One 'pays' these debts, one 'returns these obligations' to the *on* man, i.e., these are obligations regarded from the point of view of active repayment.

A. *Gimu*. The fullest repayment of these obligations is still no more than partial and there is no time limit.

chu. Duty to the Emperor, the law, Japan.

ko. Duty to parents and ancestors (by implication, to descendants).

nimmu. Duty to one's work.

B. *Giri*. These debts are regarded as having to be repaid with mathematical equivalence to the favor received and there are time limits.

1. *Giri-to-the-world*.

Duties to liege lord.

Duties to affinal family.

Duties to non-related persons due to *on* received, e.g., on a gift of money, on a favor, on work contributed (as a 'work party').

Duties to persons not sufficiently closely related (aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces) due to *on* received not from them but from common ancestors.

2. *Giri-to-one's-name*. This is a Japanese version of *die Ehre*.

One's duty to 'clear' one's reputation of insult or imputation of failure, i.e., the duty of feuding or vendetta. (N.B. This evening of scores is not reckoned as aggression.)

One's duty to admit no (professional) failure or ignorance.

One's duty to fulfill the Japanese proprieties, e.g., observing all respect behavior, not living above one's station in life, curbing all displays of emotion on inappropriate occasions, etc.

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ent types of obligations: repayment of one's *on* to parents, which is *ko*, and repayment of one's *on* to the Emperor, which is *chu*. Both these obligations of *gimu* are compulsory and are man's universal lot; indeed Japan's elementary schooling is called 'gimu education' because no other word so adequately renders the meaning of 'required.' The accidents of life may modify the details of one's *gimu*, but *gimu* is automatically incumbent upon all men and is above all fortuitous circumstances.

Both forms of *gimu* are unconditional. In thus making these virtues absolute Japan has departed from the Chinese concepts of duty to the State and of filial piety. The Chinese ethical system has been repeatedly adopted in Japan ever since the seventh century and *chu* and *ko* are Chinese words. But the Chinese did not make these virtues unconditional. China postulates an overriding virtue which is a condition of loyalty and piety. It is usually translated 'benevolence' (*jen*) but it means almost everything Occidentals mean by good interpersonal relations. A parent must have *jen*. If a ruler does not have it it is righteous for his people to rebel against him. It is a condition upon which one's gift of loyalty is predicated. The Emperor's tenure and that of his officials depended on their doing *jen*. Chinese ethics applies this touchstone in all human relations.

This Chinese ethical postulate was never accepted in Japan. The great Japanese student, Kanichi Asakawa, speaking of this contrast in medieval times, says: 'In Japan these ideas were obviously incompatible with her imperial sovereignty and were therefore never accepted in entirety

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even as theories.* In fact jen became in Japan an outlaw virtue and was entirely demoted from the high estate it had in Chinese ethics. In Japan it is pronounced *jin* (it is written with the same character the Chinese use) and 'doing jin' or its variant 'doing jingi' is very far indeed from being a virtue required even in the highest quarters. It has been so thoroughly banished from their ethical system that it means something done outside the law. It may indeed be a praiseworthy act like putting one's name on a subscription list for public charity or granting mercy to a criminal. But it is emphatically a work of supererogation. It means that the act was not required of you.

'Doing jingi' is used in another sense of 'outside the law,' too; it is used of virtue among gangsters. The honor among thieves of the raiding and slashing swashbucklers of the Tokugawa period—they were one-sword men as contrasted with the two-sworded swashbuckling samurai—was 'doing jingi'; when one of these outlaws asked shelter of another who was a stranger, that stranger, as an insurance against future vengeance from the petitioner's gang, would grant it and thereby 'do jingi.' In modern usage 'doing jingi' has fallen even lower. It occurs frequently in discussions of punishable acts: 'Common laborers,' their newspapers say, 'still do jingi and they must be punished. Police should see to it that jingi is stopped in the holes and corners where it flourishes in Japan.' They mean of course the 'honor among thieves' which flourishes in racketeering and gangsterdom. Especially the small labor contractor in modern Japan is said to 'do jingi' when, like the Italian labor padrone at Amer-

* *Documents of Iriki*, 1929, p. 380, n. 19.

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ican ports at the turn of the century, he enters into outside-the-law relationships with unskilled laborers and gets rich off farming them out at a profit. The degradation of the Chinese concept of *jen* could hardly go farther.* The Japanese, having entirely reinterpreted and demoted the crucial virtue of the Chinese system and put nothing else in its place that might make *gimu* conditional, filial piety became in Japan a duty one had to fulfill even if it meant condoning a parent's vice and injustice. It could be abrogated only if it came into conflict with one's obligation to the Emperor, but certainly not when one's parent was unworthy or when he was destroying one's happiness.

In one of their modern movies a mother comes upon some money her married son, a village schoolmaster, has collected from the villagers to redeem a young schoolgirl about to be sold by her parents to a house of prostitution because they are starving in a rural famine. The schoolmaster's mother steals the money from her son although she is not poor; she runs a respectable restaurant of her own. Her son knows that she has taken it but he has to shoulder the blame himself. His wife discovers the truth, leaves a suicide note taking all responsibility for the loss of the money, and drowns herself and their baby. Publicity follows but the mother's part in the tragedy is not even called in question. The son has fulfilled the law of filial piety and goes off alone to Hokkaido to build his character so that he can strengthen himself for like tests in coming years. He is a

* When the Japanese use the phrase 'knowing jin,' they are somewhat closer to Chinese usage. Buddhists exhort people to 'know jin' and this means to be merciful and benevolent. But, as the all-Japanese dictionary says, 'knowing jin refers to ideal man rather than to acts.'

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virtuous hero. My Japanese companion vigorously protested my obvious American verdict that the person responsible for the whole tragedy was the thieving mother. Filial piety, he said, was often in conflict with other virtues. If the hero had been wise enough, he might have found a way to reconcile them without loss of self-respect. But it would have been no possible occasion for self-respect if he blamed his mother even to himself.

Both novels and real life are full of the heavy duties of filial piety after a young man is married. Except in 'modan' (modern) circles it is taken for granted in respectable families that the parents select their son's wife, usually through the good offices of go-betweens. The family, not the son, is chiefly concerned about the matter of a good selection, not only because of the money transactions involved but because the wife will be entered in the family genealogy and will perpetuate the family line through her sons. It is the custom for the go-betweens to arrange a seemingly casual meeting between the two young principals in the presence of their parents but they do not converse. Sometimes the parents choose to make for their son a marriage of convenience in which case the girl's father will profit financially and the boy's parents by alliance with a good family. Sometimes they choose to select the girl for her personally acceptable qualities. The good son's repayment of parental *on* does not allow him to question his parents' decision. After he is married his repayment continues. Especially if the son is the family heir he will live with his parents and it is proverbial that the mother-in-law does not like her daughter-in-law. She finds all manner of fault with her, and she may

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send her away and break up the marriage even when the young husband is happy with his wife and asks nothing better than to live with her. Japanese novels and personal histories are just as apt to stress the suffering of the husband as of the wife. The husband of course is doing *ko* in submitting to the break-up of his marriage.

One 'modan' Japanese now in America took into her own rooms in Tokyo a pregnant young wife whose mother-in-law had forced her to leave her grieving young husband. She was sick and brokenhearted but she did not blame her husband. Gradually she became interested in the baby she was soon to bear. But when the child was born, the mother came accompanied by her silent and submissive son to claim the baby. It belonged of course to the husband's family and the mother-in-law took it away. She disposed of it immediately to a foster home.

All this is on occasion included in filial piety, and is proper repayment of indebtedness to parents. In the United States all such stories are taken as instances of outside interference with an individual's rightful happiness. Japan cannot consider this interference as 'outside' because of her postulate of indebtedness. Such stories in Japan, like our stories of honest men who pay off their creditors by incredible personal hardships, are tales of the truly virtuous, of persons who have earned their right to respect themselves, who have proved themselves strong enough to accept proper personal frustrations. Such frustrations, however virtuous, may naturally leave a residue of resentment and it is well worth noting that the Asiatic proverb about the Hateful Things, which in Burma, for instance, lists 'fire, water, thieves, governors

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and malicious men,' in Japan itemizes 'earthquake, thunder and the Old Man (head of the house; the father).'

Filial piety does not, as in China, encompass the line of ancestors for centuries back nor the vast proliferating living clan descended from them. Japan's veneration is of recent ancestors. A gravestone must be relettered annually to keep its identity and when living persons no longer remember an ancestor his grave is neglected. Nor are tablets for them kept in the family shrine. The Japanese do not value piety except to those remembered in the flesh and they concentrate on the here and now. Many writers have commented on their lack of interest in disembodied speculation or in forming images of objects not present, and their version of filial piety serves as another instance of this when it is contrasted with China's. The greatest practical importance of their version, however, is in the way it limits the obligations of *ko* among living persons.

For filial piety, both in China and Japan, is far more than deference and obedience to one's own parents and forebears. All that care of the child which Westerners phrase as being contingent on maternal instinct and on paternal responsibility, they phrase as contingent on piety to one's ancestors. Japan is very explicit about it: one repays one's debts to one's forebears by passing on to one's children the care one oneself received. There is no word to express 'obligation of the father to his children' and all such duties are covered by *ko* to the parents and their parents. Filial piety enjoins all the numerous responsibilities which rest upon the head of a family to provide for his children, educate his sons and younger brothers, see to the management of the

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estate, give shelter to relatives who need it and a thousand similar everyday duties. The drastic limitation of the institutionalized family in Japan sharply limits the number of persons toward whom any man has this *gimu*. If a son dies it is an obligation of filial piety to bear the burden of supporting his widow and her children. So also is the occasional providing of shelter to a widowed daughter and her family. But it is not a *gimu* to take in a widowed niece; if one does so, one is fulfilling a quite different obligation. It is *gimu* to rear and educate your own children. But if one educates a nephew, it is customary to adopt him legally as one's own son; it is not a *gimu* if he retains the status of nephew.

Filial piety does not require that assistance even to one's immediate needy relatives in the descending generations be given with deference and loving-kindness. Young widows in the family are called 'cold-rice relatives,' meaning that they eat rice when it is cold, are at the beck and call of every member of the inner family, and must accept with deep obedience any decisions about their affairs. They are poor relations, along with their children, and when in particular cases they fare better than this it is not because the head of the family owes them this better treatment as a *gimu*. Nor is it a *gimu* incumbent upon brothers to carry out their mutual obligations with warmth; men are often praised for having fully lived up to obligations to a younger brother when it is freely admitted that the two hate each other like poison.

Greatest antagonism is between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. The daughter-in-law comes into the household as a stranger. It is her duty to learn how her mother-

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in-law likes to have things done and then to learn to do them. In many cases the mother-in-law quite explicitly takes the position that the young wife is not nearly good enough for her son and in other cases it can be inferred that she has considerable jealousy. But, as the Japanese saying goes, 'The hated daughter-in-law keeps on bearing beloved grandsons' and *ko* is therefore always present. The young daughter-in-law is on the surface endlessly submissive but generation after generation these mild and charming creatures grow up into mothers-in-law as exacting and as critical as their own mothers-in-law were before them. They cannot express their aggressions as young wives but they do not therefore become genuinely mild human beings. In later life they turn, as it were, an accumulated weight of resentment against their own daughters-in-law. Japanese girls today openly talk about the great advantage of marrying a son who is not an heir so that they will not have to live with a dominating mother-in-law.

To 'work for *ko*' is not necessarily to achieve loving-kindness in the family. In some cultures this is the crux of the moral law in the extended family. But not in Japan. As one Japanese writer says, 'Just because he esteems the family highly, the Japanese has anything but a high estimation of the individual members or of the family tie between them.'* That is not always true, of course, but it gives the picture. The emphasis is upon obligations and repaying the debt and the elders take great responsibility upon themselves, but one of these responsibilities is to see to it that those below them make the requisite sacrifices. If they re-

* Nohara, K., *The True Face of Japan*. London, 1936, p. 45.

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sent these, it makes little difference. They must obey their elders' decisions or they have failed in *gimu*.

The marked resentments between members of the family which are so typical of filial piety in Japan are absent in the other great obligation which like filial piety is a *gimu*: fealty to the Emperor. Japanese statesmen planned well in secluding their Emperor as a Sacred Chief and in removing him from the hurlyburly of life; only so in Japan could he serve to unify all people in unambivalent service to the State. It was not enough to make him a father to his people, for the father in the household, despite all the obligations rendered him, was a figure of whom one might have 'anything but a high estimation.' The Emperor had to be a Sacred Father removed from all secular considerations. A man's fealty to him, *chu*, the supreme virtue, must become an ecstatic contemplation of a fantasied Good Father untainted by contacts with the world. Early Meiji statesmen wrote after they had visited the nations of the Occident that in all these countries history was made by the conflict between ruler and people and that this was unworthy of the Spirit of Japan. They returned and wrote into the Constitution that the Ruler was to 'be sacred and inviolable' and not reckoned responsible for any acts of his Ministers. He was to serve as supreme symbol of Japanese unity, not as responsible head of a State. Since the Emperor had not served as an executive ruler for some seven centuries it was simple to perpetuate his back-stage rôle. Meiji statesmen needed only to attach to him, in the minds of all Japanese, that unconditional highest virtue, *chu*. In feudal Japan *chu* had been obligation to the Secular Chief, the Shogun, and its

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long history warned Meiji statesmen what it was necessary to do in the new dispensation to accomplish their objective, the spiritual unification of Japan. In those centuries the Shogun had been Generalissimo and chief administrator and in spite of the chu that was due him plots against his supremacy and against his life were frequent. Fealty to him often came into conflict with obligations to one's own feudal overlord, and the higher loyalty frequently was less compelling than the lower. Fealty to one's own overlord was, after all, based on face to face ties and fealty to the Shogun might well seem cold in comparison. Retainers too fought in troubled times to unseat the Shogun and to establish their own feudal lord in his place. The prophets and leaders of the Meiji Restoration had for a century fought against the Tokugawa Shogunate with the slogan that chu was due to the Emperor secluded in the shadowy background, a figure whose lineaments every person could draw for himself according to his own desires. The Meiji Restoration was the victory for this party and it was precisely this shifting of chu from Shogun to symbolic Emperor which justified the use of the term 'restoration' for the year 1868. The Emperor remained secluded. He invested Their Excellencies with authority but he did not himself run the government or the army or personally dictate policies. The same sort of advisors, though they were better chosen, went on running the government. The real upheaval was in the spiritual realm, for chu became every man's repayment to the Sacred Chief—high priest and symbol of the unity and perpetuity of Japan.

The ease with which chu was transferred to the Emperor was aided of course by the traditional folklore that the Im-

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perial House was descended from the Sun Goddess. But this folkloristic claim to divinity was not so crucial as Westerners thought it was. Certainly Japanese intellectuals who entirely rejected these claims did not therefore question chu to the Emperor, and even the mass of the populace who accepted divine birth did not mean by that what Westerners would mean. *Kami*, the word rendered as 'god,' means literally 'head,' i.e., pinnacle of the hierarchy. The Japanese do not fix a great gulf between human and divine as Occidentals do, and any Japanese becomes kami after death. Chu in the feudal eras had been due to heads of the hierarchy who had no divine qualifications. Far more important in transferring chu to the Emperor was the unbroken dynasty of a single imperial house during the whole history of Japan. It is idle for Westerners to complain that this continuity was a hoax because the rules of succession did not conform to those of the royal families of England or of Germany. The rules were Japan's rules and according to her rules the succession had been unbroken 'from ages eternal.' Japan was no China with thirty-six different dynasties in recorded history. She was a country which, in all the changes she had embraced, had never torn her social fabric in shreds; the pattern had been permanent. It was this argument, and not divine ancestry, which the anti-Tokugawa forces exploited during the hundred years before the Restoration. They said that chu, which was due him who stood at the apex of the hierarchy, was due the Emperor alone. They built him up as high priest of the nation and that rôle does not necessarily mean divinity. It was more crucial than descent from a goddess.

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Every effort has been made in modern Japan to personalize *chu* and to direct it specifically to the figure of the Emperor himself. The first Emperor after the Restoration was an individual of consequence and dignity and during his long reign he easily became a personal symbol to his subjects. His infrequent public appearances were staged with all the appurtenances of worship. No murmur rose from the assembled multitudes as they bowed before him. They did not raise their eyes to gaze upon him. Windows were shuttered everywhere above the first story for no man might look down from a height upon the Emperor. His contacts with his high counselors were similarly hierarchal. It was not said that he summoned his administrators; a few specially privileged Excellencies 'had access' to him. Rescripts were not issued on controversial political issues; they were on ethics or thrift or they were designed as landmarks to indicate an issue closed and hence to reassure his people. When he was on his deathbed all Japan became a temple where devotees devoted themselves to intercession in his behalf.

The Emperor was in all these ways made into a symbol which was placed beyond all reach of domestic controversy. Just as loyalty to the Stars and Stripes is above and beyond all party politics so the Emperor was 'inviolable.' We surround our handling of the flag with a degree of ritual which we regard as completely inappropriate for any human being. The Japanese, however, capitalized to the hilt on the humanness of their supreme symbol. They could love and he could respond. They were moved to ecstasy that he 'turned his thoughts to them.' They dedicated their lives to 'ease his

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heart.' In a culture based as fully as Japan's has been on personal ties, the Emperor was a symbol of loyalty far surpassing a flag. Teachers in training were flunked if they phrased man's highest duty as love of country; it had to be phrased as repayment to the Emperor in person.

Chu provides a double system of subject-Emperor relationship. The subject faces upward directly to the Emperor without intermediaries; he personally 'eases his heart' by his actions. The subject receiving the commands of the Emperor, however, hears these orders relayed through all the intermediaries that stand between them. 'He speaks for the Emperor' is a phrase that invokes *chu* and is probably a more powerful sanction than any other modern State can invoke. Lory describes an incident of peacetime Army maneuvers when an officer took a regiment out with orders not to drink from their canteens without his permission. Japanese Army training placed great emphasis on ability to march fifty and sixty miles without intermission under difficult conditions. On this day twenty men fell by the way from thirst and exhaustion. Five died. When their canteens were examined they were found to be untouched. 'The officer had given the command. He spoke for the Emperor.'*

In civil administration *chu* sanctions everything from death to taxes. The tax collector, the policeman, the local conscription officials are instrumentalities through which a subject renders *chu*. The Japanese point of view is that obeying the law is repayment upon their highest indebtedness, their *ko-on*. The contrast with folkways in the United States could hardly be more marked. To Americans any

* Lory, Hillis, *Japan's Military Masters*, 1943, p. 40.

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new laws, from street stop-lights to income taxes, are resented all over the country as interferences with individual liberty in one's own affairs. Federal regulations are doubly suspect for they interfere also with the freedom of the individual state to make its own laws. It is felt that they are put over on the people by Washington bureaucrats and many citizens regard the loudest outcry against these laws as less than what is rightly due to their self-respect. The Japanese judge therefore that we are a lawless people. We judge that they are a submissive people with no ideas of democracy. It would be truer to say that the citizens' self-respect, in the two countries, is tied up with different attitudes; in our country it depends on his management of his own affairs and in Japan it depends on repaying what he owes to accredited benefactors. Both arrangements have their own difficulties: ours is that it is difficult to get regulations accepted even when they are to the advantage of the whole country, and theirs is that, in any language, it is difficult to be in debt to such a degree that one's whole life is shadowed by it. Every Japanese has probably at some point invented ways of living within the law and yet circumventing what is asked of him. They also admire certain forms of violence and direct action and private revenge which Americans do not. But these qualifications, and any others that can be urged, still do not bring in question the hold that *chu* has upon the Japanese.

When Japan capitulated on August 14, 1945, the world had an almost unbelievable demonstration of its working. Many Westerners with experience and knowledge of Japan had held that it would be impossible for her to surrender;

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it would be naïve, they insisted, to imagine that her armies scattered over Asia and the Pacific Islands would peacefully yield up their arms. Many of Japan's armed forces had suffered no local defeat and they were convinced of the righteousness of their cause. The home islands, too, were full of bitter-enders and an occupying army, its advance guard being necessarily small, would run the risk of massacre when it moved beyond range of naval guns. During the war the Japanese had stopped at nothing and they are a warlike people. Such American analysts reckoned without *chu*. The Emperor spoke and the war ceased. Before his voice went upon the radio bitter opponents had thrown a cordon around the palace and tried to prevent the proclamation. But, once read, it was accepted. No field commander in Manchuria or Java, no Tojo in Japan, put himself in opposition. Our troops landed at the airfields and were greeted with courtesy. Foreign correspondents, as one of them wrote, might land in the morning fingering their small arms but by noon they had put these aside and by evening they were shopping for trinkets. The Japanese were now 'easing the Emperor's heart' by following the ways of peace; a week earlier it had been by dedicating themselves to repulse the barbarian even with bamboo spears.

There was no mystery about it except to those Westerners who could not grant how various are the emotions that sway men's conduct. Some had proclaimed that there was no alternative to practical extermination. Some had proclaimed that Japan could save itself only if the liberals seized power and overthrew the government. Either of these analyses made sense in terms of a Western nation fighting an all-

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out and popularly supported war. They were wrong, however, because they attributed to Japan courses of action which are essentially Occidental. Some Western prophets still thought after months of peaceful occupation that all was lost because no Western-type revolution had occurred or because 'the Japanese did not know they were defeated.' This is good Occidental social philosophy based on Occidental standards of what is right and proper. But Japan is not the Occident. She did not use that last strength of Occidental nations: revolution. Nor did she use sullen sabotage against the enemy's occupying army. She used her own strength: the ability to demand of herself as *chu* the enormous price of unconditional surrender before her fighting power was broken. In her own eyes this enormous payment nevertheless bought something she supremely valued: the right to say that it was the Emperor who had given the order even if that order was capitulation. Even in defeat the highest law was still *chu*.

7

The Repayment 'Hardest to Bear'

'GIRI,' runs the Japanese saying, is 'hardest to bear.' A person must repay *giri* as he must repay *gimu*, but it is a series of obligations of a different color. There is no possible English equivalent and of all the strange categories of moral obligations which anthropologists find in the culture of the world, it is one of the most curious. It is specifically Japanese. Both *chu* and *ko* Japan shares with China and in spite of the changes she has made in these concepts they have certain family likeness to moral imperatives familiar in other Eastern nations. But *giri* she owes to no Chinese Confucianism and to no Oriental Buddhism. It is a Japanese category and it is not possible to understand their courses of action without taking it into account. No Japanese can talk about motivations or good repute or the dilemmas which confront men and women in his home country without constantly speaking of *giri*.

To an Occidental, *giri* includes a most heterogeneous list of obligations (see chart on p. 116) ranging from gratitude for an old kindness to the duty of revenge. It is no wonder that the Japanese have not tried to expound *giri* to West-