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Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan

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He said the Emperor had remarked to him several times that the name given his reign-- Showa, [meaning] Enlightened Peace-- now seemed to be a cynical one but he wished to retain that designation and hoped that he would live long enough to insure that it would indeed be a reign of "Splendid Peace." -- Gen. Courtney Whitney

On April 28, 1952, the San Francisco Peace Treaty, the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, and the Administrative Agreement granting American military forces in Japan special privileges all went into effect simultaneously. GHQ was abolished; the occupation ended. Thousands of American armed forces began to go home.

Japan now, at last, regained formal independence. At last also the long era of combined military-civilian rule, which had begun in the mid-1880s under Meiji and endured through MacArthur and Ridgway, came to an end. Hirohito finally realized his often stated wish that the occupation be long and followed by an alliance with the United States that would protect Japan militarily into the future. Probably the emperor had even foreseen that the alliance (as opposed to the presence of large numbers of American troops) would be relatively popular with about half the nation, as indeed it proved to be. That the peace treaty had been signed with forty-eight nations but not with the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, the Philippines, and India did not bother Hirohito as it did most leftist and some conservative politicians. They opposed both the one-sided peace and the defensive military alliance that had as its main object the containment of China and the Soviet Union.

Japan's return to independence brought home to Hirohito once again the personal losses he had suffered from the defeat and MacArthur's democratizing reforms. His tours of the country, originally undertaken to strengthen domestic integration and save the throne, had largely ended. He could no longer intervene in foreign and domestic affairs by secretly communicating his views to American officials. How was he to convey to the leadership of a new Japan his vision of peace and security through military alliance and economic development? He wanted still to be considered an important political figure, and a large constituency of emperor-enthusiasts continued to believe that he ought to be a driving force in politics. How could he adjust to the role the new constitution required, that of a merely ceremonial monarch?

It was clear that these questions preoccupied him at a time when his only chance to play an active political role in rebuilding the nation depended on the continued loyalty of

conservative politicians. When, at the formation of the Progressive Reform Party in February 1952, some of those politicians began to advocate constitutional revision, Hirohito's hopes brightened. A few years later politicians in Yoshida's Liberal Party and members of the Progressive Reform Party launched a movement to partially amend the new constitution in order to eliminate Article 9, entitle him "the head of state," and revive some of the authority he had held under the Meiji constitution. Hirohito backed it. Popular opposition proved too strong, however, and by the end of the 1950s the movement was defeated.

At the return of independence, Japan was absorbed with physical reconstruction, restoration of foreign trade, and economic development. Territorial issues with the Soviet Union over the Kuriles and the United States over the Ryukyu and Ogasawara Islands remained to be negotiated. Memories of the lost war were still vivid; fear of militarism was strong and hatred of the upper echelons of the old officer corps widespread. People remembered that the emperor had sent their sons, brothers, husbands, and fathers off to war. Yet few still argued about his direct responsibility for launching the war, or for the many violations of domestic and international law that had occurred during its course. Where the "symbol" of the nation's unity was concerned, most Japanese were reluctant to exercise their new freedoms. Hirohito's continuation on the throne after independence clearly inhibited popular exercise of the constitution's guarantee of freedom of thought and expression.

Shortly before the treaties became effective, in January 1952, a thirty-four-year-old conservative politician, Nakasone Yasuhiro, declared during questioning in the Budgetary Committee of the House of Representatives that "responsibility for having degraded the glory of modern Japan lies with the Showa emperor." Nakasone wanted Hirohito, whom he called "a pacifist," to acknowledge "his responsibility for having driven Japan into a reckless war" by abdicating so that "the crown prince [could] become emperor" and "the moral foundation of the monarchy firmed up and made eternal." Prime Minister Yoshida angrily labeled Nakasone "un-Japanese;" the rest of the nation just ignored him.

So too did Hirohito. He had no sense of moral accountability to any but his ancestors, and when under pressure to abdicate, he sometimes intimated to aides that he continued to think of himself as a monarch by divine right. In early 1952, in private remarks to Grand Chamberlain Inada Shuichi, Hirohito observed that regardless of what others had said of him during the occupation, he himself had never said he intended to abdicate. He believed he had a divine mission to remain on the throne and rebuild Japan. "The Meiji emperor said that unlike ministers who can resign, emperors can't abdicate because they must carry out the divine order as written in the dynastic histories. . . . My duty is to bequeath this country, which I received from my ancestors, to my descendants." Hirohito's self-image could not have been more unsuitable and unrealistic for a "symbol" monarch under a democratic constitution. Postwar standards of morality were changing; Hirohito's were not. While Hirohito clung to his old self-image, speculation that he might abdicate ended around 1952, and Japanese media attention shifted to his nineteen-year-old son, Crown Prince Akihito. With no dark shadow of war guilt hanging over him, Akihito had been hailed in the press as the "future hope of Japan." He had received a Western-style

education, was at ease with social conversation and spoke Japanese in a normal voice, with a normal intonation (neither of which his father did). Moreover, Akihito had been tutored in the virtues of Britain's George V rather than Meiji, and in English by a Philadelphia Quaker, Mrs. Elizabeth Vining. He was now being prepared for his ceremonial investiture, a "state ceremony" scheduled for November 1952, and the press reported that he would soon be sent abroad to attend the coronation of Queen Elizabeth. At the start of the postoccupation period, Hirohito, the Imperial Household Agency, and the Yoshida cabinet strove to convey, through the crown prince, a message of close friendship with the island nation of Britain, praised as the model of apolitical constitutional monarchy.

I

Compared to military occupations of other countries by other armies, the occupation of Japan had been mild and correct; now the peace treaty was extremely generous and nonpunitive. Virtually the only reparations that Japan would ever have to pay-- a mere 1.02 billion dollars worth of goods and "services" spread out over many years-- were to the Philippines, Indonesia, Burma, and (later) the American-created client state of South Vietnam. Nevertheless, at the end of 1952, some 260,000 American military personnel remained posted at bases throughout the country, while strategically important Okinawa and the Ogasawara Islands continued to be occupied. Emperor Hirohito had personally given his consent for these arrangements to the State Department's special consultant on the treaty, John Foster Dulles. For Hirohito understood, better than most Japanese at the time, the unbreakable connection between Japan's renunciation of war and armaments in Article 9 of the constitution, and Okinawa's ongoing status as a giant military base under direct American military rule.

The entire experience of war, defeat, foreign occupation, and reform left Japan deeply divided about its recent past and uneasy about the future. For the Yoshida cabinet two tasks held priority: controlling the deep divisions of national opinion on the issue of the new Security Treaty, and correcting the "excesses" in the occupation-era reforms by pursuing a Japanese-initiated "reverse course." Favorable international conditions and a clever strategy for remembering the war dead facilitated the achievement of both tasks. Generally the U.S.-Soviet Cold War permitted Japan's ruling conservatives to be tricky in their treatment of war criminals, and it freed them from foreign criticism as they went about reimposing censorship in education where the war and the role of the emperor were concerned. In signing the peace treaty Prime Minister Yoshida acknowledged only minimal Japanese war responsibility. He assented (in Article 11) to the charges against the convicted felons and accepted the judgements rendered by the Tokyo tribunal and other Allied war crimes trials. Yet at home Yoshida was able to deny or leave unquestioned the war-leaders' and the state's responsibility to the nation and the world.

This denial could be seen in the way Japanese government officials, as well as an influential minority of private citizens, dismissed the Tokyo trial as one-sided "victor's justice," denied launching and escalating the China war, and avoided all discussion of war responsibility. Between 1951 and 1960, various movements arose seeking the release of "detained comrades" still held in prison. In the Diet conservatives and socialists passed

resolutions demanding the release of the convicted criminals. Concurrently the government paid their back salaries and restored their pensions-- on the grounds that they had not been tried under Japanese domestic law and therefore should not be treated as ordinary, standard, home-style criminals. A very small number of those who had been imprisoned as war criminals, such as Shigemitsu Mamoru, Kaya Okinori, and Kishi Nobusuke, actually rose to high positions at the very center of Japanese politics. External acceptance of war responsibility but internal denial-- or as historian Yoshida Yutaka termed it, the “double standard”-- both in the actual treatment of those convicted of war crimes, and as a framework for thinking about the lost war, first formed as the occupation ended, then spread through Japanese society during and after the Korean War.

Hirohito was the ultimate symbol of this “double standard,” just as he was an integral part of the conservative approach to containing dissent and keeping everyone aimed toward steady economic development. He played a key role in demonstrating to the nation that the leaders of the state understood the importance of according proper treatment to the war dead and their families. On the first May Day after restoration of independence, May 1, 1952, demonstrators protesting both the peace treaty and pending Diet legislation to “prevent destructive activities,” clashed with police in front of the Imperial Palace. Two people died and approximately 2,300 were injured. The next day, against this background of a deeply divided populace, the government staged the first national war memorial service at the Shinjuku Imperial Gardens in Tokyo. To the strains of the former national anthem, “Kimigayo” (May the imperial reign endure), Hirohito, wearing mourning clothes and a top hat, mounted the memorial platform together with Empress Nagako and read aloud these lines:

Due to the recent succession of wars, countless numbers died on the battlefields, sacrificed their lives in the course of work or met untimely deaths. I mourn for all of them from the bottom of my heart and am always pained when I think of their bereaved families. On this occasion, my thoughts are with them and I renew my condolences to them.

Seven years earlier Hirohito had pronounced similar words in his rescript announcing surrender. Then his intention had been to protect the kokutai. Now it was to move closer to the bereaved families and bind the nation together while also indicating, subtly and indirectly, that the question of his own war responsibility should not be reopened. Significantly, Prime Minister Yoshida’s eulogy stressed that the war dead had laid the foundation for Japan’s peace and future prosperity. Their “sacrifice” for the nation, said Yoshida, bound the dead to their living heirs. For the next quarter century, all conservative governments would make repeated and powerful use of the word “sacrifice.”

In June 1952, Hirohito visited Ise Shrine and in July the shrine of the Meiji emperor. In August he had honored the war dead. Now, on October 16, he resumed worshiping at Yasukuni Shrine. Thereafter, down to 1975, Hirohito visited the shrine on eight occasions. It was as if there had been no occupation, or at least no reforms. He was completely indifferent to Yasukuni’s disestablishment from the state for its role in channeling religious energy into war.

II

Conservatives and progressives divided in the early 1950s not only over their characterization of the Asia-Pacific war, but also about the highly subordinate military relationship that the United States had forced upon Japan. The Security Treaty, which was presented to the Yoshida cabinet as a precondition for ending the occupation, brought Japan under the U.S. “nuclear umbrella” and ceded to American military forces many special rights and prerogatives. Militarily, diplomatically, and psychologically, Japan remained dominated by its former conqueror-- a kingpin state in America’s Asian-Pacific network of alliances and military bases.

Many Japanese perceived their military entanglement with the United States as both highly dangerous and a flagrant negation of the peace ideals inscribed in their new constitution; others, including Hirohito, saw things differently. They took a “realist” view and recognized only the favorable international conditions for economic growth created by subordination to the strongest Western power. The security alliance with the United States relieved Japan of the costs of providing for its own defense, freed its industries to profit enormously from the war in Korea, and insured access to U.S.-controlled markets, technology, and raw materials. The other side was that the American-Soviet rivalry was turning into a world-endangering arms race, and Japan was being drawn into it just as it was developing a culture of pacifism and anti-militarism.

Lacking confidence in their ability to govern in a democracy torn by fierce social conflicts between unions and business firms, Japan’s political elites felt a deep uncertainty. Conservatives (including the very small but significant minority who had spent the occupation years behind bars), drafted plans to revise the “peace constitution” and strengthen the emperor’s powers by changing his status from a vague “symbol” to a “head of state” who once again could have the power to declare national emergencies and promulgate emergency decrees. Their aim was not to revive the prewar or wartime “emperor system.” Neither was it to educate future generations in the old imperial-nation view of history rooted in mythology. Rather, conservatives sought to bolster the emperor’s authority so they could use it for their own purposes. They hoped to restrict the human rights provisions of the constitution for the sake of “public welfare.” They also wanted to insert new clauses to protect rights of inheritance, thereby strengthening the family system, while curtailing most of the women’s rights so dramatically expanded under the occupation.

Extremely concerned about his people’s preoccupation with their rights rather than their obligations, Hirohito welcomed these restorationist efforts. He was happy to once again sanction official documents and to have the credentials of foreign diplomats presented to him. His years of active participation in politics and decision making had been personally fulfilling and he longed to resume meaningful political activity. But his constitutional status was now merely that of a “symbol.” Intervention in military, diplomatic, and political affairs was denied him. When established in June 1954, the “Self Defense Forces” and “Self-Defense Force Agency” were placed under the command of the prime minister with the principle of civilian control written into their enabling legislation. Being severed

from the new Japan's military was painful to Hirohito. His growing irrelevance to Japanese politics and policy making was even more painful.

What remained to him? Only the secret briefings he received from cabinet ministers, and the year-end reports on law and order from the head of the Metropolitan Police and the governor of Tokyo. Neither briefings nor reports were provided for by constitutional law, however, and either could be ended at any time. As the political battles of the mid- and late-1950s unfolded, Hirohito could only hope that influential politicians would seek out his political counsel, continue the briefings he received, and refrain from insisting he be hobbled by his constitutional "symbol" status.

The political turmoil began during the government of Yoshida's successor, seventy-two-year-old Hatoyama Ichiro, who was committed (prematurely as it turned out) to a policy of economic and political independence for Japan. On the day Hatoyama formed his first cabinet, December 10, 1954, Foreign Minister and ex-convicted-felon Shigemitsu Mamoru came to the Palace to brief Hirohito. An innately conservative, yet also intellectually innovative and ambitious person, Shigemitsu during the late 1930s had been an advocate of the "new order" and direct imperial rule. Five years in prison had not changed his fondness for abstract plans to devise new orders. Neither had prison dulled his lively sense of himself as the emperor's loyal servant, or his belief that the emperor lay at the interstices of power and could still be used to serve the purposes of his ministers just as under the old constitution.

Throughout 1955 Shigemitsu and Hirohito discussed important diplomatic issues about twice a month. After the Socialists had gained strength in the Diet and achieved party unity, the conservatives joined to form the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), with Hatoyama as its first president. In 1955, also, the Japanese economy finally surpassed its prewar and even wartime peak output in virtually all areas except one-- trade. While Hatoyama sought revision of the constitution to eliminate Article 9, and to elevate the status of the emperor, Shigemitsu moved to normalize relations with the Soviet Union and widen trade with China. The latter especially would be difficult to accomplish given that the United States was still under the influence of McCarthyism and anti-Communist hysteria, and refused even to recognize China.

At his meetings with Shigemitsu, Hirohito worried aloud about Communist infiltration of Japan should relations with Moscow be restored. He cautioned the foreign minister to avoid a situation where Japan could again become a strategic rival of the United States. In late August 1955, with Nikita Khrushchev in power and seeking a peace treaty with Japan, Hirohito spoke with Shigemitsu at his mansion in Nasu, Tochigi prefecture, and, according to Shigemitsu, stressed "the need to be friendly with the United States and hostile to communism. He said that [American] troops stationed in Japan must not withdraw." Hatoyama and Shigemitsu soon tired of Hirohito's uninvited anti-Communist admonitions and stopped consulting. Their efforts to negotiate with Moscow over the normalization of relations failed when they insisted that the Soviets return the northern Kurile Islands, seized at the end of World War II. Hirohito, unhappy with their diplomatic line, was probably pleased to see both of them depart.

By 1956 more and more Japanese were throwing off old authoritarian political attitudes under the influence of the new constitution and improved economic conditions. Nevertheless, the public was not yet ready to accept Japanese veterans who put down myths of wartime innocence and victimization. That year, determined to fill the void of knowledge about Japan's campaigns in China, veterans of those campaigns who had been imprisoned for war crimes in China returned home and began making public confessions to acts of genocide. In 1957 their book entitled, in Japanese, *Sanko, Burn All, Kill All, Steal All*, became a national best seller and introduced to the general public the term "sanko operations." Reaction was swift. The veterans were accused of "disgracing all Japanese." They were branded as communist dupes, "brainwashed by the Chinese Communist Party." Under threat from right-wing thugs, the publisher soon discontinued it. *Kill All, Burn All, Steal All* had no place in Japanese collective memory at a time when the government was supporting the U.S. policy of containing China and commemorating the nation's losses in war.

Moreover, many still remained attached to the older forms of nationalist belonging centered on the emperor. Hirohito and his brother Prince Takamatsu took a close interest in the restorationist organizations that formed during the first wave of post occupation nationalism. Occasionally, the emperor's former military aide, one Hayata Noboru, came to the palace to report on veterans groups such as the Japan Veterans Friendship League, of which he was the vice president, as well as on the Japan War-Bereaved Families Association-- an early-occupation-era group that had grown increasingly conservative since its reorganization in 1953.

On August 15, 1958, these two national associations joined with the Association of Shinto Shrines and various right-wing organizations to carry out a memorial service at the large Kudan Hall, near Yasukuni Shrine. The purpose of the service was to "enshrine the heroic spirits [eirei] of all those who died for the country in the War of Greater East Asia." The term "heroic spirit," connoting an outstanding person who had made a great achievement in war, had once been associated with the notion of "holy war." It had come to imply also a positive attitude toward the imperial state and a negative evaluation of the postwar values inscribed in the constitution. Hirohito and Empress Nagako sent flowers and an imperial message for these unofficial August 15 memorial services. They did not personally attend the annual ceremony, however, until 1963, when the name of the event was changed to the less ideologically charged "National War Dead Memorial Service."

Even among veterans and bereaved families, who in remembering the war dead at the same time reaffirmed the moral justness of the "War of Greater East Asia," there were many who also remembered that Hirohito represented all those leaders who had never admitted responsibility for the war. Such sentiment was usually expressed indirectly, as when the Shizuoka shinbun in October 1957 launched a campaign to induce the emperor to visit the "Nation-Protecting Shrine" [gokoku jinja], Shizuoka's local branch of Yasukuni Shrine. "Because the emperor is the representative of the nation and the symbol of the state, he expresses the nation's sentiment and so should bow down to the spirits of the war dead by visiting gokoku jinja. . . . They died for the Japanese state, for the nation, and for this

emperor. Why should he not bow before them, show them his gratitude, and ask for their forgiveness?" And every request for Hirohito to show his "gratitude" and ask "forgiveness" of the war dead contained the possibility of rekindling discussion of his war responsibility.

Partly in response to this renewed nationalist activity by veterans and other conservative groups, a political backlash from the Left developed during the mid- and late 1950s. A small number of historical studies espousing critical views of the lost war gained national attention. On the university campuses, criticism rekindled in certain famous intellectuals who had supported expanding war during the 1930s and early 1940s. Communists, left-wing socialists, and liberals, but also some student groups and many white- and blue-collar workers increasingly condemned the LDP's efforts to revise the constitution. Fueling their opposition were fears of Japan being drawn into war between the United States and the Soviet Union, and fear of rearmament.

The LDP government's reinstatement of state control of education, and its heavy-handed attempt to resuscitate patriotic enthusiasm, also kindled distrust. During the mid-1950s the Ministry of Education checked the influence of the progressive Japan Teachers Union and abolished publicly elected school boards. In place of the latter, it installed the mechanism of school textbook examinations-- an ideal device for perpetuating the "double standard." The system of textbook control implemented between 1956 and 1958 played down Japan's aggressive Asian colonialism and wars. The ministry also attempted to require schools to display the "Rising Sun" flag and to teach the singing of "Kimigayo," even though neither of them enjoyed legal sanction, both closely associated with the prewar regime. This was finally achieved in 1999.

During the first decade of independence, Hirohito gradually ceased to be an object of frequent media attention. He continued to make public appearances at sports events and tree planting ceremonies, to travel to different parts of the country for very short visits, and to perform the limited duties prescribed for him in the constitution. Soon two antagonistic imperial images began to emerge. One was the postwar "human" emperor, a "scientist," a "scholar," and a "family man," popular with his people and in tune with the democratic and liberal values codified in the constitution and practiced in the emerging consumer society. The other was the remote, hard, awe-inspiring, high-voiced emperor, stiffly bound into Shinto and the old value structure, and supportive of the unreformed imperial system. Many middle-aged and elderly supporters of the LDP embraced the latter image and clung to the traditional political values.

III

In February 1957 Kishi Nobusuke, who had served as minister of commerce and industry, and later vice minister of munitions under Tojo, formed a cabinet bent on revising the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, and developing a more independent foreign policy. Kishi's goals included reestablishing close economic ties with the nations of Southeast Asia and securing the release of B and C Class war criminals who still were imprisoned for such crimes as torture, rape, and murder. Some were in Sugamo Prison; others remained in the custody of former Allied nations. Their early parole and pardon, Kishi argued, would make

it easier for Japan to forget the past and move closer to the United States. The Eisenhower administration agreed and helped to expedite the release of the remaining war criminals. Kishi, like Hatoyama before him, hoped to revise Articles 1 and 9 of the constitution (on the emperor and the abandonment of war), and to expand the small Self-Defense Forces. Anticipating public demonstrations protesting renewal of the Security Treaty, Kishi introduced a bill to strengthen the powers of the police. In late October 1958 the mass media and most of the nation's labor unions turned against the proposed police law and a national coalition soon emerged calling for Kishi's removal.

In early November the four-million-strong Sohyo labor federation went on strike against the police bill. As opposition to Kishi escalated, his government, on November 27, happily announced the engagement of Crown Prince Akihito and Shoda Michiko, daughter of the president of a large flour-milling company and the product of a Catholic upbringing. Public attention immediately turned from nasty politics to romantic love as palace officials and the media carefully orchestrated all the details. An astonishing "Mitchii" craze swept Japan, and Kishi safely escaped the headlines for awhile.

The engagement and marriage of the crown prince marked an important shift in the evolution of the monarchy. To hear the words "commoner" and "love" joined to the imperial family was distinctively new and very popular. Emperor Hirohito and Empress Nagako opposed the marriage because they believed Michiko might not be able to handle the intricacies of palace customs. What most concerned Hirohito was neither Michiko's Christianity nor even the maintenance of the imperial house's ties to state Shinto, but rather the break with tradition that the marriage connoted. Hirohito was uncomfortable with the very notion of an "open, popular monarchy." But like everyone, he and Nagako could also appreciate how an alliance with one of the nation's prominent business families could serve to strengthen a legally and politically weakened monarchy.

In February 1959, a Japanese opinion poll showed 87 percent support for Akihito's choice of a commoner. But in addition to general approval, there was also public uneasiness about the marriage. Some worried that a perfectly normal woman marrying into the imperial family would suffer from the loss of her accustomed freedom and become unhappy. A small number of critics and writers of fiction, including the well-known novelist Fukazawa Shichiro, urged that imperial males never marry outside the royal pale so that continued inbreeding would eventually lead to the extinction of the whole imperial lot. Die-hard traditionalists and Shintoists were also opposed. To them there was only threat in the new society of mass consumption and hedonistic aspiration: prewar values were fast eroding, and the marriage suggested that if the throne were brought down to earth, it would eventually be debased also-- by popular acclaim and approval.

Crown Prince Akihito and Michiko were united on April 10, 1959, before a huge television audience estimated at fifteen million viewers; another half million lined the route of their marriage parade. The newlyweds then disappeared on their honeymoon, and from public attention, which now reverted to the great political issues. On January 19, 1960, Kishi signed in Washington, D.C., a renegotiated and more equitable Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. The United States promised to consult before committing its forces in Japan to military

action. American bases remained on Japanese soil, however, and the Japanese Self-Defense Forces were obligated to aid U.S. forces should Washington find itself at war with some other Far Eastern nation (such as China), and should that other nation attack American bases in Japan.

Ratification was fiercely resisted by the opposition parties within the Diet and by organized labor and student groups outside the Diet. On May 19 five hundred uniformed policemen were brought into the House of Representatives; the vote on ratification was literally a forced vote. This proceeding triggered a month of the largest demonstrations in Japanese history, culminating on June 15th with the death of a student protester in a clash with police in front of the Diet building, followed by calls for a general strike by a coalition of union federations and groups of private citizens. Kishi immediately canceled the scheduled visit of President Eisenhower to Japan. Four days later the Security Treaty went into effect, and the next month Kishi and his entire cabinet resigned, having accomplished their primary mission.

For Hirohito the whole ratification experience was an emotional ordeal. He had wanted relations with the United States improved and the alliance strengthened at all costs. Until the very last minute he had hoped to travel to Haneda airport to greet visiting President Eisenhower, and be seen riding back to the Palace with him in a limousine past crowds of cheering well-wishers. Kishi would then have gotten his treaty renewed while Eisenhower's visit would have helped the emperor raise his status as de facto "head of state," with no need for constitutional revision. The cancellation had denied him that while the struggle over the treaty had temporarily turned the majority of the nation against any tampering with the constitution.

Thus the results of the whole effort were mixed. Hirohito's and the LDP's wish for an American military alliance that would insure continuation of Japan's diplomatic course for the remainder of his reign had been realized. But the struggle over the Security Treaty had been a learning process for the ruling elites. They had weathered the biggest national crisis of the post-occupation period without ever calling on help from the emperor. The rising generation of LDP leaders drew the lesson that the monarchy was not needed as a crisis-control mechanism. Hirohito's dream of someday regaining political relevance was only a dream.

While the treaty struggle was unfolding in Japan, in South Korea student demonstrators were overthrowing American-sponsored dictator Syngman Rhee. In this heated atmosphere of revolutionary hope on the Left and counterrevolutionary fear on the Right, Fukazawa Shichiro wrote a political parody entitled "Furyu mutan" (A dream of courtly elegance). In December 1960, in the immediate wake of the treaty struggle, Chuo Koron (Central review), a popular journal of opinion and the arts, published the story. It begins when the first-person narrator purchases a strange wristwatch that keeps correct time only while he sleeps. As his dream unfolds he witnesses an uprising in central Tokyo resulting in the takeover of the palace by left-wing revolutionaries. At the plaza in front of the palace, crowds enjoy watching as their "superiors" are laid low. The dreamer sees Crown Prince Akihito (in a tuxedo) and Princess Michiko (in a kimono) lying on the ground bellies-up,

awaiting execution. The narrator realizes that it is his own ax being wielded by the executioner. The royal heads come off with a swoosh, roll across the plaza, and disappear from sight with a clinking metallic sound of tin cans.

Presently the narrator meets an elderly court chamberlain who tells him nonchalantly: "Now, if you go over there, their majesties the emperor and empress are being killed." He proceeds as instructed, and as he looks at the deceased royal couple, he notices the foreign labels "Made in England" on Hirohito's business suit and Nagako's skirt. The high point of the dream is an exchange with Emperor Meiji's wife-- that is, Hirohito's grandmother, who had died in 1914, and whom he confuses with Teimei kogo, Hirohito's mother.

"You scum wouldn't even be alive if it weren't for us! You owe us everything."

"How can you say that, you shitty old hag? Owe what? To you? Why, you sucked our blood and lived high on our money."

"What! So you've forgotten August 15? When our Hirohito saved all of you by surrendering? Unconditionally! And he did it!"

"Damn you! Our lives were saved because people around your grandson persuaded him to! Unconditionally!"

Later the dowager empress mutters defiantly, "All the people are grateful to us. They do this and they do that for us. Then in the end they say we were bloodsuckers who squeezed money out of them. But who wanted war? You, you idiots! What insolence!"

A satirical attack on the institution of the "symbol" monarchy, and on the fabricated myth that Hirohito had heroically saved the nation from destruction, the "Dream" can be seen as revealing a miscellany of thrusts and cuts that say much about the emperor problem when the era of rapid economic growth began. At a time when most Japanese opted to avoid confronting the emperor's responsibility for the war of aggression, the actors in Fukazawa's story, including the narrator, all have a bald spot on the crown of their heads. That common scar, baldness, is Fukazawa's metaphor for the emperor problem buried deep inside the Japanese conscience. The "Dream," in effect, asserts a mutual relationship of culpability shared by emperor and people, nearly all of whom had enthusiastically identified with him and cooperated in the unjust war of aggression. Fukazawa implies that having made the monarchy a unifying "symbol" for their own purposes, the people have not yet liberated themselves from their emperor. By failing to pursue his war responsibility, they avoid pursuing their own.

Fukazawa's fictionalized murder of the nation's "symbolic family" provoked expressions of delight and approval from some readers, but these quickly gave way to cries of outrage from others, and finally to a real homicide. The Imperial Household Agency sought to bring suit against both author and publisher, but the Ikeda cabinet refused to take up the issue. Right-wing groups saw the struggle against the Security Treaty and Fukazawa's "Dream" as springing from the same source-- a desire for revolution. They were more

successful than the government in enforcing sanctions against such an act of “les? majesty.” The rightists gathered outside the Chuo Koron Company’s Tokyo headquarters to berate and threaten its employees. The furor built until, on February 1, 1960, a seventeen-year-old member of a radical right-wing party invaded the residence of the company president, Shimanaka Hoji. Finding him not at home, the youth killed the family maid with a short sword and severely wounded Shimanaka’s wife.

After the murder Fukazawa went into hiding for five years. Apparently, he never published again. According to literary historian John W. Treat, he devoted “himself to making bean paste” and “later ran a muffin stall-- grandly dubbed the Yumeya or ‘Dream Shop’ in a working-class district of Tokyo” (“Beheaded Emperors and the Absent Figure in Contemporary Japanese Literature,” *PMLA*, January 1994, p. 111). Shimanaka disavowed any association with the writer. Rather than criticize the rightists for the bloodbath at his home, or defend freedom of speech and artistic expression, he repeatedly issued public apologies in the newspapers for having troubled the throne. Then, to further mollify rightwing and respectable opinion alike, Chuo Koron changed its editorial direction and became an outlet for articles that made the behavior of the wartime state appear less condemnable. Other large commercial publishers followed suit, censoring themselves more strictly on subjects concerning the throne. No one (except for a few small, underground presses) thereafter dared publish parodies mocking the authority of emperors.

The “Furyu mutan” and “Shimanaka incidents” highlighted the limits of free expression in the new, more tolerant Japan. In their wake, the mass media stopped publishing articles that could be construed as critical or demeaning of Hirohito and the imperial house. The scope of this “chrysanthemum taboo” widened in 1963, when the publisher Heibonsha ended its magazine serialization of Koyama Itoko’s novel, *Lady Michiko* (Michikosama) following its criticism in the Diet as “entertainment” unsuitable for the nation. Such actions did not silence intellectual argument about the monarchy, however, and their overall impact on the mass media was ephemeral. In the middle-class consumer society that emerged from war and occupation, the constitution had gained a high level of legitimacy. A postwar generation had become the main bearer of democratic, antiauthoritarian values, in conflict with the values of the older generations, educated under the prewar and wartime regimes, for whom unthinking loyalty and reverence for the throne remained strong. In this conflict Hirohito stood with the older generation but was always very careful never openly to defend their view of the “War of Greater East Asia.”

Some 233 organized crime and rightist groups were disbanded during the early occupation years. Between 1958 and 1961 rightwing terrorism returned briefly to the Japanese political scene. There is no clear evidence that Kishi and his “mainstream” faction of the LDP directly ordered terrorism against political opponents. Nevertheless, their hardline policies probably did foster a climate in which such incidents could occur while the police, passive if not complicit, looked the other way. Right-wing hit men struck at leftist Diet members and intimidated opponents of the Security Treaty. Asanuma Inejiro, chairman of the Socialist Party, was assassinated while giving a speech on live television. Radical rightists also ventured into the cultural arena. For the first time in the postwar era, they

targeted for intimidation and death writers like Fukazawa who were effective in expressing the need for continued reform of the monarchy.

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