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# REVISION OF THE NATIONAL HOLIDAYS IN POST-WAR JAPAN

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## I FORMER NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

The national holidays of the pre-war Japan, which had from time to time undergone some modifications in their legal stipulations since the Meiji Era, was finally fixed by the Imperial Ordinance No. 25 of March 1927, which was effective until the end of the war. The national holidays as stipulated under the Ordinance were as follows:

1. Shiho-hai (四方拜, "Worshipping in four directions" on Jan. 1)—On New Year's day the Imperial Household observed an august Shinto ceremony at the South-court of the Shinka-den in the grounds of the Imperial Palace. The Emperor offered prayers in the very early morning to the deities for the peace and prosperity of the Empire. This august day was one of the four most important national holidays of Japan, the others being the Imperial Birthday, the Day commemorating the anniversary of the accession of the Emperor Jimmu, the first Emperor of Japan, and the Day for Commemorating the Emperor Meiji during whose period Japan became a great modern Power of the world.

2. Genshi-sai (元始祭, "Emperor's New Year festival, celebrating the auspicious origin of the Imperial Throne" on Jan. 3) was observed at the Three Shrines of the Imperial Palace, the Kashiko-dokoro, where the Sacred Mirror is installed, the Korei-den, the shrine of the Imperial Ancestors, and the Shin-den, the sanctuary of Shinto deities. The ceremony was attended by the Emperor, members of the Imperial Family, Pinces and Princesses of the Blood, high officials of the Government and members of the peerage.

3. Shinnen Enkai (新年宴会, "New Year Imperial Banquet" on Jan. 5), on which the Emperor gave a banquet, inviting high Government

officials and members of the foreign diplomatic corps.

4. Kigen-setsu (紀元節, "Anniversary of the enthronement of the Emperor Jimmu, the first Emperor of Japan" (660 B.C. on Feb. 11), was celebrated at the Three shrines in the grounds of the Imperial Palace. In the evening sacred music and dances (Gagaku, 雅樂) were given in a pavillion in front of the Korei-den sanctuary, one of the Three shrines. This day was sometimes called Kengoku-sai (建国祭, "Empire Foundation Day"), for the Emperor Jimmu was believed to have actually founded the Empire after establishing himself in Central Japan.

5. Shunki-Korei-sai (春季皇靈祭, "Imperial Ancestors Festival in Spring" on Mar. 21 or 22)—The worship of preceding Emperors and Empresses and princes and Princesses took place at the Korei-den on the day of the vernal equinox. During the week with the day of the vernal (or autumnal) equinox, people also visited the graves of their ancestors.

6. Jimmu-Tenno-sai (神武天皇祭, "Anniversary of the demise of the Emperor Jimmu" on Apr. 3)—To his mausoleum at Unebi near Nara an Imperial messenger on behalf of the Emperor was dispatched to make offerings.

7. Tencho-setsu (天長節, "Imperial Birthday" on Apr. 29).

8. Shuki-Korei-sai (秋季皇靈祭, "Imperial Ancestors Festival in Autumn" on Sept. 23 or 24)—The same Shinto festival as the Shunki-Korei-sai was performed at the Korei-den on the day of the autumnal equinox.

9. Kanname-sai (神嘗祭, "Harvest Thanksgiving Festival" on Oct. 17), when the Emperor attended the ceremony celebrated at the Kashikodokoro in the grounds of the Imperial Palace and also dispatched a special envoy to the Daizingu Shrines of Ise with an offering of new rice of the year.

10. Meiji-setsu (明治節, "Commemorative Festival for the Emperor Meiji" on Nov. 3).

11. Niiname-sai (新嘗祭, "Harvest Festival of the Imperial Household" on Nov. 23), a ceremony was performed at the Shinka-den sanctuary, which was marked by the Emperor partaking of new rice of

the year after offering it to the Imperial ancestors. The same ritual, when performed at the Emperor's enthronement, was called Daijoe.

12. Taisho-Tennosai (大正天皇祭, "Anniversary of the Demise of the Emperor Taisho", father of the reigning Emperor on Dec. 25).

Besides these, the Empress's Birthday, May 6th, was generally observed as a holiday in girls' schools and by women's associations of various kinds. A glance at these national holidays will make it clear that their underlying spirit was that of ancestor-worship and especially Emperor-worship. Thus, a commemorative festival was given to the birth of the reigning Emperor and the demise of his father, and the anniversary of the enthronement and demise of the first Emperor Jimmu. Then, the august ceremony of paying tribute to the spirits of the Imperial Ancestors was observed twice every year in spring and autumn. In short, most of the national holidays of Japan were derived from the principal festivals of the Imperial Court. Another characteristic feature of the national holidays, as shown in the Kanname-sai and Niiname-sai festivals, was that special importance was attached to rice, which is the staple food of the Japanese.

## II. MOVEMENTS FOR REVISION

The post-war Japan adopted the policy of reconstructing the country as a democratic, peace-loving and cultural nation. This, however, brought about at the same time a trend to reject anything and everything of the past as feudalistic and reactionary. The new National Diet which came into being in 1947 was not an exception to this general trend. At the meetings of the Cultural Committees of both Houses, utterances were made that the national holidays should be altered and that "Kimigayo" (君が代,) the national anthem, be re-examined. One of the petitions considered by the Cultural Committee maintained that "Kyujo" (宮城), the Japanese word for the Imperial Palace, should be changed, because the word literally meant a castle and had a feudalistic association. Some people complained of the war memories associated with the Japanese national flag "Hinomaru" (日の丸), flag of the sun which had been so frequently and widely hoisted during the war. One very senior member

of the House of Representatives, who was close upon ninety years of age, went with this trend by proposing that even the name of the country, "Nippon" (日本), had better been thrown off.<sup>1)</sup>

It was easy to denounce anything old, but it was difficult to create something new to take place of it. I was then one of the Specialized Researchers of the House of Representatives. And how many times did I shudder at such hasty arguments. Among the things that had become part and parcel of the Japanese people through generations, there were many that could not be lightly condemned and discarded. Even if they were to be discarded, the things which were to take their places must be those which would win spontaneous support of the people. For this reason, it seemed to me that if any change had to be made, it had better be made at a time when the social condition of Japan would have reached a certain extent of stability.

During the occupation, all the deliberations of the Diet, both at plenary and committee meetings, whether they were public sessions or private sessions, had to be reported to the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (commonly known as the GHQ of the SCAP) as soon as the report was prepared by the Secretariat. No matter whether it was at 11 o'clock in the evening or even 3 o'clock in the morning that the report of the deliberations was ready, a car instantly rushed to the GHQ to submit the report without a moment's delay. Thus, the GHQ was in a position to obtain the latest and most detailed information of all what were happening in both Houses of the Diet.

On December 3, 1947, the Japanese Government received a "suggestion" from the GHQ to revise the national holidays. Thereupon, the Government held the extraordinary cabinet meeting on December 5 to discuss this matter and decided on the principles that the Government would revise the national holidays by issuing a Cabinet Ordinance which would be put into force as from January 1, 1948. According to this decision, a tentative draft of national holidays was prepared and was

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<sup>1)</sup> He contended that, since "Nippon" was derived from an epithet to the ancient name of Japan, there was not too much reason to stick to it.

presented to the joint meeting of the Cultural Committees of both Houses of the Diet for their comment. The national holidays listed in the draft were as follows:-

1. Shinnen (New Year's Day from Jan. 1 to Jan. 3).
2. Kenkoku Kinembi (Empire Foundation Day on Feb. 11).
3. Shumbun-no-hi (Vernal Equinox).
4. Tencho-setsu (Emperor's Birthday on Apr. 29).
5. Kempo Kinembi (Constitution Memorial Day on May. 3).
6. Sosen-no-hi (Ancestor's Day on Aug. 15).
7. Shubun-no-hi (Autumnal Equinox).
8. Meiji-setsu (Commemorative Festival for the Emperor Meiji on Nov. 3).
9. Shinkoku-Kansha-no-hi (Harvest Thanksgiving Festival on Nov. 23).

Beside these, May Day on May 1<sup>1)</sup> and Christsmas Day on Dec. 25 were also suggested as possible additions. It may well be noted that Aug. 15 is the day of the termination of the hostilities between Japan and the Allied Powers.

### III THE DIET TO INTRODUCE A BILL

In place of Dr. Tatsuo Morito, the Minister of Education, who happened to be away on his official trip, Mr. Kazuo Nagae, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Education, carried out negotiations with the GHQ on this matter. At the joint meeting of the Cultural Committees of both Houses, the consensus of the opinion was that the national holidays were so closely related to the life and sentiment of the people, that they should not be determined one-sidedly by the Government and that the matter should be decided upon after very careful study and investigation. Thus the Diet, opposing the Government's initiative, decided to prepare by itself a bill to revise the national holidays, and the GHQ gave its consent to this procedure.

Our extensive work was started. First of all, examination was made of the Four Important National Holidays and Major and Minor Festivals

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<sup>1)</sup> The Cabinet then in power was a coalition cabinet under Premier Katayama, Socialist leader.

so far observed.

The Four Important National Holidays, namely Kigen-setsu (Commemoration Day of the Accession of the First Emperor Jimmu), Tencho-setsu (Emperor's Birthday), Meiji-setsu (Commemoration Day of the Great Emperor Meiji) and New Year's Day, were the annual festival days celebrated officially by the State as well as by the people at large. On these celebration days, all the teachers, pupils and students of the primary, middle, normal and higher schools used to assemble at respective schools to observe a certain form of ceremony for the celebration. (This was legally provided, for instance, in Article 28, Enforcement Regulations, Primary School Ordinance.) Even the Military and Naval Armies were required to observe the days by holding a prescribed form of ceremony. (See, for instance, Article 126, Ordinance concerning the Formalities of the Navy.) Shinnen-enkai was also observed by the former Ministry of the Imperial Household, as equivalent in importance to the Four Important National Holidays.

The days when special celebrations were observed by the Imperial Household were called the Festival Days, which were divided into Major and Minor Festival Days.

Major Festivals meant the rituals presided by the Emperor himself. Among them were Genshi-sai, Kigen-setsu-sai, Shunki-Korei-sai and Shunki-Shinden-sai (these two took place on Vernal Equinox), Jimmu-Tenno-sai, Shuki-Korei-sai and Shuki-Shinden-sai (these took place on Autumnal Equinox), Kanname-sai, Niiname-sai, Sentei-sai (Anniversary of the demise of the Emperor who is the father of the reigning Emperor). Rituals to observe the formal anniversary of the demise of the last three Emperors preceding the immediate predecessor of the present Emperor, the consort of the immediately preceding Emperor and the mother of the present Emperor were also Major Festivals. Formal anniversary took place in 3rd, 5th, 10th, 20th, 30th, 40th, 50th and 100th year of the demise. After that, every centenary was observed as formal anniversary.

Minor Festivals meant the rituals which were held with the Chief Ritualist of the Imperial Household as the presider and to which the

Emperor personally attended to make worship. These rituals included Saitan-sai (Jan. 1), Kinen-sai (Feb. 17), Tenchosetsu-sai, Meijisetsu-sai, Kashikodokoro-Okagura (Mid-December) and annual anniversary of the demise of the last three Emperors preceding the immediate predecessor of the present Emperor, the consort of the immediately preceding Emperor and the mother of the present Emperor. Rituals to observe the formal anniversary of the demise of the successive Emperors except the first and the last four were also Minor Festivals.

In our work of examination into the former national holidays, we were favoured by most helpful cooperation of Mr. Ryoichi Takao, a sectionchief in the Ministry of the Imperial Household, who was a nice, reliable person. We also proceeded with various investigations with a view to selecting national holidays.

We invited the views and opinions of experts of various fields, while we asked the Public Opinion Unit of the Prime Minister's office to sound the public opinion on this matter. We also studied the cases of other countries. Particularly useful were the result of the public opinion poll conducted by the 'Jiji' Press Agency with the cooperation of all the presses of the country and hundreds of individual letters and organizational petitions received from every corner of the country.

The fact that the Cultural Committee of the House of Representatives made deliberations on this matter in public session from first to last seem to have invited more ready and active co-operations from outside.

In spite of these development of things. my first idea that we had better wait for the time to come to make such a drastic revision, remained unchanged. However, it was impossible at that juncture. I consulted with Mr. Shigeyoshi Fukuda, Chairman of the Committee, and agreed with each other on ther on the principle to handle the matter as carefully and deliberately as possible, not necessarily intending the delay of the deliberations.

#### IV ATTITUDE OF DELIBERATION OF BOTH HOUSES

In the same national assembly, there was observed a considerable difference in approaches between the House of Representatives and the



House of the Councillors.

The members of the House of Representatives are promised rather precarious four year tenure of office with a possible dissolution of the Diet at any time during the tenure. Naturally they frequently go back to their electoral districts, and therefore they are fairly well acquainted with the feeling of the people. On the other hand, the members of the House of Councillors, whose tenure of office is six years and who are free from the dissolution of the Diet, tend to keep less degree of contact with the electors. On the top of it, they generally consider themselves more intellectual and academic than those of the House of Representatives and, therefore, they are apt to indulge in theoretical discussions rather than practical.

When the question of revising the national holidays came up, how often did I hear them proudly saying that this was the very subject which was best suited for the House of Councillors to deal with. With such a rivalry between them, however, both Houses at length came to an agreement that, even though they might make independent deliberations on this matter, they would manage to formulate one draft of revision at the final stage of deliberations, for it would be certainly undesirable if the Diet split on such an important matter.

As soon as the deliberations of both Houses started, the House of Councillors proved its enthusiasm by its very animated discussion. As they were enthusiastic and impetuous, they were so much so impatient and hasty. One after another they hastily adopted new notional holidays, such as Culture Day to reflect a national aspiration for establishing a cultural nation, Children's Day to meet a strong advocacy from the Boys Scouts Society and the Child Welfare Association, and Adult Day to extend congratulation and encouragement to the young who have just reached full age as well as to make them awaken to the responsibilities of the adult, just as the ancient rite of "cutting the forelock" or the pre-war physical examination of new adults for conscription used to do. They were also quick enough to decide that the Emperor Jimmu's Commemoration Day be discontinued and that the Commemoration Day of the Prince Shotoku whose dates of birth and death was authentic be

created in its place. They were simply proud of this idea because it was complimented as a good idea by a "certain person".

Each time the House of Councillors reached a quick decision on a new national holiday, they promptly transmitted it to the House of Representatives, indirectly urging a quick action of the latter. They seemed to be almost out of impatience at our slow attitude. Behind their impatience, there seemed to be wrong belief that, once a law was promulgated, it would be implicitly obeyed by the public, whether they liked it or not. There was a good reason why we could not readily accept the conclusion of the House of Councillors. For this slowness I was sharply reprov'd by one of the members of the House of Councillors. It was over again that I was almost threatened with the possible issuance of a final "Directive" from GHQ. However pressed by the House of Councillors, it was impossible for us to expedite the conclusions, for they should be national holidays to be willingly observed by the whole nation. The House of Representatives proceeded rather slowly with the deliberations, each member of the Committee presenting his own idea, on which the Committee made a careful study.

Whereas the House of Councillors was in constant and detailed consultation with GHQ during the course of deliberations, the House of Representatives was of a policy that only a final draft which we would manage to reach at our responsibility would be brought to GHQ.<sup>(1)</sup>

The criteria which the House of Representatives adopted for selecting new national holidays were: (1) they should conform with the principles of the New Constitution and (2) they should be the once which the people at large could easily accept and willingly take part in. There is no need to say that all the elements of State Shinto should be eliminated in conformity with the Potsdam Declaration. It was defined that new national holidays should be "annual days of celebration and commemoration observed by the State and the people at large," completely changed from the former concept of national holidays.

As to the proposal of the House of Councillors to create Children's

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<sup>1)</sup> Under the occupation of the Allied Powers, all the drafts to be presented to the Diet, whether they are bills or resolutions, must receive the prior approval of GHQ.

Day and Adult Day, some of the members of the House of Representatives showed a cautious attitude. It was contended that it would be enough to have simple holidays in terms of article 142 of the Civil Code, Articles 72 and 87 of the Bill Law, or Articles 64 and 74 of the Cheque Law. The concensus of the Committee's opinion was to retain the Kigen-setsu.

#### V VIEWS OF GHQ.

One day in May in 1948, Chairman of the Committee and I were called for by GHQ. The officer we met was Mr. Bunce, C. I. E., who was a tall, affable man. After listening to our report about the progress of our deliberations, he told us his own opinion about the existing national holidays.

It was, in the main, as follows :-

Now that Japan has started his new step as a democratic nation, it is hoped that national holidays which are connected with Emperor or State Shinto should be eliminated. (They are Jimmu Tenno-sai, Taisho Tenno-sai, Shunki and Shuki Korei-sai, Genshi-sai, Kanname-sai and Niname-sai.)

Meiji-setsu is on the borderline. As far as the day is to commemorate the Meiji Era, it would be all right, but if it be for the memory of the greatness of Emperor Meiji he cannot approve of it. He strongly disapprove of Kigen-setsu, even if it be renamed Kenkoku-sai (national Foundation Day), because it may remind the people of the legend and myth about the foundation of Japan as written in "Nihon Shoki." The date of the accession of Emperor Jimmu to the throne is not authentic and the history of the foundation is not reliable.

The only national holiday with which he did not find any faults was the New Year's Day. With all these criticisms of the old national holidays, however, he did not express any positive suggestions for establishing new national holidays. He merely said that he would have no objection against any new national holidays, as far as they were in accord with the new Constitution. We felt relieved at this reasonable attitude of GHQ. It was advised, however, that Ancestor's Day or

Reflexion Day on Aug. 15 proposed by some of the members of the House of Representatives be reconsidered, for Mr. Bunce's opinion was that there was the fear that such celebration would some day give rise to a national revenge, even if the original purpose was good and pure.<sup>(1)</sup> "We should give up the Ancestors' Day to keep the Kigen-setsu," said Chairman of the Committee on our way back. I thought it a good idea at this moment, though it seemed to be a tactics most likely to the Diet members.

#### VI EMPEROR AND STATE SHINTO

Here, I should like to touch upon the relations between Emperor and the State Shinto.

Until the termination of World War II, the Emperor in Japan was an individual sacred and inviolable, and his conduct was considered beyond criticism and comment. The institution of the Emperor itself also was not allowed to be the subject of any scientific analysis. It was, so to speak, a sort of taboo, a taboo which had its root in the myth of the origin of the country.

According to this myth, the divine couple, named Izanagi and Izanami, gave birth to Nippon ("Oyashima" or Eight Isles, as it was anciently called), and all that it contained. The couple had a daughter, a princess called Amaterasu-Omikami (Great-Heaven-Shining-Goddess), who bestowed the sovereign power of the realm on her grandson, Prince Ninigi, to be handed down to posterity. It was generally believed that only a descendant of this divine line, whose ancestor acceded to the throne twenty-six centuries ago, could govern the people as Emperor. That the myth was not the reflection of a historical fact has long been the opinion of historians. It may be said that, as a matter of fact, Japan was founded about 2,000 years ago. With such a belief in the myth however, the loyalty of the people was intensified into a feeling of worship for the Emperor and the result was a strong unification of the nation with the Imperial House as the nucleus.

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<sup>1)</sup> Aug. 15th (or July 15th) is the so-called "Bon" Festival Day, when people console the souls of their ancestors in Buddhist rites. Unfortunately, however, this very day happened to be the day when the Great Pacific War terminated.

When the Meiji Constitution was drawn up in 1889, this myth (which deified the Emperor) was made the central feature of the Constitution and the Emperor was regarded as absolute ruler of Japan by virtue of the ordinance of the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu. Consequently, though a Diet was established according to the constitutional system of the West, its power was not unlimited. Moreover, as the authority and power of the Emperor was actually in the hands of the bureaucracy and the military clique, this resulted in forcing the people into the maelstrom of war and finally into defeat.

It was on November 3, 1946, that a new Constitution was drawn up, introducing a radical change in the political structure of Japan. This Constitution aimed at the democratization of Japanese government and politics in accordance with the purport of the Potsdam Declaration, and by this the legal status of the Emperor was completely altered. From his position as ruler of Japan, he has become a symbol possessing no authority or power over the government.

Shinto (神道, "The Way of the Gods") is the native cult of Japan, combining nature and ancestor worship, the chief deity in its pantheon of so-called "eight million gods" being Amaterasu-Omikami ("Great-Heaven-Shining-Goddess"), Great Ancestor of the Japanese Imperial House, whose line has been considered as extended in unbroken succession for thousands of years to the present day. Although this pantheon embraces many Nature gods and goddesses of the sea, rivers, winds, fires and mountains, and many deified loyal servants of the Imperial House, it is the worship of the first Imperial Ancestor and many of her relatives and descendants, like Susano-o-no Mikoto, her brother, and the Emperor Ozin (270-310A. D.), her descendant, that constitutes the leading characteristic of Shinto. This fact led the Japanese people to respect profoundly the Imperial Court, which owes its origin to Great Imperial Ancestor, and in turn to revere their own ancestors. This takes the form of loyalty to the Imperial Court and of filial piety among families. These two virtues, combined altogether into one harmonious whole, form the cornerstone of Japanese character. The people are then inclined to

believe that their ancestors sprang from those of Emperor—the relationship between the two being quite inseparable, and this prompts them still further to offer their services ungrudgingly to the cause of the Emperor and the country. This national faith naturally developed a custom of deifying those who had rendered distinguished services to the country. Thus, the Daizingu (Great Shrines) of Ise, consisting of the Naiku or Inner Shrine and Geku or Outer Shrine, stand quite peerless in sanctity and are worshiped with profound reverence: as the Naiku is dedicated to the Imperial Ancestor and the Geku to the Goddess of Food and Clothing, whose unbounded benevolence was deeply appreciated by the Ancestor. What an important part the Great Shrines of Ise fill in Japan's national life may be illustrated from the fact that, until the World War II, whenever any event of national importance occurred, whether of good or ill-fortune, the Emperor used to send an Imperial messenger to Ise to report the event to his illustrious Ancestor. It was one of the dearest wishes of every Japanese to visit Ise at least once in his life time. Besides the spirits of the deified Emperors, members of the Imperial Family, statesmen and warriors who have done meritorious services to the country are all enshrined in the jinsha, or Shinto shrines, which are found almost everywhere in Japan. These sanctuaries are to Japanese towns, so to speak, what parish churches are to European towns.

Shinto in its early stage had no system of theology or ethics. It taught the innate goodness of the human heart. "Follow the genuine impulses of your heart" was the essence of its ethical teaching. The conception of loyalty or filial piety, which played so important a part in the moral life of the people, was more consolidated by the teaching of Confucianism, the ethical system of the North Chinese, which came into Japan along with Buddhism in the middle of the 6th century.

In addition to these influences, Buddhism had an overwhelming influence upon Shinto after its introduction culminating in the creation of Ryobu 両部, or Double Aspect Shinto. The theory is that the Buddhist pantheon in general represents the indestructible parts of the gods,

while the deities in the Shinto pantheon are their partial appearances or incarnations. The real entity, or prime noumenon, is called the Honchi 本地, the original, the manifestation, the Suijaku 垂迹. In this combination every kami (god) was regarded as a manifestation of a certain Buddhist deity. This state of things lasted for well-nigh a thousand years, but in the 15th century further progress was made in the systematization of shinto theology. The name of Ichijo-Kanera (1402-1481) is prominent in this connection. Shintō, according to Kanera, teaches the existence of many deities, but, metaphysically speaking, they are one, because each deity is but a manifestation of the universal soul in a particular aspects of its activity and all the gods are one in spirit and entity, especially in the virtue of veracity.

In the course of the 18th century Shinto entered a new stage and prepared for another revival. All the earlier Shinto theolists had depended much upon either Buddhism or Confucianism in interpreting Shinto ideas; now the time became ripe for purging the alien elements to a certain degree and restoring early Shinto by means of historical scholarship. This was made possible by the philological studies of ancient records compiled in the 8th century. The greatest of the philologists and the pioneer of "Pure Shinto" was Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730-1801). His contention was that Shinto, when purged of all foreign accretions and influences, represented the pure, and therefore the best, inheritance of humanity from the divine ages.

There was another aspect of the revival of Shintō, namely, the appearance of popular teachers in the first half of the 19th century. Most of them are known as Shintoists and their followers today make up the so-called Shintō sects.

There are two forms of Shinto, i.e., the "Sectarian or Denominated Shinto", and the "Jinsha Shinto". Up to 1945 the "Jinsha Shinto" was also known by 3 other names, i. e., "National Shinto Faith", "State Shinto" and "Official Cult". The "Jinsha Shinto" is so called as it is symbolized by means of a jinsha (shrine) structure.

The jinsha (shrines) which belonged to the State Shinto were

maintained at the expense of the central or prefectural governments, city, town or village authorities, or other public bodies. They were controlled administratively by the Shrine Bureau of the Home Department. With the promulgation of the Religion Corporation Ordinance in December, 1945, however, official support of these shrines was abolished, and all the jinsha (shrines) are now maintained by their respective believers.

As of Dec. 1949, there were 87,802 jinsha (shrines) belonging to the non-sectarian Shinto, with 14,874 priests.

The Sectarian Shintoism consists of about 160 sects.

#### VII DISPOSITION OF KIGEN-SETSU

I was ordered to make further investigations to settle the question of Kigen-setsu.

The two public opinion polls conducted by the Prime Minister's Office and the Jiji Press Agency coincided in that the New Year's Day took the first rank, the Emperor's Birthday the second and the Kigen-setsu or Kenkoku-sai the third. Besides, the House of Representatives attached much importance to Kigen-setsu.

Kigen-setsu, as it was called, was established to celebrate the foundation of our country. Nihonshoki, volume III, says, "On the First Day of January of the Year Shin-Iyu the Emperor ascended the throne at Kashi-hara. And this year was made the first year of the Emperor."

On the basis of this record, it was in 1873 that this date of the ancient calendar was officially converted to February the Eleventh of the solar calendar by the application of William Bramsen's Japanese Chronological Tables.

Since it celebrated the very foundation of the country, it was rather natural to tend to stress the authenticity of that date. In connection with Kigen-setsu, there was a group pushing forward a movement for making it "Kenkoku-sai" or "the National Foundation Festival," which was at the instance of Mr. Hidejiro Nagata, late Mayor of Tokyo. This movement tended to show off the remote origin and eternity of the country.

Our new idea of Kigen-setsu had nothing to do with these past



facts but it was simply to celebrate the birthday of the country within the frame-work of new national holidays. Our country at that time, thanks to the favours of the Allied Powers, was in principle admitted national and racial independence. As far as our country was permitted to be independent, it was quite natural that the people should wish to celebrate the birthday of the country just as individuals would celebrate their own birthday. Our purpose to establish "Kigen-setsu" was a reflection of such a simple and genuine wish of the people.

We asked the opinions of authorities in various fields. Here I remember to have been greatly impressed by Mr. Yoshishige Abe, Director of the National Museum and the President of the Peers' School at that time, with his usual unwavering attitude. Expert opinions given by Mr. Hiroshi Ikeuchi, Emeritus Professor of Tokyo University, and Mr. Takeo Itazawa, Ex-Professor of Tokyo University, were worth our respectful attention. On the other hand, there were some of emeritus professors or active professors of Tokyo University who bitterly disappointed us. Some of them expressed their views against "Kigen-setsu" at the beginning, and then, when we intimated our advocacy, they suddenly started singing the praises of "Kigen-setsu", revealing their true mind. Some of them were too timid and nervous to express any opinion of their own. They were more or less at a loss what to say at too strong a trend of the so-called democratization of the country.

After obtaining the understanding of the committee, Mr. Suzuki, Mr. Harada and some others (the members of Liberal Party, the Opposition Party at that time) visited GHQ to settle the problem, but they came back in vain. GHQ would not show approval to the idea of "Kigen" (Origin or birth of a country) and "Kenkoku" (foundation of a country), in spite of subsequent visit by Chairman and several members of the committee.

Though they did not mention it explicitly, it seemed to us that the main hitch was in the fact that the significance of Kigen-setsu or Ken-Koku-sai used to be too much stressed for the nationalistic purposes, particularly that the celebration of 2600th year that took place in 1940 had created an undesirable impression upon foreign countries.

Therefore, I once again explained that this was out of a simple feeling of the people to celebrate the birthday of the country just as individuals would celebrate their own birthday, and proposed, as it suddenly came to my mind, to change the name of "Kigen-setsu" to "Kokushi-setsu" or "Kokushi-no-hi" both of which meant the beginning of the country.

The GHQ officer at last said that, if it was so renamed, there would be no objection. However, the question of the date remained unsettled. The GHQ maintained that February 11th was objectionable because it was the date of the foundation of the Empire recorded in Nihon Shoki converted from the lunar calendar into the solar calendar. If the foundation of our country be dated on Jan. 1, it would be worse because it was the very date in Nihon Shoki. The negotiations was at a complete deadlock.

As mentioned above, what GHQ was really particular about did not seem to be the date itself, but the associations with the mental attitude or the events which used to be on Kigen-setsu. At this moment, Mr. Kanjiro Sato, member of the House of Representatives (currently Chairman of the Education Committee of the House, Socialist Party) provoked the laughter of the company by saying as a joke "What about taking February 12th for the day?" With this laughter we retreated from GHQ.

It was in 740 when Nihon Shoki was compiled. Judging from the stability of the Imperial throne since Emperor Ojin (270-310), and from the ancient mounds in Yamato district (most of which are of nobleman) which can be traced back to the stone age, it is evident that our country was founded far before the Era of Ojin. For all that, however, it was in 604 (12th year of the reign of Empress Suiko) that our ancestors adopted the first calendar, and therefore there is no knowing when our country was founded.

After all it must be admitted that the author of Nihon Shoki only fabricated the date of the foundation of our country.

But as long as we wish to celebrate the birthday of the country on one of 365 days of the year, we cannot but rely upon the Nihon shoki,

which is the only document containing the date of the birth of the country.

Considering that the Nihon Shoki is one of the greatest cultural heritages of our country, accomplished in 8th century, it should not be simply rejected as scientifically groundless or too much emotional, it seems to me, to fix the date of the foundation of our country on February 11th.

It is a recognized fact that the accounts of the Nihon Shoki concerning the foundation of our country is not a history but a folklore. In our wish to celebrate the birthday of our country on February 11th, we had no intention at all to advocate the scientific authenticity of the foundation date of our country nor the reliability of the recorded achievements of Emperor Jimmu.

Any way, all our efforts to retain the Kigen-setsu after all proved futile.

#### VIII AGREEMENT ON NEW NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

There were held several joint meetings of both Houses.

To the idea of the House of Councillors to create the Commemoration Day of Prince Shotoku, Mr. Morio Sasaki rose in a strong opposition on behalf of the members of the House of Representatives. He contended that it would be after all too light in significance to take place of the Kigen-setsu. There was a different opinion about the date of birth and death of Prince Shotoku. For instance, Mr. Sokichi Tsuda threw doubts even upon the reliability of the Constitution of Seventeen Articles established by Prince Shotoku, though this doubt seems to have been dispelled at present.

It may be too much to call it a bargaining, but the consultations between both Houses were apt to take a form of "give and take" between them, particularly when the session got close to its end. At this stage of the joint meeting of both Houses, the usual parliamentary practices busily took place, with piles of petitions with signatures of many an individual presented or with specially prepared pamphlets distributed.

First, Children's Day was agreed upon. For the date, the spring was preferred to the withering autumn. May the fifth, the former Boys' Festival Day, was finally chosen, because the former Girls' Festival Day was March the third, which was too early in the season.

Then the Emperor's Birthday was agreed upon. The former name "Tencho-setsu", which has become so familiar to us, was renamed Emperor's Birthday following the naming of King's Birthday in foreign countries. (What would it have been, if it had followed the example of Italian word *Genetriaco*?)

Culture Day was strongly advocated to symbolize the national aspiration for a cultural nation, and it was decided that Culture Day should take place of the former Meiji-setsu. The consequence was that the Constitution Memorial Day was not to be celebrated on November the third when the new Constitution was promulgated, but to be celebrated on May the fifth when it came into force. Thus three red-letter days in succession during the short period from the end of April to the beginning of May. It was agreed upon that May Day be dropped for the Labour Thanksgiving Day on November the 23rd. As to the former Imperial Ancestors Festivals in Spring and Autumn, there was an opinion that, if the name of Imperial Ancestors Festival was objectionable, it should be renamed as People's Ancestors Festival. After some roundabout discussions, however, it was settled by adopting the names of Vernal Equinox, and Autumnal Equinox which are too meteorological to be national celebration days. As to Women's Day the decision was deferred, as in the case of "Kigen-setsu", for opinions differed among the women members themselves. Some advocated the Chikyu-setsu (Empress' Birthday), another International Women's Day (on Mar. 8) and still another the day that women of our country exercised woman suffrage for the first time (on Apr. 10). With tenacious vindication by the members of the House of Councillors, the Adult's Day was at length passed.

On the other hand, in view of the situations at that time under which the Peace Treaty seemed to be very soon concluded, the House of Representatives made reservations to propose the Peace Day to be

celebrated on the day when the Peace Treaty be formally signed. Thus the questions of the National Foundation Day and the Peace Day were deferred for future deliberations.

While the deliberations went on at the joint meeting, the people of the House of Councillors frequently consulted with GHQ and they were pleased at the information that GHQ had decided to delete the word "Sai" or Festival, which was attributed to the State Shinto. We did not know whether they urged GHQ to delete the word or GHQ was really opposed to the word. Anyhow, it became clear that we could no more use the word "Shukusai-jitsu", which was literally translated "Felicitation and Festival Days". The Major and Minor Festivals which used to be celebrated by the Imperial Household had no doubt a strong tinge of the State Shinto, but the word for it was originally borrowed from the Chinese character and this Chinese character could not have anything to do with the State Shinto, for the word was in general use even in the postwar days, for instance, at the occasion of "Restoration Festival" of the shops and stores or "Harbour Festival" of port cities.

Then a rumour was spread that the word 'Shuku' (felicitation) might also be prohibited to use, or that the House of Councillors was eager to replace the "Shuku-sai-jitsu" by the "Kokumin-no-hi" or "People's Days". I myself had a chance to take a look at the galley-proof sheets of this plan.

The House of Representatives were already obliged to concede to the revision of "Shuku-sai-jitsu" to "Shuku-jitsu", and it was the last concession. Our chairman made desperate efforts to destroy the plan of the House of Councillors.

Of the proposed new national holidays, there would be the days of which the main stress should be felicitation (Shuku), while there would be others of which the main stress be festivals (Sai). Therefore, it would not be appropriate to employ the "Shuku-jitsu" as the generic term, which omitted "Sai" from the original term "Shuku-sai-jitsu". On the other hand, it would not be justifiable enough to completely delete the word "Shuku" and employ the new term "the People's Days", even if it might be a very simple and clever way of naming.

Among others, we felt a strong aversion to the way in which the people of the House of Councillors pushed forward their purpose, by sheltering themselves behind GHQ, as the rumour went.

As told by Chairman, one day I visited the so-called Moat-side (GHQ) carrying several authoritative dictionaries under my arms to make them understand the meaning of "Shuku", and obtained the approval for retaining the word "Shuku".

As the draft of the House of Representatives were taking shape, the Committee decided to have a public hearing on this matter.

Being entrusted with the selection of the witnesses in short notice I visited Mr. Yoshishige Abe, Mr. Hiroshi Ikeuchi, Mr. Kiyoo Wadachi, Mrs. Kaoruko Hatoyama and Mr. Naoyuki Okuzaki, and an Executive Member of Japan Teachers Union, and got their immediate consents within half-a-day time. By way of an anecdote, I may add that I was very thankful to the Socialists Party (the Government Party at that time) for their ready agreement to my proposal to invite as witness Mrs. Hatoyama, whose husband Ichiro Hatoyama was the founder of the Liberal Party. It was extremely difficult to call in a woman at the hearing. This fact is a proof that the Committee tackled the question of new national holidays in super-partisan concert.

After twenty-five meetings, nine new National Holidays were at length decided upon; they were New Year's Day, Adult's Day, Vernal Equinox, Emperor's Birthday, Consitution Memorial Day, Children's Day, Autumnal Equinox, Labour Thanksgiving Day and Culture Day. Besides, the decision was deferred on the National Foundation Day and Peace Day.

Through the whole period of these seven months, the members of the Committee made strenuous and praiseworthy efforts.

First Chairman Shigeyoshi Fukuda (Democratic Party then and Liberal Party at present) was rather liberal in presiding but deliberate enough to bring about super-partisan unanimity on every item, and the succeeding chairman Hanji Ogawa (Democratic Party then) vigorously expedited

the deliberations to formulate the final draft.

For all of that, however, some of the new national holidays were abstract and artificial, unlike the former ones which had authentic origins and justification. Moreover, the newly fabricated National Holidays lacked a balance as a whole. By any means it could not be said to be a well-done work. I advanced the opinion that we had better make it public as the framework of the new national holidays and leave it for a while to see the public reaction. But it was the least feasible with the House of Councillors which was most anxious for early promulgation of the law.

#### IX "LAW CONCERNING THE NATIONAL HOLIDAYS"

It was now agreed that the final draft was to be presented as a bill by the members of the House of Representatives. The title was decided as "Law concerning the National Holidays." The explanatory speech for presenting the bill was made by Mr. Ogawa, Chairman of the Committee, in which he stressed the point that this bill had been purposely prepared to show only the framework of the national holidays so that their contents might be developed with the willing and growing support of the people in the future.

He drew special attention to this point because some of the members of the House of Councillors were officious enough in attempting to fix upon the detailed programme of the celebration for each national holiday. For instance, they were exercising pressure upon the Department of Agriculture and Forestry for special ration of Indian beans on Adult's Day.

In June, 1947, when only a few days were left before the session was closed, the bill was laid before the plenary session of the House of Representatives and passed without any amendment. It was immediately transferred to the House of Councillors, and it was also passed without amendments.

In the following month, July, the Law was promulgated and came into force on the same day. The following is the whole text of the Law:

## Law concerning the National Holidays

Art. 1. For the purpose of preserving good customs and of building up a better society and more fruitful life, the Japanese people, aspiring sincerely to liberty and peace, have hereby determined the days which the whole nation shall observe for celebration, gratitude or, commemoration, and the above days shall be called National Holidays.

Art. 2. The national holidays shall be as follows:

Name	Date	Object
New-Year's Day	Jan. 1	To celebrate the beginning of the year.
Adult's Day	Jan. 15	To congratulate and encourage the youth who have reached full age and determined to live out a responsible life.
Vernal Equinox Day	Vernal Equinox	To enjoy Nature and to love the creatures.
Emperor's Birthday	Apr. 29	To celebrate the Emperor's Birthday.
Constitution Memorial Day	May 3	To commemorate the enforcement of the Constitution of Japan, looking forward to the development of the Nation.
Children's Day	May 5	To express thanks to mothers, as well as to value children's individuality and seek children's happiness.
Autumnal Equinox Day	Autumnal Equinox	To respect ancestors, and think about the dead.
Culture Day	Nov. 3	To love liberty and peace and to promote culture.
Labor Thanksgiving Day	Nov. 23	To esteem labor, and celebrate productivity, and to thank one another.

Art. 3. The national holidays shall be days of no work.

## Supplementary Provisions:

1. The present Law shall come into force as from the day of its promulgation.
2. Imperial Ordinance No. 25 of 1927 shall be abolished.

## X CONCLUDING REMARKS

In revising the national holidays, the House of Councillors had been



very enthusiastic from the outset, as was mentioned in the preceeding pages. They were impatiently eager for the early conclusion on the matter and even progressive in their way of thinking. It seemed, therefore, that the House of Representatives was overshadowed by the House of Councillors. In fact, however, the House of Representatives had been all the time making careful and practical deliberations, so careful that it served, as a matter of fact, to check the hasty transaction of the House of Councillors. Whereas the House of Councillors attempted to have suggestions from GHQ on almost all the matters, and it dared to have private sessions after the proposed discontinuation of "Kigen-setsu" had been severely criticized by some influential quarters of the people, the House of Representatives took up the matter on its responsibility and used its own discretion in selecting the new national holidays without being influenced from outside, and it kept all the sessions open to any spectators.

As to "Kigen-setsu" which the House of Councillors had insisted to retain until the last moment, later Mr. Soukichi Tsuda made public his advocacy of March 15th for the date of the National Foundation Festival. Though this contention is really worth serious attention, I am rather hesitant to support it, because this date happens to be in the very period when the pupils and students have no school for going up to the next grade, or they are busy in preparing for entering the higher education.

In 1952, Education Committee of Political Affairs Investigation Commission of the Liberal Party disclosed its intention to restore "Kigen-setsu". If it is as what newspapers reported, it seems to me that it was not a wise way of taking up the matter in that it had neglected a humble procedure of being guided by the public opinion and made decision one-sidedly. They might have intended to play for the gallery by direct proposal of restoring "Kigen-setsu," but it is a pity that they met harsh and severe criticism as being reactionary, or that they were alleged to be preparing for election-campaign when they called in a certain number of witnesses who were all expected to support the proposal. It is worth noticing, however, that the desire for restoring

"Kigen-setsu" has been increasing remarkably among the general public.

Anyhow, it is true that the new National Holidays are hastily-made and poorly-done work. Not a few of them still remain uncongenial to the general public. Unlike technical legislation for economic control, such a law as that concerning National Holidays should be a "People's Legislation" upon which the old or young, the male or female, all people are entitled to bring their views to bear.

Now that several years have passed since the Peace Treaty came into force, it may be high time that all the people together should reconsider the question of National Holidays.