

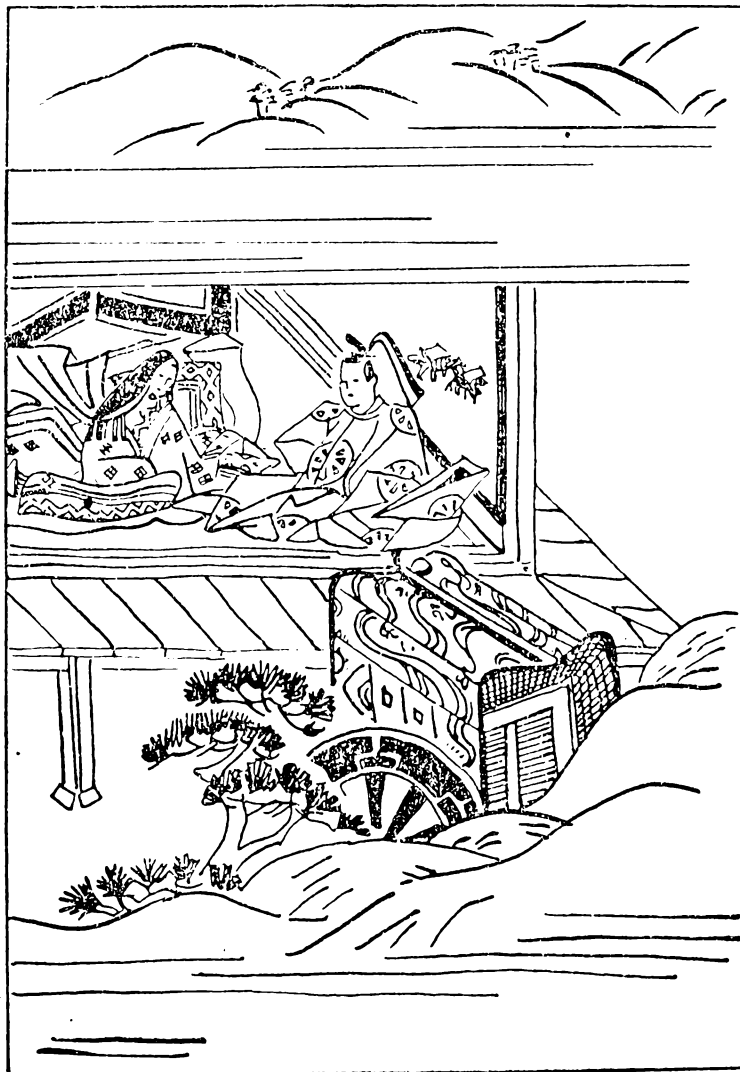
Japan: An Interpretation

By LAFCADIO HEARN

5. The Japanese Family

THE great general idea, the fundamental idea, underlying every persistent ancestor-worship, is that the welfare of the living depends upon the welfare of the dead. Under the influence of this idea, and of the cult based upon it, were developed the early organization of the family, the laws regarding property and succession, the whole structure, in short, of ancient society,—whether in the Western or the Eastern world.

But before considering how the social structure in old Japan was shaped by the ancestral cult, let me again remind the reader that there were at first no other gods than the dead. Even when Japanese ancestor-worship evolved a mythology, its gods were only transfigured ghosts,—and this is the history of all mythology. The ideas of heaven and hell did not exist among the primitive Japanese, nor any notion of metempsychosis. The Buddhist doctrine of rebirth—a late borrowing—was totally inconsistent with the archaic Japanese beliefs, and required an elaborate metaphysical system to support it. But we may suppose the early ideas of the Japanese about the dead to have been much like those of the Greeks of the pre-Homeric era. There was an underground world to which spirits descended; but they were supposed to haunt by preference their own graves, or their “ghost-houses.” Only by slow degrees did the notion of their power of ubiquity become evolved. But even then they were thought to be particularly attached to their tombs, shrines, and homesteads. Hirata wrote, in the early part of the nineteenth century: “The spirits of the dead continue to exist in the unseen world which is everywhere about us; and they all become gods of varying character and degrees of influence. Some reside in temples built in their honour; others hover near their tombs; and they continue to render service to their prince, parents, wives, and children, as when in the body.” Evidently “the unseen world” was thought to be in some sort a duplicate of the visible world, and dependent upon the help of the living for its prosperity. The dead and the living were mutually dependent. The all-important necessity for the ghost was sacrificial wor-



ship; the all-important necessity for the man was to provide for the future cult of his own spirit; and to die without assurance of a cult was the supreme calamity . . . Remembering these facts we can understand better the organization of the patriarchal family,—shaped to maintain and to provide for the cult of its dead, any neglect of which cult was believed to involve misfortune.

Bond of Religion

The reader is doubtless aware that in the old Aryan family the bond of union was not the bond of affection, but a bond of religion, to which natural affection was altogether subordinate. This condition characterizes the patriarchal family wherever ancestor-worship exists. Now the Japanese family, like the ancient Greek or Roman family was a religious society in the strictest sense of the term; and a religious society it yet remains. Its organization was primarily shaped in accordance with the requirements of ancestor-worship; its later imported doctrines of filial piety had been already developed in China to meet the needs of an older and similar religion. We might expect to find in the structure, the laws, and the customs of the Japanese family many points of likeness to the structure and the traditional laws of the old Aryan household,—because the law of sociological evolution admits of only minor exceptions. And many such points of likeness are obvious. The materials for a serious comparative study have not yet been collected: very much remains to be learned regarding the past history of the Japanese family. But, along certain general lines, the resemblances between domestic institutions in ancient Europe and domestic institutions in the Far East can be clearly established.

Alike in the early European and in the old Japanese civilization it was believed that the prosperity of the family depended upon the exact fulfillment of the duties of the ancestral cult; and, to a considerable degree, this belief rules the life of the Japanese family to-day. It is still thought that the good fortune of the household depends on the observance of its cult,

and that the greatest possible calamity is to die without leaving a male heir to perform the rites and to make the offerings. The paramount duty of filial piety among the early Greeks and Romans was to provide for the perpetuation of the family cult; and celibacy was therefore generally forbidden,—the obligation to marry being enforced by opinion where not enforced by legislation. Among the free classes of old Japan, marriage was also, as a general rule, obligatory in the case of a male heir: otherwise, where celibacy was not condemned by law, it was condemned by custom. To die without offspring was, in the case of a younger son, chiefly a personal misfortune; to die without leaving a male heir, in the case of an elder son and successor, was a crime against the ancestors,—the cult being thereby threatened with extinction. No excuse existed for remaining childless: the family law in Japan, precisely as in ancient Europe, having amply provided against such a contingency. In case that a wife proved barren, she might be divorced. In case that there were reasons for not divorcing her, a concubine might be taken for the purpose of obtaining an heir. Furthermore, every family representative was privileged to adopt an heir. An unworthy son, again, might be disinherited, and another young man adopted in his place. Finally, in case that a man had daughters but no son, the succession and the continuance of the cult could be assured by adopting a husband for the eldest daughter.

The Life Giver

But, as in the antique European family, daughters could not inherit: descent being in the male line, it was necessary to have a male heir. In old Japanese belief, as in old Greek and Roman belief, the father, not the mother, was the life-giver; the creative principle was masculine; the duty of maintaining the cult rested with the man, not with the woman.¹

The woman shared the cult; but she could not maintain it. Besides, the daughters of the family, being destined, as a general rule, to marry into other households, could bear only a temporary relation to the home-cult. It was necessary that the religion of the wife should be the religion of the husband; and the Japanese, like the Greek woman, on marrying into another household, necessarily became attached to the cult of her husband's family. For this reason especially the females in the patriarchal family are



not equal to the males; the sister cannot rank with the brother. It is true that the Japanese daughter, like the Greek daughter, could remain attached to her own family even after marriage, providing that a husband were adopted for her,—that is to say, taken into the family as a son. But even in this case, she could only share in the cult, which it then became the duty of the adopted husband to

The Old Family

THE constitution of the patriarchal family everywhere derives from its ancestral cult; and before considering the subjects of marriage and adoption in Japan, it will be necessary to say something about the ancient family-organization. The ancient family was called *uzi*,—a word said to have originally signified the same thing as the modern term *uchi*, “interior,” or “household,” but certainly used from very early times in the sense of “name”—clan-name especially. There were two kinds of *uzi*: the *o-uzi*, or great families, and the *ko-uzi*, or lesser families,—either term signifying a large body of persons united by kinship, and by the cult of a common ancestor. The *o-uzi* corresponded in some degree to the Greek *yevos* or the Roman *gens*; the *ko-uzi* were its branches, and subordinate to it. The unit of society was the *uzi*. Each *o-uzi* with its dependent *ko-uzi*, represented something like a *phratry* or *curia*; and all the larger groups making up the primitive Japanese society were but multiplications of the *uzi*,—whether we call them clans, tribes, or hordes. With the advent of a settled civilization, the greater groups necessarily divided and subdivided; but the smallest subdivision still retained its primal organization. Even the modern Japanese family partly retains that organization. It does not mean only a household: it means rather what the Greek or Roman family became after the dissolution of the *gens*. With ourselves the family has been disintegrated: when we talk of a man's family, we mean his wife and children. But the Japanese family is

¹ Wherever, among ancestor-worshipping races, descent is in the male line, the cult follows the male line. But the reader is doubtless aware that a still more primitive form of society than the patriarchal—the matriarchal—is supposed to have had its ancestor-worship. Mr. Spencer observes: “What has happened when descent in the female line obtains, is not clear. I have met with no statement showing that, in societies characterized by this usage, the duty of administering to the double of the dead man devolved on one of his children rather than on others.”—*Principles of Sociology*, Vol. III, § 601.

still a large group. As marriages take place early, it may consist, even as a household, of great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, and children—sons and daughters of several generations; but it commonly extends much beyond the limits of one household. In early times it might constitute the entire population of a village or town; and there are still in Japan large communities of persons all bearing the same family name. In some districts it was formerly the custom to keep all the children, as far as possible, within the original family group—husbands being adopted for all the daughters. The group might thus consist of sixty or more persons, dwelling under the same roof; and the houses were of course constructed, by successive extension, so as to meet the requirement. (I am mentioning these curious facts only by way of illustration.) But the greater uzi, after the race had settled down, rapidly multiplied; and although there are said to be house-communities still in some remote districts of the country, the primal patriarchal groups must have been broken up almost everywhere at some very early period. Thereafter the main cult of the uzi did not cease to be the cult also of its subdivisions. All members of the original gens continued to worship the common ancestor, or uzi-no-kami, “the god of the uzi.” By degrees the ghost-house of the uzi-no-kami became transformed into the modern Shinto parish-temple; and the ancestral spirit became the local tutelary god, whose modern appellation, ujigami, is but a shortened form of his ancient title, uzi-no-kami. Meanwhile, after the general establishment of the domestic cult, each separate household maintained the special cult of its own dead, in addition to the communal cult. This religious condition still continues. The family may include several households; but each household maintains the cult of its dead. And the family-group, whether large or small, preserves its ancient constitution and character; it is still a religious society, exacting obedience, on the part of all its members, to traditional custom.

The Family Head

So much having been explained, the customs regarding marriage and adoption, in their relation to the family hierarchy, can be clearly understood. But a word first regarding this hierarchy, as it exists to-day. Theoretically the power of the head of the family is still supreme in the household. All must obey the head. Furthermore the females must obey the males—the wives, the husbands; and the younger members of the family are subject to the elder members. The children must not only obey the parents and grandparents, but must observe among themselves the domestic law of seniority: thus the younger brother should obey the elder brother, and the younger sister the elder sister. The rule of precedence is enforced gently, and is cheerfully obeyed even in small matters: for example, at meal-time, the elder boy is served first, the second son next, and so on,—an exception being made in the case of a very young child, who is not obliged to wait. This custom accounts for an amusing popular term often applied in jest to a second

son “Master Cold-Rice” (*Hiyamesi-san*); as the second son, having to wait until both infants and elders have been served, is not likely to find his portion desirably hot when it reaches him Legally, the family can have but one responsible head. It may be the grandfather, the father, or the eldest son; and it is generally the eldest son, because according to a custom of Chinese origin, the old folks usually resign their active authority as soon as the eldest son is able to take charge of affairs.

Flower-Daughter

THE subordination of young to old, and of females to males,—in fact the whole existing constitution of the family,—suggests a great deal in regard to the probably stricter organization of the patriarchal family, whose chief was at once ruler and priest, with almost unlimited powers. The organization was primarily, and still remains, religious: the marital bond did not constitute the family; and the relation of the parent to the household depended upon his or her relation to the family as a religious body. To-day also, the girl adopted into a household as wife ranks only as an adopted child: marriage signifies adoption. She is called “flower-daughter” (*hana-yome*). In like manner, and for the same reasons, the young man received into a household as a husband of one of the daughters, ranks merely as an adopted son. The adopted bride or bridegroom is necessarily subject to the elders, and may be dismissed by their decision. As for the adopted husband, his position is both delicate and difficult,—as an old Japanese proverb bears witness: *Konuka san-goo areba, mukoyoosi to naruna* (“While you have even three go¹ of rice-bran left, do not become a son-in-law”). Jacob does not have to wait for Rachel: he is given to Rachel on demand; and his service then begins. And after twice seven years of service, Jacob may be sent away. In that event his children do not any more belong to him, but to the family. His adoption may have had nothing to do with affection; and his dismissal may have nothing to do with misconduct. Such matters, however they may be settled in law, are really decided by family interests—interests relating to the maintenance of the house and of its cult.

It should not be forgotten that, although a daughter-in-law or a son-in-law could in former times be dismissed almost at will, the question of marriage in the old Japanese family was a matter of religious importance,—marriage being one of the chief duties of filial piety. This was also the case in the early Greek and Roman family; and the marriage ceremony was performed, as it is now performed in Japan, not at a temple, but in the home. It was a rite of the family religion,—the rite by which the bride was adopted into the cult in the supposed presence of the ancestral spirits. Among the primitive Japanese there was probably no corresponding ceremony; but after the establishment of the domestic cult, the marriage ceremony

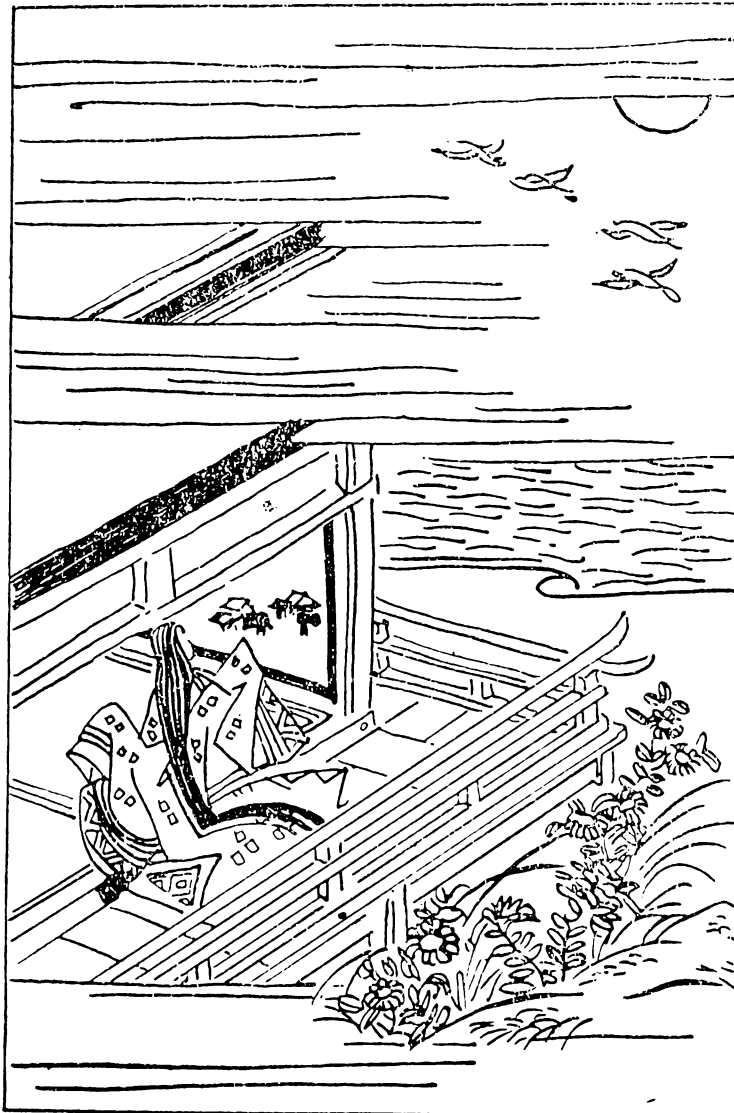
¹ The translation is Mr. Mitford's. There are no “images” of the family-god, and I suppose that the family's Shinto-shrine is meant, with its ancestral tablets.

became a religious rite, and this it still remains. Ordinary marriages are not, however, performed before the household shrine or in front of the ancestral tablets, except under certain circumstances. The rule, as regards such ordinary marriages, seems to be that if the parents of the bridegroom are yet alive, this is not done; but if they are dead, then the bridegroom leads his bride before their mortuary tablets, where she makes obeisance. Among the nobility, in former times at least, the marriage ceremony appears to have been more distinctly religious,—judging from the following curious relation in the book *Syorei-Hikki*, or “Record of Ceremonies”: “At the weddings of the great, the bridal-chamber is composed of

three rooms thrown into one (by removal of the sliding-screens ordinarily separating them), and newly decorated The shrine for the image of the family-god is placed upon a shelf adjoining the sleeping-place.”

It is noteworthy also that Imperial marriages are always officially announced to the ancestors; and that the marriage of the heir-apparent, or other male off-spring of the Imperial house, is performed before the *Kasikodokoro*, or imperial temple of the ancestors, which stands within the palace-grounds. As a general rule it would appear that the evolution of the marriage-ceremony in Japan chiefly followed Chinese precedent; and in the Chinese patriarchal family the ceremony is in its own way quite as much of a religious rite as the early Greek or Roman

marriage. And though the relation of the Japanese rite to the family cult is less marked, it becomes sufficiently clear upon investigation. The alternate drinking of rice-wine, by bridegroom and bride, from the same vessels, corresponds in a sort to the Roman *confarreatio*. By the wedding-rite the bride is adopted into the family religion. She is adopted not only by the living but by the dead; she must thereafter revere the ancestors of her husband as her own ancestors; and should there be no elders in the household, it will become her duty to make the offerings, as representative of her husband. With the cult of her own family she has nothing more to do; and the funeral ceremonies performed upon her departure from the parental roof,—the solemn sweeping out of the houserooms, the lighting of the death-fire before the gate,—are significant of this religious separation.



Speaking of the Greek and Roman marriage, M. de Coulanges observes: “*Une telle religion ne pouvait pas admettre la polygamie.*” As relating to the highly developed domestic cult of those communities considered by the author of *La Cite Antique*, his statement will scarcely be called in question. But as regards ancestor-worship in general, it would be incorrect; since polygamy or polygyny, and polyandry may coexist with ruder forms of ancestor-worship. The Western-Aryan societies, in the epoch studied by M. de Coulanges, were practically monogamic. The ancient Japanese society was polygynous; and polygyny persisted, after the establishment of the domestic cult. In early times, the marital relation itself would seem to have

been indefinite. No distinction was made between the wife and the concubines: “they were classed together as ‘women.’” Probably under Chinese influence the distinction was afterwards sharply drawn; and with the progress of civilization, the general tendency was towards monogamy, although the ruling classes remained polygynous. In the 54th article of Iyeyasu’s legacy, this phase of the social conditions is clearly expressed,—a condition which prevailed down to the era:

“The position a wife holds towards a concubine is the same as that of a lord to his vassal. The Emperor has twelve imperial concubines. The princes may have eight concubines. Officers of the highest class may have five mistresses. A Samurai may have two handmaids. All below this are ordinary married men.”

Monogamic Trend

This would suggest that concubinage had long been (with some possible exceptions) an exclusive privilege; and that it should have persisted down to the period of the abolition of the daimiates and of the military class, is sufficiently explained by the militant character of the ancient society. Though it is untrue that domestic ancestor-worship cannot coexist with polygamy or polygyny (Mr. Spencer’s term is the most inclusive), it is at least true that such worship is favoured by the monogamic relation, and tends therefore to establish it,—since monogamy insures to the family succession a stability that no other relation can offer. We may say that, although the old Japanese society was not monogamic, the natural tendency was towards monogamy, as the condition best

according with the religion of the family, and with the moral feeling of the masses.

Of Marriage

Once that the domestic ancestor-cult had become universally established, the question of marriage, as a duty of filial piety, could not be judiciously left to the will of the young people themselves. It was a matter to be decided by the family, not by the children; for mutual inclination could not be suffered to interfere with the requirements of the household religion. It was not a question of affection, but of religious duty; and to think otherwise was impious. Affection might and ought to spring up from the relation. But any affection powerful enough to endanger the cohesion of the family would be condemned. A wife might therefore be divorced because her husband had become too much attached to her; an adopted husband might be divorced because of his power to exercise, through affection, too great an influence upon the daughter of the house. Other causes would probably be found for the divorce in either case—but they would not be difficult to find.

For the same reason that connubial affection could be tolerated only within limits, the natural rights of parenthood (as we understand them) were necessarily restricted in the old Japanese household. Marriage being for the purpose of obtaining heirs to perpetuate the cult, the children were regarded as belonging to the family rather than to the father and mother. Hence, in case of divorcing the son's wife, or the adopted son-in-law,—or of disinheriting the married son,—the children would be retained by the family. For the natural right of the young parents was considered subordinate to the religious rights of the house. In opposition to those rights, no other rights could be tolerated. Practically, of course, according to more or less fortunate circumstances, the individual might enjoy freedom under the paternal roof; but theoretically and legally there was no freedom in the old Japanese family for any member of it,—not excepting even its acknowledged chief, whose responsibilities were great. Every person, from the youngest child up to the grandfather, was subject to somebody else; and every act of domestic life was regulated by traditional custom.

The Japanese Patriarch

LIKE the Greek or Roman father, the patriarch of the Japanese family appears to have had in early times powers of life and death over all the members of the household. In the ruder ages the father might either kill or sell his children; and afterwards, among the ruling classes his powers remained almost unlimited until modern times. Allowing for certain local exceptions, explicable by tradition, or class-exceptions, explicable by conditions of servitude, it may be said that originally the Japanese pater-familias was at once ruler, priest, and magistrate within the family. He could compel his children to marry or forbid them to marry; he could disinherit or repudiate them; he could ordain the profession or calling which

they were to follow; and his power extended to all members of the family, and to the household dependents. At different epochs limits were placed to the exercise of this power, in the case of the ordinary people; but in the military class, the *patria potestas* was almost unrestricted. In its extreme form, the paternal power controlled everything,—the right to life and liberty,—the right to marry, or to keep the wife or husband already espoused,—the right to one's own children,—the right to hold property,—the right to hold office,—the right to choose or follow an occupation. The family was a despotism.

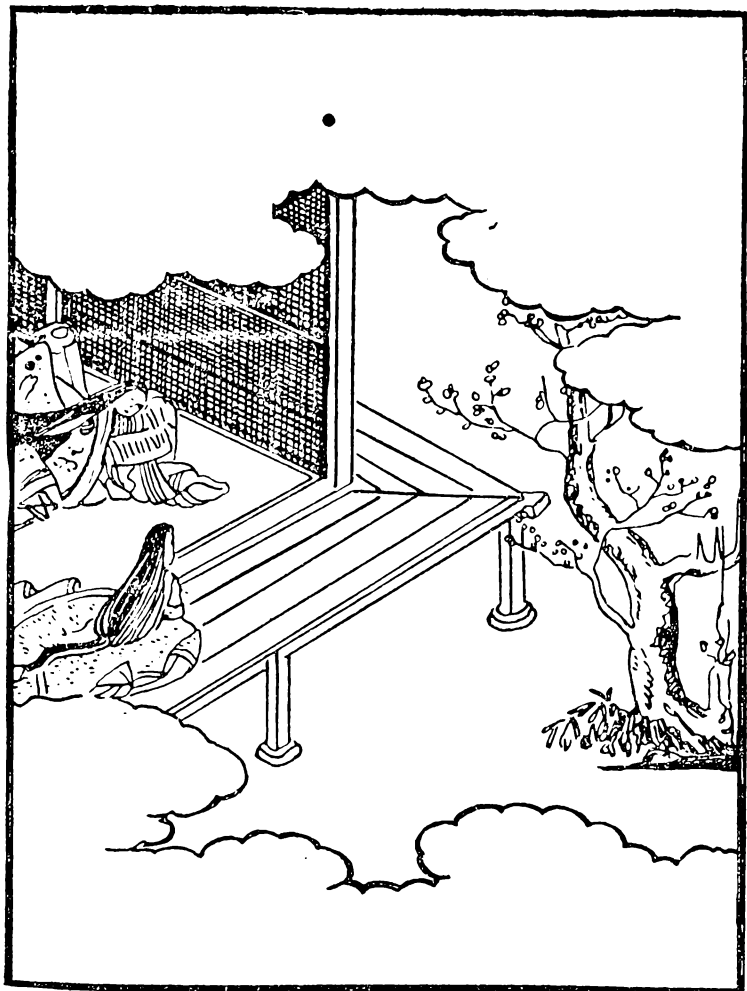
It should not be forgotten, however, that the absolutism prevailing in the patriarchal family has its justification in a religious belief,—in the conviction that everything should be sacrificed for the sake of the cult, and every member of the family should be ready to give up even life, if necessary, to assure the perpetuity of the succession. Remembering this, it becomes easy to understand why, even in communities otherwise advanced in civilization, it should have seemed right that a father could kill or sell his children. The crime of a son might result in the extinction of a cult through the ruin of the family,—especially in a militant society like that of Japan, where the entire family was held responsible for the acts of each of its members, so that a capital offence would involve the penalty of death on the whole of the household, including the children. Again, the sale of a daughter, in time of extreme need, might save a house from ruin; and filial piety exacted submission to such sacrifice for the sake of the cult.

Of Property

As in the Aryan family, property descended by right of primogeniture from father to son; the eldest born, even in cases where the other property was to be divided among the children, always inheriting the homestead. The homestead property was, however, family property; and it passed to the eldest son as representative, not as individual. Generally speaking, sons could not hold property, without the father's consent, during such time as he retained his headship. As a rule,—to which there were various exceptions,—a daughter could not inherit; and in the case of an only daughter, for whom a husband had been adopted, the homestead property would pass to the adopted husband, because (until within recent times) a woman could not become the head of a family. This was the case also in the Western Aryan household, in ancestor-worshipping times.

Position of Woman

TO modern thinking, the position of woman in the old Japanese family appears to have been the reverse of happy. As a child she was subject, not only to the elders, but to all the male adults of the household. Adopted into another household as wife, she merely passed into a similar state of subjection, unalleviated by the affection which parental and fraternal ties assured her in the ancestral home. Her retention in the family of her husband did not depend



upon his affection, but upon the will of the majority, and especially of the elders. Divorced, she could not claim her children: they belonged to the family of the husband. In any event her duties as wife were more trying than those of a hired servant. Only in old age could she hope to exercise some authority; but even in old age she was under tutelage—throughout her entire life she was in tutelage. “A woman can have no house of her own in the Three Universes,” declared an old Japanese proverb. Neither could she have a cult of her own; there was no special cult for the women of a family—no ancestral rite distinct from that of the husband. And the higher the rank of the family into which she entered by marriage, the more difficult would be her position. For a woman of the aristocratic class no freedom existed: she could not even pass beyond her own gate except in a palanquin (kago) or under escort; and her existence as a wife was likely to be embittered by the presence of concubines in the house.

A Joyous and Kindly Race

Such was the patriarchal family in old times; yet it is probable that conditions were really better than the laws and the customs would suggest. The race is a joyous and kindly one; and it discovered, long centuries ago, many ways of smoothing the difficulties of life, and of modifying the harsher exactions of law and customs. The great powers of the family head were probably but seldom exercised in cruel directions. He might have legal rights of the most formidable character; but these were required by reason of his responsibilities, and were not likely to be used against communal judgment. It must be remembered that the individual was not legally considered in former times: the family only was recognized; and the head of it legally existed only as representative. If he erred, the whole family was liable to suffer the penalty

of his error. Furthermore, every extreme exercise of his authority involved proportionate responsibilities. He could divorce his wife, or compel his son to divorce the adopted daughter-in-law; but in either case he would have to account for this action to the family of the divorced; and the divorce right, especially in the samurai class, was greatly restrained by the fear of family resentment; the unjust dismissal of a wife being counted as an insult to her kindred. He might disinherit an only son; but in that event he would be obliged to adopt a kinsman. He might kill or sell either son or daughter; but unless he belonged to some abject class, he would have to justify his action to the community. He might be reckless in his management of the family property; but in that case an appeal to communal authority was possible, and the appeal might result in his deposition. So far as we are able to judge from the remains of old Japanese law which have been studied, it would seem to have been the general rule that the family head could not sell or alienate the estate. Though the family rule was despotic, it was the rule of a body rather than of a chief; the family head really exercising authority in the name of the rest In this sense, the family still remains a despotism; but the powers of its legal head are now checked, from within as well as from without, by later custom. The acts of adoption, disinheritance, marriage, or divorce, are decided usually by general consent; and the decision of the household and kindred is required in the taking of any important step to the disadvantage of the individual.

Compensation

Of course the old family organization had certain advantages which largely compensated the individual for his state of subjection. It was a society of mutual help; and it was not less powerful to give aid, than to enforce obedience. Every member could do something to assist another member in case of need: each had a right to the protection of all. This remains true of the family today. In a well-conducted household, where every act is performed according to the old forms of courtesy and kindness,—where no harsh word is ever spoken,—where the young look up to the aged with affectionate respect,—where those whom years have incapacitated for more active duty, take upon themselves the care of the children, and render priceless service in teaching and training,—an ideal condition has been realized. The daily life of such a home,—in which the endeavor of each is to make existence as pleasant as possible for all,—in which the bond of union is really love and gratitude,—represents religion in the best and purest sense; and the place is holly

Of Dependents

IT remains to speak of the dependants in the ancient family. Though the fact has not yet been fully established, it is probable that the first domestics were slaves or serfs; and the condition of servants in later times,—especially of those in families of the ruling classes,—was much like that of slaves in the early Greek and Roman families. Though necessarily

treated as inferiors, they were regarded as members of the household: they were trusted familiars, permitted to share in the pleasures of the family, and to be present at most of its reunions. They could legally be dealt with harshly; but there is little doubt that, as a rule, they were treated kindly,—absolute loyalty being expected from them. The best indication of their status in past times is furnished by yet surviving customs. Though the power of the family over the servant no longer exists in law or in fact, the pleasant features of the old relation continue; and they are of no little interest. The family takes a sincere interest in the welfare of its domestics,—almost such interest as would be shown in the case of poorer kindred. Formerly the family furnishing servants to a household of higher rank, stood to the latter in the relation of vassal to liege-lord; and between the two there existed a real bond of loyalty and kindness. The occupation of servant was then hereditary; children were trained for the duty from an early age. After the man-servant or maid-servant had arrived at a certain age, permission to marry was accorded; and the relation of service then ceased, but not the bond of loyalty. The children of the married servants would be sent, when old enough, to work in the house of the master, and would leave it only when the time also came for them to marry. Relations of this kind still exist between certain aristocratic families and former vassal-families, and conserve some charming traditions and customs of hereditary service, unchanged for hundreds of years.

In feudal times, of course, the bond between master and servant was of the most serious kind; the latter

being expected, in case of need, to sacrifice life and all else for the sake of the master or of the master's household. This also was the loyalty demanded of the Greek and Roman domestic,—before there had yet come into existence that inhuman form of servitude which reduced the toiler to the condition of a beast of burden; and the relation was partly a religious one. There does not seem to have been in ancient Japan any custom corresponding to that, described by M. de Coulanges, of adopting the Greek or Roman servant into the household cult. But as the Japanese vassal-families furnishing domestic were, as vassals, necessarily attached to the clan-cult of their lord, the relation of the servant to the family was to some extent a religious bond.

The reader will be able to understand, from the facts of this chapter, to what extent the individual was sacrificed to the family, as a religious body. From servant to master—up through all degrees of the household hierarchy—the law of duty was the same: obedience absolute to custom and tradition. The ancestral cult permitted no individual freedom: nobody could live according to his or her pleasure; every one had to live according to rule. The individual did not even have a legal existence;—the family was the unit of society. Even its patriarch existed in law as representative only,—responsible both to the living and the dead. His public responsibility, however, was not determined merely by civil law. It was determined by another religious bond,—that of the ancestral cult of the clan or tribe; and this public form of ancestor-worship was even more exacting than the religion of the home.

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