

taken from them, and they were thrown on the street to earn their own living. All restrictions on trade and industry were done away with.

But as soon as this new capitalist state developed a fairly strong central government, and had gained the confidence of the people, there was added a strong centralized bureaucracy and a powerful army and navy, based on conscription.

At first the constitution was really liberal, comprising five articles which are the Magna Charta of Japan. Everything was to be decided by public opinion, councils and assemblies were created, so that the people should govern themselves and that public sentiment and activity should not become stagnant as formerly. It was to be a new era of universal justice, freedom and enlightenment.

Soon it became clear that these aspirations were not being realized. The interests behind the government, and in it, began to oppress the people and to suppress revolts that sprang up everywhere, with iron and steel.

It was not possible however, to overcome the popular sentiment in favor of a constitutional government based on parliamentary representation and after ten years or more of agitation, the constitution now still in force, was promulgated.

While the new constitution was liberal on paper, it was far from being so in operation. The five articles of the old constitution were acknowledged and accepted, but in the meantime there had grown up a new nobility with ranks, titles, privileges and favoritism to strengthen bureaucratic rule. And over and above all the Emperor was made an absolute ruler by divine right.

The Emperor of Japan is commander in chief of the army and navy, executive head of the national administration, declares war, makes peace, signs every death warrant, has absolute right to pardon for any crime except one committed against himself or his family.

Everything that the Emperor does, however, must be countersigned by one of his responsible ministers. Thus his governing power is limited by those who are legally of his own creation. And the responsibility for all that he says and does rests, not on him, but on the shoulders of the minister who signs. The Emperor is thereby made divine and inviolable.

Thus the real power governing Japan rests with the ministers, but unfortunately they are responsible, not to the people nor even to the Imperial Diet, but to the Emperor only. They say and do what they like in his name, or at any rate there is no way of differentiating his views from theirs, or theirs from his. Everything is done, however behind the authority of his name, and this unique arrangement of the Japanese constitution gives the ministers absolute freedom to use the name of the Emperor to suit themselves.

That is why Japan became so autocratic and imperialistic. Under cover of the divineness and inviolability of the ruler politicians exploit the country for their own self-interest in combination with the capitalists. The people are powerless before the bureaucracy, which has not only the authority of the great power and influence of the Emperor's name, but is very well organized in addition. The bureaucracy has shaped the system of education to suit its own purposes, and has entirely suppressed any liberal tendencies. It is tightening its grip over the people more and more, through police power and militarism.

This state of things stands in apparent contradiction to the weak foreign policy previously described. But the fact is, the Japanese are not diplomats, they are parvenus in this field, and so they either resort to force, or otherwise go to the opposite extreme by following a policy of subservience. Either they adopt the catchword, "Always be ahead of the other fellow," "Strike without a word," or "Be the first to take advantage of every opportunity," such as was the case in the war with China in 1894—1895 and with Russia in 1904—1905, or they observe a cringing policy towards England, and the