

barriers. I don't think we will ever inflict so much on anyone else; I don't think there will be so many misunderstandings and well-intentioned blunders. He was a pioneer, but not without disciples with the courage and the capacity to pick up where he was forced to stop. Inevitably they will carry on his work and for themselves think out a theology of liberation, and in so doing they will compel the rest of us to reject the structures and societies that prevent us from living together as brothers. We cannot avoid the problem, for we live with it from Kentish Town to the Rand and from Kingston back to Leicester. We are committed quite clearly and irrevocably and out of principle, by our common vocation with Irenaeus; through his experience and the continuing presence in the Province of our West Indian brethren we are brought some understanding and concern for the black world as it really is, so that we know that racism is simply a manichean abuse of the term black that masks principles and systems that are inherently evil and must be resisted at any price.

Kami-Natures

by Louis Allen

Stiff opposition from the Socialist and Communist parties in Japan has forced the Japanese Government to cancel the visit to the United States of a marine biologist, author of *Some Hydriods of the Amakusa Islands* and ten other works. Censorship? Persecution of intellectuals? No, nothing so sinister. The distinguished scientist in question also happens to have another role, and is known, outside the pages of biology periodicals, as the Emperor of Japan. This gives the postponement this week¹ of his visit to America planned for the autumn an importance of a different kind. The Socialists and Communists claim that the Liberal-Democratic party is misusing the person of the Emperor by making him a factor in relationships with the US. It is, they say, giving him a political role, and this is in direct contradiction with the Japanese Constitution of 1947. Indeed, that constitution does state quite clearly in Article 1 that the Emperor 'shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power'. It doesn't matter now that this new constitution was largely American-inspired, in ideas and language; what matters is that a totally new concept of the Emperor's function was forcibly introduced into Japanese life by it. The Meiji Constitution of 1889 had stated categorically that the Emperor was sacred and inviolable, the heir of a 'line of emperors unbroken for ages eternal'. 1947 introduced the

doctrine of popular sovereignty, a notion quite foreign to Japanese ways of thought. This constitutional change had implications which we in the West would regard as theological. The Emperor ceased to be a God to his people. He became someone they could actually look upon in the streets without being punished for doing so; someone who not only came out of his palace and talked to them, but was the first reigning Japanese monarch *ever* to leave his country and travel overseas. The divinity had been humanized.

In that case, why all this fuss about visiting America? I think there are two ways of looking at this. The first has as much to do with the current political situation as with Japan. And the fact that there's been a fuss at all might secondly suggest that, theological speculations apart, the Emperor as 'symbol' has perhaps rather more importance than we realize.

First, the postponed trip to the States. The Foreign Minister Mr Ohira recently summoned Mr Ingersoll, the US Ambassador, to the Foreign Office and told him that a tight schedule of Imperial arrangements this autumn had made the visit quite impossible. It was known that Mr Nixon had expressed a desire to include Japan in his itinerary next year, and such a visit would be in return for the Emperor's visit to the US. The cancellation or postponement of this—the net effect is the same—means that there is now no reciprocal need to invite Mr Nixon, however much Mr Ohira says the President would be welcome. There's little doubt that Mr Nixon could do with some of the kudos that might rub off from a successful Imperial tour and his own return match in Japan. There's little doubt, also, that the Japanese intend to see he doesn't get any. I suspect it's not merely the flavour of the Watergate affair that has begun to assail Japanese nostrils; there's also the retarded impact of the 'Nixon shock', as the Japanese press called it—that moment when Dr Kissinger, on behalf of the American President, descended upon Peking and told an astonished world that Communist China was no longer the implacable enemy but a nation you could do business with. The Japanese would have liked some notice of this *volte-face*, since they had been debating for two decades what kind of relations with China they should have themselves; but almost no notice was given them, and there was certainly no opportunity for consultation. 'Shock' was the appropriate word. Bogged down by discreditable events in his own entourage, flailing around for help, Mr Nixon would naturally like to use the Imperial visit to repair his rather frayed image; the 'Nixon shock' he so thoughtlessly inflicted on the Japanese will ensure that, in whatever polite terms this is wrapped up, help will not be forthcoming from that quarter.

All this set me reflecting on the change in the Imperial role I've seen in my lifetime, and on the different ways in which the Japanese think of their Emperor, who is 72 this year. A public opinion poll

was carried out by the Social Research Institute of Tokyo two years ago when the Imperial couple were about to set out for their trip to Europe. To the first question—What comes to your mind first when you hear the word Emperor?—nearly a quarter thought merely of the word ‘symbol’—an indication, the pollsters asserted, that the postwar Constitution had become rooted in the minds of many Japanese. The next largest bloc thought of the war, of defeat, and in particular a large segment of men in their forties listed the war as the first thing that occurred to them. Only a tiny percentage—1.3—regarded the Emperor as a god, as he had been in pre-war Japan. Even among those over 60, only 3.3 per cent retained this pre-war notion, and no-one in their twenties would admit to having it. But there was another question which possibly needs a subtler interpretation. ‘How do you call the Emperor,’ they asked, ‘*tenno heika* (“His Majesty the Emperor”) or *tenno-san* (“Mr Emperor”)?’ Now *tenno* means Emperor, and *san*, as everyone knows, is the rough equivalent of ‘Mr’. To use *san* would, in the eyes of the speaker, be demoting the idea of *tenno*—whether consciously or otherwise. Similarly to continue to use ‘*tenno heika*’ would be a harking-back to pre-war ideas. As many as 82.5 per cent said they used this more formal term quite naturally when they spoke or thought of the Emperor. Less than 11 per cent used the more familiar *tenno-san*. Sadamu Kimura, chief of the Institute’s Opinion Survey Department, thought that there was a simple explanation for this: the Japanese mass media refer to the Emperor with the more formal expression and have continued to do so since pre-war days.

Was there not also, during the period of the Imperial tour in Europe, a feeling of unease? Even for those Japanese who were well informed about the West, and were fairly certain that the Emperor would receive at any rate a courteous and correct welcome, there remained the feeling that it was somehow inappropriate for the Emperor to be physically absent from the country. Possibly this feeling is linked with the idea of the Chinese Emperor as closely connected with the revolving seasons. The Book of Rites describes how one of the Emperor’s tasks is to plough the first furrow of the year and sow the first seed; in other words, the prosperity of the country is in some way related to the presence on the surface of its land of a charismatic being who will guarantee that the land—and what else is there?—will continue to produce the means of life.

Whatever the origins of this particular feeling, the way the Japanese continue to regard their Emperor is evidently very different from the way we have become accustomed to treating our Royal House. It may overstep the bounds of politeness in many cases, but the public’s voracious interest in the affairs of the Royal Family is, in essence, very little different from that shown by the people of late Victorian England. It is a way of coming to terms with the idea of royal power.

Most of us can remember our relatives of older generations being astonishingly well-informed on the genealogical ins-and-outs of this or that ramification of the Saxe-Coburg-Gothas, who had married whom and when, and how many children they had had, and what the correct title and placing of these royal infants was. This wasn't a class thing—it moved right across the spectrum of society.

There doesn't seem to have been quite the same kind of domestication of what was a fearful power, the same kind of familiar acceptance of the royal institution, in Japan since 1945. Even in Japanese academic writing, though there do exist books and articles dealing with the Imperial function, I don't have the impression that it's a subject which is approached casually. And even when the interest is there, it is focused not on the living being so much as on the nature of the institution.

An analysis carried out twenty years ago on the basis of an opinion poll showed that just after the war the Japanese justified the Imperial institution to themselves either in terms of a family analogy—when the father is absent from the family, the family is unhappy; so the Emperor is the father of Japan; or in terms of personal or national sentiment, the need for a supreme, unquestioned being at the apex of the social pyramid. Or they justified it in terms of acceptance of a historical fact; or from a conviction that the Emperor would ensure that those who govern are good men; or, lastly, that he is there because of a supernatural power.

This last concept has been the great stumbling block as far as the West is concerned. For the Japanese, the Emperor is a *kami*. The word *kami* implies a belief in the sacredness of the Universe. You could not fell a tree or tap a bush for lacquer juice or light the fire of a forge without making an appeal to the *kami* or sacred spirit which was present in each one of them. Our over-simple translation of this word *kami* as God has forced us to conclude that the Japanese believed their Emperor to be God, as we understand it. We have created an unnecessary difficulty for ourselves.

In the Jewish and Greek tradition of Christian thought, 'God' is a word signifying 'supreme being', or 'omnipotent creator of the universe'. We may make images of him—and warn ourselves not to be idolators as we do so—and turn him into a kindly old man with a long white beard. Or, like Blake, we may see him leaning out over the bar of heaven from a cloudy sky with a pair of compasses poised over the created world. Or he can become a philosophical phrase—prime mover, uncaused first cause, and so on. But in all these things we are concerned with connected notions of creation and power, of eternity and infinity, of something which transcends humanity utterly.

It may look as if the Japanese, by setting their Emperor so much apart, believe in transcendence too. But this isn't so. A *kami*-nature is more like something we call 'numinous', having a supernatural

quality, even though we may be aware that we have conferred that quality upon it ourselves. I say this because, though it seems—in politics—the very opposite of what can be produced by a system of democratic checks and balances, this idea of *kami* can in fact occur in western society with the greatest ease.

And I don't mean something like the Holy Roman Emperor where it's explicit. Of course, Charlemagne was a *kami*, and had the attributes of priest as well as king.² No, I am thinking more of someone like Churchill, the great *shogun* of the 20th century, who was most certainly a *kami*, as was General de Gaulle. The Japanese could understand de Gaulle perfectly. He was acutely aware of his own numinous nature, and fully identified himself with the being of France—in other words with what the Japanese call *kokutai*, 'the body of the country'. He *was* the body of France. Consequently any refusal to recognize this caused him the same sort of pain that any act of sacrilege does. 'J'étais un mythe . . .', he confessed to André Malraux, and in the Second World War this was a simple statement of fact. The situation created the need for something numinous. A national crisis always brings the *kami* to the fore.

But perhaps it has to be a really profound crisis, in which the very identity of the nation is at stake. The *kami*-nature is not available for the hurly-burly of modern constitutional politics. I find it difficult to invest either Mr Heath or Mr Wilson with a *kami*-nature. But perhaps that is unkind. Their numinous moments may be still to come. . . .

In another sense, perhaps I am falsifying the Japanese idea of *kami* by using it in connection with charismatic politicians or statesmen. Because one characteristic of the *kami* is distance, remoteness from common concerns, the idea of being set apart in a tabernacle,—even though the tabernacle, like the great shrine of Ise, may be empty.

I can remember another Japanese Imperial visit, twenty years before the Emperor made his tour of Europe in 1971. It was when his son the young Crown Prince came to England in 1950. There was opposition to this trip as well; not from political parties within Japan but from ex-prisoner-of-war organizations in England. It was difficult not to sympathize with them. They were not *au fait* with the constitutional set-up in Japan, and they attributed guilt for war crimes to the Japanese Emperor simply because he was the reigning monarch; and the discovery of the Japanese treatment of our prisoners was still very fresh in people's minds. The Crown Prince's arrival must have been a considerable headache for those who were responsible for his security. In fact, I think we overdid it. At one part of his tour, the Prince rested for a while at Rothbury in Northumberland, the home of Lord Armstrong. (The connection between Lord Armstrong and Japan was a highly practical one—the ships his father built for the Japanese navy in the Tyneside shipyards helped the Japanese to sink

the Russian fleet at Tsushima in 1905.) The Crown Prince was accompanied on this trip by my old Japanese language teacher, General Piggott, who had escorted the Emperor round England in 1922, and I wrote to him suggesting that it would be a pity if the Crown Prince left the North of England without seeing Durham Cathedral. It would be like going to Japan and not visiting the temples of Kyoto. So, on his way south, the Prince stopped in Durham, and we entertained him briefly in the State Rooms of Durham Castle and the Dean showed him over the Cathedral. What he made of it all is hard to know; but it is quite certain that the people of Durham didn't get much chance to see him. There were far more police visible than citizens, and I can recall a security officer in plain clothes charging rapidly ahead up some steps in the Cathedral, his hand in his bulging jacket pocket—taking no chances.

At that moment in time, though, that visit marked a change in atmosphere. There *were* expressions of hostility from ex-POW associations; but one of the London papers came out with a warm headline—'Give This Boy a Break!'—which, however hearty it may sound, divorced the responsibility for Japan's recent past from the Crown Prince who was (rightly) seen to have been too young to bear any kind of guilt for it.

What struck me, though, most profoundly, was the way in which the Japanese in his entourage treated him. There was deference, but not obsequiousness, and there was, too, a feeling of friendliness. While we were waiting for the train to arrive in Durham station, this descendant of an Imperial line unbroken for two thousand years sat in the station waiting-room while his escort stocked up with cigarettes for the London journey.

I was all the more intrigued by their casual, polite friendliness because I had seen at first hand, five years previously, exactly what the impact of Imperial command had been upon the ordinary Japanese. In August 1945 there were moments of great uncertainty in South-East Asia as to whether the Japanese armies would surrender when ordered to do so by Imperial General Headquarters. It was strongly rumoured that General Itagaki, who was in command in Singapore, and had in the past been one of the instigators of Japan's take-over of Manchuria in the 1930s, was likely to resist any demand made on him to surrender. I don't know how this particular rumour started, but several field commanders outside Japan were unwilling to accept the command of the central authorities. I have seen a message to Tokyo from the commanding general in China, Okamura, begging to be allowed to fight on to the death.

It is interesting to see how the Japanese overcame this unwillingness in the field. They did not send out high-ranking generals or admirals from Tokyo to coax subordinates by a show of rank. Instead, Princes of the Blood flew to the various overseas commands, to China, to

Manchuria, to South East Asia, to ensure that those on the spot knew that what was expected of them was compliance with an *Imperial* decision.

(It was only, paradoxically, by quitting his constitutional role of non-intervention that the Emperor was able to bring hostilities in the Pacific to an end.)

Nearly all the various peace feelers that had been put out were concerned with one issue: would the *kokutai* be preserved, if Japan surrendered? It was of course a political élite that continued to make these conditions. Their fears were natural. There was strong pressure from some of the Allied nations to arraign the Emperor as a war criminal, to consider him, that is, not as a symbol but as a participant in Cabinet government and therefore to be held co-responsible with his ministers. It would have been disastrous if advice to remove the Emperor from his throne had been listened to. The war would not have ended when it did, atom bomb or not, and millions more men, on both sides, would have been killed.

In the Japanese Headquarters at Saigon in Indo-China, a few months after this fateful decision, I sat talking to one of their officers. 'You know, we would never have surrendered,' he said quietly, and pointed a finger upwards, 'if "He" had not told us to.' What surprised me was that I had regarded this officer as an untypical Japanese. He was a *Nisei*, that is, a second-generation Japanese born in the United States, and had only been caught in Japan on a visit by the hazards of war. He was fully westernized in his knowledge of the world outside Japan, and English was at least as natural to him as Japanese. He was, too, quite cynical about the motivations of his military superiors, and casually free and easy with the British when daily affairs brought him into contact with them. And he was not play-acting. There was nothing theatrical about the way his voice dropped when he said ' "He" told us'. He was merely reflecting in his tone an awareness of the *kami*-nature which had intervened so decisively in military politics and made peace possible.

Yet some Japanese have never forgiven the Emperor for this act. The Japanese novelist Yukio Mishima, who committed suicide with such public forethought two-and-a-half years ago, carried out that action in part from disillusion with the peace-mindedness of modern Japan and the Emperor's role in it. For Mishima, the voices of the heroic past reproached both the Emperor for having renounced his divinity and modern Japan for enjoying the fruits of material civilization. 'Everyone has chosen to go on living happily' he wrote in disgust to his English translator, Donald Keene.

I talked some time ago to Professor Joyce Lebra, the only foreigner present on the day of Mishima's suicide at the Ichigaya Headquarters of the Ground Self-Defence Forces. 'Mishima began to shout,' she said, 'and for about seven minutes he exhorted the soldiers to rise in

the name of the Emperor, to overthrow corrupt politicians and the Constitution and to create a genuine army.' The western world might quite rightly see a fearful threat in this exhortation, in the combination of an intellectual's world-weariness and the appeal to a tradition of violence. But to look on this side only would be to ignore the impact Mishima had on his audience. His hoarse harangue, Professor Lebra said, was nearly drowned out by the shouts and jeers of the incredulous soldiers who were listening to him.

The Emperor's importance in Japanese life, and his political role as defined by the Constitution, are not really one and the same thing. It is perfectly possible, as I have shown, to think of him as a *kami*, as a numinous being, without endorsing any nostalgia in the manner of Mishima for a past in which that *kami* was exclusively defined as a god of war. There may, of course, be a risk of a revived militarism in Japan, but the scepticism of those soldiers at Ichigaya is perhaps the best guarantee we have that the Japanese will not again allow their Emperor to be used as its figurehead.

¹This paper was broadcast by the BBC on *Personal View* (Radio 3), April 28, 1973.

²In a way that the last reigning Bourbon, Charles X, was not, even though he had himself crowned at Rheims with all the panoply of the royal past, in a vain effort to assume what he had not got.

The Pope's New Clothes

by Edward Quinn

I suppose that was the reason why a plenary indulgence was granted to people who gathered together before the basilicas on the great feast days while the Pope gave his blessing *Urbi et Orbi*. Fair enough. For, although such attendance was not precisely earth-shattering, it had important consequences: the large numbers made a great contribution to the honour of the Apostolic See and to the public profession of faith in the rock on which the firmness of the whole Church is built. This in fact was the object of granting the indulgence. The same reasoning could be applied to the indulgences proclaimed in Luther's time by the people who collected alms for the building of St. Peter's.¹

So now we know. Hans Küng's massive criticism of the critics of his views on infallibility² reached me with the newspapers announcing that the Pope was to proclaim a Holy Year. It was the same week in which sensational headlines about the Lambton case gave way to the reassuring news that the heart of the establishment was sound: fox-hunting, hard-riding Anne would really marry her stalwart and even more hard-riding Mark.

The juxtaposition is hardly fair. The announcement of Anne's engagement may well have been timed without regard for less edifying events in high places. And Küng's worst enemies only find fault