

## Introduction

Geographically Japan and Israel lie at opposite ends of Asia. The cultural differences of the Japanese and the Jewish peoples form but one measure of the astonishing diversity of nationalities who reside in that geographical expression called Asia. Yet these two peoples do have one thing in common: among those Asian peoples who have attempted the experiment the Japanese and the Israelis have most successfully assimilated the Western political form of representative government.

Israel's situation is unique; for Western European *emigrés* imported the parliamentary system almost intact, bringing with them the very political parties which became the instruments for successful operation of the Knesset. Japan's experience, which began earlier in point of time, might also be considered more typical and more relevant to the problems of the remaining countries of Asia. Ambassador Edwin O. Reischauer contends that Japan, during the years 1868-1941, underwent a "classical democratic experience," that new power groups successively became politically conscious and demanded a share in political leadership. First the samurai, then the rich peasants clamored for a parliamentary body in which to make their voices heard and ultimately the Diet was created. "Quite classically," continues Reischauer, "the Diet, once established, seizes more power."

To this volume, appropriately, two of Reischauer's students, Roger F. Hackett of the University of Michigan and Jackson H. Bailey of Earlham College, contribute studies of an episode in the complex and long-drawn-out process by which the once-circumscribed Diet seized power. They describe the Taishō political crisis of 1912-1913 from the vantage points of the two protagonists. Professor Hackett looks at the crisis through the role played by Yamagata, most adamant and powerful among those Meiji oligarchs who resisted the advance of representative government; while Professor Bailey views it from the somewhat ambivalent position occupied by Prince Saionji, concurrently head of the majority party and member of the oligarchy. The

authors are in substantial agreement that the Diet's open challenge of authoritarian methods in 1913 was only a "skirmish" which did not result in "decisive" victory, but that it foreshadowed and hastened the day of independent party cabinets.

Scott D. Johnston provides an optimistic assessment of contemporary Israel's somewhat contrasting experience with representative government. Some Israeli parties antedate statehood, observes Johnston; and they have rallied strong followings by stressing—in addition to the usual political aims—ideology, social services, and colonization activities. A multi-party system would seem to threaten division within the state; but Johnston discerns that the Israeli parties, for all their differences, have developed an underlying consensus and tradition of co-operation which has provided a basic national unity.

Two contributors to this volume consider the role of religion in modernization. Philip Hitti of Princeton University demonstrates that Islam, tradition-steeped though it may be in its orthodox form, is not necessarily a barrier to Westernizing change. He traces the process by which the faithful may still justify social and economic innovations; and he concludes by prophesying that, as the Islamic world modernizes, bitterness between Islam and Christianity will diminish and the two religions will "find themselves once more drawn closer together" in a world of "godless unbelief." Winston L. King of Grinnell College, in a companion treatment of Buddhism in Burma, centers on U Nu's effort to synthesize the traditional religion, Buddhism, with the imported political and economic philosophy, socialism. As Professor King explains in a footnote, he penned his closing query about the degree of permanence of reforms effected in the name of *Buddhist socialism* before General Ne Win's coup of March 2, 1962.

Indian socialism, at least major state sponsored capital investment, has received so much attention as to obscure the very important role of the private sector in India's economy, contends Henry H. Schloss of the University of Southern California in the final paper of the volume. Moreover, the public vs. private ownership controversy, he concludes, is much less relevant to economic development than factors such as the professional competence of management; and he suggests that India should develop her

latent resources "without necessarily following either the American or the Soviet 'model.'"

The studies in this volume grew out of the Tenth Conference on Asian Affairs at Grinnell College on October 20-21, 1961; Professor Hitti's paper on Islam was initially prepared as the principal address at that meeting. This selection of papers from the Grinnell Conference is presented in the belief that they merit a wider audience than the Conference itself afforded; and their dissemination will, it is hoped, encourage further solid research on this important area of the world.

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