

Excerpt from "Youth and Culture"

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Then, how to achieve this ideal? Emperor JIMMU's August rescript is written in the NIHON SHOKI (Records of Japan): "We will establish our capital at the centre of RIKUGO (universe), making HAKKO U." The careful reading of this rescript will show the way of us Japanese. HAKKO means the world, and U a house.

Let me explain it more explicitly. In the world as well as in a country, each of us should try to secure everlasting welfare of mankind by harmonious intimacy, as if in the same family, not trespassing upon one another, and under a strict order, each holding his own proper position. That is my humble interpretation of the rescript.

It is true that you young men should always be brave and high spirited, but I would like to say out of kindness that you should be careful not to display reckless and personal courage nor to satisfy your own personal enmity, which is very harmful not only to yourselves but to society and the country you live in. Therefore, we earnestly advise you to shun such action and pursue genuine moral courage developed from the cause of justice and humanity. With it you can never be in the wrong and can look at the main issue of things. Then, please bear in mind the difference between the former and the latter.

For instance, if you resort to brutal force on the spur of the moment, driven by your personal feelings and injure others, it does not mean courage. On the other hand, if you can fight as fierce as a tiger in case of emergency, though you are usually gentle as a cat, then you are truly courageous. That is, even if you are looked upon as a coward and despised as such by others at ordinary times, yet you have moral courage if only you can sacrifice yourselves with determined courage in an emergency for what you believe to be the cause of justice and humanity.

"Knightly Benevolence"

Courtesy is the primary basis of human relationships. Courtesy between sovereign and subject, father and son, elder and younger brothers and sisters, endows human relations with order and a distinction. Otherwise, there can be neither sovereign nor subject, and neither father nor son, and no distinction whatever between elder and younger brothers and sisters.

So a man without propriety is no better than a beast. Even the crow observes filial piety to parents by feeding them in return when the parent birds get old, and the pigeon is said to be so polite to parents as to stay in lower positions than the parents do. The

man without propriety may be regarded as an inferior being to birds and beasts.

In the Imperial Rescript granted to soldiers it is desired that "soldiers shall be decorous." Should soldiers lack propriety, they would merely constitute a mob or a gathering of vagabonds; no distinction of rank may be observed whereby no orders shall be obeyed. Thus the military spirit shall be lost.

Then what is propriety? The Imperial Rescript graciously defines it as "to be respectful toward your superiors and considerate toward your subordinates." This is the essence of propriety. That is to say, merely revering superiors is not sufficient. True propriety is displayed only when the superior and the subordinate conduct themselves with due respect and consideration toward each other.

From the old times propriety has been appreciated as a virtue of "Bushido" along with loyalty, courage and faith. One must be wholly sincere toward not only his superiors but also toward his colleagues and subordinates and even toward his enemies. This sincerity in associating with people is propriety. The term "Knightly Benevolence" also means this. In our country a man is not respected, no matter how excellent a tactician he may be in battles, unless he adheres to the principle of "Knightly Benevolence".

The principle of "Knightly Benevolence" is something that the great military leaders of our country have always adhered to. Without exceptions, the warriors, such as UESUGI, Kenshin or KATO, Kiyomasa in older times, and more recently SAIGO, Takamori, who were called great commanders and heroes, strictly adhered to this principle. If one opens the pages of Japanese history of war he will find numerous examples.

The warm courtesy shown by Fleet Admiral ITO, Yusuke to the enemy admiral, Ting Ju-chang is a good example of this. On September 17, 1894 on board the flagship "Matsushima" as the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet, the Admiral engaged in battle with the North Ocean Fleet of the Chinese Navy in the Yellow Sea. Commanding the main force of the Combined Fleet and the First Diversion Squadron, he smashed the enemy fleet, sinking five warships, causing fire on the "Ting-yuang" and the "Lai-yuang", and putting the other ships out of commission. Although this remarkable victory was, of course, attributable to the august virtue of His Majesty, much credit was due to those brave officers and men who did splendid work under the command of the Admiral.

After suffering this crushing blow, the Chinese Navy staggeringly retreated to Weihaiwei to make a stand. The Admiral who had been acquainted with Ting Ju-chang in the past was deeply impressed with the loyalty of the enemy expressed in his continued brave defense on the small island of Liukung Tao. In January the following year the Admiral wrote a letter to Ting Ju-chang advising him to surrender. Even such a brave man as Ting Ju-chang was said to be moved to tears by the courteous Admiral's letter which expressed his heart-warming feeling. Let us now cite a passage from the letter,

"I had the honor to be on intimate terms with Your Excellency for many years. The change of situations between the Empire of Japan and the Empire of China unfortunately forced us to face each other as enemies in the battle field. This was, however, due to the

fact that each of us had duty to serve our respective countries, but the friendship between us remains unchanged as in bygone days. So I would like to venture to state a few words to Your Excellency for your kind consideration. That the military forces of your esteemed country continue to lose and that Weihaiwei is about to fall are entirely the result of many years of corrupt administration. Unless the root of the evil is crossed your country will never be saved from inevitable ruin. Why does your Excellency not wait for a proper time to undertake a great renovation and save your country from the crisis so that you can truly fulfill your duty as a subject? It is not the way for a man of honor to be particular about a trivial matter and not to be able to bear minor disgrace. Hence, with the worldly known chivalry of the Samurai in mind, I sincerely plead with Your Excellency to visit Japan for the time being and do your utmost so that Your Excellency may be of service to your country in the future. I shall greatly appreciate Your Excellency's acceptance of the advice of Your faithful friend."

Ting Ju-chang, however, turned down this offer of a surrender. Accordingly, our torpedo boat flotilla made an attack on the night of February 5th and following this, our fleet opened fire simultaneously from every ship, sinking or capturing the enemy battleships. Ting Ju-chang then sent his delegation to negotiate for peace with the condition that all the remaining ships and arms be surrendered and that at least his subordinates will be saved. As for himself he committed suicide bravely. Meeting the delegation, Fleet Admiral TPC willingly accepted all the propositions and sent "sake", confections, etc. to Admiral Ting to comfort him for his long struggle. Soon afterwards the Admiral received the news of the suicide of Ting Ju-chang. He immediately ordered the fleet to observe silence and expressed his sincere condolence.

When he heard that Ting Ju-chang's coffin would be sent to Chofoo by a small junk, he released the warship "Kangchi" and allowed them to send the coffin aboard the warship. This was done with his following remark: "Admiral Ting was our enemy but he certainly was a praiseworthy man of loyalty. If he had died in peace time, the deceased would be sent escorted by battleships. He who died for his country is about to be sent instead by a small and humble boat. The Samurai of Japan from respect to his spirit can not allow this to happen."

Furthermore, he expressed his true sentiment of benevolence, adding that: "should there be any room on board the ship, I have no objection to embarking surrendered officers of the Chinese army and navy provided that while she passes the area under occupation of the Japanese fleet she bear a white flag. We shall never fire on her."

The Chinese officers and soldiers were said to have been deeply impressed by this and tendered their sincere appreciation. Does not this story truly illustrate the characteristics of the Japanese soldier who lives on the principle of "Knightly Benevolence". Propriety should be observed to this extent.