

MY RECENT TENTATIVE TRANSLATION OF THE KŌDŌKWANKI, REVISED

By

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What is Kōdō or Widening the Way? It is man himself that can widen the Way. What is the Way? It is the Great Law of Heaven and Earth, from which mankind cannot detach itself even for one single moment. Why has the Kōdō-Kwan been established? Reverently I express the humble opinion that in antiquity the Heavenly Deity established the foundation of the Empire, and founded the dynasty. And thus a happy order has prevailed throughout Heaven and Earth and all things are flourishing. Owing to this Way the Heavenly Being illumined the "Six Quarters" and ruled over the universe, and thanks to it, Emperors have ruled without interruption, the State has achieved its sublime dignity, subjects have enjoyed tranquillity, and the surrounding barbarians are completely quiet.

The Emperors of divine descent, however, far from being self-satisfied, rejoiced in doing good, following any wiser example of other people. To cite an instance, the ideal government administration and the education of the Western Land of Cathay during the Tō(T'ang), the Gu(Yu) and the "Three Dynasties" were adopted, to cultivate the Imperial Way. Thus fostered, the Way became more and more broadened and brightened. From the middle ages onwards, however, alien heretical doctrines deceived our people and enchanted the world, whilst unprincipled literati and men of false learning, misled by imported foreign teachings, lost

their hold on the truth. In consequence the Imperial sway became gradually weakened in practice, and led to frequent outbreaks of natural disaster and civil strife, the Grand Way becoming obscured for long ages.

Our Tōshōgū, renowned for virtues both civil and martial, quelled civil strife, and restored peace and order in the Empire, at the same time revering the Emperor and expelling the barbarians. Thus the period of great peace ensued.

Our ancestor Ikō became the first feudal lord of the eastern part of Japan. In his early days, he admired the brave personality of the Imperial warrior Prince Yamato-takeru, held steadfast faith in Shintō, or the Way of the Gods, and exercised himself in military readiness.

Our Gikō, the successor of Ikō, was a great admirer of Hakui (Poh I) and Shukusei (Shuh Ts'i), and while young, he reverently adhered to Confucianism, so that he not only enunciated Confucian morality with great clarity but also re-adjusted names, according to their true nature. He was a bulwark of the State.

During more than one hundred and several decades we have had the honour of enjoying our ancestral legacy from Gikō as well as the gracious favour of both the Imperial House and the Shogunate Government. How can we descendants remain inactive without undertaking the propaganda of this Way and without revealing to the world the virtuous merits of our ancestors in the past? It is with this aim in view that this Institute has been founded.

Why then is the God Takemikazuchi reverently enshrined in this Hall? It is because, in ancient times, He participated in the heavenly meritorious work of establishing our Empire, and even now his powerful divine spirit hovers over this eastern district. Consequently we consider

it most proper to direct the people to recognize and remember well how the Imperial Domain was first founded, and to show grateful appreciation to the initiator, besides leading them fully to recognize the origin and growth of the Way.

What has made us dedicate a temple to Confucius in this precinct? The reply is that Confucius was a sage by whom the true essence of the Way of Tō(T'ang), Gu(Yu) and the "Three Dynasties" has been transmitted to us, and we have been nourished with his teachings. Therefore we reverence his virtuous personality, and ardently desire to let the people know that it is quite natural for the Way to become greater and greater, and brighter and brighter.

Oh, ye retainers, both samurai and commoners, living in this castle-town, be diligent at your studies in the Hall, from morning till night, take steadfast hold of the Way which, re-inforced by the teachings of the Western Land of Cathay, is indigenous to the Divine Kingdom, know that loyalty and filial piety are one and the same thing; remember that the pen and the sword are bound together, that learning and its practical application are inseparably connected, that, paying homage to the Gods with reverence and awe, while at the same time embracing Confucianism, we should be impartial and do justice to both, that listening without restraint to every advice of thoughtful people and making the best use of the strength of every one, we should be grateful to the Imperial State for its countless favours bestowed upon us in the past.

With all these things successfully observed, we are confident that not only the ideals and purposes of our ancestors will be realized, but also that the divine Imperial Ancestral Spirits in Heaven will be pleased to descend to help us and favour us here below with their divine presence.

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