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CONCEPT OF THREATS AND NATIONAL DEFENSE IN THE JAPANESE IDEOLOGY AND DOCTRINE

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ABSTRACT

The concept of threat and defense concerns an individual, social group but also – in a wider understanding – policy of every state, which is emphasized by researchers of this issue. To be able to refer to the issue of threat and defense in both epistemological and ontological sense, one should identify a specified social group or state, i.e. create a sociological layer, which enables to distinct the characteristic, unique elements. This paper attempts to first shortly discuss the aspect of threat and defense of national interests using the example of Japan after the so-called Meiji Restoration and second prove that in the case of this country, as in no other, the question of defense as a reaction to threat, reaches far into social culture, maintaining historical continuity, enriched with elements derived from the Western culture. Starting point for these deliberations on the subject of Japanese specificity in relations to perceiving threat and defense is definition proposed by Juliusz Piwowarski, who indicated few important components, which altogether compose the concept of threat and defense.

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Before one starts to discuss both of these issues, they should be defined first. J. Piwowarski, a specialist in the field of security, defined the concept of threat as follows: *“Threat is a phenomenon which is primal in relation to an epiphenomenon of security. The level of absence or of the degree of control over threats for a subject of security determines not only its survival but also the possibilities for further development in both personal and social dimensions.”*¹

Taking into consideration the overall relation and interaction between a threat and

sense of security or of its lack, it is necessary to define also the concept of security. For the purposes of this study it will be necessary to recall a multidimensional definition of security proposed by J. Piwowarski, including, however, only three dimensions: epistemological, ontological and a sociological one. It must be noted that:

“Security, for a specific individual or collective entity, is a multi-faceted phenomenon, concerning this entity directly or indirectly, which spectrum consists of the following components:

- a desired state, which means for a specific entity the level of effectiveness of

¹ J. Piwowarski, *Fenomen Bezpieczeństwa*, Kraków 2014, p. 19-20.

control over possible threats to values relevant to the entity in the given place and time; in other words, security is a state which reflects the result of the difference of potentials: the potential of self-defense of a specific entity and the potential of threats to the entity in a given space-time [...]

- a development process, which is a metaneed of a human, through which is realized personal and social growth of the potential that increases the autonomous defense of an entity [...],
- a social construct, effect of the functioning of social ties of interdependences and interactions occurring in the human population, which is also one of the subjects of protection that is able to withstand numerous threats”²

In the situation of increase of risk the sense of security disappears, which generates the need of defense in order to restore the desired level of security through elimination of the threat.

Since the beginning of the Japanese statehood the security system: clan, ancestral and finally after 1868 – a national one – was based on the class of warriors called *bushi* – or samurai. The development of the knightly clans was strongly associated with the native belief system – *shintō*.

The process of unification of *shintō*, which took place in the period of VII – VIII century was also the time when the developed philosophical and doctrinal systems: Buddhism and Confucianism had a strong impact on this primitive conglomerate of beliefs, myths and legends. “As did the Taoism in China, in Japan Buddhism set a framework of this primitive animism and contributed to the fact that it finally earned the name *shintoism* (“

the way of gods”, in contrast to “the way of Buddha”).³

Suzuki Daisetsu⁴ evaluating the influence of Buddhism on the culture of Japan from the perspective of several centuries states:

“We cannot discuss the Japanese culture, without including Buddhism, because at each stage of its development we can find different forms of the Buddhist manner of feeling. In fact, there are no areas in the Japanese culture that were omitted by the Buddhist influence, so pervasive, that we, who live in its center, are not aware of this at all. Since the official bringing it to Japan in the sixth century, Buddhism is the most inspiring factor in the history of the culture of this country. It could be said that the fact of introduction of Buddhism, as it were on the recommendation of the ruling classes of that era, made it an important factor in the cultural progress and political consolidation. Buddhism quickly began to be identified with the state [...] Buddhism was fully involved in the policy of successive governments and in many ways helped to enforce it.”⁵

³H. G. Blocker, Ch.L.Starling, *Filozofia japońska*, transl. N. Szuster, Kraków 2008, p. 36-37.

⁴ Suzuki Daisetsu Teitaro (1870-1966) belonged to the samurai class. He was one of the most well-known Japanese thinkers. He was a professor of Buddhist philosophy, first and the most important exponent of the philosophy of Zen in the West. By his numerous studies on Buddhist thought, and especially on Zen he started in the West his scientific and philosophical research on the essence of Buddhism and Zen and its impact on the culture and history of the people of Asia. At the beginning of the XX century he lived in the United States and Europe, where he participated in numerous conferences devoted to the development of religion, gave lectures and seminars, as well as published numerous scientific papers on the school of Buddhism Mahayana and Zen. He was engaged in translating Buddhist literature from Japanese and Chinese to English. D. T. Suzuki in his publications and research studies dealt with the metaphysical and philosophical exploration of nature of religion and has compared mystic Christian and Buddhist philosophy.

⁵ D. Suzuki, *Zen i kultura japońska*, transl. B. Szymańska, P. Mróz, A. Zalewska, Kraków 2009, p.141

² *Ibidem*, p. 20-21.

What becomes essential to the explanation of the essence of the development of the national security system based on the samurai class is the influence of Buddhist philosophy, especially Zen⁶ sect, on ethical and moral attitudes of Japanese warriors that seem to have a specific character. Zen relationship with samurai was explained in details by already mentioned D. Suzuki. He writes, "It should be mentioned about the inner relationship between the samurai manner of feeling and zen. Now it is recognized that the elements that define bushido are: unwavering perception of the demand for the samurai's dignity, expressed in loyalty, filial devotion, nobility, kindness and generosity".⁷

The concepts of honor and filial devotion became basic building blocks of morality of soldiers after 1868 and were a source of strength of every citizen of Great Japan, who fought for the fulfillment of the ideas included in the doctrines: *Kokutai and Hakko-Ichiu* (which will be explained in further part of this work).

Analyzing causes of close relationship of the class of warriors with Zen Suzuki Daisetsu explains:

"It may seem strange that Zen was in some way linked to the samurai spirit or samurai stratum of the Japan society. Regardless of the form that Buddhism took on in different countries in which it was developing, it is a religion of compassion and in its variable history it has never been involved in wars."⁸

D. Suzuki says that there were several reasons for this. Lack of a clear incentive to fight "[...] passively sustained a fighting spirit

when warriors, for some reasons, had to step on the warpath. Zen did it in two ways: ethical and philosophical. Ethical - because Zen is a religion that teaches not to look back when you have to take some action, philosophical - because it treats with equal indifference both life and death".⁹

Worth to be emphasized are strongly accentuated by Zen discipline and self-improvement. Mind, which was clear and focused on the fight, was a guarantee of a win. An obstacle in obtaining internal concentration was craving for wealth, excessive emotionality and unnecessary intellectual speculation. All of this made it difficult to achieve the goal. Zen with its cult of simplicity was everything that a warrior with his simple and not used to the *philosophical thinking* mind needed.

Despite the message of peace which is carried by the philosophy of Zen, one of its most important symbols is a sword. Although it is identified with the struggle against evil, in the base layer it was a symbol of warrior's power, his loyalty and willingness to sacrifice his life for his master. The significance of a sword in this case is closely related to the concept of the spirit of patriotism and was heavily emphasized, contributing to the development of nationalistic and militaristic attitudes in Japan after 1868.

Also *shintō* referred to the symbolism of a sword, but Suzuki Daisetsu claims that there it has not as strong spiritual dimension as it has in Buddhism. "In *shintō* a sword always reveals its naturalistic origin. It is not a symbol but a powerful item with mysterious powers".¹⁰ Despite some reservations of D. Suzuki, one cannot ignore the fact that the symbol of a sword in the *shintō* during the Meiji Restoration - and later - had major ideological and political meaning for the legitimism of the imperial power and for creation of a basis for Japanese nationalism and expansionism.

⁶ It is assumed that Zen was brought to Japan in the XII century (Kamakura season) by a Buddhist monk Eisai (1148-1215). The new philosophy was appreciated by the Hōjō clan samurai – the family that was famous for bravery, discipline and even ascetic way of life. No wonder that Eisai and his philosophy of minimalism and emptiness gained him recognition in the eyes of the family, which gave him the role of a spiritual guide.

⁷ D. Suzuki, *Zen i kultura japońska*, p.43.

⁸ Ibidem, p.37.

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 55.

Thus, D. Suzuki's considerations as a representative of the Zen sect can be understood as emphasizing a strong influence of the philosophy of fighting spirit on the formation of successive generations of warriors, which created a close and inseparable relationship of this social class and Zen. The sense of Suzuki's views has to be examined from the perspective of time in which they were uttered, i.e. the period of a strong impact of the Kokutai ideology, which in an institutionalized way sought to minimize the influence of Buddhism on the Japanese society. Therefore D. Suzuki's thoughts had at that time a special dimension as they indicated a huge contribution of Zen to shaping the spirit and attitude of a large class of warriors, which became the nucleus of the army, fulfilling in practice the ideological foundations of the Empire of Great Japan.

In the process of upbringing of a warrior one of the most significant values was loyalty, perceived as one of the most important virtues. In *The Young Samurai Code - Budō Shoshinshu* in the rule describing a filial love *Kō Kō* it is written, "Regardless of whether since the birth he will be gifted, smart, eloquent and handsome, if he is disloyal, he would quickly come down on the wrong path and become useless"¹¹. Further there are also some important leads, "And although the words "parent", "ruler", "filial affection" and "loyalty" differ, their meanings have something in common"¹².

In the consideration of the principles of education and attitudes of Samurai, as well as other social areas, we get to the essence of the idea of Confucian philosophical message.

Conrad Totman assessing the scope of the impact of Confucian principles on shaping of the Japanese political system claims that the time of onset of the Confucius' philosophy

fell on the period when in Japan family known as Yamato came to dominance, which by combining in the person of the emperor both the political and religious functions led to centralization of power and significantly expanded their influence.

"As soon as Yamato leaders expanded their power to the East and West, they encountered more complex internal political problems and were involved in diplomatic problems with a new and powerful dynasty T'ang in China. In order to remedy these problems they implemented political reforms that combined the principles of legitimacy and bureaucratic practices used by the T'ang dynasty. The reforms included the Confucian concept of the emperor, as the sole ruler, bureaucratic authority of regional and local governments, a military system based on public recruitment and a tax system, closely corresponding with the production capacity of the country."¹³

The adaptation of Confucian principles was not only about an administrative organization of a state. Confucian philosophy, having quite a significant resemblance to the traditional Japanese system of values, which has a strong emphasis on the hierarchical social order with the dominant role of a family, was initially treated by the imperial court as a justification for these values, and even strengthened their importance due to its origin. Adoption of the Chinese philosophical system by the Japanese court circles was something momentous and honorable, and at the same time due to its ideological overtones had a very practical dimension. Presentation in the Confucian conceptual system of a state as a representation of a family - with its dependencies, hierarchies, emphasizing the importance of respect and devotion to the father of a family, and in the broader meaning, to the ruler, respect to elders and senior - perfectly fitted

¹¹ Daidoji Yuzan Shigesuke, *Kodeks Młodego Samuraja Budō Shoshinshu*, przeł. D. Marczevska, Bydgoszcz 2004, p. 18.

¹² Ibidem, p. 19.

¹³ C. Totman, *Early Modern Japan*, University of California Press 1995, p.16

the needs of the Japanese court to consolidate those principles among the society, which significantly influenced political empowerment of the ruler.

One should not assume that Confucianism was adopted in all and without reservations. The differences between Japanese and the Chinese systems of governance were important and very significant. In Japan the concept of *the mandate of heaven* was unknown, whereas it was an important part of the Confucian philosophy. In China wielding the power was of conditioned nature, as long as the ruler, who was holding his office with *the mandate of heaven* act in accordance with the will of heaven, walking *the path of heaven (tao)*. Following the virtues and providing harmony guaranteed him his position. Despotism reigns were ending with the overthrow of the ruler by the people, which was the *order of heavens*. This Chinese method of limiting despotism was unfamiliar in Japan and ideologically distant from the Japanese rule of governance. A Japanese Emperor held no power from someone's mandate, he held an office as a result of a divine command, "...You, my grandson, go there and carry a government", the Japanese emperor himself was a god, and was not subjected to earthly law, not to mention the whims of the people regarding following this or that ruler. For the Japanese, the Chinese mandate of heaven was unconditioned transfer of power, without any possibility of withdrawal, an attack on the reign wielded by the divine descendant was against the will of heaven.

Regardless of the level of acceptance of its basic ethical and moral principles at different times and by different centers of power in Japan, there was a huge impact of Confucian philosophy on the religious, cultural, political and social tradition. Historians and cultural researchers in related fields of knowledge agree that the Confucian philosophical system "played a major role in the evolution of Japa-

nese religion, giving a specific character to the modern *shintō*"¹⁴.

Its unique advantages in shaping social attitudes have been spotted in the early Edo period¹⁵. Since the inception of their governments, i.e. from 1603, Tokugawa noticed its extraordinary potential. The legitimacy of the shogun's power in military governance and administration of the country (like several centuries earlier) occurred based on "...Confucian values and ideals..."¹⁶. "For very important are knowledge of their place, treating social relations with honor, respect for order and fulfillment of obligations."¹⁷ Having regard to the need to strengthen the position of the Tokugawa military power, it was necessary to make significant changes: "Certain aspects of this philosophy, however, were modified to fit the reality of Japan more. For example, the Chinese Confucianism allowed for showing fidelity to beliefs, whereas in Japan this was limited to fidelity to the superior"¹⁸.

This interpenetration of ideas, beliefs and rituals was important to consolidate social patterns such as loyalty, devotion, faith in the divinity of Japan as a country house of the gods, and the superiority of the Yamato family, which had divine roots. However, above all the Confucian rules of loyalty combined with the indifference to death, strongly emphasized in zen, shaped the attitude of Japanese warriors. It is worth to once again recall the words

¹⁴ B. Bocking, *A Popular Dictionary of Shinto*, Psychology Press 2005, p.17. About the influence of Confucianism on the development of other dimensions of the social life in Japan writes Tu-Wei-Ming in *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity: Moral, Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons*, Harvard University Press 1997, p. 21-37.

¹⁵ Edo period (*Edo jidai*) coincides with the period of the Tokugawa government, which began in 1603 and lasted continuously until 1868 when the political power has been restored to the emperor again, as ushered was the period that in the history of Japan was called *The Meiji Restoration*.

¹⁶ C. Totman, *Early Modern Japan*, p. 21.

¹⁷ Kenneth. G. Henshall, *History of Japan*, Warszawa 2011, p. 78.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p.78.

of D. Suzuki, who explains, "Since the dawn of history Zen has always been strongly associated with the life of samurais. Although it has never encouraged actively to violent activities, it passively sustained the fighting spirit when the warriors - for some reasons- had to step on the warpath. Zen did it in two ways: ethical and philosophical. Ethical - because Zen is a religion that teaches not to look back when you have to take some action, philosophical - because it treats with equal indifference both life and death"¹⁹.

Discussing the nature and symbolism of the sword in terms of Confucianism and Zen, which has a defense functions in relation to an individual and a specific community (clan, nation), cannot be omitted. Here we will also use D. Suzuki's approach to this idea:

"Therefore a sword shall fulfill two tasks: it must remove everything that gets in the way of the will of a holder and lead to the suppression of all pulses that rises from the instinct of self-preservation. This first task directly concerns a patriotic spirit, and sometimes also a military one, the latter one has its religious references to loyalty and sacrifice. In the first meaning a sword often simply means destruction. It can also be a symbol of power, sometimes a demonic one. A sword must therefore be under the control and perform the second function indicated. An aware holder of a sword always keeps that in his mind. Destruction should be directed always against an evil spirit. A sword is identified then with the annihilation of what carries the threat to peace, justice, progress and humanism - with everything that is important for the whole world of spiritual bliss"²⁰.

A sword is also important in the symbolism of Shinto. It has a divine origin and it is used by samurais with the highest esteem. Its importance is emphasized by all of the divine books - *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*. Transmissions,

myths and legends contained in the books played the most important role in the process of educating young samurai, which underlines a great importance of symbolism and its unquestionable genealogical continuity.

One of the best examples which reflects this message is a story of a national hero named Yamatotakeru. This story is important as it combines several key elements: a reference to the main Shinto temple in Ise - a place of worship of the only descendant of the gods - the emperor and his divine ancestors, a symbol of a sword, and of genealogy of the family of Yamato"²¹.

The political, economic and social transformation which took place in Japan after the restoration of full imperial power in 1868 did not affect the re-evaluation within the morality and the duties of a warrior class, on the contrary, it gave a new meaning to the traditional virtues. A researcher Hajime Nakamura presents it as follows, "After the Meiji Restoration, until the discomfiture in the World War II, the willingness to sacrifice (addressee of which in the feudal epoch was the senior), was declared to the emperor. The spirit of bushido, which for a long time was being shaped by the class of warriors - Yaishi Hague rightly pointed out in 1907 - is now directed only at the imperial throne"²². Hereafter H. Nakamura explains: "The cult of emperor did not appear right after the Meiji Restoration (1868). Originally its elements already existed in the deep antiquity. Studying myths and legends in the *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki*, we will notice that stories about the gods were not there to show the size, strength and power of the gods, in which ancient people believed, but to prove the di-

¹⁹ D. Suzuki, *Zen i kultura japońska*, p. 43.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 54.

²¹ Perephrasis of The Yamatotakeru legend can be found in Jolanta Tubielewicz's, *From myth to history. Lectures about Japan.*, Warszawa 2006, p. 115 - 121

²² Otō Fuji, *Edo bungaku kenkyu* (*Studia nad literaturą okresu Edo*), s. 70 [w:] H. Nakamura, *Systemy myślenia ludów Wschodu, Indie, Chiny, Tybet, Japonia*, ed. P. P. Wienera, transl. M. Kenert, W. Szkudlarczyk – Brkić, Kraków 2005, p. 446

vinity of an emperor, whose relationship with the gods is exactly as described”²³.

Relationships formed under the power of tradition influenced the shape of other important attitude, which is an inherent part of the Bushidō Code – defense. “Giving a supreme value to specific interpersonal relations entails a strong sense of need to defend and develop this attitude. When existence of a particular system of relationships, to which an entity belongs, is threatened, they are willing to defend it even by force. In the Japanese way of thinking the use of brute force is considered as neither ethically wrong nor good, nor as justified or not under some specific circumstances. Individuals who belong to groups are striving to religiously justify an act of defense itself.”²⁴

The religious nature obtained political dimension. Created in 1872 on the basis of the Ministry of Heaven and Earth Deities - Ministry for the Kyōbushō Doctrine developed a doctrine which came down to the three main points:

“1. One should obey both the rules of worshiping the deities and the national patriotism 2) one should preach the heavenly mind and the way of mankind 3) one should worship and obey the throne of authority”.²⁵

In response to ministerial activities representative of the Buddhist community Inoue Enryō claimed that:

“...unlike China and the West, loyalty to the monarch and filial love are one. This is because all Japanese are descendants of the imperial family. The imperial family is a grand family of all Japanese, which makes the emperor and all of his people a part of one family”²⁶.

The combination of religion and politics was summed up by one of the creators of the Meiji reform - Itō Hirobuni, as he said, “...religion in Europe is one of guidelines, which plays an important role in the society and brings people together. In our country, there is only one religion, which is nonetheless too weak to be a factor contributing to the policy development...”²⁷

Therefore, there arose a problem for a new Japanese government, the problem of adding to the religion an ideological force which will be able to play such a significant role in the formation of state structures.

Analyzing this problem a historian of religion, Helen Hardacre, came to a surprising conclusions: “For the first time in history, the state dared to create a religious doctrine and committed itself to proclaiming it in a systematic way as the National Gospel...”²⁸

European patterns transposed to Japanese territory, and then reinforced by the *Kokutai* ideology, which has its origin in *shintō*, became the supreme political value, which could be used in the state's attempts to implement future plans. These patterns, which are derived directly from the idea and refer to the religion, served as a model for the construction of the Japanese moral state, which starting from the *political theology*, and with its help, as its ultimate goal considered the constitution of a state by the following slogan – “*enriching and strengthening the nation's army*” (*Fukoku Kyohei*)²⁹, and that is

²⁷ M. Łuczko, *Itō Hirobuni i Yamagata Arimoto, Czołowi politycy Japonii okresu Meiji*, Warszawa 2006, p. 22

²⁸ H. Hardacre, *Shintō and the State*, Princeton University Press 1989, p. 7 – 8.

²⁹*Fukoku - Kyōhei* was the political slogan of the Meiji government with a strong nationalist color, aimed at mobilizing the forces of the entire nation in order to make rapid economic and political transformation that will be used to build a country that could stand in one line with the Western powers. This watchword was in accordance with the nationwide dominant trend in Japan at the beginning of the so-called *Meiji's Restoration*. It was all about the acquisition on a large scale of Western civilization achievements, transmitted to the Japanese ground, and then implemented to nearly

²³ H. Nakamura, *Systemy myślenia ludów Wschodu, Indie, Chiny, Tybet, Japonia*, p. 447.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 463 – 464.

²⁵Masaharu Anesaki, *History of Japanese Religion: With Special Reference to the Social and Moral life of the Nation*, London 1930, p. 335.

²⁶*Ibidem*, p.19.

why religion ceased to be a goal itself, and become a measure of authorities to form a state. The emperor, in the new political realities, but in accordance with the centuries-old tradition, was identified as a descendant of the gods, and thus being a god himself, he merged in a political way in his person a dual role: a god and a ruler. Therefore the Japan Empire was perceived as a divine state, which was functioning by the will of God and based on divine principles. This procedure was necessary in a situation in which technologically and economically backward Japan could share the fate of China or Korea, which were completely dominated by such Western powers as Russia, England or the United States of America.

every aspect of the social life. *Fukoku – Kyōhei* allowed a rapid political transformation and modernization of Japan. In *Fukoku- Kyōhei* attention draws the military aspect. This can be a guide to show which of the priorities were the most important to the Meiji government. Building a strong army was a prerequisite that allowed Japan for alignment of forces in the face of Western powers and then struggle to strengthen its position in the international arena. One must remember that the international political situation in which the *Meiji* government had to exist, ranked the Japan on the losing position, which was initiated by the US military intervention, interrupted the isolation of the country, which lasted over 250 years. Meiji government was aware of the seriousness of the situation and kept in mind freshly the experiences, in which participated the other countries in the region, China and Korea, who have lost a large part of their sovereignty to the Western powers. Based on: www.britanica.com/Meiji_Restoration, <http://countrystudies.us/japan>, (10.12.2013). *Fukoku - Kyōhei* idea was the subject of research by American historians and political scientists. P.A. Scalapino claims, that: "under the influence of *Fukoku - Kyōhei* Japan started [...] the process of industrialization, as a necessary part of its policy, which led to security." W.P.A. Scalapino, *The Foreign Policy Of Modern Japan*, University of California Press 1977, p. XV. Worth seeing is another comment on *Fukoku-Kyōhei* by a researcher S.K. Vogel, who put this issue as follows: "*Fukoku – Kyōhei* become the motto of the coalition of political ideas. Many [Japanese – M.H.] intellectuals sustained the assumption that the key to the survival of the nation is the development of domestic economic growth by the balance of trade and strengthening the military force, using the achievements of Western technology" – after: S. K. Vogel, *US-Japan Relation's in a Changing World*, Washington 2002, p. 67.

From the Japanese perspective these Western standards came down to, among others, expansionism and conquest. "...most of the non-Western world in those days was subordinated to European and American nation states, to their ever growing and expanding economic and political hegemony"³⁰. Sometimes brutal subordination of Asian countries was accompanied by "[...] racist mindset which was dominating in the West then"³¹.

It should not be surprising, therefore, that the Japanese elites were aware of a constant threat from the UK or the US. In shaped by western powers Asia's political order "...policymakers of the Meiji era adopted a geopolitical point of view, which in an inevitable way was leading to a conquest of the empire or to reconcile with its own submission, without taking into account any possible middle situations. They perceived the non-Western world as a prey parceled to pieces by strong countries of the West. They came to the conclusion that Japan had no other way to consolidate its independence, than to imitate imperialists and attempt to catch up with them.[...] The adoption of this doctrine in a world of competing powers meant an approval for the logic of escalation, which was built into it. It is not out of the question that Japanese leaders could protect the national independence and Asia's prosperity by supporting trade and emigration, both in dealing with neighbors and distant countries and without striving to impose domination. But none of them believed in existence of such a possibility and the behavior of other powers did not encourage them to change their views."³²

³⁰A. Gordon, *Nowożytna Historia Japonii*, p. 163

³¹ Ibidem, p. 175.

³² Ibidem, p. 174.

KOKUTAI AND HAKKO - ICHIU AS A RESPONSE TO A THREAT AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE DEFENSE OF NATIONAL INTERESTS

Restoration of the imperial power after 1868 sought to merge again the religious and political functions, which would consequently serve to strengthen the authority of the emperor himself. This was very important for determining the ideological base of the Japanese state in its modern shape. The *Kokutai* idea (国体) (abbreviation of *Kokumin Taiku naikai*) was supposed to serve it, in which an emperor was defined as the highest religious and political authority in the state. This doctrine was defined and recognized by the Constitution of 1889. It stated that "Kokutai is a form of state in which the emperor standing steadfastly on the guard over the line graciously supervises the state power."³³

This definition, which gained a binding character, was repeated by the Imperial Supreme Court where again confirmed was significance and a role of the emperor as an authority that guards the legal order of a state.

Primarily the word *Kokutai* in Japanese meant a state or a national character and didn't have such an unambiguous political overtone. It gained this meaning already in the process of social and political changes, which took place in Japan since the second half of XIX century. A researcher of the *Kokutai* ideology Masao Maruyama in his publication of 1961 entitled *Denken In Japan*, stated that this expression at the end of the XIX century gained a new "magical meaning", turned into "the living awareness" and became a "religious character"³⁴.

A Japanese political scientist Yoshisha Hagiwara also sees a religious character of the *Kokutai* ideology, which through a person of the emperor was turning hitherto shintoistic beliefs into "national shintoism, which could have been defined as faith in the emperor [...]. The emperor himself is the founder of the divine paths (*Kannegara no michi*), the highest god of all gods of the imperial ancestors, the only priest of the highest god and he is the god of this title and moreover – the only living god"³⁵.

Emphasizing of the divinity of an emperor and related to it predestination of Japan to exercise the world power – as the divine land – gave a basis for elaborating the basis of a political doctrine which would define a framework and directions of the foreign policy. This doctrine was *Hakko – Ichiu* which in Japanese means "eight corners of the world under a common roof". The genesis of this doctrine ranges the period of merging Japanese myths and legends into two sacred books – *Nihongi* i *Nihonshoki*. The first attempts to put into practice the mission of Japan appeared in XVI century and were related to the plans of conquering Korea and China by one of the three great leaders of mediaeval Japan - Toyotomi Hideyoshiego. Forgotten for over 300 years, he came back in the turn of XIX and XX century and was fitted to the new political reality.

Hakko – Ichiu doctrine was Japan's answer to the geopolitical situation in Asia, which was being a real threat to the resilient national interests. As a result of the colonial expansion vast territories of Southern and Eastern Asia found themselves under a strong influence of the western superpowers, which were engaged in the activities of even the character of a robbery.

³³ Y. Hagiwara, *Über Begriff und Funktion der „kokutai“ – Ideologie: Der Mythos des japanischen Kaisertums als Herrschaftsideologie vor dem zweiten Weltkrieg*, www.law.keio.ac.jp/~hagiwara/kokutai.html, p.1. See also John S. Brownlee, *Four Stages of The Japanese Kokutai*, University of British Columbia, October 2000, p. 1-14 www.iar.ubc.ca/centres/cjrl/seminars/semi2000

³⁴ Masao Maruyama, „Denken In Japan“ (1961), Frankfurt 1988, s.45

³⁵Hagiwara, *Über Begriff und Funktion der „kokutai“ – Ideologie: Der Mythos des japanischen Kaisertums als Herrschaftsideologie vor dem zweiten Weltkrieg*, s.2Y

Effects of these doings were noticeable particularly in China. One should also remember that the effect of breaking isolation of Japan by force, was a signature of unprofitable agreements, similar to those in force on the territory of the imperial China.

All of these facts had a great influence on the awareness of Japanese political, cultural and economic elites. Already at the end of the XIX century after a short period of fascination with western culture in Japan occurred a rapid turn in the direction of domestic values. As people are aware of the reasons of the fall of China and recent American activities in Japan, one can hear opinions that Japan plays the role of a defendant of Asian values against the expansive western materialism.

The authorities were conducive to the increase of such a political climate and using official propaganda made the society realize the necessity of undertaking efforts in order to enable development of the "unique divine Imperium" and fulfillment of its mission.

The main assumptions of the doctrine were in accordance with the *Kokutai* ideology and were emphasizing the uniqueness of an emperor and Japan. They proclaimed the following ideas:

1. „Japan is the centre of the world, at it forefront there is the divine emperor, who owes his divinity to the fact that he is the descendant of the great Amaterasu – Omikami.
2. Japan is under a particular protection of gods (Kami). Therefore the nation and the ground of Great Japan, as well as all of its institutions are above everything else.
3. All of these characteristics are a basis of KODOSHUGISHA (the way of the emperor) and provides Japan with a divine mission of leading all nations under the common roof so that the mankind for its

own sake could be included into the act of the emperor's governance"³⁶.

By creating *Kokutai* and *Hakko – Ichiu* Japan pushed the limits of such concepts as: threat and defense of the national interests, which covered the area of Asia and Pacific. The foreign policy of Japan pursued in accordance with these principles was inevitably leading to a military confrontation with the western superpowers, which within their activities were striving to maintain the *status quo* in this part of the world.

PRACTICAL DIMENSION OF BOTH THREAT AND DEFENSE OF THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF JAPAN ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE WAR BETWEEN JAPAN AND RUSSIA (1904 – 1905) AND JAPAN AND CHINA (1937 – 1945)

Creating foundations for building political and military power Japanese elites were aware of the necessity of learning the methods of exercising of power in western countries. "To learn about the West and it's methods to defend from it even more effectively"³⁷. Later on the word "defend" ceased to be meaningful and was replaced by the word "defeat".

Already at the beginning of 70. XIX century many politicians, who had nationalistic views, started to make plans of conquering Korea, which was compliant with the belief in a special mission of Japan in Asia. An obstacle to fulfilling these plans was inter alia Russia, which had some considerable influences in China and Korea. The first attempts – diplomatic ones – of creating a protectorate in Korea ended – in the interpretation of Japanese people – with a failure, which was believed to be Russia's fault. Another political and military attempt undertaken in 1873 admittedly did end up with a success, it was not

³⁶ K. Dave, *Japan's Dark Background 1881-1945*, Willamette University www.willamette.edu/~rloftus/moremilitarism.html, s.1 26.02.2005

³⁷ J. Tubielewicz, *Historia Japonii*, Wrocław 1984, s. 353

however compliant with the expectations of the Japanese. The climate of dissatisfaction increased after political activities of Russia, which led to the necessity of returning the Liaotung peninsula. The Russian policy supported by numerous military demonstrations was a major threat to the plans of Japan, which consequently led to the defense of the national interests through starting military activity by Japan. The war between Japan and Russia was officially declared on February 10th 1904.

Leaving aside the detailed descriptions of individual actions worth recalling is the following passage: "In May 1904 130000 Japan soldiers crossed the border with Manchuria and clashed with the 220 thousand Russian corps, defeating it in a fight. [...] The defeat of Japan in some way was probably caused by the revolution, which lasted since January 1905, however the military power of Japan exceeded the expectations greatly, which was clear for all the observers. None suspected that discipline, equipment and effectiveness of Japan troops would be this high. Apart from admiration of the military experts this also caused some justified concerns"³⁸.

A Polish commentary on these events is interesting: „The war of 1905 [...] was provoked solely by imperialism and Russian rapacity. [...] Already the intransigence of the Russian government even in relation to so modest restrictions of its imperialist ambitions [...] prompted the government of the emperor Matsuhito, who had no desire for war with Russia and was afraid of it, to break off the unfruitful negotiations and deflect the Russian drive to the East by the military force"³⁹.

The analysis ends up with the following sentence, "Not only the Polish opinion seems to underestimate the fact that the war of 1905 for Japan was not the war of conquest but strictly a defensive one, and that Japan was provoked to this war and that it decided to the war after long hesitation and with a heavy heart"⁴⁰.

Japan military activity in China, which started in July 1937, was explained by nothing more but defensive actions. This time, however, Japan – as it was being explained – was defending not only its own national interest but also the Asian identity from the communism. Before the escalation of the tension and military activities, Japan policy makers were speaking out about the threat from the communism movement. *The Policy of Nations*, relating the Japanese government meetings posted the statements by leading Japanese politicians: "[...] Minister Arita ascertained a great concern of the Japanese government caused by the communist influences in the Eastern Asia and mentioned the march of Chinese communist army in Northern China [...]. The minister of war, gen. Terauczi in the mid-May this year performed at a meeting of the Budget Committee of the Japan parliament and opposed the Soviet policy in the Far East"⁴¹. In another speech minister Arita "Draws the attention to [...] relationships between Japan and Soviets, admitting that they are bad and accusing USSR for that, which, in his opinion, does not understand the position of Japan in the Eastern Asia. [...] Further on he pointed the fact of maintaining by the USSR too many of military forces in the Far East, which were a real threat to the peace in this part of the world and declared that Japan in its concern for the peace in the Eastern Asia cannot watch this indifferently"⁴².

³⁸ J. P. Rurarz, *Historia Korei*, Warszawa 2009, Wyd. II poprawione, s. 301

³⁹ *Polityka Narodów*, Warszawa 1933 IX, z.9, s.38 Miesięcznik „Polityka Narodów” ukazywał się w latach 1933-1938 i zawierał analizy polskiej polityki zagranicznej oraz poświęcał dużo miejsca na prezentowanie geopolityki światowej. Miesięcznik pełnił rolę periodyku opiniotwórczego skierowanego do polskiej inteligencji.

⁴⁰ tamże, s 38-39

⁴¹ *Polityka Narodów*, Warszawa 1936, VII, t.VIII, s.96-97

⁴² *Ibidem*, s. 95

Information policy of Japan created for the internal and international benefit left no doubts. The war in China (waged without declaring it first) is a war against communism, which was the greatest threat to fulfillment of Japan's policy that aimed at establishing hegemony in Asia and the Pacific – in the spirit of harmony and cooperation of the Asian people and under the guidance of the divine Japan.

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