

Tocqueville's Democracy and *Samurai*: Inazo Nitobe's Attempt to Apply American Democracy to the Feudal Tradition of Japan

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Introduction

Alexis de Tocqueville was remarkably sensitive to the importance of religion in American political culture; he believed that religion acts as a check on impulses toward political instability and anarchy. Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* has been widely read in Japan as a "bible" in understanding the democratic mind and polity since the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Because they understood the importance of Tocqueville's democratic theory, late 19th century Japanese philosophers, such as Inazo Nitobe (1862-1933), attempted to apply American democracy to Japan, which was struggling to emerge as a modern nation from the feudal system. They found, however, that one very basic factor of democracy in Tocqueville's theory had apparently been lacking in Japanese society—strong religious beliefs.

This study examines Alexis de Tocqueville's views on religion in democratic society and its influence on philosophers in Japan, a country which has not had any "religion" in the Western sense. Especially, this work focuses on the theory of Inazo Nitobe who believed that samurai ethics is the Japanese equivalent of religion and that Japanese democracy will bloom as long as the Japanese citizens maintain traditional samurai ethics.

Tocqueville's Ideas on Religion

Tocqueville regarded religion as a social "safety net" to avoid tyranny of a majority caused by the excesses of democracy. He devoted a large portion of *Democracy in America* to explain how American democracy functioned at that time although its stability was seriously fragile and unstable.

Tocqueville maintained that democracy is unstable because it results in individualism, which atomizes society and makes governing difficult.

Concerned only for themselves and their immediate families, democratic people tend to be alienated from the bonds of the larger connection that made aristocratic societies prone to self-sacrifice and the more sublime virtues. Tocqueville wrote:

One must admit that equality, while it brings great benefits to mankind, opens the door. . . to very dangerous instincts. It tends to isolate men from each other so that each thinks only of himself. (444)

He went on further to state: "Aristocracy links everybody, from peasant to king, in one long chain. Democracy breaks the chain and frees each link" (508). Therefore, if unchecked, individualism could lead to a "passionate exaggerated love of self" which threatens our daily lives (506).

Although democracy was weak, Tocqueville emphasized that American society was exceptional because certain of its characteristics tended to counter against a majoritarian democracy. He identified roughly three "safety valve" factors, all of which had neatly cooperated as a shield against the tyranny of majority. The first counterforce against despotism was the availability of land. In the 1830s when he traveled in the United States, America seemingly had unlimited geographic resources. Compared with European countries, where all the land was already owned, selfish interests and desires for property could be pursued with minimal social disruption in America. Secondly, the characteristics of American government, especially federalism, the separation of power, an independent judiciary, and the jury system discouraged legislative totalitarianism and attempted to challenge basic freedom. Finally, the mores of American people counteracted self-centeredness. Religion — Christianity in America's case was the key element of this third factor (542).

The Puritans who had settled New England brought with them not only a religious doctrine but one with radical democratic implications (38). Tocqueville stated: "The main business of religions is to purify, control, and restrain that excessive and exclusive taste for well-being which men acquire in times of equality" (448). Needless to say, he implied that "excessive and exclusive taste for well-being" is promoted by democracy and egalitarian conditions. Compared with despotism, Tocqueville argued that democracy

demands a faithful tie among people:

Despotism may be able to do without faith, but freedom cannot. Religion is much more needed in the republic they advocate than in the monarchy they attack, and in democratic republics most of all. How could society escape destruction if, when political ties are relaxed, moral ties are not tightened?
(294)

Moreover, Tocqueville assumed that religion can help mitigate fears and anxieties of American democracy caused by the unstable nature of the government. The American political system is democratic; however, it is weak, decentralized, and changeable because the government adheres to the separation of powers and the frequent replacement of officeholders. Although all of these federal characters are designed to maintain freedom and democracy, they cause a danger to divide governmental functions. He explains the nature of American polity and the demand of religion as a "societal bondage":

If the Americans, who change the head of state every four years, elect new legislators every two years and replace provincial administrators every year, and if the Americans, who have handed over the world of politics to the experiments of innovators, had not placed religion beyond their reach, what could it hold on to in the ebb and flow of human opinions? (298)

Tocqueville's cardinal view of religion was that it works as a guardian of morality and mores in an unstable democracy in America, where "the Christian religion has kept the greatest real power over men's souls" (291). The American family, he felt, is quite democratic and individualistic, and hierarchic family structure no longer exists. In America, father is not a traditional type of "magistrate" of the family, but "only a citizen older and richer than his sons" in both societal and legal context (586). In addition, a typical married couple confronts a risk of divorce because of strong individualism on the part of one or both of the married partners.

Tocqueville believed that religion can help sustain democracy by urging self-restraint and self-regulation in citizens and maintaining the order of

family. In the America of the 1830s, according to Tocqueville, Christianity governed the "habits of the heart," or sexual mores, and as a result, the country had the highest level of chastity in the world (287, 291). Tocqueville attributed the high level to a strictness that originates in religious beliefs. This observation led him to emphasize the women's role in the American democratic society:

Religion is often powerless to restrain men in the midst of innumerable temptations which fortune offers . . . but it reigns supreme in the souls of the women, and it is women who shape mores. Certainly of all countries in the world America is the one in which the marriage tie is most respected and where the highest truest conception of conjugal happiness has been conceived. (291)

Chastity fosters self-control and stable family life, he maintained; consequently, these values in private institutions turn into popular support for American laws and political institutions (291-292).

Although there are a number of Christian sects in the United States, all of them, said Tocqueville, belong to the great unity under the name of Christianity (291). He argued, "in the United States there are an infinite variety of ceaselessly changing Christian sects. But Christianity itself is an established and irresistible fact which no one seeks to attack or to defend" (432). He even elaborated his "functionalist" idea of religion in society:

Though it is very important for man as an individual that his religion should be true, that is not the case for society. Society has nothing to fear or hope from another life; what is most important for it is not that all citizens should profess the true religion but that they should profess religion. (290)

Thus, he felt a multitude of Christian sects does not affect the maintenance of democracy.

Tocqueville argued that in America both religious spirit and freedom of mind are incorporated into each other. In other words, America is "both the most enlightened and the freest" country (291). He explained this tendency

because of the American national character:

For the same of a religious conviction men sacrifice their friends, their families, and their fatherlands; one might suppose them entirely absorbed in pursuit of that intellectual prize for which they had just paid so high a price. Yet it is with almost equal eagerness that they seek either material wealth or moral delights, either heaven in the next world or prosperity and freedom in this. (47)

Tocqueville's discussion of family value and religion was based on his comparison between Europe and America. In contrast to America's social stability and order maintained by religion, according to him, European family values are degrading. He maintained: "In Europe almost all the disorder of society are born around the domestic hearth and not far from the nuptial bed. . . Shaken by the tumultuous passions which have often troubled his own house, the European finds it hard to submit to the authority of the state's legislators" (291). Therefore, Tocqueville valued highly that the American feeling of urgent necessity to "instill morality into democracy by means of religion". (542). He continued, "what they think of themselves in this respect enshrines a truth which should penetrate deep into the consciousness of every democratic nation" (542).

Along with liberty, according to Tocqueville, religion in America creates an egalitarian mentality, while European religion sometimes contributes to the maintenance of the hierarchy. He noted that this difference comes from the US Constitution's complete separation of church and state. Because of that principle, he argued that the influence of religion on American politics is indirect. However, in Europe, he observed, religions have been intimately linked to earthly governments, and dominate people's souls both by "terror and by faith" (297) and oppress people. Christianity was so interwoven into the social fabric of the Old Regime that it became discredited when the aristocracy fell during the French Revolution. In contrast to this, American religions are free from despotism and the citizens are equal under God. People's equality before God forms the democratic foundation of the American society. Therefore, Christianity has been spared the stigma of association with a discredited aristocracy.

In America, Christianity was seen as a positive civic force, tempering the full impact of secularism. Tocqueville greatly admired the fact that the US has a vibrant religious heritage which fosters participation in all rounds of church and state affairs, especially at the grass-root level. Thus, he maintained, while religion in American does not directly impact legislation and political ideology, it influences people's souls and helps to regulate the political system by affecting people's political opinions (291). In sum, he observed that Americans nurture the democratic soul by practicing democracy in the context of Christian norms.

Tocqueville believed that Catholic doctrine is more favorable to equality than Protestant. This is because the Catholic religious society is composed of only priest and people, and all people below the priest are equal. Only the priest is "raised above the faithful"(288). He described the difference between Catholicism and the Protestantism:

Catholicism may dispose the faithful to obedience, but it does not prepare them for inequality. However, I would say that Protestantism in general orients men much less toward equality than toward independence. Catholicism is like an absolute monarchy. The prince apart, conditions are more equal there than in republics. . . It makes no compromise with any mortal, but applying the same standard to every human being; it mingles all classes of society at the foot of the same altar, just as they are mingled in the sight of God. (288)

In Catholicism, God is left to people's free investigations; therefore, American Catholics are both "the most obedient of the faithful and the most independent"(289). The Catholics are a minority in America; however, Tocqueville believed that American freedom ensures their rights (289). Although Puritans-Protestant reformers-established the democratic foundation with strict religious practice and individualism, "no men are more led by their beliefs than are Catholics to carry the idea of equality of conditions over into the political sphere"(289). Therefore, Protestants tend to express fewer less democratic sentiments than do Catholics, according to Tocqueville.

Religion, especially Catholicism, prepares the egalitarian ground work.

Thus, Tocqueville asserted:

the more people are assimilated to one another and brought to equality, the more important it becomes that religions, while remaining studiously aloof from the daily turmoil of worldly business, should not needlessly run counter to prevailing ideas or the permanent interest of the mass of the people.(448)

Tocqueville even noted a close relationship between the religious spirit and the strength of capitalistic impulse in America. Many Americans profess their religions out of self-interest because their religions deny self-interest; also they link the pursuit of wealth and property with the quest of God (530). Thus, as Tocqueville saw it, because of its "worldliness" religion can mobilize a large number of people. This observation has some parallels with Max Weber's notion that Calvinists have been deeply involved in political, social, educational, and economic developments and thus, Calvinism promoted the rise of capitalism.

The practical side of American religion seems to stem from the American practical national character. According to Tocqueville, the whole of American society tends to be preeminently practical. Americans are more concerned with the application of science than with theoretic or abstract thinking (460) because most Americans are:

extremely eager in the pursuit of immediate material pleasures and are always discontented with the position they occupy and always free to leave it. They think about nothing but ways of changing their lot and bettering it. . . . Democratic peoples come to study sciences, to understand them, and to value them. In aristocratic ages, the chief function of science is to give pleasure to the mind, but in democratic ages, to the body (462).

In sum, American religion can provide both relief and practical benefit to its believers.

Further, Tocqueville emphasized the relationship between the popularity of religion and public opinion. He wrote: "if one looks very closely into the matter, one finds that religion is strong less as a revealed doctrine than as

part of common opinion"(436). He implies that public opinion in America is elevated to sacred statues. In other words, faith in the Bible has been replaced by faith in public opinion. Tocqueville assumes that the more a society becomes uniformed and classless, the more public opinion becomes "mistress of the world" (435) and influential. Democratic souls believe that all people have an equal capacity for judging truth, and truth "will be found on the side of the majority" (786). In America, he observed that the influence of religion has been much stronger than in Europe. Since Christianity is supported by public opinion, even those who do not actively believe Christian dogma attempt to profess Christianity because they are afraid be identified as non-believers. Religion organizes much of the American way of life and maintains democracy as a moral guardian; however, Tocqueville believed that religion's role in democratizing is not peculiar to America. He asserted that Christianity introduces equal freedom to initiate the gradual but inevitable establishment of democracy throughout the Christian world. The growth of democracy, he felt, is clearly providential:

everywhere the diverse [decline of aristocracy] happenings in the lives of peoples have turned to democracy's profit. . . all have worked together, some against their will and some unconsciously, blind instruments in the hands of God. Therefore the gradual progress of equality is something fated(12).

Thus, Tocqueville assumed that both the Jewish concept of "chosen people" and strict restraints by the Jewish church do not accord with democracy. Instead, he argued that democratic progress is inclusive in nature. He regarded the democratic movement as "universal and permanent, it is daily passing beyond human control, and every event and every man helps it along" (12). In this way, he emphasized his functionalist view on religion and society:

Though it is very important for man as an individual that his religion should be true, that is not the case for society. Society has nothing to fear or hope from another life; what is most important for it is not that all citizens should profess the true religion but that they should profess religion." (290)

Tocqueville as a "Textbook" of Democracy : Adaptation by Japanese Political Philosophers

Introduced in the late 19th century, Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* has been widely read in Japan as a "bible" in understanding the democratic soul and polity. Especially in the Meiji (1864-1912) and the Taisho periods (1912-1926), when Japan emerged from the feudal reign of the Shogun to a modern country, Tocqueville's readers (mostly scholars and philosophers) were concerned about how to adapt his democratic theory to Japan (Miya 124). However, *Democracy in America*, there is no reference to Japan. Tocqueville's arguments were mostly based on the comparison between America and Europe, especially France. Japanese readers associate Japanese polity with Tocqueville's views on China.

In *Democracy in America*, there are only three references to China during the reign of the Ching Dynasty. Tocqueville apparently intended to condemn the oppressive Chinese polity in comparison with the American democratic political system. He saw the Chinese political system as a typical example of centralized political administration. He states that "travelers tell us that the Chinese have tranquility without happiness, industry without progress, stability without strength, and material order without public morality"(91 n). He sarcastically concluded that when China is opened to Europeans, "they [Europeans] will find it the finest model of administrative centralization in the world" (91 n).

To Tocqueville's eye, the East Asian country is the land without progress because perennial despotism deprived the people of the ambition to improve their status. He elaborated:

The nation was a hive of industry; the greater part of its scientific methods were still in use, but science itself was dead. That made them understand the strange immobility of mind found among people. The Chinese, following in their father's steps, had forgotten the reasons which guided them. They kept the tool but had no skill and used the formula without asking why. . . . So the Chinese were unable to change anything. They had to drop the idea of improvement. . . . Human knowledge had almost dried up at the fount, and though the stream still flowed, it could neither increase nor change its course. (464)

To Tocqueville, the Chinese government rules peacefully; however, the political system is oppressive and it discourages people's freedom. He referred to the bar examination for officials, which was based on numerous Confucian readings, and charged that the examination kills individual ambition. Comparing the ambitious American national character with the Chinese "examination hell", he sarcastically asserted:

I remember reading a Chinese novel in which the hero, after many ups and downs, succeeds at last in touching his mistress' heart by passing an examination well. Lofty ambition can hardly breathe in such an atmosphere(630).

He concluded:

three hundred year ago, when the first Europeans came to China, they found that almost all the arts had reached a certain degree of improvement, and they were surprised that, having come so far, they had not gone further. Later on they found traces of profound knowledge that had been forgotten(464).

To modern readers, Tocqueville's view on China almost seems to lack a recognition of cultural differences. His concept of "progress" stemmed from Western a value judgment, and he could not appreciate the values of the Orient, where tradition and peaceful order were well respected. However, many Japanese philosophers who read Tocqueville in the Taisho period (1912- 1926) were greatly shocked by his harsh description of China. One philosopher and early Japanese Christian leader, Kanzo Uchimura, is quoted: "If we cannot democratize our country, industrial modernization can not be achieved. If we do not have democracy, we must remain a "backward" country just like China. Without democracy, our progress is dead" (Miya 129). Like him, most philosophers at that time who advocated democratization had the urge to build up a modern industrial country like the United State and European countries. Their views are symbolized by the idea in Yukichi Fukuzawa's "Datsuaron", which means "escaping from Asia

to enter the Western society." Fukuzawa (1835-1901), the founder of Keio University and leading economist at that time, insisted that Japan had to build up its military and its industry to compete against European and American imperialism. To realize this "progress," he insisted on discarding Asian views and employing Western ideas and technology. For modernization advocates, such as Fukuzawa, democratization and westernization of Japan are synonymous. Also, in terms of an historical perspective, "westernization" was the lifeline of the Japanese because Western powers, such as the United Kingdom, France and the United States could invade and colonize Japan as well as other Asian countries such as the Philippines, Indo-China, and India. Indeed, Fukuzawa's urge to westernize was initially caused by the shock of the arrival of Commodore Perry's large ship at Tokyo Bay in 1851. His shock was apparent because for more than 250 years in the Edo Period (1603-1868) the government almost banned citizens for contacting Western countries—so that they would not be influenced by other cultures (Earhart 120-121).

Those who attempted to apply Tocqueville's theory to Japan found that there was not a strong religion in Japan. The profession of Christianity in Japan was strictly forbidden from its importation to the late 19th century. Christianity was introduced in the 17th century; nonetheless, the Tokugawa Shogunate banned every single Christian church and annihilated Christian leaders such as Shiro Amakusa, who was killed by the Shogun's government in 1638. The Shogunate assumed that the existence of God, the absolute ruler of the universe according to Christianity, could be a hindrance to the Shogunate's hierarchy and employed a strong class system to maintain and strengthen the reign of the Shogun and its government. Both Buddhism and Shintoism have greatly contributed to Japanese life and prevailed well; however, they have become so secular that they are nominal social customs rather than religious beliefs. In Japan temples and shrines are places to worship without religious dogma (Davis 20-21). Confucianism was used as a tool of the Shogunate's despotism to build up a centralized county. Unfortunately, to many of Tocqueville's readers in Japan at that time, their country looked like a Godless country.

Samurai Ethics and Democracy

Among the advocates of democracy, Inazo Nitobe (1862-1933), an American educated philosopher and a Quaker, pointed out the strong similarity between Christianity and samurai ethics. He believed that the samurai spirit could be a substitute for the democratic soul.

Nitobe's democratic propensity was nurtured in America. He studied together with the future president Woodrow Wilson at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and became the first American Studies professor at the University of Tokyo along with two other pioneers of democratic ideals—Sakuzo Yoshino and Tatsukichi Minobe. Later, he became the Under Secretary General of the League of Nations (1920 to 1927). He was the first Japanese to have a responsible position as an international official. When he was in this position, he founded what would become UNESCO. Nitobe is known as the author of *Bushido: the Soul of Japan* an English text which he published in 1898. (Bushido literally means "precepts of Knighthood" or the *noblesse oblige* of samurai.) He sought out the qualities which characterize the Japanese soul: loyalty, courage, benevolence, courtesy, and fidelity. Collecting them under the rubric samurai ethics, he attempted to explain them systematically to the Western world.

Theodore Roosevelt and Harry Truman, who were among Nitobe's readers, claimed to have been greatly influenced by the book. After reading it, Roosevelt started practicing judo to understand more clearly the Japanese sentiment and ethos in the book (Kamei 172-173, Asahi 62). Unlike Roosevelt, Truman came to have a view that the Japanese are an incomprehensible race and have a tenacious mentality because of samurai ethics. Some critics even argue that this negative view had influenced his decision to drop a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki regardless of the possible blame for ordering the massacre (Miwa 78-79).

Nitobe was a strong advocate of democracy, believing the American type of democracy was universal and would prevail over the systems of other countries, including Japan (Miya 143-147). However, he confronted the same question that his colleagues did; he had the difficulty in finding the Japanese equivalent of Christianity in America. His conclusion was that Japanese samurai ethics and Christian morality have a number of similarities and that Japanese democracy would bloom as long as the Japanese people

retained traditional samurai ethics. He regarded samurai ethics as a substitute of religion and illustrated Japanese mores and integrity in a prism of samurai ethics in Bushido

Nitobe treated Bushido as an ethical code, parallel to chivalry in the West. He was concerned by Westerners who look at Japanese as immoral beings. He asserted: "It is a quite customary remark of foreign tourists that Japanese life is as singularly lacking in morals as Japanese flowers are in scent". However, he insisted that "those who associate fragrance with roses only, or morality with conventional Christianity" misunderstand. He elucidated in the introduction of Bushido the reason why he came to think of the relationship between samurai ethics and morality. Nitobe wrote:

The question [moral education lacking Christianity] stunned me at the time. I could give no ready answer, for the moral precepts I learned in my childhood days were not given in schools; and not until I began to analyze the different elements that formed my notions of right and wrong, did I find that it was Bushido that breathed them into my nostrils (7).

He observed that the Japanese type of chivalry, Bushido, is still the "dominant moral power" among Japanese (Samuraiism 411-414). The samurai class system was abolished when the Tokugawa Shogunate's rule ended in 1868; however, Nitobe contended that although its institution had passed away, samurai virtue remains the same in the Japanese mentality forever:

Bushido as an independent code of ethics may vanish, but its power will not perish from the earth; its schools of martial prowess or civic honour may be demolished, but its light and its glory will long survive their ruins (Bushido 140-141).

Nitobe explained that Bushido is an eclectic system derived chiefly from Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shintoism. First, Bushido borrows its form of expression largely from Chinese classics such as the theory of Confucius and Mencius; therefore, Confucius's five cardinal moral relationships (between parent and child, husband and wife, older and younger brother, friend and

friend, and the governing and the governed) are the samurai's most important ethical sources (Bushido 31-33, Samuraism 415). Secondly, Buddhism provides Bushido with metaphysical elements, such as "the mysteries of our spiritual nature" "the good and the evil" or "life and death." Thus, Buddhism in samurai ethics plays a role of "a modus operandi of spiritual culture" (Bushido 29, Samuraism 415-416). Finally, Shintoism helps samurai to understand the worship of nature and of ancestors. Since Shintoism is the Japanese indigenous religion, it acts as the foundation of Bushido (Bushido 29-31, Samuraism 416). Nitobe asserted: "Whatever we borrowed from Chinese philosophy and Hindu religion was its [Bushido's] flower. . . they . . . acted as a fertilizer to feed the tree of the Yamato race [Japanese] to blossom into knightly deeds and virtues" (Samuraism 416).

According to Nitobe, Bushido is categorized by particular characteristics such as *giri* (justice, duty), courage, *nasake* (benevolence), and *reigi* (politeness) (Bushido Chap. III-VI). Throughout, the author emphasized the peaceful, artistic and literary side of the samurai's training and interpreted in detail the significance of etiquette, the tea ceremony and judo as methods for inculcating self-control and regard for others. Thus, qualities like loyalty, self-control, and self-surrender are all nurtured by samurai training (Bushido Chap. X-XII). Nitobe emphasized the Bushido's influence on virtues: "I admit Bushido had its esoteric teachings . . . looking after the welfare and happiness of the commonalty. . . emphasizing the practice of virtues for their own sake" (Bushido 121). In this way, he asserted that the samurai mores prevailed and the solidarity in family and community strengthened.

Nitobe emphasized the similarity between Christian morality and Japanese samurai ethics. He saw in Bushido, "like Christianity, a doctrine of duty and service" because they both teach us morality; "the governing and the governed are alike taught to serve a higher end, and to that end sacrifice themselves" (Samuraism 424). Comparing samurai ethics with Christianity, Nitobe thought that Christian morality is based on more individualism than the samurai's code because Christian ethics deal "almost solely with individuals" (Bushido 140). In contrast, Bushido stresses the moral conduct of rulers, other public leaders, and nations. However, Nitobe predicts that in the age of democracy Bushido would "become more and more practical as individualism, in its capacity as a moral factor, grows in potency" Bushido

140). Thus he concluded that both Christian and Bushido ethics will be more and more similar. According to him, the only difference between them is that Bushido "contends that society—the fellowship of spirits—does not begin with Adam and Eve but with Adam and his Father" (Samuraism 425). Nitobe went further to discuss Bushido's influence on Christianity in Japan: "With an enlarged view of life, with the growth of democracy, with better knowledge of other peoples and nations, the Confucian idea of benevolence—dare I also add the Buddhist idea of pity?—will expand into the Christian conception of love" (Bushido 137).

Although Nitobe has a reputation as a great cosmopolitan, some contemporary historians contend that his theory was so bellicose that it was used as propaganda by the Japanese pre-war militarist government. Yuzo Ota asserts that Nitobe's excessive idealization of samurai in *Bushido* created, contrary to Nitobe's intention, an impression both in Japan and abroad that the Japanese were really a very different people. Ota states:

Bushido was later used, quite independently from Nitobe, as "evidence" for the Japanese superiority over other nations. Nitobe's *Bushido*, when it was translated into Japanese and was read by a fairly wide Japanese audience, tended to encourage the abuse of the Bushido ideology for the militaristic cause rather than prevent it (250).

Canadian historian Ciril Powers has a similar view. He regards Nitobe's link between samurai ethics and democracy as a total failure. Although Nitobe did not share the militarists' view, he and his theory are considered equally "bellicose" because of the Japanese militaristic historical propensity at that time. Powers elucidates:

No society can live by ideas alone. The intellectual cannot function apart from the world of economics and politics, the ever-changing context of historical process. Just as St. Thomas Aquinas' magnificent synthesis became the basis for the fascism of Franco's Spain, so Nitobe's attempt at cultural grafting lent itself to. . . ideological manipulation of Japanese militarists. (116)

Nitobe's theory of the respect for tradition was used by the militarist government, which wanted a symbol of strong imperialism. Top militarists interpreted Shintoistic dogma according to their will and advocated Emperor Hirohito's divinity in Shintoism. The government used Nitobe's theory to promote the concept of the Emperor's supremacy. Indeed, many citizens at the time worshipped Hirohito as the "living God" (Earhart 155-159). The militarist government actually once used Nitobe as a spokesperson for its imperialism. In 1931, soon after the Japanese militarist's Manchuria annexation, Nitobe was sent to America to defend these Japanese actions. At that time he was a high ranking officer of the Foreign Ministry. Kiyoko Takeda criticizes Nitobe's "patriot" view: "He lacked the vision of his student Tadao Yanai, who criticized the institution of colonialism itself. But perhaps, he [Nitobe] felt that he could not go so far under the militarist government" (Asahi 64).

Known as a "bridge of transpacific understanding" in Japan, Nitobe had tried to promote an intellectual relationship between the United States and Japan (Kamei 173). However, history was against him. Both Japan and the United State deserted his vision of international harmony and eventually engaged in full-fledged war. After World War II, his views of samurai ethics and democracy were intentionally forgotten in both Japan and the United States because he was identified so closely with Japanese militarist ideas. Also, Nitobe himself has become an almost forgotten figure in Japanese academia since Japan's defeat in 1945. American historian John Howes asserts that Nitobe has been "a taboo topic since 1945 precisely because he, like other thoughtful Japanese, did not unequivocally oppose the road to war from 1931 until his death in 1933" (5).

Conclusion

Alexis de Tocqueville believed that religion acts as a check on impulses toward political instability and anarchy. Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* has been widely read in Japan as a "textbook" in understanding the democratic mind and polity. Many Japanese philosophers at the turn of the century attempted to apply American democracy to their country, which was struggling to emerge as a modern nation from the feudal Shogunate reign. They found, however, that Western religious beliefs, which function as a

"safety net" against tyranny of the majority, had apparently been lacking in Japanese society.

To solve this problem, a philosopher named Inazo Nitobe (1862-1933), who is known as the author of *Bushido (samurai ethics): the Soul of Japan* was eager to look for the Japanese equivalent of religion, "an indispensable element in democratic soul, "according to Tocqueville. Nitobe's conclusion was that the ethics of samurai, the traditional Japanese warrior, brought up by the Confucian, Buddhist, and Shintoistic tradition could substitute for religion. He claimed that democracy would bloom among citizens even without the Western sense of strong religion because samurai ethics, deeply rooted in the Edo Period (1603-1861) functioned as a moral code.

Unfortunately, Nitobe's theory was used by militarists to advertise ultranationalistic ideas. The militarist government during the early 20th century employed Nitobe's theory to mobilize the people's dedication to the Emperor Hirohito. The government labeled the Emperor as the "living God" who was the symbol of strong imperialism. Mingled with the advocacy of Shintoism, the respect for the Emperor became a "religion." Although Nitobe's intentions were not militaristic, many philosophers and political scholars in the United States have assumed that Nitobe's ideas were linked to the expansionism and fanaticism in the imperial system.

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(日本語要約)

トックビルの民主主義理論と「武士道」

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1830年代にアメリカを訪れたアレクシス・ド・トックビルは、当時、アナキズムに近いものだと信じられていた民主主義がアメリカでは崩壊せずに政治システムとして機能していることに着目した。政治システムを支えていた要因として、トックビルが目にしたのが宗教であった。宗教的な道德規範が社会的秩序を守り、市民による地域ネットワークを補完する形で、民主主義的政体が「多数派の暴政」に陥ってしまうのを防ぐ「セーフティ・ネット」として宗教が機能しているとトックビルは分析している。

トックビルの『アメリカにおける民主政治』は日本でも民主政治を考察する教科書的な存在であり、政治的リーダーの間で広く読まれてきた。その中でも、新渡戸稲造はトックビルの視点を発展させ、民主主義を支えているアメリカの宗教に相当する存在を日本社会の中で模索した。その結果、たどり着いたのが、倫理的規範である武士道である。新渡戸によれば、武士道は西洋の騎士道に似たものだが、儒教、仏教、神道という日本の伝統を総合したユニークな概念であるという。そして、義理や情け、礼儀など様々な倫理的な特徴はキリスト教倫理に相通ずると新渡戸は主張している。

英語で出版されたこともあって、1899年に出版された新渡戸の「武士道」はアメリカでも広く読まれ、セオドア・ルーズベルト大統領をはじめ、エリート層の中にも新渡戸の視点を賞賛する声も少なくなかった。それとともに、「太平洋の架け橋」として日本文化をアメリカの紹介する新渡戸に対する次第に評価も高まっていった。しかし、その後、日本の軍事的な野心が高まっていく中、「武士道」は好戦的な日本の異質な伝統としてみなされるようになった。このようにして、アメリカにおけるキリスト教と同等のものであり、日本の民主主義の基盤として説明しようとした新渡戸の意図とは反し、アメリカでは「武士道」は日本の軍国主義のプロパガンダとして曲解され、戦後は忘れ去られた存在となってしまった。