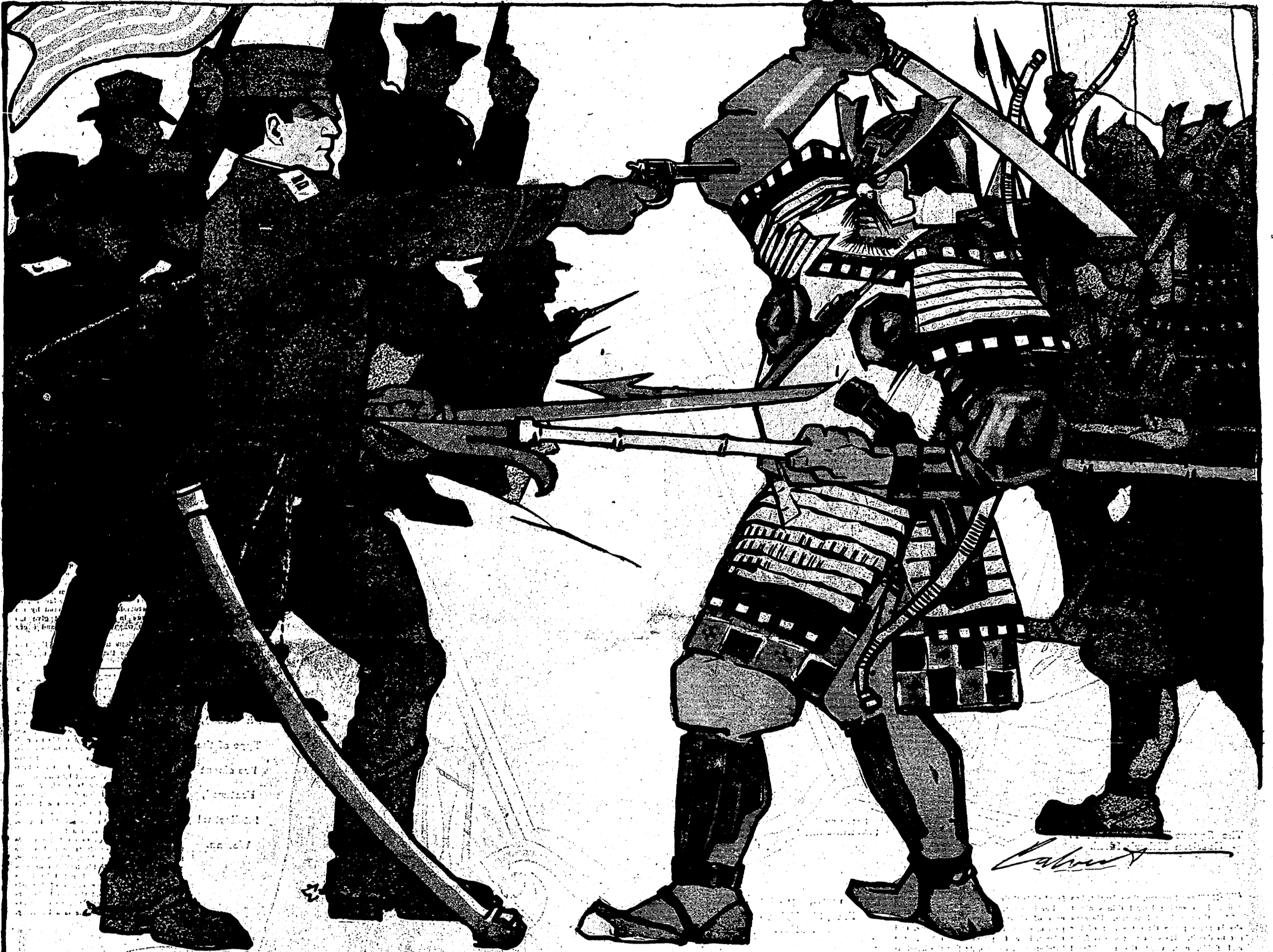


Seattle Japanese Tells Why Orient and Occident must War



Mikado's Empire, Awakening From Past Ages, Face to Face With Crisis of Democracy Against Militarism, Individual Against Family, and Battle Will Be Needed to Satisfy National Spirit



JIHEI HASHIGUCHI

By JIHEI HASHIGUCHI.

IN The Seattle Times of a recent date there appeared an article under the heading of "Japanese Sees War With America." This dispatch from New York attracted my attention considerably from my regular studies. It was a hair-splitting, heart-throbbing, breath-choking, and, nevertheless, very interesting article.

Gen. Torio, who is reported to have made the prophecy of war, is a veteran soldier of the War of Restoration of 1868. As a leader of Tokugawa Shogun's forces against the Emperor, he displayed remarkable skill as a strategist. It may be mentioned in passing that Gen. Oyama, who was

the commander-in-chief of the Japanese army in the war with Russia, and many other prominent soldiers and statesmen, received their early instructions in the art of war from our prophet of a Japanese-American war. Consequently, Gen. Torio's utterances merit our attention, as they represent a considerable portion of public opinion in Japan.

The present generation in Japan has somewhat outlived the ideas so persistently held by men like Gen. Torio. But for centuries the nation has been governed by the samurai class, whose privilege it was to maintain and promote the honor and glory of the nation at the point of their swords. Speaking in the tone of the general, fifty years of modern life the people

experienced, after the advent of Western civilization is but a day compared with the centuries back of them. No matter how powerful the influence of Western civilization upon the life of Japan it could not be powerful enough as yet radically to change the Bushido trained character of the samurai class.

This explains in a way why there are today two departments of the Japanese governments, around which all the others revolve, as do the spokes of a wheel around its axle; namely, the army and the navy departments. Any minister of state who attempts to "monkey" with these too much is bound almost invariably to find himself "bumping his head against rocks. It is in his days was wise not to do so, Yamagata did not need, Okuma could not. A prominent Japanese statesman once declared fatalistically that Japan cannot do without war.

All this is the result of a long training the people underwent when in the idea of family consolidation, such as Gen. Torio advocates, was the dominant note. While Japan's system of family unit has its strength, its weakness outweighs its strength. At the risk of digressing a little I may say that under that system individuals are sacrificed to the point of annihilation to the interest of the family. To be more specific, take an example of a Japanese family. The eldest male offspring of the head of a family is arbitrarily set up as the heir apparent. As the prospective lord of the manor, he is given all the advantages that a freeman should have; nay, perhaps more. All the younger members of the family are taxed to the utmost of their humility and humiliation to

support the eldest brother with their naked selves, which are about the only things given them as inheritance from their preceding generation. What is the result?

The heir apparent is spoiled, the rest of the family are either crushed into spiritless nonentity or voluntarily or involuntarily exiled from the family. There is a plenty of food for thought for writers, novelists and poets in the study of family system of Japan. Lafcadio Hearn has seen only one side of Japanese life. But that aside! Suffice it to say that in the system of all for family, which Gen. Torio apprises so much, there is very little room for development of individual initiative. Command and obey are the only words that are to be remembered.

But as I have intimated before, the present generation in Japan has somewhat outlived Gen. Torio's doctrine. The heimin class, the commoners, who, up to fifty years ago, had been held in a condition of virtual slavery, are coming to the front with their native leaning toward democracy, reinforced by the introduction of Western principle, which has been a potent factor in revolutionizing the whole Occident, and which made America what she is today. If, as Gen. Torio prophesies, a war is to come between Japan and America, that war will be begun not on the American continent, nor on the waters of the Pacific Ocean, but at the very entrance of the Mikado's court, where militaristic aristocracy has its stronghold. In another phrase, it will be a struggle between classes, militaristic aristocracy pitted against industrial democracy.

The entire American nation a few days ago read with interest an interview with the noted Japanese officer, General Torio, in which he frankly predicted a great war between Japan and America, and declared the struggle might last an hundred years. Following this line, Jihei Hashiguchi, editor of The Japanese Current, and instructor in the Japanese language at the University of Washington, one of the thinkers of his race and student of the times; tells why this contest must come, and asserts that while Japan is awakening, the last half century since she opened her heart to the world, is but a few moments when compared with all the ages of her past. His expressions, printed on this page, cannot help but form an important addition to recent writings upon a great subject.

In this struggle America cannot help sympathizing with the latter; hence a war between Japan and America.

So I see, as does Gen. Torio in a different light, a war that would last for a century or longer, a war between what Japan stands for and what America stands for, a war between aristocracy and democracy, between classes and masses, that may involve not only Japan and America, but also the whole world. I shall not go so far as Gen. Torio does in predicting the outcome of the war. But this much I can say without fear of contradiction, that a final victory will be won by democracy rather than by aristocracy, as has been the case in wars of the past.

It is a great mistake to think that Japan won in the war with Russia on the strength of military efficiency alone. No doubt that has played a large part in the game. But a greater importance should be ascribed to the fact that the masses in Japan have

come to their own in the last fifty years, with the realization of their individual worth. Even the military strength itself cannot be explained unless one takes into account the fact that the main forces of the army and navy have been drawn from the democratic heimin class, the commoners. Much less readily can the victory Japan won from Russia be explained, unless one remembers that the sinews of war, the mainstay of the army and the navy, have been contributed by the commoners.

Japan has been awakened once; Japan needs to be awakened again. This time it will be a more fundamental awakening, whereby the people will come to the full possession of their own, and the trace of aristocracy will be completely wiped out from the land. But that will take a century, and within the coming century the struggle that will be engaged in will be the most severe, the world will know.