

## ИСТОРИЯ И ИСТОЧНИКОВЕДЕНИЕ

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**Premodern Ideas “kokutai” as Essential Elements of  
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Modernization in historically later developed countries is an amalgamated process, where all its elements must be analyzed both as a whole picture and as variety of its components. Early Japanese Marxists thinkers, scrutinizing political systems that emerged after the Meiji revolution, found traces of so-called “feudal remnants” in the public consciousness of people. These “remnants” still make modern researchers to question the role of the elements in Japanese modernization. Modernized state should be not only sovereign, but also be a nation state “kokumin kokka”, therefore it is worthwhile to look upon the prehistory of the creation of the first Japanese constitution “Dainipponn teikoku kenpoo” (1889), which reflected the national ideas “kokutai”. It is also necessary to analyze a number of socio-political reasons that entailed the issuance of an imperial decree addressed to the soldiers “gunjin chokuyu” (1882) and the imperial speech on public education “kyouiku chokugo” (1890). These documents along with the constitution contained the ideas of “kokutai”, which represented the element of the feudal world. Under the right conditions, a nation is born and develops on its own, but when the historical prerequisites and conditions do not form, it is necessary to create them artificially. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Japan faced the similar situation. In 1925, the Chian iji-ho Law of Public Peace Preservation was published, in its first article the word kokutai could be found, however it does not contain a definition of this term. In 1932 and in 1936, military putsches occurred, it should be noted that participants of these accidents were ardent supporters of the “kokutai” ideas. On August 14, 1945, the Japanese government conveyed the intention to adopt the Potsdam Declaration under one condition, namely the preservation of the “kokutai”, thereby they extended the existence of the kokutai ideas until the surrender of Japanese empire.

*Keywords:* kokutai ideas, modernization in Japan, nation-state, inner politics, constitution.

Among different driving forces behind Japanese modernization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, specialists usually distinguish one — Japanese ruling circles' fear of the threats emanating from Western colonial powers, including Russia and the USA. However modernization could not be carried out by the outside impulse only, without internal capacities, which should have reached a certain level under feudal system, it could not exist. Significant development of capitalism and sovereignty are also required conditions for growing modernization.

In “*bakumatsu*” period internal markets already had started to consolidate all over Japan [1, p. 21]. Concerning the markets of rice, rice was the most important article of trade at that time. And although production of goods was hardly developed, still in Osaka procurement of goods was carried out by deals that were made for a certain period of time, so-called “*sakimono torihiki*”, a hundred years ahead of Chicago. This particular phenomenon of “progressiveness” in not fully modernized societies was not a rare case for Japan and other Asian countries of that time.

Nowadays there is a certain tendency among Asian researchers of history and social sciences, who insist that “modernization” in Asian countries begun at the very moment when those “premature” elements emerged. But when it comes to “modernization” in historically later developed countries, it is necessary to scrutinize the issue “as a whole” and not in its separated parts. At the same time it is impossible not to pay attention to those obsolete elements of the Old World which found the way into new modernized society.

In the 1930s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century two Marxists economists' groups “*Koza-ha*” and “*Rono-ha*” had started heated debates about whether Japanese industry was on manufactory level on the eve of the *Meiji ishin* or not [2, p. 14–19]. Undoubtedly wholesale and usurious enterprises were able to manage the country's economy; however banking system hadn't emerged yet. And this lack of banking mechanisms in the economy caused merchants to store golden coins *koban*, thereby accumulating wealth. This led to abrupt and frequent increasing in goods prices and *Edo Bakufu* had to recoin around 10 times [3].

In Europe the emergence of banking networks, which met the needs of the markets, led to the formation of a network of large cities in different Western European countries which were involved in intensive commodity-money relations. Feudal-fragmented Japan didn't have such large markets, since trade there was based on relations between separate principalities “*han*”. The only exception was the rice market, and Osaka was the center of rice trading where every clan from all over Japan could sell the rice that was levied as a tax. As for the merchants, they were permitted to sell rice in any profitable for them place. Sea transportation despite the strict pressure from the Tokugawa shogunate was still developing to satisfy the need in transportation of goods. Apart from rice, regional entrepreneurs also transported various original local goods, and therefore every port the ships entered had its own “local” market. But this type of market was not sufficient to stimulate the emergence of a banking system in Japan.

The young Marxist theorist from mentioned above “*Koza-ha*”, *Noro Eitaro* (1900–1934), believed that the Meiji Revolution was a forceful social transformation that put major entrepreneurs and capitalist landowners in the ruling class. However, according to another young Japanese historian, the *Noro* case was not limited only to explanation of the revolution's essential parts. He points out that *Noro's* work “broadened the research horizon in the direction of analyzing the political system led by “emperor” and consisted of “feudal remnants” in the public consciousness of different layers of society” [4, p. 71].

This point of view still is taken as explanation of the so-called Japanese “modernization” formed after the Meiji Revolution.

So analyzing the sequence of events of the Meiji Revolution, can we consider the *Edo Bakufu* as authority representing the Japanese state at that time? The highest officials of *Bakufu* had a permission to negotiate with foreign envoys; therefore the legitimacy of the government was recognized abroad. But later it became clear that neglecting the Emperor’s power in negotiating with other governments put *Bakufu* in a difficult situation. Hence it is necessary to recognize that on the eve of the *Meiji Ishin*, Japan had already stood at the threshold of modernization, but step over the threshold proved to be incredibly difficult.

## 1

This brings up the question — when had modernization started in Japanese historical process? To answer this question it is necessary to add the second important factor to the mentioned above “requirements”. A modernized state should be not only sovereign, but also “*kokumin kokka*” i. e. “*Nation state*”. “*Kokumin*” is a partial synonym of Russian word “*narod*”; more precisely this term — “*nation*”, which means a large group of people who consider themselves a part of a state [1, p. 40, 49; 5, p. 321]. In my opinion, Japanese people became “*kokumin*” only at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, before the start of the war with China *Nisshin senso*.

At the very beginning of the events, which ultimately boiled down to the transfer of real power from the Tokugawa shogunate to the government of Emperor Meiji, no programs or strategies prepared in advance by the active members of political life could be noticed and in Japanese historiography several important questions still remain unraveled. For example, why the samurai class shortly after the establishment of the new Meiji government obediently (except for some short riots) accepted the “*Chitsuroku shobun*” statute, which meant the de facto cancellation of the centuries-old economic privileges the samurai class had, with consideration that this class was a main driving force behind the Meiji Revolution. *Ochiai Hiroki*, who wrote the monograph “Ending the Privileges: The Meiji Restoration and the Laying Off of the Samurai” concludes at the end of the book that the samurai turned out to be “a class that would prefer public good over its personal interests to protect the state interests and its political ambitions” [6, p. 204]. But such a purely “ethical” interpretation does not satisfy many modern specialists of the history of the Meiji Revolution.

In my opinion, events of the *Meiji Ishin* occurred as a result of spontaneous encounters of different interrelated forces which in the end had been merged into two camps — supporters of monarchy “*kinno-ha*” and supporters of *Bakufu* “*sabaku-ha*”. However until the moment when the internal war “*Boshin senso*” broke out, the leading role was given to the group “*Kobugattai-ha*”, which was looking for a compromise way to solve the issue. The word “*kobugattai*” literally means “the merger of imperial and shogunate forces.” In 1867, the last shogun *Tokugawa Yoshinobu*, with tactical intentions, offered to transfer the supreme executive power to the Imperial court. The proposal was approved by still underage Emperor Meiji, who had just ascended the throne (on the advice of the influential councilors from “*kinno-ha*” group). But at the very last moment, “*Kobugattai-ha*” could not get an approval from both sides on implementing certain projects and rules in new governmental system. In other words, a compromise was impossible.

It should be noted that none of these parties from the very beginning till the very end had a well thought-out program or prospects. If there was anything that encouraged *kinno-ha* militants and gave them an inspiration, it was ideological self-confidence based, firstly on the theory of moral obligation “*meibunron*”, one of the fundamental theories of Confucianism, and secondly on Confucian worldview strictly dividing the whole world into the enlightened center (*chuka*) and the barbaric surroundings “*i-teki*”. And in Confucian understanding of the world, Japan was one of the barbarian nations. *Kinno-ha* militants also borrowed the Korean concept of Confucian worldview “*sho-chuuka shisou*”.

Concerning the interpretation of “*sho-chuuka shisou*”, Korea, after the imperial throne of Qing China was taken by Manchu people that undoubtedly were barbarians, inherited the right to call itself “the secondary successor of the “*sho-chuka*”, or “*chuka* of the second rank”. According to Korean Confucianism, Japan belonged to the “*i-teki*” rank, but Japanese Confucians had a different opinion.

The theory of “*meibunron*” was based on a model of vertical relationship between subordinates and superiors, applying ethical concepts of ‘loyalty’ and ‘filial duty’ “*chukou*”. In this regard, the theoretical concepts of supporters of *Bakufu sabaku-ha* were also based on the same philosophy and worldview. Only high officials of *Bakufu* were relatively freed from superstitious ideology “*kai shiso*”. And in general, theory of “*meibunron*” didn’t consider populace as an object of research, therefore *kinno-ha* and *sabaku-ha* neglected populace, calling them ignorant mob “*gumin*” [1, p. 23, 24; 5, p. 350, 351]. And vice versa Japanese populace didn’t respect or admire their lords regardless of ranks — whether it was Tenno or Tokugawa shogun, or feudal lords “*hanshu*” and vassals “*kashin*” [2, p. 106, 107].

Different groups of *kinno-ha* were united under the slogan “power to the emperor, exile to foreigners” “*sonno-joi*”. “*Sonno*” and “*joi*” represented different but complementary concepts; strictly speaking, they were traditional Confucian terms, but representatives of the later school “*Mito-gaku*”, in the era of internal conflicts and worsening of international situation, began to use these terms in a new context [7, p. 34, 35]. Along with the concepts of “*sonno*” and “*joi*” the “*Mito-gaku*” also introduced the “*kokutai*” concept. This word wasn’t new as well, but later it was used to justify “*sonno-joi*” and to deify the country, calling it “Gods’ Country” (“*Shinshu*”).

The ideologists of the school “*Mitogaku-ha*” were induced to form new theoretical concepts by one trifling accident, namely, a sudden landing of the crew of English whaling ship on the territory of *Mito-han*. The crew didn’t have any aggressive intentions, but this accident proved that the country was not protected by its geographical position as it used to be when seas protected the archipelago from the outside invasion. The rare historical exception was two attempts from the naval forces of Yuan army in the 13<sup>th</sup> century which failed in the end. But by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this advantage became a huge disadvantage, when the time of powerful navies came. Enemy warships were equipped with guns that could attack any coastal stations in Japan from the seas. Strategists started an active discussion on how to form an effective coastal defense, but no measures could help to defend such long coastlines. Needless to say, in such a difficult time, theorists didn’t have a choice but to emphasize so-called “ideological armament”, which acquired a purely religious and mythical character with the most important rule to adore the “motherland”. This original idea was first introduced by the school of “*kokugaku*” (philological science based only on original Japanese data and methods). An influential theorist of the “*koku-*

*gaku*” school *Motoori Norinaga*, using the word “*kokutai*”, praised the customs and morals of the Japanese nation living on the “God’s land”.

*Motoori Norinaga* based his theory on the oldest historical and mythological books “*Kojiki*” (in 3 volumes, written in 712) and “*Nihonshoki*” (in 30 volumes, written in 720), which state that “*Kookoku*” “The Imperial country, i. e. ancient Japan” was on “*ohotsuchi no itadaki*” on the top of the globe, and was directly connected to “*Ten*” “Sky, in particular, Sun”. According to *Motoori*, every place on the globe has a qualitative vertical order from the lowest and the ugliest to the highest and the most respectable [4, p. 188]. Needless to say, that in his opinion Japan from the very beginning was located in the most holy place of the globe. It is proved by the fact that since ancient times the imperial lineage “*kootoo*” continued uninterruptedly, every year rice abundantly ripened, the population was high and the country was rich in all aspects” [8, p. 187]. The ideas of “*kokutai*” for *Motoori Norinaga* boil down to this, at first glance, naive and primitive formulation.

One of the leaders of “*Mito-gaku*” school, *Fujita Toko*, being influenced by *Motoori Norinaga* began to disseminate the concept of “*Shinshu*”, interpreting the greatness of “*kokutai*”, by this he meant “peculiar Japanese morals and customs” [7, p. 57]. Author of the quoted book *Yoshida Toshizumi*, unlike previous researchers of “*Mito-gaku*”, underlined a significant difference in the evaluation of populace between *Fujita Toko* and his contemporary *Aizawa Seishisai*, another influential leader of the school.

And speaking of theory, *Aizawa Seishisai*, who wrote the two-volume book “*Shinron*” (*New Theory*), played, probably, a more important role. Even though *Bakufu* prohibited printing and publishing “*Shinron*”, the manuscript was spread quickly throughout Japan by copying it manually (therefore some differences between texts can be noticed).

The first 3 chapters of the first volume of “*Shinron*” are called “*kokutai jo*”, “*kokutai chu*”, “*kokutai ge*”. The words “*jo*”, “*chu*”, “*ge*” are the traditional numbering instead of “1”, “2”, “3”. Before the first chapter there is a small text instead of the preface. *Aizawa Seishisai* began to write it this way (the original was written in the old written Chinese language “*kanbun*”): “With respect it is thought that “*Shinshu*” (the “God’s country”, an allegory of “Japan”) is located at the place where the Sun rises, where cheerfulness begins, where, by decree of the God of the Sun, the Emperor sits on the throne and rules the country and that does not change forever” [8, p. 9]. Then he described what was the current international situation: “Despite this (i. e., neglecting the holy status of Japan), today Western barbarians, who occupy such a low place as knees and legs (which meant that Western European countries were at the low level of vertical rank), run over all seas and oceans (i. e. they were culturally low creatures, namely, animals, that is why they had to invent such fast transports as steamers and etc.), wandering here and there and trampling other countries, and want to brazenly rise over superior country (i. e. Japan). Further the description of the USA follows. According to the author, “as for the United States, it is located on the place that could be considered as the back of a predatory beast, which is why the people of America are the darkest and most stupid”. In contrast, “*Shinshu*” takes the place of the “head”. That is why its width is not particularly large, but it dominates the whole world. Beside until now, the dynasty and the principle of inheritance have never changed” [8, p. 9].

This text makes it clear that both *Aizawa* and *Motoori* knew the world atlas, on which the Pacific Ocean is located in the center, what is commonly accepted in Japan. But if they had the European edition of the World Atlas, they could hardly explain the same semiotic interpretation. They both insist on their interpretation of Japanese geographical position,

but since *Motoori Norinaga* was born half a century earlier than *Aizawa*, it is obvious that the second author took this idea from *Motoori*.

*Aizawa* put his original ideas into first three chapters of “*kokutai*”. In the first chapter he analyzed historical alternations of the forms of government in the country, which according to Confucian terminology can be divided into two forms “*gunken-sei*” and “*hooken-sei*”. As it was in ancient China (around 5<sup>th</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC.) where the emperor sent subordinate high officials to the provinces and ruled a centralized state through them. As for the word “*hooken-sei*”, it resembles the medieval European system “feudalism”. The feudal lords were subordinate to the emperor, and at the same time they ruled their own provincial territories assigned to them. After the death of the lord, one of his sons inherited all rights of the ruler. *Aizawa Seishisai* could not choose which of these two systems was more preferable. In his opinion, the only person who could choose the system was the emperor and in general he could not make mistakes.

But the political situation of *bakumatsu* itself created the atmosphere of distrust toward the “*hooken-sei*” system, which lasted more than 700 years running by *Shogun*. Almost in all cases when new *Shogun* came to power, he immediately was acknowledged by *Tenno*. And after political defeat of the emperor *Godaigo*, which occurred in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, there was no more chance to “restore” the imperial power. At the same time *Shoguns* kept the existing system of imperial power with giving it a right to assign ranks for the very reason not to be called “impostors”. But by the end of the “*bakumatsu*” period, this centuries-old balance between the power of the *Shogun* and the authority of *Tenno* began to falter.

Under the strong influence of the *Aizawa Seishisai* book “*Shinron*”, nationalists got the opportunity to spread this nationalistic atmosphere, or, more precisely, the thoughts of xenophobia, especially among the samurai class, as well as those non-samurai people who began to show their interest in new theories. They consisted mostly of local rich peasant-proprietors “*goono*”, millionaire merchants “*goosho*”, owners of manufactories, as well as doctors, Buddhist and Shinto priests, etc. They often gathered at “*kangaku-juku*” (a private educational school of Chinese philological science) and shared their ideas.

Many children of famous samurai families, who studied in high schools (gymnasium) *hankoo* which were subsidized by principalities “*han*”, became prominent ideological leaders of the next generation. To put an example of another practical ideologist of *bakumatsu* period and the very beginning of *Meiji* — *Yokoi Shoonan*, who was accepted as an adviser into new government but was killed by the terrorists from “*Sonno-joi-ha*”. *Yokoi Shoonan* studied at the *hankoo* “*Jishuukan*” in the west-south clan “*Kumamoto han*”, and then became a mentor of this school. Education wise he was a Confucian philosopher, however he was more into practice than theory. Being strongly influenced by “*Shinron*” *Yokoi Shoonan* considered himself as a respected fan of *kokutai* ideas. But after reading Chinese books with detailed information about European countries and the United States, *Shoonan* rejected “*kokutai*”. He was truly interested in the Parliamentary system of Western European countries and the USA governmental system in particular its election of a president. Seeing the significant difference between Japan and the West, he realized that Western people were free to choose their professions and positions based on their talents and efforts without being riveted to a certain class. In Japan at that time, only an exceptional minority could have such choice.

His ideas are well shown in the recording of the conversation between him and *Inoue Kowashi* “*Shozan taiwa (Dialogue in the secluded village of Shozan)*”. *Inoue Kowashi* was then a high-class “*Jishuukan*” student. In a private conversation with *Shoonan*, he asked a number of questions on broad philosophical and political topics, after this he wrote the whole conversation on the paper. It should be noted that back then (in 1864) *Shoonan* had already principally criticized the political course of *Mito han* and *Choshuu han*, based on the ideology of Shinto, since Shinto was a religious basis for “*kokutai*” ideas. Asked the question on religion, *Shoonan* replies to *Inoue*: “In general, all sorts of religious disputes entail unexpectedly large incidents, therefore, they are scary. Japanese Shinto can also cause great distress, which is well proven by the recent tragic events that took place in the clans of *Mito han* and *Choshuu han*” [9, p. 175]. Harsh criticism of the ideological course advocated by the “*Mito gaku-ha*” school was touched several times in this conversation. Interestingly, that the interviewer *Inoue Kowashi* did not express disagreement with this point of view during the conversation. However 25 years later *Inoue Kowashi* became the leading compiler of the “*Kyoiku chokugo*” (Imperial speech on public education) which was an epitomic description of “*kokutai*” ideas.

*Yonehara Ken*, a researcher of “*kokutai-ron*”, analyzing the examples of usage of the word “*kokutai*” during the most active period of the “*Mito-gaku*” school, distinguished several meanings of the word “*kokutai*”. In his opinion, there are following 4 types: 1) dignity or greatness of the state; 2) nature of the state; 3) traditional political system; 4) political and religious system with eternally continuing line of imperial succession [10, p. 39].

These ideas almost for 100 years, until the surrender of the Great Japanese Empire in World War II, had undergone numerous changes. It must be noted that the unambiguous meaning of these ideas was never clearly formulated. But with the state developing in the *Meiji* period, the concept of “*kokutai*” had gradually reduced to the above-mentioned fourth type. Approximately it was in 1890 [10, p. 9]. It has to be said that during the next 55 years, various types of inaccurate and unilateral interpretations and explanations of the ideas “*kokutai*” were constantly appearing on different levels of the ruling circles, including military. This shows the dominance of irrationalism in solving essential issues in the relationship between the state and people in “modernized” Japanese society.

## 2

In 1868, when Japanese society was in the middle of the Civil War “*Boshin senso*”, but the final victory of the government troops “*Kangun*” against *Bakufu* was already beyond doubt, a decree on the restoration of the Imperial Rule “*osei-fukko*” was promulgated. It had been almost 700 years since the transition of sovereign power of the imperial court “*Chotei*” to the shogunate “*Sei-taishogun*” and therefore the new government was forced to promptly establish an effective political system. After 4 months the Emperor declaration on 5 principles of governance entitled “*Gokajono goseimon*” was adopted, and after another 2 months — “*seitaisho*”, a project of a new form of polity of the imperial government was published.

The real author of this basic policy document of the new *Meiji* government was *Yuri Koosei*. He was one of the most talented students of *Shoonan*. The head of the *Fukui-han* clan, *Matsudaira Yoshinaga*, an active member of the *Kobugattai-ha* group, many times invited *Shoonan* to move to the *Fukui* clan from *Kumamoto*, without changing his clan affilia-

tion and teach there. However the strict rules made it almost impossible without a number of approvals from the council of dignitaries of the *Kumamoto* clan and the *Bakufu* Council.

During that time so-called “*Koogiseitairon*” system (parliamentary system) was popular among progressive thinkers-activists who served both in *Bakufu* and various clans during the *bakumatsu* period. The commentator on the *Yokoi Shoonan* collection of articles “*Kokuze sanron*” lists about 10 names, including *Yuri Koosei* [9, p. 279].

The first paragraph of the Declaration proclaimed the necessity of establishing of meeting system which would reflect the broad range of views, and within which all issues would be resolved through public discussions. Some scholars believe that the course of modern national policy, aiming at construction of the constitutional regime, had been established during this period of time [11, p. 144]. But this statement is highly questionable, because at that time, many leaders of the Governmental Clans, such as *Satsuma*, *Choshu*, *Tosa*, *Higo*, and also the court nobility “*kuge*” had a little notion of a constitutional state. Although some of them, such as *Kido Takayoshi*, knew about the French Constitution and Civil Law, but before his participation in the trip of the delegation “*Iwakura shisetsudan*”, which visited the United States and European countries, his knowledge remained theoretical.

In addition, throughout the period of conflicts and wars between *Bakufu* and principalities of *Satsuma* and *Choshu*, both camps often had different types of meetings and consultations at which the line between feudal lords “*hanshu*” and vassals “*kashin*”, and between the upper and lower samurai “*joshi*” and “*kashi*” was blurred. Therefore, the first paragraph became a confirmation of the nascent tradition in the formation of a general social agreement. The most interesting part was the last 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph, which emphasized the importance of strengthening the foundation for the future imperial power, but at the same time there was still no self-satisfied bragging of eternal succession of the imperial power, so apparently the ideas of “*kokutai*” at that time had not played their roles yet. The principles of the basic policy of the new Meiji government “*Gokajo no goseimon*” soon transformed into the project on governmental bodies “*seitaisho*”. After a cursory reading, this governmental project gives an impression that the new Meiji government could be built on the principle of separation of powers “*sanken bunritsu*”. However this document represents more unprincipled eclecticism of legislative and executive powers [12, p. 12]. There are also no traces of the “*kokutai*” ideas.

To be historically accurate, it is impossible to criticize the lack of understanding of general principle of “*sanken bunritsu*” (separation of powers) in “*seitaisho*”. This principle still ranges from “sufficient understanding” to “misunderstanding” in modern Constitutions. But if we talk about legislative work of the modern Japanese parliament, one cannot fail to notice the real advantage of administrative bodies over parliament. But what is more important is that “*seitaisho*” still doesn't have “*kokutai*” ideas.

The Imperial Rescript of the *Meiji* Emperor on education published in 1890 had changed the situation. In the decree entitled “*Kyoiku chokkugo*” ethical requirements of the state to the nationals of Japan were finally formulated, expressing “*kokutai*” ideas very clearly. One year before this Rescript was published, the Japanese Constitution was enacted on the basis of the Emperor's decree “*Dainippon teikoku kempoo*”, and a number of articles were written under strong influence of the “*kokutai*” ideas. So what was the impulse for creating, so-called “lieges of the empire” (*teikoku shinmin*), who should have felt themselves a part of modernized Japanese state?



Regarding universal public education “*kokumin kaigaku-sei*” and compulsory military service “*chohei-rei*”, the two fundamental reforms got underway long before, namely in 1872, 5 years after the restoration “*osei fukko*”. The leaders of *Satsuma-han* and *Choshu-han* learnt a lot through their bitter experience of military conflicts with the Western fleets and realized the need of building a modern army, which in its turn required trained soldiers and advanced military technology. To carry out these plans and to make the country rich, they demanded initial capital and the only reliable capital source was taxation on arable land. Along with “*kokumin kaigaku-sei*” and “*chohei-rei*” tax reform “*chiso kaisei*” had taken place the same year. However, all three reforms had faced persistent popular movement [2, p. 167–189]. So we can say that the modern “nation” “*kokumin*” in Japan was not born on its own accord.

As a result of a split in the *Meiji* government, which happened because of the debates on invasion to Korea “*seikan-ron*”, officials who resigned from their positions in the government, as *Itagaki Taisuke* and others, had started active anti-governmental movements, demanding the establishment of parliament based on results of elections. This movement for the elected parliament “*minsenshi setsuritu*” had quickly spread across Japan in the atmosphere of general disaffection from former samurai class that lost its privileges, as well as landowners and peasants who suffered from land taxes “*chiso kaisei*”.

Realizing the essential role of parliament in the country’s modernization, the remaining government leaders, led by *Okubo Toshimichi* vigorously sought to work on establishing optimal for them parliament and constitution. In their opinion “*kokken*”, “sovereignty” should have belonged to *Tenno*, who had played the role of a head of constitutional absolutism. *Okubo* demanded Japanese nationals to be distinctive members of the society with their own morals and customs, and to always dutifully obey their merciful lord [13, p. 317]. No wonder the decree “*kyoiku chokugo*” characterized the “*quintessence of kokutai*” (“*kokutaino seika*”) as the loyalty of Japanese nationals “*chu*” and “*kou*”. It emphasizes the obligations of nationals to be faithful and selfless supporters of the imperial family even during difficult times. But in the end these ideas reminded a myth remote far from historical reality.

It seems that the constitutional regime established by the governmental leaders, on the initiative of *Ito Hirobumi*, lacked distinguished features of modernization in terms of modern standards. But in any constitution, regardless of the form of government, whether it is Republic or Absolute Monarchy, there are always binding articles describing sovereignty of a state. Therefore the Japanese emperor had to act according to the Constitution. And that was the most important condition for modernization. Beside this constitution established the principle of separation of powers “*sanken bunritsu*”. Japanese citizens for the first time in the history got the freedom to choose their place of residence, which is also can be considered as one of the achievements of modernization.

Here we must elaborate on the prehistory of the implementation of the first constitution “*Meiji kenpo*”, as well as on the objective sociopolitical conditions that led to the issuing of an imperial decree addressing the soldiers *gunjin chokuyu* (1882) and the imperial speech on public education “*kyoiku chokugo*” with distinguished traces of “*kokutai*” ideas.

First “preliminary drafts on the constitution” appeared one by one after the other, proposed by the activists of the “*jiyuu minken undoo*” movement. *Ito Hirobumi* had not yet formulated a certain constitutional plan, which was a necessary part to establish the parliament and still he has certain ideas. As early as 1871, *Ito*, leaving a written objection on the issue

of reforming the administrative structure of the Ministry of Finance, expressed a number of critical opinions. In this document he writes: "In the future, when the development of civilization will be achieved in more spheres and public conscience, if an elected member of the parliament will look upon the financial situation of that time (that is, the present moment. — T.K.) from critical point of view, which official document the Minister of Finance (future. — T.K.) will offer to people as a proof of payment?" [14, p. 27] From this it is clear that *Ito* was one of those who clearly had an idea of the future Japanese parliament.

In 1881, an imperial decree announced that in 10 years the parliament will be established. In this regard, it was forbidden to voluntarily offer personal plans for draft constitutions. Ruling governmental circles, and *Ito* himself, fearing the radical political activity of the *Ookuma Shigenobu* group, which was eager to implement its plan of the constitution, managed to force *Ookuma* to leave the government after the backstage political conflict (*Meiji 14 nen no seihen*). In 1882, *Ito Hirobumi*, accompanied by 10 delegations, went to Europe (first to Berlin, and then to Vienna) to study the real work of European constitutions. They stayed there more than one year. And during that time he faced one intractable question. It concerned the questions what kind of people could be elected in the parliament, where they will oppose administrative bodies? The key to addressing the issue was given by a law professor at the University of Vienna Lorenz von Stein.

In 1889, *Ito Hirobumi* delivered a speech in the hall of the Senate "*Suumitsuin*", where he discussed the draft Constitution. In this speech, he emphasized: "European constitutional politics had started to form more than a thousand years ago and European nations while having an exact understanding of the system, were greatly influenced by their religion, which in the end merged with politics in one. In our country there is no such strong religion, none of religious confessions can be put in a core of the state. Buddhism at one time had united the hearts of all people, but today it has already weakened; Shinto although inheriting and transmitting the teachings of ancestors is not strong enough to attract the hearts of people as an influential religion. In Japan, the only thing that should be the core of the state is the imperial family, there should be nothing except it. That is the reason why the initial draft of Constitution didn't restrict an imperial power. Some may fear the abuse of imperial law with its excessive understanding. Such an opinion can surely exist, but in this case all responsibilities should be put on prime minister. In addition it will be possible to create other rules to restrict imperial power in the future, if it is necessary, but writing down these rules in the Constitution just of fear of imperial power will be a reckless act" [15, p. 81]. "Abuse of imperial law," as we will see in the third chapter of this paper, occurred, contrary to *Ito's* suggestion, 40 years later.

Beside *Ookuma Shigenobu*, *Ito* had another political "rival" who was able to pretend an "ally". He was not a politician, but a high-ranking government official named *Inoue Kowashi*, the very one who in his youth had interviewed *Yokoi Shoonan*. *Inoue Kowashi* found out that *Ookuma Shigenobu* secretly contacted *Fukuzawa Yukichi*, who already had a high reputation as a "Japanese educator". He was the rector of Keio University where the future generation of talented and capable people (bureaucrats, politicians, journalists, business people, etc.) was trained. He based his theory on a number of English books, hence the project of the constitution, which *Ookuma Shigenobu* prepared, was a reflection of constitutional ideas typical for England (for example, the relationship between cabinet, parliament and king). *Inoue*, who studied different types of European constitutional systems during his stay in France and Berlin, was against *Shigenobu's* idea. He was sure that

implementation of “Napoleonic Code” without taking in account the unique characteristics of Japanese culture, would be a disaster. In this regard, he, like *Ito Hironobu*, sympathized with the Germanic type of constitutional system rather than the rest of Western European types. It is therefore not surprising that *Inoue* secretly suggested and assisted *Ito* in expelling *Ookuma Shigenobu* from governmental circles.

*Inoue Kowashi* read a lot of classical Japanese documents as “*Kojiki*”, “*Nihonshoki*”, “*Kogoshuui*”, “*Man-yoo shuu*”, etc. He also carefully studied through both “*Dainihon-shi*” and “*Shinron*”, which were written in “*Mito han*”, the “homeland” of the “*kokutai*” ideas. Interestingly that *Ito Hirobumi* later wrote detailed comments on each article of “*Dainippon teikoku kenpo*”, which consists of a large number of quotes from classical historical and mythological books and collections of the poem “*tanka*” of ancient and medieval Japan, as “*Nihonsho-ki*”, “*Man-yoo shuu*”, “*Kojiki*”, “*Ryooigishuu*”, “*Shoku-nihongi*”, “*Engishiki*”, “*Harimano kuni fudoki*”, “*Gukanshou*”, etc [16, p. 24–26, 30, 38, 45, 46, 49, 61, 62].

Therefore there was a strong intellectual exchange between *Ito* and *Inoue* in creating a new constitutional plan where they continued their collaboration.

According to the Meiji Constitution, emperor does not take responsibilities, for he is “holy and inviolable”. But in order for people to believe this without a doubt, using proper legal terminologies was not enough. *Mitani Taichiroo*, who studied the essence of Japanese modernization, explained the complementary relations between the Constitution and the Imperial speech of “public education” “*Kyouiku-chokugo*” as follows: “... that was not the Constitution but “*Kyouiku-chokugo*” that showed above constitutional character of imperial power and embodied its “holy immunity”. “*Kyouiku-chokugo*” was a necessary logical conclusion, where *Ito* put a figure of the emperor above usual constitutional monarchs, as a “core of the state”, who should play the role of a semi-religious absolute being” [17, p. 226].

The initial request for this kind of “speech” was made by *Yamagata Aritomo*, the Prime Minister. It is worth noting here that it was the same *Yamagata*, who was then the minister of the land forces and ordered in 1882 to declare an imperial decree to the soldier “*Gunjin chokuyu*”. And that time, the final text was written by the hands of the very *Inoue Kowashi*. The first half of “*Gunjin chokuyu*” describes a clearly fake brief story from the time of the first emperor *Jinmu*, whose existence is not proved by objective historical data. Instead nowadays a critical approach to the “*Kojiki*” and “*Nihonshoki*”, which describe the “exploits of the emperor *Jinmu*”, managed to present a reliable hypothesis on the retrospective methods how his “biography” was forged. “*Gunjin chokuyu*” begins with words that especially emphasize that from generation to generation the army has always been under the command of emperor (a clear distortion of historical facts. — *T. K.*). And since the times of the emperor *Jinmu*, after the successful unification of Japan (let’s suppose that this is a fact, it touches only the western part of today’s Japan. — *T. K.*) more than 2500 years have passed. In the second half five paragraphs on military emphasize that soldiers of the Japanese Army cannot reject their military duty. The first thing recruits had to do in army was to memorize “*Gunjin chokuyu*” and repeat it aloud for verification. For the slightest failure, severe punishment was expected.

At the four most important state holidays the imperial speech “*Kyouiku chokugo*” in the form of a special ceremony was read by school principals in front of all schoolchildren gathered in large school halls. On weekdays, a copy of the text “*Kyouiku chokugo*” was respectfully stored along with a photographed portrait of their Highnesses in a special room called “*Houan-den*”. The four-time ceremony was repeated every year in all schools

of Japan, and even outside the mainland of Japan, as in Taiwan, in Korea, which later became a part of Japan. When World War II began, all students from grade 4 were forced to memorize the entire text of “*Kyouiku chokugo*” and verbally repeat it. Despite the text was short, it was written in the complex translation style of the ancient Chinese language “*kakikudashi bun*”.

And today, some of the conservative circles in Japan do not hide their approving attitude toward the “moral norms” listed in it, such as “we should respect our parents respectfully”, “brothers and sisters should be friends with each other”, “husbands and wives should live in the spirit of harmony and love”, etc. The co-author of this text, *Motoda Nagazane*, a former colleague of *Yokoi Shoonan* in the gymnasium “*Jishuu kan*”, therefore was a teacher of *Inoue*, insisted that it was necessary to state a number of “correct norms” of Confucian philosophy beforehand. But this was not a priority for *Inoue Kowashi* who mostly cared about western “civilized” countries opinion on new Constitution. He tried his best to “erase” religious tone from the script so Europeans and Americans will no doubt the principle of “freedom of religion”, clearly set out in the new constitution. During the reign of “*bakufu*”, Japan was known for its notorious anti-Christian environment. But if “*Kyouiku chokugo*” contained such context then all the previous efforts would have been in vain. Therefore, *Inoue Kowashi* also added various civil norms that the modern civilized world could not oppose. But those “norms” were means of manipulation. There are two essential parts of the “*Kyouiku chokugo*”: the first is the introductory part, which states that long time ago the first emperor established the country, and then the emperor descendants performed the deepest good, and the nation obeyed, and that continued from generation to generation which is the best description for “*kokutai*” ideas. And the second part refers the “readiness” of citizens to boldly serve the emperor during the national crisis, being loyal and brave warriors to fulfill their public duty, and thus provide assistance for the eternal continuation of the fate of the empire.

Modernization of the country also demanded “appropriate nation” to make the contribution to development of modernization. Ideas of “*kokutai*”, undoubtedly, are the product of the feudal illusion. Ideally modern nation should be constructed by itself. However, when there are no historical conditions, it should be established from the top. Because without “*kokumin*” it is impossible to build a modern state.

### 3

Statistic on the frequency of the usage of the word “*kokutai*” in titles of books that are stored at the National Diet Library of Japan shows that the first peak was reached in the 20s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the second — in 30s, and the third — in 40s. The author introducing this statistic to readers, suggests that the first peak was connected to the entry into force of the “Public Security Preservation Law” in 1925 (“*Chian iji-ho*”), the second peak had begun in the 30s with debates on the “organ theory” according to which the emperor was “the highest organ of state power” in Japan (“*tenno kikansetsu jiken*”), and the third peak was related to the beginning of the war against the United States and Britain in December 1941 [10, p. 7, 8].

1925 was not only “*Chian iji-ho*” year but also the year when the “Law on elections of deputies of the House of Representatives” (“*Danshi futsuu senkyo-hoo*”) was promulgated, as well as the year of establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union after

signing the Soviet-Japanese agreement (“*Nisso kihon joyaku*”). The last two factors seemed to encourage the coalition cabinet led by *Kato* to adopt a new law that would strengthen the control over the activities of political parties and organizations which denied “*kokutai*” ideas and private property.

In the first article of the law the word “*kokutai*” is mentioned several times however its precise definition is not determined. Therefore the special police authorities (“*Tokubetsu koutou keisatsu*”, ab. “*Tokko*”) could pursue and arrest suspects at their discretion. This law was amended twice, but the word “*kokutai*” in the first article remained without any clarifications. Only on May 31, 1929, for the first time clear definition was given by the Supreme Court “*Daishin-in*” which declared that “*kokutai*” was a condition in which an emperor, eternally existing in one imperial line (“*bansei ikkei*”), carried overall control of the supreme governance [18, p. 123]. From 1928 to 1940, 65.153 people were arrested. Among them 5.397, i. e. only 8.2% of the numbers of arrested, were brought to trial [18, p. 131]. These numbers show that the authorities preferred intimidation over other methods. Punishment itself in the frameworks of the law was not the ultimate goal. However during interrogation, various torture methods were widely used, mutilated many people both physically and mentally, and fatal cases were not exceptions. A famous example is the fate of the proletarian writer *Kobayashi Takiji*.

In February 1935, at the Upper Chamber of the parliament “*Kizoku-in*” an attempt was made on the life of the lawyer-deputy *Minobe Tatsukichi*, who formulated and was promoting the “*Organ theory*” (“*tenno kikan setsu*”). This theory at that time was common. According to this theory, in the Constitution emperor was one of the state organs. In other words, the Emperor’s power was limited by the Constitution itself. The leader of the ultranationalist movement *Kita Ikki* also believed that the Emperor is none other than one of the state organs [19, p. 93]. *Minobe’s* opponents sharply criticized “*tenno kikan setsu*” as a theory roughly opposing the essence of the “*kokutai*” ideas. In the end, at the Upper Chamber *Minobe* was not condemned, but outside of the Parliament far-right political groups and organizations had actively opposed *Minobe*.

In these circumstances, the Ministry of Education *Monbusho* adopted a declaration to clarify the term “*kokutai*” (“*kokutai meicho seimei*”). The Government acknowledged that the right of supreme power belonged only to an emperor, and banned universities from giving lectures on “*Organ theory*” (“*tenno kikan setsu*”). After 2 years, the Ministry of Education issued a policy paper “*Basic Principles of Kokutai*” and distributed the manual to all educational institutions. Exactly at this moment the cult of the emperor as a living god (“*arahitogami*”) was born. Ideas “*kokutai*” were born and entrenched as an integral element of the modernization in Japan. And in the end this element was disfigured, hindering the modernization.

The 11<sup>th</sup> article of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan (“*Dainippon teikoku kenpo*”) contained a small ambiguity. It was written that “*Tenno-wa rikukaigun-o tousui-su*”, the right of the supreme command of the ground and naval forces belonged to an emperor. But does this mean that the emperor had an absolute right to decide on all military issues without the consent of the relevant ministers and the parliament? Military circles and some politicians understood it differently and that is why they refused to discuss the ratification of the London Agreement on arms reductions in the parliament.

So disdain for the parliament spread among military circles, since the parliament could not solve the problems during the Great Depression “*Daikyoko*”, followed after

shares dropped at the New York Stock Exchange. Young officers from various departments took up arms in the capital, swept in the series of political assassinations of important figures, who from their points of view were the enemies of anguished people. These young officers were particularly from rural areas of northeastern Japan. Most of the officers themselves were natives of these provinces; their subordinate soldiers were from these areas as well. Military coups had taken place in 1932 and in 1936.

The latest, i. e. “The incident on February 26” (“*Ni-ni-roku jiken*”) was bigger than the first one and it was strongly influenced by the theory of the above mentioned *Kita Ikki*, in particular, by his manifest “An outline plan for the reorganization of Japan” (“*Nihon kaihohouan taiko*”) [20, p. 20–22]. But unlike their teacher, officers were strongly attached to the “*kokutai*” ideas [20, p. 98–99, 101–102, 122, 123]. They naively believed that the young Emperor *Hirohito* understood their plan and endorsed their actions. On the contrary, the emperor ordered to arrest and severely punish them according to law. At the military court 15 ringleaders were sentenced to death by firing squad. *Kita Ikki* and a number of other persons were also sentenced to death as backroom coup leaders of “*Ni-ni-roku jiken*”.

Japan and Russia have common features in terms of historical consciousness, in particular, the thesis of backwardness in comparison with the European civilization, discussed among intellectual elites of the two countries. As part of this discourse different nationalist ideas were born, the elites were trying to find some starting points of the countries’ own unique strengths and sides. Count Sergey Uvarov, Minister of Education and President of the Academy of Sciences, in 1832, in the “Report on the Review of the Moscow University” expressed his faith “in the true Russian beginnings of Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality, the last anchor <...> of salvation and the most faithful pledge of power and greatness <...> of Fatherland” [21, p. 300].

Canadian historian Whittaker determined the special place of Uvarov in historical coordinates of the Russian thought of 20–30s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As for the “nation”, there are 4 main groups, namely: 1) “dynastic nationalists” like Bulgarin, Grech, Senkovsky; 2) “romantic nationalists” like Pogodin, Shevyrev; 3) “Slavophiles”, which saw the key to the explanation of Russian nationality in the church rather than in the state. Eminent representatives are Aksakovs brothers, Khomyakov, Kireevskys brothers and Samarin; 4) Granovsky, Herzen, Ogarev, Bakunin, Belinsky, i. e. “Westernizers” [22, p. 104–105].

According to Whittaker, Uvarov denied views of Westernizers, except of Granovsky. In this case Chaadaev’s statement was inadmissible. But he was also too far from the first group of “dynastic nationalists” [22, p. 107].

Along with these classifications of Russian thinkers of the beginning and middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Whittaker naturally made an original remark on Russian Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality. She hinted here that an important point for solving the “eternal dispute” about the Uvarov’s triad lies in the organic connection of the three elements. Analyzing these three elements separately from each other, the true meaning of the theory will be lost. It seems that, the author touches mostly the peculiarity of the “legitimacy” and “orthodox” of the Russian type and the obedient attitude of the people towards this giant imperial power. But since the deepening in the consideration of this topic leads to a deviation from the main topic of this paper, we, unfortunately, must postpone this matter to another case.

The “*kokutai*” ideas differ from the Russian “nationality” with the complete absence of the fourth group, e. g. In Japan in the end there was not “Westernizers”, moreover such persons as Chaadaev. But in some sense *Motoori Norinaga* perhaps was close to the second

group, as *Fujita Toko* and *Aizawa Seishsai* to the first. But let's not delve further into this typological approach, as it cannot replace scientific analysis.

Captives of the ideas “*kokutai*” were not only Japanese people but also the Emperor *Hirohito* himself. It became clear after investigating of the remaining revisions of the imperial edict of the end of the war, the so-called “*Shusen no shosho*”.

On July 26, 1945 “The Potsdam declaration of unconditional surrender of Japan”, was declared, signed by the US President Truman. Absentia agreed also by the British Prime Minister Churchill and the President of the Republic of China Chiang Kai-shek. There was not Stalin's name, since the “neutrality pact between the Soviet Union and Japan” was still valid.

In response to this declaration on August 14, the Japanese government expressed the intention to accept the Potsdam Declaration, but only with one condition, namely the preservation of “*kokutai*”. The Japanese people had learned about it only on August 15, at 12 o'clock on the radio, which transmitted the recorded voice of the emperor, reading out his edict “*shosho*”. Within 2 weeks after receiving of the Potsdam Declaration Japanese people experienced two atomic bombings, as well as the entry of the Soviet army in the war against Japan.

It is said that in this hopeless situation, on the initiative of the emperor, it was decided to adopt the requirements of the “Potsdam Declaration” and a few days before the broadcast of “*gyokuon hoso*” (of course, later on 9 August) compiling of a draft edict “*shosho*” began. The analysis of the text clearly shows intentions and fears of the Emperor's entourage. Interestingly, that from the seventh edition phrase about sacred regalia of imperial power “*Jinggi-o houjite*” just disappeared [23, p. 147]. In 1980, one document, written between March and April 1946 by five closest emperor's officials, was found in the United States. It says that the Emperor *Showa*, in fact, was scarred of American fleet, which could land on the shores of Ise Bay. Emperor Hirohito was afraid to lose the three jewels, which were stored in the temples of *Atsuta* and *Ise*, along the coast of *Ise* Bay. According to the Emperor's opinion, the loss of jewels “*Jingi*” could mean the abolition of the “*kokutai*”. Just because of this fear, the emperor finally decided to end the war [23, p.119, 120].

However, in the latter edition, we still can notice the abundance of phrases such as “preservation of *kokutai*” (“*kokutaigoji*”), “the immortality of the Gods' country” (“*kokutai fumetsu*”), “quintessence of *kokutai*” (“*kokutaino seika*”), “you, loyal subjects” (“*churyonaru nanji shinmin*”) and other clichéd expressions. It was a sad ending for the ideas “*kokutai*”.

## Instead of conclusion

The image of the ideas “*kokutai*” seems to have disappeared. The new democratic Constitution came into force on May 3, 1947. The three main provisions of the Constitution were the following: 1) “the supreme power belongs to the people” (“*shuken zaimin*”); 2) “pacifism” (“*heiwashugi*”); and 3) “the basic human rights” (“*kihonteki jinken*”). In the first article it is said that the Emperor is the symbol of Japan and symbol of unity of the Japanese people, and this provision is based on the will of all the Japanese people, whom the sovereignty belongs. In contrast to the *Showa* Emperor current Emperor is trying to be active symbol of “the unity of the Japanese people.” However recently he expressed his sincere wish to retire during his lifetime, being too tired of his obligations and old age. But today, in both chambers of the parliament, more than two-thirds of the deputies belong to government parties. Most of them are members of the organization “*Nihon kaigi*”, which

aggressively promotes restoration of the pre-war regime “*kokutai*”. We wonder under what emperor their “ideal state” will be created.

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## Премодернистские идеи «kokutai» как неотъемлемые элементы модернизации в историческом процессе Японии

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Модернизация в странах, ставшими развитыми в более поздний срок, представляет собой амальгамированный процесс, элементы которого должны рассматриваться и в цельной картине и в отдельно взятых ее деталях. Ранние японские марксисты, характеризуюя политические системы, возникшие после революции Мейдзи, отмечали наличие так называемых феодальных пережитков в общественном сознании людей, что заставляет и сегодня задаваться вопросом о роли этих «пережитков» в процессе модернизации Японского государства. Модернизированное государство должно быть не только суверенным, но и национальным «kokumin kokka», поэтому стоит подробнее остановиться на предыстории создания первой японской конституции «Daipponpō teikoku kenpō» (1889), в которой были отображены собственно национальные идеи «kokutai». Также необходимо выделить ряд общественно-политических причин, повлекших за собой издание императорского указа, обращенного к солдатам «gunjin chokuu» (1882) и императорской речи о народном образовании «kyouiku chokugo» (1890), которые наравне с конституцией содержали в себе идеи «kokutai», представлявшие собой элемент феодального мира. В правильных условиях нация зарождается и развивается сама по себе, но когда исторические предпосылки и условия не формируются, то возникает необходимость создать их искусственно. В конце XIX в. Япония столкнулась с подобной ситуацией. В 1925 г. был опубликован «Закон поддержания общественной безопасности» (Chian iji-ho), в первой статье которого встречается слово «kokutai», но который не содержит определение этого термина. В 1932 и в 1936 г. произошли военные путчи, участники которых были яркими приверженцами идей «kokutai». 14 августа 1945 г. японское правительство передало намерение о принятии Потсдамской декларации при одном условии, а именно сохранении «kokutai», продлив тем самым жизнь идей «kokutai» до полной капитуляции Японской империи.

*Ключевые слова:* идеи кокутай, модернизация в Японии, национальное государство, внутренняя политика, конституция.

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