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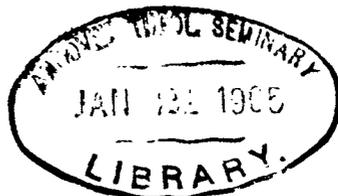
THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF MODERN JAPAN.

BY THE REVEREND GEORGE E. ALBRECHT.

Two considerations must precede every attempt at describing the present religious life of Japan,—the one historical, the other psychological. The present is rooted in the past: present conditions cannot be duly appreciated when viewed apart from their historic origin. And, again, some acquaintance is needed with the psychical characteristics of the people; for, without a study of human nature, the inner characteristics of any religion—the secret of its influence, its growth, its decline—cannot be understood.

When, in the sixth century, Buddhism gained entrance into Japan, it found the nation fairly consolidated, under the sway of the emperor, who was believed to be the direct descendant of the "heaven-shining-great-august goddess," ruling in the "plain of high heaven." Thence the conquerors of the aboriginal tribes claimed to have come on their divinely appointed mission to bring under their sway all the "ever-fruitful land, with its reed-covered plains and its luxurious rice-fields," having the promise of the gods that the imperial line established by them should "flourish forever with the heavens and the earth." They were most probably invaders from the South-

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west;¹ and by superior prowess and by better weapons they subdued the native tribes, and conquered the native religions of the aborigines. By his conquests the ruler of the Yamato clan had proved his divine claims, and it was not strange that the religion of the conquerors became the religion of the conquered also. *Cujus regio, ejus religio*. Western history is not without parallels.

One of the chief features of the Yamato religion was belief in the divine descent of the ruler, who on earth was the representative and vicar of heaven, to be obeyed and worshiped.² Towards the various native faiths, this religion showed itself as obliging as, later on, Buddhism showed itself towards Shintoism. The various gods of the aborigines were acknowledged, but they all were declared to be inferior to the vicegerent of Heaven. The Mikado was "virtually chief-god in a great pantheon."

This belief was the bond holding together the various tribes, or clans, of Central and Southern Japan. It came to be the strongest force in the history of the nation, a sacred principle inherited from "ages eternal." It is the central belief to-day of Shintoism. It has begotten the *Yamato damashii*, the proud spirit of Japan, shown in absorbing devotion to emperor and country, being the supreme force of the nation's life and progress, the "Soul of Japan." No doubt this belief

¹ According to Dr. E. Baelz, formerly of the Imperial University, Tōkyō, three distinct racial types can be distinguished in Japan: the Ainu, who are the aborigines, found mostly on the island of Yezo, but whose traces remain also in Satsuma and in the vicinity of Aomori; the Mongol-Malay type, coming from the Philippines and Formosa with the Black Current to Hyūga, on the island of Kyūshū, where the first emperor is said to have descended from heaven; and the Manchu-Korean type, coming over Tsūshima to Izumo. On the western coast of Japan, Polynesian and Negro blood may also be found.

² This primitive religion must be distinguished from the later,

in the divine descent of the imperial family cannot stand in the light of historical criticism, but the people are not yet ready to look at their most-cherished belief with cold impartiality. Whatever any man's private opinion may be, he does not openly confess doubts regarding the divine descent of the "Son of Heaven," the common designation of the emperor. When, in 1892, Professor Kume, at that time professor in the Imperial University in Tōkyō, showed by historical research, that this Mikado-worship was not the original faith of the people of Japan, that there had existed, at least in Central Japan, some sort of monotheism, the Shintoists rose up in wrath against this scholar, and, in spite of a constitution guaranteeing religious liberty, the Government deprived him of his position. This spirit is still a vital factor in the religious life of the nation.

Buddhism did not supplant the Yamato religion. When first introduced, probably during the reign of the emperor Keitai (507-551 A. D.), the new faith did not find a favorable reception. Neither court nor people felt drawn to the "god of the foreign country." In October of 552 A. D. King Seimei of Kudara,¹ one of the three ancient divisions of Korea, sent priests with an image of Buddha, made of an alloy of copper and gold, with streamers and silken parasols,² some sacred books and other tributary offerings. In spite of the favorable reception which the prime minister, and even the king, gave to the ambassadors, the religion was not welcomed.

developed form of Shintoism. It was probably nature-worship, with the sun as chief object of worship; and besides it there was a variety of gods and goddesses, among whom were the spirits of the departed ancestors of the imperial family.

¹The Japanese designations respectively for King Syōngmyōng and his country Pih-tse.

²A large, richly decorated parasol is, in China and Korea, a

Their kingdom was divine, they worshiped one hundred and eighty gods, and why should they worship these foreign gods? ¹ During a pestilence some years later, the idols, which were kept in the house of one of the ministers, were thrown into the river Yodo at Ōsaka, the capital then being Naniwa, the present Ōsaka; as the national affliction was attributed to the wrath of the gods, who were offended at the introduction of rival deities. But Buddhist tactics ultimately carried the day. One of the priests from Korea, prostrating himself one day before the little son of the emperor Yōmei (585 A. D.), declared that he recognized in him the reincarnation of Nangaku no Eshi, a famous Buddhist priest of Southern China, who had died a few years before. The priest prevailed upon the Mikado to confide the young prince's education to the Buddhist priests. This prince, best known by his posthumous name, Shōtoku Taishi (572-621 A. D.), became regent under his aunt, Empress Suikō (593-628 A. D.), who was the chief champion of Buddhism. Opposition on the part of the Shintoists ² was forcibly suppressed; new missionaries from Korea were invited; temples were built; the country was parcelled out into dioceses, with Buddhist bishops and archbishops; the services of the monks were used for practical purposes, such as the construction of roads and bridges, as well as for the more spiritual functions of their profession; and Japanese priests were sent across the sea to study, in China and elsewhere, the mysteries of the faith, especially the *Vin-* symbol of authority and high rank, being much used in Buddhist processions. The Japanese (Chinese) term, *banzai*, might mean a "canopy"; but the addition of the adverb *jakkan* points to more than one object.

¹ Cf. Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, Vol. xiv. p. 78.

² *Shintō*, the Chinese word, of which *Kami no michi* is the Japanese equivalent, was first adopted after the introduction of Budd-

aya (in Japanese, *Ritsu*), or discipline for the Order.¹ At his death there were forty-six temples, and thirteen hundred and eighty-five priests, monks, and nuns in Japan;² in fact, by imperial edict Buddhism had been made the established religion of the country.

But to Japan, as before to China and to India, Buddhism came in a very tolerant spirit. It has never shown the exclusive spirit of Christianity. Indeed, its readiness to adapt itself to the circumstances, instincts, and prejudices of the people with whom it has to do, is one of the most powerful and most striking peculiarities of Buddhism.³ "The doctrines of Buddhism have no fixed form." The *Kami* of Shintoism were declared to be merely *avatars* of some Indian deities, and were readily given a place in the Buddhistic pantheon. Gyōgi Bosatsu⁴ (670-749 A. D.), a Buddhist abbot and saint, was the first to proclaim the doctrine of *shin-butsu-dōtai*, the identity of the Shintō gods and Buddhist deities. After him, Kūkai (better known by his posthumous title Kōbō Daishi), born in 774 A. D., in the small village of Byōbugaura, in the province of Sanuki, was most influential in the amalgamation of Shintoism with Buddhism. The emperor Saga (774-824 A. D.) gave to this system the name of *Ryōbu Shintō*, the "Two-fold Way of the Gods." The people took readily to it; they were left in the possession of their old gods, but a new splendor was added to them. The gorgeous ceremonies, the elaborate worship of the Buddhist hism (*Butsu-dō* means "the Way of Buddha"), and signifies "the Way of the Gods."

¹ Cf. Lloyd, "Developments of Japanese Buddhism," in *Trans. As. Soc.*, Vol. xxii. p. 337 ff.

² Cf. Griffin, *The Religions of Japan*, p. 180.

³ Cf. Cobbold, *Religion in Japan*, p. 53.

⁴ *Bosatsu* is the Japanese equivalent for the Sanskrit *Bōdhisattva*, a class of Buddhist saints.

temple, were more attractive than the bare simplicity of the Shintō shrine. Buddhism brought art, philosophy, yes civilization; while Shintoism had none of these. In an age when the primitive simplicity of life had mostly passed away, when luxuriousness and licentiousness reigned at the court, it is no wonder that the simple, and in many ways insufficient, "Way of the Gods" was overpowered by the more elaborate "Way of the Buddha."

In 1870 this double system was rent asunder by imperial decree. Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, scholars like Mabuchi, Motoori, and Hirata had labored to revive pure Shintō.¹ By critical study of the ancient records and rituals they endeavored to separate the primitive doctrine from all foreign traces, proclaiming the principle that the only religion necessary was to obey the Mikado, and to follow one's natural impulses. Under the excitement of the stirring events of 1868, when the shōgunate was abolished, and the sole reign of the Mikado was restored, on the basis of pure absolutism, Buddhism, which had always been the religion favored by the shōgunate, was disestablished, and Shintō was installed as the only state religion. Wherever Buddhist symbols and furniture, rites and ceremonies, had found their way into Shintō temples, they were expelled, and the ancient simplicity was restored. A "Department of Spiritual Affairs" was established, and a grant of some three hundred thousand dollars a year was made by the Government for the maintenance of Shintō temples and shrines. Such voltaic currents from the government battery were able to galvanize the corpse for a while; but they could not restore life. The "Department of Spiritual Affairs" naturally has sunk to a sub-bureau of

¹For a description of their work, cf. Satow, "The Revival of Pure Shintau," in *Trans. As. Soc.*, Vol. III., App.

the Home Department. Some temples¹ are still maintained by public funds, but Shintoism proper has ceased to be a religion; it is a semi-religious, semi-patriotic cult.² But, although officially separated, in the daily life of the people the old syncretism continues. There is no sharp line of demarcation between the two faiths. "It is the established custom to present infants at the Shintō family temple one month after birth; it is equally customary to be buried by the Buddhist parish priest."³ This eclecticism must be borne in mind when estimating the religious life of modern Japan.

There is a third amalgam in this religious compound, which must not be overlooked,—Confucianism. The doctrines of Kōshi and Mōshi (Confucius and Mencius) formed, and possibly even yet form, the gospel and the quintessence of all worldly wisdom to the Japanese gentleman. They became the basis of his education, and the ideal which inspired his conceptions of duty and honor.⁴ These words hold true to-day. Every one at all acquainted with the ethical life of Japan realizes the influence exerted by *Bushidō*, the "Precepts of Knighthood"; and the sources of *Bushidō* are found

¹According to the *Résumé Statistique de l'Empire du Japon* for 1903, their number is 136.

²This is, however, not true of the twelve sects, like the Kurozumikyō, Tenrikyō, Remmonkyō, etc., which are also in an official sense religious. Shintoism may be said to consist of two divisions: the one officially pronounced to be not a religion, the other officially recognized as a religion. To the former belong all the shrines connected in any way with the government, and it is only this class of shrines which are entitled to the designation of *jinsha*. The places of worship of all sects belonging to the other division of Shintō are termed *kyokuaisho* ("places of assembly") or *otamasho* ("places for worshipping the honorable spirit"); though popular parlance does not always observe this distinction.

³Chamberlain, in *Things Japanese*, art. "Religion."

⁴Griffis, *l. c.*, 112; also Rein, *Japan*, p. 447.

in Buddhism, with its calm trust in Fate; in Shintoism, with its central teaching of loyalty; in Confucianism, with its "calm, benignant, and comfortable character of its politico-ethical precepts," and in the democratic theories of Mencius.¹

Confucianism supplied the greatest defect of the old Yamato religion,—ethical precepts. Its introduction into Japan probably dates from about the third century of the Christian era, coming, like Buddhism, by way of Korea, where it has to-day yet, the greater influence. Buddhist missionaries brought the literature of China, but it remained the possession of a narrow circle within the court. With the spread of Buddhism the teachings of Confucius also spread: for there was harmony between the various forms of Buddhism and the undeveloped system of Chinese ethics. Strangely it owes its greatest progress to the mighty warrior Iyeyasu, born in 1542, shōgun from 1603 to 1605; who, after having subdued all turbulent princes, became educator as well as administrator of the Mikado's realm.² He encouraged the study of Chinese literature, established a college in Yedo, his capital, the modern Tōkyō, and, at the fall of the Ming dynasty in China, welcomed to Japan large numbers of learned Chinese, who lived chiefly in Yedo, Kyōtō, and in Mito, where Prince Mitsukuni was a great patron of literature.³ This revival of learning ultimately led to the rise of the Shintō revival, referred to

¹ Cf. Nitobé, "Bushidō, the Soul of Japan," a charming little book, but decidedly "one-sided," to quote Captain Brinkley's criticism. For a truer appreciation of Bushidō, cf. Brinkley's *Japan, Its History, Art and Literature*, Vol. II. chap. v.

² Even after his resignation, he remained the "soul of the government, so that his son undertook little that was important without his knowledge and counsel" (Rein, *Japan*, p. 302).

³ For an account of some of these scholars, cf. *The Open Court*, Oct. 1903, and *Trans. As. Soc.*, Vols. xxiv. and xxx.

above, and thus to the overthrow of the Tokugawa shōgunate, of which Iyeyasu was the founder and most striking representative.¹ But the Confucianism which these sages found in Japan was not that of their teacher. The corner-stone of his system was filial obedience; in Japan loyalty to the ruler was put above filial obedience. To forsake parents, wife, and children for the feudal lord, was esteemed a great virtue. Confucius certainly inculcated loyalty, and this made his system fit so well into the ethical conceptions of the Japanese; but the foundation principle is filial duty. "Filial duty lies at the foundation of humanity"; and the first of the four rules given by Confucius to a "noble-minded man" for the regulation of his conduct is, "to serve one's parents in such a manner as is required of a son," and only as a second rule follows the injunction "to serve one's sovereign in such a manner as is required of a subject."² Japan changed the emphasis to suit its purpose, and also in other ways adapted the system to its new environment. But in its changed form the system of the Chinese sage has been a great power in molding the ethical life of Japan, even more than its philosophical thought.

During the two centuries and a half of national isolation, following upon Iyemitsu's edict (1624) for the expulsion of all Spaniards, and, in 1638, of all the Portuguese, allowing only a small company of Dutch traders under most humiliating conditions to live on the small island of Deshima, in Nagasaki harbor, the social system of Japan was firmly established and elaborated, while the religious faiths were "interwrought more and more into a homogeneous body of thought

¹ Tokugawa was Iyeyasu's family name, and the dynasty of shōguns founded by him is thus called the Tokugawa dynasty, which had its end in 1868.

² Cf. "Confucianism," by the Hon. Pung Kwang Yu, in *The World's Parliament of Religions*, p. 415.

and a cult for the life."¹ Christianity had been introduced by St. Francis Xavier, who, on August 15, 1549, landed at Kagoshima with Anjiro, a native of Satsuma, who had found his way to Malacca in a Portuguese vessel, where he had received baptism in the previous year. Xavier's success was far from what he had hoped. When leaving Japan on November 20, 1551, he left three small congregations with a few hundred baptized converts. When we read that, without knowing the Japanese language, merely by reading a semi-Japanese catechism, and by addresses, he and his two Spanish companions were able within a few days to make about a hundred converts, a question regarding the depth of their conversion can hardly be suppressed.² Still, he was the first to sow the seed of Christianity in Japan, and to draw the attention of the Catholic Church to this promising field of labor, where he himself had labored with consuming zeal.

It was especially under Nobunaga's³ fostering care, due to his hatred of Buddhism, that Christianity attained its greatest prosperity. The number of adherents rose to not less than one hundred and fifty thousand; churches, hospitals, asylums, and colleges for the training of a native clergy, were erected in various parts of the land. In 1582 the first embassy was sent from Japan to the Pope, assisting at the coronation of Sixtus V. It did seem as if Xavier's enthusiastic prophecy, that the Japanese nation would preserve unshaken and forever the

¹ Clay MacCauley, "The Present Religious Condition of Japan," in *The American Journal of Theology*, Vol. vi. No. 2.

² Cf. Murdock, *A History of Japan (1542-1651)*, p. 62; also Haas, *Geschichte des Christenthums in Japan*, p. 165.

³ Ota Nobunaga (1534-1582), while never receiving the title of "shōgun," was practically ruler of the country after his overthrow of the Ashikaga shōgunate in 1575.

profession of Christian holiness,¹ was to be fulfilled. But on July 25, 1587, the first of a series of edicts, directed against Christianity, was promulgated by Hideyoshi (1536–1598),² most likely for political reasons. For the sake of securing foreign trade the coming of foreign priests was for a long time encouraged, and, even after edicts had been issued against them, their presence was winked at; but finally the conviction grew upon the rulers of the land that the total exclusion of Spaniards and Portuguese, and of all their works, was the sole way of preserving the integrity of the Empire. An era of persecution followed, which Roman Catholic historians rightly designate as “the special and abiding glory of the Japanese church.” The church which, according to Roman Catholic estimates, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, numbered 1,800,000 souls (no doubt, an exaggerated figure), appeared at its close to be absolutely extinct. Missionaries, braving torture and death, came again and again, but either were not allowed to land, or suffered martyrdom. The edicts against the “pestilent sect” remained in force for more than two hundred years. Christianity had failed to gain a permanent foothold in Japan. When in 1858, subsequent to the treaty formed by Commodore Perry between the United States and the shōgun’s government, the missionaries of the French *Société des Missions Étrangères* resumed work in Japan, they found, it is true, several scattered Christian communities in the vicinity of Nagasaki, who had preserved certain prayers, rites, and books, but they again had to endure bitter persecutions; the seed had to be sown anew.

¹ Cf. *The Catholic Church in Japan*, by Rev. Dr. Casavelli.

² Commonly known as *Taikō Sema*, a title signifying “great councillor,” the recognized title of a retired regent; but, being rarely applied to any except Hideyoshi, it has almost come to form part of his name in popular parlance (*Chamberlain, Things Japanese*).

What was the resultant, in the religious life of the Japanese people, of these centuries of both intercourse and isolation? Standing at the threshold of New Japan, what principles, or facts, stand out most prominent as the heritage of the past? First and chiefly, the principle of unquestioning loyalty to the emperor, as the earthly representative of the gods, the progenitors of the Japanese nation, and, accompanying it, the religious tolerance and eclecticism of the people, in so far as any religion is not at war with the religious principle of devotion to the throne.

This review of the religious life of the nation will help us to answer our second preliminary question: Are the Japanese essentially an irreligious people?

This assertion is frequently made. Professor Chamberlain, one of the ablest students of Japan and its people, in his remarks upon "Religion" in "Things Japanese," begins by speaking of them as "essentially an undevotional people," then proceeds to give some examples of their religious devotion, and concludes by saying that "these (perhaps inconsistent) remarks" may indicate that "the subject is a difficult one," and cautions Europeans "from judging too summarily of conditions alien to the whole trend of their own experience." This counsel is to the point; for it is not easy, even for the resident of many years, to penetrate below the surface, and to come to know the real heart-life of the people. The observing traveler in Japan finds in every city, town, village, in groves, in valleys, or on the hills, by the side of every waterfall, temples and shrines and altars. In the months of July and August he sees thousands of pilgrims ascend the twelve-thousand-foot high Mount Fuji, and at all seasons of the year he finds pilgrims crowding the courts of various temples. He is impressed with the massive proportions and magnificent decorations of

the Higashi Hongwanji, a temple built in Kyōtō within the last twelve years at an expense of over one million dollars. He reads that no less than 1,200,000 yen was subscribed in six provinces alone for the Nishi Hongwanji temple; he sees at nearly every house door in city and village one or more charms, intended to ward off evil. Stopping over night in a Japanese inn, he is aroused from his slumber early in the morning by the sharp clapping of the hands of some worshiper of O Tentō sama, the Sun-Lord of heaven. In his round of shopping or visiting, he finds in nearly every store or house fresh offerings before the *Kamidana*, or the *Butsudan*,¹ and, noting all this, and the multitudinous rites and customs of the people, having a religious significance, he will not quickly or lightly judge that the Japanese are an irreligious people. Rather will he consider them to be *δεισιδαιμονέστεροι*. Abbé E. Ligneul, a member of the Roman Catholic Mission in Tōkyō, has expressed the belief that there is no nation where customs, habits, and sentiments are so influenced by religion, as in Japan;² and he is right; he speaks of the Japanese as "exceptionally religious."³

Still, "where there is smoke there must be fire." The impression, so widely prevailing, that the Japanese are essentially a non-religious people, is not wholly without foundation. There is a multitudinous variety of religious forms, customs, and ceremonies; there are thousands, yes tens of thousands, of temples and shrines; there is much religious life and activity, but, on the whole, it is shallow. Allowing liberal room

¹The Buddhist shrine in a private house. The *Kamidana* is a shelf where anything representing the Shintō divinities is placed for worship.

²Quoted by Pfarrer Schiller, "Modern Japan and Christianity," in *Zeitschrift fuer Missionskunde*, etc., xviii. Heft 10.

³Cf. *The Japan Weekly Mail*, June 6, 1903, p. 627.

for exceptions, which certainly exist, the average Japanese is not a man of deep religious convictions. A visit to the temples certainly does not leave the impression that the worshippers, found there, are very devout. The *matsuri*, or religious festivals, are often shocking in their coarseness and utter lack of all religious decorum. With the daily life religion has but little to do: it spends itself chiefly in outward rites and observances. Bearing in mind the religious eclecticism which has prevailed in Japan for centuries, the absence, in general, of deep religious convictions causes no surprise; the two are mutually destructive. It may be true that these religious characteristics "have been determined by the history, rather than by any inherent racial character, of the people,"¹—and this fact is of importance to the Christian missionary,—but that the religious life, as well as the intellectual life, of the Japanese, is marked by superficiality, is one unfortunate result of the historical development of the religious life of the nation. "Highly ethical, not highly religious," is the judgment of one friendly critic;² "Want of thoroughness and of insight" that of another;³ unable to understand "the intense interest" taken by the people of the West in "ethical, religious, and philosophical questions," the conclusion of a third;⁴ "There is no Fifty-first Psalm in all the literature of Japan," is the significant remark of a fourth;⁵ and of similar testimony to the above there is an abundance. The influence of Confucianism upon the educated classes of Japan will have to be considered further on; that it has had a benumbing influence could only be expected from a system which is, at the

¹ Gulick, *The Evolution of the Japanese*, p. 329.

² Munzinger, *Die Japaner*, p. 187.

³ Dr. Busse, quoted by Chamberlain, in *Things Japanese*, p. 258.

⁴ Walter Dening, in *Things Japanese*, p. 258.

⁵ Canon Barnett of Toynbee Hall, London.

best, uncertain as to the existence of a personal Supreme Being, and knows nothing of penitence and mercy. Religious indifference is certainly characteristic of the educated classes.

Turning now to the consideration of our main problem, inquiring into the religious life of modern Japan, we are prepared to find a very complex condition: the ancient faiths interacting with the new thought and the new life to be found in the country to-day. The Shintō priest and Buddhist bonze are contesting with the Christian preacher for religious supremacy in the land. The reopening of the country has caused various systems of Western thought, as well as Western institutions, to come into the land; new thoughts, new principles, new customs, intermingling with the old, so that a condition of thought and life exists which it is difficult to understand, and no less difficult clearly to describe.

Shintoism proper lives as an official cult, and as a spirit animating the lives of the Japanese, rather than as a distinct religion. The most holy place of Shintoism is the Dai Jingū at Yamada in Ise. It is dedicated to Tenshōkō Daijin ("heaven-shining mighty goddess"), the progenitress of the present imperial dynasty. Thousands of pilgrims every year visit this shrine; merchants and artisans especially flocking there to secure the favor of the goddess. But in 1899 the officials and ministers of this central shrine petitioned the government that they should not be considered longer a religious body, but should be esteemed a single association constituting a juridical person, with the purpose of performing rites in veneration of the imperial ancestors. This petition was granted, and the *Dai Jingū Kyōkwai*, now become the *Dai Jingū Hōsaikwai* (Reverential Representation Society of the Great Jingū) passed from the category of religious bodies, becoming exempt from all supervision, to

which religious associations in Japan are subjected. The cause for this change of basis on the part of the chief representatives of Shintoism, voluntarily abandoning their claim to be called religionists, lies, no doubt, in their apprehension that Shintō, as a religion, cannot live. It may stand as the embodiment of a national sentiment, and as such it may compel the veneration and support of every loyal Japanese. If Shintō is a religion, by the Constitution of the land, granting liberty of conscience, no Japanese would be under obligation to respect it. But if Shintō is merely a cult, embodying the principle of veneration for ancestors, and having for its chief function the performance of rites in memory of the ancestors of the empire's sovereign, then every loyal Japanese is obliged to support it.¹ Thus by the very resignation of its religious character Shintoism has greatly strengthened its influence with the Japanese people. It lives as the spirit of loyalty and patriotism, and as such is a real power in Japan. The Government itself is very active in fostering this spirit by regulations demanding that in all schools throughout the land, either public or private, a copy of the imperial rescript on education² should be suspended in the general assembly-room of the school, to be read at stated seasons, and further through the ceremony of bowing before the emperor's picture in public schools. This latter is not demanded as a religious rite, only as a ceremony expressive of respect;³ but it has led to such exaggerated forms of respect, that school-teachers, at the risk of their lives, have snatched the sacred picture from a burning building.⁴

¹ Cf. The Japan Weekly Mail, Sept. 9, 1899.

² Cf. The Missionary Herald, Vol. lxxxvii. p. 148 f.

³ The Japanese term used is *keirei suru*, which signifies "to make a respectful bow."

⁴ In not a few schools the emperor's picture is placed within a shrine, resembling those used in Shintō temples.

The number of Shintō shrines and shrine-keepers, reported in the official census, shows, however, no decline. On December 31, 1890, the number of state shrines and shrines of higher rank was 163; in 1900, the latest date for which statistics are available, they numbered 169. The corresponding numbers for larger district shrines and temples of secondary rank was 56,347 and 57,902; smaller shrines respectively 136,732 and 138,287. The number of priests also had risen from 14,717 to 16,408.¹ This increase, however, is only in appearance. It is caused by long-existing temples and shrines applying for official enrollment, and by temple assistants, formerly not reported at all, now being classed as *shinshoku*, or "priests." There have been but very few new shrines or temples built.² The number of priests of the twelve sects, which are offshoots of Shintoism, as well as the pupils in their schools, have greatly decreased within the last five years: the former from 101,142 to 89,507; the latter from 1,939 to 687. These sects are officially recognized as religious, and are under the "Bureau of Religions," a branch of the Department of State for Home Affairs, while the Shintō temples and shrines proper are under the direction of the "Bureau of Shintō shrines."

Of these quasi-Shintō sects, the *Tenrikyō*³ and *Remmonkyō*⁴ are the most flourishing. It is interesting to note that the founders of both of these sects were ignorant peasant-women, that both make much of faith-healing, approach a mono-

¹Cf. *Resumé Statistique*, etc., for the respective years.

²I make this statement on the authority of the head-priest of a Shintō temple in Kyōtō.

³"The Doctrine of the Heavenly Reason"; cf. an article by Rev. D. C. Greene, D.D., in *Trans. As. Soc.*, Vol. xxiii.

⁴"The Doctrine of the Lotus Gate"; cf. articles in *Trans. As. Soc.*, Vol. xxix., by Rev. A. Lloyd, and by Dr. Greene.

theistic form of belief, and have attained to their popularity only in recent years. Moreover both count among their followers mostly those of the lower and ignorant classes, and foster much superstition. They may be interesting manifestations of the blind groping of the human soul after the One God; but in their present form they cannot be considered valuable allies of the church of Christ.

Buddhism is still the religion of the great mass of the Japanese people. But a distinction must be made between popular Buddhism and philosophical Buddhism. The common people know nothing of the latter, the educated classes look with compassion, or derision, upon the former. Of the subtle philosophy of the Mahâyâna, or even of the Hinâyâna, the common believer is more ignorant than the Christian farmer or mechanic of America is of the Trinitarian controversy or of the Nicene Creed. On the other hand, the few scholars in the Buddhist ranks are exerting themselves not so much for a revival of orthodox Buddhism, as for the harmonizing of Buddhist philosophy with modern thought, convinced that this philosophy is truer and deeper than that underlying the Christian religion.

The statement is frequently made that Buddhism in Japan is dying, is losing its hold upon the people. This is not altogether true. The authority of the priesthood is not what it was thirty and more years ago; the people also are freeing themselves more and more from the superstitions of Buddhism; temples that had been supported chiefly by the feudal princes have fallen into decay; but, on the whole, Buddhism is more alive to-day than when Christianity reëntered the country in 1859; and, anomalous as it may seem, it was the coming of Christianity that was the cause of this revival. At first the Buddhist priesthood derided the few heralds of the "Western

religion," with their small flock of followers; but as Christianity spread, they were aroused first to violence, then to systematic resistance. They learned to oppose Christianity with its own weapons; preaching, instruction of the young, young men's and young women's societies were organized, girls' schools and eleemosynary institutions of various kinds were introduced in imitation of these forms of Christian work. Young men were sent to the universities of Europe and America to study Western philosophy, and a New Buddhism is in process of formulation, of which more will be said further on. When disestablished and disendowed, during the years 1871-74, in consequence of the revival of Shintō, many thought that the ancient faith of the Indian prince had received its death-blow; but, though many temples suffered, on the whole it proved the stimulus for new life. Not only was the priesthood stimulated to worthier lives and to more faithful service, but the people were aroused to more active interest, and, under the impulse received from Christian missions, Buddhism became anew a missionary religion, opening work not only among the Japanese in Korea, Shanghai, Amoy, and the Hawaiian Islands, but even in San Francisco, where a periodical entitled *The Light of Dharma* is published. *The Orient*, a similar periodical published in Japan, has, however, failed of success. The Eastern Asia Buddhist Society has been formed for the purpose of propagating the doctrines of the Buddha both at home and abroad. Another association, The Imperial Eastern Association, has for its object the translation into Japanese of the Thibetan, Mongolian, and Manchurian Buddhist scriptures, a work of vast magnitude, and of far-reaching importance. All this shows that Buddhism in Japan is far from being moribund; on the contrary, Buddhism has probably more life and energy in Japan than in any other Asiatic country.

Statistics do not give us the number of believers, or of adherents. Where one and the same man is both a Shintoist, a Confucianist, and a Buddhist,¹ such figures would naturally be worthless. But we have statistics of temples and priests. They do not show a very marked gain. For the years 1890-1900, the latest date for which statistics are available, the number of temples increased from 71,821 to 71,951; the number of Buddhist shrines, outside of temples, from 36,503 to 38,032; but here, as in the case of Shintoism, the growth is rather statistical than actual.² The number of priests in 1890 was 94,631; in 1900, 111,215,³ an increase of eighteen per cent in ten years, but during the same years the number of those preparing for the priesthood fell from 10,089 to 9,276.

Of the various sects into which Japanese Buddhism is divided, the *Shin* sect and the *Shingon* sect show the greatest vitality. They report an increase of respectively 453 and 161 temples between 1895 and 1900, while most of the other sects show a decrease.

The *Shin* sect, probably the most progressive in Japan, has frequently been called the "Protestantism of Japan"; the reason being that it sanctions the marriage of its clergy,⁴ approves the reading of the scriptures in the "vulgar tongue," permits a wider freedom in respect to food and drink, and affords other indications of a reforming spirit. Professor Chamberlain says: "This sect curiously illustrates the fact

¹ Cf. "Future of Religion in Japan," by N. Kishimoto, in *Proceedings of the World's Parliament of Religions*.

² This is the statement of the priest in charge of a Buddhist temple in Kyōtō, acquainted with the writer. Less than two hundred years ago there were 393,087 temples in Japan.

³ These numbers include respectively 53,275 and 52,873 head-priests in charge of temples.

⁴ This is confined to this sect, although in others sects many priests have families, a fact well known to their superiors.

that a religion may, with the lapse of time, and by passing from nation to nation, end by becoming almost the exact contrary of what it was at starting. At first sight, one would imagine the Shin sect to be a travesty of Christianity rather than a development of Buddhism."¹ Reference, no doubt, is to the strikingly *evangelical* character of the creed of this sect.² The growth of this sect is the result of its liberal spirit, on the one hand, and of an energetic propaganda, on the other; not only the priests, but frequently the common believers, being earnest propagandists. Most of the promoters of the "New Buddhism" belong to this sect. The *Shingon* sect, on the other hand, owes its growth mainly to its free use of charms, divination and the like, among the ignorant classes. "*Shingon no himitsu*," i. e. Shingon mysteries, are proverbial; and already old Will Adams³ found that "the people be verie superstitious in their religion."

Of great interest to the observer of religious movements in Japan is the New Buddhism,—a movement especially in educated Buddhist circles, endeavoring to bring Buddhist doctrine

¹ Cf. *Things Japanese*, article "Buddhism," note.

² The summary of belief of this sect, as given by one of its principal teachers, is as follows: "Rejecting all religious austerities and other action, giving up all idea of self-power, we rely upon Amida Buddha with the whole heart for our salvation in the future life, which is the most important thing; believing that at the moment of putting our faith in Amida Buddha our salvation is settled. From that moment invocation of his name is observed as an expression of gratitude and thankfulness for Buddha's mercy. Moreover, being thankful for the reception of this doctrine from the founder and succeeding chief-priests whose teachings were so benevolent, and as welcome as light in a dark night, we must also keep the laws which are fixed for our duty during our whole life" (Cobbold, *l. c.*, p. 63).

³ The first Englishman that ever resided in Japan, coming to Japan in 1600 as pilot of a fleet of the Dutch East India Company; he died in Japan in May, 1620.

into harmony with modern thought, with modern science and philosophy. Among the chief representatives of this movement are Professors Murakami, Takakusu, Inouye (Enryo), of the Imperial University in Tōkyō, Nanjio of the University of the Hongwanji sect, Fujishima of the Nishi Hongwanji temple in Kyōtō, Nukariya of the Zen sect, and others. Their task is by no means an easy one, for they meet with considerable opposition on the part of the older priests. This is natural; for it is frequently difficult to see in what respect this new movement deserves the name of Buddhism. It is not a return to the simple teachings of Sākya-muni;¹ in fact, these reformers frankly avow that these teachings are imperfect; and that, as a matter of fact, even popular Japanese Buddhism is by no means built upon the teachings of Shaka.² "We make very little of Shaka in our sect," sounds strange from the lips of a Buddhist priest. The New Buddhism is rather an eclectic system of philosophy, taking different shape with different men,—some having atheistic evolution for guiding principle, some pantheism, some an attenuated form of theism. "Some young men, especially those of the Pure Land sects, never go beyond the limit of monotheism, and believe in a personal God," says Professor Nukariya.³ The doctrines of transmigration and of retribution, the *Saṃsāra* and *Karma*

¹ Sākya-muni—sage of the tribe of the Sākyas, of which the father of Gautama was a chief. The common Japanese designation is Shaka.

² Cf. "The Buddhists of Japan," by M. L. Gordon, in *The Andover Review*, Vol. v. p. 301 ff.; also Atkinson, "Japanese Buddhism," in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. xlix.

³ Cf. "New Buddhism," in *The Japanese Register and Messenger*, May 18, 1903. Professor Nukariya cannot mean belief in a personal God in the Christian sense; only in Amitabha as a self-conscious being, with a desire of saving men from their sufferings; Gautama was an incarnation of Amitabha; but they do not believe him to be the creator and sustainer of the universe.

of Gautama, are philosophized away into the permanent influence of our lives and living again in our children, or developing under the doctrine of heredity. The pessimistic view of life characteristic of genuine Buddhism gives way to a more healthy optimism, and the New Buddhism is empirical and practical, while Old Buddhism is theoretical.¹

Thus the Buddhism of Japan presents a very confused aspect. With its ten sects, again divided into forty-nine subjects, varying from the progressive *Shin* sect to the bigoted *Nichiren* sect, whose priests are "the most successful expellers of foxes";² with different objects of worship, and different sūtras to follow; with varied conceptions of salvation, and varied paths by which to attain to salvation; with the advocates of the New Buddhism trying to reform the whole Buddhist religion, Japanese Buddhism presents a heterogeneity which has no parallel in Christian countries. Certainly the leaven of Christian thought is working in Buddhism; but an amalgamation of Buddhism with Christianity and Confucianism, such as Dr. T. Inouye purposes, is utterly impossible.

Passing to *Confucianism*, a brief word will suffice. In Japan, Confucianism has never been a religion; it lives as a system of ethics, especially as the *noblesse oblige* of the Japanese gentleman. But it is a system of ethics very defective in the eyes of a Christian. Its conception of chastity extends only to woman, and even in her it is secondary to filial obedience. Many a daughter has sold herself, at the wish of her parents, or of her elder brother, to a life which she herself loathes. In hundreds of Japanese ro-

¹Cf. on the "New Buddhism" a review in the *Japan Weekly Mail* of April 2, 1892, of "Shin-Bukkyō-Ron" by Nakanishi (Gyūro), who, however, has now joined the "Tenrikyōkwai."

²Possession by foxes is the form of demoniacal possession most common in Japan.

mances and plays she is made the heroine, and no one ever questions the parent's right over the girl's body, and the sale as transacted is ratified and enforced by the police-courts.¹ Truthfulness is likely to yield to politeness, in spite of the proud saying "*Bushi ni ni-gon nashi*," "The warrior has but one word"; and humility is not in the code at all. How impotent this code of ethics is in practical life has been shown anew in the so-called Text-book Scandal in 1902-03, when about one hundred and fifty school-directors, school-inspectors, yes even provincial vice-governors and governors, were accused of bribery.² The conviction is growing in educated circles that a religious basis for ethics is necessary.

Christianity is a new factor in the life of the Japanese nation. For over two hundred years it had been rigidly excluded from the country; to-day it is at work as a powerful leaven. Numerically it does not command much attention. The latest statistics available are for 1903. They give a total of 55,354 Protestant Christians, 58,086 Roman Catholic, and 27,-

¹ It is true that, in consequence of an agitation by Christian missionaries, aided by Japanese philanthropists, a law was passed in 1900, enabling any girl to quit the business of a prostitute, by a declaration of that intention to the police; but this law has practically been nullified by a decision of the courts that the debts involved in these contracts are valid, and can be collected by process of law from the girls, or their parents. However, in the "Revised Draft of the Proposed New Criminal Code of Japan," an article appears to the effect that any one urging and encouraging, for the purpose of gain, a virtuous girl, or woman, to commit fornication, shall be punished with penal servitude for three years, or with a fine not exceeding five hundred yen.

² The courts in Tōkyō passed judgment in this matter upon four provincial governors, two vice-governors, nine general school-inspectors, twenty normal-school principals and teachers, twenty-one provincial and seventeen township school-inspectors, one primary-school principal, three normal-school teachers, one lawyer, two officials of the Educational Department.

366 Russian Orthodox (Greek Church) Christians.¹ This is a total, in rough numbers, of 140,000 Christians in a population of somewhat over 44,000,000, or about one Christian in every three hundred of the population. But when it is borne in mind that up to 1873 the edicts against Christianity as "the evil sect" were still in force; that there are converts living to-day who have suffered persecution at the hand of the Government; that only with the promulgation of the Constitution in 1889 religious liberty was granted; that the progress of Christianity has been strongly opposed not only by the Buddhists, but also by men in high positions of no particular religious persuasion,—with the above knowledge in mind the numerical progress is surely not bad. According to the statistics for 1901, 6,043 Protestants, 4,391 Roman Catholics, and 983² members of the Greek Church received baptism, resulting in a *net* increase of over six thousand Christians, or 4.61 per cent, while the increase of population was 1.23 per cent.³ A missionary has computed that, by the same percentage of increase, the evangelization of Japan would be completed in about one hundred and seventy years. Such a rapid conquest would certainly be without parallel in the history of Christian missions; but without laying any stress on this computation, a percentage of increase more than threefold the

¹ According to the Missionary Directory of Japan for 1904. But it must be borne in mind that many of the Protestant churches do not include baptized children in the total church-membership, while the Roman and Greek Catholic churches always do.

² This figure is taken from the table prepared by George Braithwaite, Mr. D. S. Spencer's table (in *The Christian Movement in its Relation to the New Life in Japan*) having a blank. In every case children are included.

³ The Statistics of the United and Presbyterian and Reformed Churches for 1903 show a net increase in church-membership during 1902 of 6.13 per cent; those of the Kumiai (Congregational) churches of 6.74 per cent.

natural growth of population testifies to the life and vigor of this new-comer to Japan. Four hundred and sixty-one Protestant churches, of which seventy-four¹ are wholly self-supporting, two hundred and ten Roman, and one hundred and seventy-four Greek Catholic churches are scattered throughout the land; every city of twenty thousand inhabitants,² and many of a smaller number, being occupied. In Tōkyō alone, with its 1,440,121 inhabitants, are eighty-seven organized churches and fifty-six preaching places and Sunday-schools, with between fourteen and fifteen thousand church-members. It is evident that the various missions have seized upon the strategic centers of Japan.

These figures give but an imperfect idea of the part which Christianity plays in the religious life of modern Japan. Its influence is far greater than its numerical strength. Roman and Greek Catholicism have but a small share in this larger life. Their followers are mostly drawn from the lower classes. They do not exert much influence in the national life. The fetters which both churches put upon the intellect, the fact that both are subject to a "foreign" head, do not make them attractive to the independent and patriotic Japanese. The Roman Catholic Church does much philanthropic work; Bishop Nicolai, the head of the Greek Church in Japan, and its founder, who looks back over forty-four years of most self-denying service, is highly esteemed by every one.

Of the influence of Christianity in Japan, the Rev. H. Kozaki, one of the leading Kumiai pastors, says: "Though the Christian church in this country is still in its infancy, there are clear proofs that it has already made an impression on

¹Of these thirty-four are Kumiai (Congregational), thirteen Methodist, twenty-two Presbyterian and Reformed, two Anglican and Episcopal, two Independent.

²Japan has seventy-eight cities of over 20,000 population.

various departments of life, and especially on the minds of leading writers. Proofs of the truth of this statement are to be found in our literature. There are few books among all these that have appeared in the Meiji era that do not bear witness in some way to the influence exercised by Christianity in this country. Many of the terms now in constant use are Christian terms, such as *sambi*, (praise), *eisei* (eternal life), and *kansha* (gratitude). To the term *Kami*¹ quite a new significance has been given. And as for ethical thought among us, it is more permeated with Christianity than with any other religion. If I were asked to state what are the sources of prevailing thought in Japan, I should say that Confucianism and Buddhism combined furnish four-tenths or five-tenths of the elements that it contains, and Christianity five-tenths or six-tenths of those elements. In the matter of charity, though Christians have by no means always been successful, they can point to institutions like the Okayama Orphan Asylum with considerable pride. Society generally has learnt from Christianity that monogamy is the highest form of married life, and when a few years ago the Mormons made a stir here, most of the newspapers were opposed to the introduction of Mormon teaching in this country."²

This recognition of monogamy as the ideal for the married life is one of the clearest, and at the same time most benevolent, results of the incoming of Christianity. Concubinage

¹This is the term used by Protestant Christians for God; it is the old Shintō term for all deities and deified spirits; its derivation is uncertain. Its original significance is "upper," thus "a higher Being"; but not a few Japanese philologists prefer other explanations; cf. Chamberlain's *Commentary to the Kojiki*.

²Quoted from the *Japan Weekly Mail*, May 9, 1903. The Mormons, nevertheless, secured permission for conducting evangelistic work in this country, but only after having given the promise not to teach polygamy.

has all along been very common in Japan, especially among the upper classes, since even the present emperor has concubines. The present crown prince, however, lives in strict monogamy; his marriage was the first in the imperial family to be solemnized by a distinct ceremony, and it may be expected that thus a new example will be set to the people. In the present civil code, promulgated in 1898, concubinage is no longer recognized. A few years ago some Christian members of the Imperial Diet introduced a bill proposing to make marital unfaithfulness on the part of the husband, as well as in case of the wife, cause for divorce. The bill did not pass; Japan is not yet ready for such equality; but the public agitation of the question was beneficial. The influence of Christianity upon the modification of the present system of licensed prostitution has already been referred to. It certainly is the pioneer in this movement. It also has introduced various forms of practical philanthropy, of which Buddhism, in spite of its doctrine of Pity, had no conception. The asylum for the insane, the leper asylum, the rescue-home, the home for the aged, were unknown before the coming of Christianity, while the orphan asylum, the charity hospital, or any regard for ex-convicts were "like lonely stars in the murky gloom of a clouded sky." Christianity has established "a score of orphanages, three blind and three leper asylums, three rescue-homes, three prison-gate missions, a score of hospitals, six charity kindergartens, three homes for the aged, one social settlement, and at least two hundred classes for the poor." But, above all this, it has "stirred a whole nation from emperor to *ex-cta* to take an interest in all that tends to elevate and purify society."¹ Philanthropy has become one of

¹ Cf. "Social Movements," a paper read by Rev. J. H. Pettee, D.D., before the Tōkyō Missionary Conference, 1900; cf. also, *The Christian Movement*, etc., 1903.

the fads of the day, and the Home Office publishes a census of charities. The Red Cross Society, which the Buddhists assure the people has nothing to do with Christianity, numbers over 740,000 members, under the immediate patronage of the Empress. The *Kyō-fū-kwai* ("Society for the Reformation of Customs") fights intemperance and other forms of vice. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals does for the poor, abused draft-horse what Buddhism never has thought of doing. Men of wealth are beginning to use their affluence for the public welfare; Baron Mitsui gave year before last 100,000 yen for a charity hospital in Tōkyō; Mr. Okura, in Tōkyō, established a Commercial School; a non-Christian Japanese gave 1,854 yen to the distinctly Christian Okayama Orphan Asylum; the head of the Sumitomo family in Ōsaka established a fine public library.¹

In literature the supreme importance of religion and morality is being more and more recognized. Three of the leading dailies of Tōkyō are edited by Christian men. The most popular novel of recent years, having run through ten or twelve editions, is a Christian story, portraying the life and experiences of a Japanese pastor and his American wife;² another one deals with the sin, repentance, and conversion of a wayward young man to Christianity. In the field of philosophy, religion, and ethics, there are writers like Uyemura, Kozaki, Ebina, Harada, Yokoi, Matsumura, Takahashi, Uchimura, Ukita, who, although of different shades of belief, are all

¹Since this article was put in type word has been received that the Emperor and Empress of Japan have presented 2,000 yen to the distinctly Christian Okayama Orphan Asylum.

²Cf. for a summary Dr. DeForest's review in *Mission News* for November, 1902. The leading dally of Ōsaka has had within the last few weeks a Christian story as a serial, entitled "Foster-Brothers." It has met with great favor, and has now been put on the stage.

Christians, whose writings have compelled the attention of non-Christian scholars. Surely, Mr. Aston's statement, in his "History of Japanese Literature," that "Christianity has still to put its stamp on the literature of the Meiji Era," needs modification.

There is scarcely a department of life that has not felt the vivifying and ennobling influence of Christianity. The whole spirit of Japan has become more Christian; "the whole Japanese nation is honeycombed with influences which radiate from the cross."¹ From being outlawed as "the evil sect," Christianity has risen to be an acknowledged beneficent power, which even non-Christian statesmen appreciate. Thus Count Okuma, ex-prime minister, and leader of the Progressist party, in an address given before a company of young men, said: "The efforts which Christians are making to supply to the country a high standard of conduct are welcomed by all right-thinking people. . . . Live and preach that life [the life of Christ], and you will supply to the nation just what it needs at the present juncture." So also Baron Maejima, an ex-cabinet officer, speaking at the tenth anniversary of the Young Men's Christian Association in Tōkyō: "I firmly believe we must have religion as the basis of our national and personal welfare. . . . And when I look about me to see what religion we may best rely upon, I am convinced that the religion of Christ is the one most full of strength and promise for the nation."² Surely, the Christian leaven is at work.³

¹ Dr. Doremus Scudder, in *Missionary Herald*, for August, 1903.

² Both quotations are taken from the *Missionary Herald* for August, 1903, p. 332; cf. also *Japan Weekly Mail*, May 9, 1903.

³ From the Twenty-sixth Annual Report of The Council of Missions Coöperating with the Church of Christ in Japan, 1903, I take the following corroborating statements: "The most popular book among educated people to-day is Mr. Kuroiwa's 'What is Human Life?' Mr. Kuroiwa is the editor of a large Tōkyō newspaper.

But antagonistic forces are likewise at work. No presentation of the religious life of Japan can overlook them. They have their origin in the religious history and in the temperament of the people, of which a brief sketch has been given.

The intense nationalistic spirit of the Japanese presents difficulties. By many, Christianity is still considered an exotic, as a foreign body in the life of the nation. Baron Kato, ex-President of the Imperial University in Tōkyō, a member of the House of Peers, holds that Christianity cannot claim the privilege, granted by the Constitution, of equal rights to all religions, since it is detrimental to the welfare of the country. The Department of Education, by its discrimination against private schools, the majority of which are Christian, has acted until recently as a strong opponent of Christianity.¹ In military circles Christianity likewise is to a great extent proscribed. It is feared that through the spread of the Christian religion reverence for her throne may be weakened. The influence of men like the late K. Kataoka, reelected four times to the presidency of the Lower House of the Imperial Diet, and president of the Christian Dōshisha; of S. Ebara, member of Parliament, and President of the Tōkyō Educational Society; of the hundred and more officers in the army and navy; of not a few professors

His book leads up to the Christian solution. There is more than one voice in the wilderness preparing the way of the Lord. These are interesting and happy days in mission work in Japan" (p. 17 f.). Also the following: "Viscount Watanabe recently expressed himself favorably to Christianity. His words were reprinted, and many hundred copies distributed in the neighborhood of his native place" (p. 50).

¹A concise account of the regulations of the Department, and of resulting actions of the Christian schools, will be found in the Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Reports of the "Council of Missions" (Presbyterian and Reformed). Since then the Educational Department has granted to private schools all they have contended for.

of the Imperial universities, and of many Christians prominent in other ranks of life,—the influence of these, no doubt, is greatly modifying this unjust judgment; but still it exists, and forms no mean factor in the situation.

A different manifestation of this nationalistic spirit is the purpose of some leading Christian pastors to fashion a Japanese Christianity. Within proper limits this is wholly praiseworthy. Christianity is not an image of Diana fallen from heaven; it is a life that takes different shape in different environments. The Japanese have a right to do their own thinking, and to formulate the results of their own thoughts. That this is not without danger is evident; but it is only in this way that Christianity can become a strong, indigenous plant. When, however, this spirit of independence vents itself in attacks upon the missionaries, and in opposition to their work, as occurred frequently some seven and eight years ago, and is manifest to-day yet in at least one leading, Christian magazine; then it becomes an unwholesome chauvinism, opposed to the spirit of Christianity.

In close connection with this nationalistic hindrance is also raised the objection by many, that Christianity is unsuited to Japanese society. Christianity; it is said, is individualistic; Japanese civilization being communistic; not the individual, but the family, is the unit and the controlling factor. Christianity places woman on a level with man; gives her the right to decide who shall be the father of her children, and opposes the laxity of divorce legislation, or custom;¹ it insists upon faithfulness on the part of the husband also. All this is new

¹It is only just to say, however, that the percentage of divorces as compared with marriages is steadily declining. While the number of marriages per thousand of the population has remained essentially 8.00, the number of divorces has decreased from 2.76 to 1.42 in the ten years 1891-1900.

in Japan: it is contrary to the ruling Confucian ethics; therefore do they esteem Christianity not suited to Japanese society.

This objection is not uncommon, especially in conservative circles, and Christians must take it into consideration. The change must be gradual, and extremes must be avoided. But here, also, the leaven is working. The new civil code allows a young man of thirty, and a young woman of twenty-five, years of age, to marry without consent of their respective families; and for the first time in the history of Japan the wife also can, in certain cases, bring an action for divorce.

The intellectual life of a nation is closely interwoven with its religious life. Among the causes hindering the progress of Christianity must be classed Occidental rationalism, skepticism, and religious indifferentism. These modes of thought found congenial soil in Japan. The religious eclecticism of the past, the religious indifferentism of Confucianism, and the revulsion against the formalism and superstition of Buddhism had prepared the soil.

Japan has a well-developed system of education. The number of students in the Imperial University of Tōkyō has risen from 1,833 in 1896 to 3,121 in 1901; to which must be added 491 students in the Imperial University of Kyōtō, established in 1897. The high schools, or *gymnasias*, numbered respectively 4,231 and 4,361.¹ The middle schools, which may be said to correspond to the American high schools, have risen from 73, with 22,316 pupils, to 165, with 59,580; the higher

¹Up to the year 1900 these schools included a medical department. In 1901 these departments were organized as separate institutions, so that, for ascertaining the growth of number of students, those enrolled in the Special Medical Schools, supported by the central government, should be added; thus making the respective figures 4,231 and 6,389.

girls' schools, of about the same grade, rose during the same years from 12, with 2,323 pupils, to 38 with 8,918 pupils; the number of libraries, apart from those connected with schools, from 25 to 43; the number of books published from 8,506 to 18,170. The number of books on religion has increased from 210 to 1,104, on philosophy from 15 to 105, on ethics from 38 to 161.

All this certainly is indicative of an active intellectual life, and every friend of Japan will rejoice in it. But, to a great extent, this life is controlled by a spirit unfriendly to Christian truth, yes to religion of any sort. For example, a statistical table compiled in 1902 by the teachers of a higher girls' school in Ōsaka, contains the following figures: Believers in no religion, First Year, 2.6 per cent; Second Year, 10.7 per cent; Third Year, 7.6 per cent; Fourth Year, 11.0 per cent; under head "Non-Believers in the Immortality of the Soul" the corresponding figures are 17.4 per cent, 25.9 per cent, 26.1 per cent, 31.3 per cent; showing plainly that, as education progresses, irreligion and unbelief progress. In 1901 Professor Motora, of the Imperial University, and fifteen other gentlemen, addressed a series of questions on religion to the students of universities and high schools. Only 20.8 per cent replied; but, judging from these replies, 70 per cent of the students receiving high-class education are indifferent to religion. Only 15 per cent admitted that they had been under religious influence at school, and these were mostly students of Christian schools. Two hundred and thirty-seven out of nine hundred and fifty-two, who answered the questions, i. e. 48.2 per cent expressed a desire for religion, but found obstacles,—intellectual doubts, want of time to study religion, and the like.¹ *The Philosophical Magazine*, in which this report was

¹ Cf. *The Japan Weekly Mail* for January 12, 1901; or No. 166 of the *Tetsugaku Zasshi*.

published, concludes, "that the facts stated are very significant, and show that some efforts are required to present religion to students in a more acceptable form than it has hitherto assumed."¹ But a more correct conclusion would be: "These facts are very significant, and show that the materialistic views held and taught by the university professors exert a deep influence upon the students." Professor Motora himself has introduced Hæckel's "Weltraethsel" as a text-book in the Imperial University, a book of which Professor Paulsen of Berlin says that he read it "with a burning sense of shame." Professor T. Inouye would form a synthetic religion, with the personal element wholly left out. Ex-President Baron Kato, who did as much as any one to give to the Imperial University its materialistic bent, declares all religion to be a *piâ fraud*. The late Y. Fukuzawa, founder and president of the largest private university, declared that "the world is a great machine originated by chance, and we human beings are born by chance, and really form part of the machine."² He proclaimed a system of ethics, of which independence and self-respect are the center; and likened religion to the cup of tea which men drink, green, or black, one as good as the other.³ With such teachings and such examples, and with the influence of the Department of Education against religion, is it any wonder that 70 per cent of the students in the Japanese high schools and universities are indifferent to religion? They have been fed on Mill, Spencer, Schopenhauer, von Hartman, Nietzsche, Hæckel, certainly food not calculated to build up a very robust religious constitution. After such teaching they devour a book like that of the late Nakae, who, in elaboration

¹Quoted by MacCauley in *The American Journal of Theology*, April, 1902, p. 232.

²*Cf. Professor Dening in Appendix A to A Life of M. Yukiichi Fukuzawa, by A. Miyamori.*

³*Cf. Things Japanese, p. 404.*

of his theory that spirit perishes, but matter remains, does not shrink from saying: "While the souls of Christ and Shaka have perished, even the roadside droppings of the horse last forever."¹ Materialism and atheistic evolution have for the present conquered the higher schools of learning in Japan;² but only for the present. Even now the conviction is growing in responsible circles, that morality without religion has been weighed and found wanting; and if a religion, then Christianity.³

In the above we find portrayed the religious life of modern Japan. It is complex, chaotic, full of confusion and uncertainty. The central principle of Shintoism, deep reverence for the person of the emperor, the filial piety inculcated by Confucianism, though not in their exaggerated forms, will abide; they are the treasured heritage of the ages. Buddhism, girding for the conflict with Christianity on the one hand, and modern science on the other, undergoing modifications that bid fair to change its essential nature; individualism disintegrating the age-long communism, a fuller recognition of the rights and of the value of the individual; Christianity, though woefully divided, yet with one message and one aim; Western agnosticism and skepticism; a mythological patriotism, fearful of its

¹ Cf. *The Japan Weekly Mail*, November 9, 1901. This book was ably answered by Mr. G. Takahashi, a prominent Christian writer of Tōkyō.

² So also an editorial in the *Christian World*, the organ of the Kumiai churches, for January 7, 1904, "The tendency in our world of thought to-day is towards materialism and pantheism."

³ The work of the Young Men's Christian Association must be mentioned in this connection as of great importance and great promise. By means of this organization the forty-eight per cent, and more, of young men interested in religion, as well as others, can be reached far more effectively than by the churches directly. The growth of the Y. M. C. A. work in Japan during the last six years is one of the most interesting features of the general progress of Christianity; cf. *The Japan Evangelist*, November, 1903, p. 356 ff.

idol,—these are elements constituting the religious life of modern Japan.

The Christian can await the outcome with confident hope. On this strategic battle-field, where two civilizations with their divergent principles meet, where the two most influential religions of the world are contending for the conquest of a highly gifted, influential people, he knows that in God's own time, one of the most glorious victories of the cross will be won. Whatever may become of existing institutions, or present forms of belief, the idea of God, the belief in Jesus Christ as the Revealer of God and Redeemer of men, the conception of man made in the image of God, a personality of priceless worth, will gain the victory over atheism, polytheism, and agnosticism and materialism. Not in this generation, as many devout souls have fondly thought. "The greater conflict of Buddhism with Christianity is yet to come." But the "Sage of the tribe of the Shakyas" cannot stand before the "Lion of the tribe of Judah"; the "Light of Asia" will pale before the "Light of the World." Eternal life through Christ will be more powerful than eternal death through Buddha.

"The immediate and most urgent task seems to be the awakening of the 'soul of Japan' to a true religious consciousness." These words of the former leader of the Unitarian mission are most true. The religious life of Japan, smothered by superstition and by eclecticism, must be revived; the soul of Japan must be brought face to face with the Soul of the Universe. An "intelligent theism," not one borrowed from Jewish transcendental theology, but in harmony with what God himself is teaching us, as he is opening ever more before our eyes the Book of Nature, will be the foundation for further religious progress. The soul of Japan will not be able to rest until it has found rest in God.