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# Foundations for Christian belief in Japan

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Senior Thesis

Boston University School of Theology

1920

FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN BELIEF IN JAPAN

Submitted by

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FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN BELIEF IN JAPAN

The last commission of Christ, "Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world", has been the inspiration for every truly Christian missionary enterprise since the beginning. Some have rejected the words as being from the lips of Jesus; yet whether they are accepted, or not, it was the spirit of Christ. And from the time of Christ on earth, the Christian truth has never lacked champions among heathen peoples. Yet Christ only gave the commission, he has left it to those who would take up his Cross to work out the details of adaptation. This is the task of the missionary enterprise.

The object of the missionary enterprise is to temper the lives and civilization of heathen peoples. The end in view is not to overturn the old order of civilization where ever the new message of Jesus Christ is being preached. Rather, the objective of

Christian missions is constructive. It builds from the inside out, it transforms the heart and has faith that the civilization will ultimately become Christian. Such was the essence of Christ's teaching. He did not enter into the matter of regulating the details of life so much as he emphasized right attitudes towards all things that arise in life. The gospel is capable of application for all times and all peoples. The fundamental reason for this fact is that Christianity is a matter of soul attitudes. Christian love does not prefer one language above another, it does not set one race above another. The universal element in all Christian peoples is the spirit of Christ. This is the reason that the Christian enterprise has succeeded, and this is the basis of hope for the missionary enterprise. This fact of attitudes, rather than regulation of details of civilizations, must be always kept uppermost if the permeating influence of the Christian message is to be felt to the fullest extent. Just as soon as Christianity is confused in its content with Western civilization its power will be impaired, for it does not require deep insight to see that so-called

"Christian nations" are not always dominated by the spirit of Christ. The Gospel of Christ and the civilizations of "Christian nations" must be kept distinct. The successful missionary must be able to rise above his own nationality, if it be not perfect, and be an advocate of an attitude of soul that will make all men brothers in Jesus Christ.

Christian missions are not expeditions sent forth for conquest, to destroy faiths and ideals of life that differ from Christianity, and then to impose the creed of the Church and ideals of the West. The missionary enterprise has never degenerated into such egotistical proselyting. However, it has not always been easy to regard other faiths in any other light than that of enemies, which must be exterminated if Christ is to stand supreme. There is, ofcourse, a sense in which other beliefs must be destroyed in order that the true conceptions of life be established. But the Christian method is not to destroy the outer temple of heathenism while the heart of the worshipper remains true to his gods. Rather, the heart of the idolater must be elevated before the idol can be cast down. Christian missions

demand that he leave his "carved gods", but seek to retain that spark of divine fire, the sense of an obligation to a Supreme Being. It must be upon this that the Christian missionary enterprise builds. And such is our thesis in this discussion of the "Foundations for Christian belief in Japan". The missionary goes forth not to impose a creed, but to evoke a richer faith, not to destroy but to fulfill. In a sentence, the soul of the missionary enterprise is not to destroy the existing order of heathen civilization, but to seek out those foundations suitable for Christian belief and build upon them a Christian structure of and in the civilization it finds, trusting that the zeal of Christian love will burn out the dross of idolatry, hatred, and misery. If the only object of the missionary enterprise is to plant the seeds of Western civilization throughout the world, the cynic might reply that the harvest would not be worth the labor.

The nature of the missionary enterprise is optimistic. Pessimism is foreign to the spirit and commission of Christ. If ever there was an excuse for pessimism, Christ himself had that excuse, for

his mission to his own day and people had comparatively little material or visible effect. Yet he knew that the leaven had been deposited. And the basis for optimism was that his message was spiritual, not material. He knew that it was not necessary to change governments in order that his gospel be made to work in the hearts of men. And so it is with the missionary enterprise. The success of the gospel message preached in heathen lands will not depend upon material change. Optimism is the very nature of the missionary enterprise and it must continue to be so, for there is no work that requires so much effort and sacrifice and which brings so little material and visible returns from time to time. It is said that the missionary field, which we are about to consider, is a most difficult problem; but we must approach the problem with all faith that there are foundations for Christian belief in Japan, or else our whole study will prove empty.

There is another premise which we need to lay down before we can enter into a fruitful study of the missionary problem. It is this, that we must look upon Japan's missionary problem with sympathy.

Two leaders in the interpretation of Japan to Americans have been severely criticised because they have done this very thing. Of Sidney L. Gulick it is said that he looks upon everything with "Japanese eyes". And of Lafcadio Hearn it is said that he alienated himself from his own country and became a Japanese. And perhaps these statements are true. But who has done more to present the cause of Japan, which side has been so woefully neglected in American comment, than Gulick? And hear what a Japanese, Dr. Nifobe, has to say of Hearn - "the most eloquent and truthful interpreter of the Japanese mind". The goal of Christian missions is to present the truths of Jesus Christ so that they will be received by Japanese minds. The Western interpretation does not make strong enough appeal. So, from the missionary viewpoint, the appeal must be to and through the Japanese mind. It is this premise that we lay down while we are seeking the foundations for Christian belief in the Japanese mind and life. Any other viewpoint fails. For example, Montaville Flowers, of California, has been unable to see the Japanese through any other than "American eyes". Because the

Japanese is of different color and stature, acts differently, and has different ideals, he sees him as nothing but a menace to the future of the American and Western civilization. What he needs to understand is that in the Japanese there are possibilities for a Christian civilization just as good, possibly better than our own. And so it is the purpose of this discussion to try to sympathize with the Japanese viewpoint, not to the exclusion of the principles of righteousness and justice, but possibly to the exclusion of a narrow interpretation of Western civilization.

Differences in Occidental and Oriental civilizations do exist. To every traveler from the West into the Far East comes this feeling of a different world. Kipling has the essence of this in his lines:

For East is East, and West is West:

And never the twain shall meet.

But the problem of the Christian missionary is not to make the two meet in the kind of unity here referred to. Economically, socially, politically Japan may never be upon the same basis as are the Western nations. Yet the missionary of Jesus Christ is inter-

ested in making the East and West meet in Christian brotherhood, in the attitude of love and service. Someone has completed the thought of Kipling by adding this verse:

But Christ is Christ, and rest is rest,

And love, true love must greet.

In East and West hearts crave for rest;

And so the twain shall meet,

- The East still East, the West still West, -

At Love's nail-pierced feet.

Sidney L. Gulick, in his lengthy book "The Evolution of the Japanese", points out in detail the characteristics of Japanese mind, life, and institutions, religions, and customs. He notes many things that seem strange to Occidentals, characteristics which seem to have their roots deep in physiological and psychological differences. Yet the conclusion of his whole survey is that these can be explained from a sociological viewpoint. The Oriental nations - India, China, Korea, Siam, Japan have grown up in isolation. The result has been a distinct Oriental civilization that has been builded throughout the centuries, becoming a very part of physical and

~~and~~ mental life. The same has taken place in the West. The two have been brought into contact through modern commercial intercourse. The East has absorbed more from the West than the West from the East because the West has a more highly developed civilization. Yet the centuries of Oriental isolation will never be forgotten in their effect. This social heredity will always modify every Oriental custom and temper every Occidental idea that is taken into Japan. And again we find the thesis of our discussion, that Christianity must seek foundations within Japanese life itself, not hoping to import ready-made "Christian ideas", nor to be too sure of the bent Japanese Christian thought should take. The social heredity of the Japanese has been different from ours, and the reactions of the Christian teachings will be correspondingly different.

The subject of this discussion is closely related to the object, spirit, and viewpoint of the missionary enterprise. "Foundations for Christian Belief in Japan" may be an assuming subject, for in it is the idea of confidence that the missionary enterprise will find in Japan something upon which

to build. But as we have attempted to set forth, there can be no missionary campaign without confidence and optimism.

In carrying out this study we shall make five main divisions - social and economic, political, philosophical, psychological, and religious foundations for Christian belief in Japan. These divisions may seem arbitrary, and it may be difficult to keep the divisions clear cut at times. Yet this is to be expected for there are no such clear cut divisions in life. One interest of life blends into another. The influences of our philosophy and our religion cannot always be differentiated. Neither can the results accruing from our economic and social environment always be distinguished from the influences of our religion. Therefore, when we discuss life we cannot hope to proceed with the exactness of scientific analysis. The purpose of these five divisions is that they may act as guides, and it is the hope that under these heads we may group the main ideas that serve as the foundations for Christian belief in our missionary enterprise.

"The present age rests upon the shoulders of

the past", so we are told. And this is true, yet more true of the centuries past than the present. We have made such remarkable progress during the past hundred years that it is sometimes difficult to recognize the modern man as the direct product of the past. And this idea is seemingly more true of Japan, for the Japan of today is not the product of the Japan of yesterday. So many currents of progress have flowed into the life of Japan from without that a study of the present conditions cannot be based upon the past. The idea is so well set forth in a personal letter from a Japanese boy, who is now in Harvard, that I shall quote. "My parents live in a little isolated village of northern Japan. They can hardly imagine what my American college has done for me. When I think of that portion of my life in northern Japan in comparison with my present state, I seem to myself to have traveled through the lights and shadows of four thousand years". The point is that we must be primarily interested in the present as the basis of Christian approach. It is not our purpose to leave out altogether the historical element from our discussion, but to make it subor-

dinate. Japan has progressed too much during the past fifty years to place much significance in its ancient history. This idea will come out frequently in the discussion.

The approach to our problem will not be that of the critical student of comparative religions, but rather it will be from the practical viewpoint of the foreign missionary who is intent upon changing men's lives. We are interested in any facts that lead to that end. Paul, the first great missionary, had the spirit when he said, "To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some".

#### I. Social and economic foundations.

Christianity is the only religion that has developed a social gospel. It is a religion of the whole life and it recognizes that salvation cannot be developed out of an inward experience alone. Therefore, when Christian principles begin to work in a community all interests of life are effected and move forward with the inward religious emotions. The teachings of Jesus do not take root and grow in any environment. It is necessary to lay well the

foundations for Christian belief in the social and economic life of the community. A consideration of this phase of the missionary field should therefore be of primary importance, especially in a materialistic age such as the present.

It may be well to look backward into the economic and social history of Japanese life in order that we may see the old order that has influenced the present day. The most significant historical fact is feudalism. W. E. Griffis says that feudalism has existed no where in such absolute form as in Japan during past centuries. There has been absolute dependence of the vassal upon the feudal lord for everything - food, protection, government, social customs, religion. There is not much authentic history of Japan up to the seventh century, A.D. Most historical information has depended upon tradition. It seems that there had been a very loose political unity among groups. In the seventh century, however, there was a movement to draw these groups together under feudal lords. The emperor, because of his mythical origin from the gods, remained the absolute sovereign in theory, yet the actual power passed into

the hands of noble families who set up puppet mikados. After this had continued for three or four centuries great military leaders arose. The wars between contending factions favored the development of the feudal system in that it compelled lesser leaders to ally themselves with more powerful leaders. The great nobles or daimyos in the fortified castles became more and more powerful. Their retainers formed the military caste of samurai, whose influence upon the social life of Japan we shall notice later. For many centuries Japan was parcelled out among great clans, the chiefs of which professed great loyalty to the sovereign. It is pointed out by Otis Cary that the daimyos were to Japan what the Macduffs, Macdonalds, Campbells, and Douglasses, of Sir Walter Scott's stories, were to Scotland. And such a system could not endure for ten centuries without having a lasting influence upon modern economic life in Japan. The chief element of the old feudalistic spirit left is the sense of loyalty and dependence upon the upper classes upon the part of the lower. There may not be anything in the survival of this old class system that would directly militate against the progress of

Christianity in Japan, yet when people have allowed others above them ~~them~~ to think and act for them in the important things of life for so long, it is not easy to establish a new faith without the staunch cooperation of those leaders. And so far the leaders of Japan, as a class, have not given their personal assent to Christianity.

The other influence out of the past that has an important bearing upon the missionary enterprise is Bushido. The classic work in English explaining this cultural system is that of Dr. Nitobe, "Bushido the Soul of Japan". It is impossible to give a careful review of this book in the brief space of this discussion. Yet it is not the content of Bushido that we are so much interested in as its spirit. Dr. Nitobe has, of course a Japanese prejudice. He has selected the highest virtues of Japanese ethics, and incorporated these in the Bushido spirit of the old samurai. Although he admits that the system is founded in Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism, yet he placed the whole ethical tenor of Bushido upon a plane that is higher than any of its sources. Among the elements of Bushido he includes rectitude,

justice, courage, the spirit of daring and bearing, benevolence, sympathy for those in distress, politeness, veracity and sincerity, honor, duty of loyalty, self-control. All of these are indeed noble virtues, yet it seems that Dr. Nitobe has idealized these Japanese virtues in theory. They may exist in Bushido but surely not in the hearts of the common men. If they did exist there, there would not be the emptiness of religious life that exists in non-Christian Japan. On the other hand, the missionary enterprise surely has a foundation upon which it may build in Bushido. There is no hostile element in it, save possibly an over-emphasized sense of loyalty to the Emperor who is officially a Shintoist. To reject Bushido would be to reject one of the greatest assets that Christian missions has to build upon - that of loyalty to a few good principles. If the love of Christ takes hold upon the heart of a samurai, the unrefined elements in his Bushido spirit will surely be burned out. Dr. Nitobe is right in that he claims virtue for the cultural system that has grown out of the relationships between samurai. The wonder of it all is that an ethical system of so much value has grown

out of the empty religious life of Japan in the past.

In these two elements - feudalism and Bushido, both of which are closely related to the idea of loyalty - we have the essence of the influence of the past upon the missionary enterprise in Japan. As was stated in the introduction, the important thing from the standpoint of Christianization is the fact of the present flux to a new order. This is more true of the social and economic foundations for Christian belief than any other. The past fifty years, in fact the past five years, have brought so much of change in the social and economic order that the interests of Christian missions must be largely absorbed in such questions. There are three or four facts in the present social and economic life of Japan that we should consider - the industrial quickening, the social unrest, the moral degradation, and the educational attainments of the Japanese people. In building a program for the establishment of the principles of Jesus Christ in the lives of these people, such social and economic foundations cannot be ignored.

From earliest times Japan has been an agricultural nation. The people were more or less evenly

distributed over the country industriously tilling the soil, and they were protected and provided for by their feudal lords. Such were the economic conditions up until fifty years ago. But a wave of industrialism has swept over the country, especially during the last five years, carry literally hundreds of thousands of people out of their peaceful rural life into the great factory centers. We do not want to be concerned so much with statistics in this discussion as with the mere fact that the movement is enormous in size and it carries many far reaching social influences. Tokyo has grown from less than a million to over three millions in thirty-five years. The great cities of Yokohama, Kobe, Osaka have leaped from towns of a few thousand to great industrial centers. The reports of the increase of factories indicate that manufacturing has increases at a tremendous rate during the War. There are aspects of this phenomenal growth that are encouraging for the future of Japan. In the first place, the population of the islands is increasing at the rate of half a million a year. If Japan can become a manufacturing nation, it will be possible for this expansion to

continue for many years before the problem of emigration becomes acute. Furthermore, through the increase of manufacture Japan is taking her place besides the leaders of the world in commerce. Every financial report during these days of business reconstruction has some comment upon the place Japan is making for her-self in world commerce. Those that are interested in the welfare of Japan rejoice over this advance in material prosperity. But there is another side to the question of industrial expansion when we come to look at it for the individual man's welfare. The new industrialism of the past century has come into Japan unaccompanied by the humanitarian spirit. Employees have become machines in common with other material equipment. Industrial disease, accident, and injustice has followed in the wake of the new industrialism. Then, the cities have not grown fast enough to adequately house this mass of in-rushing factory workers. Men and women, boys and girls are living in frightful quarters - small, unsanitary, immoral in environment. Along with all this has come the evil of employing women and children in the industries with long and unhealthful hours.

Another aspect of this new spirit in Japan is the social unrest. None of the enlightened nations of the world have been able to stand by and observe the new spirit of democracy and the assertion of justice for every man without being stirred with the same impulses. Today there is a movement to give a wide-spreading suffrage to men in Japan, a thing that would have been beyond thinking a few years ago. This spirit of unrest has made itself felt in a more certain way during the past year in the "rice riots". These never reached large proportions, yet they were effective protests against low wages and rising cost of living. Many rich men, including the Emperor, have seen the hand writing on the wall and have contributed towards the alleviation of these conditions. There has been an ever-increasing number of strikes among the factory employees, and an increasing self-consciousness of the laboring class. These various aspects of unrest are of interest to Christian missions for upon these conditions the missionary enterprise must build.

The darkest aspect of the social situation in Japan is undoubtedly the immorality. The status of

womanhood has never been high among the Japanese (in spite of the fact that many writers claim otherwise), and with the coming of the new social and industrial order, immorality has become aggravated. The story of the geisha girls is familiar to all those who have read or visited Japan. These seemingly innocent entertainers have undermined the social purity of nearly the whole manhood of Japan. Another agency of immorality is licensed prostitution. The Government carries out a system by which several thousand prostitutes are under the protection of the law. It is not wholesome to bring into this discussion figures of comparison with our own country's social purity, for the case might not be entirely against Japan. Yet the fact remains that immorality is undermining the race purity of the Japanese people to a degree that the leaders of the nation are alarmed. One of the great tasks of the missionary enterprise is to lift the moral tone of this people through the purifying agency of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We have noted so far a number of facts that throw shadows upon the prospect of missionary work

in Japan - the industrial quickening with its accompanying economic disorders, the social unrest growing out of injustice and oppression, the flagrant immorality which has sprung forth from social relationships untempered by Christian love - all these are obstacles in the way of Christian progress. Yet there is one bright aspect of the missionary outlook, and that is the high educational attainments. This is a great foundation upon which the missionary enterprise is to build. It is claimed by the Government that ninety-eight percent of the children are in school. Yet it has been an educational system entirely lacking in religious or moral instruction. The result at the present is that most educated Japanese are without religious faith. As we shall point out later, the established religions of Japan are barren and lack the content necessary to grip the educated mind. It is through this lack that Christianity may find its entry into the Japanese mind in the future, for the principles of Christianity will stand the light of education. The people of Japan have no inherent prejudice against Christianity. Already there is a dissatisfaction with the atheism and the agnosticism

of the past half century. When the tide of religious thought turns, it is then that the intellectual content of Christianity will make its strong appeal. So the missionary enterprise has a great asset in the educational attainments of the Japanese people.

Japan is not waiting with yearning and expectation for the preaching of the gospel of Christ, there is no such subjective desire in the soul of Japan. The social and economic interests are great and as obstacles they seem to present a barrier between the bearers of the message and the needy Japanese people. But herein is the challenge to Christianity. It is in the presence of need that the Gospel is glorified. The great physical and spiritual needs have sounded the call to service. Such was the attitude of Jesus and of Isaiah and of the whole line of followers who have ministered to the needs of a broken world. "And there was delivered unto Jesus the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

Because he anointed me to preach the tidings  
to the poor:

He hath sent me to proclaim release to the  
captives,

And recovering of sight to the blind,

To set at liberty them that are bruised,

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord".

"They that are in health have no need of a physician;  
but they that are sick. I am not come to call the  
righteous but sinners to repentance".

## II. Political foundations.

Political influences are always closely allied  
to the social and economic, so that it is difficult  
to trace definitely the cause of certain facts. The  
political conditions have had ~~had~~<sup>a</sup> direct bearing  
upon the welfare of the people in the past than in  
the present, for the old autocracy touched life in  
more of detail than does the modern democratic gov-  
ernment.

This fact is evident in ~~our~~ study of the past  
history of Japan from the missionary viewpoint. Feud-  
alism of the old samurai system made the propaganda  
of Christianity impossible. Those below the samurai  
did very little thinking for themselves. There was  
no opportunity for the individual religious exper-

ience and initiative. The vassal believed whatever his samurai lord believed.

Another element in the old political situation of Japan that made Christian missions impossible was the Shinto belief in the divine origin of the Emperor and the destiny of the Japanese people as rulers of the world. Izanagi and Izanami were the divine progenitors of the race, and this idea was a part of their religious belief. Such a worship, which embraced all authority, was sufficient to prevent all aggressions of the Christian movement. And this led to the "closed door" policy of Japan which was carried out so effectively up until 1868 when Perry gained admission. No heathen nation of the world presented such a formidable barrier to the missionary enterprise as did Japan in the past. All Christian attempts have failed and had been abandoned long before modern times. It is recorded that some Catholic missionaries did gain a foothold in the south part of Japan in the fifteenth century, when the daimyos were drawing together their clans, but these Christians were massacred. No serious attempts were made after that to establish Christian missions until the opening of the

of the century just past. The political barrier in Japan against Christianity was almost complete.

But the past and the present of Japan's political life are as different almost as the past and present economic order. Whereas the past attitude of the rulers made the missionary enterprise impossible, the present offers no direct opposition. It is true that Christianity has no positive encouragement from the government, yet there is nothing in the political atmosphere that is distinctly unfavorable to the missionary enterprise. When Japan determined to open the door to western civilization, she realized that Christianity was an inseparable element in Western institutions, although such was not a conscious recognition. Christianity never has, in the new era, encountered official opposition.

There are some things in the internal political situation of Japan that are undoubtedly unfavorable to Christianity. The chief thing to which we refer is the growing spirit of democracy and the failing confidence in military might. When Germany fell, Japan's idol fell. Japan had builded a perfect duplicate of Germany in ideals, army and navy, and politi-

cal attitude. When Germany was defeated, at so great a cost, the world saw that such a spirit of force could never ultimately dominate. It is true that some have not yet learned the lesson. But to those who analyze the effect of the Great War ~~on~~ the final result will realize that the grandeur of the throne upon which militarism sat has faded. And Japan has learned this lesson, in part at least. It comes from authentic sources that military training is fast becoming distasteful to the young manhood of Japan. There is constant agitation for universal manhood suffrage, which will ultimately prevail. In keeping with this spirit is the coming into office of a very democratic spirited man as Prime Minister, Mr. Hara. All these things pave the way for the missionary enterprise; all these things point to the day when the individual man, with whom Christ's teachings must deal, will assert himself. There is much hope in the new democratic spirit that is moving Japan.

It would be impossible to proceed far into a discussion of Japanese politics without reference to her external policy. It would be a happy privilege for those who would criticise Japan in favorable light

only, if they could avoid discussion of Japan's policy in Korea and China. We must face the fact that Japan has not carried out a policy of Christian statesmanship in Korea, or Manchuria, or Shantung, or Siberia. It is not our purpose to defend Japan's foreign policy. Those who have been compelled to answer the charges against Japan have recourse in the fact that those in control of the Government today do not represent the highest type of manhood in Japan. The element in Japan that has already felt the warming glow of Christian truth is still very much in the minority. Yet the leaven is planted, and here and there the spirit of Christian statesmanship, which we hope will dominate in the future, comes to light. The keynote to a more wholesome attitude for the world towards the Japanese Government is confidence. Japan has not yet betrayed the confidence which the world has placed in her. There are those, even in our own country, who are constantly proclaiming the treachery of the Japanese, yet that "treachery" has not yet been demonstrated. Japan has never yet sought to rule the world by force. It is true that she has dominated the Orient. But no other nation of the Orient is as yet

capable of taking this lead. This can be said to Japan's everlasting credit, that she unhesitatingly entered the League of Nations. If she had a deep-dyed plot ~~of~~ treachery to perpetrate upon the world, surely she would not have placed herself in such a League for mutual help and mutual control. So the foreign policy of Japan, even though it may have some dark aspects, cannot be said to be utterly out of harmony with the Christian movement.

The missionary enterprise in the future does not depend upon the political situation for its entire success or failure. The Kingdom of God is not that kind of kingdom. It works in the hearts of men, and those men make up the political state. So Christian missions will go forward changing the hearts of the Japanese and trust for the rise of a Christian state. The Japanese state has thrown open the door of the future to the Christian nations. It is a challenge to Christian missions to lead on to righteousness.

### III. Philosophical foundations.

Up to the present point of the discussion we have been concerned with the environment in which the

Christian enterprise must work. The social, economic, and political conditions of life are of paramount importance in molding men's lives and determining destinies. But in the end the Christian movement is not concerned primarily with external conditions, but with the inward consciousness of each individual man. Therefore, the ultimate foundations for Christian belief are not to be found in environment but in the individual. The interest throughout the remainder of this discussion will be the inward consciousness of the Japanese man - the foundations for Christian belief in his philosophy, his psychic nature, and his religious beliefs.

In the first place, consider the philosophical foundations. The practical interests of life do not follow after philosophy, but rather philosophy follows after life. A system of philosophy cannot be thought of as self-contained, isolated from an individual consciousness and personal interests. Philosophy is but the systematization of ideas and principles that have been developed out of life itself. Therefore, a discussion of philosophy of the Japanese has no importance in our consideration unless it is used to

throw some light upon the foundations for Christian belief that are to be found in the individual. Philosophy is but the reflection of life, and Christian belief cannot be builded upon a philosophy but upon the elements that enter into practical living. Philosophy must be subordinate to religion, must serve as the foundation rather than the structure itself. With this thought in mind we may proceed to review the philosophy of Japan with the hope of perceiving to a degree what kind of a man the missionary enterprise has to deal with.

Japan has developed no philosophy of its own out of the past. There has been a paucity of philosophical thinking just as there has been a barrenness of religious thinking. Japan can boast no indigenous religion, except Shinto. There have been none of the Oriental peoples that have been given so little to systematic philosophical and religious thinking as the Japanese. This fact is outstanding to us of the Occident, who can trace independent lines of thought coming from nearly every nation. It seems that Japan was absorbed in the practical too much to trouble herself about the formulation of philosophical or

theological systems. Religion and philosophy have rested lightly upon them. They have seen no reason for absolute loyalty to any one idea. A combination of philosophies and religions was satisfactory, if all contributed to the practical end in view. An example of this is found in their attitude toward the three established religions - Shintoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. They have not seen the incongruity of holding three religious beliefs at one time, for each one had some practical value to contribute. And so we can say that there has been no definite system of philosophy come out of the past history of Japan. As near an approach to a unified system as they have had has been Confucianism. Even this was imported from China, and very little change or development was ever made in it. The very lack of thought systems has made Japan a fertile field for outside influences. Buddhism found ready believers, as did Confucianism. The past history is not of importance to this discussion because it has no light to throw upon their modern philosophical position.

The present is not quite so barren of philosophical content as the past. Today there are main

currents of thought that are felt among the large class of educated people. And this tendency has three outstanding characteristics that have an important bearing upon the subject. These are its utilitarianism, its materialism, and its lack of idealism.

Since the introduction of Western influences the philosophical thought of Japan has been vacillating. It is often said that they change their philosophical allegiance with the advent of new systems from the West on the morning's mail. They held firmly to Spencer, then Mill, then Nietzsche - all following in order. One word of commendation should be given for them and that is they have been bold in new ventures of thought. They have not been held down by the bonds of conservatism. They have gone the length in order to find a suitable philosophy. With this fact before us, we must say that they have not been systematic in their philosophical thinking, even in this present day when so many "systems" are at their command. The characteristic of their modern philosophy which stands out clearly is its utilitarian nature. The guiding motive for their thinking has constantly been political. They have been obsessed with the political

grandeur of the leading Occidental nations, and have made a wild search for the secret. Therefore, they have held one system of thinking in no more respect than another, if it were not directly useful.

Another characteristic of Japanese modern philosophical tendency is its materialism. They admire the West, and the outward appearance of the West is undoubtedly materialistic. So they have taken the philosophies of materialism as the secret of material success. There had been no deep spiritual insight during the past, and so they were not qualified to see that the foundation of Western civilization was deeper than the superficial philosophy of materialism. It is common knowledge that Japanese thinkers, scientists, statesmen, all admired Germany before the War. They thought that the key to success was the materialism of Nietzsche. But this idol has fallen. It remains to be seen whether or not the Japanese mind has comprehended the fallacy in the German method.

The third outstanding characteristic of modern Japanese thinking is its lack of ideals. They have refused to be dogmatic in their thinking, refused to commit themselves to any theoretical thought system.

Therefore, idealism has been lacking. It is true that there are certain elements, such as loyalty, that have seemed to take the form of ideals. But, still, such have not been in the form of significant and eternal structures. Their first loyalty has been to the State, the feudal lord, the Emperor. Loyalty itself was not the virtue sought after, but rather the state's welfare and the favor of the Emperor. So it is not surprising that they have failed to see that idealism is the foundation upon which Christian civilization is builded.

Such is the philosophical background of the individual consciousness upon which the missionary enterprise must build. The key to the missionary approach in Japan today seems almost to be this, that the idealism of Christianity must make its appeal upon a purely utilitarian basis and supplant the materialism through its sheer usefulness. It is not surprising that Christian progress has been slow in Japan, for the centuries of idealistic thinking, such as the West has known from the time of Plato, has been lacking. Japan has made an attempt to interpret Christianity in terms of materialism and has found it empty. What the missionary

enterprise needs is patience. The idealism of the West must be instilled into the Eastern mind, along with the other elements of Western civilization before Christianity will find fruitful soil. We must use what we have and expect, for a while, a more or less materialistic interpretation of Christianity. As we have pointed out in the introduction, the gospel of Jesus Christ will burn out the dross of materialism if it can gain a place in the honest thinking of the Japanese people. There is nothing inherently opposed to the idealism of Christianity in their mental make-up. They can be Christians as well as Buddhists. In the following section we shall point out that any peculiarities of the Japanese mind may be accounted for from the sociological viewpoint. Herein is the hope of the Christian missionary enterprise.

#### IV. Psychological foundations.

The element in Oriental civilization that has presented itself as the most formidable barrier to the missionary campaigns, carried on by Occidental Christians, is probably the psychological difference. Missionaries have gone to their tasks without much

consideration of philosophical difficulties; they have not been daunted by appalling social and political conditions; neither has heathen religion seemed to be a discouraging element in the missionary approach. The thing that has held back Christian activity in the Orient more than any other one thing is the difference of Oriental and Occidental psychic nature. It is the object of this section of our discussion to point out the basis of this difference and attempt to show what effect it can be expected to have upon the missionary enterprise.

Differences of mind do exist. The Westerner feels it as soon as he comes into the presence of the man from the East; and, no doubt, vice versa. This difference has been the theme of many literary productions. It has often been presented as a barrier insurmountable as physical differences. There is in every man a certain antipathy towards another race, and this difference of psychic nature has been considered an essential part of the emotion. And it can not be denied that differences do exist, and that it takes years of association with Orientals to overcome this feeling. So this psychological problem is one of

importance to the missionary enterprise.

A discussion of the psychological differences might carry us into a very interesting observation of Japanese characteristics. Gulick has produced the classic work for English speaking people in this field. He points out the sensitiveness to environment, hero worship, abdication, suspiciousness, jealousy, revenge, ambition, conceit, fickleness, stolidity, stoicism, memory, indirectness, imagination, etc. This list might be indefinitely extended, but we are not so much interested here in just what these peculiar psychological characteristics are as in the possibility of building Christian belief upon the foundation of the Japanese mind. What we desire to show here is that there is nothing in the mental nature of the Japanese that makes Christian belief impossible.

For a long while psychologists expounded the theory that there was a "race mind" for each racial group, just as there was a physical body for each racial group. This view has gradually given away before the light of research into the effect of the environment upon the body and the mind. The races of

mankind are different from one another not in essential physical organization. All differences, even though they may appear great, are only superficial and may be explained from a sociological point of view of environment. This is just the process that psychological investigation ~~investigation~~ has followed. These racial differences of mind, great and deep rooted as they may seem, can be explained from the sociological point of view of environment, also. Psychic nature is controlled and follows social influences. All attempts that have been made to point out psychological differences, that cannot be explained sociologically, have failed. The missionary enterprise is not concerned in the task of changing psychic nature of heathen peoples, but in changing environment which will in turn change the psychic nature into a responsive recipient of Christian truth. It may be true that at present there are traits of the Oriental mind which present barriers to Christian belief, but the root of the matter is not found in brain structure but rather in the social environment which has molded the psychic nature. The concern of the missionary over psychological difficulties need

not go farther than this.

The missionary enterprise must expect reactions to Christian truth somewhat different from the Occidental reactions. Psychologically the Japanese are non-dogmatic. Philosophically they are materialists and the dogmatic formation of Christian truth as it has come from the West may not be adaptable directly to Japanese practical life. But this is not a fact to be too greatly deplored, for the interpretation and adaptation of Christian truth has changed from age to age since the time of Christ, and it cannot be asserted that the fullest meaning of Christ's teachings has been attained and expressed in Western dogma.

With the coming of the new age of world intercourse the nations will become more and more alike in sociological aspects. Christianity will have a richer soil for production when Western civilization with its Christian foundations becomes a part of the Japanese environment. It is not our intention to claim Western civilization to be perfect soil for the propagation of Christian truth, yet it is a fact that Western civilization has grown out of the

idealistic atmosphere of Christian thought. Western civilization has often gone far astray from Christian truth and it may be that Eastern soil will ultimately produce as good, if not better Christian doctrine than has the West.

The psychological foundations for Christian belief in Japan are not ultimate factors to be reckoned with. Christianity is not a matter of psychic function but of practical attitudes towards environment. There is no quality of the Japanese mind or mental structure that will permanently check the Christian missionary enterprise.

#### V. Religious foundations.

We have so far passed in review those foundations in the Japanese thought and life upon which the missionary enterprise may expect to build. There has been no account taken of the distinctly religious phase of Japanese institutions, yet many elements of their lives which have already been discussed have to do with this. It is never possible to draw sharp lines of division between the different interests of life, as we pointed out in the introduction.

Japan is barren in religious life. Whereas some non-christian <sup>nations</sup> have developed systems of religion of significance, Japan has remained barren. Shinto may hardly be classed as a real religion - it amounts to a system of patriotism and loyalty to ancestors. Buddhism is grossly idolatrous, so lacking in real religious value that it has very little ethical or moral influences in the lives of the people. And Confucianism is professedly not a religion, only a system of ethical philosophy. The first of these, only is indigenous to Japan, the others having been imported from Asia. So when we come to make a general survey of religious conditions in Japan we find little that is of value upon which the Christian enterprise may build. There is very little of the mystical element, such as is found in India, which finds affinity with the mysticism of the Gospel. There is little of the objective idealism, as in China. The Japanese religious consciousness is not already trained in these elementary religious categories that have proved to be such valuable foundations for missions in other lands.

So the study of religious foundations cannot be

put first in importance in the survey of Japan. What the missionary enterprise has to build upon is mostly human need. Distinctly religious ideals are so few and so barren in content that they are not of prime importance to the missionary enterprise.

Japanese religious thought is a composite of several systems. The people have found somethings useful, however, in the three established religions - in Shinto their patriotism, in Buddhism their future hope, in Confucianism their ethics. And, furthermore, they have not seen the incongruity of holding faith in all three at one time. In fact it is said that some Japanese Christians have not hesitated in worshipping at Shinto shrines on patriotic occasions. As was pointed out in the discussion of the philosophy of the Japanese, they are utilitarian and are willing to use any idea so long as it serves a practical end. This tolerant attitude may account for the fact that Christianity has not suffered persecution in Japan as in some other missionary fields. Only when it has conflicted with their patriotic ideals has Christianity suffered persecution.

The conquest of Christianity in Japan will be

evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Christian ideals will take possession of that Empire as it takes up new ideas from Christian nations of the West. Already Japan is more Christian than she herself realizes, or more than Western observers are ready to admit. Slowly Japan is taking up new ideas, which are nothing if not Christian, and the old religious ideas of their heathenism are sinking into disfavor. Shinto is being turned into a mere culture of patriotism. Buddhism has lost its power so is trying to imitate Christianity in its effort to retain its former position as a religious faith. And Confucianism is inadequate in its power to compete with the ethical and moral power of Christianity. The religious foundations are already being laid in the life of Japan, unconsciously perhaps. Yet it remains to the Christian campaign of evangelism to change the hearts of individual men in order that Christ be established upon his final throne.

The oldest religion in Japan is Shinto, "The Way of the gods". The whole land is full of Shinto shrines that are supported by the Government. The cult has grown up around the idea of ancestor worship, culmi-

nating in reverence paid to the Imperial line both living and dead. In this idea of ancestor worship is a suggestion of the existence of a soul and of immortality. These have been exaggerated by some commentators upon the virtues of Japanese religion, however. It may be said in favor of Shinto that it is a spiritual worship and that its shrines are free from images. It has prayers and hymns directed towards deities and spirits in the ancient language which not many of the people understand. There are also sacrifices, at one time including human victims, but now confined to rice, fish, and other food. Shinto has much to say about defilement, mostly physical, and this idea has been carried over into the conception of sin. The Emperor performs the act of "Purification" for the nation once a year. The great advantage that Shinto has is that it is supported and indorsed by the Government. But it is so barren of valuable religious content that it has in modern times tended to degenerate into a mere agency for the propagation of patriotism. Shinto is not given to contemplative thought, but rather to careless and light-hearted enjoyment of temporal and passing things of life.

It is here that Shinto differs greatly from Buddhism. The latter starts from the fact of suffering in life and builds upon the idea of the indestructibility of human personality through death, which leads to a belief in the future existence of the soul. The absolute law of cause and effect makes it impossible to escape suffering until the desires and the passions of the present life are overcome, when there may be an escape from the endless cycle of suffering in this series of lives. This is the substance of Buddhism as it has been studied by a few Japanese scholars of the Sanskrit. But this is not the popular Buddhism of the common man of Japan. The complex ways of thought of pure Buddhism are too subtle for the average mind. Almost forty sects have grown out of the Buddhist religion in the attempt to interpret the complex thought to the simple minded Japanese. Pieters describes the Buddhism that does exist in Japan as "an idolatrous system presenting as religious elements nature worship and ancestor worship, absorbed from Shinto, Hindooism, and other sources; worship of imaginary deities who were originally personifications of the virtue of Buddha; and

saint worship, wherein especially the founders of the sects have prayers and worship addressed to them". Buddhism makes a great improvement over Shinto in placing significance upon deeds in the present life as they are related to the future state of happiness. Salvation and sin are implied in Buddhism. In its worship elaborate temples with gorgeous rites and ceremonies are employed. It embraces orders of monks and uses the parish system, has congregational singing and popular preaching. In fact, it is said that Buddhism is employing many Christian means of organization for the conversion of non-believers to its faith.

The other agency of religious significance in Japan is Confucianism. This cannot be called a religion, yet it has had so much to do with the formation of Japanese moral character that it deserves a place in our discussion. It has aided Shinto and Buddhism so much that it may be classed among the other religious influences. The Chinese classics have been the text books for many centuries and the influence of Confucius's writing is continually coming to light. There is no distinct organ of Confucianism

today, yet its influence is deep rooted in the moral nature of the Japanese. The substance of this ethical system is found in loyalty of the lower to the higher. There were five relationships emphasized by Confucius. They were these: lord and retainer, father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, friend and friend. In all of these the ideal of devotion to the superior was of greatest importance. And now we can begin to see where Bushido found the various elements that formed its code of honor - in Shinto its devotion to ancestors and Emperor, in Buddhism its stoicism and utter abandonment of the present life, and in Confucianism the element of loyalty and devotion.

In this review of the three great religious religious systems of Japan we have seen various elements of value. To cast all heathen religions out as valueless because of their defects would not be fair. If ~~to~~ such a method were applied to the Christianity as represented by the various creeds and churches it might prove disastrous to our Faith. What we need to do is to admit elements of value, even though meager and undeveloped, in the heathen religious attainments.

What we must constantly keep in mind is that whatever any heathen nation has to boast of they can attribute to the uplifting power of their imperfect faiths. Their religions are but "the broken lights of Christ", they are lacking in the fullness of truth which is revealed in Christ. We cannot go all the way with Mr. Harada who sets forth the virtues of the composite faith of Japan in his work entitled "The Faith of Japan". It is a typical, yet Christian, treatment of the highest virtues of which Japan can boast in her religious faiths. Harada points out the fact that in their "kami" there is a fairly perfect conception of the Supreme Deity; that in "michi" they have a conception similar to the logos idea of John; that in "satori" there is an intellectual thirst for enlightenment; that in "sukai" there is a suggestion of the Christian doctrine of salvation; and that in "murai" the idea of the future life is suggested.

All these elements of virtue in the faiths of Japan are not to be passed over lightly, for they do constitute a real foundation for the building of Christian belief. But these valuable elements do not exist unaccompanied by error, they are not found

in the free state. Rather they are accompanied by a mass of error that form a mighty hindrance to the Christian missionary enterprise. The great criticism of the Japanese religious belief is the impersonality of their supreme being. There is no personal relation between God and man, no idea of Fatherhood such as Jesus gave to the world, nothing to temper human and divine relationships with love.

Mr. Albertus Pieters points out a fact, in which there is much truth, concerning the religions of Japan as foundations for Christian belief. It is this, that even though there may be some virtues in the venerable teachings of Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism, yet there may be a great hinderance in them, because they only partially satisfy the religious need of the Japanese people, and their appetite for deeper and more complete truth has thereby been dulled. They would be better off if they, like the Koreans, had been free of the heathen religious conceptions and could have builded their religious structure from the foundation up out of pure Christian truth. Religiously there is a certain amount of self-satisfaction in the Japanese. The Christian

missionary enterprise will work under handicap until the ancient religious influences are overcome.

The study of the religious attainments of the races of mankind must be comparative, all must be rated relative to the standard of Jesus Christ. There has been none, except Jesus himself, who can set an absolute standard of measurement of value. In all religions there has been some element of truth, although often meager. And he who has gone to those who are without the Light with the attitude of intolerance and absolute superiority has missed the fundamental point of contact between Christianity and heathenism. There is no race that has wholly missed the Way of Truth. All have seen something of the Divine Light, "even the light which lighteth every man coming into the world". In all religious faith that has withstood the centuries of testing there is some element of truth. And so let us who go forth to carry out the Great Commission remember the words of our Master, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill".