

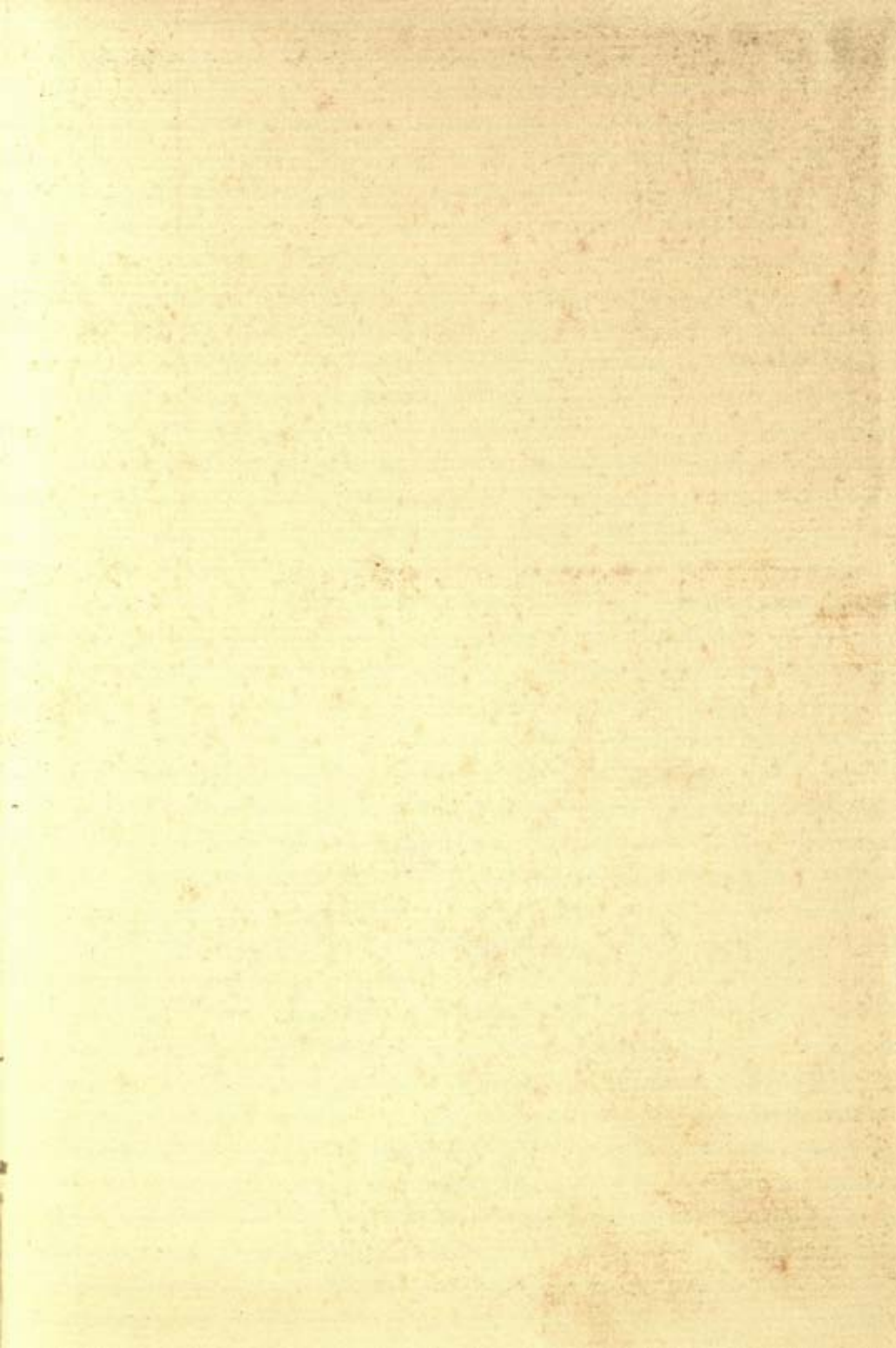
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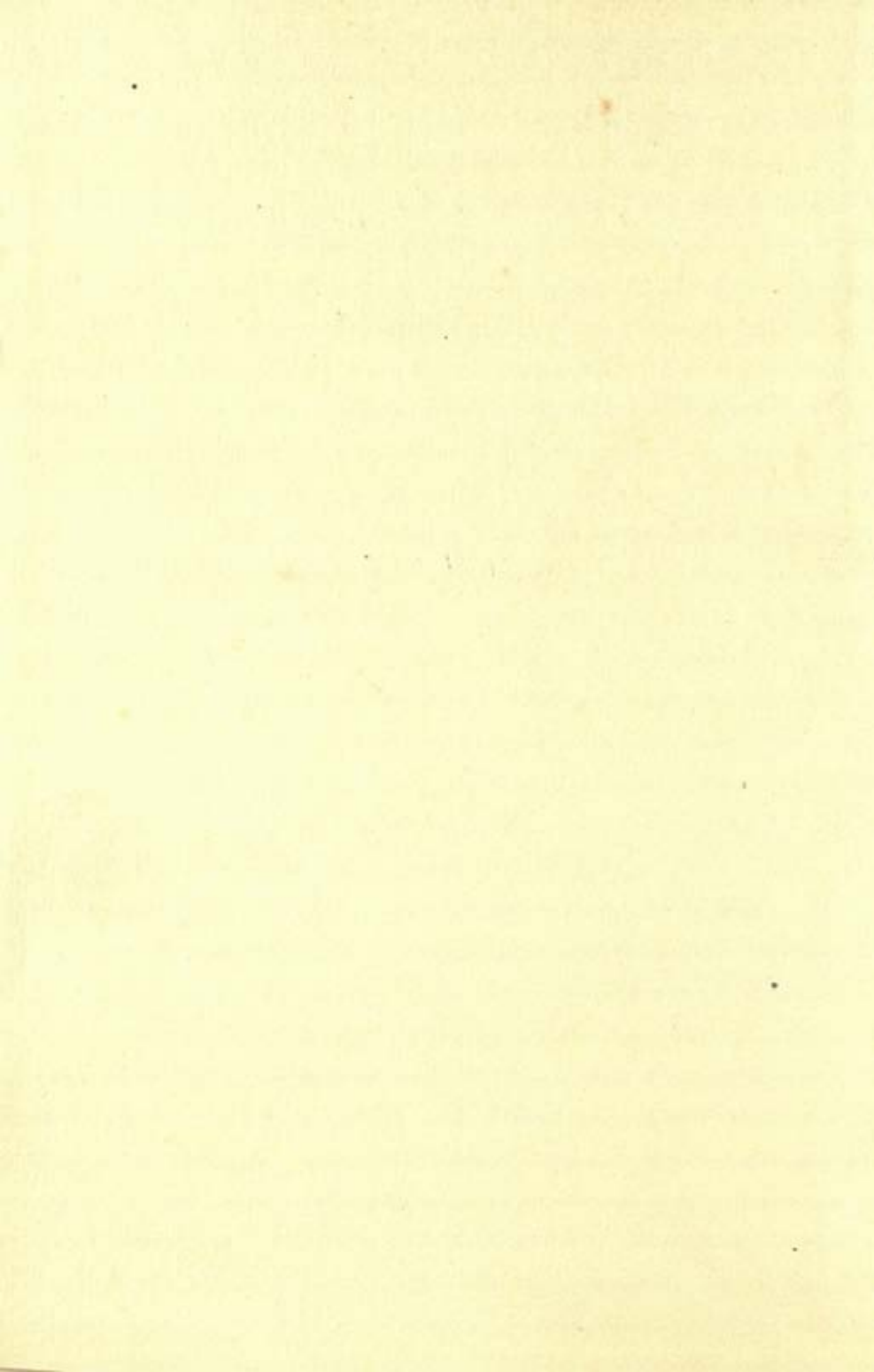
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JAPANESE CULTURE  
IN THE  
MEIJI ERA

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Volume II

RELIGION

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T.B.T.

THE TOYO BUNKO  
TOKYO JAPAN





# JAPANESE RELIGION

## IN THE

# MEIJI ERA

49702

Edited by  
HIDEO KISIMOTO

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JOHN F. HOWES

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TOKYO JAPAN

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## FOREWORD

HANEDA Tōru, president of the Centenary Cultural Council until his death last year, explained the general intent of the Centenary Cultural Council Series in his foreword to the first volume, *Japanese Literature in the Meiji Era*, which was published in the spring of 1955. Those who may be interested are referred to that volume.

At the present time as a result of World War II, a great deal of attention is being paid to the Meiji Era both within Japan and abroad. Its importance cannot be denied. It was a great turning point within Japan itself: she abandoned her policy of seclusion and firmly established herself as a national state; at the same time, she started on the path to modernization. Japan's development during the Meiji Era was also of international significance: during this period she developed from a small Far Eastern country into a nation which ranked culturally among the best in the world.

The Centenary Cultural Council with the financial assistance of the Japanese government is compiling a cultural history of modern Japan, that is, the period of approximately one hundred years since Commodore Perry opened Japan to the West. By means of these volumes, the Council hopes to contribute to understanding both within Japan and abroad. For the Japanese themselves, it hopes to provide new facts and materials for interpreting this period. For those abroad, it plans to present a more general understanding. It is now completing the

eighteen volumes in the Japanese original. It takes pleasure at this time in introducing *Japanese Religion in the Meiji Era* translated by John F. Howes as the second volume in English.

The translators for the English-language volumes are being chosen by a committee of distinguished specialists in the field of Japanese-American cultural relations. Its members include Matsumoto Shigeharu, Takagi Yasaka, Gordon Bowles, Tōgasaki Kiyoshi, Glenn Shaw, Ishida Mikinosuke and Sakanishi Shio. Mr. Howes was selected to do this translation on the recommendation of this committee. Mr. Howes is very proficient in the Japanese language. In addition, he has a deep understanding of modern Japanese culture, particularly its religion and thought. He is well-known for his appreciation of the spirit of Uchimura Kanzō and his studies on Protestantism in Japan. The Council considered themselves very fortunate to have found just the right man for this translation in Mr. Howes.

Not only I, but all of my countrymen of like mind will feel amply repaid if this volume can be of use in presenting a correct picture of Japan, particularly to foreign scholars studying its modern development.

Amano Teiyū  
Centenary Cultural Council President

Tokyo  
March, 1956



## COMPILER'S PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

THE historical development of religions in Japan during the Meiji Era is quite a fascinating subject both from the viewpoints of cultural and religious studies. On Japanese soil, freshly opened to the West, Eastern culture and Western civilization met in fierce impact. Crushing, biting, melting, uniting with each other, they gradually swelled up together like a high tide to create the Golden Age of Japan. Religion played important roles. The time-honored national religion and the Asian and Western universal religions colorfully competed and flowered side by side.

A curious situation has existed until now with reference to the study of this interesting period. A good part of it has been left untouched until after World War II. This is partly because such events were considered too recent. For the Japanese who had two thousand years' history behind them, the span of eighty years just elapsed appeared to be nothing more than a moment. These eighty years could not claim the serious attention of historians as a part of established national history. Another factor which made historians cautious was apprehension of political pressure. The events of these days were so closely connected with contemporary political institutions that one could not but feel some invisible pressure confining his freedom of objective and critical study. Historians did not particularly wish to choose such precarious subjects as their major theme.



World War II and the defeat of Japan caused such tremendous changes that, not only are all those bans gone, but everything before the war now rightly looks as if it belonged to the distant past. Naturally, the historical study of the Meiji period is just beginning. Exactly for the same reason, full-fledged scholars specializing in this field are yet very rare.

Such facts themselves explain the structure of the present volume. The writers of each essay are specialists in their respective subjects—Shinto, Buddhism, and Christianity. But none are historians of Meiji religions in the strict sense. There is no one person who can integrate the scholarship of such specialists. This book may be justifiably regarded as the first work to handle the religious history of the Meiji Era in a thoroughgoing manner. But, we will feel well rewarded if it can serve merely as a steppingstone for further and more elaborate studies in the future.

The original book was written for Japanese readers. It is never a very envious undertaking to attempt the translation of such a work. This is especially true of a history. The barrier is not limited to the great gap between the Japanese language and English. The contents must be subtly reinterpreted so that they can fit in with the Western readers' knowledge on Japan as well as with the context of Western thinking. On this very point, I am happy to express my deep admiration for the achievements of Mr. John Howes.

Kishimoto Hideo

The University of Tokyo  
March, 1956

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

WHEN the Centenary Culture Council commissioned me to do this translation last year, they requested a rendition of the spirit of the original rather than a literal translation of each word or even a free expression of each sentence. They explained that the original had been written for the level of university undergraduates studying their own nation's history. The Council wanted the translation to be of a level which would be useful in the West as reference for writers of undergraduate term-papers or as a text for graduate students working more specifically in the field of the Far East. In other words, they desired an adaptation for Western readers rather than a translation in the technical sense of the term. In my own mind, I have envisioned the reader to be someone who has studied one or more of the general Western-language texts on Japanese history but little other specialized material.

The adaptation of the volumes in this series represents, to my knowledge, the first attempt to make available the essence of so large a quantity of contemporary Japanese historical learning to Western readers. It is, in this sense, a pioneer undertaking. Therefore, I should like to explain in some detail the methods and the standards which I used in translation and adaptation, both for the benefit of others who may be interested in similar projects, and for specialists in the field who are interested in knowing in what way and to what extent the original has been adapted.

The work consists of five essays. Each was written by one of Professor Kishimoto's colleagues who had studied under him at The University of Tokyo. The contents of the essays reflect the broad approach to the study of religion which Professor Kishimoto has long represented and which has become more widespread in Japan since the end of World War II. It is a foretaste of what we may expect in increasing quantity in the future.

It quickly became apparent that numerous changes would have to be made in the translation of the essays. In order to assure that the changes made did not affect general meaning and to make certain that technical terms were translated correctly, I worked in company with Japanese scholars in the field of religion for the entire first draft except for the section on Christianity. In the translation sessions, we read the original together, discussed its meaning, and decided on emendations. The conferences were in the Japanese language. After the meaning of the original had been made clear by this means, I composed the actual translation into English by myself. The translation in draft form was then circulated to the various authors for their comments, and I did the subsequent revisions alone. As a result of this process, the translation is approximately forty per cent shorter than a literal rendering would have been.

It was necessary during the course of translation to adopt a number of criteria for deleting or adding material. The standard in either case was whether the deletion or addition would contribute to the value of this study from the point of view of the educated Western reader. The Council has assumed from the beginning that scholars who desire more specialized details will be able to get them from the Japanese original. These are the main categories of deleted material:

1. Names of places or persons unknown in the West and unimportant to the narrative.



2. Footnotes, except where their contents are necessary for the narrative. In such cases, the content has been included in the body of the text.
3. Details of government rescripts or announcements which are not important.
4. Material which when translated literally would have been meaningless and which did not justify the explanation that would have been necessary to give it meaning.
5. Repetitions of direct quotations which appeared in two or more of the essays, in which case cross reference has been indicated.

These are the main categories of added material:

1. Brief identifications of persons or events not necessary for the Japanese reader. The first paragraph of the part on religion during Tokugawa is one example.
2. Certain specific portions at the request of the authors.
3. Cross referencing between essays.

The additions and deletions are most frequent in the parts on Shinto and social development. Besides these deletions and additions, changes were made in historical facts mentioned in the original when work on the translation showed the original to have been mistaken. None of these deletions, additions, or changes, however, has altered the general tenor or content of the originals.

A number of policies were also adopted for the translation itself:

1. Names of Japanese are given with the family name first in the normal Far Eastern order.
2. Long marks are included for place-names only when these are not well known in the West.
3. The Chinese characters for names of places and people

- are given in the index but not in the body of the text.
4. Some of the authors indicated subjects they planned to cover by listing numerous questions at the beginning of their essays. These have been changed into declarative form in keeping with current English style.
  5. The original contains a number of quotations which were translated from English sources. Whenever possible, I have included the original English in this work.
  6. All dates have been adjusted to their equivalents by the Western calendar.

Readers who are interested in further Western-language introductory material on the religions of Japan are referred to Anezaki Masaharu's *History of Japanese Religion with Special Reference to the Social and Moral Life of the Nation*, and to *Religions in Japan* by William K. Bunce. The former is the standard work, but it is unfortunately now very difficult to obtain. The latter was written co-operatively by a number of Japanese and American scholars and is particularly good in its description of very recent developments and the organizational details of various sects.

The insights into Japanese life and language which I have gained while doing this translation have more than repaid the effort. I can only hope that the work contributes to a broader understanding of a very interesting subject and a very interesting period.

John F. Howes

Tokyo, Japan  
November, 1955

## TRANSLATOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TO acknowledge adequately the assistance of those who have helped me with the translation would require a catalogue of all my friends and acquaintances of the past year. I have talked freely of the various problems as they arose and have received assistance from almost all the people with whom I talked. I hope that they will all realize how grateful I am.

I should like to thank a number of people more specifically, however. First are the two scholars who worked with me in the first draft. They are Nakazawa Kōki and Ikado Fujio. Mr. Nakazawa is Associate Professor of Christianity at Rikkyō University, and Mr. Ikado is now continuing his studies in the psychology of religion at Meadville Theological Seminary in Chicago. Both are dear friends who have contributed greatly not only in this manuscript but also to my understanding of Japanese life and culture in general.

A number of other people read the manuscript critically and offered suggestions. Mrs. C. Martin Wilbur and Robert Sager read the whole manuscript, and parts of it a number of times. Takagi Yasaka, professor emeritus at the University of Tokyo and eminent Christian layman, contributed greatly to the sections on Christianity and the relation between religion and society. Herschel Webb, Richard Brown, Stuart Griffin, and E. John Hamlin read and commented upon shorter passages. Any errors which remain, however, are of course my responsibility.

Numerous typists have also assisted during the various drafts



of the manuscript. They already know, I hope, how much I appreciate their work. The library staff at The International House of Japan have also been most helpful in locating the original texts of Western-language material.

Particular thanks are due to Shiga Takeo, Professor at Waseda Seminar, and to his students who spent many days on the unrewarding task of proofreading the text and compiling the index. Kuga Kazuo of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Tokyo, also spent many hours in finding illustrations suitable for the English edition.

My personal thanks go to the members of the Fulbright Commission in Tokyo; to my professors at the University of Tokyo, Maeda Yōichi and Maeda Gorō; and to my advisory professor at Columbia University, Hugh Borton, for allowing me to divert from my other duties the considerable time that this translation required.

Everyone associated with the Centenary Culture Council was saddened by the death of Haneda Tōru in the spring of 1955. Dr. Haneda had spent his life in making available knowledge of the Far East, and it was perhaps fitting that his last work should have been as the first president of the Council.

J. F. H.

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*Introduction*  
RELIGION DURING TOKUGAWA

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*Kishimoto Hideo*  
*Wakimoto Tsuneya*



## RELIGION DURING TOKUGAWA

### 1. THE GENERAL FEATURES OF MEIJI RELIGION

THE term "Meiji Era" refers to the period during which the Emperor Meiji ruled over Japan, (1868-1912). To designate a period of history by the years during which a given emperor reigned is in accordance with the Chinese and Japanese method of studying history. It is used much as Western historians use terms like "Victorian Era." Such divisions of history according to the dates of a monarch's reign do not usually coincide with important historical developments. The Meiji Era is an exception to this general rule. The Emperor Meiji ascended the throne just when a revolution was returning the power of direct rule to the Emperor. This is referred to as "The Restoration of Imperial Rule." The years during which the Emperor Meiji reigned coincide very nearly with the period in which Japan developed from a backward and inaccessible nation to a modern power with communication to all parts of the world. This volume describes the great changes brought about in religion during that period of swift transformation.

The first thing that impresses one when he views Japanese religion is the large diversity of faiths. It is rare for a number of religions completely different in origin and nature to coexist for a long period of time in the same society. Such a condition has rarely occurred in the West. Christianity, in spite of its manifold developments, underlies all Western culture. Greek

and Islamic civilization influenced the West indirectly, but Christianity completely assimilated these influences. In contrast, Japanese religions are complex and heterogeneous. This characteristic is particularly pronounced during the Meiji Period.

First comes Shinto, the Japanese polytheistic folk religion which goes back to the beginning of history. Shinto provided the ideology for the Meiji Restoration and during the Meiji Period became a national cult.

Buddhism came later than Shinto, and its development paralleled that of Shinto. Its expansive philosophy included both atheistic and theistic strains but preserved an essentially Far Eastern pantheistic mysticism. Originating in India, Buddhism matured in China and reached its fullest flower in Japan. Because of its inclusiveness and tolerance, it was able to dominate Shinto for centuries. In the Tokugawa Period (1603-1867), Buddhism ascended to the position of a state religion. One of the acts of the Restoration of Imperial Rule, or Meiji Restoration, was to remove Buddhism from this privileged position. This is called the "disestablishment" of Buddhism. Disestablishment temporarily dealt Buddhism a heavy blow, but its roots were sunk so deeply that it escaped permanent harm.

Christianity also has a place among Japanese religions. Catholic evangelism flourished during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Subsequent persecution and proscription led to widespread popular prejudice against it. The word "Christian" became associated in the popular mind with sorcery. Christianity, this time Protestant, re-entered Japan when international intercourse was resumed at the end of the Tokugawa Period. Along with it came Western culture, which by this time was highly valued by the Japanese. It progressed steadily in spite of the dichotomy between revulsion against Christianity and simultaneous longing for Western culture. Christianity developed in Meiji Japan as a new-type religion which, in contradistinction to Shinto and Buddhism, was clearly monotheistic and included a positive social program.



The peculiar complexity of Japanese spiritual life is not confined to religious doctrine; it applies to ethics as well. Where differing religious and ethical systems exist in the same society, there results a religio-moral dualism which has profound effects on the lives of the people living in that society. This dualism conditions the life of the individuals who, while living in the same national society, are nurtured in these differing religious and moral systems. It is difficult for a person brought up in a Christian nation to imagine the complexity of this dualism. Shinto and Buddhist tradition emphasizes that religious salvation and insight are more important than social ethics. Religion and ethics belong to separate spheres. A system of thinking completely independent of religion provides the basis for ethics. Confucianism was the system which provided the basis of Japanese ethics and continued to have a strong influence into the Meiji Period. This book will not treat Confucianism in detail, but it must not be overlooked as a further complicating factor in Meiji religious history.

The ideas of the Meiji Restoration disrupted the relationships which had existed between the above-mentioned religions and established new relationships. The Restoration aimed at restoring Imperial rule. One of the policies to accomplish this was to unify religion, or more specifically, worship, and government. This was at the same time both a renovation and a restoration. It attempted to rejuvenate the whole society by restoring an ancient system wherein the same people performed national religious rites and executed the functions of government. The first Emperor, Jimmu, had, according to tradition, initiated such a system. In it the rulers of the early clans officiated as priests at primitive religious functions and at the same time were responsible for government administration. The word used to describe this system during the early Meiji Period was *saisei itchi*, "the unity of worship and government." This term did



not have the same meaning in Japan as its translation had for representatives of the Western powers, mostly Protestant, who interpreted it in terms of the connection between the church and state in European medieval history. The term referred to a much more primitive culture where the rulers had also been priests.

This combination of restoration and renovation implies elements of both conservatism and reform. Shinto represents the former and Christianity the latter. In the actual Restoration, conservatism and reform were inseparable. "Return to the past," i.e. restoration, repudiated the Tokugawa government by restoring ancient Japanese ideals. Return to the ancient unity between worship and government meant that the rulers were trying to renew the true, pre-Tokugawa, Japanese spirit. Japanese antiquity, however, was not the only reason for opposition to the Tokugawas. Increased contact with Western nations augmented the appeal for a return to ancient Japanese folkways. Christianity, with the power of these Western states behind it, represented the stream of reform. Thus, confronted with Christianity, Shinto was forced into a new conservatism. Shinto faced a battle on two fronts at the beginning of Meiji: one against Buddhism, which because of its favored position during Tokugawa symbolized the evils of the Tokugawa government, and the other against Christianity, which represented Western culture.

The meaning of two religious events which occurred at that time becomes clear in the light of historical trends leading up to this restoration and renovation. The first event is the appearance at Urakami, near Nagasaki, of Christians who, unknown to the authorities, had retained their faith for centuries. The second is the government policy known as the Separation of Buddhism from Shinto (*shimbutsu bunri*). This withdrew government support from Buddhism and officially ended a syncretism which had existed for centuries. The purpose of this policy was to remove Buddhism from its position as a state religion.

Discovery of Christians retaining a recognizable Christian faith astonished the Meiji authorities. They thought Christianity had been stamped out, and the very existence of these Christians constituted direct opposition to the revival of Shinto as a national faith. Officials in the Restoration government renewed their predecessors' prohibitions against Christianity. In addition, they added the Chinese character meaning "evil" when they wrote the word "Christianity" in official statements. The Western powers protested vigorously at having their religion officially dubbed "evil." The authorities responded with a strained apology that this use of Chinese characters referred to two separate things: Christianity and "the evil religion."

Use of this second term, "the evil religion," brought on unexpected Buddhist opposition. One Buddhist priest suspected that the words referred to the Nichiren or Shin sects of Buddhism. There was reason for Buddhist priests to have such apprehensions, since radical Shintoists were proposing the abolition of Buddhism.

Problems of this sort continued throughout Meiji. After the ban against Christianity was removed, the number of Christians increased parallel to the importation of Western civilization. State Shinto, the government-sponsored national cult, however, hindered the spread of Christianity. In spite of this hindrance, Westernism and Christianity almost defeated the spirit of conservatism and Shinto. Buddhists, having been awakened from their complacency by the shock of disestablishment, tried to regain their lost power. They attempted to unify their own ranks and to align themselves with Shinto through attacks on Christianity. At its lowest point, Buddhism became an appendage to Shinto.

The authorities soon found they could not unify worship and government. The Buddhists began to demand religious freedom in the Western sense of the term; Christians and the general public joined them. The government had no choice but to abolish the offices which it had established to protect Shinto.



Later, the government relaxed controls further so that Sect Shinto, or religious Shinto free of any government ties, developed independently. Despite these changes, the government-supported State Shinto remained powerful as the official cult.

This conflict between religious freedom and a state-sponsored religion did not arise overnight. It was conceived in the preceding ages. The Meiji Restoration could not erase the effects of two hundred and fifty years of Tokugawa rule. Therefore, it is necessary to examine Tokugawa briefly as the prelude to Meiji religious history.

## 2. RELIGIOUS POLICIES OF THE TOKUGAWA SHOGUNATE

The words "Tokugawa Shogunate" refer to the government established by the military leaders or shoguns of the Tokugawa family who seized the reins of government early in the seventeenth century. The Shogunate concerned itself with the establishment, strengthening, and preservation of the feudal system. This feudal system, perfected by the third Shogun, Iemitsu (1604-1651), ushered in two hundred and fifty years of peace. The Shogun held complete authority. A great number of decrees early in the seventeenth century precisely defined this authority. These decrees concerned all aspects of society. They went so far as to prescribe details regarding the daily lives of servants and merchants. A Japanese historian has described the Tokugawa rules as approximating "a government by prohibition which attempted to regulate all human activities by means of ordinances." For instance, the nobility were forbidden to go about in the streets without a definite purpose; farmers could not make their clothing out of anything but low-grade cotton. These ordinances constituted a network of unavoidable prohibitions extending into every phase of society, so that the individual existed only as a member of his social class. These regulations consolidated and maintained the feudal government. Successive

feudal leaders relied on formality and precedent as the sole justification for continued rule.

The Tokugawa government kept the Imperial Court powerless; it forced the nobility to pledge their allegiance; and it constrained the masses to blind obedience. It had to use all its energies to maintain such a rigid society without incurring opposition. Religion was regulated along with everything else. The result of Tokugawa policy was to unite all religious groups in support of feudal rule. Adoption of Confucianism as the official philosophy; protection of Buddhism as a quasi-national religion; fierce suppression of Christianity—all served the Tokugawa's purpose. Confucianism stressed status ethics. These ethics made the individual's status in his family and society the basis for rules of conduct. This fitted in perfectly with the feudal social spirit. The government had to prevent the influx of new ideas which might threaten the hierarchical order of society. It had to exterminate Christianity, for Christianity would bring in new ideas. The government used the traditional religion of Buddhism to help exterminate Christianity.

Tokugawa religious conditions may be compared to a common feudal political axis with the various religious institutions placed around it. Specific methods early Tokugawa rulers used to bring about this relationship are: publication of ordinances regarding Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, and the priests that inhabited them; suppression of Catholic priests and Christianity; establishment of administrative offices including magistrates to control temples and shrines; encouragement of general policies which hampered Buddhism and helped Confucianism. Status determined the treatment of individuals. The masses did not have to be informed; they had only to obey. Political stability brought about social stability. Administration of religion was fitted into this pattern. The modern concept of individual freedom remained in the distant future. Thoroughgoing government control of religion seemed imperative in order to preserve the feudal state. These ideas did not disappear with Tokugawa but



were carried over into the new Meiji government.

### 3. BUDDHIST SPIRITUAL STAGNATION

The primary motivation for disestablishing Buddhism early in Meiji was to make Shinto the national religion. But Buddhism itself had many defects which demanded correction. Buddhism had become secular and formalized. Many of its critics during Tokugawa had been aware of such dangers; as early as 1666, several clan governments confiscated large Buddhist holdings of land. By the end of Tokugawa, the temples themselves, and particularly the many small parish temples, provided ample grounds for criticism: "The priests are all stupid; they confuse the people, waste national resources, and offend morality." This laxity had increased as time passed. Official apathy to these increasing abuses in the national religion had evoked more and more criticism from Shinto. At the time when the Tokugawa government was overthrown, some of the poorer clans actually disestablished Buddhism before the new national government did. The direct cause of this action was to secure revenue otherwise earmarked for the temples.

The secularization of Buddhism stemmed largely from Tokugawa policies; these, in turn, developed from the years preceding Tokugawa. How to control the Buddhist temples was a great problem to Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) and to Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), the great military-political leaders immediately preceding Tokugawa. Nobunaga's carefully considered military plans and Hideyoshi's equally good political policy succeeded in destroying the traditional military and economic power of the temples. Having destroyed them, however, Hideyoshi then rebuilt many of them as a part of his plan for political unification. The temples, unable to threaten the government, became its tool. The daimyo, or feudal lords, were forced to contribute to the reconstruction. This lessened their military capacity and

potential threat to the central government. Commoners were required to hand over their swords on the pretext that they were to be remade into nails and staples for great statues of Buddha. The Buddhist authorities were pleased at having their temples rebuilt. The new buildings did not reflect an increase in Buddhist strength, however. They merely indicated that Buddhism had become a tool of Tokugawa policy.

Tokugawa administrative control over Buddhism was very thoroughgoing. First, it assumed direct authority over the various sects. As a result, if the headquarters of a sect relegated too much of the strength of its temples to itself, the government could control the whole sect through its leaders. Control was so complete that the government repressed one branch of Nichiren Buddhism and split another into two. Second, the government weakened Buddhist power by setting up rewards for study and by increasing the period of apprenticeship for the priesthood to twenty or thirty years. The rulers felt that priests would be prevented from entering politics by prolonging the period of study preparatory to ordination. Another regulation transferred control over appointments to certain high Buddhist positions from the Imperial Court, which had traditionally made the appointments, to the Tokugawa government. Once, when the Court tried to oppose the Shogunate by honoring one of its own favorites, the Shogunate forced the Emperor to resign.

Thus, the Tokugawa first subdued Buddhism and then used it to strengthen feudal institutions. Authorities assigned families to specific temples. The membership lists of the temples became the basis for a national census and part of the government program against Christianity. The temples also handled such practical tasks as funerals, commemoration services, and the supervision of cemeteries. At the same time, they increased political stability by functioning as observation posts for the government.

These policies had a broad influence in society. Encouragement of scholarship directly aided the Buddhist seminaries so



that denominational studies progressed rapidly. But this scholarship, unlike that which preceded the Tokugawa, was not free, but narrow and constrained. This proved fatal to the further development of Buddhism. The government suppressed as heresy any attempt to break out from this narrow framework. The scholastic works of the priests no longer communicated religious fervor to the average man. Vulgar cults arose among those who, tired of Buddhist formalism, sought vital religious experience. These cults spread quickly among the lower classes.

Theological disputes flourished at the upper levels of Buddhism, but priests in the local temples were reduced to the position of professional funeral directors. Priestly corruption had invited censure for a long time. The Tokugawa policy of assigning families to certain sects assured the priests considerable economic security, and afforded the temples unexpected relief from worldly cares. Normally, candidates for the priesthood came from among the poor. In the most powerful sect, priests married and established hereditary succession. Children who were born in temples became priests for that reason alone. They did not necessarily have any deep sympathy for human concerns.

The system of assigning families to certain sects at the same time granted Buddhism an official monopoly in matters of faith. The priests gained parishioners through no effort of their own. The motivation for visiting temples was not necessarily the joyous faith of pious men and women. It was often just the obligation to register births or arrange for funerals. Temples very nearly became government offices. As a result, popular superstitions arose as substitutes for living religion. The authorities in the sect headquarters, although greatly concerned over doctrinal minutiae, paid scant attention to the far more deplorable heresies prevalent in the small temples. Positions in the priestly hierarchy were usually filled either by sophists inclined to scholastic apologetics or by religious administrators engrossed in ecclesiastical politics. The bond between this

hierarchy and the individual believer became political and economic rather than spiritual. Tokugawa Buddhism became sterile and ritualistic while apparently flourishing.

Of course, during the two hundred and fifty years of Tokugawa, many individual priests responded to the challenge of their calling. Some became brilliant scholars. Others mingled widely with the common people and personified to them the charity and ethical precepts of Buddha. But they could not provide the spiritual strength Japan needed if it were to develop into a modern nation.

#### 4. CONFUCIAN DEVELOPMENT

Most intellectuals during Meiji were brought up on the Chinese classics, that is to say, Confucianism. Tradition decreed that everyone in education or scholarship had to be acquainted with Confucianism, whether he agreed with it or not. Consequently, every Meiji religion was affected by it to a greater or less degree. Its influence actually goes far beyond religion. The samurai who came to power at the time of the Restoration illustrate this. Their early educational policies, though officially based on Shinto, clearly reflect this Confucian background. Further, the overwhelming majority of the early Christians who opposed Shinto were also samurai. They had supported the Tokugawa government during the War of the Restoration, however, and therefore had no influence in the new Meiji government. Confucian training worked both for and against Christianity, leading some to the new faith and providing others with anti-Christian arguments. Confucianism retained an influence in all three religions: Shinto, Buddhism, and Christianity. Why did Confucianism retain such an influence? What contributed to this influence?

Confucianism has a very long history in Japan. The interpretation of Confucianism popular in Sung Dynasty (960-1279)



China, the Sung School, spread widely during the Ashikaga Period (1392-1573), and flourished during Tokugawa. Tokugawa feudal society had four classes: warrior, farmer, artisan, and merchant, plus a hierarchy within the warrior class itself. Confucian status ethics strengthened and preserved this system. Hayashi Razan (1583-1657), the official philosopher to the Tokugawa government, clearly expressed the political relevance of Confucianism in attacks on Buddhism. Buddha "left his prince and deserted his father to seek the true way of life. I know no other way of life than loyalty to one's prince and filial piety." The Tokugawa authorities used Confucianism to provide the theoretical basis for the feudal society they were establishing. All schools of Confucianism, not only those officially espoused by the government, flourished.

Originally, Confucianism had contained religious elements in addition to its code of ethics and philosophy. All Confucianists agreed to a greater or less extent in venerating Confucius (*ca.* B.C. 551-479) himself. They erected a mausoleum, enshrined a statue of Confucius within it, and conducted ceremonies before it. Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725) made Confucianism more like a religion by adding a demonology derived from the ancient Chinese dualism of negative and positive, the *yin* and the *yang*. Even more pertinent was the concept of Heaven, a basic element in Confucianism, which from the time of Confucius himself had included religious features. Nakae Tōju (1608-1648), the founder of the Wang Yang-ming School of Confucianism in Japan, very clearly ascribed to Heaven a divine personality when he called it "The Supreme Emperor of the Universe." Therefore, the Wang Yang-ming School provided a frame of mind receptive to the Christian view of God. Most of the persons who understood Christianity best during Meiji had originally belonged to the Wang Yang-ming School.

Confucianism's attitude toward Buddhism was generally antagonistic. It retained its basic conviction that Buddhist belief was illusory, although it recognized Buddhism's contribution to

political stability as the official religion. As Buddhism continued to degenerate, however, Confucianists went on to attack Buddhist institutions as well as its theory. For instance, Kumazawa Banzan (1619-1691), a member of the Wang Yang-ming School, said, "The temples serve no function. They are an extravagant drain on the national treasury." Members of the Mito School, the nationalistic school of thought which gradually developed opposition to the Tokugawa government, were particularly harsh in their criticism of the financial drain caused by Buddhism. They later melted down temple bells into cannon, using government demands for coastal defenses to bolster their religious prejudices. The Confucianists who tried to abolish Buddhism at the time of the Restoration also came largely from this school.

In contrast to their attitude toward Buddhism, Confucianists generally were friendly and co-operative toward Shinto. Hayashi Razan had developed a syncretic thesis that the theory of the two was the same and that only their application differed. Thus, Shinto could be interpreted in the light of Confucian doctrine. This theory was generally accepted.

Restoration Shinto, which prepared the intellectual motivation for the Restoration, was not included in this synthesis of Shinto and Confucianism. Restoration Shinto attempted to disregard Chinese and Buddhist ideas and to return to ancient Japanese thought. It could not escape the elements of Confucianism within itself, however. These elements were revealed in the methods its members used: the critical study of ancient documents and the worship of ancient sages. From its beginning, Confucianism has had a distinct point of view toward history. *The Spring and Fall Annals*, one of the basic Confucian classics, interpreted all historical events in terms of moral criticism. This moral interpretation appeared in such Japanese historical works as *The Great History of Japan*, which was the work of the Mito School. The leaders of Restoration Shinto also had this attitude toward history. The theory of loyalty to the Emperor



which they developed and which sparked the Meiji Restoration arose spontaneously from a combination of Confucian moralism and the study of Japanese history. Confucianism was always in the background, but it was always influential.

Confucianism also penetrated into the merchant class. The samurai despised profit-seeking merchants, but Ishida Baigen, originator of the *Shingaku* school of Confucianism, said, "The merchant lives by making a profit. It is his duty to make a profit." Thus, ever-present Confucianism even provided brave new ethics for the rising merchant class which was beginning to threaten the feudal system. Complete syncretism characterized *Shingaku* thought: "We should use all religions to aid our country. We should utilize the teachings of Confucianism and Buddhism to aid Japan's ancestral deity Amaterasu Ōmikami." The wide appeal of *Shingaku* lay in this syncretism which stressed empiricism rather than ideological consistency.

Thus, Confucianism during Tokugawa assumed the position of influence previously held by Buddhism. This influence extended into every element of culture: politics, economics, education, literature, and religion. Confucianism both became the official philosophy for the ruling class and extended its influence among the common people through small private schools and drama.

The fact that Confucianism could be applied to almost any human relationship was an important reason for its wide influence. It actually achieved the power it did, however, only because of the military authority and feudal organization behind it. It became the ethic which joined a hierarchical view of man to a military social structure.

For two and one-half centuries, the Japanese government confined its people within its own national borders and indoctrinated them with Confucian precepts. Confucianism implanted in their minds a tendency toward unquestioning obedience to their superiors. One could not expect to find in Confucianism any development of independent thinking. It did not have the ability to bring change to Tokugawa Japan, though it did develop

some fresh approaches within itself, and though it fostered them in other areas of thought. Confucianism's constitutional weakness was that it could not repudiate the policies of the military dictatorship. The intellectual forces which were to lead Japan into the Restoration were to come from outside Confucianism. That is why Confucianism lost its official status during the Restoration.

Yet historical tradition is powerful. The remnants of Confucian influence permeated all thought during Meiji. Its status ethics even assisted State Shinto in establishing the emperor system. Two forces opposed the newly arrived Christianity: the concept of Shinto as a state religion, and the Confucian ethical ideals which it incorporated.

#### 5. PROHIBITION OF CHRISTIANITY AND WESTERN LEARNING

The appearance of the Christians at Urakami caused the new government much concern. Modern society in the Western sense of the term includes religious freedom, and the Meiji Restoration is considered the beginning of modern society in Japan. If this assumption were correct, the new government could have been expected to remove the ban on Christianity. In 1873, it appeared to have done this by removing the signs which had publicly announced the prohibition of Christianity. But the Meiji government, dominated as it was by pre-Restoration clan relationships, was not basically modern. In the words of one contemporary observer, "this was not a sudden renunciation of previous policy, but only an attempt to continue the essence of previous policy while gradually adjusting to new conditions. Hereafter, Christianity, actually continuously suspect, apparently had the consent of the government." The Constitution of 1889 publicly recognized Christianity for the first time. It was not easy, however, to dispel the prejudices which had developed among the common people over two hundred and



fifty years. Most of them viewed Christianity with both apprehension and curiosity. For the majority, the apprehension was stronger than the curiosity; they felt it was safer not to risk the displeasure of the government by showing interest in Christianity. The people who did show interest were largely intellectuals. Christianity later developed into a religion of social protest because of its influence among the educated. What conditions in the preceding period laid the way for this Japanese acceptance, however incorrect and partial, of Christianity?

Oda Nobunaga, the great political unifier of the late sixteenth century, built "temples for the Southern barbarians," that is, Catholic Christian churches, welcomed missionaries, and aided the diffusion of Christianity. He did not act out of respect or faith, however. He used Christianity as a means of reducing the secular power of the Buddhist temples, and he hoped that as a result of patronage he might get more contacts with European traders and increase his profits. The various feudal lords had welcomed Christianity somewhat earlier out of the same motives. Of course, true religious feeling was not entirely lacking; the "Christian daimyo" included many ardent believers. The missionaries utilized this official protection to their own ends. In return, they indirectly supported the code of feudal ethics which the officials had imposed upon the farmers. The missionaries themselves found conditions in Japan similar to those in Europe. They also had grown up in very feudal surroundings. They were able to instill political loyalty among the masses by applying the logic of Catholic hierarchical absolutism. They began their work just at a time when the people, wearied with long warfare and seeking spiritual support, realized that they could not find that support in secularized Buddhism. The missionaries burned with enthusiasm after their long journey from Europe. The people welcomed their message like dry sand soaking up water. This happy combination of official permission, missionary zeal, and popular spiritual thirst bore results. In less than forty years there were two hundred thousand Chris-

tians, more than two percent of the total population.

But this success did not continue; government policy changed overnight. The political authorities who had been using Christianity for their own protection suddenly proscribed it. This proved fatal to the faith which had no roots in Japanese soil. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Oda Nobunaga's successor, proscribed Christianity. Two of the factors which entered into his decision were his self-confidence after having united all Japan and his suspicion of the political power which might accompany this foreign religion. Tokugawa Ieyasu founded the Tokugawa Shogunate after Hideyoshi's death. Its third ruler, Iemitsu, perfected political centralization and enforced Hideyoshi's ban on Christianity very harshly. Iemitsu had a strong suspicion that Christianity was really a prelude to foreign invasion.

The missionaries themselves had no such intention. Though their zeal drove them to the ends of the earth, it could not overcome the political realities which they faced. Spain and Portugal were engaged in a global commercial war, and Christianity arrived in Japan at the height of their scramble for colonies. Holland, which had recently won its independence from Spain, had entered the struggle for colonies as a latecomer. It used its record of opposition to Spain to slander its rivals. The Dutch claimed that "after foreign missionaries have baptized many people in any given area, they raise their own national flag as the first step toward conquest." Nobunaga's bitter experience with Buddhism alerted Tokugawa rulers against the political implications of religious power. That the religion in question was alien and without deep roots in Japan made it additionally suspect.

Accompanying the fear of direct foreign intervention was concern that the feudal lords who had become Christians would ally themselves with the Europeans. To welcome Christianity meant, in fact, a lively increase in foreign trade and capital. The central government feared that daimyo of distant provinces might threaten the political power of the Shogunate if they



amassed such capital on their own initiative. Another concern was that Christianity might serve as a strong spiritual tie between members of a whole clan. This would strengthen their allegiance to the clan government and correspondingly weaken their loyalties to the central government. By 1614, the Shogunate had reached the conclusion that it had to expel missionaries.

The government also felt it had to stamp out Christianity among its own subjects. The Japanese Christians did not easily submit to political coercion. Christianity placed great emphasis on the importance of the soul as the connection between man and God; it was one of the prerequisites for the modern view of man. As a result, Catholicism which had previously been loyal to feudalism revealed itself as inherently anti-feudal by its resistance to persecution. Martyrdoms were frequent. In many cases, the sight of these executions, often by crucifixion, inspired rather than terrified. The authorities then devised some of the cruelest tortures the world has known. These tortures were not intended to result in death but in the renunciation of Christianity. Revulsion against these methods finally brought on the Shimabara Rebellion of 1637. The Shogunate in desperation decided on national isolation.

Japan's insular position favored isolation. The Shogunate, however, did not wish to be completely cut off from the West. The arrival of Dutch traders solved this dilemma, for though Western, they were enemies of Portugal, Spain, and Catholicism. The Shogunate decided to limit foreign trade to one country—Holland—and to one port—the island of Deshima in Nagasaki Bay. This ended the Christian nuisance. It also gave the Shogunate a monopoly on foreign trade. The government continued this policy of isolation in spite of later advice by trusted advisors that they should change it. One of these advisors was Arai Hakuseki (1457-1725). Arai, after talks with an Italian Catholic missionary accidentally shipwrecked off Japan, argued that a plot such as the government feared was inconceivable

"because it ran counter to the aims of Christianity," and because Spain and Portugal were so distant from Japan. The rulers did not accept this advice, and the ban against Christianity continued to encourage deeply rooted and unnecessary prejudice.

Though Arai's advice was unheeded at the time, it later contributed significantly to the Westernization of Japan. Shortly after turning down Arai's suggestions, the Shogun, Yoshimune (1684-1751), adopted a policy of encouraging the European science which members of the Dutch trading mission were teaching at Deshima. This study came to be called "Western Learning." The fact that the government encouraged Western science while continuing the ban on Western religion greatly influenced later Japanese attitudes toward the Western intellectual tradition. The natural sciences alone, particularly medicine, astronomy, calendar-making, and military arts, became the principal contents of Western Learning. Its students stressed extreme empiricism and concentrated only on technical success. Arai Hakuseki, who recognized the general superiority of Western thought, restricted himself to the physical sciences after the Shogunate had rejected his proposal regarding Christianity. Those who wanted to resume foreign relations at the end of Tokugawa still had this lopsided view of Western culture. Actually it persists to the present. The phrase "Eastern morals and Western techniques" epitomizes this attitude. "Eastern morals," of course, means Confucianism.

Western Learning could not directly assist religious development. Its only contribution to the history of Japanese religious thought was a materialistic criticism of religion. Andō Shōeki (1701-?), with his complete denial of all religions and his professional absorption in medicine, is an example of its teachings. Western Learning had its roots in the Christian West, but it had hardly any relationship to Christianity in Japan. The government allowed Western Learning to continue as one part of its more liberal policy toward most fields of study. It was not



similarly liberal toward Christianity.

Some knowledge of Christianity came indirectly through China. At first, cessation of trade with Christian countries had enabled the government to continue its ban against Christianity. During Tokugawa, however, Catholic missionaries went to China and distributed Christian literature there. Some of this literature found its way to Japan through Deshima. Scholars of the Hirata School of Shinto which prepared the way for the Restoration appear to have been influenced by these Christian ideas. After the Restoration, the main obstacle to the development of Christianity, paradoxically, was the government attempt to make the Hirata interpretation of Shinto into the national religion.

#### 6. THE RISE OF RESTORATION SHINTO

The new Meiji government adopted two policies which were known by the slogans "The Unity of Worship and Government" and "The Restoration of Imperial Rule." The concepts these slogans expressed resulted from two parallel developments. One was the evolution of a school of philosophy with later religious overtones which was called the "National School." The other was the political movement to overthrow the Shogunate and to restore the Emperor to personal power. This political movement drew much of its inspiration from the philosophical or religious movement. The inspiration expressed itself as a kind of religious imperative. The leaders of the political movement felt they were fulfilling a religious duty. The two phrases they adopted reflect this dual motivation. "The Restoration of Imperial Rule" is a political slogan, whereas "The Unity of Worship and Government" is a religious one. The discussion of the development of this movement can be divided into two parts. First, in this section, the evolution of National School thought into a religion, and second, in the next section, the Imperial Restoration theory which served as the philosophical

support for the Restoration.

The National School arose during the last half of the seventeenth century. This was about the time when the Mito School was starting its work on *The Great History of Japan*, and when Western Learning was beginning, though there was little direct connection between them. The National School was so named because it studied Japanese, or national, classics rather than Confucian, or foreign, texts. The National School is important historically because its study of the past led to the conclusion that the Tokugawa had usurped political power from the rightful ruler, the Emperor. This, in turn, provided a rationale for overthrowing the Tokugawa and restoring Imperial rule. The Hirata School of Shinto gave further religious meaning to this rationale.

Confucian scholars like Tokugawa Mitsukuni (1628-1700), first editor of *The Great History of Japan*, had studied Japanese history deeply. Shinto, borrowing from this Confucian interest in national history, turned its attention anew to the period when the Emperor had ruled directly instead of through a military dictatorship. This Shinto study provided the basis for the National School.

The new understanding the National School provided resulted from new scholarly methods. The first method was positivistic philology in the study of poetry. The *Manyō* School of poetry had evolved between the forth and eighth centuries as a reaction to overly formalized court poetry. National School poets longed for the free and pure expression of the *Manyō* poetry. This longing brought on an intense political ferment. It resembled the Renaissance in European history when an interest in classical literature became the transition point between the Middle Ages and the Modern Period. An analysis of the ancient language was indispensable to study *Manyō* classics. This analysis required linguistic and philological tools. By using linguistics and philology to analyze an ancient language, its concepts are defined and finally the ancient ways of thought are reconstructed.



Thus, the National School's progression from the study of poetry to that of classics in general results directly from their use of the philological method. Western Learning which began at the same time also used critical investigation to infuse fresh life into contemporary scholarship.

The second method the National School developed was thoroughgoing philosophical rejection of Confucianism and Buddhism. As stated above, the philological method was not used by the National Scholars alone. The Classic School of Confucianism and particularly Ogyū Sorai (1667-1729) had used it very successfully. The National School borrowed Sorai's method of linguistic analysis in order to further its studies of *Manyō* poetry.

The National School stated its aim to be "the way to Japan's ancient purity" as distinct from the way of the ancient Chinese sages, or Confucianism. The first step in achieving this end was to work back to the Japanese classics themselves by philological methods. To do this, the Shintoists had to rid themselves of Confucian and Buddhist ideas as well as the Buddhist-Confucian-Shinto syncretism which overshadowed the ancient native concepts. Criticism of Buddhism and Confucianism was an indispensable, though indirect, method of reclarifying what these ideas were. The Sorai School had clarified its own position by criticising Sung philosophy and returning directly to the Confucian classics. In the same way, the National Scholars demonstrated the independence of their system through criticising Buddhism and Confucianism.

The third method which characterized the National School was its use of irrational faith. This developed from its criticism of other faiths. The main object of its venom was Confucianism and particularly the rationalism of the Sung interpretation. Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), the great National Scholar, concluded that the Sung principles were meaningless fabrication: "The gods of Japan are in reality the ancestors of the present Emperor and are not mere empty reason." Norinaga revived



belief in the ancient myths because he himself believed them.

The way the National Scholars provided a source of authority for their belief deserves particular attention. Kamo Mabuchi (1697-1769), an earlier National School leader, had substituted nationalism for the rationalism of Confucianism. Norinaga drew a distinction precisely between this naturalism and Shinto. The basic reality worked out by him was not impersonal reason or nature but the personal gods of Japan: "The works of the Gods cannot be understood by ordinary human reasoning. Man's intelligence cannot exceed its limitations." Norinaga turned to the native gods after he had denied that man could know anything independent of them. This attitude is in some ways similar to the Buddhist view of a personal God. Jōdo Buddhism had influenced Norinaga in his youth. There is also a similarity between the National School and Sorai Confucianism. In the Sorai interpretation of Confucius, the source of authority was the Sage, the model human being. Similar to this, Norinaga found his source of authority in the Imperial ancestors: "Norinaga, although differing from the Sorai School completely on the contents of his belief, used the same intellectual methods to provide a basis for belief."

There was no contradiction between the irrational source of authority and the rational or positivistic method of literary criticism mentioned above. The positivistic attitude excluded all subjectivity in the interpretation of literary classics. But this sort of attitude can exist side by side with a religious commitment. Norinaga's own personal piety was the consummation of all three methodologies: positivistic philology, rejection of Buddhism and Confucianism, and irrational faith. With him, the National School did not remain merely a philosophy but became a religion.

Norinaga's successors divided the National School into two groups: one, the school of pure literary criticism represented by Ban Nobutomo (1772-1846), and two, Hirata Atsutane's Restoration Shinto. These two schools differ by the degree to which

they emphasized positivistic philology or irrational faith; they criticized Buddhism and Confucianism equally.

Hirata's Restoration Shinto is important. Hirata criticized Confucianism, Buddhism, and the various accommodations which Shinto had made to other faiths. He went on to develop a new theological point of view which he called "The Pure Way of the Gods." In this, Hirata utilized the results of the new Western Learning. The following three points are significant. The first was a new interpretation of the creation myth as found in ancient Japanese literature. Hirata explained it by means of Western astronomy beginning with the Copernican theory. From this, he formed an original theological world view. Much more important than astronomy, however, was the possible Christian influence in Hirata's theology. The latter two points derived from this first one. Number two was the emphasis on an all-powerful God and number three the idea of an after-life. There were two opposed Gods: one of creation and the other of the after-life. By recognizing the supremacy of the latter, Hirata developed a Shinto with a faith in life after death. This interpretation went far beyond Norinaga's classic this-worldly Shinto. Hirata also developed Norinaga's theory of creation much more completely. Hirata's deep religiosity, an integration of Western and Japanese thought, gave Restoration Shinto a popular appeal. The various clan schools taught Restoration Shinto along with Confucianism; Restoration Shinto, however, triumphed and became the philosophy of the new Meiji government leaders.

Restoration Shinto and the National School played an important role in the latter part of Tokugawa. Their members did not, at first, concern themselves with politics. Later, of course, they evolved a very strong anti-foreign nationalism, but in the beginning they were apolitical. Unlike Buddhism and Confucianism, the National School developed free from the interference of the Tokugawa Government. The literary theory of the National School reflects this fact. Their main contribution was



in the aesthetic concept of *mono no aware*, a phrase which defies translation, but refers in general to the mutual empathy of all natural phenomena: "Norinaga developed this concept which seeks after independent evaluation of the fine arts and excludes moralistic appraisal of them. Because of this contribution alone, he is important in Japanese intellectual history." The National School was the first to adopt a freer view of human nature than that of feudalism.

Criticism of the government philosophies, Confucianism and Buddhism, was the basis from which National School literary theory developed. The ultimate of this criticism was a reaction against Confucian worship of the Chinese sages and Chinese antiquity in general. The National School focused on Japanese, instead of Chinese, antiquity, and on Imperial ancestors instead of ancient sages. Confucianism had also developed some emperor worship, but its interpretation of emperor worship made Chinese ancient sages the ethical principles and considered the Japanese Emperor as the embodiment of these principles. The focus of the National School was entirely different. The Imperial ancestors themselves were to be worshiped directly; their lives were the ethical ideal for all Japanese. The National School went on to make a religion out of emperor worship. It also produced a theory of direct allegiance to the Emperor which the Meiji government used to strengthen nationalism. Actually, however, neither the National School nor the Hirata School advocated direct allegiance to the Emperor nor the overthrow of the Shogunate until the end of Tokugawa. The inherent possibilities for reform in these ideas could not be immediately realized. In spite of the fact that the National School provided a passionate theory of emperor worship, it actually approved the Shogunate. Norinaga's works provide one example. As has already been seen, his development of the concept *mono no aware* was anti-feudal. He further said, "That farmers and merchants band themselves together to petition the Government and make trouble is not at all their fault, but the fault of their



rulers." He directly opposed the view that man is a member of a static class. But he did not recommend the overthrow of Tokugawa society as a result of this conviction. On the contrary, he praised the establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate in poems like this: "May all Japan, pacified under Tokugawa Ieyasu, remain in peace eternally." This shows the intermediate nature, neither completely feudal nor completely modern, of the National School. Hirata Atsutane's position was similar.

Restoration Shinto's greatest historical significance lies in its religious respect for the Emperor. In the complex conditions surrounding the end of the Shogunate, this respect for the Emperor changed to an attack on the Shogunate. The next section traces the development of respect for the Emperor as a political movement at the end of Tokugawa.

## 7. THE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF SONNŌ-RON

*Sonnō-ron* means "the theory of respect for the Emperor." It was the rationale for revolt which the Imperial forces used at the time of the Restoration. Previous to Hirata Atsutane, this theory of respect for the Emperor was, for the most part, religious and apolitical. It included, however, the possibility of political application to any particular reigning Emperor. Such theories are often accompanied by extreme emotionalism when applied in the area of politics. These generalities were true of *sonnō-ron* at the end of Tokugawa.

Respect for the Emperor has long been a potent force in Japan. The location of actual political authority has made no difference. The Emperor, at least formally, continued to maintain his position as chief of the state. A folk reverence for indigenous gods stood behind the authority of the Emperor and profoundly influenced the religious nature of *sonnō-ron*. The Emperor as a lineal descendant of Amaterasu Ōmikami, the mythical founder of Japan, was at least partly divine. The Shinto priests all

venerated Amaterasu Ōmikami. The common people joined in this veneration, as is shown by the popular worship of Amaterasu Ōmikami which started in the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Groups organized themselves to send believers on pilgrimages to Ise, where a special shrine had been built in honor of Amaterasu Ōmikami. This worship continued during Tokugawa and gradually prepared the way for the doctrine of *sonnō-ron*.

Confucianism played a role in this preparation. As in the case of the National School, this role was, in a sense, tragic. Confucianism taught respect for the ruler and expulsion of usurpers. This theory idealized the king who possessed the Mandate of Heaven and ruled with benevolence and virtue. At the same time, it rejected dictators who seized control by military force. Thus, it conflicted with the historical facts of the Tokugawa rise to power; Tokugawa Ieyasu had come to power through a military coup. Confucianism as the official Tokugawa philosophy had to reconcile this contradiction. A reconciliation was found in the theory of delegated authority. According to this theory, the Emperor in a national emergency had deputized the shogun to unify the nation. Thus, Confucianism gave to the Shogunate a kind of Imperial religious sanction. At the same time, it unwittingly prepared the way for the overthrow of the Shogunate by attributing to the Emperor the moral qualities of the Sage, or philosopher king. If the Shogunate lost its ability to govern, then it lost its *raison d'être*. Confucianism did not criticize the Shogunate directly, but it strengthened the tradition of respect for the Emperor by explaining the origin of military rule and contrasting with it the earlier direct Imperial rule.

Restoration Shinto took this Confucian theory of reverence for the Emperor one step further and infused religious fervor into it. It absolutized the person of the Emperor as the hereditary source of authority and made him the direct object of religious worship.

Restoration Shinto, however, did not go beyond theory. It needed a catalyst to transform the idea of respect for the Emperor



into a theory for overthrowing the Shogunate and eventually restoring Imperial rule. The catalysts which finally accomplished this purpose were political and economic. Both domestic and foreign problems beset the government. Domestically, there was the social and economic crisis which had brewed within Tokugawa society, and externally, there was increasing foreign pressure to end international isolation. These problems are presented in detail in other volumes of this series. Suffice it to say here that domestic problems arose as the people began to realize that government based on a land tax in kind was anachronistic. Repeated attempts at administrative reform succeeded only temporarily. Japan badly needed basic social reform. At the same time, the overwhelming strength of the advanced Western nations threatened Japan's coastline. Scholars of Western Learning, members of the National School, and Confucianists all urged preventive measures. They had no leisure in which to surmise whether this might threaten the rigid status society. Up to that time, emperor worship had been only religious. These confused domestic and external conditions gave a political character to this worship. Thus, *sonnō-ron* became a rallying point for national consciousness just as Japan emerged from its seclusion into international society.

Gradually, during early Meiji, *sonnō-ron* became a popular theory of national polity which absolutized the Emperor. The traditional religious respect for the Emperor became the emotional foundation for this absolutization. It was one cause of Japan's amazing development during Meiji. At the same time, it bred extreme ultranationalism.

## 8. ON THE THRESHOLD OF MEIJI

Having traced the development of various religions during Tokugawa, the next step is to describe the legacy they bequeathed to Meiji.



Buddhist disintegration made it necessary to sever Buddhism's connections with the state early in Meiji. The main adversaries of the Buddhists, of course, were the Restoration Shintoists. But the Buddhists could blame only themselves for providing the Restoration School with such a good target. Oppression for more than two centuries by the Buddhists had aroused the ire of the Shinto priests. When the government officially separated Shinto from Buddhism, most of the Shinto priests were satisfied just to have their independence. It was not long, however, before they began to insist that the government stop assisting Buddhism. The government complied. In the end, this humiliation proved a benefit to Buddhism.

Confucianism was greatly weakened as an organized branch of learning. Even before the downfall of the Shogunate, most intellectual leaders had turned away from Confucianism toward a syncreticism of the National School and Western Learning. The downfall of Tokugawa marked the end of feudal morality and the privileged position Confucianism had enjoyed. From this time on, professional study of Confucianism gradually ceased. Confucian thought patterns did not entirely disappear, however. On the contrary, as men stopped studying Confucian philosophy formally, they accepted it unconsciously as a way of life. It performed two functions almost diametrically opposed: it prepared the way for accepting Christianity, and it also remained the staunch support for the remnants of feudalism. Confucianism in any case could have been expected to retain a certain amount of influence because the traditional Japanese religions had not developed their own ethical norms.

At the beginning of Meiji, most people still considered Christianity to be "witchcraft." In spite of this popular suspicion, Christianity was welcomed as a representative of Western culture. These opposing attitudes of suspicion and welcome conditioned the development of Christianity. They also determined what sort of people would accept Christianity.

Shinto was the most favored of the religions. The influence

of Hirata Atsutane among the new rulers appeared most clearly when they attempted to unify worship and government. This policy itself was a great anachronism, however, and the government found it impossible to carry out their early ideas of theocratic administration. Finally, they had to give up. After many vicissitudes, Shinto, abetted by *sonnō-ron* prestige, developed anew into a national cult.

The government did not recognize the anachronism in its attempt to unify worship and government until its members started to mingle with representatives of the Western powers. These powers demanded, particularly after the appearance of Christians at Urakami, that missionaries be allowed to preach in Japan. Shimaji Mokurai, a Buddhist priest, wrote an excellent report on this subject while traveling in Europe. Gradually, those men who had knowledge of Western culture came to recognize the need for an incisive new policy. These various considerations led the officials to end the ban on Christianity in 1873 and to discontinue active government control of religion in 1875.

Beginning a few years later, the ideas of modern Western culture and of the monolithic state competed for control over Japanese religion. Both had to conform to the government's plan for enriching the country and increasing its military strength in a desperate attempt to catch up with the West. Christianity flourished as one aspect of this desire to modernize. Buddhists opposed Christianity by using Western naturalistic philosophy. Shinto leaders, taking strength from political reaction, continuously attempted to regain a privileged position for Shinto as a national cult. The government's trump card in this game of free interplay between religions was the Constitution of 1889. In theory, this Constitution guaranteed "religious freedom." But this freedom was conditional on the citizen's fulfilling "his duty as a subject" to the Emperor. The Emperor was proclaimed to be "sacred and inviolable." Thus, the Constitution explicitly defined the Emperor's supreme political position but left doubt

as to the extent of his religious authority. The Education Rescript, issued in 1890, strengthened his political position in a way that implied a strengthening of his religious position. This is covered more in detail later.

The two great trends in early Meiji were restoration and renovation. These two trends intertwined and appeared in differing forms throughout Meiji. By its end, the leaders of the various faiths each had the liberty to perfect his own organization. But the people in general still had a long way to go before they could achieve real religious freedom.





*Part One*

SHINTO

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*Hori Ichirō*

*Toda Yoshio*





## *Chapter One*

### THE MEIJI RESTORATION AS RELIGIOUS HISTORY

SHINTO during the first years of the Meiji era permeated the whole society, not simply as a religion, but as the central principle of national life: its politics, state religion, ethics, and education. Shinto gradually lost most of this influence. First ritual, then politics, then finally the idea of a state religion itself disappeared. During the middle years of Meiji, government policy toward religion changed and two distinct types of Shinto emerged as a result. One, Sect Shinto, consisted of a number of folk religions which were generally Shinto in nature. The other, State Shinto, was nothing more than an ethical cult based on ancestor worship. This essay deals mainly with the second type. The interpretation of Shinto as a cult was intimately associated with the upsurge of nationalism which began in 1897. Thereafter, the government, while paying lip service to religious freedom as guaranteed by the Constitution of 1889, accorded State Shinto special protection as the national cult. Reforms at the end of World War II resolved this contradiction.

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In retrospect, many of the post-Restoration government policies appear ill-advised. The attempt to make Shinto into the national religion was one of them. Another was the abandonment of certain wise policies which the Tokugawa had instituted during its last days.

But the Restoration Shintoists were not able to recognize that these were shortcomings. Their only aim was to return the

Emperor to direct rule. The only way to accomplish this was to overthrow the existing government. They had no concrete plans for what they would do once they had fulfilled their aim.

Early Meiji policy regarding Christianity clearly failed. This failure can be attributed to the inexperience of the men who ran the government, to the narrow-mindedness of the National School, and to the backwardness of the Shintoists. Ōkuma Shigenobu, later to become a famous statesman and educator, negotiated with the Western powers regarding the prohibition of Christianity. In his memoirs he concluded, "In these negotiations I completely failed. I was not alone. All the others working with me failed also." These men failed because they lacked experience in politics. It would be unfair to judge them as if they had been experienced policymakers. They had just come into power, and their only thought was to destroy the evil aspects of the old society.

The new Meiji ruling class had not developed concrete plans of what to do once they had overthrown the Shogunate. They had had no idea that their hopes would be fulfilled so quickly. There was no unanimity on what sort of new society they wanted to construct. The new leaders agreed on the ideal of a patriarchal government based upon reverence for the Emperor, but there was no decision on how to submit this ideal to practical application. Tokugawa isolation had prevented them from acquiring a knowledge of Western political theory and institutions. They were unable to substitute another theory of government for Confucianism and Buddhism.

Reverence for the Emperor was the strongest ideal of the Restoration. The most important single element contributing to this ideal was the Shinto theory of the National School. Because of the part the scholars of the National School played in the Restoration, Shinto emerged both as the national political theory and as a popular code of ethics. Both of these, of course, were in addition to its religious elements.

From the first, Restoration Shinto was intolerant of other



religions. The reason generally given for this was that neither Confucianism, Buddhism, nor Christianity was genuinely Japanese. All were "contemptible" foreign religions. The members of Restoration Shinto considered Shinto, as they idealized it, to be superior to any other religion. The *Kojiki*, Japan's oldest traditional history, described the characteristics of Shinto that they idealized. Motoori Norinaga and Hirata Atsutane rejected everything which did not conform to the pure Shinto they found in the *Kojiki*. Among the elements they rejected were the popular religious groups which later come to be called "Sect Shinto." After the government-sponsored form of Shinto became the national cult, these sects were granted the status of separate religions. Norinaga and Atsutane called them "vulgar," even though they were manifestations of Shinto. With similar narrow-mindedness, these two men rejected all other faiths outside of Shinto.

The Restoration School continued to dominate Shinto throughout Meiji. It did not depart from the outmoded ideas of Norinaga and Atsutane. It contributed nothing towards helping the new Japan adjust to changing conditions.

The hero of Shimazaki Tōson's novel, *Before the Dawn*, goes to Tokyo and begs Hirata Tetsutane, the successor of Hirata Atsutane, to accept him as a student. Tetsutane refuses to regard him as his own student but insists that he consider himself a student of Atsutane, Tetsutane's own teacher.

Tetsutane, at the time, was the head of the Hirata School. That he should continue merely as the interpreter of Atsutane, and encourage students to imitate Atsutane rather than to think for themselves is understandable in terms of the reverence required of a believer toward the founder of his sect. But the interpretation of his students so closely followed Atsutane's original that it robbed Shinto of realistic and practical leadership. While these men did not develop a practical program from



Restoration Shinto, they also did not change its basic ideas. Thus, the original theories of Norinaga and more particularly of Atsutane continued to influence Shinto thought during early Meiji. An understanding of their ideas is necessary for an understanding of Meiji Shinto itself.

Norinaga applied the name "Shinto" to the indigenous Japanese folkways that had existed before the influx of Chinese language and learning in the sixth century. He emphasized that these folkways differed from both the humanism and the naturalism of the Chinese classics. They had come directly from the Imperial ancestor Amaterasu Ōmikami. The Emperor ruled with the same ancient wisdom as had the gods, neither adding to nor detracting from it. The Japanese were loyal subjects of the Emperor and served him in accordance with instructions handed down from the gods. The benevolent rule of the Emperor kept Japan peaceful and prosperous as it had been under the gods. As a result, Norinaga continued, Japan did not need a severe moral code similar to that developed by mere men in China. He then developed theories of politics and arts based upon this ancient philosophy, and these became the core of Shinto belief during early Meiji.

Norinaga also complained that Buddhism and Confucianism were leading men astray and keeping them from the true way of Shinto:

Everybody of whatever class, wise or foolish even unto the mountain bandits, believes in Buddhism. Those who can read, even a little, make their decisions based on half-understood Confucian precepts. Only one in a million believes in the true way of the gods. Almost the same holds for Shinto priests; rare indeed are those who remember their traditional duties. Though some revere the way of the gods, most of them are also Buddhists and Confucianists.

A third theory of Norinaga's concerned the Chinese concept

of the Mandate of Heaven. The Mandate of Heaven refers to the justification that any particular ruling house had for its authority. The Chinese felt that if a dynasty did not rule correctly, it would lose the right to rule—the Mandate of Heaven. As a result, a new ruling group would replace it. According to Norinaga, this concept was only the justification for a rashness in the national character which permitted wanton usurpation of the throne to continue. Japan excelled other nations, in contrast, because it was a land of gods. It had been founded by the gods, and it was governed with the aid of the gods by a ruler himself a direct descendent of the gods.

Atsutane inherited these theories from Norinaga and developed them. According to legend, Atsutane at the age of twenty-six went to Matsuzaka in the province of Ise to become a disciple of Norinaga. Opposition from some of the other disciples prevented him from succeeding. After Norinaga's death, however, Atsutane strengthened Norinaga's renunciation of foreign religions, particularly Buddhism. He criticized the foreign nature of Buddhism and its doctrine. This is the essence of his attack: India was not the good land the priests described it to be. In reality it was worse than China. The ultimate in Buddhism was to obtain Buddhahood, but neither Buddha nor any Buddhist priest had ever done this. If they were to succeed, would they not be subject to the same regulations as other men? Would they not take a wife and have children in accordance with their basic nature? Would they not respect their parents and serve their masters? Atsutane attacked Buddhism by asking these questions.

The Tokugawa government had relied heavily on Buddhism, but now the time for change had come. As part of overthrowing the Shogunate, they had to weaken Buddhism which had supported the Shogunate. The political movement for Imperial rule developed into an attack on Buddhism.





## *Chapter Two*

### TRANSFORMATION OF SHINTO INTO A NATIONAL RELIGION

#### 1. THE DEPARTMENT OF SHINTO AND THE UNIFICATION OF WORSHIP AND GOVERNMENT

AS has been pointed out, the primary aim of the early Meiji government was to restore Imperial rule. As part of the Restoration, they hoped to cast off all undesirable holdovers from the past. Restoration Shinto, with its emphasis on rediscovering the ancient Japanese society through a study of its literary classics, was an important intellectual force in this renovation.

The Meiji Restoration in addition to this return to the past forced Japan to absorb Western civilization and to modernize as quickly as it could. Every revolution in world history which has had reform as its object has contained two facets: one of reborn conservation and the other of creative reform. This is true both of the Renaissance in Europe and of the Meiji Restoration. In the case of the Meiji Restoration, return to the simple government of classic times represented conservatism and the development of Western civilization represented creative reform, or in this case, modernization. First one, and then the other, dominated policy. This flux between conservatism and modernization constantly harried the new government. A conservative, i. e. Shinto, return to the past was dominant during the early years of Meiji.

One chapter in the Meiji Reformation ended in 1867. On November 9, Tokugawa Keiki, the last Tokugawa Shogun, re-

requested permission to restore the actual powers of government to the Emperor. This permission was granted on the following day. The Restoration Rescript, which officially announced the beginning of Meiji, followed within two months.

This Rescript stated that the Restoration of Imperial Rule meant a return, in fact, to the government used at the time of Jimmu Tennō, the founder of Japan and first Emperor of the Japanese people. The government planned to carry out this program practically by re-establishing the Department of Shinto as it had existed in early Japan. Many people had advocated such a move before the Restoration, but the government finally adopted it on the recommendation of such men as Iwakura Tomomi. Iwakura later became famous as an emissary to the Western powers and a government official.

The actual proposal to re-establish the Department of Shinto was delivered to the Court in December, 1867, after the new officials had asked the advice of Tokugawa Keiki and the various daimyo. On January 19, 1868, the government asked Tokudaiji Sanenori to establish and supervise the new Department. Sanenori asked his advisor, Ōkuni Takamasa of the National School, whether this was a good move. The Department had first been established in connection with the great legal reforms which began in the middle of the seventh century. These reforms in general had introduced into Japan the Chinese system of centralized government. One of the few indigenous Japanese institutions that was incorporated into the new system was a government office charged with worshiping the native Japanese gods. This was the Department of Shinto which some National Scholars traced back to the Emperor Jimmu. It had in fact been in existence through the centuries preceding Meiji, but had ceased to be of importance for almost one thousand years of rule by military cliques. National Scholars like Ōkuni felt it should be restored to its earlier importance. As a result, the government made it one of seven departments in the reorganization of February, 1868. Many leaders of Restoration Shinto



enjoyed important government positions as officials in the Department of Shinto.

On April 22, 1869, the Emperor dispatched one of his officials to venerate the grave of the Emperor Jimmu in Nara Prefecture. Three days later, the Emperor himself led a procession of court nobles and daimyo to the Hall of Ceremonies where they performed a worship service before all the gods of the Shinto pantheon and swore allegiance to the Charter Oath, a general statement of the new government's aims. The Emperor then interpreted the Charter Oath and expressed his desire to continue the Imperial tradition of concern for the people's welfare. By these actions, the Emperor Meiji personally demonstrated the meaning of the unity between worship and government.

Three days later, Shinto priests who had been at the same time Buddhist priests were ordered to let their hair grow long as proof that they had renounced their affiliation with Buddhism. The following day, all of the Shinto priests came directly under the control of the Department of Shinto. This ended the system whereby shrines had been licensed by one of the two large sects, the Yoshida and the Shirakawa, or had had to depend directly on court nobles for favors. The Yoshida and the Shirakawa sects, though they had arisen as a result of theological differences, had become financially and politically powerful, so powerful that they dominated most of Shinto. Shrines not connected with them had been obliged to go directly to the nobility to find other means of financial assistance. This order by the Department of Shinto brought all shrines directly under government control.

In June, 1871, the government took the first step in making Shinto the national religion by issuing the following proclamation:

The function of shrines is to provide a place of worship for all the people of Japan. They are not the sole property of any individual or family. Some shrines still obtain priests in ac-



cordance with ancient procedures, but in most cases the daimyo who originally established the shrine has continued to appoint its priests. Often where ownership of the land has changed several times, the connection with the daimyo who established the shrines has ceased, and they have become laws unto themselves. Even in small villages, the priests have made the succession of the priesthood hereditary and use the shrine revenues for their own income; they consider themselves independent. Priests have become a class apart; this is exactly opposed to unifying worship and government, and has many harmful effects. . . . From now on, the government will appoint the priests for all shrines, from the very largest at Ise to the very smallest throughout the country.

The officials had expressed their intention to unify worship and government three years earlier, that is, in 1868. The three men who did the most to carry out this decision were Ōkuni Takamasa, his pupil Tamamatsu Misao, and the great leader of the Hirata School, Yano Gendō. The government had originally planned to return only to the fourteenth century for its model. At that time, the Emperor had ruled in fact as well as in name for a short period. Tamamatsu Misao, however, as Iwakura Tomomi's advisor, persuaded the officials to go all the way back to the time of Jimmu. Yano Gendō had revealed in petitions presented to the court as early as 1867 that he favored this return to the classic period. The men who had planned the unification of worship and government and who had founded the Department of Shinto agreed. Gendō, claiming that many ancient writers had believed as he did, made a complete reversion to the past the core of his thinking. Though the theories of all these men had been adjusted to fit the exigencies of the time, they did not essentially differ from the thinking of Motoori Norinaga and Hirata Atsutane who had first proposed uniting worship and government.

## 2. THE DISESTABLISHMENT OF BUDDHISM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHRINE SHINTO

The first step in elevating the position of Shinto during the Restoration was, as has been mentioned, to revive the Department of Shinto. The *Taihōryō*, a code of laws promulgated in 701, had reorganized the Department. This reorganized form became the model for the Meiji Department. There is no detailed information on the Department of Shinto as it existed shortly after it was founded. The few historical sources on the period indicate, however, that special government officials performed religious ceremonies as a part of the normal government routine. Detailed regulations describing the officials and their function within this department during the second half of the seventh century are still in existence.

In general, the functions of the Department re-instituted in Meiji were the same as those of its predecessor. They consisted mainly of ceremonial rites. The Department as newly revised no longer offered prayers for the safety of souls in purgatory or carried out services of divination. On the other hand, it took over two new functions: locating Imperial mausolea, some of which had been long forgotten, and propagating Shinto.

The Department of Shinto was re-established on June 11, 1868, after two preparatory bodies had paved the way for it. These preparatory bodies were known as the Shinto Section (*jingi ka*) and the Shinto Office (*jingi jimukyoku*). The Shinto Office existed for one hundred days before the government established the Department of Shinto (*jingi kan*). During this short period, the Shinto Office began the processes of separating Buddhism from Shinto and disestablishing Buddhism, that is, removing the official patronage and status which Buddhism had previously enjoyed. The Grand Council of State issued the first of the regulations which brought this about on April 20, 1868. This was called the Separation Edict. It was mainly a request for



information, but it indicated very clearly the policy that the government planned to follow. First, the officials requested the history of any Shinto shrine which had called Shinto gods by Buddhist names, that is, which had confused Shinto and Buddhism. Secondly, they requested the location of any letters or calligraphy written by Emperors. Thirdly, they desired information on shrines which had used Buddhist statues to symbolize Shinto deities. They also ordered that the Shinto temples discard any Buddhist statues or implements of worship.

As described in Chapter One, the Meiji government came into power with the conviction of Shinto superiority. A proclamation issued April 5, 1868, explicitly stated that "henceforth the government will be based on a return to the Imperial Rule of Jimmu Tennō." This regulation specified that of the three religions which had previously nurtured the Japanese—Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism—only one, Shinto, would remain as the basis of government. Many people thought this proclamation foreshadowed the destruction of Buddhism. But the proclamation did not say that. It removed Buddhism and Confucianism from their previously privileged position, but it did not advocate their destruction. The Department of Shinto was, in fact, just like the headquarters of a religious sect. On August 14, 1869, however, it was given a position in the government above the Grand Council of State. Its officials were all Shinto priests. This was a part of government policy. In contrast to this preferred treatment of Shinto, the government handled the various sects of Buddhism as they did ordinary individuals, granting them no special rights.

An order relating to the future status of Buddhist priests followed the Separation Edict by one month. This commanded all Buddhist priests who had been connected with Shinto shrines to return to secular life. At the same time, it re-ordained them as Shinto priests. Those who for any reason did not want to accept the appointment could do as they pleased but had to resign from the temples. Those who agreed to become Shinto



priests had to don their new vestments immediately. This ended the confusion that the Tokugawa had caused by placing Buddhist priests in Shinto shrines. Later in the same month, the government decreed that funeral services for Shinto priests or any member of their families would be Shinto rather than Buddhist.

The government could not effect such a transformation without protest. In order to weaken this protest, it appointed "propagandists" in 1869 to popularize the official reasons for founding the Department of Shinto. These propagandists are described in detail later. The important thing here is that the Imperial Rescript which announced their appointment also specified that the theories of Shinto alone would form the basis for morality. The authorities hoped to use this Restoration Shinto philosophy to quiet popular unrest.

In February, 1871, the government confiscated all temple lands. In the following June, it moved the various Buddhist statues and ceremonial implements which had been located in the Imperial Palace to a temple outside the palace. One month later, it abolished the special ranks which had been accorded temples whose priests had been members of the former nobility. In October, 1871, the Imperial Household gave up the Buddhist ceremonies it previously had commissioned. In March, 1872, the government revoked all the special ranks and privileges of Buddhist priests and the function of keeping census records which Tokugawa policy had given the temples.

Thus, the new government completely rescinded the economic, legal, and social advantages which its predecessor had granted Buddhism. On the other hand, it encouraged Shinto with direct assistance. It did not specifically order that Buddhism should be exterminated, but its directives on the subject were vague. Clan authorities often interpreted the orders they received to mean that the central government wanted to eradicate Buddhism. The central government did not realize the effects its policy would have in the rural areas where the people had not yet

recovered from the shock of the Restoration. Local clan orders issued as a result of the directives from the central government sometimes virtually exterminated Buddhism. These excesses greatly shocked the people. The central government feared possible revolt because of the clan policies. Therefore, it clearly expressed its position in a number of regulations. One, issued November 2, 1868, explicitly denied any government intention to eradicate Buddhism. It also clearly repeated that the Buddhist priests who had lost their official status might re-enter the Buddhist priesthood, remain in secular life, or enter the Shinto priesthood. Another regulation, issued in 1871, answered the protest of a temple against consolidation with other temples. A number of clans, particularly Toyama, had been forcing temples to unite as a means of reducing Buddhist strength. In this regulation, the government plainly stated that the Imperial Court's intention was not to abolish or consolidate temples. Since Toyama was one of the centers of militant Buddhism, the government ordered it to relax its regulations in the interests of public peace. This concern for public peace is one reason why the Meiji government repeated frequently that separation of Shinto from Buddhism did not mean the destruction of Buddhism. It feared violence, particularly in the areas where the Shin Sect had strength.

At first, the new rulers had assigned leadership in the Department of Shinto to members of the court nobility who had traditionally held such posts. The task of determining department policy and its application, however, fell to two members of the old Tsuwano clan, Kamei Koremi, the former daimyo, and his follower, Fukuha Bisei, each of whom subsequently held a succession of policy-making positions. Fukuha was elected to lecture the Emperor Meiji on the *Kojiki* when the latter visited the East Honganji in 1868. Though Tsuwano was a small and isolated clan on the northwest coast of Honshu, its members played an important part in Meiji Shinto history. In fact, its religious policy was a miniature and a prelude to national



religious policy. Koremi and Bisei naturally had a personal antipathy toward Buddhism. At the same time, other officials in the Department of Shito, like Hirata Tetsutane, were Restoration Shintoists. Provincial officers agreed with the personal attitudes of men like Koremi, Bisei, and Tetsutane, and assumed these attitudes to be government policy. Thus, the idea that the government wanted to eradicate Buddhism developed almost spontaneously.

Three factors contributed to the strength of this sentiment: the rapid development of the National School; nationalistic rejection of Buddhism as a foreign faith; and degeneracy of the Buddhist priesthood. There were many Shinto attempts to destroy Buddhism. The National School, particularly followers of Hirata Atsutane, often led such attempts. Many Confucianists also were strongly anti-Buddhist, as is shown in the Introduction. Confucianism during Tokugawa had encouraged respect for the rule of right and contempt for the rule of might. Applied to conditions in Japan, it considered the Imperial line the rule of right since the Emperors had reigned over the people with beneficence and virtue; it considered the Shogunate the rule of might because of its oppressive policies. Therefore, respect for the rule of right and contempt for dictatorship became respect for the Emperor and desire to return to direct Imperial rule. Criticism of Buddhism's opportunistic relations with the Shogunate also developed out of this thinking. Thus, both the Confucians and the National Scholars opposed Buddhism. From the Muromachi Period (1378—1573) on, Buddhism had gradually been losing vitality. The people, as a result, had begun to criticize its overly aristocratic nature, its government functions, and the laxity of priestly morals. These all made it easy to accept the misapprehension that the government wanted to eradicate Buddhism.

The government had removed Buddhism from its previous position of power and had established the Department of Shinto as a means of unifying worship and government. But that which



risers with the tides of history also declines when those tides run out. The day was approaching when the spirit of pure Shinto which had brought on the movement against Buddhism would disappear from the minds of government leaders.

### 3. THE SUPPRESSION OF CATHOLICISM AND THE PREFERMENT OF SHINTO

Ōkuma Shigenobu was one of the first officers in the Department of Shinto. His reactions to the problem of unifying worship and government are typical of those of many administrators. Ōkuma says in his memoirs that the decision to separate Shinto from Buddhism might well be called a "revolution." Just when society was in the midst of the turmoil caused by this decision, a group of Catholics who had not turned apostate during Tokugawa appeared in Urakami, near Nagasaki.

At that time, one of the great problems facing the government was whether or not to open relations with the West. Much anti-Western sentiment remained, and the discovery of Christians who had evaded police vigilance for over two centuries increased suspicion of Christianity and of the West. The Emperor sent an envoy to Nagasaki to inquire into the problem early in 1868. This envoy had very set opinions regarding these Catholics. He had them seized and interrogated twenty-four of the leaders. A few months later, Kido Takayoshi (Kōin) replaced him and lectured the senior members of eighty households on their duties as Japanese. He had thirteen beheaded as an example to the others. Later, the officials established a branch of the Ise Shrine and a school at Urakami to convert the remaining Christians.

The government attempted to build the shrine with local labor, but hardly anyone from Urakami would agree to work. The Nagasaki court sent out one of its counsellors to Kyoto for instructions on the matter. He arranged a conference between

the Prime Minister's Office and the Foreign Office. They submitted a draft of measures to the leaders of the government on May 14, 1868. As a result of this meeting, the following order went out to the various clans the next day:

During the recent revival of Imperial rule, Christianity has begun to spread again and is likely to do great harm to the state. We cannot allow this to continue. Bring the leaders together and explain to them the error of their ways. If they repent, destroy all Christian books and images and have them swear allegiance before the Shinto gods. If they refuse to repent, we have no recourse other than to behead a number of the leaders, expose the heads, and to exile the rest to forced labor in other clans. After a number of years, when they have lost every trace of their faith and when they have manifested complete repentance, they may go home.

The representatives of the Western powers had reacted vigorously to the continuing suppression of Christianity even before this edict appeared. Just one month earlier, the Grand Council of State had posted new signs containing the following: "The evil religion Christianity remains strictly prohibited as heretofore." Strong objections from the Powers had surprised the government: The consuls of the United States, Great Britain, Portugal, Denmark, Holland, and France resident in Nagasaki complained about the punishment of the Urakami Christians to the Peace Preservation Officer of Kyushu who was at the same time the presiding judge of the court. This was on May 12, 1868. On May 31, a number of judges in the Nagasaki Court ruled that this verdict did not conflict with the treaties.

The Imperial government could not take a firm stand against the Powers since it had persuaded them less than three months earlier to remain neutral in its war with the Shogunate. It adopted a more moderate program and decided not to execute even the leaders among the Christians. Instead, all the offenders



were sent to large clans far distant from Nagasaki. There they were gathered together for indoctrination.

Ōkuma Shigenobu commented as follows on the fact that the Meiji government continued Tokugawa policies toward Christianity:

Countries like Spain and Portugal have actually used Christianity to interfere in politics or to steal territory. They may have had similar designs on our country, for which reason everyone opposed both foreign intercourse and Christianity. The desire to continue isolation and to expel the barbarians which was the immediate cause of the Restoration became one more reason for popular distrust of diplomacy and for opposition to Christianity. In addition to the threat of Christianity, Buddhism was daily becoming more corrupt. Its priests and teachers could not lead the people toward a better way of life. The priests had become an additional burden on an already heavy load. For these reasons, people came to believe that neither Christianity nor Buddhism should remain in Japan. The people needed a religion which would not conflict with the basic nature of Japan as it had existed for twenty-five hundred years, which would nurture public morality, and which would encourage the people's spirits. What religion had these characteristics? The people, fearful of Christianity, disgusted with Buddhist corruption, and enraged at the excesses of the Shogunate, rallied around Shinto and turned with the force of a great river to the separation of Shinto from Buddhism. . . . The thousands of shrines which had honored the spirits of forefathers and heroes became pure and fitting places for the citizen to express his reverence. At this moment, the government had to proclaim Shinto the national religion.

Ōkuma went on to say that in the past Shinto had not been an organized religion and that its extremely simple ceremonies did not befit a religion. Therefore, it had to develop a dogma



and to popularize it. The "propagandists," who will be discussed more fully later, had this duty.

It is impossible to develop a dogma and propagate a religion without an outstanding personality like Jesus, Buddha, or Mohammed, however. No such individual appeared to change Shinto into a vital religion. This was, in Ōkuma's opinion, the reason for the failure of the government's policy favoring Shinto:

The spirit of the times produces great men, and great men in turn are led by the spirit of the times. Particularly in times of revolt, great men rise up and act as mediators, bring peace to their country, and succor to their people. The Restoration did produce a few great political leaders but no religious leadership equal to the task. Therefore, it was impossible to utilize the tides of revolution to make Shinto into a true religion.

Most government administrators at the time agreed with Ōkuma. He goes on to comment on his experience as an official in the Department of Shinto:

My job was to handle the diplomatic problems and necessary negotiations arising from Christianity. This assignment stimulated my interest in religion. I had never before had much knowledge or interest in religion, but this gave me the opportunity to cultivate it. As I look back, my actions seem very rash. Many officials at the time felt that: "The Restoration has at last made us forget isolation. Day by day as intercourse with the United States and Europe increases, those countries are helping us to overcome our shortcomings. Therefore, Christianity is bound to become, sooner or later, a strong religion in Japan, particularly since there is nothing to take the place of Buddhism." I shared this opinion.

Ōkuma wanted to develop and maintain Japan's spiritual independence in the face of the common fear that Christianity

would become very strong once Japan was opened to foreign trade. Seen in retrospect, their concern appears unjustified, but this should not obscure the fact that many were concerned.

Their policy toward Christians did not succeed. The government scattered the Urakami Christians among various clans where it tried to indoctrinate them in Shinto, but as Ōkuma reports, "This did not work; I consider it a great historical mistake." To consider the folk religion of Shinto as equal with the organized religions of Christianity and Buddhism was a mistake from the beginning. When the government administrators began to recognize their mistake, they drifted apart from the Restoration Shintoists. Shortly thereafter, the latter began to bewail their loss of authority at the Imperial Court and in the government.

This split between the administrators and the Shintoists resulted from differing conclusions regarding Japan's condition. Tamamatsu Misao, one of Iwakura Tomomi's trusted advisors, "sighed and said that" he "had been betrayed by evil men" when the Imperial Court adopted the Charter Oath as policy. Tamamatsu and Iwakura together had urged the government to adopt Shinto. They parted company as a result of the differences which arose at this time.

#### 4. PRACTICAL POLICIES FOR MAKING SHINTO INTO THE NATIONAL RELIGION

All of the officials in the new government shared the fear that Christianity would spread through Japan and threaten their authority if they established relations with the West. Ono Genshin increased their apprehension by a petition delivered to the court in 1868. In this petition, he described the urgent need to prevent Christianity from spreading in Japan, particularly since international relations had been formally resumed. He suggested that the government support Shinto as a means of



preventing the people from turning to Christianity. This petition started the chain of events which led eventually to the appointment of official "propagandists." This new government post "had no precedent, even in antiquity."

The government established the Office of Propaganda within the Department of Shinto on November 2, 1869. Even though it had been established and staffed, however, its members did practically nothing. One of them suggested that this lack of activity resulted from the fact that there was no shrine which could serve as the spiritual center for the worship and instruction which was the main job of the Office. A shrine was built to answer the need. It measured thirty-six by fifty-four feet and was constructed entirely of Japanese cypress. Each of the three sections faced south. The center one honored the eight gods of creation who were worshiped by the four Imperial Princes as well as the Shirakawa and Yoshida families. These families had for generations been in charge of the two main Shinto sects. The section on the east honored all of the gods except those of the Imperial Household, and the one of the west honored the spirits of the Imperial ancestors. The propaganda movement finally started officially on January 18, 1870, when the images representing the gods were installed in the shrine.

The first services were held on February 1, 1870, New Year's day by the calendar then in use. The Emperor had planned to worship at the shrine and hear the first lecture in the new program on February 3, but was unable to attend because he had caught cold. On February 14, the Emperor had recovered enough to take part in ceremonies. After they had been finished, he returned to the throne room and there explained the details of the new program to the assembled officials. At this point, one of the newly appointed propagandists came forward to a position opposite the Emperor but not directly facing him. He then lectured the Emperor on how Jimmu Tennō had built an altar on Mt. Torimi and there had worshiped his ancestor, Amaterasu Ōmikami.



The preceding paragraph presents a general picture of the instruction the propagandists offered. The government instituted the Office of Propaganda hoping that it would make Shinto into a real national religion. Because of the internal weakness of the government before it replaced the clans by prefectures in 1871, however, the plan did not succeed. One writer expressed his dissatisfaction as follows:

Now the Department of Shinto is superior to the Grand Council of State and the gods are housed in a special building. In spite of this, the only activity in the Department is occasional ceremonies. There are no regulations for the local shrines or provision for their repair. We members of the Office of Propaganda have become like priests who are interested only in our new shrine.

Later, the Department of Shinto took up this question of regulations for local shrines. In November, 1870, it petitioned the throne as follows:

We have issued no regulations for the shrines since the Restoration, so we cannot expect to have them reform quickly if we issue some now. The shrines have no idea what to do, and the provinces are becoming increasingly confused since there is no set policy. We frequently receive requests for aid, but since we do not have established procedures for making decisions, both we and they are confused. The theory of unifying worship and government will have no meaning unless regulations explaining just what it means are sent to the most remote provincial temples. This Department recently sent a questionnaire to the various cities and provinces requesting their opinion on procedures. We have done this because there are no other regulations to follow. An additional problem is to explain the urgency of propagating Shinto to the local temples. If the government does not explicitly express its particular reverence

toward Shinto gods, it cannot expect any results. We humbly beseech that the Imperial Court first decide the general outlines of its policy and then issue specific regulations. We further request that the Court consider the difficulties of carrying this out in various areas, and that it accomplish the reform gradually.

As a preliminary to a unified national program, the Department of Shinto intended to rotate the personnel of all the shrines.

In addition to the Office of Propaganda, the Department of Shinto had the function of caring for Imperial mausolea. An office called the Caretaker of Imperial Mausolea was established on October 17, 1869, to perform this duty. Four days later, the Department of Shinto assumed control over this office. The *Engishiki*, a code of laws enacted in 905, had stipulated that this office be included within the Department of the Interior (*jibu shō*) which handled such other miscellaneous duties as court music and contact with foreigners. The Meiji government switched it to the Department of Shinto, apparently because the conception of honoring souls of the dead in general, and of the Imperial line in particular, had changed considerably.

Two of the pressing problems in making Shinto the national religion dealt with death and the pollution resulting from death. The authorities worried particularly about correct procedure in the case of an Imperial death. Before they had actually defined the relation of the Imperial spirits to Shinto as a religion, the government had already repaired the Imperial mausolea in order to placate the spirits within them. Repair of the Imperial mausolea had from the beginning formed a part of their plan to unify worship and government. For over six hundred years, not even one mausoleum had received proper respect. Some supporters of the Emperor, either on their own initiative or with the permission of the Shogunate, had begun to repair the run-down Imperial mausolea and to search for the remains of others as an expression of their respect for the Imperial family. One



of the supporters was Tokugawa Mitsukuni, first compiler of *The Great History of Japan*. The Emperor Kōmei had also been deeply concerned over the graves of his forefathers and, in 1853, had privately requested the agent of the Shogun in Kyoto to repair the mausolea of a number of Emperors including that of Jimmu.

At the same time, an advisor to the Utsunomiya Clan, Mase Wasaburō, petitioned the Shogunate to care for the Imperial mausolea as a means of leading Japan back to her traditional ideals and improving public morality. Mase then found a patron under whose name he publicized his own ideas. Later, the Shogunate appointed Mase Commissioner of Imperial Mausolea, and the Imperial Court as a result of his petition re-established the office of Caretaker of Imperial Mausolea. In the year 1869, as has been seen, the Restoration government transferred this office to the Department of Shinto.

For some reason, with two or three exceptions, special shrines had not been constructed to honor the spirits of Imperial ancestors. Instead, priests conducted services at the mausolea themselves, the government later distinguishing between the graves of Emperors on the basis of the historical contribution that each Emperor had made during his lifetime. During the centuries when Buddhism had been the official religion, one room in the palace had contained tablets bearing the names of the Imperial ancestors. When, after the Restoration, the Imperial Household gave up Buddhist services in favor of Shinto ceremonies, the government erected a shrine for the worship of the Imperial ancestors along with the eight great gods and the lesser gods of the Shinto pantheon. Later, the Emperor ordered that another shrine be built within the palace to honor the Imperial mirror representing Amaterasu Ōmikami.

The reason for worshipping the spirits of the Imperial ancestors in the palace was to strengthen Shinto by clearly demonstrating how completely Buddhism had been separated from Shinto within the Imperial Court itself. The government appointment of



propagandists, on the other hand, was a concrete attempt to gain support for Shinto among the people.

## 5. SHINTO FUNERALS AND THE SHINTO PARISH SYSTEM

The Tokugawa Shogunate had established Buddhist parishes, that is, had assigned each Japanese to membership in a temple, as a means of suppressing Christianity. Buddhist priests from the local temple conducted all funerals. Of course, there were a few exceptions. Members of The Yoshida family, one of the families who traditionally supplied Shinto leadership, received permission in 1688 to choose the type of ceremony, including Shinto, they desired for themselves. During the eighteenth century, a number of other families received similar permission, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the practice had become quite widespread among priestly families. As the Restoration approached, however, Shinto funeral ceremonies became more and more important in the minds of Shintoists as a means for strengthening the position of Shinto among all the people.

A detailed example of one clan, Tsuwano, will suffice to show how this happened. As has been pointed out, the religious policies of this clan later became a model for the central government. It had allowed all of its priests to use Shinto ceremonies since the eighteen-thirties. In 1868, when the daimyo was planning to separate Shinto from Buddhism, he ordered Fukuha Bisei to study and promulgate Shinto funeral practices. The daimyo considered man's greatest moral obligation to be respect for the gods and worship of his own ancestors. Political reform would arise from respect for human morality, and this respect in turn depended on a return to Shinto funeral ceremonies as a means of worshipping ancestors:

The deep meaning behind reforming funeral ceremonies is to

revive preference for Shinto. From the beginning of time, the will of the gods has been to rule the whole world in peace and to let all its peoples live in safety. It is too bad that the people do not realize this, and that they do not exert every effort for the land of the gods. Respect alone does not suffice. The things which please the gods, that is, which we may call the way of the gods, are to entrust our hearts with the best of our ability to the nation; to worship the gods, particularly our own ancestors; to continue religious observances; and to maintain national peace. I as daimyo and all my subjects should perform these Shinto ceremonies, for it is very difficult to express our complete sentiments by means of the Buddhist rites which we have been using. Since by so doing we loyally fulfil our obligations to our ancestors, this should please them and deepen our own satisfaction. Let us each remember his ancestors and the debt which he owes the Emperor, and let us unite with one mind to continue our religious observances forever.

For political reasons, the clans had varying degrees of difficulty in trying to revert to Shinto funeral ceremonies. But in every case, Shinto services were held for the spirits of loyalists whom the Shogunate had put to death right before the Restoration. Since these men had sacrificed their lives trying to remove the defilement caused by the Tokugawa preferment of Buddhism, it was felt their souls would not rest in peace until Shinto services were performed.

The first commoner to turn his attention to the problem of Shinto funeral rites and eventually to gain permission to use them himself was a village headman named Kurazawa Gizui. He started about 1867 to preach that one could not safely entrust to Buddhism important ceremonies dealing with human welfare. He then began to encourage others to sever their connection from the Buddhist temples. In order to further his cause, Kurazawa resigned his position as village headman and shuttled back and forth between the commissioner of shrines and temples in



Kyoto and the local government offices. Altogether, he spent four years and all his accumulated savings. Individual acts like this as well as formally organized movements were part of the movement to revive Shinto funerals.

Disestablishment of Buddhism and the spread of Shinto funeral ceremonies were both necessary parts of Shinto's development into a national religion. The Shinto Parish System was the third concrete policy in establishing the supremacy of Shinto. In November, 1869, the government requested the opinion of the Department of Shinto on two problems. One was how to treat requests for changes from Buddhist to Shinto funeral ceremonies. The other concerned methods for controlling any remnants of Christianity by means of substituting a Shinto parish system for the Buddhist parish system. This is the answer to the second question: "A law establishing a Shinto parish system should be modeled after the old law which set up the Buddhist Parish System." Accordingly, during June of the following year, ten clans in Kyushu set up temporary Shinto parish regulations and, three months later, all of the clans received orders to adopt similar regulations:

1. Everyone, noble, samurai, or common, who is registered in the census books, shall enroll in the shrine of the local deity of his residence. He will receive from the shrine a certificate of enrollment which he must keep in his possession.
2. Men who are being adopted in marriage, brides, servants, and any others who have changed their residence will immediately enroll in the shrine registry of the locality to which they have moved. They will then receive a certificate of membership. They will also receive a certificate from the shrine where they were previously registered, and they must keep both in their possession. In the event that a bride, servant, or anyone else returns to the place from which he originally came, however, he will return his second certificate and have his name removed from that list.



3. If a child be born, either noble or common, his parents shall take him to the shrine of the local god and enroll him. In return, they will receive a certificate from the shrine. The period within which this will be done may vary according to local customs, but in no event will it exceed fifty days.

The census law passed in the spring of 1871 confirmed this order. The Grand Council of State also sent regulations to the various shrines concerning the system and the certificates which the shrines were to distribute. These were clear measures to force the Shinto faith upon the people. The government had completely eradicated the last traces of Buddhism as an official religion and had substituted Shinto for it.

## Chapter Three

### FAILURE OF SHINTO AS THE NATIONAL RELIGION

#### 1. THE "GREAT RELIGION" AND THE SEPARATION OF GOVERNMENT FROM RELIGION

THE Shinto Ministry (*jingi shō*) replaced the Department of Shinto on September 22, 1871. Within a year, the Department of Religion and Education (*kyōbu shō*) superseded the Shinto Ministry. The government considered it neither wise nor practicable to continue its extreme favoritism toward Shinto because of the traditional strength of Buddhism and because of the imminent possibility of Christian growth. The attitude which replaced this preferment may be described as all-embracing emperor worship. This shift from the Department of Shinto to the Shinto Ministry and then to the Department of Religion and Education expresses this changing attitude in terms of official policy. In 1870-1, the government began to emphasize the elements of emperor worship in Shinto after giving careful consideration to contemporary social conditions.

At every time and in every society, reform elicits conservative reaction. The early years of Meiji are no exception; reaction against the government's sweeping social and political changes frequently flared into violence. In 1870, a number of samurai plotted a restoration of the Shogunate, partly because they disagreed with the Meiji government in general, and more particularly because they were angry at the power of Satsuma, Chōshū, and Tosa in this government. They secretly set up an "Office for Investigating Loyalty to the Meiji Government." Its ostensible

purpose was to control samurai whom the government suspected of continuing loyalty to the Shogunate. Its real purpose, on the other hand, was to collect men who opposed the new government and to organize them into a force for restoring the Shogunate. The government discovered and quelled this conspiracy in July of the same year.

After the administrative change from clans to prefectures in 1871, a number of farmers approached a prefectural office and demanded that the former daimyo be made governor. At the same time, they petitioned for a decrease in taxes. They revolted when the officials did not meet their demands.

Another example of conservatism concerned the *eta*, or outcasts, whose choice of occupation and place of residence had been severely limited by government regulation and social custom. The Meiji government rescinded all the legal restrictions on the *eta* in 1871 and encouraged them to integrate themselves into the rest of society. Later the same year, groups of farmers petitioned that the government return the *eta* to their former position. In one instance, when the government did not agree to their request, five or six thousand of them banded together and got out of control, burning houses and offices and killing some of the local officials.

A fourth example of reaction occurred in what is now Niigata Prefecture where a peasant revolt originated because of discontent over the irrigation system of the Shinano River. Several thousands of these peasants were threatening prefectural offices when a number of Tokugawa supporters seized control of the group. They hoped to use the peasants in an attempt to restore the Shogunate. They caused great damage, burning houses and killing or wounding government officials. Garrison troops sent from Tokyo finally re-established order.

Such strong conservative reaction greatly hampered the new government. The authorities needed strength to suppress dissident samurai and farmers, and to mold public opinion. The government had promised in the Charter Oath to permit public



discussion. As a partial fulfillment of this promise, it had established a central legislative body whose members were selected by daimyo. In order to strengthen bureaucratic control, the government abolished this legislative body when it substituted prefectures for clans. As might have been expected, government policy toward religion underwent similar changes. It had attempted a popular spiritual mobilization to familiarize the people with its concept of national polity and to provide a foundation for civilization like that in the West. The Shinto Ministry could not carry out such a mobilization. One authority has said: "Saigō Takamori accused the Shinto Ministry of being nothing more than a lounging place for officials. He advocated that the Department of Religion and Education be established and that this Department devote itself to doctrinal research." Once such criticism had been leveled against it, the Shinto Ministry's days were limited.

On January 21, 1872, the *Sain*, or Legislative Bureau, issued the following statement:

The government has now set up the Grand Council of State and decided upon government administrative areas and offices. Even if this policy succeed, the government in our humble opinion is not concentrating enough on spiritual matters; it is not defining the concept of national polity and the duties of its citizens; it is not strengthening indoctrination.

This statement went on to suggest closer co-operation between the government and religion. Specifically, it recommended that the Emperor perform religious rites in close co-operation with his government officials. To facilitate this, the *Sain* suggested that a place of worship to Amaterasu Ōmikami be constructed within the palace grounds; that important affairs of state be decided in front of this shrine; and that the mirror, the symbol of Imperial authority which was then in Ise, be moved into the palace. It then continued:

Establish a Department of Religion and Education and assign it the duty of handling all religions which deal with ethical problems. Appoint teachers, not only of Shinto but also of Buddhism and Confucianism, to educate and enlighten the people. It is important to discriminate among the many religions. All men naturally respect their religion and entrust the lots of themselves and their families to it. Therefore, any religion which opposes our established laws should, by all means, be proscribed.

Thus, the members of the *Sain* obliquely showed their lack of confidence in the movement to propagate a national religion which the Department of Shinto had started. The attitude of the government officials is easy to surmise. By replacing the Shinto Ministry, itself the successor to the Department of Shinto, by the Department of Religion and Education, they hoped to use Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism together, instead of Shinto alone, to indoctrinate the people in accordance with the aims of the state.

One petition presented to the government about this time states that the farmers still cling to their traditional beliefs although the upper classes all agree with the program of unifying worship and government. Any sudden attempt to change their belief, the petition continues, would temporarily confuse them. Buddhist leaders who have the confidence of the farmers should broaden their traditional doctrine and should "help revive Shinto by going from door to door, instructing the people to pay heed to the nature of the universe from the point of view of Japan's national character, to employ themselves diligently at their current occupation, and to increase their knowledge and the people's wealth." It is easy to see from this petition that pure Shinto as a state religion could not meet the needs of the farmers. Its author hoped that Buddhism might change its character completely and assist in strengthening Shinto. A secret movement among the Buddhists themselves supported the intent of this petition. Two priests, a father and a son, requested in 1872 that



Buddhist priests also, if they were capable and virtuous, should be used in educating the people. Thus, some Buddhist priests finally joined the government's drive for a national religion.

Another reason for dissolving the Shinto Ministry was the complaints against Japan's religious policy which the Iwakura Mission, then in Europe, received. The Mission urged the dissolution of the Shinto Ministry as part of a program to convince the Western nations that Japan was not persecuting Christianity and, thus, to expedite treaty revision.

The actual directive which abolished the Shinto Ministry on April 21, 1872, read in part as follows: "Let the purely formal functions be transferred to the Board of Ceremonies, while the Department of Religion and Education take over the duties of religious propaganda. Transfer the various staff members to their new offices as soon as possible."

The government quickly established the Department of Religion and Education to handle the second of these functions. Its organization table, general program, and the basic ideas that it was to teach were all adopted within four days after it was established. On May 31, 1872, the government decided on fourteen ranks of government priests. They were to be called "national priests" and were actually to preach to the people. The first appointment to these new posts were the chief priests of major Shinto shrines like the Ise Shrine; the heads of large Buddhist organizations such as the East and West Honganji; and other Shinto and Buddhist notables. Later, the duties of national priests greatly increased and more men were needed to handle the extra work. In August, 1872, the Department made all Shinto priests national priests. In February, 1873, it pressed into service everyone who could help convert his fellow Japanese. The list included provincial leaders, vaudeville entertainers, soothsayers, professional storytellers, and actors. The government outlined the content of what they were to teach in what have come to be known as the Three Doctrines. The Three Doctrines, promulgated on June 3, 1873, are as follows:



1. To embody respect for the gods and love for Japan.
2. To preach "heavenly reason" and "the way of humanity."
3. To revere the Emperor and to obey the authorities.

This was clearly more than nationalistic Shinto pure and simple. The government had added other ethical elements better suited to education. The new religion was called *Daikyō*, or "Great Religion."

The authorities had to interpret these very vague doctrines for the people. Therefore, in 1873, the *Daikyōin* prepared two sets of subjects which dealt with the meaning of the Three Doctrines and could be used as sermon material. The *Daikyōin* was the organization which carried out in detail the plans of the Department of Religion and Education. It will be described later. One of the sets of topics had eleven articles, and the other had seventeen. The eleven were:

1. The benevolence of the gods and the Emperor.
2. The immortality of the soul.
3. The belief that the gods gave birth to all things Japanese.
4. The relationship between the gods of the afterlife and the world of the living.
5. Patriotism.
6. Worship of the gods.
7. The magical ceremony of infusing a fresh spirit into a man.
8. Loyalty to one's lord.
9. Filial piety.
10. Harmonious conjugal relations.
11. Ceremonial purification.

These emphasized Shinto studies and national morality. They became the core curriculum for less well-educated priests.

The list of seventeen subjects contained:

1. The national characteristics of Imperial Japan.

2. The complete change that has come with Imperial rule.
3. The immutability of traditional morality.
4. The necessity of keeping government institutions consistent with the times.
5. Man's superiority over animals.
6. The obligation to teach every citizen.
7. The obligation of every citizen to study.
8. Intercourse with foreign countries.
9. The rights and duties of a citizen.
10. The use of both body and mind for the state.
11. The mutability of political theories and the immutability of the Imperial Institution.
12. Rapid modernization.
13. Rule by law.
14. Public law and private law.
15. National wealth and armed strength.
16. The duty of paying taxes.
17. The production and invention of material wealth.

These subjects were more sophisticated and included other aspects of culture besides religion. They formed the core of the training for more intelligent priests.

By means of the eleven and seventeen subjects, the authorities gave to the national priests a task of public education which had very little connection with Shinto, but which had strong legal and political overtones. One duty of the priests was to purvey universal national education based on the Three Doctrines and their explanations, the eleven and the seventeen subjects. Another object, as was stated a few pages previously, was to prevent reactionary movements by explaining the aims of the new government. It was in fulfilling this second duty that the national priests changed from purely religious leaders to hucksters pushing the government line.

Buddhism, which had received a staggering blow when separated from Shinto, attempted recovery by announcing its own



program in line with the government's nationalistic objectives. This was called the movement to "Protect the Country and Aid Religion." Its main activity was at about the time the Department of Religion and Education was founded (1872). The Buddhist priests who had been made national priests jointly petitioned the government in the early summer of 1872 to establish the *Daikyōin*. Their objective was to get up a course of study in which priests of all the Buddhist sects could participate together. The Department acceded to their request by establishing a planning committee. In spite of the fact that the plan had been devised by the Buddhists for their own use, the *Daikyōin*, when completed, became jointly Shinto and Buddhist. This was in response to requests from the Shinto priests. Shinto received preferential treatment, however, and was emphasized to the extent that it practically eclipsed the Buddhist elements. As might have been expected, the Buddhists were angered when the Shinto priests seized the initiative in the *Daikyōin* and went so far as to use it to persecute other religions. An important priest of Sect Shinto who had gone into the *Daikyōin* later said:

The Department of Religion and Education only issued directives until it established the *Daikyōin*. The *Daikyōin* undertook active administration. It worked with both Shinto and Buddhism and adjusted all problems arising between them. The leaders of each sect along with appropriate clerical personnel were made officials in the *Daikyōin*. There are a number of interesting tales of Buddhist priests wearing their ceremonial robes and performing Shinto rituals. I thought the *Daikyōin* should not include both Shinto and Buddhism. I predicted that it could never function smoothly and would soon fail. When I told the Minister of Religion and Education that making offerings before Shinto gods while wearing Buddhist ceremonial robes was like a child's game, he was infuriated and said that if this were child's play, then all government was



child's play. It is not hard to imagine the impotent rage of the Buddhists, who were forced to do what Shinto leaders called child's play.

Shimaji Mokurai, a priest of the Shin Sect who accompanied the Iwakura Mission, sent a letter home while still abroad in 1872. In this, he requested that the government cease its control over religion and abolish the *Daikyōin*. He demanded the separation of government from religion as follows:

In my own opinion, China and Japan have frequently confused government and religion. Europeans have also erred on this point. As a result, they have harmed their culture greatly. There have been many improvements in the Western world, however. I had hoped that the same improvements would take place in Japan, but apparently just the opposite is happening. Let me mention briefly one or two points on which I disagree. The first of the Three Doctrines enjoins reverence toward the gods and patriotism. Reverence toward the gods is religion. Patriotism is government. Is this not confusing religion and government?

Mokurai returned to Japan in July, 1873, and, thenceforth, frequently petitioned the authorities, both of the government and of the Honganji, the headquarters of his sect, to separate government from religion and to permit religious freedom. Other priests returning from trips abroad supported Mokurai's position. Working together they helped bring about a number of changes in 1873. The government eventually abandoned attempts to make Shinto a national religion and stopped trying to unify worship and government. Changes accompanying the shift in policy included the removal of Shinto priests from local or national government payrolls and the termination of compulsory membership in Shinto shrines. In May, 1875, the government abolished the *Daikyōin* itself. This was one victory for religious freedom.

## 2. THE DISESTABLISHMENT OF SHINTO

The simple movement to separate Shinto from Buddhism had developed by 1875 to the place where the government was teaching all Japanese people to accept such concepts as "the unity of worship and government," and "the Emperor Jimmu as the progenitor of all Japanese." The officials then tried to go farther and to elevate Shinto to a position of equality with other religions. In doing this, they neglected the basic characteristics and history of Shinto. The Meiji officials wanted a national religion in order to oppose foreign, particularly European and American, culture. This was all the interest they really had in Shinto. The government constructed shrines to the Emperor Jimmu all over Japan as a means of giving tangible form to their plans. The Department of Shinto, on the other hand, gave an intellectual content to their religion which alienated it from the common people. It was a far cry from the traditional popular belief.

The slogans like "Back to the Emperor Jimmu" and "The Unity of Worship and Government" served to overthrow feudalism, but they could not guide the new society which followed. For the leaders who made up the slogans, the Restoration was not renaissance, nor was it predicting the future by using the past as an example: it was a complete return to primitive society. The authorities tried to compare their Shinto, reclothed in its old garb, to other modern religions and cultures which had developed over the centuries. They attempted to present Shinto philosophy as superior to that of other religions. But they did not do this by religious or philosophical means; instead, they forced the people by political means to consider Shinto the equal of other religions. Shinto theory had to follow the crooked path of political necessity: finally the government declared in desperation that Shinto, as it had later developed into an official cult of emperor worship, was "not a religion."



Unfortunately, the Buddhist leadership did not recognize the intent of the government early enough. The loss of official patronage had concerned them. The violence which flared up in some places had increased this concern. They turned against the government, and priests like Shimaji Mokurai finally demanded religious freedom as a means of protecting their faith. The Buddhists had been conscious of adverse criticism. Beginning in 1653 and increasing greatly in the nineteenth century, many works defending Buddhism had appeared. Unfortunately, few of these defenses considered the close connection between the Buddhists and the Tokugawa government or the degeneracy of the Buddhist priests. In general, they lacked national consciousness or historical perspective. Many felt that Buddhism would suffer if they frankly recognized its faults and tried too energetically to remedy them. No one appeared to expose this fallacy before the movement to nationalize Shinto had assumed serious proportions.

The government officials discussed religions, but they had scant religious appreciation or sensitivity. They could not unify popular religious sentiment by means of Shinto, for they themselves did not believe in Shinto. In reality, the Shinto they preached was not even a religion. Buddhism was a true religion with a long tradition; it retained its hold on the people in spite of the history of Tokugawa abuses. Having failed to make Shinto into the national religion, the government next turned to creating a new religion by combining Shinto and Buddhism.

It has been explained that the word the authorities chose to describe the new religion was *Daikyō*. They called the movement to popularize this idea the *Daikyō Sempu Undō*, or "The Movement to Disseminate the Great Religion." The Department of Religion and Education after its formation established the *Daikyōin* to unify popular thinking through this movement. The government abolished the *Daikyōin* in 1875 in response to a petition by the Shin Sect of Buddhism. On January 11, 1877, the Department of Religion and Education itself ceased operation



and transferred its functions to the Bureau of Shrines and Temples in the Home Ministry. Why did the *Daikyō Sempu Undō* fail?

The first reason was that the government, through its propagandists, tried to extend politics and ethics into every facet of human existence, but particularly into religious faith. The second reason lay in the contents of the faith they tried to impose: the *Daikyō* itself. Although the authorities had proposed to unite Shinto and Buddhism, the *Daikyō* had practically no Buddhist elements. It was childish, contradictory, and insufficient:

If Shinto had been better developed, it would not have failed so quickly as a means of religious conversion. The followers of Hirata Atsutane had developed Shinto from the antiquarian studies of Motoori Norinaga and were in the process of working out a theology. Individual students had achieved some worthwhile results, but they had developed no systematic doctrine. Their spirit of respect for the Emperor and zeal for the Restoration of Imperial Rule were outstanding, but they had not developed their theories logically. They naturally had trouble in answering the Buddhists, but they were also unable to cope successfully with the complex historical traditions of Shinto. These deficiencies became targets for Buddhist attacks or sources of further controversy within Shinto itself.

The main theological problems concerned the creation myth as seen in the earliest legends of the gods, and the future life. The basic reason for the failure of the *Daikyō Sempu Undō*, however, was not theological difference but the impossibility of developing and controlling religion by political means. History shows that any such project is doomed to failure. The French Revolution is an example. The revolutionists thought out a new religion, "the worship of reason," befitting revolutionary France. They forced the people to believe it and used it as a tool to unify thought and faith. In Japan, the new ideal religion,



**Emperor Meiji**

Five Men Who Figured in Making Shinto the National Cult. All except Ōkuni were young men at the time of the Restoration who matured during Meiji. Emperor Meiji appeared this way in 1890. Ōkuma is shown as he looked when he was shaping religious policy. Itō looked this way when he was working on the Constitution of 1889. Mori appeared this way a number of years after he attacked government policy in "Religious Freedom in Japan."



**Ōkuni Takamasa**



**Ōkuma Shigenobu**



**Itō Hirobumi**



**Mori Arinori**



## TWO ASPECTS OF EARLY POLICY TOWARD RELIGION



The Iwakura Mission in Washington, D. C. Prince Iwakura is in Japanese clothes.



At the same time as the Mission was traveling in the West, Shinto leaders were reviving native ceremonies as they had existed centuries previously. This picture illustrates such ceremonies at the Ise Shrine. The person seated to the left of the torii is a member of the Imperial Household.



*Daikyō*, exactly paralleled the French experiment. The French government recognized the Catholic church once again when their policy failed. This resembles the way in which the national priests, including Buddhists, replaced the propagandists in Japan. Still more striking is the similarity between Napoleon's utilitarian interpretation of religion and that of the Meiji government. He said in an interview with Pope Pius VII, "Religion as a standard for ethical behavior is both fitting and important in controlling the common people." The Meiji government under the Department of Religion and Education forced all of the national priests to revere the Three Doctrines and to serve the government by preaching from the two sets of articles which interpreted the doctrines. The officials in both Japan and France tried to change religion by political means. They both tried to use it as a tool of the government, when religion by definition is closely connected to the human spirit and therefore is not a fit subject for government. Both in the East and in the West the policy failed. Its failure in Japan marked the end of the government attempt to impose religion on the people.

### 3. THE DESIRE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Meiji religious policy had tried to substitute Shinto for other religions. This Shinto contained many of the elements necessary to an advanced religion. Its theology included a faith in the end of the world as well as salvation from sin and repentance by means of sacred charms and ceremonies of lustration. On these points Shinto could not avoid conflict with Buddhism and Christianity. When the government tried to force this faith upon the people, therefore, it violated their freedom. This attempt at coercion resulted from confusion over the functions of government and religion. Therefore, the leaders of the other religions naturally attacked this policy. The self-confident champions of democratic rights, represented particularly among those who had

received a European education, joined these religious leaders. Their demand for religious freedom received its stimulus from Europe.

Not all those who demanded religious freedom were reflecting Western thinking, however. Many Japanese, particularly Buddhists, based a claim for religious freedom on their Japanese tradition. One priest of the Shin Sect, Fukuda Gyōkai, said:

I have known nothing but the traditional Buddhist chant of *nembutsu*. Now that I am in my seventies, I cannot suddenly change, no matter what the government orders, to tell you that worship of the Shinto gods and patriotism are enough, and that you need give no concern to the future life. Since there has not as yet been an Imperial Rescript urging you to stop saying *nembutsu* and to stop thinking about nirvana, I must urge you to continue your prayers, to encourage them in others, and to go to paradise together. I can do nothing more than to implore you to strengthen your will, to remember the prayers which have been handed down to you, and to decide that you must attain nirvana.

At first, the members of the Shin Sect felt that the *Daikyō* had the same authority as Buddhist law and should be obeyed as such because the Emperor had proclaimed it. But they came to realize that, if they accepted it, they would have to perform its Shinto rites for the afterlife and for the prevention of evil. The basic tenets of the Shin Sect forced them to return from the *Daikyō* to their traditional devotions. However, even Gyōkai, as illustrated in the quotation above, was not conscious of the need to exclude all government interference from religion.

Shimaji Mokurai's opinion, as opposed to Gyōkai's, arose from Mokurai's own observation of the West. While in Europe, he became a worshiper of Western culture:

I had come to realize that conditions in Western countries



would be better than I originally thought them, but I was not prepared for the reality. I was more impressed than a country hick visiting Tokyo.... I am at a loss for words.... It is truly a paradise on earth;... People cannot really consider themselves educated until they have seen this. I am ashamed at what I thought before I left Japan.

During Shimaji's journey in the West, the government established the Ministry of Religion and Education, appointed national priests, and set up the *Daikyōin*. Shimaji realized how at variance the *Daikyōin* was with his ideas. Increasingly as the government strengthened its controls, he insisted on separating government from religion. This is the letter he wrote directly to the government from Europe late in 1872:

Government and religion are different and must remain separate. The art of governing deals with human affairs and controls only man's external actions. Therefore, a government's power is limited to its own domain. But religion deals with divine affairs and controls man's spirit. It is universal. Government is devoted to nothing but its own advantage. Religion pays scant heed to itself but hopes for another's advantage.... I have noticed in studying the ancient gods of different countries that, with slight differences, they resemble the various gods of Japan. This study in Europe is called 'mythology' now and is relegated to such diversions as sculpture and drawing. Man had but little intelligence in the ancient past. In general, he worshiped as gods those things he did not understand. Mountains, rivers, grass, and trees: all were gods. Culture developed gradually. Things which in the past had been considered unusual now became commonplace. As a result, many of the gods ceased to exist or were neglected. The people of Africa, South America, the South Sea Islands, and Asia, as well as the barbarians in Siberia, continue to worship such gods. Cultivated European countries, on the other hand, greatly despise them. I dare speak



thus frankly because I am so embarrassed for my country over this matter. . . . I cannot restrain myself from weeping. This matter concerns the foundations of Japan's government and, therefore, any suggestion of mine is impertinent. I have arrived at my convictions after much thought while traveling through the various countries of Europe, and I hold them firmly. I humbly request that this may have the Emperor's attention.

Shimaji's intellectual dependence on the West and the depth of his understanding of Western democratic rights and cultural enlightenment are obvious from this petition. In the early seventies, there was an increasing popular yearning for things Western. Shimaji's opinions fitted in with this mood and greatly assisted other Buddhist priests in expressing their dissatisfaction against the government. Progressive government administrators accepted what they did of Shimaji's opinions probably more because they fitted in with the intellectual currents of the time than because of their intrinsic worth. His requests were the precursors of stronger demands which came later.

#### 4. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND THE MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

Men who clamor for individual liberties in general usually also demand religious freedom. Fukuzawa Yukichi introduced the idea of religious freedom in the book entitled *Conditions in Western Lands* (Seiyō Jijō) which he published in 1866. His thesis was that it is positively harmful for a government to identify itself with any single religion. Later, an Osaka newspaper criticized the government for its violation of religious freedom when it founded the Department of Religion and Education. By 1874-5, such ideas were becoming accepted. One example is the Japanese translation of a book on religion and government written by an American. This stressed the necessity

of separating government from religion in the following words:

In the past when European countries confused the functions of government and religion, they suppressed public opinion and invited revolt. But recently, both the United States and European countries have abandoned this system in favor of separating government from religion. This has greatly assisted in liberating men's minds and relieving social unrest.

Again, Nakamura Keiu, a famous early translator of Western books and a baptized Christian, wrote to the Japanese government as if he were a Westerner:

The basis of Western culture is Western religion, this same religion which your country despises. At the present, you rejoice in the branches and forget the roots. This is a mistake.... Western nations today are not the same as they were two hundred years ago.... They allow each man to choose his own religion; the king pays no attention to his subjects' faith.

Also, in 1874, Nishi Amane wrote in an essay on religion:

Religion is not limited to the present world but looks back on the past and forward into the future. It does not take into account formal obedience to the laws, but questions only their inner significance. Its main object is to gather together people of the same faith, and to judge the virtue or the evil of their deeds. Using these deeds as a criterion, it determines a person's fortune after death. The regulations of the state, on the other hand, concern this world. The bases of religion and of government are entirely separate. Why does a government adopt a certain religion and work for its benefit so that the government itself is harmed?... If a government wanted to control the inner consciences of its citizens, it would have to apply the rule to every household, and it never would have time for the task.



What would officers do with the individual who agrees outwardly but inwardly is intractable, even though encouraged and threatened?

Previous to this, Mori Arinori, a talented spokesman for democratic rights, had written an English-language pamphlet while in America in November, 1872. He called it "Religious Freedom in Japan," although it was addressed as a memorial to Prince Sanjō. Why did he write a memorial to the Japanese government in English? The reason seems to be that, as Japanese minister resident in America, Mori wanted to show it to Americans. Only secondarily did he want it read by the Japanese authorities in Japan and the Iwakura Mission which at that time was in Europe and was receiving complaints against the Japanese prohibition of Christianity. He said in the beginning:

Among many important human concerns, the one respecting our religious faith appears to be most vital. In all the enlightened nations of the earth, the liberty of conscience, especially in matters of religious faith, is sacredly regarded as not only an inherent right of man, but also as a most fundamental element to advance all human interests.

It is a strange and grievous fact that we fail to find in the whole history of the long and glorious continuance of our intelligent race, a trace of the recognition in any form of this sacred right. It is even more remarkable, amid the wonderful progress we now behold, that our people are not as yet quite earnest and thorough in their consideration of this important subject....

The notion of making a new religion or precept by the authority of the State, which now prevails in our country, has a strange appearance in the light of reason. Religion can neither be sold to, nor forced upon, any one. It is, if set forth in a word, a duty of man as a rational being, and according to the internal conception of its light, we, independently of each other,



are enabled to know and to enjoy the happy life of faith, and insight into spiritual truths.

It was fitting that Mori should criticize the use of government authority to construct a new religion and to force it upon the people. It was also right to say that freedom of conscience was a person's own concern and that the government should not interfere with it. But was Mori correct in saying that in all Japan's national history he did not find one case where the sacred right to freedom of religion had been recognized? Mori tried to generalize for all of history from the Tokugawa policy toward Buddhism and the Meiji policy toward Shinto. This was not a correct generalization.

## 5. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Japan's international position also influenced the development of religious freedom. In 1871, the Iwakura Mission went to the United States and Europe with the reform of the treaties of 1858 their principal aim. The Western governments put Iwakura on the defensive because Japan was persecuting Christians.

On November 22, 1872, the group met with the English Foreign Minister, Lord Granville, in the Foreign Ministry and discussed various problems. At that time, Lord Granville said:

Freedom of religion is recognized both in the United States and in England, but it is particularly revered in England. Pro-Japanese sentiment could probably be created among the English by the simple act of granting religious freedom.

Five days later, Iwakura replied to this with the following words: "The Japanese government is striving earnestly to solve this problem. If conditions permit, the government hopes to proceed to a policy of religious freedom."

When the mission arrived in Brussels, the people pressed against its carriages and demanded that the Christians then in prison be released. During the following March when the group arrived in Holland, the foreign minister, Gerecke d'Herwituen, said: "Holland has had religious freedom for several centuries. In addition, she has not as yet sent missionaries to Japan. Therefore we can discuss the main issue freely."

Iwakura replied, "As soon as I return I shall request the advice of the government and urge them to grant religious freedom."

The Western powers skilfully used the religious problem as an excuse to forestall any negotiations on treaty reform. Iwakura concluded that religious freedom was a prerequisite to treaty reform, if nothing else. Consequently, he cabled home that the imprisoned Christians be released. In February, 1873, the government removed the notices proscribing Christianity. This must be recognized as a long step toward religious freedom, even though treaty reform and not a genuine concern for religion was the main factor in bringing it about.

## *Chapter Four*

### SHINTO AND THE OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

#### 1. JAPANESE RELIGIOUS TRADITION AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

THE desire for religious freedom gradually increased in spite of government attempts to make Shinto the national religion. Article 28 of the Constitution of 1889, promulgated on February 11, 1889, said:

Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief.

Mori Arinori's "Religious Freedom in Japan" was an important factor in developing the demand for religious freedom. One thing that he said, however, is incorrect. This, as has been indicated, is his claim that "in the whole history of Japan there has never been religious freedom." If only the chain of events directly leading up to Article 28 is studied, its thoughts appear almost entirely imported. Many of the Japanese who desired religious freedom had been educated abroad. Article 28 was included in the Constitution partly because of the demands made by foreign countries, and it was modeled on their policies.

But can this article be explained only as an import which was adopted out of expediency? Did not Japan in its own past recognize religious freedom at all? These questions are basic to the relation between the state and religion in Japan. The



question is this: What is the historical meaning of Article 28? One cannot correctly evaluate the normal Japanese relationship between government and religion, nor can he correctly understand the meaning of religious freedom in Japan unless he knows the facts of this relation.

A European scholar has said:

We cannot look for conclusive evidence of religious freedom among the defeated. We must search for it among the victors. The hearts of the vanquished gush forth paeans to liberty out of pure emotion. In this case, liberty is not a principle but an instinct. But if this instinct is found on the part of the victor, then instinct has become principle.

Substitution of the word "ruler" for "victor" and "ruled" for "vanquished" does not change the meaning. The latter words more nearly fit Japanese conditions. The hearts of the ruled, constrained by the steely bonds of the government, instinctively long for and praise liberty. This is a natural human emotion. The victor, however, does not appreciate the human demand for freedom except by a rational process. The hearts of the ruled have springs which nourish the instinct for freedom, but the hearts of the rulers lack such springs. For this very reason, when the ruler recognizes freedom by means of his intellect, what has been instinct with the ruled becomes a conscious principle. What evolves if the development of Article 23 is considered from this point of view?

The people had an instinctive desire under the government's oppressive religious policies. Fukuda Gyōkai's statement about his inability to urge Shinto services on the people represents this demand. The advocates of religious freedom saw a well-developed theoretical and systematic expression of this freedom in the West. They grasped this as a formal statement of their instinctive desire. The theory of this statement became the motivating force behind the official adoption of religious freedom in Japan.

The government administrators who promulgated the Constitution, of course, studied the various expressions of this instinct and developed their own interpretation of it. Religious freedom became a principle when the ruling group recognized it. The Emperor, who granted the Meiji Constitution to the people, was certainly a member of the ruling class, and it probably was not an instinctive reaction for him. Another problem is whether or not religious freedom was granted only because conditions abroad made this necessary. The new attitude toward research on this problem is that the development of Article 28 cannot really be understood until this question is asked. A look into the ideas on religious freedom which the Meiji administrators expressed may be of help here. Three are important.

1. The Charter Oath had made the primitive government of the Emperor Jimmu its ideal. Nevertheless, its general tone includes many things that an orthodox Shintoist could not accept. One such Shintoist, Tamamatsu Misao, is said to have retired from office when he heard that the new government had adopted the five articles of the Charter Oath as basic policy. This shows how far this document had departed from the ideas of the intellectual leaders who had prepared the way for the Restoration. The five articles have a new and different tone, a tone which should be accepted as representing the true viewpoint of the Emperor. The third of the articles reads as follows: "All the civil and military officials and all the common people shall be allowed to realize their own aspirations to the best of their ability." This granted individual freedom, that is, freedom to live according to the dictates of one's own conscience, to all people.

2. The Restoration Rescript of April 6, 1868, contains the following passage:

If, at this moment of reformation, there is any among Our subjects who cannot attain a fitting position, the fault is Ours. From this day henceforth, We shall expend our energy and



exhaust Our spirits, putting Ourselves in the forefront in the fight against distress and treading the path which Our Imperial forefathers have trod before us. Thus shall We endeavor to govern well. For the first time, We shall fulfill our Heavenly obligations and be true to Our subjects.

The two important phrases here are the one in which the Emperor voluntarily accepts the responsibility of fighting against distress, and the one in which he promises to preserve freedom so that each person "can attain a fitting position."

3. The *Sain* on January 31, 1871, petitioned the Throne to establish the Ministry of Religion and Education. Three weeks later, the Emperor replied to three of his ministers:

We should not only allow the people to believe elements of every religion; we should encourage this. For instance, we should disseminate the teachings of Confucius from China and those of Buddha from India. To the extent that these religions do not violate the will of the Japanese gods, we should accept them without asking their nationality, master them, and put them to our own use.... We should encourage the people to take what they like from these various doctrines and to believe them, and we should suppress only those things which look as if they will harm government administration, morals, or the people's attention to their work. There is no reason to force the people to believe any one religion.

From the above, it is apparent that long before the promulgation of the Constitution, the Emperor Meiji and those close to him had recognized the virtues of religious freedom. The Shinto leaders and their sympathizers in the Court bear a heavy responsibility for refusing this advice to foster religious freedom, instead pushing Shinto into the position of state religion. Did not their mistakes in religious policy, if nothing else, result in subverting the Imperial will?



Japanese officials in the first half of Meiji wrote a number of documents like these which indicate a desire for religious freedom. It looks as if the officials were themselves ready to accept it in principle before the Constitution was promulgated.

Of course, this is not to imply that Japan clearly recognized the principle of religious freedom from the beginning of its history. But there was a potential for religious freedom. Various stimuli and influences from abroad increased this potential. The principle as it is now known developed out of this matrix. It is very important for Meiji religious history and particularly Shinto history that this be better known.

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The chief architect of the Constitution, Itō Hirobumi, in his *Commentaries on the Constitution of the Empire of Japan* interpreted Article 28 in this way: "This article continues the policy, started with the Restoration, of granting each individual broad latitude in spiritual matters."\* The words "policy started with the Restoration," refer to the desire for freedom which, as has been shown, stems from the Charter Oath.

But does this tendency go back no further than the Restoration? An examination of the periods in Japanese history when there has been suppression of religion and the periods of religious freedom will provide the answer to this question. The most significant examples of suppression existed in Japan from the advent of Buddhism (552) to the beginning of the Heian Period (794): 1) suppression resulting from the conflict between the Buddhists and non-Buddhists from the time of Buddhism's arrival; 2) control of the Buddhist priesthood during the reign of Empress Suiko (592-628) by means of strict control over priestly offices; 3) control of the priesthood during the period of the Taika Reform (645-9); 4) demands that priests serve

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\* This translation and following ones from the same work are by Itō Miyoji. This is considered the official translation. (p. 54, [3rd. ed.] Chūō Daigaku, 1931.)

the state and develop a national Buddhism during the Temmu Period (673-686); 5) the Yōrō Code (718); 6) the suppression of the free Buddhist Gyōki during the Yōrō Period (717-723); 7) the policy of reforming Buddhism during the Kammu Period (781-806). None of these were primarily questions of faith. The first was a factional struggle which used Buddhism as an excuse. The rest were attempts to prevent Buddhism from degenerating into a magic cult, or to keep the priests from interfering in government.

The next examples of anything resembling suppression concerned the new Kamakura Buddhist sects. Some people call the government suppression of the Nichiren and Jōdo Shin Sects at this time "persecution." In the case of Nichiren, this refers to the government resentment against his attempt to enter politics. In the case of the Shin Sect, the authorities took action to keep its priests from breaking social codes such as the ban against priestly marriage.

Conditions changed completely during the Tokugawa and early Meiji Periods. The authorities did try to control thought by their policies of making Buddhism and then Shinto into the national religion. This was really religious suppression. It is not correct to generalize, however, from this suppression during Tokugawa to say, as Itō did in his *Commentaries*, that "of course there was no religious freedom because the rulers allowed no faith to spread without their permission and even threatened the lives of those who joined forbidden religions."

For most of Japan's history, there has been no suppression of religion. Yanagida Kunio, an outstanding authority on Japanese folklore, has said:

Recognition has been the most important principle of Imperial worship. It goes without saying that everyone worshiped without reservation the shrines where the Emperor personally performed rituals. At the same time, the government recognized all of the various shrines at which the people had traditionally



performed ceremonies. On festival days, it sent representatives to make offerings at the more important of these shrines. This policy continued during the feudal period and has been expanded since the Restoration. It unifies the spiritual life of the people. Up to the present, the government has never ordered anyone to worship a certain god, or to change his ceremony to comply with its own wishes, and there has never been any trouble about religion.

Fortunately from the beginning, there was no distinction made between these gods; even in periods when people feared foreign gods, the Emperor issued an edict that they "be allowed to follow their own beliefs." At the present, the Constitution contains a clause guaranteeing freedom of speech and the government has taken special care not to establish a state religion. . . . Everyone who performs ceremonies before the gods of Japan believes that they have virtue and strength superior to any humans, even saints or sages. This is faith in the accepted sense of the word: we may call it a religion since it has been systematized. Government support goes no further than recognition of the gods. All other support wells from the hearts of the people, as it has without interruption since the time of the gods.

Yanagida's opinion is not entirely correct. The government with its attempt to nationalize Shinto in the early years of Meiji did, in fact, try to force its own religion on the people and did prevent them from worshiping as they pleased. This may have been unavoidable, but it was particularly unfortunate in the light of Japan's tradition of religious freedom. The Constitution of 1889 separated religion from government as the first step in returning to this traditional position.

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The *Daikyōin* was closed because true co-operation between Buddhism and Shinto was impossible. The Shintoists wanted to revive the Department of Shinto, while the Buddhists disliked



the thought of joint proselyting. As a result of these basic differences, the government dissolved the *Daikyōin* in May, 1875. Since the *Daikyōin* had been the chief organ for implementing its policies, the Department of Religion and Education was left with little reason for existence. It soon went the way of the *Daikyōin*.

The Department of Religion and Education had been the final stage in the early Meiji movement to impose its policies upon the people and to prevent the spread of Christianity. In February, 1873, the government had removed the notices prohibiting Christianity. Nine months later, it announced its support of religious freedom in the following words:

The government shall protect the freedom of both Shinto and Buddhism and shall encourage each of them to grow. This will make them an administrative asset rather than liability to the nation. This is the attitude of the government toward priests; it gives the priests religious freedom.

Thus, the government publicly admitted that its attempt to make Shinto a national religion had been in error. It then reversed its policy. This reversal is particularly important because it anticipated the more formal guarantee of religious freedom in the Constitution.

Shinto, Buddhism, and Christianity began to seek converts independent of external control. Because the government had granted greater freedom, it no longer needed the Department of Religion and Education whose purpose had been to unify the major religions as the moral foundation of the state. Therefore, the Department was dissolved in January, 1877. Eight days later, the Home Ministry was relegated the duties which the Department had previously performed. The Ministry handled these duties in the Office of Shrines and Temples, one of fourteen offices in the Ministry. This loss of bureaucratic prestige reflected the government's new attitude toward control

over religion.

The duties of the Office of Shrines and Temples included the handling of finances for state shrines, the classification of shrines, the care of shrines to the war dead, and the regulation of various Shinto sects. It also handled the few administrative details with regard to Buddhist temples that the government still exercised. Neither the Shintoists nor the Buddhists were satisfied that administration for the two of them was handled in the same office. Therefore, on April 24, 1900, the government replaced the Office of Shrines and Temples with two offices, one, the Office of Shrines, and the other, the Office of Religions. This was partly in response to the discontent which had been expressed and partly a move to discriminate in favor of State Shinto.

When the government had established these separate offices, the Shintoists had temporarily achieved their aim: a return to the special status they had enjoyed in the Department of Shinto. At the end of World War II, both the Office of Shrines and the government support of Shinto temples were discontinued because they violated true religious freedom. Nothing but directives from the occupying forces could have eradicated this kind of thinking at its roots.

The dissolution of the *Daikyōin* and the abolition of the Department of Religion and Education were steps in separating government from religion, but they did not, in themselves, effect complete separation since the system of national priests continued. In January, 1881, a number of Buddhist priests from the East and West Honganji petitioned that the government stop appointing priests also. One of these petitions further requested that Shinto be limited to ceremonial rites. It went on to say that Shinto remained what it always basically had been: a religion. Therefore, government could not force it upon the people now that it had publicly declared itself in favor of religious freedom. The people would probably despise and reject further coercion if it were attempted. The government could not control this.



Therefore, it should return to the spirit of the Nara Period, first abolishing the system of national priests and then removing all traces of religion from Shinto. The main responsibility of Shinto priests should be the worship of ancestors. Buddhist priests should be restored to the position they had enjoyed before Tokugawa, so that each could propagate his own beliefs. This would leave no doubt as to the relations between religion and the state.

Complete religious freedom did not allow the government to force upon the people the Japanese traditions of worship before shrines which previously had been considered a religion. Nor could the government ignore these national rites. This led them ultimately to establish State Shinto as an ancestor-worship cult and to declare that "State Shinto is not a religion." This decision to separate official ancestor worship from Shinto as a religion had some support among Shinto priests themselves. A number of the Shinto leaders concurred with this minority view. Dissolution of the Department of Shinto had smashed their dream of supervising both worship and government. They still hoped, however, that they might achieve their end even while recognizing religious freedom. They thought that the separation of ancestor worship from other religions would work to their advantage, since they could establish a unity between worship and government through rites for the ancestors of the Imperial Household and the people in general. The Emperor would conduct these rites. To give the function of ancestor worship to the Emperor was in fact, they felt, unifying worship and government.

It would seem as if the theory that State Shinto was not a religion should have solved the conflict of religious freedom versus the state-supported cult. No matter how cleverly one argues, however, it is impossible not to recognize that Shinto is a religion. This problem of whether State Shinto was a religion appeared repeatedly from the middle of Meiji to the end of World War II. It was apparent that to claim that Shinto was



not a religion was nothing more than a ruse. Many of the priests lacked confidence at the end of World War II when Shinto had to start once more as a religion because of the contradictions that had stemmed from this subterfuge.

## 2. THE INDEPENDENCE OF SECT SHINTO

In order to assist Shinto priests to retain contact with each other after the dissolution of the *Daikyōin*, the Shintoists petitioned the Department of Religion and Education that it establish a special office for Shinto. The government set up the office in May, 1875, at the same time that it abolished the *Daikyōin*. It was called the Shinto Office (*shintō jimukyoku*). One author describes the purpose of the Shinto Office in this way: "to bind together and to provide communication between all the shrines. It will serve the nation by making all the shrines as one."

This office did not achieve its purpose, however, because of the two factions among its members. The first, and by far the larger, was the nationally supported ancestor-worship cult of State Shinto. The second was a group of organizations called *kō*. Each of these had been established by laymen in Tokugawa for the express purpose of worshiping some god in the Shinto pantheon or some awesome force in nature. A number, for instance, worshiped Mt. Fuji, while others worshiped the Ise Shrine. Most *kō* had a financial as well as religious aspect. Each member contributed money to the *kō*. This money was used to send a few individuals on pilgrimages or to provide emergency capital if personal misfortune visited any of its members.

Gradually these *kō* became better organized and requested independent status as sects of Sect Shinto, the name given collectively to the various branches of religious Shinto. State Shinto as distinct from religious Shinto did not proselyte but

undertook the observance of traditional ceremonies and festivals consistent with ancestor worship.

Only one of the thirteen sects did not develop out of a *kō*. It arose as the result of strife within the ranks of State Shinto. This strife centered about the Izumo Shrine and its representative, Senge Sompuku. This shrine and its followers separated from the main body of State Shinto in July, 1877, to become a sect in Sect Shinto. They separated over the problem of electing a chief for the Shinto Office. The question concerned which gods should be officially worshiped in the shrines of State Shinto. Four of the traditional Shinto gods whose names appear in the traditional history, the *Kojiki*, had been designated by the *Dai-kyōin* for worship. They were Ame-no-Minakanushi-no-Kami, Takamimusubi-no-Kami, Kammusubi-no-Kami, and Amaterasu Ōmikami. Senge Sompuku insisted that the god worshiped in the Izumo Shrine, Ōkuninushi-no-Kami, be included.

Factions developed around these two points of view, and in the end, Senge's group lost. Senge then petitioned that the Izumo Taisha Sect be established as a sect in Sect Shinto. His petition was granted, and the sect was officially founded in November, 1882. Here is a very brief description of the thirteen sects of Sect Shinto. They are listed in the order that the government officially recognized them.

*The Kurozumi Sect* (Kurozumikyō) worships the goddess Amaterasu Ōmikami, the traditional sun goddess. It considers her the one supreme being and, as such, the creator of the universe. It was recognized as a sect in 1882.

*The Shūsei Sect* believes that though man receives his body from his parents, his spirit comes from the three great Shinto gods, Ame-no-Minakanushi-no-Kami, Takamimusubi-no-Kami, and Kammusubi-no-Kami. The purpose of religion is to nurture this spirit.

*The Izumo Taisha Sect* has already been discussed by describing its origins.

*The Fusō Sect* is an amalgamation of several *kō* which wor-



shipped Mt. Fuji. Its main religious discipline is to climb Mt. Fuji, and it worships the three great Shinto gods. Its members believe that these three gods live at the top of Mt. Fuji.

*The Jikkō Sect* also worships Mt. Fuji and considers climbing it on August 3 its highest discipline. It prays for the peace of Japan and tries to instill a national morality into the people.

*The Taisei Sect* worships all the gods of the Shinto pantheon and the spirits of the Imperial House. It aims to spread this faith as widely as possible among the people.

*The Shinshū Sect* was founded by a descendant of the famous Nakatomi family which had long served the Imperial household as priests. He included in his sect many of the old ceremonies which the Nakatomi had initiated many centuries earlier. These rites are the principal distinguishing features of the sect.

*The Ontake Sect* worships Mt. Ontake in the southern part of Nagano Prefecture.

*The Shinri Sect* worships all the Shinto gods of creation down to Amaterasu Ōmikami. Its principal doctrine is respect for the gods and love of country.

*The Misogi Sect* has as its principal act of worship the loud recitation of magic phrases and the control of breathing. The object of these exercises is to cleanse away any defiling thoughts.

*The Konkō Sect* (Konkōkyō) worships the god *Konjin*. Other popular faiths had traditionally considered *Konjin* to be an evil god. The founder of the *Konkō Sect* is believed to have had a mystic experience in which he heard the gods speak to him.

*The Tenri Sect* (Tenrikyō) was founded by Nakayama Miki (1798-1887). She had a revelation from what she called "the very foremost god of creation." She ascribed human characteristics to this god by calling him "Tenri-o-no-Mikoto." She believed that people would be cleansed if they had faith in this god and ceremonially purified themselves from their sins. On the surface it appears like Shinto, but its doctrine and religious exercises also have a strong Buddhist flavor. This sect is covered more in detail in Part Four.



*The Taisha Sect* (Taishakyō) is more correctly known as Ōyashirokyō. It is a combination of all the small groups of Sect Shinto which did not belong to any other organization.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Shinto at the beginning of Meiji was more than a body of religious thought or a group of religious ceremonies. It was the basis of a revolution which overthrew the old society. After the Restoration, it became the complex guiding principle in the new Japanese society. It brought together government, ceremonies, and education. But the Restoration made it imperative that Japan do more than return to the past. It had to modernize speedily. The slogan, "cultural enlightenment," which followed a few years after the Restoration, indicated this need.

Two divergent tendencies in the Meiji Restoration determined the course of future Japanese history. First, the Restoration resurrected the ancient and pure folk-vitality of Shinto, and second, it applied the old customs to conditions of the modern world. The first led to suppressing ways of thought other than Shinto, an attitude which came out of Shinto's basic character. Just as a spring when released jumps to more than normal length, so anything which is oppressed clamors for freedom. The Western theories of religious freedom and separation of religion from government encouraged the Japanese instinct to clamor for freedom. Cultural enlightenment and intercourse with foreign countries resulted in the importation of these theories and their use as a basis for individualism. The conservatism of Shinto and the progressiveness of the Western ideas inevitably clashed.

*Part Two*  
BUDDHISM

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*Masutani Fumio*

*Undō Yoshimichi*





## *Chapter One*

### TOKUGAWA BUDDHISM IN OUTLINE

#### 1. ATTITUDE OF THE SHOGUNATE TOWARD BUDDHISM

DURING Tokugawa, the government used Buddhism as part of its administrative machinery and, in return, gave Buddhism financial support. One of the first acts of the new Meiji government was to take upon itself the responsibilities previously relegated to Buddhism and to remove the support. The reasons for this change may be found in the history of Buddhism during Tokugawa.

Buddhism had enjoyed official patronage from the Heian period (794-1185) as the religion of the nobility. The Tokugawa rulers made Confucianism their official philosophy. Confucianism had entered Japan roughly at the same time as Buddhism with the influx of Chinese culture. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it had become anti-Buddhist as a result of a new interpretation of Confucianism which came to Japan at that period. This was the interpretation which had developed during the Sung Dynasty and was called Sung Confucianism. Sung Confucianism became the official Tokugawa government philosophy and served as the spiritual rationale for its policy of thought control. A long series of civil wars had just ended, and the country lacked social stability. Confucianism with its status ethics served very well to establish and to maintain feudal control for the new government.

The military strength of the Buddhist temples had been one of the chief causes of the civil wars preceding Tokugawa.

Ieyasu first subjugated these temples and then cleverly turned them into organs of social control. The third shogun, Iemitsu, having decided to ban Christianity, began to use temples to make certain that no persons remained secretly Christian. Tokugawa policy toward the temples, though sometimes lax and sometimes strict, was, in every case, clever. The government skilfully forced the previously intractable temples into active co-operation.

The Shogunate even controlled sectarian doctrinal studies. For instance, while encouraging doctrinal research in general, the government tended to emphasize traditional doctrine at the expense of independent thought. As a result, scholarship flourished but produced nothing new. This policy gradually deprived Buddhism of any ability to provide leadership relevant to the problems of human beings. Buddhism itself could never approve a feudal society. On the contrary, it had always been included among anti-feudal elements, both personal and social. The successful use of Buddhism by Tokugawa as a tool for social control showed its leaders' political ability.

The two men responsible for the introduction and adoption of Sung Confucianism were Fujiwara Seika (1561-1619) and his disciple, Hayashi Razan. The Shogunate made Razan its official philosopher, and the position became hereditary. Razan first developed Seika's theories into a criticism of Buddhism and Christianity. Then he assimilated Shinto into Confucianism. He criticised Buddhism principally because it lacked ethical content. His contention, "Confucianism is substance, while Buddhism is illusion," went far toward shaping the later attitudes of men toward both Confucianism and Buddhism. In brief, Tokugawa religious policy assigned Confucianism practical leadership in this life and gave Buddhism control over the insubstantial affairs of the other world, though even within this sphere it made Buddhism subserve its own policy.

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In addition to controlling the temples themselves, the govern-



ment used them to control the people as part of the program against Christianity. History demonstrates that military and political power alone can never successfully suppress faith. Religion can be countered only by another religion. The Tokugawa rulers realized this truth and used it. They used Buddhism first to help suppress Christianity, and then they made each temple part of the government thought-control system. The government benefitted from this policy, but it hurt Buddhism.

At the beginning of his rule, Ieyasu, the first Tokugawa Shogun, was not particularly ill-disposed toward Christianity. He continued Toyotomi Hideyoshi's ban and prevented new missionaries from entering Japan, but he did not cut off foreign trade, and he did not prohibit those Japanese who had already become Christians from continuing in their faith. Thus, though Christianity was banned, enforcement of the ban was lenient. The government gradually came to realize, however, that the Christian faith in one God threatened their policy of political consolidation. At the same time, there was temporarily no need for the matériel of war, guns and powder, almost all of which they had to import through the European traders. As a part of stronger anti-Christian regulations, they reasoned, the central government would be able to control directly the importation of what few arms they did need. Thus, the feudal chieftains would lose their opportunity to buy arms directly and to become a potential threat to the central government.

For these reasons, Ieyasu in his later years enforced the ban more strictly. In 1613, he prohibited Christianity completely, officially designating it the "evil religion" and ordering its adherents to join Buddhism. The second Tokugawa Shogun, Hidetada, expelled all missionaries and imposed heavy penalties upon Christians who would not disavow their faith. But Christianity, once diffused among the people, did not surrender easily. Hidetada's successor, Iemitsu, greatly intensified the penalties against Christians, but missionaries evaded the law by coming in as traders. In 1624, the government ceased trade



with Spain and, in 1635, Japanese were forbidden to go abroad and, if already abroad, lost the right of repatriation. After the suppression of the Shimabara Rebellion in 1637, the government adopted even more severe measures because they believed that Christians had started the rebellion.

In 1639, all Portuguese were expelled and, in 1641, Nagasaki was designated the single port of entry for foreign goods. Only Dutch and Chinese could trade there. The period of seclusion began at this time. Internally, the government intensified its methods for detecting Christians. These methods included the use of secret informers, public oaths of allegiance, and a ceremony called *fumie*, or "treading on a picture." This ceremony was intended to function as a kind of lie detector to disclose covert believers in Christianity. It consisted of stepping on a picture or tablet containing an image of the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus or some other Christian symbol. It was felt that those who were secretly Christian could not perform this act. Government officials conducted the ceremony periodically and required all Japanese to participate in it. Former Christians had to join some Buddhist sect and to swear that they had renounced Christianity. Each Buddhist priest was empowered to administer this oath to his own parishioners. Thus, the priests became part of the government's thought-control system.

Certificates indicating that one had taken this oath were at first required only of converted Christians, but, after 1664, the practice was generalized to include all citizens. It was called the "conversion system." The members of each household affixed their seals to a copy of the oath. The chief of the neighborhood organization then added his seal, and the priest of the local temple certified their membership in it. This document functioned as a kind of identification card. It was needed for weddings, travel, changes of residence, and the employment of servants. Temples became a kind of government office, and reports on the system to the government developed into an important source of economic and political information. These

reports served a function similar to that of census reports today. The system continued after Christianity had been completely suppressed, and severe punishment awaited those who evaded any of its regulations.

Absorption with the governmental functions of thought control and census registry caused the Buddhist priests to drift away from their basically religious function. A person had to have permission from his priest to make any change in his mode of living, and his status was assured only when he joined a temple. This gave the priests immense secular authority.

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Tokugawa policy toward Buddhism was embodied in a code called "Various Ordinances Regarding Sects and Temples" which appeared piecemeal between 1610 and 1615.

In order to control Buddhism, the government had to make certain the temples could not act independently. Hideyoshi initiated a policy of lessening the material strength of the temples by frequent redistribution of their land and by confiscating arms illegally in their possession. As the government perfected its feudal framework, it realized that even more stringent control was needed.

Ieyasu appointed the Buddhist scholar Sūden (died 1633) as his highest advisor. Since Sūden was well versed in temple organization, Ieyasu ordered him to prepare a code of ordinances for controlling the temples. The lack of precedents hampered Sūden in preparing this code. The ordinances finally adopted were generalizations based on the decisions of individual cases that had been brought before the government.

Three general principles underlie the many ordinances which were finally adopted. The first was that the power of the main temples should be strengthened by tightening their control over their branch temples. This facilitated government domination, as officials had to deal directly with sect headquarters only. Qualifications for the post of chief priest, regulations for entering the



priesthood and for collecting money: all were made consistent with the government policy of control. Suits between branch and main temples or arguments between priests and their superiors provide an example of how the regulations worked. Except in rare cases, the inferiors were penalized, irrespective of guilt, for opposition to their superiors. Continued opposition to superior authority was almost impossible as long as authorities agreed with the government.

The second principle was that learning should be encouraged. This was a general policy, not confined to temples alone, which had great merit in promoting culture and social stability. The temple ordinances provided land or money to encourage scholarship; specified that priests be appointed on the basis of scholarly ability; and encouraged priests to travel in pursuit of learning. This policy derived from Ieyasu's love of scholarship, but, at the same time, it clearly prevented the temples from supporting troops and interfering in politics as they had done previously. Encouraging learning was a very effective way to make priests toe the mark. An ordinance aimed at the Sōdō Sect of Zen Buddhism in 1612 specified that "no priest can attempt independent interpretation until he has studied thirty years." This regulation forced the priests into a lifetime of scholarly pursuit, during most of which time they had no chance to think of anything except what the government wanted them to think about.

The government often arranged public discussions between priests of the various sects. Ieyasu himself attended and asked questions on problems of doctrine. This provided further encouragement for study, but at the same time it effectively assured that the priests did not deviate from what the government thought they should study.

The third principle was that the central government should have authority over those temples directly connected with the Imperial Court. One ordinance limited the Imperial prerogative by specifying that appointments to these temples could be made



only with consent of the Shogun.

The Various Ordinances Regarding Sects and Temples completely subordinated the temples to the Tokugawa government. The conversion system which has been described above made the temples centers of thought control. By serving as local agents of this control, the temples earned their right to continued existence and received an assured place in society.

Even Shinto priests had to belong to some Buddhist temple. Beginning about 1785, however, they requested permission in increasing numbers to withdraw from their temples. The reason they gave for desiring to withdraw was that they wanted to have Shinto funeral rites performed for them and their families. The question of funeral rites has traditionally been very important in Japan. It was one of the principal religious functions of the Buddhist temples. If the priests were to have Shinto funeral rites, they would have to withdraw from Buddhism. The government reply to these requests was that, "there is no objection to Shinto funeral ceremonies for priests licensed by the Yoshida Sect or the direct heirs of such priests, but no other families may use Shinto ceremonies." The Yoshida Sect was the most powerful sect of Shinto, with over one thousand shrines. Thus, while the Tokugawa government granted the particular request, it reaffirmed the regulation in general.

## 2. OPPOSITION TO BUDDHIST STAGNATION

Some priests during the Tokugawa were very virtuous, but they were exceptions and had insufficient influence to reform Buddhism in general. Buddhism's one merit during this period was its power among the common people. The system of compulsory membership made all the people formally affiliate with temples. The Buddhist faith spread among all classes of the population: the farmers and merchants as well as the upper classes. Among the Buddhist sects, Jōdo, Shin, and Nichiren

were particularly popular because their doctrines were easily understood and fitted in easily with the people's way of life. It must be remembered, however, that Buddhism achieved this success because of government support. The temple schools also helped to popularize Buddhism. They did not really teach Buddhist doctrine but a mixture of Buddhism and Confucianism, the total effect of which was to inculcate loyalty to the government.

Thus, the Tokugawa government cleverly used Buddhism as a tool for its feudal administration. The Buddhist priests maintained their social position and the respect of the people whether or not they performed any religious functions. They merely had to officiate at Buddhist funerals and memorial services. Such circumstances led inevitably to priestly stagnation and degeneration.

Many of the priests lived a luxurious life from the offerings of their parishioners and the patronage of the government. Some became addicted to women and incurred the contempt of their parishioners. The government could not allow this to continue and frequently issued regulations against it, in extreme cases imposing sentences of exile, forced retirement, and domiciliary confinement. For instance, in 1685, a famous priest reciprocated the attentions of ladies in the Shogun's court and was banished to a small island off the coast of Honshu. In 1718, an ordinance forbade priests in Kyoto to keep women in their quarters. In 1796, the authorities seized more than seventy priests who habituated the gay quarters of Yoshiwara, publicly exposed them in the center of what is now Tokyo, and exiled them to a distant island. One may judge the extent of the depravity from these examples. This tendency toward immorality characterized all the society at this time, but to have it so rampant among the priests bespeaks the extreme degeneracy which government patronage had brought them. The protection and restrictions which had formalized Buddhism and robbed it of its fervor were the basic cause of this degeneracy. Even scholarship became overly formal.



The studies which the Shogunate encouraged were largely exegeses of traditional texts. Priests inclined toward scholarship had but two alternatives: they could bury themselves either in scholastic discussion or in sectarian polemics. The temples also lost their freedom and fervor. They became aristocratic, and their priests became demoralized and estranged from the people. The people began to resent this. Tokugawa Buddhist policy became a remote but important cause in the Meiji decision to disestablish Buddhism.

Zen Buddhist priests between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries were generally well versed in Confucianism. Priests in the five great temples of Kamakura, for instance, printed most Confucian books. In addition, as a result of repeated contact with Chinese priests from the end of the Sung (960-1279), the Japanese Zen priests learned a great deal about Sung Confucianism. Even during Tokugawa when Confucianism was separated from Buddhism, famous Confucian scholars like Fujiwara Seika, his student Hayashi Razan, and Yamazaki Anso (1618-1682) all began as Zen priests who later went into Confucianism, developed their own school of thought, and finally attacked Buddhism.

As mentioned previously, the Tokugawa government adopted Confucianism as the official philosophy. As a result, it enjoyed more freedom of inquiry than Buddhism had, even though in 1790 all schools other than that of Chu Hsi were declared heretic and suppressed. Confucianism's practical ethics based on rigid status distinction fitted the requirements of the new age. Buddhism, in contrast to Confucianism, seemed to preach salvation after death.

The attack on Buddhism centered around this Buddhist otherworldliness and the degeneracy of the priests. The privileged life of the priests became the target of popular hostility. Confucian criticism stimulated the Shinto criticism of Buddhism. This prepared the way for the National School and Restoration Shinto.

Buddhism paid no attention to these attacks but whiled away



its time secure within the Tokugawa bureaucracy. It faced the epoch-making events of the Meiji Restoration with no concern about its own degeneracy or the future.

## Chapter Two

### THE MEIJI RESTORATION AND *HAIBUTSU KISHAKU*

#### 1. THE RESTORATION OF IMPERIAL RULE AND THE SEPARATION OF SHINTO FROM BUDDHISM

THE history of Buddhism during Meiji starts with the separation of Buddhism from Shinto, the disestablishment of Buddhism, and the movement, called *haibutsu kishaku*, which grew out of them. *Haibutsu kishaku* means to "exterminate Buddhism." The new Meiji government did not necessarily mean to exterminate Buddhism, but its Separation Edict set in motion forces which almost brought this about. Fukuda Gyōkai, one of the leaders of the Jōdo Sect, said:

At the present, provincial temples are being destroyed; people are withdrawing their memberships and this causes temple revenues to decline; priests are gladly returning to secular life. Although there is no demand to destroy Buddhism, there probably has been nothing to compare with this situation in the fourteen or fifteen centuries during which Buddhism has been in Japan. In my opinion, there will be an Imperial Rescript eradicating Buddhism within five to seven years.

For priests who had long basked in the security and protection of the Tokugawa government, *haibutsu kishaku* seemed to reflect a policy of deliberate destruction. Their concern was not without foundation. This violent attack on Buddhism and the Buddhist awakening which it evoked continued to be important during all

Meiji. Before considering this, however, it is necessary to consider the ideological forces which led up to the Restoration and the meaning of *haibutsu kishaku*.

The political ideal of the Meiji Restoration was to return to Imperial rule. There were two desires behind this Restoration ideology. The first was to overthrow Tokugawa authority and to return to the ancient practice of direct Imperial rule. The second was to unify worship and government. The re-establishment of the Department of Shinto and the distinct separation of Buddhism from Shinto followed as natural consequences.

Buddhist-Shinto syncretism had its roots in the Nara Period (710-794). Gradually, through the Heian and into the Kamakura Period (1185-1333), doctrines appeared which absorbed the Shinto deities into the Buddhist pantheon. The resultant mixture was called Dual Shinto. During the succeeding centuries, it took firm root among the people. Buddhist ideas enriched the simple Japanese concept of divinity, but, at the same time, they greatly confused other indigenous beliefs. The pantheon of Japanese Buddhism gave new meaning to the Shinto concept of divinity. The people accepted a number of esoteric Buddhist incantations and used them in ceremonies which confused Buddhism and Shinto elements. Shrines and temples stood together; shrines housed Buddhist implements of worship, and sutras were read before Shinto gods. The common man saw nothing strange in this.

The Tokugawa government appointed a number of officials, called *bettō* or *shasō*, to manage the Shinto shrines. These men were often Buddhist priests, and their presence was a constant irritation to the Shinto priests.

Restoration Shinto was not the only force behind the Meiji Restoration. There were also many political and economic forces. The Restoration cannot be understood, for instance, unless one also considers the poverty of the samurai who were the core of Tokugawa government; the development of commercial capitalism based upon the economic position of the merchants; the appearance of lower-class samurai who desired political and economic



reform; and, finally, the arrival of representatives from the advanced Western nations at the very time when other groups within Japan were eager for change. Although there were these many divergent factors behind this change, "The Restoration of Imperial Rule" became the slogan which symbolized it to the people.

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The first practical step in separating Buddhism from Shinto was to unify worship and government and to re-establish the Department of Shinto. This has already been described in Part One. The Department of Shinto assumed control over all shrines and Shinto priests and abolished the positions of *bettō* and *shasō*. Men who had been *bettō* or *shasō* were to return to secular life, resign their bureaucratic ranks, and await the pleasure of the government. Control of the priests and shrines was shifted from Buddhist authorities to the Department of Shinto.

But a mere legislative change could not really separate Buddhism from Shinto. Dual Shinto had spread deeply and widely among the people. The way to counteract this syncretism was to define objects of worship and to devise appropriate ceremonies which were free of Buddhist taint. The government issued the Separation Edict two weeks after it had established the Department of Shinto in order to remove all traces of Buddhism from Shinto.

The two religions were quickly separated. In many cases Shinto priests who had long chafed under *bettō* and *shasō* seized upon the opportunity to destroy Buddhist images, temple implements, and sutras. Such emotional outbursts suddenly changed the government's intended separation of the two religions into *haibutsu kishaku*. The ensuing acts of violence incited further unrest.

Sincere Buddhist priests met this violence by trying to rouse their parishioners to renewed faith, while many others who had lost their faith gladly left Buddhism and turned to secular pursuits.

## 2. THE PROGRESS OF HAIBUTSU KISHAKU

In the light of Japanese history, it was important to clarify what the basic difference between Shinto and Buddhism was. Japan never experienced a true religious revolution like the Reformation in Europe. The Meiji Restoration offered the best opportunity in its history for such reform.

Most reforms claim authority in ancient precedents. The separation policy of early Meiji was the result of a claim for such authority. It lost sight of its purpose of reform, however, because it was too heavily weighted in favor of conservatism. Popular anti-Buddhist feelings which had developed during Tokugawa plus the desire to restore the unity of worship and government produced a climate in which the movement to destroy Buddhism developed quickly. It was neither a purely intellectual nor a purely religious development, but it contained some elements of each along with the desire typical of early Meiji to destroy everything old.

Long-standing intellectual and emotional tensions assisted the rapid spread of this violence. Shinto antipathy to Buddhism's preferred position had brewed a deep hostility which appeared in the dispute over Shinto burial ceremonies and frequent controversies between Buddhist and Shinto priests. Hirata Atsutane's attack on Buddhism also included many emotional elements. The Separation Edict unleashed these pent-up emotions.

One can best comprehend the nature of this violence by citing some examples:

The destruction done to one shrine on Mt. Hiei, one of the best known Buddhist landmarks, is particularly famous. The head priest of this shrine, Kinoshita Shigekuni, felt that this was the opportunity to express his deep-seated resentment. He demanded the keys to the shrine from the Buddhist temple whose priests up to that time had held authority over it. The temple called together its priests and worked them into a fever pitch. Before



they could start anything, however, Kinoshita rallied his men and with them broke the lock to the inner sanctuary of the shrine. They removed all the statues, sutras, and implements of worship and burned them before its gate.

Another example is the Suwa Shrine in what is now Nagano Prefecture. Here, the power of the Buddhist priests had been very great. A local philosopher was a follower of Hirata Atsutane and well versed in the National School and Chinese Philosophy. Many of his followers among the Shinto priests had developed a deep hatred for the Buddhist priests as a result of his teaching. As soon as they heard of the Separation Edict, the Shinto priests wanted to remove the Buddhist statues and implements of worship from the shrine, but the townspeople would not co-operate. Thereupon, the Shinto priests called in an inspector from the Department of Shinto and with his help goaded the frightened laborers into destroying the Buddhist buildings attached to the shrine. The crumbling remnants of these buildings presented a sorry spectacle for many years.

*Daisen Ji* in what is now Tottori Prefecture had been a Buddhist temple for over a thousand years. In 1869, it was made a shrine on the recommendation of the local officer in charge of religion. He had all of the appurtenances which could not be defined as either Buddhist or Shinto destroyed and had Buddhist priests dispose of the Buddhist statues and implements. As a result, "relics from Daisen" became famous in the antique shops.

The attack against Buddhism in the Atsuta Shrine of Nagoya was instigated by two disciples of Motoori Norinaga. They burned all the Buddhist implements except for one scroll of the Lotus Sutra which was hidden by the Buddhists and so preserved for posterity.

These are but a few of the most outstanding examples of violence against Buddhism. The Shinto-Buddhist synthesis had penetrated deeply into the people's emotions, and the attempt to separate the two produced much spiritual unrest.



*Haibutsu kishaku* eventually became a national movement which reached its climax in 1871. During this year, the government strengthened centralized control by establishing prefectures to replace the feudal clans. After this change, the social unrest caused by the Restoration slowly died down. Until this time, the policies of the new government were not always administered from the capital. Each clan interpreted the general regulations in its own way. The separation of Buddhism from Shinto is no exception. Its excesses resulted simply from the emotional aberration which can accompany any reformation when there is no clearly outlined administrative procedure.

As a result of this lack of unified administration, *haibutsu kishaku* was interpreted in many different ways. These fall into a number of broad categories. The first category consists of the abolition or consolidation of temples. This occurred in a number of clans, not as the result of a specific government order, but quite spontaneously.

Upon receipt of the Separation Edict, officials naturally decided to apply it first to temples which either had no resident priests or no members, or which had been receiving relatively small stipends. In many cases, the priests themselves desired to return to secular life and requested that their temples be closed. At first, the new authorities approved almost all these requests with no change. The rulers welcomed such developments as long as they did not threaten public peace.

This practice started with consolidating weaker temples. Some clans, however, soon began to use it to destroy temples in general. This led to popular discontent which resulted in direct petitions from the people to the central government. These petitions forced the government to be more cautious. Its instructions regarding the abolition of temples issued in the end of 1870 stipulated, even in the case of small and impoverished temples, such conditions as, "consent of the priests and congregation," "agreement with the various regulations of the sect headquarters," and "provision for the welfare of the priests."

The following year, in response to a complaint from one temple, the Grand Council of State defended its position by saying, "It is not the intention of the Emperor to abolish or to combine temples arbitrarily."

A number of factors influenced the government to change its attitude, but the immediate cause was the policy of *haibutsu kishaku* adopted by the Toyama clan.

Toyama announced its order abolishing temples in the fall of 1870 with no advance warning. It limited each sect to one temple: the rest were ordered abolished. The 1,730 temples within the clan were reduced to seven. At the same time, troops were placed at key positions, communications between sect headquarters and their believers were cut, and people were notified that the clan authorities would punish opposition by death. The Buddhists in Toyama were particularly devout, however, and complained much more bitterly than did people in other clans which had similar policies.

The Toyama policy elicited particularly great criticism because of its suddenness, its severity, and the traditional strength of Buddhism. All the sect headquarters complained until the Grand Council of State, in 1871, ordered Toyama to be more conciliatory. The spirit of *haibutsu kishaku* suddenly subsided, and the position of the temples began to improve with the shift from clan to prefectural organization a few months later. Not all the clans carried out separation the way Toyama did. There were differences in severity, methods, and timing. But strong Hirata or Mito School influence was present in every instance of severe *haibutsu kishaku* fervor. Therefore, it may be assumed that these two schools supplied the intellectual support for *haibutsu kishaku*. The form it took differed greatly depending on whether policy stemmed from the Hirata or the Mito School, although there are many cases where the two intellectual trends were present together. Policy derived from Hirata philosophy anticipated the complete destruction of Buddhism and the return to Shinto: change by legislative order from Buddhist to Shinto



funeral ceremonies; complete destruction of Buddhist images and sutras; complete expulsion of Buddhist influences, and their replacement by Shinto. Followers of Hirata wanted to effect religious conversion by decree. The most outstanding examples of Hirata influence were Satsuma; the island of Oki; Mino, near present day Nagoya; and Tosa.

In clans where the Mito School predominated, *haibutsu kishaku* did not necessarily mean a return to Shinto and its corollary, a complete denial of Buddhism. The aim of the Mito School was to eradicate unnecessary temples and to eliminate worthless priests. Clans influenced by the Mito School hoped to use *haibutsu kishaku* to relieve the people of the excessive economic burden imposed by the temples. Toyama, Sado Island, and Matsumoto represent this group.

Two examples in which Hirata influence predominated follow. In both cases the clans planned to substitute Shinto for Buddhism. They differed in the speed and severity of their methods.

Satsuma and Oki applied *haibutsu kishaku* most thoroughly and ruthlessly. Satsuma, which during the latter part of Tokugawa had been influenced by the Hirata School and to a less extent by the Mito School, prepared a practical plan as early as 1865. According to this proposal, Satsuma planned to abolish all the useless temples and send the idle priests back to secular life, impressing the younger ones into the army and making the older ones teachers; to confiscate temple revenues for military expenditure; and to melt down temple bells and metal accessories for weapons. They had appointed an official to supervise the abolition of temples and were making other preparations.

While these preparations were in progress, the central government issued its Separation Edict and anti-Buddhist sentiment swept through the clan. In late 1869, the clan ordered the abolition of 1,066 temples and the secularization of 2,964 priests. It further commanded all its subjects to become Shintoists. Clan officials destroyed many Buddhist images, sutras, and accessories. Thus, at least on the surface, Buddhism completely disappeared.



Last, the authorities announced a program of clan reform to improve coastal defense. The forced conversion resulted from Hirata influence, and the clan reform resulted from Mito influence.

Oki, because of its insularity, affords another good example of extreme interpretation. In 1868, the clan adopted a program which two students of Hirata Atsutane had long advocated. All of the temples were destroyed and the inhabitants had to signify their conversion from Buddhism to Shinto in the following oath which each signed in blood: "In accordance with the recent change in religion, our names have been recorded in the Shinto shrines of the local gods. Henceforth, we are to reverence these gods alone." All the Buddhist priests were forced to enter secular life. As a result, there were no Buddhist priests on Oki for a long time.

One of the small clans within Mino carried out *haibutsu kishaku* methodically and completely. The chief councillor was a student of Hirata Atsutane who persuaded his clan daimyo to join the Hirata group. At the time of the Separation Edict, the daimyo himself went into the most remote corners of the clan preaching a return to Shinto. He also ordered all the temples and tiny Buddhist roadside statues destroyed and fined any persons who were discovered in possession of Buddhist implements of worship. Almost all traces of Buddhism disappeared.

Influence of Confucianism and the Mito School predominated in a number of clans. One was Toyama, whose policy of *haibutsu kishaku* has already been described.

In Sado Island, the action of the authorities evoked great opposition, even though they had not intended to eradicate Buddhism. The leaders planned only to lessen the number of temples and priests as a socio-economic measure, and to restrict religious activities to funerals and memorial services. Shinto had no practical influence on their program.

Late in 1868, the magistrate called in all the resident priests and ordered that the temples, which then numbered over 500, be reduced to eighty. The excess priests were urged to go into

farming. Those who agreed received lands which had formerly belonged to the temples. Those who did not agree were later forced to take the land and pay the normal price. Within three months, all of the priests except those of the Shin Sect had applied to go into farming. In the following month, the metal objects were collected from the abandoned temples and were melted into cannon and coins.

The Matsumoto Clan in Shinshū, a mountainous area in central Honshu, is another example. Its leaders, in 1871, consolidated temples and urged superfluous priests to go into farming, but they did not use violence. Instead, they taught the members of the clan the importance of weakening Buddhism and urged them to change from Buddhist to Shinto funeral practices. Seventy-three of the ninety-two temples in Matsumoto closed as a result. The local authorities issued a pamphlet on funerals in order to popularize the idea of Shinto rites. Its object was to free the people from the economic burden which the temple monopoly on funeral services had caused. In recommending Shinto services, it pointed out that these services could be conducted by laymen without the aid of priests. The clan authorities later issued an admonition against employing priests at all when it became apparent that the Shinto priests were assuming the role formerly played by the Buddhists.

These examples show the kind of effect that *haibutsu kishaku* produced. With the change from clans to prefectures in 1871, however, the disorder gradually subsided. During this interval, a few conscientious priests, as if waking from a long dream, discovered the traditional spirit of Buddhism for the first time in their lives. The fruits of this thought, however, did not become apparent for several years. The leaders of the various sects tried to counteract *haibutsu kishaku* by pleading their case before anyone who would listen, but they did not have the inner resources to ponder basic methods of reconstruction. The most shallow and faithless priests, fearing to be thought behind the times, wanted to return to secular life. Some even served as



tools of *haibutsu kishaku*.

How did the common man react to *haibutsu kishaku*? Although vaguely understanding its significance as a reform, he could not agree in his heart with sudden and violent destruction. In the long run, the people could not support this movement which had no relevance to their earnest spiritual desires. *Haibutsu kishaku* lost its strength with the spread of Western progressive thinking, particularly its idea of religious freedom. Even Kagoshima which had carried out the nation's most thorough-going program had to proclaim religious freedom in 1876.

### 3. BUDDHIST REACTION TO *HAIBUTSU KISHAKU*

*Haibutsu kishaku* struck a heavy blow at Buddhism. Although it was only temporary, this blow was both deep and far reaching. Some clans completely eradicated Buddhism, not one temple nor one priest remaining. The Buddhists did not all react passively to this violence. Many priests tried to ride with the current of the times, but others reflected humbly on past Buddhist evils and attempted to awaken their fellows from the sloth of Tokugawa protection. The return of many priests to secular life became a kind of voluntary weeding-out process which unexpectedly helped Buddhism. *Haibutsu kishaku* destroyed worldly Buddhist power, but it also resulted in a spiritual awakening in which priests of strong faith committed themselves to revive Buddhism. This attempt at Buddhist revival belongs to another section; in this section only the immediate reaction of some Buddhists is covered. The violence accompanying *haibutsu kishaku* not only incurred the antipathy of the people but also educed doubts about their faith in Buddhism itself. This antipathy and doubt turned into criticism of and revulsion at the reform policies.

The case of some Shinto priests in what is now Fukui prefecture is a good example. Though professionally Shinto priests, these men were convinced Buddhists. They felt no inconsistency



over their membership in a branch temple of the Honganji. The clan decided that all funeral services, henceforth, would be Shinto. More than 120 priests signed a petition in opposition, resigning from their shrines and requesting that they be allowed to return to secular life. The gist of their petition is as follows:

The meaning of separating Buddhism from Shinto is to establish the two religions independently, without preference to either. We consider that to order Shinto funerals is fair and just as a means of making a distinction between the two religions and their priests. We shall go into farming and do our best to serve the Emperor. We only request that while worshipping the local gods we may also follow the way of Buddha after the founder of our sect.

This petition hit directly at the excesses of the separation policy. The priests were simply unable to accept the overbearing demands the authorities made in matters of faith.

In a number of cases, reaction of this type against *haibutsu kishaku* also erupted in violence. The three most outstanding examples were the riots in Mikawa Ōhama, now a part of Shizuoka (1871); what is now Niigata Prefecture (1872); and what is now Fukui Prefecture (1873). The Niigata case has been discussed in Part One.\*

The riot at Mikawa Ōhama occurred after the central government had dispatched a new official to implement its religious policies. He abolished temples, placed restrictions on the monks and nuns, and even recalled Buddhist priests who had been displaced when their temples were closed to make them learn Shinto prayers as a form of etiquette. Mikawa was a traditional stronghold of the Shin Sect, and Shin priests now formed a coalition to resist these oppressive new policies. As one of their tactics, they spread the rumor that the official administering the

\* See page 66.

order was a Christian. The people joined them to "expel Christianity." The priests lost control of the crowd. Its members became violent and killed a number of the clan officials with bamboo spears. Troops from a neighboring clan quickly suppressed the riot, and its leaders were executed. The interesting thing is that the riot resulted from the popular feeling toward Christianity which they still considered an "evil religion."

The immediate cause of the Fukui insurrection was the popular attitude toward the Buddhist priests who had too quickly left the priesthood and had aided the *haibutsu kishaku* movement. One priest of the Shin Sect in Fukui, after studying Western Learning in Nagasaki, had changed his name and later had become an official in the Department of Religion and Education. On his own initiative he closed temples and advocated the spread of Shinto as a means to restore Imperial rule. The train of events he started culminated in an attack on him in the name of preserving Buddhism. His assailants were priests and believers who had mistakenly interpreted the decision of the Grand Council of State to appoint national priests as an expression of intent to destroy Buddhism. When the police were about to capture the leaders, the temples of three counties sounded the alarm to assemble their parishioners. The group marched off in procession, carrying bamboo spears and holding aloft straw mats inscribed, "Save us, merciful Buddha." As they went along, farmers swelled their ranks. The uprising developed into a full-fledged peasant revolt. It differed from others in its demands:

1. Do not let Christianity into Fukui.
2. Allow Buddhists to preach.
3. Do not teach Western Learning in the schools.

The officials deceived the rioters by pretending to agree to their demands, while calling for garrison troops from Nagoya who suppressed the revolt as soon as they arrived.

The *haibutsu kishaku* movement never satisfied the religious sentiments of the people, even though the evils of the temples and priests during Tokugawa had alienated many of them. This further substantiates the claim that the Meiji Restoration was a political change from above rather than a reform which welled up from within the masses. Buddhist uprisings against *haibutsu kishaku* had three points in common:

1. Unexpressed antipathy, in addition to purely religious grievances, against the new government policies in general.
2. Strong anti-Christian sentiment.
3. Shin Sect leadership in the majority of cases.

The awakening of the Buddhists which followed *haibutsu kishaku* finally ushered in the Buddhist Reformation of Meiji.



## Chapter Three

### THE BUDDHIST AWAKENING AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE *DAIKYŌIN*

#### 1. THE BUDDHIST AWAKENING

THE excesses of *haibutsu kishaku*, at least as they affected Buddhists and their priests, were not merely the concomitants of historical change. Some people shouted that now was the time to revive Buddhism by returning to its original spirit. Others resolutely advocated that Buddhism be reformed to fit the times. One priest who later became head of the Tendai Sect left his temple in a rage over the violence of *haibutsu kishaku* and went to Tokyo to petition the authorities. His petition argued that Buddhism could not be separated from Shinto. It went on to recommend the strengthening of Dual Shinto since the Imperial Court had for centuries been Buddhist. Another priest, Unshō Risshi (1827-1909), enraged at the conciliatory attitude of the officials, went to Tokyo from Mt. Kōya. There he appeared frequently before the Grand Council of State. He also presented a formal petition, the main ideas of which are as follows:

Confucianism and Buddhism supplement Shinto. Dual Shinto clarifies Shinto in terms of Buddhist doctrine. The Emperor cannot continue omnipotent unless the three faiths—Confucianism, Buddhism and Shinto—are united. *Haibutsu kishaku* will estrange the people from Buddhism, they will doubt Shinto, and Christianity will try to exploit this doubt. I entreat you to open the eyes and ears of the people and save them from the foreign

barbarians.

This represents the Buddhist apologetic of early Meiji. The tone of remorse which ends it, however, differentiates it from other examples: "Worldly pleasures have made the priests forget their duty and so seduced them that the authorities have reprimanded them. We cannot endure this shame." Unshō wisely realized that *haibutsu kishaku* was a natural result of priestly degeneracy. He was embarrassed by this and advocated in other writings that the only way to revive Buddhism was to reform the priestly evils and to return to the perfect truth of Buddha himself.

Although these ideas were not common among Buddhists in general, most of the alert leaders shared them. Fukuda Gyōkai (1806-1888), revered as the greatest Buddhist of Meiji, also called for a sweeping reform of the priesthood:

Buddhists regret *haibutsu kishaku*, but not because temples have been destroyed. It is not because we now have less food and clothing. It is not because we have lost our government stipend. We grieve before heaven and man that we have lost the greatest Good. In order to regain this Good, and for this reason only, priests should pray for the elevation of truth and the prevention of *haibutsu kishaku*.

Most of the priests complained because Buddhism had lost its secular power. Gyōkai paid no attention to these externals. Instead, he mourned the loss of Buddhism's inner spirit: the way of piety and charity which was his ideal for a priest.

As has been seen from the above, what finally rescued the Buddhists from the effects of *haibutsu kishaku* was the desire for a reform which would attempt to eradicate the evils of Tokugawa Buddhism and to return to its true spirit. Buddhism had to rouse itself. The threat of Christianity made reform doubly necessary.



The people still firmly believed Christianity to be an evil religion. One priest, lamenting "the spread of the Western religion," brought together a number of others who agreed with him. A well-known priest in Kyoto offered his support and persuaded the leaders of the various sects to form the Association of Buddhist Sects in 1868. The following spring they pledged "to value their country more than their lives," and signed an oath which bound them to sacrifice themselves in the fight against Christianity. These priests had been awakened by nationalism and hatred of the foreign religion. Their ideal of Buddhist reform was to return to the time when Christianity had been proscribed. This defensiveness arose from religious zeal, yet it was really only one kind of conservatism and not the sort of reform which answered the demands of the new era.

The Association continued to rally sympathizers among the priests and to play a large part in arousing the Buddhist public. A similar group was organized in Osaka, but for some reason, possibly official pressure, it never functioned. In Tokyo, over thirty important Buddhists formed an organization in the spring of 1869. These Buddhists requested official recognition for their organization in the following terms:

The Association of Buddhist Sects in Kyoto petitioned the government to take steps for defense against Christianity. The officials told them that they need not be concerned, and they were thankful for this reassurance. Many foreigners live throughout Tokyo, however, and we fear that Christianity will adversely influence the people here. Therefore, we priests of various sects wish to meet every month as they do in Kyoto, so that we may learn to instruct our parishioners correctly.

The group framed thirteen rules of association. These rules stipulated that members should co-operate peacefully, and that no group would stress either its own or any other organization. Eight topics were listed for study:



1. The indivisibility of Imperial and Buddhist law.
2. The study and refutation of Christianity.
3. The co-operation between and perfection of the three Japanese faiths: Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism.
4. The study by each sect of its own doctrines and texts.
5. The expurgation of evil habits.
6. The establishment of a new type of school to produce men of ability.
7. The discovery of new ways to use exceptionally qualified priests.
8. The encouragement of popular education.

The leaders in Tokyo realized the true nature of the problem, as this list shows. Attacking Christianity was not enough. Buddhism also needed to reform its own evils, to promote study and education, to utilize men of talent, and to minimize sectarian spirit. At the same time, these priests were the first to recognize the need for parochial schools. A number of these schools were later established and became well known.

## 2. THE *DAIKYŌ SEMPŪ UNDŌ* AND ITS PROPAGANDISTS

The Meiji government's separation policy ran the gamut from disestablishing Buddhism to attempting to make a national religion out of Shinto. *Haibutsu kishaku* accompanied the policies of unifying worship and government and exalting the Shinto gods. The plan to use Shinto to increase national consciousness developed slowly.

On April 21, 1869, the government established the Bureau of Religious Statistics within the Grand Council of State and commissioned it to study concrete methods for disseminating Shinto. On August 14 of the same year, they placed the Department of Shinto above the Grand Council of State. On November 2, they instituted the system of propagandists, choosing men for the

new jobs largely from among the priests in the Department of Shinto. Early in 1870, an Imperial rescript announced the adoption of the *Daikyō* or "Great Religion:"

We hereby clarify our religious policy and proclaim the exalted way of the gods. To that end we have recently appointed propagandists and have ordered them to preach throughout Japan. All you, our subjects, shall endeavor to carry out this desire.

The government began to treat Shinto as the national religion after this rescript had been issued. It sent propagandists to each of the clans in order to strengthen Shinto and also assigned the governors and councillors in each clan the duty of propagandist. The "Rules Governing Propagandists" show how prudent and zealous these preachers were. According to these rules, the propagandist:

Exemplifies the exalted way of the Imperial Ancestors by his bodily actions. He himself sincerely respects and believes the instructions of these ancestors. He worries about neither life nor death but trusts the gods implicitly. He is careful of his words and deeds, and attempts to demonstrate the way for his people by his own actions. This is his first and most important duty.

The propagandist was to devote himself completely to his mission. When he lectured on the classics, he was to wear the right clothing and conduct himself with decorum, watching his actions and observing politeness in the extreme so that he might be a good influence to the people. He had to watch his attitude toward Confucianism and Buddhism:

The job of the propagandist is to convince the people and to make them trusting followers. In schools, it is permissible to refute Confucianism and Buddhism and to defend Shintoism



scholastically. But calumny of your opponents and even slight aggressiveness will make your daily preaching ineffective. This is a great hindrance to conversion, and you must guard against it.

The people had not yet recovered from the shock of the Restoration, and the government considered its most pressing task to direct the people's thinking and sentiment. Having proclaimed personal rule by the Emperor, they naturally instructed the people to respect the gods and to serve the Imperial Court, specifying exact principles of human ethics. The object of the *Daikyō Sempu Undō* was to teach these virtues.

In actual practice, however, it was not easy to gain acceptance for the new religion. The government scrupulously instructed the itinerant propagandists in methods they were to use. But at the same time, some local officials assigned people to groups and had Shinto scriptures read aloud to them on specified days. This kind of teaching gave the impression of bureaucratic thought control. Regulations and coercion can never mold people's faith. In this case, the excesses of *haibutsu kishaku* had evoked deep resentment among the Buddhists, and those who were dissatisfied with the turn of political events had made common cause with these Buddhists against the new religious policies. As a result the government faith did not gain many followers. In addition to fostering Shinto, the government felt impelled to oppose Christianity, but representatives of the Western powers demanded that Japan remove its restrictions on Christian evangelization. Thus, government religious policy was strongly criticized both at home and abroad.

In the light of these conditions, the desire to unify worship and government appeared anachronistic. The government had to plan other and stronger methods to control the thought of its citizens.

The propagandists were most active from late 1869 to the fall of 1871. This was the same period during which *haibutsu*



*kishaku* was most severe. It has been mentioned previously that *haibutsu kishaku* served to awaken some priests to the need of a Buddhist revival. These leaders were driven by two motives. One was to protect their faith by righting the evils of the priesthood and consecrating their lives to reviving pure Buddhism. The other was to protect their country from Christianity. For better or for worse, this motivation to preserve the nation has been an important characteristic of Japanese Buddhism. But to return to the narrative, by the end of 1871, the antipathy toward Buddhism had diminished so greatly that the government decided to use temples and their priests for its own ends. It formed the Department of Religion and Education to carry out this decision.

Previous to establishing the Department of Religion and Education, the government had handled all matters pertaining to Buddhism in the Home Ministry. Buddhist leaders grieved that there was not a special office concerned exclusively with their problems. In the summer of 1871, Shimaji Mokurai, representing the Honganji, petitioned that "a Department of Religion and Education be established for the purpose of propagating religion, and that Shinto and Buddhism be united administratively, but that each handle its own propaganda." Buddhist leaders in general concurred with this desire. The government established the Department of Religion and Education in response to this petition, but they planned only to use Buddhism as a tool for national education, while outwardly granting it freedom.

At the time when the government established the Department of Religion and Education, it gave the Board of Ceremonies the duty of handling official rites. The new department controlled religious propagation for both groups. This was the first step in separating Shinto ceremonies from the job of proselyting. This separation of official rituals from religion later took on great importance when the government made participation in State Shinto compulsory. At this time, it defined State Shinto as a national cult for ancestor worship and "not a religion." In the Department of Religion and Education, the government

for the first time granted Buddhism a function and a position, although subordinate, in the new national structure. A few months later, the Department of Religion and Education started to appoint a new kind of priest whom they called "national priest." The best Shinto and Buddhist priests as well as professional entertainers were given this title. The appointment of national priests was an extension of the system of propagandists which the Department of Shinto had established. The main difference was that a national priest might be a Buddhist. In June, 1872, the various Buddhist sects submitted a joint petition that the government establish an office for training these priests.

### 3. THE *DAIKYŌIN*

The petition which the sects had presented read in part:

We humbly request permission to build centers of instruction in order that the various sects may fulfill their heartfelt desire to serve their country. Assign the cost of construction and stipends for the students to the sects and temples; we definitely do not seek government assistance; we will not collect money from the people specifically for constructing these centers.

The fervor of this petition, particularly in consideration of the former government patronage to Buddhism, shows how sincere the Buddhists were.

The *Daikyōin* was the main training center established in response to this petition. When actually opened, however, the *Daikyōin* was far different from what had been expected. In January, 1873, it started to function in temporary quarters, but shortly, thereafter, moved to the Zōjōji, a temple in Shiba, Tokyo. The *Daikyōin* was supposedly a seminary in which Shinto and Buddhism were equal, but in practice, its main function became worship of the Shinto gods. All the figures of Buddha were



removed from the main hall of the temple. The final appearance was bizarre: statues to Amaterasu Ōmikami and other Shinto gods appeared in the main hall, and a large torii was placed in front of the main gate. At the opening ceremony, Shinto priests sat on one side of the hall in their tall black hats; facing them was a line of bald-headed Buddhist priests in their flowing robes. The Buddhist priests who had become national priests had to wear Shinto ceremonial hats, make offerings to the Shinto gods, and preach from the Three Doctrines.\* Thus, they actually became subordinated to the Shinto priests. They were allowed to preach nothing but the Three Doctrines. Not only did this contradict the original purpose of the *Daikyōin*, but it also violated the separation of Shinto from Buddhism which had been one of the great decisions of the Meiji Restoration. It was, in fact, an invitation to a new Shinto-Buddhist syncretism with Shinto predominant.

The government selected large temples in the provinces and made them seminaries under the *Daikyōin*. Subsequently, they named other temples to be small seminaries. The "small seminaries" preached directly to their parish members. There were fourteen ranks of national priests. The head of each Buddhist sect was named to the highest rank. This was the system by which the government hoped to teach the Three Doctrines. They did not succeed. The priests frequently contradicted each other in their sermons: the Shintoists reviled Buddhism, while some of the Buddhists preached only Buddhism, contradicting the Three Doctrines. As a result, the national priests confused their audiences and increasingly less people came to hear them. A contemporary describes this condition as follows:

The government is now establishing lecture halls for the sole purpose of teaching religion, but the number of attendants is very small. It is reported that members of the audience, when not observed, occasionally stick out their tongues or ridicule the

\* See page 70



sermons.

Or again: "The Buddhist priests slowly relax into cat naps as Shinto priests read from the *Kojiki*, and Shinto priests yawn behind their hands as the Buddhists read from their sutras." Under such circumstances, any real success at propagating religious truth became impossible. The people on their part were also criticized: "You have for a long period believed in Buddhism, but suddenly you change to the national religion. Your heart is not like a thin sheet of paper. It is all right for you to believe in Shinto, but have you any right to revile Buddhism?" The friction between the Shinto and Buddhist elements among the national priests gradually increased. The content of the Three Doctrines was Shintoistic. In preaching them, priests were forcing the people to accept Shinto. The government had not yet completely abandoned its earlier desire to unify worship and government.

As mentioned previously, Shimaji Mokurai, while traveling in Europe in 1872, sent a letter to the Department of Religion and Education. This letter sharply criticized religious policy and pointed out the confusion the Three Doctrines caused between worship and government. This remains a convincing document even today. In the same year, Mori Arinori, charge d'affaires in the United States, published a pamphlet in English called "Religious Freedom in Japan." He joined Shimaji in criticizing the attempt to unite Shinto and Buddhism in the *Daikyōin*. At last, people began to desire religious freedom and to recognize how it conflicted with the government policy of unifying worship and government.

In January, 1875, the Grand Council of State granted permission for four branches of the Shin Sect to separate from the *Daikyōin*. The following April, the Grand Council in a directive to the Department of Religion and Education abolished the subordinate seminaries and decreed that each sect should henceforth do its own proselyting. On May 2, 1875, another directive

ended the era of direct interference in religion by abolishing the *Daikyōin*.





## Chapter Four

### CONTACT WITH THE WEST AND BUDDHIST REFORM

#### 1. FOREIGN TRAVEL BY BUDDHIST LEADERS

THE problem the Buddhists faced during all of Meiji was how to recover from *haibutsu kishaku*. Rebuilding destroyed temples and reopening others was not enough; the damage could not be repaired so easily. Nor would simple return to Tokugawa conditions suffice. Buddhism needed renovation consistent with the demands of a new age. It had luxuriated for two hundred and fifty years in special government privilege and was not equipped to meet this crisis. It had to breathe fresh air. The trips which Buddhist leaders of all sects made to the West throughout Meiji were one attempt to get such fresh air. The general popularity of Western thinking contributed to the urge for travel, but the main reason was the desperation which the Buddhist leaders felt. The reforming zeal which this contributed to Buddhism cannot be overestimated. The Buddhist leaders, who like other Japanese had been confined their small country under Tokugawa, experienced the spirit of freedom for the first time. As a result of their trips, they also changed from trying to recoup the losses Buddhism had suffered to true renovation. Almost all the Buddhists who had positions of leadership in the Meiji period studied abroad.

The two groups which were most active in sending priests abroad were the East and West Honganji. The West Honganji had planned to send Shimaji Mokurai to observe Western religious conditions with the Iwakura Mission in 1871. He could not

accompany them, however, and finally left Yokohama with a group of scholars in Januray, 1873. After they had traveled through England, France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, part of the group returned by way of America. Mokurai, however, returned through the Middle East, visiting Greece, Egypt, Turkey, and the Holy Land. He then made a pilgrimage to Buddhist sites in India and returned to Japan in July. This was the first voyage made by a Buddhist to the West and to India.

Other Buddhist leaders who followed Shimaji contributed greatly to the renovation of Buddhism, particularly by opening new fields to Buddhist scholarship. In 1876, the East Honganji sent Nanjō Fumio to England to study Sanskrit under Max Müller. Nanjō went on to devote his life to Sanskrit scholarship, introducing and firmly establishing it in Japan. His studies in Buddhist original texts were particularly valuable. In 1875, the West Honganji sent another student to study Christianity at the University of Pennsylvania. He hoped to contribute to the renovation of Buddhism by discovering why Christianity flourished in Europe and America. Another priest, Kitabatake Dōryū, stopped in India in 1881 after a trip through Europe and America. He made a pilgrimage to various Buddhist sites in India and was the first Japanese to visit the Ganges valley where Buddha had attained enlightenment. Kitabatake returned to Japan after erecting a tablet to commemorate his visit. The following year, the West Honganji sent a student named Fujishima Ryōon to study in France. During his nine-year stay, he translated a part of the *Nankai Kikiden* into French. The *Nankai Kikiden* was the seventh-century travel diary of a Japanese priest who studied many years in India and Southeast Asia. Fujishima also published a book on Buddhism, *La Bouddhisme Japonaise*, which contributed much to the French understanding of Japan.

At the beginning, the priests who traveled abroad were all members of the Shin Sect, because the East and West Honganji, both parts of the Shin Sect, were particularly interested in foreign study. Their example, however, stimulated the other sects who,



beginning late in the eighteen-eighties, joined in sending priests to Europe, America, India, and Ceylon. Most outstanding among this latter group were Takakusu Junjirō who worked in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Indian philosophy, and Anezaki Masaharu, who founded the Department of Religious Studies in Tokyo Imperial University and himself made many contributions in comparative religion.

## 2. THE MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The first thing that struck these scholars in their travels through the West was the principle of religious freedom. Very few cultures have combined as many diverse religions as has the Japanese culture. The government had never been concerned about religious freedom in principle, however, nor were the people conscious of its meaning. The basic nature of Shinto and Buddhism provided one reason for this. In Western society, a very rigid monotheism underlay the religious authoritarianism of Christianity. This authoritarianism, contrary to what might have been expected, actually occasioned the movement for religious freedom. In contrast, polytheistic Shinto and pantheistic Buddhism did not include in themselves extreme claims to exclusivity. Even Tokugawa oppression of Christianity developed because of political considerations and is not an exception to the general Japanese attitude toward religion. As a result of this tolerance and syncretism, there was very little reason for people to become aware of, and much less to demand, religious freedom.

The separation of Buddhism from Shinto attempted to reform religious evils that had existed under the Tokugawa. The people who devised the policies, however, had no concept of religious freedom in the Western sense. Furthermore, the concept of unifying worship and government confused religion as external observance and faith as personal belief. The government compounded the confusion when it later tried to unify popular



thinking and faith through the *Daikyōin*. Here again there was no concept of religious freedom. In making a distinction between religion as external observance and faith as a personal matter, the government left the way open, in theory, for the development of religious freedom. But this movement did not actually develop until after contact with Western culture. Actually, Shimaji Mokurai was the first to demand religious freedom in his petition entitled "Critique of the Three Doctrines." In this, he pointed out that the existence itself of the *Daikyōin* and the Three Doctrines were a great anachronism. He did not mention religious freedom as such, but the Critique was undoubtedly a plea for such freedom.

Two of Shimaji's petitions are still extant. The first, "Critique of the Three Doctrines," is an imposing six-thousand-word document addressed to the Japanese government from a hotel in Europe. Its opening phrase is very cautious: "I am fortunate to be living in the reign of Emperor Meiji and to have traveled afar in the world. It is my heart's desire to repay, even slightly, the Imperial benevolence. If your majesty would but incline his ear to my petition, I could die in peace." He closed in the same vein: "My impudence deserves ten thousand deaths. I desire only to fulfill my obligation to the Imperial Court. Therefore, I can do nothing but speak boldly. Most humbly your obedient servant." As has been seen in the more complete quotation in Part One,\* Shimaji was not speaking for the benefit of Buddhism alone but for all the Japanese people.

Shimaji fearlessly criticized official religious policy because of the basic difference between government and religion. These are the main elements of his argument: the first of the Three Doctrines calls for respect to the gods and patriotism. Respect to the gods is religion; patriotism is government. To unify them is to confuse the nature of government and religion. Shimaji cut to the heart of the matter when he said, "Is this 'respect

\* See pages 78-80



**Fukuda Gyōkai**



**Shimaji Mokurai**

Buddhist Leaders. Fukuda represented the best in traditional Buddhism. Shimaji and Inoue ardently defended Buddhism against Christianity. Anezaki and Takakusu brought new breadth and understanding through contact with the West. Anezaki looked this way while teaching at Harvard and Takakusu is shown as he appeared just before going abroad to study.



**Inoue Enryō**



**Anezaki Masaharu**



**Takakusu Junjiro**



## TWO ASPECTS OF BUDDHIST DEVELOPMENT



The Honganji Sects sent many students to the West. Here two are shown with Max Müller.



At the same time, the Honganji Sects constructed new buildings in the best of the old tradition. This is the East Honganji in Kyoto.



for the gods' limited to Japanese gods alone, or does it refer to the gods common to all nations? The gods are gods; they differ only in man's interpretation of them." This was how different religions arose; it was not the government's function to control them. If the government were to attempt to impose religious beliefs, it might fail at this and also lose the political loyalty of its people because it had violated their religious sensibilities. Shimaji particularly criticized the third of the Three Doctrines, "To revere the Emperor and obey the authorities."

Reverence for the Emperor belongs to the realm of politics; it is not religion. Reverence for the Emperor is dictatorship; it is not consistent with constitutional practices. The position of the Emperor has to do with national polity; it goes without saying that everyone must respect him.

Shimaji roundly criticized the attempt to unify worship and government, but he did not deny respect for the Emperor and patriotism. On the contrary, he felt that this very separation protected the integrity of the national polity.

Shimaji composed his other petition after returning home, where the first thing that met his eyes was "that comical place," the *Daikyōin*, which he could only describe as "most astonishing." He hastily composed his "Petition for the Dissolution of the *Daikyōin*." In it, he said, "The distinction between government and religion should not be blurred. To give the impression that they are united will probably confuse the people. At least, it will raise doubts in their minds." This petition caused a sensation in the religious world. The discussion of religious freedom which ensued grew into the greatest religious problem of the day. Public discussion continued until the *Daikyōin* was dissolved in May, 1875, and the post of national priest was discontinued in August, 1884.

From this point on, Buddhism developed without further government interference. This change in policy was mainly due

to the insight and enthusiasm of Shimaji Mokurai.

Of course, Shimaji shared many of the prejudices of his colleagues. Even his trip through Europe did not enable him to discard the defensive rejection of Christianity that he shared with other Buddhist priests. This cannot obscure the fact, however, that his thinking and faith contains remarkable insight. His petition for the dissolution of the *Daikyōin*, illustrates this:

If the government attempts to enforce a faith based on the founding of the nation and the forefathers of the Imperial Household, it will be using Imperial prestige to constrain men's thinking. At some future time, this will bring sorrow to the Emperor. The ancient past is very distant, and it is impossible to believe in it absolutely. Why should people who have their own faith throw over this faith and follow something in which they do not believe? Even if a person outwardly submits to coercion, grief will build up within him and at some time in the future will erupt into action. The harm done him at this time will be great in proportion as his previous faith was beneficial.

The enthusiasm and intelligence of the priests who traveled abroad seriously weakened the government attempt to use the *Daikyōin* as an instrument for molding public opinion. Although their movement to dissolve the *Daikyōin* arose, at least partly, from a desire to protect Buddhism, its historical importance rests in the principle of religious freedom which the priests introduced at this time.

### 3. THE DIRECTION OF BUDDHIST REFORM

The movement for religious freedom led to the Buddhist Reformation. The leaders of Buddhism now neither wanted, nor would they have been able, to revert to the conditions of Tokugawa. They had no choice but to throw off the feudal aura of



Buddhism and to make it relevant to the new age.

All the leaders of Buddhism keenly recognized the need for reform: not only the priests who had led the movement for religious freedom, but also the laymen who sensed the meaning of the Meiji Restoration and had an acquaintance with Western thinking. Just as the Restoration itself was incomplete, however, so the Buddhist Reformation was only partially successful. One reason was that the Buddhist organization, as distinct from their leaders, did not accept the necessity of reform. For instance, only the four Shin sects participated in the movement to dissolve the *Daikyōin*. The others wanted to continue it and favored a course of conciliation toward the government. Kitabatake Dōryū, on his return from Europe, pointed out the evils of sectarianism and called for Buddhist unity based on the teachings of the historical Buddha. No one listened to his plan, and Buddhism lost the opportunity of a thousand years. Some partial reforms, however, did succeed. After the abolition of the position of national priest in 1884, the sects availed themselves of their new freedom to establish independent organizations and institutions suited to the new conditions. The West Honganji, for instance, adopted a system of ecclesiastical administration which employed the Western political theory of representation.

The years from the Satsuma Rebellion in 1877 until the promulgation of the Constitution in 1889 may be called the Era of Buddhist Revival. Buddhism began to revive partly, of course, due to the spiritual awakening of its adherents. But other social factors also contributed. Unstable internal politics between 1871 and 1877 culminated in the Satsuma Rebellion. The government leaders felt the need of Buddhist co-operation and thought it better to accede to their wishes rather than to increase opposition by oppressing them. Further, various Christian denominations, which in 1873 had received freedom to evangelize, were now proselyting vigorously. The Japanese desire to learn about the superior European culture made their task easier. Those who worshiped Westernism rushed to Christianity. Among



them were many members of the political opposition who soon began to agitate for more liberal political policies. This did not please the government. The general public, as opposed to those who favored Westernism, had difficulty in seeing anything good in Christianity. A number of people who wanted to preserve "national purity" began to attack it. These considerations external to Buddhism itself temporarily assisted the Buddhist revival.

Members of the Association of Buddhist Sects had been preparing themselves since the first years of Meiji for conflict with Christianity. Now that they had won their fight against Shinto oppression, the Buddhists recognized that the time to join Christianity in battle had come. Even Shimaji Mokurai's movement for religious freedom showed no religious toleration toward Christianity, and the reason that Buddhist priests went abroad to study Western culture, after all, was to find out how Buddhism might best Christianity. Many priests immersed themselves in comparative Buddhist-Christian scholarship and refuted elements of Christianity. These refutations eventually became the foundation for modern Buddhist research.

The greatest stimulus to the priests' reforming zeal was the awesome specter of Christianity. This Buddhist anti-Christian spirit naturally aligned itself with the nationalistic anti-Christian spirit which began a few years later. This partnership against Christianity, however, confined the modernization of Buddhism within the limits of narrow nationalism. This was one of the important reasons for the failure of the Buddhist Reformation.

## Chapter Five

### THE REVIVAL OF BUDDHISM

#### 1. THE MEIJI CONSTITUTION OF 1889 AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

AS explained in the previous chapter, the desire for religious freedom first developed along with the entry of Western culture about 1874-5. Article 28 of the Constitution of 1889 specifically affirmed it to be national policy.

Basically, this Constitution accepted the theory of human rights and set up a constitutional monarchy. It specifically included the section on religious freedom because of strong pressure from religious circles. In the Constitution, the government administrators recognized the principle of religious freedom in the Western sense of the words. *Commentaries on the Constitution of the Empire of Japan*, written by the man who was chiefly responsible for the Constitution, Itō Hirobumi, interprets the meaning of religious freedom in the following words:

Freedom of religious belief is to be regarded as one of the most beautiful fruits of modern civilization. For several centuries, freedom of conscience and the progress of truth, both of them of the most vital importance to man, have struggled through dark and thorny paths, until they have at last come out into the radiance of open day. Freedom of conscience concerns the inner part of man and lies beyond the sphere of interference by the laws of the State. To force upon a nation a particular form of belief by the establishment of a state religion is very injurious to the natural intellectual development of the people,

and is prejudicial to the progress of science by free competition. No country, therefore, possesses by reason of its political authority, the right or the capacity to an oppressive measure touching abstract questions of religious faith.\*

Early Meiji seems to be almost a different world. One need only look, for instance, at the desire to unify worship and government as expressed in the restoration of Imperial Rule and the *Daikyō*. The Constitution firmly separated government from religion and recognized religious freedom.

The Buddhists had realized their long-cherished desire. This in itself brought them new problems. They prided themselves on Buddhism's more than one thousand years of contribution to Japanese culture. They recognized the fact that, logically, the newcomer, Christianity, should receive the same treatment as Buddhism, but they found it difficult to accept this fact emotionally. Furthermore, they could not overestimate the strength which the prestige of Western culture and foreign financial assistance gave Christianity. Many people feared that Japan would become completely Christianized within a few years. For a short period, the government officials themselves, infatuated with Western culture, promoted Christianity and things Western to convince the European powers of Japan's modernity and, as a result, to persuade them to hasten treaty revision.

In 1887, a strong nationalist reaction against Western culture began to develop. This nationalism accompanied the Buddhist movement to protect itself against Christianity. The Buddhists preferred to call it, however, *haja kensei*, which means to reject Christianity as a wicked religion and to restore Buddhism to its original purity. The Buddhists planned to revive their faith by aligning themselves with the increasing nationalistic sentiment. They used their hard-won religious freedom for the first time to attack Christianity. This gave the Buddhists a strong sense of unity and enthusiasm. In the light of these conditions, it seems

\* See page 89 for identification of the translation



inevitable that the Buddhists should have interpreted religious freedom in terms of sectarian advantage. The leaders of this anti-Christian movement were mainly members of the laity, Buddhism's intellectual leaders rather than professional priests.

## 2. BUDDHIST APOLOGETICS

Nationalism and secularism influenced many of the Meiji Buddhist apologetics. Buddhism had just completed severing its connection with the Tokugawa government, but the Buddhists saw no inconsistency in co-operating with the new Meiji government. Buddhism in Japan had always enjoyed state protection. One of its outstanding characteristics was that it served as "the pacifier and protector of the state." The separation policy of the Meiji Restoration attempted to break this tie between the state and Buddhism. But Buddhism's nationalistic coloring had not yet disappeared. After its period of difficulty, it looked forward to revival with state assistance. This, in turn, became another reason why Buddhism could not meet the challenge of the modern world.

Early Meiji Buddhist apologetics covered the following general topics:

1. Reformation of priestly evils through a spiritual awakening.
2. Interdependence of the national and Buddhist law. This refuted the anti-Buddhist positions of Confucianism and Shinto. It preached Buddhism's practical utility to the nation.
3. The harmony of Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. This attempted to use Eastern philosophy to cope with Westernism and, especially, Christianity.
4. Attacks on Christianity from the point of view of pure Buddhist apologetics.

The works had no consistent point of view, but they shared a certain nationalistic tone. This, in the final analysis, arose from the antipathy to Christianity common to all the articles.

The person who first attacked Christianity was a priest of the Jōdo Sect, Ugai Tetsujō (1814-1891). Beginning in the final years of Tokugawa, he had reprinted earlier anti-Christian literature. The title of one of his books, *Ridiculous Christianity* (1869), indicates the tenor of all of them. Ugai issued his best known books just at the height of the *haibutsu kishaku* movement, and they greatly strengthened the Buddhists' case.

Shimaji Mokurai's outstanding contribution in the fight for religious freedom has already been described. He also actively opposed Christianity. His *New Thoughts on the Resurrection* (1875) illustrates this attitude. A desire to defend Buddhism against Christianity underlay his life's work of educating the Japanese about Buddhism.

The next important apologist was Inoue Enryō (1859-1919). His *Introduction to Enlivening Buddhism*, published in 1887 as the first volume of a four volume set called *Enlivening Buddhism*, forms the high point of the Buddhist attack on Christianity. Inoue was graduated from the Department of Philosophy of Tokyo Imperial University in 1885 as the first Buddhist recipient of a bachelor's degree. His aim was to vitalize Buddhism through his writings. He wrote 122 works altogether, but the two most widely read and influential were *The Guiding Principle of Truth* and *Enlivening Buddhism*. *The Guiding Principle of Truth* contained three sections: *The Philosophical Refutation of Christianity* (1886), *The Practical Refutation of Christianity* (1887), and *Buddhist Teaching: Both Completely Intellectual and Completely Emotional* (1887).

Inoue insisted that religious faith must be theoretically perfect. He pointed out the irrationality of Christian doctrine while comparing it unfavorably with the extreme rationality of Buddhism. The following is an excerpt from the first section of



*Introduction to Enlivening Buddhism:*

Buddhists claim that their belief is true. Christians feel they have the truth. Neither succeeds in proving that the other lacks pure truth. This is both biased and partial. In criticizing the two here, I shall use as my criteria objective truth and impartial philosophy.

If one looks at the world of religions through a philosopher's eyes, he can easily see that objective truth lies within the realm of Buddhism. Christian truth is biased and incomplete. Compared to Buddhist truth, it is like the tip end of a hair or a shadowy echo. Ah, how clear is Buddhist truth, how obscure that of Christianity, similar to the dimming of the stars before the moon's brilliance. Ah, how complete the truth of Buddhism, how partial that of Christianity, similar to the insignificance of rivers as they enter the sea. How can I even discuss the two religions on the same day?

For twenty-odd years I have specialized in philosophy and have attempted to discover truth in it. One day a great enlightenment came to me. I realized that the truth for which I had been striving several decades was not in Confucianism, nor in Buddhism, nor in Christianity; rather, it was in Western philosophy. I felt almost immeasurable joy, similar to Columbus when he discovered the first bit of land in the Atlantic Ocean. The clouds of doubt of the past decades suddenly dispersed; my heart had been cleansed.

Having discovered the truth in philosophy, I turned my eyes back toward the traditional religions. By this means, I gradually understood what was not true in Christianity and proved the fallacies in Confucianism. Only the teachings of Buddhism agreed for the most part with philosophical truth. I read over the Buddhist scriptures and reaffirmed their wisdom. I clapped my hands with joy! I should have known that the truths arrived at through several thousand years' experience in Europe were already in existence in Far Eastern antiquity three thousand



years ago.

No other book in Meiji Buddhist literature equalled or excelled this *Introduction* in influence, both among Buddhists and non-Buddhists.

Another leader was Murakami Senshō (1851-1929), whom Inoue's *Enlivening Buddhism* had influenced. He himself later directed a Buddhist apologetic movement to oppose the flourishing Christian evangelism. For a while, he had a lecture hall in Tokyo which he used for this purpose. He closed this lecture hall when he received an appointment to Tokyo Imperial University. He later addressed the general public a second time through his book, *The Unity of Buddhism*.

*The Unity of Buddhism* was Murakami's life work. The first of its five volumes appeared in July, 1901. He hoped to contribute a new synthesis to Buddhist reformation. A remark in the appendix unexpectedly aroused the ire of his own group, the Ōtani branch of the Shin Sect, however, which then expelled him. The reason for this was his opinion on the controversy, then current, that the Mahayana interpretation of Buddhism, which most Japanese Buddhists accepted, was not true to Buddha's own teaching. This expulsion did not affect Murakami's aim of establishing a new interpretation of Buddhism and reforming its evils. He felt deeply the need for historical research and published a number of works, including *The History of Japanese Buddhism* (Dai Nihon Bukkyō Shi), which contributed much to a general re-evaluation of Buddhist history.

In summary, the apologetics of Inoue and Murakami inspired the Buddhist world and contributed a deeper understanding among non-Buddhists, particularly intellectuals and statesmen.

### 3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAY BUDDHISM

Priests were not the only ones who contributed to this revival

of Buddhism. A number of outstanding laymen began to consider Buddhist doctrine and thought at least the equal, and in some respects the superior, of Western thinking. These men became active Buddhist apologists. Intellectuals were beginning to criticize excessive Westernism and to recognize that Christianity and Western civilization were not inseparable. This recognition encouraged the lay Buddhists to attack Christianity. Buddhism had lost its privileged position basically because of the sloth and degeneracy of the priests. Lay Buddhists had to take an important role in defending Buddhism because the public had lost faith in the priests. After 1887, the public began to expect a great deal from Buddhism, but hoped for ideas and faith consistent with the new age rather than for revival of the past. Sect tradition restrained both temples and priests from independent thought and action. The total result was that lay Buddhists took the lead in defending their faith. Of course, some perceptive and enthusiastic priests did contribute to Buddhist regeneration, but it was independent lay action that furnished the leadership.

Among these laymen there were various points of view and methods of action. Three deserve attention. The first was an attack on Christianity by emphasizing the essential unity of Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. The second was an attempt to revive Buddhism by fusing it with statist philosophy. The third was an independent reform movement.

From the time of the Meiji Restoration, a number of conflicts had arisen between Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism over the separation of Buddhism from Shinto and the unification of worship and government. These conflicts had frustrated co-operative effort. Beginning in 1887 as part of the secular reaction, the leaders of the three religions decided to work together against the popularity of Western thought and Christianity. The National Religio-ethical Society of Japan, founded in January, 1888, represents Buddhism's contribution to this activity. The society's organ vigorously attacked Christianity and Westernization, and suggested that Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism had no al-



ternative but to unite against them. Positively, it proposed to unite the basic elements of the three religions and to establish a new national religion. The Society described its plan in the following words:

The national religion is the spirit of a country. The spirit of Japan has three components: Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. We call the combination of these three the "great way." Shinto excels in love for our Emperor and country. Confucianism directs public morality. Buddhism relieves anxiety. The sages of old developed a religion which united all three.

As a result of diligent effort, the society grew to about thirty-five thousand members, and its magazine had a circulation of approximately ten thousand in 1902. It helped the Buddhist cause greatly.

Another movement attempted to strengthen Buddhism by fusing it with statist philosophy. It originated in January, 1889, and was called "The United Movement for Revering the Emperor and Buddha." Its purpose was to encourage Buddhists to enter politics and so to become members of the Diet which was to open the next year. There they could propagate the concept of dual respect for the Emperor and Buddha. The plan failed completely. The man who had been most active in it, Ōuchi Seiran, then joined Shimaji Mokurai and others in lecturing and writing magazine articles. Ōuchi engaged in many other projects, including the construction of what he called a "church" in honor of Shōtoku Taishi, the first great Buddhist ruler. He also organized Buddhist social-service groups and a Buddhist publishing house.

Strong conservatism and nationalism characterized these Buddhist lay programs, but the thinking of some, at least, of the leaders was quite progressive. The Fellowship of Enlightened Buddhists was one such liberal group. It consisted of young laymen and a few young priests. It violently criticized both



the evils of traditional Buddhism and the conservative laymen who countenanced them. The Fellowship at one time came close the philosophy of the Unitarian Church. At last, because the government could no longer tolerate the progressive opinions of the Fellowship, they suppressed it. Many of its members, however, later became leaders in Buddhism and in society at large.

The Buddhist conservative movement against Christianity gave new vitality to Buddhism for a short period around 1890. This movement reached its peak in what is called the "Conflict Between Religion and Education" which Inoue Tetsujirō initiated. As the excitement caused by this clash lessened, the Buddhist revival itself subsided. The attitude of Christians toward the Education Rescript originally provoked the controversy, and the reaction to the Christian position took the form of an attack on Christianity. In reality, however, the antagonists were nationalism and Westernism. After this clash, Christianity increasingly adapted itself to Japanese culture, and the Buddhists lost some of their chauvinism. They became more internationally minded in keeping with Buddhism's basic religious nature. The Buddhist movement against Christianity gradually subsided.



## Chapter Six

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN BUDDHIST THOUGHT

#### 1. BUDDHIST SCHOLARSHIP IN EUROPE AND ITS INFLUENCES

AS stated previously, a Buddhist revival developed in connection with the appearance of nationalism during the early eighteen-nineties. Because of its connection with nationalism, this revival did not go beyond apologetics to true spiritual reform. The lasting changes which did occur in Buddhism were not a revolution in the Western sense, much less a religious reformation. The real change which took place in Buddhism during Meiji received its inspiration not from *haibutsu kishaku* but from a new kind of Buddhist scholarship. This scholarship developed solely under the influence of Buddhist studies in Europe. European students of Buddhism approached it as a problem in scholarship with relatively little interest in the thought itself. The new scholarship which developed in Japan under the influence of this study in Europe, however, gave birth to new thinking and faith within Buddhism itself.

From early Meiji, Buddhist leaders and young scholars had competed for an opportunity to study in the West. It became almost a fad. Of course, the importation of Western ideas in general was one of the great currents of Meiji scholarship, but, at first glance, it is difficult to understand why Japanese scholars of Buddhism should go to the West to pursue their studies. Buddhism originated in India, matured in China, and attained its fullest flower in Japan. Why indeed should scholars from



Buddhist Japan go to the Christian West to study Buddhism? What did the Buddhist priests study in Europe? In what way did European Buddhist scholarship affect Meiji Buddhist scholarship? These are problems of prime importance in the development of modern Japanese Buddhist thought.

European research into Buddhism developed from English and French studies of ancient Indian texts. It started a little more than a hundred years ago. This research had two main emphases: one centered around sources in the Pali language and the other around sources in the Sanskrit language. Monumental advances occurred in both in 1826. In the fourth volume of *Asiatic Researches*, Brian H. Hodgson first described his collection of 381 sutra scrolls written in Sanskrit. This opened a new horizon for Buddhist scholarship by clearly indicating that a rich store of Sanskrit sacred writings existed. During the same year, A. Johnston completed his translation project entitled *The Sacred and Historical Works of Ceylon*, while C. Lassen and Emil Burnouf announced their joint work, *Essai sur le Pali*, the first scholarly work on the Pali language. These new developments were the beginning of the Western scholarly study of Buddhism.

Hodgson bequeathed most of his Sanskrit writings to various organizations dedicated to Oriental studies. The only individual to receive any of them was Burnouf, an extremely gifted linguist who subsequently vindicated Hodgson's faith in him. He succeeded in establishing a new level of Buddhist scholarship with the materials he had received. His most important work was the *Introduction a l'histoire de Bouddhisme indien*. His pupil and successor, Max Müller, directly influenced Japanese Buddhism greatly.

Max Müller completed the study of the Sanskrit scriptures which Hodgson and Burnouf had started. At Oxford, he continued to announce new findings both in linguistics and the study of religion. His forty-five volume work, *Sacred Books of the East*, is monumental. Japanese scholars of Sanskrit like Takakusu

Junjirō vied to study under him. His contribution through them, though only a relatively small part of his influence on Japan, makes him an important figure in modern Japanese Buddhist scholarship.

Studies of Buddhism based on Pali texts also continued to advance. In 1875, Robert C. Childers published his work of half a lifetime, the *Dictionary of the Pali Language*. Seven years later, the Pali Text Society was founded as a result of the enthusiasm of Rhys Davids.

Rhys Davids had gone to Ceylon as a government official at an early age. Here he started a lifelong study of Pali and Buddhism. Returning to England in 1876, he awakened interest in Oriental studies through his lectures at London and Manchester Universities. His books, *Buddhism* and *Buddhist India*, were definitive. Takakusu Junjirō, Nagai Makoto, and others continued his tradition by studying Buddhism through Pali sources for the first time in Japan.

Many other famous scholars contributed to the European study of Buddhism. Those who were most influential were E. Leumann and H. Oldenberg of Kiel University, Paul Deussen of Germany, Sylvain Levi of France, and the Belgian Sanskrit scholar, Louis de la Valée-Poussin. Their study arose from free scientific inquiry which did not then exist in lands where Buddhism flourished. This new attitude made the study of Buddhism for the first time a modern scholarly discipline and added a new dimension, hitherto unknown in Far Eastern countries, to their own studies of Buddhism.

European scholars devoted most of their time to linguistic research. They contributed most in collecting Sanskrit and Pali texts; studying these languages scientifically; examining the texts in the light of their linguistic knowledge; and publishing translations. Japanese had previously ignored this linguistic approach. They had also not used Sanskrit texts much. Only a few such texts existed in Japan. The texts at Hōryūji in Nara were particularly well known. Japanese wanting to learn



Sanskrit studied either in China or from Brahmins resident in Japan. But except for a few priests of little influence who studied Sanskrit at the end of the seventeenth century, work on Sanskrit sources stopped at the end of the Heian period (1185). The Japanese had not attempted a thoroughgoing study of Sanskrit before the Meiji period. It appears that they did not even know Pali existed. Buddhist scholarship in Japan concerned itself with wearisome philosophical exegeses, and apologetic doctrinal studies based upon vast numbers of texts in Chinese translation. The Japanese did not even think of studying primitive Buddhism or of criticizing basic texts. Suddenly, they heard of European scholars with an excellent linguistic grasp of many Sanskrit and Pali texts. This is why Buddhist scholars from a Buddhist country had to study in the West.

This European approach greatly benefitted Japanese scholarship. In the first place, the Japanese learned of the Tripitaka in the Pali Language. This differed greatly from the Chinese texts, which was all the Japanese had had previously. From these new texts, the Japanese gained a new system of Buddhist knowledge, primitive Buddhism, or knowledge of Buddha as an historical person. Secondly, they found out about numerous other Sanskrit texts. This gave them new knowledge about Buddhism itself and also the basic texts from which the Chinese translations had been made. Thirdly, by comparing the Pali texts and the Chinese translations, they learned of errors in the translation and could trace the development of Buddhist thought.

Europeans brought in and studied Buddhism as a strange Oriental religion differing from Christianity. Their attitude was entirely devoid of apologetic. By means of this new point of view, the Europeans recognized characteristics of Buddhist thought and historical facts about Buddhism which the Japanese had not previously understood. The methodology itself was revolutionary in terms of Japanese traditional scholarship.



## 2. NEW METHODS OF BUDDHIST SCHOLARSHIP

European influence renovated Japan's Buddhist scholarship. An entirely new methodology grew up.

In addition to the linguistic method, European studies contributed, first, an understanding of the ancient Indian history and culture underlying Buddhism and, second, a point of view which emphasized the historical Buddha. For instance, Müller's *Sacred Books of the East* includes many such non-Buddhist texts as *The Law of Manu*. Rhys Davids's *Buddhist India* dealt mainly with Indian culture and politics rather than with the life of Buddha or Buddhist doctrines. Oldenberg's *Buddha, sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde*, published in 1881, dealt for the first time with the historical life of Buddha as found in Pali sources. Previously, the Japanese interpretation of Buddha had stopped at the mythological figure found in the Chinese texts. Japanese had never thought of verifying the existence of Buddha as a man. Even in Europe, scholars at first denied the historical existence of Buddha and interpreted him in terms of a solar myth. When they were dependent upon Sanskrit texts alone, the Indian superhuman interpretation of Buddha impressed them. According to this interpretation, Buddha had emitted a radiance, flown through the air, remained for a long period under water, and walked on fire. Therefore, Oldenberg made a great contribution by establishing Buddha's existence as a human being.

The earlier Japanese scholars knew India only as the mythical holy land of Buddhism. They made no study of its history or culture. They used important traditional Chinese sources on India, but these, after all, were written by priests who had traveled many years earlier to India with no geographical or historical knowledge of it. Some Japanese priests had wanted to go to India, but not one accomplished his aim before the Meiji Era. The first Japanese visitor to the area where Buddha

had lived was Kitabatake Dōryū of the West Honganji. But by that time, European scholarship on India was already quite advanced.

This concentration on India and the influence from Europe naturally stimulated objective research on the life of Buddha. Previous to this influence from Europe, sect and doctrinal differences set the tone of Buddhist studies, a result of the fact that all study was undertaken either to defend or to enlarge one's own sect.

The Chinese translation which the Japanese used presumed the superiority of the Mahayana interpretation. Religious authorities unquestioningly suppressed any claim that the Mahayana, the Buddhist interpretation traditional in China and Japan, was not the authentic Buddhist interpretation. They looked with suspicion on anyone who studied the Theravada, the earlier interpretation which was still commonly followed in India and Southeast Asia. Sect authorities occasionally excommunicated anyone who studied Theravada. This prejudice gave way, finally, before two forces. One was the fact that some Japanese adopted the Theravada and the other was the influence of European scholarship. At last Japanese scholars were able to concentrate on the study of Buddha as an historical figure.

The revolution in Buddhism during the latter half of Meiji brought about a great change in point of view. The influence of European Buddhist studies was the deciding factor in this change. The spirit of historical inquiry then prevailing in Europe had made this study possible.

This approach to history which came into Japan with the European studies of Buddhism slowly spread into all fields of study to become the guiding intellectual spirit of the day. Inoue Tetsujirō of Tokyo Imperial University was the first to use this method. He analyzed Buddha's life by means of it in 1889. The first Buddhist historical journal in the Western sense started five years later.

This historical approach emphasized conclusions based upon



historical fact in place of the traditional philosophical speculation. In Japan, this new scholarship concentrated first on primitive Buddhism. This subject engrossed all of the famous Meiji scholars, particularly those working with Anezaki Masaharu and Takakusu Junjirō at Tokyo Imperial University. At the present, it is impossible to think of Buddhist studies without this concentration on the primitive period, but what a change this is from the pre-Meiji era! "Basic Buddhism" is the name applied to the results of this research.

Anezaki Masaharu was the principal exponent of "Basic Buddhism." In the introduction to his book, *The Historical Buddha and the Eternal Buddha*, he said: "The eternal truth of Buddha cannot result from visionary speculation;... it must be found in actual history." One cannot base conviction on imagination; enthusiasm does not flare up from empty speculation. Running through the study of primitive Buddhism is the conviction that "eternal truth can be found only in historical fact." Anezaki went on to criticize the traditional viewpoint of Japanese Buddhism severely:

Japanese Buddhists try to elevate their position by calling themselves Mahayanists. While playing with lofty theory and impractical logic, they have forgotten any deep faith in Buddha himself. From the twin standpoints of faith and history, it is lamentable that Japanese Buddhism has become so vapid.

Anezaki recommended the Aganna Sutra, which related the words and deeds of Buddha with comparative accuracy, in place of Mahayana doctrine. He felt that sutra to be the true source of Buddhist faith. He defined Basic Buddhism as primitive Buddhism which became the source of faith for individuals. He commented on this in the preface to his book *Basic Buddhism*:

Theravada Buddhism is the stem of the flower while Mahayana



is its leaves. Is not Buddhism now forgetting the roots while being dazzled by the color of the flower? Are not the leaves flourishing while the stem droops? My description of Basic Buddhism developed from my own research in comparing the traditional Pali texts and the Chinese translations. This work springs from a desire to arrive at the true essence of Buddha derived from Buddhism as an historical religion.

Anezaki's desire to revive Buddhism as a living religion must not be overlooked. It was not merely a problem of words. Anezaki believed that within primitive Buddhism were the living springs of the faith, the truth of Buddha, and the root from which all Buddhism had developed. It was this faith that he indicated by the phrase "Basic Buddhism."

At the same time, Murakami Senshō published a work called *The Unity of Buddhism* which also criticized the Mahayana position from the historical point of view. He urged the various Buddhist sects to adopt unified doctrine and, though criticizing Mahayana, did not cast off its general concepts. Murakami's opinions differed greatly from Anezaki's but these differences arose from the varying degree to which they understood the modern historical approach.

Basic Buddhism was Buddhism's answer to the problems of the new day. Murakami's *The Unity of Buddhism* went only halfway, retaining some vestiges of the pre-Meiji interpretation of Buddhism which should have been excluded. Murakami's demands for organizational and doctrinal unity are nothing more than partial measures within the framework of traditional Mahayana Buddhism. But traditional Buddhism is not enough. Only the principles of "Basic Buddhism" provide sources for further Buddhist thought.

## 3. THE END OF THE CRITICISM AGAINST MAHAYANA

What was the reaction of organized Japanese Buddhism to the change in Buddhist scholarship brought about by European influence? Japanese Buddhist scholarship no longer lags behind that in Europe or America. That does not mean that Buddhist organization or society in general has changed accordingly. Nor will the various traditional forms of organized Buddhism change in the near future. Neither primitive Buddhism nor Anezaki's Basic Buddhism, both the fruits of Meiji scientific scholarship, have as yet been accepted by Buddhism at large. Most Buddhists, on the contrary, continue their traditional beliefs.

This is not to imply that the leaders and scholars of organized Buddhism were completely insensitive to the new ideas. They deeply recognized the need for theory applicable to this age along with new methods of organization and propaganda to cope with new social conditions. They also realized the need to defend Buddhism against Christianity. During the latter part of Meiji, they succeeded to a certain extent within Japan itself and started foreign mission work for the first time in the history of Japanese Buddhism. Apart from this, a new movement free of organizational ties developed to encourage more liberal and broad-minded faith.

By far the greatest problem facing organized Buddhism in the latter half of Meiji was how to end the criticism against the Mahayana interpretation of Buddhism. The Aganna Sutra had long been highly venerated as one of the repositories of Theravada Buddhism, but no one had paid it much attention. Now it suddenly appeared as if it might be of the highest value. The difficulty lay in the conclusions resulting from study of the Aganna Sutra. According to these conclusions, the Mahayana Sutras, which were the basic canons of the various Japanese sects, did not contain the authentic words of Buddha.



This conclusion arrived at by the new scholarship posed a difficult problem for the sects. They could not alter their entire systems of thought overnight. Furthermore, the sect leaders did not always want to change. For some of them, theology was a way to control faith and to maintain authority. As a result, most priests shrank from the problem and confined themselves as formerly to studies of doctrinal history and exegetical analysis. Some sect officials even excommunicated those who criticized Mahayana thought.

The sect administrators did not really want to face the new scholarship. Buddhist scholars, both lay and priest, though particularly the latter, took positions in defense of the sect position. One who accepted the new interpretation and yet did not budge from his old faith was Murakami Senshō. This point of view colored all his work including *The Unity of Buddhism* which was mentioned earlier: "The criticism of Mahayana Buddhism is a problem of history, not of doctrine. From the doctrinal point of view no one should doubt the Mahayana interpretation."

This answer now appears overly facile and has drawn the criticism that Murakami was shallow. But a little reflection brings to mind the tremendous difficulties he faced as a sectarian priest-scholar who tried to reconcile the historical approach with Mahayana doctrine. *The Unity of Buddhism* may be considered a product of this dilemma:

After 1898, I altered the direction of research. I specialized in doctrinal development as intellectual history rather than in social phenomena. In this doctrinal research, I compared the standpoints of various sects rather than emphasizing individual sect research. I strived to reconcile differences.

Murakami attempted a doctrinal compromise while criticizing the Mahayana point of view. His method was to trace the intellectual development of Buddhism. By this means he concluded



that the Mahayana doctrine, though not the direct teaching of Buddha, was a necessary and brilliant development in Buddhist thought.

Maeda Eun was, along with Murakami, a lecturer in Tokyo Imperial University at the time that the latter's ideas were attracting attention. He was also a priest-scholar and in 1903 published a refutation of the case against Mahayana Buddhism called *An Interpretation of Mahayana History*. His introduction contains the following statement:

Some readers will consider me in disagreement with Mahayana doctrine, but this is not necessarily the case. At the present, a scholar of my mean ability cannot prove whether the Mahayana scriptures now extant are really the true teachings of Buddha. I planned to answer this question in this book, but I could not do so satisfactorily. I have been able to establish only the fact that the seeds of Mahayana doctrine were present during Buddha's lifetime.

Maeda's work in following up the strands of Mahayana Buddhism to the time of Buddha was in itself a great achievement. As a result of it, he proved Mahayana Buddhism was a development of the original doctrine of Buddha. He considered the Mahayana to be an important part of Buddhist doctrine while at the same time recognizing the criticism leveled against it. By this means, he tried to fuse Mahayana with Anezaki's Basic Buddhism.

Kimura Taiken during the first three decades of this century influenced many people by his intellectual maturity and lively insight. He was also a priest-scholar who propounded a kind of primitive Buddhism. This is an example of his thinking:

In a sense, it is correct that Buddhism became unscientific after the Mahayana developed. In order to make Buddhism applicable to modern life, it is necessary to purge it as much

as possible of these unscientific elements. I say this as a scholar of Mahayana myself.

This being the case, some people ask whether Buddhism has not contained unscientific elements since its inception. The thing which continually reassures me is that there are practically none of these elements in primitive Buddhism. The direct teachings of Buddha are pure and logical to an amazing extent, and if I may be permitted to say so, are almost modern. Of course, they have neither the grandeur of Mahayana nor the subtlety of Theravada. But the more one studies the doctrines of primitive Buddhism, the more he recognizes their original simplicity and clarity. Many people are turning to them as their value becomes generally better appreciated.

The Buddhism which Westerners study is almost entirely primitive Buddhism, and such scholars as Takakusu and Anezaki have been encouraging research in it. But this study has been limited to scholars because Japan has traditionally favored the Mahayana interpretation. Recently, however, people have started to turn from other interpretations to primitive Buddhism. They feel that this is more in keeping with the true Buddhist spirit and that it alone offers a way to save both their own souls and the present world.

I personally feel that the true spirit of Buddhism arrived at its fullest flower in Mahayana. Therefore, it is difficult for me to accept fully the interpretation that primitive Buddhism is sufficient. But I firmly believe that primitive Buddhism should be encouraged as much as possible, both as a scholarly pursuit and as a way of relieving Buddhism of its confusion and obscurities. This is important for both Buddhism and the intellectual world in general.

Kimura entitled this article "In Praise of Primitive Buddhism," but primitive Buddhism as he saw it did not exclude Mahayana. On the contrary, he adopted primitive Buddhism from Mahayana concepts. Primitive Buddhism would help modernize organized



Buddhism by removing the unscientific elements from Mahayana.

Later, Kimura published a great deal concerning Mahayana Buddhism. One thing is common to all of the articles. This is a proclamation that the Mahayana, for all its impurities, glorifies Buddha. It is the pinnacle of Buddhist intellectual development. Mahayana arose to reinvigorate the true spirit of primitive Buddhism which had been formalized in Theravada Buddhism: "In short, the Mahayana's objective in idealizing Buddha was to bring the people back to his true spirit. Mahayana aimed at revitalizing primitive Buddhism from a deeper point of view."

#### 4. LATER DEVELOPMENTS IN BUDDHISM

A great increase in national consciousness followed the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War. Japan's improved international position provided her with breathing space during which she was able to reflect on her indiscriminate adoption of Western culture and her relationship to other nations. She started to digest the Western culture which she had swallowed so rapidly and to make it her own. Only at this time did the seeds of the Restoration at last bear fruit.

Buddhism itself gradually recovered from the severe reverses *haibutsu kishaku* had dealt it. As a scholarly discipline, it seemed entirely different. The Buddhist organization, in contrast, did not change. Bound as they were by tradition, the sects could not follow the primitive Buddhism which the new research had developed. Within the limits of their conservatism, however, they did try to improve doctrine, sect administration, and propagation.

Educational reform came first. Early in Meiji when Buddhism was still being attacked, the various sects had decided to reform the priesthood and to train young men of ability as a basic countermeasure. The Association of Buddhist Sects reaffirmed



this decision in 1869.

On the advice of Shimaji Mokurai and Ishikawa Shundai, the East and West Honganji abolished their system of sectarian seminaries and replaced it with parochial schools modeled after the public-school system. The West Honganji, for instance, revamped its system into a Buddhist college, higher middle school, and middle school. The East Honganji changed its Takakura Seminary into Shinshū College. The other sects followed suit.

Most of these reforms occurred in the decade following 1892. They were modeled on the European system and required the students to follow a normal curriculum in addition to the traditional study of Buddhism, both its thought in general and its sectarian doctrine. They particularly emphasized Western languages and philosophy in order to prepare the students for the new methods of Buddhist research.

Reform of sect administration and methods of propagation was second. Its purpose was to facilitate organizational activity and to extend missionary work into new fields. The West Honganji started this in 1880, to be followed seven years later by the other sects. As part of its program, the West Honganji established a representative conference to administer the sects a decade before the national parliament opened. Later, the sects considerably changed their regulations regarding administration, propagation, and entrance into the priesthood. The energetic social work of the sects was the most outstanding aspect of this. The East and West Honganji led in developing a Buddhist social conscience and charity work. This work included dispatching chaplains to the forces during the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese Wars, appointing prison chaplains, and assisting newly released convicts. Buddhist women's organizations also helped disabled soldiers and bereaved families.

Another thing which bespeaks the vigor and religious zeal of Japanese Buddhism at this period was the initiation, for the first time in its history, of overseas missionary work. Missionaries went to Hokkaido when it was being colonized, and to Formosa,

Sakhalin, and Korea as these areas came into the Japanese orbit. Activity later extended to Manchuria and China. Beginning in 1897, missionaries also went to Hawaii and North America where they met with a good deal of success. Organized Buddhism had regained its energy.

The beginning of inner spiritual awakening was the third point of reform. It appeared within both organized Buddhism and the lay movements outside of the sects.

In 1900, a Buddhist puritan group started the "Movement for a New Buddhism." During the following year, Kiyozawa Manshi (1836-1903) exerted a profound influence by his intense faith which he described as "spiritualism." His influence lived on in a number of prominent followers. Preceding this, Chikazumi Jōkan had opened a private seminar for the purpose of attracting students to Buddhism. Many students from schools which now are included in Tokyo University attended this seminar. Takayama Chogyū, a famous novelist and professor, used his literary ability to advance the Nichiren Sect and a kind of Buddhist nationalism.

These movements helped revive interest in Buddhism. They differed from the momentary bursts of energy of earlier Meiji; they were conscious of the modern world. The Buddhist organizations had far to go in adjusting to this modern world, but at least they had started.





*Part Three*  
CHRISTIANITY

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*Ōhata Kiyoshi*

*Ikado Fujio*



## *Chapter One*

### PREPARATION FOR EVANGELIZATION

(1853—1873)

#### 1. THE MEIJI RESTORATION AND ITS SOCIETY

SOME of the reasons that one culture may be transplanted to an entirely different culture and expand in assimilated form throughout its new home may be found in the society of the country which accepts the new culture. Therefore, it is natural to reflect on social conditions in early Meiji if one is to consider Christianity's second entry and its subsequent expansion into Japan.

Christianity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had cleverly used political power and the ambitions of the ruling class to its own advantage. Fascination with Western civilization and a desire for more arms motivated the substantial assistance the ruling class gave Christianity. In feudal society, "authority from above" and "tacit approval of the rulers" are very important. Christianity expanded as much as it did during this early period partly because the missionaries used the "authority from above" in Japanese feudal society to Christianity's advantage.

Evangelization during Meiji, however, arose from social conditions quite different from those of the earlier period, conditions which favored Christianity and particularly Protestantism.

A modern authority on Japanese Christianity says: "Although on the surface religion seems to flourish in Japan, it in fact stops at conventional formality; true believers are comparatively few." Confucianism and Buddhism regulated Japanese society during Tokugawa. The former taught how to get along with



people by defining human relationships; the latter performed rites for the dead and became a tool of the government. Christianity was ruthlessly suppressed. Its development during Meiji followed centuries of suppression. The Charter Oath had said: "Absurd customs of the past shall be discarded,..." and "knowledge shall be sought throughout the world..." This did not change the authorities' attitude toward Christianity, however. The Japanese welcomed Western civilization, but they were completely indifferent and sometimes hostile toward Christianity. As a result of representations from the Powers, the government halted overt persecution, and courageous missionaries came to spread the gospel in a new land. In spite of their efforts, the second attempt at evangelization met stiff resistance. Suspicion resulting from the Tokugawa ban against Christianity was one source of resistance. Another source was that the Japanese had difficulty in understanding some of the essentials of Christianity, particularly the concepts of original sin and atonement which were not present in Buddhism and Shinto. Denominational differences created hardly any difficulties.

Christianity needed two things to prosper: a valiant spirit to repel governmental and social pressure, and intellectual ability to understand and propagate difficult doctrines.

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A certain amount of Western culture including Christianity had come in as a result of the Nagasaki trade. The men who studied this culture were low-ranking samurai. Niiijima Jō (Joseph Niisima), who later founded Dōshisha University, is an excellent example. He was born into a samurai family near Tokyo and had prepared for government service. While awaiting official appointment, he went to Hakodate and from there escaped overseas in defiance of the law. He later described this in his own English:

Since foreigners trade price of everything get high, the

country get poor; because the countrymen don't understand to do trade with foreigners, therefore we must know to do trade, and we must learn foreign knowledge. But the government's law neglected all my thoughts and I cried out myself, "Why government? why not let us be free? why let us be as a bird in a cage, or as a rat in a bag?"

This desire for practical reform was typical of these young samurai. The merchants, unable to continue without foreign trade, began to agree with the samurai. Progressive members of these two classes finally broke the bonds of feudalism and formed a society congenial to the development of Christianity.

## 2. RENEWED EVANGELISM AND ITS PROGRESS

Early in the nineteenth century, the mission boards of the various European and American denominations were greatly concerned about Japan. Less than half a century after America had gained its independence, its devout merchants were collecting funds to send missionaries to Japan. Missionaries who could not enter Japan went temporarily to China in preparation. What is known as the *Morrison* Affair of 1837 resulted from the zeal of one such missionary who tried to enter Japan on the excuse that he was returning shipwrecked sailors. Until Perry arrived in 1853, all such attempts only increased Japanese determination to repel the foreigner. Missionaries who could not enter Japan but wanted to contribute somehow to its evangelization sent in Chinese-language tracts on Christianity through Nagasaki. Uemura Masahisa, later to become one of the great Protestant leaders, has pointed out that many books including Chinese authorized translations of the Bible were imported in response to requests from Japanese intellectuals. Some missionaries went into the Ryukyus with military and diplomatic backing as preparation for entering Japan. At the time, the Ryukyus were



considered Japanese possessions. The Lew Chew Naval Mission sent one such missionary in 1845. Neither his evangelism nor his laborious translation of the Bible into Japanese brought many converts. Before the ban on Christianity was lifted in 1873, Christianity made very little progress.

The commercial treaties which Japan had promised to sign as a result of Perry's visit were finally exchanged in 1858. A number of ports were opened in June the following year. Two months prior to that date, the American Episcopal Church had already moved two missionaries from China to Nagasaki. They were able to act so fast because of information an American naval officer at the scene of the negotiations had sent them. These missionaries found that the Japanese character was such that "Christianity could be quickly propagated," but that social conditions prevented such evangelism. They decided that they should study Japanese and publish books in preparation for more active proselyting later. At the same time, however, they provided those among their visitors who could read with copies of the Bible and other books on Christianity. The Japanese who flocked around them were almost all interested in Western Learning as a means for meeting new conditions. They were not primarily interested in Christianity.

Missionaries who came shortly after these first two found conditions similar. From 1858 to 1861, J. C. Hepburn of the Presbyterian Mission, J. Ballagh of the Dutch Reformed Church, and a number of others came to Kanagawa, near Yokohama. There they lived in a temple while reconnoitering the possibilities of evangelization. They observed that "Inevitably one person in three had pockmarks," and that "People whose heads were covered with running sores could be seen everywhere." As a result, the missionaries started their work with a clinic which demonstrated the essentials of Western medicine. The village headmaster described this work as follows: "Five or six people, completely cured of serious diseases, weepingly express their appreciation of Hepburn. Although there is suspicion that he



is some sort of Christian, he does not act like one, and certainly he is a wonderful foreigner." Hepburn's clinic became the silent evangelism upon which he founded his later success. In addition to medicine, some missionaries opened small schools in their homes. These specialized in teaching English. The missionaries tried to make close friends among young Japanese by means of this teaching. Other missionaries, in response to repeated pleas, left direct evangelism to become teachers of Western Learning or political advisors to the government. They indirectly expressed their Christian faith by helping develop Japan.

Dr. and Mrs. Hepburn lived in the temple for three years and then built a home in the foreign concession of Yokohama. In addition to the many poor people who thronged to the clinic, a number of young men came to study Western Learning. The school which Hepburn started with them later developed into Meiji Gakuin for boys and Ferris Girls' School, both of which played an important role in the development of modern Japanese education. At first, two other missionaries had schools in Yokohama. These two were united with Hepburn's school to form the Eigakkō, or English School. From this school graduated Uemura Masahisa, one of Japan's great Protestant leaders, as well as others who established one of the three main streams of Protestant leadership in Japan. Through this educational work, Hepburn and the others indirectly carried out evangelism and directly contributed greatly to modern Japanese secular culture. Those who taught in government schools also contributed greatly. Much of the early education system and legal codes were based on their advice.

Two other important tasks for missionaries were language study and translation of the Bible. They studied Japanese diligently and made a number of dictionaries which, although not definitive, contributed to Western studies on Japan. None of the Bible translations done before Perry's arrival was satisfactory. Therefore, J. C. Hepburn and S. R. Brown set their hearts on translating the Bible as soon as they landed in 1859.

By 1870, they had completed part of the New Testament. The so-called Hepburn translation was published in 1872-3. A number of missionaries also formed committees to do co-operative translations. These will be covered in more detail later.

A point of special interest is the co-operation in general among the missionaries. During the early history of Protestantism in Japan, interdenominationalism was an accomplished fact. The First Missionary Conference in 1872 adopted a resolution which described this reality in the following words: "Any denominationalism among the new converts is an accident and does not obstruct the spiritual unity in Christ. . . . Japan as a heathen country naturally does not comprehend the history of denominations." The interdenominational translation committee mentioned previously came into being in such circumstances. This "interdenominational evangelization" arose from the fact that the missionaries, weak, oppressed by the government, and misunderstood by the people, banded together for greater strength. After the ban on Christianity had been lifted in 1873, the prestige of Christianity rose, and the various boards sent in many missionaries. Evangelistic competition replaced co-operative effort. This competition has continued up to the present.

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Missionaries were suspect while the government ban on Christianity continued. Hepburn soon learned that servants whom he hired were frequently government spies. Such conditions naturally limited early conversions to Christianity.

Those few who became Christians were generally intellectuals from the groups who had supported the Shogunate and who had opposed the Imperial forces. Harsh government regulations against Christianity and strong social prejudice hindered conversion. To become a Christian required more than rational conviction: it required a great deal of courage. This courage was strengthened by the emotional tangle in which these samurai who had opposed the Imperial forces found themselves. A very



intense expression of these emotions is found in the words of such Christians as Ibuka Kajinosuke. Ibuka has left this record of a conversation with a former direct retainer of the Shogun, Shinozaki Keinosuke:

One day as we were walking together, Shinozaki said with deep emotion that the overthrow of the Tokugawa had been God's will. For me who had come from Aizu (one of the staunchest supporters of the Tokugawa), this was a great surprise. It was the last thing I would have expected from a person who had been so closely affiliated with the Tokugawa government. That he should say so casually words I could never forget! But I had real respect for his faith, and felt at once as if I had heard the voice of God.

Most of these former vassals of the Shogunate who approached the missionaries wanted "English instruction with the Christianity removed." Their hearts changed after they saw what men of character the missionaries were, and after they understood the meaning of Christianity. Just because they had been in such straightened circumstances, however, their conversion was rapid and violent. As they progressed more deeply into the faith, their dissatisfaction with the Meiji government changed to criticism of the feudal remnants they still harbored within themselves. At this point they were able to accept the overthrow of the Tokugawa as the will of Heaven. They then divested themselves of their samurai feelings of superiority. These feelings were replaced by a new sense of purpose—a consciousness of being elite or "elected" by God to the service of social reform based upon the love of one's fellow men. Shinozaki's calm acceptance of the new regime as the will of Heaven was based on a faith that he had been thus elected. A large proportion of the converts were samurai, men like Shinozaki who had fallen on hard times because of the Restoration. This fact has complex significance for Meiji Christianity.



Early Christian activity was closely connected with the missionary English schools. Both later Christian education and evangelization developed from these schools. The missionaries endeavored to open the way to faith through teaching English. In 1872, a group of the young students were impressed at the zeal displayed by the missionaries in a private New Year's prayer meeting held in the foreign concession at Yokohama. Acting on the suggestion of one of them, Shinozaki Keinosuke, the students gathered in a small chapel and themselves conducted a prayer meeting in which they confessed their faith. Uemura Masahisa describes the scene in this way:

A number of the young men listened to lectures on Christianity when not studying English. This group in a period of emotional fervor asked Mr. Ballagh, the missionary, if they could have a New Year's prayer meeting modeled after that of the foreigners. . . . About thirty people, none of whom had ever before prayed aloud, were present. After a long silence, finally one started, and another followed: some crying, some shouting, they vied with each other for the opportunity of praying next. . . . It looked like a great revival.

Their enthusiasm continued. Japan's first Protestant church was established in March, 1872, as a result. It was called the "Yokohama Church." The church at first consisted of nine students. A number more, including Honda Yōichi, later to become famous as the first Japanese Methodist bishop, joined the following month. By the next year there were sixty-two adult members and thirteen children. In 1875, gifts from a number of countries provided funds for a large church building. Until that time, the gatherings, which numbered between twenty and forty people, had met in a temporary stone structure irreverently referred to as the "dog kennel."

Two points are of interest in connection with the founding of this church. The former is that, although in appearance Presbyterian, it did not belong to any sect and was in fact anti-denominational. One of the church regulations reads as follows:

Our church belongs to no denomination. Since we are brought together in the name of Jesus Christ alone, we have made the Bible our only standard. All others who believe its words and endeavor to put them into practice are servants of Christ and our brothers. Therefore, we should consider the members of this church and all believers the world over as the loving members of one family. For these reasons we have called this organization a Christian church.

This may be considered a convincing example of how these Japanese, still young in the faith, eschewed theological and political controversy. It may, on the other hand, be taken as an assertion of their pride as Japanese. The later movement for self-support and freedom of action, refusing to depend completely on missionary aid even if accepting it for partial assistance, may be considered as rising from this same sort of pride. The fact that the first Japanese church had started out as anti-denominational greatly impressed the missionaries. In the First Missionary Conference of September, 1872, they supported this spirit:

Whereas we, as Protestant missionaries, desire to secure uniformity in our modes and methods of evangelization, so as to avoid as far as possible the evil arising from marked differences, we therefore take this earliest opportunity afforded by the Convention to agree that we will use our influence to secure, as far as possible, identity of name and organization in the native churches in the formation of which we may be called to assist.



The second point is that the founding members of the church included two Buddhist priests who had been secretly dispatched to observe it. The Buddhists, so recently fallen from a position of preference, could not challenge Shinto but were ready to take on Christianity. Even in the *Daikyōin* which aimed to exclude everything foreign, "The students either did not attend classes or paid no heed to their teachers of the Shinto and Buddhist classics. On the contrary, they were intoxicated with the lectures of the foreigners." Under these circumstances, it was natural that the Buddhists should consider Christian evangelization dangerous. Infiltrating the Christian group with incognito priests was a prelude to the disputes of later Meiji.

In 1873, a second church was founded in Tokyo because a missionary and many members of the original church had moved there. With the removal of the ban on Christianity the same year, this church prospered greatly.

A non-Protestant church had also established its headquarters in Tokyo in 1872. This was the Japan Russian Orthodox Church founded by the Russian priest, Nicolai. Russia, along with the other Western powers, had concluded a treaty of commerce in 1858 and had established a consulate in Hakodate. Nicolai came to Japan as the priest assigned to the consulate, although he apparently intended to become a missionary from the beginning. His first convert was a Shinto priest, Sawabe Takumaro, who was violently anti-Christian, and who sought an interview with Nicolai with the intention of murdering him. In that first interview, Nicolai bested him in an argument. Instead of killing Nicolai, Sawabe became his pupil. Thereafter, two friends, a physician and a samurai, also became students. Nicolai baptized these three in 1868. Later, Nicolai, through Sawabe's introduction, became acquainted with some members of the Sendai Clan who were dissatisfied with the new government. A number of them ceased their opposition to the government after realizing that it could not be overthrown. They then became convinced that only Christianity could reform their country, and started



to study under Sawabe. Their single purpose of national reformation through Christianity was the same as that of the Protestant, Nijima Jō. Another point of comparison between the early Protestants and leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church is that they were largely intellectuals from among samurai who had supported the Shogunate. By 1871, the Russian Orthodox Church already had more than one hundred members. Nicolai's move to Tokyo the next year was for the purpose of carrying on more effective evangelization.

Nicolai's method of attracting believers was similar to that of Hepburn and other Protestants. Many people wanted to study Russian, and the first group to be baptized in Tokyo consisted of ten men who had started as language students. Thus, the Russian missionaries felt the same satisfaction as did the Protestants in Yokohama. Nicolai and his assistants were similarly to experience deception at the hands of the Buddhists: soon after the first baptisms in Tokyo, Nicolai visited a large Buddhist temple and there discovered that Buddhist spies had been present at the service and had made its details public.

### 3. GOVERNMENT POLICY AND THE POPULAR ATTITUDE TOWARD CHRISTIANITY

The Tokugawa policies brought on deep-seated prejudices against Christianity. The first American minister, Townsend Harris, observed that the Japanese "as a people do not have emotional reactions against other religions." Over the years, the stiff penalties against Christianity in company with the diffusion of rumors depicting its reprehensibility, however, had combined to mold a popular concept that Christianity was a kind of witchcraft. There was a basic conflict between the feudal social structure and the Christian ethic which insisted on the equality of all men before God. New factors abetted the official inertia against changing the government attitude toward

Christianity. The first was that the government chose Shinto to bolster its own strength, and the second was that, in their misunderstanding of Western culture, the government impatiently attempted to accept only its techniques.

This official policy towards Christianity was a fatal mistake. The government expected that its policy would succeed as well as that of its predecessors had succeeded. But the two main props of the former policy, national seclusion and government support of Buddhism, had been removed. The currents of Western thought that were sweeping into Japan, even at this early period, made the unification of worship and government an anachronism. Early Meiji attitudes toward Christianity did not recognize this anachronism. Complaints from the Powers forced the Japanese to understand its defects and to lift the ban against Christianity. Actually, the government switched to indirect oppression of Christianity through the less spectacular methods of education. The Education Ministry Directive Twelve (1899) which prohibited religious education in the schools was the final product of this change in method.

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How did the people react to these policies? Among the intellectuals, a class of government-employed scholars taught the evils of Christianity. These included Buddhist priests who wanted to escape from their present difficulties by regaining, if even to a slight extent, their old authority. *Exposure of Falsehood* written by Yasui Sokken in 1873 was the last of these writings. The authors of all works agreed that Christianity was "the source of rebellion and disunity among the people." Yasui Sokken in *Exposure of Falsehood* feared that Christianity would upset the Confucian status ethics which were the basis of social order: "People who profess Christianity would rather desert their lord or father than be untrue to their religion." Starting with premises like these, the arguments of all these scholars brimmed with pride: "Japan is the land of the gods and of



Buddha: the land which reveres its gods, reverences the Buddha, and follows only the Confucian way of humanity and justice." These scholars' love for their country and desire for its prosperity blinded them to the realities of world history and led them to accept feudal social control.

Popular, as distinct from official, anti-Christian sentiment was not so systematized. As Townsend Harris said in the passage quoted above, the people did not have strong emotional reactions against other religions. Only fear and the eyes of the government spies relentlessly passing among them kept them from Christianity. A Christian merchant, for example, placed imported goods on sale in his Ginza store. Later, a rumor arose that the police had taken down all the names of persons whom the novelty of these goods had attracted. Christianity was an object for discussion only among those who directly or indirectly stood to gain or to lose by Christian evangelism; as an intellectual problem it did not affect the masses. Furthermore, the positive anti-Christian policies of the government were clumsy and hastily enacted. They said: "'We have one hundred thousand Buddhist priests but not that many Shinto priests.' Thereupon, all sorts of men were made Shinto national priests. These included Kabuki actors and poets." The people ignored these crude policies. The following quotation from the *Comic History of Tokugawa and Meiji* illustrates the prevailing attitude:

The Buddhist images, even down to the roadside statues which had lost their noses, all rushed forward arrayed in ranks for a valiant attack on the heights of the Shinto gods. These latter prepared to defend themselves rather than suffer defeat by default. Just at this juncture, Jesus Christ, familiarly known as *Yaso-san*, arrived in the wake of the red-bearded foreigners. He had come from lands afar to reconnoiter Japan. Utilizing the conflict between Shinto and Buddhism, he took possession of a small bit of land. He gradually made friends by spreading palliating 'amens' among the people. Shinto and Buddhism



observed that they could not laugh away this force and realized that in their strife they might both fall before the foreigner. They then ceased fighting each other, crying that all would be lost unless they drove him off. Finally, they united against him. But *Yaso-san* had gradually wormed his way into the domain of Shinto and Buddhism under the guise of modern learning, and one by one imposing churches sprang up over the countryside.

There is no interest—only sarcasm—regarding Christianity in the popular confusion and curiosity which this passage mirrors.

In sum, early Meiji oppression of Christianity developed under the leadership of officials who continued without change the thinking of their predecessors. They erected new signs prohibiting Christianity in 1868 over the concerted protests of the foreign diplomatic community. The most famous instance of the oppression that followed is that of the Urakami Christians.

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Protestantism alone has been described up to this point because Meiji Christian history is mostly Protestant. Protestant America and England took the lead in opening Japan, and Protestantism with its lack of emphasis on formalism was more acceptable than Catholicism to the Japanese. But in order to discuss the discovery and persecution of the Christians who survived at Urakami, it is necessary to touch on the re-entry of Catholicism into Japan. In 1708, a shipwrecked priest named Sidotti who had been captured in a Christian household furnished Arai Hakuseki with the material for his *Reports of the Western World* (*Seiyō Kibun*). No other priests followed Sidotti. The Catholics did not give up hope of working in Japan, however, and continued to seek an opportunity to enter in disguise. The first Catholics went to the Ryukyus in 1844, ahead of the first Protestants. They accomplished almost nothing since they lived practically under house arrest. As soon as the commercial treaty

had been concluded with France in 1858, a party of priests arrived in Japan. They erected churches in Yokohama (1862) and Nagasaki (1865) to serve the foreign community and to prepare for future evangelization. As soon as the church had been opened in Yokohama, negotiations began between the Tokugawa government and the French minister regarding Japanese who wanted to visit it. The result was that Japanese were allowed to visit both churches as long as missionaries did not preach in Japanese.

Some of the missionaries in Nagasaki, including one called Petitjean, ignored this regulation by actively searching for believers and trying to make new converts. Petitjean made many visits to the sacred land around Urakami which had been the scene of so many martyrdoms two centuries earlier. On April 12, 1865, a descendant of one of the hidden Christians made an ardent confession of faith before Petitjean. More Christians appeared, "and several thousand signed a list which was delivered to the village headman." The Christians at the same time attempted to "sever their relations with their (Buddhist) temple and to establish a new Christian community." The government officials could not condone this. While Christians were optimistically contemplating their future, the police had made preparations. They had searched out the meeting places of the Christians and the houses in which the missionaries secretly lived. They had also prepared a list of influential Christians to be used for arrest warrants. In 1867, several hundred Christians were rounded up and thrown in prison. The government could not mete out very stiff penalties because of other political considerations. Its hold on the clans was gradually relaxing. Members of the Western diplomatic corps, especially from the United States and France, objected to this treatment of Christians. The government was concerned about the commercial treaties and worried lest Japan become the scene of a second Opium War. On the other hand, the authorities could not simply free their prisoners, who had, after all,



disobeyed the law. It released them, therefore, on the pretext that they had apparently reformed.

In contrast to this, the punishments imposed by the new Meiji government in 1869 were terrible. Selecting oppression of Christianity as an appropriate place to show its strength, it seized all the Christians in Urakami and exiled them—over three thousand persons—into twenty-one different clans. In 1868, the officials had sentenced some of the captives to death, but these sentences were commuted out of fear of what the Powers might say. The authorities made no concessions to the protests that followed the sentences of exile imposed the following year. Instead they replied sophistically: "It is not a question of whether these people are Christians. They have been moved in the best interests of their home villages only because of their evil activities." The twenty-one clans who had been assigned the exiles vied with each other in forcing them to recant. Some resorted to tortures too hideous to behold: punishment by water in the middle of winter, starvation, and hanging by the feet. With the removal of the ban on Christianity in 1873, those lucky enough to be alive were allowed to return home. In some cases only one-third or one-fourth made the trip. The basic problem changed from religious freedom to suppression of human rights. The Western powers considered Japan barbaric as a result of this persecution and later used it as a pretext for not revising their treaties with her.

Relatively few Protestant converts were imprisoned or died in confinement. Two cases of individuals will indicate how the lot of those that did die differed from that of the Catholics. Two missionaries had employed a language teacher named Ichikawa Einosuke. He had participated out of a sense of professional duty in a worship service which the foreigners had held in a tightly closed Kobe hotel room. The authorities insisted on an investigation in spite of the missionaries' defense of Ichikawa. Finally, he was imprisoned on the charge that he had "assisted in propagating Christianity in Japan." He stated in a



petition, "I confess to having read proscribed Christian books, and regret that I caused the officials inconvenience. My health is failing daily; I humbly petition for clemency." His death while still in confinement made him Japan's first Protestant martyr.

At about the same time, another language instructor named Futagawa was imprisoned. He was already a believer, and: "Before the court at Nagasaki, I realized that my life depended on my answer to this one question. I determined to die in the Christian faith, and answered that I believed deeply." For this reason, he was sent to prison, although he was finally released in 1872 through the intervention of Fukuzawa Yukichi.

These cases represent official suppression. Until mid-Meiji, popular ignorance and the jealousy of Buddhist priests caused much other unofficial suppression. Oshikawa Hōgi, an early Protestant, set out in 1875 on pioneer evangelism into Niigata. This was an area where Buddhism flourished. When the priests heard Oshikawa was coming to propagate Christianity, they quickly whipped their parishioners into a fury. The people mistakenly killed someone else thinking him to be Oshikawa, so that Oshikawa's life was spared. The basis of aversion to Christianity was fear of the government. Persecution of Christianity followed when mob psychology started to work in this atmosphere.

At the time of the Restoration, the new government had decided to select only the very utilitarian aspects of Western culture. The first five or six years of Meiji, during which this policy started, are called the period of "civilized enlightenment."

This "enlightenment" introduced no more of the West than its materialism; it conferred only material advantages on the people. The task of going beyond materialism to the real spirit of modern life and then diffusing this spirit among the people was entrusted to the early progressive thinkers—the students of Western Learning. In 1871, a mission under Iwakura Tomomi had gone to Europe and America with the twin purposes of observing government administration and discussing treaty

revision. One member of the group, Kido Takayoshi, said in a letter: "I realize that Western progress did not develop overnight but is deeply rooted. At the same time, I wonder what there is to admire in our so-called 'enlightenment' which is only skin deep." Even members of the government were beginning to understand that Western cultural superiority was more than material, and that cultural enlightenment deprived of its basic spiritual support was nothing more than mimicry. Kataoka Kenkichi, a Christian who later became speaker of the Diet, also praised the West in his trip abroad in 1871:

The thing I admired first was the philanthropic work, . . . and, after I studied it a while, I found that it was Christians who were engaged in it. I visited Christian homes. . . . In our homes where the codes of Bushido prevail, etiquette is observed very strictly, and it is difficult to escape the bonds of constraint. But in the homes of Christians and particularly ministers, one sees more love than attention to rules of behavior. This attitude is basic, and, therefore, has spread throughout the whole society.

As travelers to the West gradually increased in number, the Japanese began to realize that Western cultural progress had its origin in bourgeois society which, in its turn, arose from the Protestant spiritual heritage. Nakamura Keiu was one of those who best understood the West. While he was translating John Stuart Mill's essay, *On Liberty*, he criticized the government for forcing the people to believe that the Orient, and more particularly Japan, absolutely excelled in ethical education: "The government must protect its citizens and enable them to follow their own beliefs. To rob the people of their right to independent thought and to make people act in accordance with your own will is to enslave religion to government." Gradually the number of liberal thinkers increased, and in 1873, men such as Nishi Amane, Fukuzawa Yukichi, Tsuda Shindō, Katō Hiro-yuki, Nakamura Keiu, Nishimura Shigeki, Mori Arinori, and



Kanda Kōhei founded an organization called the Meirokusha (Sixth Year of Meiji Club). Not all these men supported Christian evangelization, and a number of them later strongly opposed it. At this time, however, they all were at least kindly disposed toward it. Half of them had supported the Tokugawa government against the Imperial party. It is interesting to compare this with the fact that so many early converts had also been among those who supported the Tokugawa.

In the meantime, a number of publications which described conditions in the West and explained Christianity were appearing. These included works by Fukuzawa Yukichi such as *Conditions in the West* (1869) and *The Encouragement of Learning* (1872). Soon thereafter, the members of the Meirokusha started publishing *The Meiroku Magazine*. Nakamura Keiu, who did much of the editing for this magazine, also founded a small private school in Tokyo. He later came under the influence of a missionary who taught at the school and, in 1874, received baptism. He then explained the essentials of Christianity in this way: "The Western World has made religion its motivating principle. Such strong diligence and patience must have its roots in the virtues of faith, hope, and love." Mori Arinori's pamphlet, "Religious Freedom in Japan," supported this position.\* In response to the leadership of the two Christians, Mori Arinori and Nakamura Keiu, Tsuda Shindō urged the government to use Christianity as a state religion: "How would it be if we employed the very best missionaries and had them publicly instruct the people in religion?" Enemies of these men claimed that such talk proved them to be intoxicated with love for the West, but they were not. Like the young patriots who had become the first Christians, they lamented Japan's sad state and recognized how Christianity could be used to construct a new society. In essence, Meirokusha members at this time understood the path Japan should take after ridding itself of the feudal government. Very few of them later went on to become

\* See pages 82-3



Christians or to acquire a true belief in freedom, however. Their views changed when resurgent nationalism began to interfere with freedom of thought.

## *Chapter Two*

### ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH AND INCREASING EVANGELISM

(1874—1890)

#### 1. CHANGES IN SOCIETY AND RECEPTIVITY TO CHRISTIANITY

OPEN evangelization gradually gained momentum after the removal of the signs proscribing Christianity in 1873. During the first years of Meiji, foreign missionaries had controlled the movement, but Japanese gradually took over most of the evangelism. Therefore, the theme of this chapter is the shift in leadership of evangelization from the missionaries to the promising young Japanese leaders.

Why did the government remove the ban on Christianity? The Iwakura Mission, which left Japan in November, 1871, went to America and Europe for the purpose of treaty revision. Its members received a great shock, however, when they reached their first stopping point, the United States. One American newspaper reported the prevailing temperament as follows:

The Ambassadors' main mission is to revise the treaties which the Tokugawa government previously concluded, and to gain for Japan status equal to other nations. But it is exceedingly presumptuous to make these requests when Christianity is still forbidden, when there are no laws except an extremely severe criminal code, and when, in addition, strong sentiment to expel the foreigners still exists.

The delegation had no alternative but to cable their home government to lift the ban on Christianity. The churches could not conceal their joy: "The Tokyo papers have announced that the government has lifted its ban on Christianity. We have no doubt that God has brought this about, and our joy knows no bounds. Therefore, we are to offer up thanks to God in meeting this evening." Niijima Jō, at that time a student in Amherst College, was temporarily assisting the Iwakura Mission. He records in his diary that the members of the mission suddenly began to display unusual good will toward Christianity, and unusual consideration to Niijima as a Christian. Removal of the ban was also important in shifting the leadership of evangelization from foreigners to Japanese.

The Satsuma Rebellion (1877) and the social reforms which followed it also affected evangelization. Proselyting mentioned in the previous chapter was confined to the very small intelligentsia in the foreign concessions and in the large cities. Afterwards, however, Christian evangelists with the help of the intellectuals and the middle class went directly into provincial cities. Here many Christian leaders developed among the middle class, most of them attracted by Western studies at the clan schools. Many samurai, impoverished after losing their feudal support in 1874, also became Christians.

In the same year, a political faction began to propose the conquest of Korea to quiet domestic political strife and to enrich the nation. The faction was led by Saigō Takamori. The samurai, a grave political problem at home, could enter the army, and the profit from aggression would assist the treasury. The proposal was not accepted, and Saigō retired in disgrace. With this setback, the samurai lost all hope of regaining their former position. Many of them clamored for other assistance, a demand which finally developed into a movement for more liberal policies. The members of this movement came from the dissidents who had been refused influential jobs in the government. Samurai who had held government posts under the



Tokugawa formed its leadership. They did not concern themselves either with the recurrent peasant uprisings which attempted to change the land tax or with the petitions against the oppression of merchants and manufacturers. Before 1878, they sought only the advantage and protection of the samurai class. Very few samurai became leaders of the people. There apparently was a connection between this continuing samurai class consciousness and the fact that very few former samurai, even among those who became Christians, went to work in the rural areas or small provincial cities during this time.

The day finally arrived when these last vestiges of the samurai superiority complex disappeared. Defeat in the Satsuma Rebellion removed the props for this complex. A conscript army of merchants and farmers defeated Saigō's forces who were all samurai and, therefore, supposed to be professional soldiers. Commoners then took over the movement for liberal government, and the samurai, now poverty stricken, began to consider themselves commoners. They then slowly developed into leaders of the people as lower-ranking bureaucrats, teachers, provincial politicians, and journalists. At the same time, the peasants who were losing their land because of high taxes began to demand economic relief and political rights. The downfall of the samurai and the upsurge of the lower classes worked together to start a new middle class like that in Europe. Members of this society, also like that in Europe, wanted freedom of speech and religion. Christianity developing among the members of this new class changed its emphasis from self-consciousness to social consciousness, and its evangelism then became more acceptable to Japanese. The intellectuals had been freed from striving for personal position, the rural middle class was achieving class consciousness, and the urban middle class had developed on a wave of prosperity. All of these groups sought two things: modern ethics which are based on Protestantism and knowledge about the advanced Western nations.

The great increase in believers which is described later

developed as a result of these conditions. Japanese Christianity already had enough members to begin its own training of evangelists. Young men who had been trained at the Yokohama Church and at Dōshisha began to appear as ministers. Many aspects of Christian activity reflect growing strength: a large lecture meeting was held outdoors in 1880 near downtown Tokyo, and Christian publications or those sympathetic to Christianity for the first time had enough subscribers so that they could pay their expenses.

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Missionary reports reflected these beginnings of change. The first missionaries had lived temporarily in dirty temples surrounded by deeply suspicious and often unintelligent people. The wife of one missionary recalls in her memoirs that in 1865 the United States' minister accompanied by Tokugawa guards frequently came in the middle of the night, even on Sundays, to urge the missionaries to flee for safety. Another woman gives the following account of her family's experiences when they set out to teach in Niigata:

They had prepared what they called a "*hikido kago*" for us. This was a large rectangular box with poles attached (for carrying)... There were nine special guards called "*bette*."... As the procession went along, these guards called out "get down and bow, get down and bow," as they had called out previously before the processions of daimyo.

But a huge wave of change was washing over Japan:

During the eight months we were in Niigata, the Japanese government effected great changes. They abolished almost all ceremonies. . . . The common people no longer had to bow before the processions of royalty. . . . It had become permissible to greet even the Emperor while standing.



Two important customs which came from Christianity grew out of these changes: the adoption of Sunday as a holiday and the popularization of Christmas. The first Japanese office to adopt Sunday as a holiday was the Customs House in Yokohama. In 1868, it announced that it would "be closed on the Western Sundays and Christmas." In 1872, the military academy and the school for military medicine made Sunday a holiday for the convenience of their foreign teachers. In the end of 1872, the government adopted the Western calendar. As part of its drive to gain acceptance for the new calendar, it announced a plan to end the confusion regarding days of rest and to facilitate government administration by adopting the Western system. The Education Ministry announced in 1874: "Up to now, schools have been recessing either on the sixteenth of each month or on Sundays. From now on, all government schools will close on Sundays."

Before the government made this decision, Christians were faced with various tragicomic situations. The early churches made the strict observance of Sunday an inflexible condition for those seeking baptism. Christians employed by the government were greatly perplexed. In 1873, a judge included the following statement in a strange letter of petition to a missionary: "I beg you by your mercy to allow me into your organization even though I cannot go to church on Sundays. Please show me this compassion."

As Sunday became recognized as a day of rest, the Christians started to organize Sunday schools. In 1874, the First Presbyterian Church of Tokyo opened a Sunday school. This was a Bible class for older students of the missionaries' schools rather than for small children as most Sunday schools are now. For the first ten years of Meiji, it was difficult to open Sunday schools, because going to church meant going to the foreign settlement to which evangelism was at first restricted. After the ban against Christianity was lifted, churches and Sunday schools were built closer to residential areas. Prejudice against



Christianity was such, however, that any school that had ten children was considered big. In 1877, a missionary started publishing a children's newspaper, *Glad Tidings*, and at the same time started using cards printed with pretty pictures and inscriptions to attract children. It is easy to understand the difficulties of the missionaries when the only way to attract children was to give them cards, cakes, or sweet-flavored beans. A few years later conditions started to change. Children competed to enter the schools, and there were many varieties of cards and teachers' handbooks. The young men who formed the backbone of the churches moved on to accept responsibility as Sunday school teachers. The subsequent great expansion in Sunday schools is covered later.

The second important custom which developed at this period was the popularization of Christmas. Christmas was apparently first celebrated outside the church in 1874 as an act of thanks at a girls' school in Tokyo. The quaint scene is described as follows:

The American Consulate heard about it, and, feeling that it would be too bad to have any mistakes, sent four men down the day before to look over the room. Their eyes lit upon a cross, hanging from the ceiling and beautifully decorated with tangerines. They advised that this was the Catholic practice and so the cross, constructed at so much time and effort, was taken down. . . . There was also a crudely ornamented Christmas tree. Realizing that this would be much more interesting if kept for a surprise, the leaders planned to hide it with a curtain. They found that they could not get unbleached muslin enough unless they went to Yokohama, so they borrowed the curtain of a nearby theater. They wanted Santa Claus, at least, to be purely Japanese. They made him out to be regular lord: wearing a formal gown, a large and a small sword stuck into his sash, and a wig on his head.

In contrast to this with the increasing popularity of things

Western during the eighties, Christmas became separated from Christianity and accepted into many houses as part of the holiday season. One author has commented on this deftly as follows:

Japan had still not completely roused itself from its Tokugawa feelings toward Christianity. Therefore, it treated Christianity like a foreign religion and despised Jesus as an immigrant outcast. Christmas alone, strangely enough, captured the fancy of these people and spread into the area of non-believers. In houses where the children called their parents "mama-san" and "papa-san," the commemoration of the holy birth made the busy year-end seem like the relaxed days of early spring. During my teens, I lived temporarily in the Tsukiji Concession (Tokyo). On Christmas, the church music sounded even more refreshing than usual, and beautifully dressed Western children ran about happily. Grand ladies in warm-looking fur coats passed in groups of three or five on their way to church. Everyone's face looked serene, and peaceful strains of piano music drifted through the air. One step outside of the concession, people looked as if they were going to bite you as they went about in the busy bustle of dusk. Only the concession was brimming over with the joy of paradise.

But now, children in even the smallest hamlets look forward to Christmas. It has become so much a part of Japanese life that it is a seasonal theme for poetry. Shops in downtown Tokyo spend all year making Christmas decorations, and the most distant suburban toy stores advertize Christmas presents. Even homes where no one goes to church sport Christmas trees and enjoy an evening with the children.

Christmas as a secular holiday spread rapidly during the period from the eighteen-seventies through the early nineteen-twenties; the first half of the above quotation describes the period before this started.



## 2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH

How Christianity had to work through education to circumvent the government's ban has already been described. Christian schools may be divided into two general groups, those which developed from the small private schools operated directly by the missionaries in Yokohama, and those which were started by Japanese as Christian schools. Both formed a tradition of developing competent young Christian leaders. This section deals with the activities of these leaders.

Graduates of the schools established by the missionaries in Yokohama started the first Protestant churches in Japan. These graduates are known as the "Yokohama Band." Their contact with intensely devout missionaries made them very evangelical. Before the removal of the ban on Christianity, each convert was in mortal danger because of his faith, and so felt a unity and brotherly love for all other Christians. The converts did not concern themselves with problems of denominations, but, on the contrary, feared sectarianism. New churches were officially called branches of the Yokohama Church and had a strong family atmosphere of missionary purpose.

The best known early graduates of Japanese Christian schools may be divided into two groups. These are the graduates of the Kumamoto Clan school and the graduates of the Sapporo Agricultural School. The two groups are often called the "Kumamoto Band" and the "Sapporo Band." These men differ in a number of ways from graduates of the mission schools. Members of the Kumamoto Band did not experience the influence of missionaries or of the foreign concessions while they were in school; they were brought up in the clan schools of provincial cities where the mainstay of education was Confucianism. They retained the effects of early Meiji nationalism for many years. This group produced leaders who wanted to Japanize the church, that is, to bring its institutions more into line with



Japanese tradition, and to free it from foreign financial influence. Graduates from the Sapporo Agricultural School, inasmuch as they had been graduated from a government school—even though influenced by Christianity, were scholarly and theoretical in comparison to members of the Yokohama Band whose abilities were organizational and evangelical. Few among the graduates from Sapporo became ministers. Many stood aloof from the church, and others joined independent churches. One started the Non-church group. Compared with the Kumamoto Band, the graduates from Sapporo showed the effects of study in frontier Hokkaido with its comparative freedom from feudal bonds. They had a breadth of vision: Nitobe Inazō is a good example of this sort of person. Ebina Danjō, one of the most famous Christian pastors, described the differences thus:

Christian leaders in Japan have come from three schools. . . . Graduates from Yokohama were particularly concerned with the Christian church. Those from Sapporo proclaimed a kind of individualism. Uchimura Kanzō, the famous founder of the Non-church group, came and talked to our group about this subject. He said that the Yokohama group were ecclesiastical, the Sapporo group spiritual, and the Kumamoto group national, that is, preaching a nationalistic Christianity. At that time, I said, "Friend Uchimura, you take only the good elements for your side. . . . I am referring to the fact that you call your group 'spiritual.' This is common to all three groups. You folks are really individualistic."

These three streams determined the future of the Protestant Church in broad outline. Unfortunately, the Yokohama Band did not remain anti-sectarian. Later missionaries did not directly experience the sufferings imposed by the ban on Christianity. As a result, competition between different missions grew as the opportunities for evangelism increased. Missionaries began to neglect their 1872 decision for interdenominationalism.

**a. The First Evangelization by Japanese and the Founding  
of the Church**

According to the diary of one church, evangelism by Japanese started in 1873. A well-known Christian leader, Uemura Masahisa, however, reveals that these people worked entirely under missionaries, and so the first indigenous evangelism did not take place until 1874. Whichever is correct, the first evangelization carried out by the elders of the Yokohama and Tokyo churches in 1873 repaid their efforts. The following report submitted by some national priests shows how effective they were:

Two men have come here to preach the Christian religion and to exhort men to join their faith. We find them considerate and polite when they gather the villagers together to teach them; their teaching brings tears to the eyes of the people. Judging from these responses, there is no doubt that in a few days the people will become receptive to their teaching.

Uemura recalls his first attempt at evangelization one year later: "The members of the Yokohama Church gathered together seventy yen and appointed five groups of two men each. The others conferred with these men and sent them off with a farewell party which buoyed up their spirits." This shows the enthusiasm with which the young students started to proselyte their fellow Japanese.

Evangelism by Japanese may have started in 1873, but missionary influence still predominated among the Christians. Many missionaries did not believe in a united church. The first missionary to separate from the group was a Presbyterian, in spite of the fact that another Presbyterian defended the missionary proclamation of 1872 which had called for united action. In Yokohama a group of Japanese who had become Christians at Hepburn's School separated from the original



church and established themselves independently. The original Yokohama Church continued to grow in spite of this increasing denominationalism. In addition to several branches in Tokyo, two were established in Kobe and Osaka. Others followed, all becoming Congregational, although they had originally been closely affiliated with the Yokohama Church because of the missionary agreement on interdenominationalism. At first the churches were all in the large cities where samurai and merchants, who were the most receptive to Christianity, lived. Gradually the energies of the missionaries extended into provincial cities. As evangelism spread, a number of Japanese pastors started churches. These included men such as Honda Yōichi, Inagaki Shin, and Ebina Danjō who were later to become famous.

Because of the increase in sectarian spirit as evangelization increased, the missionary conference of May, 1874, reaffirmed the statement of co-operative evangelism adopted by the first conference. Encouraged by this statement, the two churches in Tokyo and Yokohama suggested to the general conference a change in the rules governing them. They proposed a "Christian Church in Japan" which would be united in fact as well as in name by joining with the Kobe and Osaka churches. The groups in the Kansai area at first indicated they would co-operate. They changed their minds the following March on the advice of Nijima Jō, the founder of Dōshisha University, and his missionary friend, J. D. Davis. Thus, the movement ended in failure. The American Board of Foreign Missions which had originally established the churches in Kobe and Osaka did not itself favor sectarianism. From the beginning, it had selected missionaries for Japan without respect to their denominational affiliation. As the desire for independent denominational activity grew in the other groups, however, it also grew in the American Board. This contributed to the tragedy of sectarianism as it exists today. One activity led in exactly the opposite direction: toward unity rather than diversity.

The Japan Presbyterian Church under the influence of one of



its missionaries had been the first to break away from the Yokohama Church. It later realized the foolishness of competing with denominations which had doctrinal similarities. Therefore, it decided to unite with two other missions, the Dutch Reformed Mission which was assisting the Yokohama Church and the Scotch Presbyterian Mission. In October, 1877, the three came together to organize the United Church of Christ in Japan (*Nihon Kirisuto Itchi Kyōkai*). The new group included nine churches, four of which had previously been branches of the Yokohama Church and five of which had been in the Presbyterian Church. The total membership was over six hundred. The United Church of Christ in Japan was the first to ordain Japanese as ministers. In 1878, it took on as probationary ministers a number of outstanding men including Inagaki Shin and Uemura Masahisa. These men after a short time became active and set up churches all the way into Kyushu.

#### b. The Kumamoto Band and the Sapporo Band

At first, those who later became members of these two bands had gone to the cities to enhance their future prospects by studying Western Learning. Once they came into contact with Christianity, however, they realized that their old ethical system was nothing but an unsatisfying community mechanism for preserving the feudal stratified society. The new God whom they faced made demands on their consciences. These demands went beyond external social formalities. Before the claims of God's righteousness, even family ties were nothing more than a social contract. A covenant with God demanded that each man offer up his entire being. The change to this new ethical system meant that they had thrown off the last dregs of feudalism. Their ideal of loyalty did not change, but the object of that loyalty did change. They turned from unquestioning obedience toward their lord and parents to help other persons by pledging their loyalty, in this case, their soul, to God. In the east,



Petitjean



Nikolai

Early Missionaries Who Brought Christianity to Japan. Clark and Janes are shown as they appeared during the short time they were in Japan. The others appear as they looked toward the end of their careers.



J. C. Hepburn



W. S. Clark



L. L. Janes



## EARLY CHRISTIANITY



Until 1873, Christianity was prohibited. This print shows how the signboards which announced the proscription were displayed in the center of Tokyo.



Soon after the proscription ended, Christians started to erect buildings. These two are an early Catholic church near Nagasaki and the first building of Dōshisha University.



Honda Yōichi and others went into evangelism. At the same time, in the west, Sawayama Pauro (Paul), just returned from America, gave up an official career at a monthly salary of ¥150 to become a pastor at ¥6. Another Christian gave up a position as a professor in a normal school to work as a pastor at ¥20. This new ethical system gained converts at the same time in Kumamoto to the south and in Sapporo to the north.

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The tides of revolution and the Restoration government had not favored Kumamoto clan. The Daimyo, on the advice of some of his followers, adopted a number of measures to compensate for Kumamoto's late start. These measures included the foundation of an educational institution specializing in Western Learning, the establishment of a hospital and medical school, and the encouragement of local industries.

The leading intellectual influence in Kumamoto had traditionally been the realism of the Wang Yang-ming school of Confucianism,\* particularly as exemplified by Yokoi Shōnan. As one Japanese had exclaimed when he read Christian literature, "This resembles (Wang) Yang-ming-ism; disintegration of the empire will begin with this." This philosophy of Wang Yang-ming had certain similarities with Christianity. All the members of the Kumamoto band had studied Wang Yang-ming. This made it relatively easy for them to become Christians. Ebina Danjō, later to become a great Christian leader, points this out:

I turned to Christianity for the solution of my problems because I previously had studied the realism of Wang Yang-ming. Chu Hsi taught that a son should try to persuade his parents to his way of thinking three times, but if they did not agree, he then should weepingly comply with their desire. Wang Yang-ming taught, to the contrary, that when a man is concerned for his country, he should follow his own conscience.

\* See pages 14-15

Therefore, I turned my back on my parents and chose this way for the sake of my country.

This education in the thinking of Wang Yang-ming also helped strengthen the convictions of the students when they met persecution because of their conversion:

My parents tearfully and earnestly ordered me to give up Christianity. In the case of my mother it was almost a supplication. She pleaded with me to leave Christianity out of consideration for my father and for her. Confucianism teaches us to obey our parents, even though tearfully. We wept as we held firm to our belief in Christianity, but we did not comply with our parents' entreaty.

Thus, Ebina's education in Wang Yang-ming finally made him turn his back on the old society.

The Kumamoto School of Western Learning opened in 1871. It hoped to produce men in tune with the new age, and to prepare for a second Restoration after which Kumamoto's influence would increase. Therefore, the Daimyo named one condition when he asked the famous missionary G. F. Verbeck for assistance in finding a foreign instructor: the teacher must be a military man. The clan planned to select the very best students on the basis of a stiff competitive examination and then pay all their expenses. The teacher they chose was a retired Army Captain, L. L. Janes. Janes was the son-in-law of F. S. Scudder, a member of one of the mission boards, and so was a very acceptable candidate, rich both in personal faith and scientific training. When he took charge, all of the other employees resigned, leaving the teaching as well as the administration of the school in his hands. All students were to live together in a dormitory for the whole four years. The rules governing their behavior emulated those of a military school, so that the indolence and dirt common to Japanese schools disappeared. One



of the students, Kozaki Hiromichi (Kōdō), later reminisced that they "all had politics as their aim when they entered school. Asked his professional objective, there was not one who would not reply 'statesman'." The students followed the political situation closely and spent much time discussing its changes. Janes disagreed with this and taught straightforward business ethics:

The first step in increasing national strength is to plan for the increase of production. Japan should encourage agriculture, mining, civil engineering, shipbuilding, mechanization, and mechanical arts; politics is the least important. In America the men who take part in politics are generally inferior; the bureaucracy is the lowest of all occupations.

This quieted the students and eventually led many to choose other careers.

Janes, sensitive to community criticism of him, did not mention Christianity for the first three years, but concentrated instead on various practical problems. He then told some of his most promising students that Christianity formed the basis for Western civilization and that he would hold an evening Bible class in his own home if any students desired it. After considerable discussion, fourteen or fifteen students agreed on the grounds that such meetings would probably help them learn English. The number increased within one year to more than fifty. The students then started a Sunday service. By 1875, over thirty had become Christians. On January 30, 1876, thirty-five of the young men climbed a hill outside the city, and signed a covenant of belief. This covenant said:

We have in the past learned a great deal from Christianity and in the future will gradually increase in our zeal. We hope in the end to propagate this religion in Japan and to enlighten the people's ignorance. Oh, how lamentable is the fact that



many of our fellows still stubbornly steep themselves in the traditional theories, ignorant of Christian truth. At this time all men who want to repay their country for its assistance should dedicate themselves to propagating Christian truth, counting their lives as nought. This is our consuming desire. Therefore, we have gathered on Mt. Hanaoka to unite ourselves in pursuit of this ideal.

There are two important elements in this covenant. The first is that the students anticipated at this early date the persecution which was to arise later in Meiji. The second is that they had determined to "serve their country" through Christianity. This martial valor reminds one of the fixed purpose of Puritans. The students' consciousness of undivided loyalty to the state, however, contained the danger that the new Christians might be diverted from their original plan to a kind of nationalism. Ebina Danjō developed out of this Kumamoto Band into the champion of a pure Japanese church; the seeds of such development were already present in his youth.

But description of these developments belongs to a later chapter. The people of Kumamoto were appalled when they heard that the young men had become Christians. Torrents of abuse and persecution beset the young converts:

Kanamori was tormented most.... His parents immediately called him home and had Professor Takezaki admonish him. The professor politely told him to revere the way of the sages and not to be confused by Christianity. Kanamori sat quietly throughout and listened respectfully. When the professor had finished, he burst out, "Have you ever read the Bible?" The professor replied, "Why should I read the writings of such an evil religion?" Kanamori answered, "In your lectures on the *Great Learning*, you taught us to investigate all things as completely as possible because empty theories were not sufficient. You further told us that we could not attain truth unless we

verified our knowledge by comparing it with actual experience. Why, in the case of this religion alone, do you not study deeply, but arbitrarily call Christianity an 'evil religion'?" The professor could not reply. Instead he shouted "fool" and left his seat.

Or again:

It was heard that a young man had become a Christian. His father drew his sword and threatened his son. But the latter calmly extended his neck and replied, "To die by the honorable hand of my father is in accord with my wishes." Bellowing "fool," his father struck the boy on the neck with the back of his sword and gave up trying to change his mind.

Some of the remaining students sided with the Christians against their elders. The persecution actually spurred others on to join the faith. Janes wanted to nurture this belief, and himself, though not a minister, baptized twenty-two of the students after consultation with a Congregational missionary in Kyoto, J. D. Davis. Such future leaders as Ebina Danjō and Kozaki Hiromichi were in this group.

The clan tactfully dismissed Janes at the end of his appointment in October, 1876, and closed the school. Most of the graduates through the influence of Janes and Davis went on to Dōshisha in Kyoto. Up to that time, Dōshisha had not lived up to the hopes of its founder, Nijima Jō. With the entry of the Kumamoto Band, it took on the form and gained the mental discipline worthy of its name. Many of the later presidents of Dōshisha came from among these students.

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Members of the Sapporo Band all studied at the Sapporo Agricultural School. This had been founded in 1875 by the government for the purpose of developing Hokkaido. The president of Massachusettes Agricultural College, W. S. Clark,



came as its first principal.

The director of the Office of Colonization, Kuroda Kiyotaka, accompanied Clark on his way to Sapporo to undertake the post. The two agreed on administrative matters but differed on the question of ethical education. Clark wanted to use the Christian Bible as the basis for such education. Kuroda had a chance to observe Clark's enthusiasm and directness after the school opened. He then tacitly allowed Clark to teach Christianity. Clark added character training based on the Bible to more formal instruction in the Bible itself. For this reason, the Sapporo School produced many men of high moral calibre and scholarly ability. The phrase by which Clark is remembered is, "Boys, be ambitious!" These words have remained a part of the student tradition at Hokkaido University ever since. Uchimura Kanzō and Nitobe Inazō entered the school its second year, and so did not know Clark personally. Soon after entering, however, they signed a pledge not to use tobacco or liquor and met second-year students who had become Christians. Thus they benefited indirectly from Clark's inspiration. Partly because of pressure from students in the first class, seven members of the second class received baptism in June, 1877. These students conducted their own church service in the dormitory: "All of us in the church had the same point of view. We were Biblical and apostolic. Therefore we all took turns at leading the service. The leader for the day was the minister, priest, and servant." Members of this group differed from the students in the Yokohama Band in their individualism and lack of emphasis on the church. The men who later became dissatisfied with the divisive tendencies of the church and turned to Non-church Christianity developed in these circumstances.

Later careers of the graduates from Kumamoto and Sapporo show a continuation of the attitudes of their school days. Ebina Danjō and Kozaki Hiromichi from the Kumamoto Band became pastors and leaders in the Congregational Church; both became presidents of Dōshisha. Others became professors and leaders



in Dōshisha and other schools. Uchimura Kanzō from the Sapporo Band influenced all Japan as a critic and the leader of the Non-church Christian group. In addition, Nitobe Inazō, onetime Under-Secretary General of The League of Nations Secretariat, and Miyabe Kingo, world renowned professor of Botany at Hokkaido Imperial University for many years, served as great Christian laymen.

In the fervor and severity common to these men there are traces of Puritanism, and this Puritanism arose from their samurai heritage. One writer later in Meiji said:

There is great meaning in the fact that evangelism in Japan first succeeded not with members of merchant, craft, or farming families, but with the sons of samurai who had been taught by Shinto to revere the Gods of Japan, by Confucianism to follow the ethic of loyalty, and by interclan competition to strive for national independence. Whereas Jesus' first disciples in Judea were fishermen, farmers, and tax collectors, in Japan it was the sons of military men who were first chosen. God's election is truly wonderful.

### c. Denominational Development

After the government tacitly granted religious freedom in 1873, a number of missionaries representing all denominations came to Japan. This section briefly describes the most important of the denominations.

**The Roman Catholic Church**, as has been pointed out, was present in Japan for about a century before the exclusion period started. Evangelism began after the Urakami Christians returned from their exile. During the early years of Meiji, the Catholics concentrated on the lower classes and the indigent since the first priests to arrive had dedicated their lives to social welfare and education. The first group of nuns came in 1872 and started orphanages. They also achieved great success in aiding

the poor and the weak. The Protestants with their emphasis on teaching entered into the middle class. Catholics, in contrast, gained many friends among the farmers of Urakami and other members of the lower classes. These uneducated people had no real understanding of Christianity. Just because their thought processes were so simple, they immediately became Christians when they realized that the miracles of the missionaries resulted from benevolence rather than from magic. And once converted, even without education they could understand the religious spirit reflected in the beauty of the Catholic churches and the magnificence of their ceremony.

Catholicism had no chance to enter higher social strata until the middle eighteen-eighties when the government as a matter of policy encouraged members of the upper classes to become Christians. The authorities feared that political opposition would accompany Christianity. But the Catholic church, traditionally organized around the Pope and his hierarchy, contained elements consonant with conservative political power. The Catholic missionaries in Japan previously had had the sagacity to base their evangelical work on "joining forces with the wealthy and the politically powerful." As Catholicism spread and the government learned that the Pope was the head of a secular state, the Japanese realized that Modern Catholicism did not oppose monolithic government. In the secular realm, their own power would be strengthened if the number of Catholics increased. This was because a Catholic's attitude toward his Pope was similar to the attitude the Japanese government wanted to inculcate with respect to the Emperor. Catholicism began to spread among the upper classes as the children of the wealthy went to Catholic schools.

Catholicism did not attract as much attention as Protestantism, but with its emphasis on charity and education it grew steadily. By 1890 it had 82 missionaries, 15 Japanese priests, and 44,505 believers. In the beginning, there was only one diocese centered around Urakami. Its first bishop was Petitjean, the



same man to whom the hidden Christians had confessed their faith. In 1876, this diocese was discontinued and two others established in its place. These were the Southern Diocese with its center at Osaka and the Northern Diocese located in Tokyo. Petitjean was the first bishop in the former, and a man named Osouf the first bishop in the latter.

Catholic work is described later in the chapter on social work. In brief, however, other important events in its development are as follows. The first Japanese priests were ordained in 1883. The Southern Diocese was again divided in 1887, Nagasaki becoming the headquarters of the new Southern Diocese and Osaka becoming the headquarters of the newly created Central Diocese. In 1890, the first general council was held in Nagasaki. This established a Bishop's conference consisting of the three bishops and eight missionaries. This conference compiled a code of regulations concerning the priesthood in Japan. It also established a fourth diocese which had its offices in Hakodate and was called the Northern Diocese. Tokyo, which had previously been the seat of the Northern Diocese, was made the seat of the first Archdiocese in Japan. Osouf became archbishop and representative of the Holy See.

As the church flourished, various religious orders came to Japan. These can be divided into three general groups. The first, like the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, opened up monasteries for the single purpose of spiritual training. The second group, including the Society of Mary (1888), the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (1908), and the Society of Jesus (1913), specialized in education for upper-class boys and girls in the larger cities. The last group, like the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (1898), and the Servants of the Holy Ghost (1908), specialized in welfare works like hospitals, leprosaria, homes for the aged, and orphanages.

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How the Protestant sects entered the socially conscious middle



class has already been explained. Sectarian influences from Western Europe also worked their way in among the new Christians in Japan. This resulted in competitive evangelism which misinterpreted the traditional Christian spirit of love. Following the worst of this competition came a complex kind of ecumenical movement represented by united denominations and co-operative evangelism. The complete reliance of Protestants on Biblical authority encourages independence. As a result, attempts at unification usually fail. This kind of tragedy recurred in various forms during Meiji. The remainder of this section consists of short descriptions of the major denominations.

**The Japanese Episcopal Church** was organized in 1877 by three missionaries. As a result of this denomination's emphasis on ecclesiastical organization, it did not unite with other groups and was cool toward co-operative undertakings. By 1894, it had completed an organization throughout Japan. According to the report of 1903, there were 217 foreign missionaries, 266 Japanese religious workers, and 12,000 communicants. In Tokyo the Episcopalians had St. Paul's University, and in the provinces they operated a large number of primary schools.

**The Church of Christ in Japan** (Presbyterian) developed out of the Yokohama Church which had started out to be non-sectarian. Circumstances forced it to become more sectarian. As was described previously, the Yokohama Church had united in 1877 with a number of Presbyterian churches to found the United Church (*Itchi Kyōkai*). From their first days in Yokohama, the Presbyterian missionaries had concentrated on developing Japanese evangelists. They continued the tradition by opening the Union Theological School the same year the United Church was organized. Because of this emphasis on theological training, the United Church produced a number of outstanding young leaders who became the core of the Japanese Christian world. In 1881, the Presbyterians unified the churches under three Presbyteries and planned a yearly General Assembly to co-ordinate them. The first General Assembly with the discreet

assistance of the missionaries elected Japanese both as chairman and recording secretary. Later missionaries did not take as active a part in administration as in other denominations because of this start with Japanese leadership. In 1890, the United Church entered a new phase of development when a change in its constitution reorganized it into the Church of Christ in Japan. Its subsequent developments are covered later.

**The Japan Council of Baptist Churches** was started by a missionary named J. Goble who returned to the United States with the Iwakura Mission. Nathan Brown replaced him in Japan as the representative of the American Baptist Church. In addition to opening the first Baptist Church in Yokohama, Brown concentrated on language study and later devoted himself to translation of the Bible. In 1874, another missionary named Arsol arrived to work in Tokyo. Three years later, he founded the First Baptist Church of Tokyo, the second church of that denomination in Japan. At that time, foreigners were not permitted to live outside of the concession. Arsol, however, was a fervent evangelist and disliked being shut up within the concession. Mori Arinori allowed him to construct a home on the grounds of Mori's private residence. Arsol then opened a school for girls near his new home and started educational evangelism. The next year, a Miss Kidder arrived to take charge of the school. Under her direction, it flourished and strengthened the basis for later Baptist work in Tokyo. Here is a report of the baptism of one girl who later joined the church. It must have taken real courage for both the minister and his spiritual daughter to go through with a public baptism when anti-Christian sentiment was still so strong:

When the two went down in the water, passersby stopped and stared in amazement, not comprehending what was happening. . . . They tried to explain the sight of the girl going into the water with the foreigner. Some said that they were embarking upon a love suicide; others said that the foreigner was punishing



her because of an act of indiscretion. By their standards it seemed very strange....How many girls with that kind of courage remain today?

The Baptist Church naturally flourished with the help of such courageous leaders. Lecture halls and churches gradually increased in Tokyo. New missionaries who arrived in 1879 started evangelism to the northern and western parts of Japan.

**The Congregational Church of Japan** was started by missionaries of the American Board and brought to maturity by members of the Kumamoto Band. Niijima Jō and influential missionaries paved the way for future evangelization in the Kansai by establishing Dōshisha University there. The members of the Kumamoto Band were among the first students at Dōshisha and, along with other graduates from Dōshisha, have assumed a large role in Congregationalism. Their particular contribution was a spirit of independence and nationalism. As a result of this spirit, Japanese early took over positions of leadership from the missionaries as they did in the Church of Christ in Japan. Members of the Kumamoto Band also worked actively in the movement for independence from foreign finances.

The American Board began sending missionaries to Japan in 1869 on the suggestion of Niijima Jō. The first couple, a Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Greene, chose Kobe as their station after seeing that Christian activity was centered in Yokohama and Tokyo, while Kobe had no missionaries. The first Protestant martyr, Ichikawa Einosuke, was Greene's language teacher. Many more missionaries came and by 1877 had established a number of stations in Kobe and Osaka. Later, when the Yokohama Church, which was very close theologically to the Congregationalists, proposed union, Niijima Jō rejected the proposition. One reason for this was that Congregational evangelization was flourishing so well by itself.

Niijima Jō was for a number of years the leading spirit among the Congregationalists. He was the son of a samurai who had



secretly gone abroad to study because he realized that under feudal restrictions he could not fulfill his aims. His great desire was to study Western subjects for the benefit of Japan. He received his inspiration to go abroad from a missionary translation of the Bible which he happened upon in a friend's house: "Because I had been saved from the depths of darkness and knew the way which I was to follow, I wanted to share my happiness with my friends." He hoped to leave Japan for training in the West as soon as possible. He understood Christianity in these terms: "Thus I knew who God was. I put down the book and looked around me, saying, 'Who made me, my parents? No, God.'" From then on, Niijima was freed from the feudal ethics which had previously bound him to his parents and daimyo. He determined to defy the government by accepting Christianity and going abroad. He finished college and theological seminary in America through the assistance of a wealthy Boston businessman. Japanese recognized his ability when he acted as interpreter for the Iwakura Mission. When he returned to Japan in 1874, members of the Iwakura Mission were effecting a number of changes in the Imperial Court and asked Niijima to join them. He refused:

How would it benefit Japan if I were to receive a high position in the government? I think it would hardly benefit Japan at all. My one great ambition is not government service. It is to educate many young men and women in this beautiful place; to develop thousands of Niijimas who will devote themselves to the future of their country.

Niijima then returned to Kyoto.

The Dōshisha English School opened in 1875. There were only eight students, no fixed courses, and no rules governing student discipline. None of the students were very interested. Some of them had formerly been policemen and others had been drifting aimlessly. The school appeared as if it might have

to cease operations at any time. The transfer of thirty-some members of the Kumamoto Band to Dōshisha at this time gave it a first-rate student body. They themselves planned new regulations for their conduct and slowly improved the whole tone of the school. The government did not want a Christian school in Kyoto which had for so long been the capital city. Even after granting Niijima permission to found the school, the authorities hindered his efforts to bring in a missionary teacher. After granting permission for a missionary teacher to come, they would not allow the school to teach Bible. Therefore, Niijima bought a small house in front of the school gate. Here he conducted daily worship services and Bible study. Niijima later made joint cause with other leaders clamoring for religious freedom. In 1885, he went abroad a second time to collect funds for a University. This was the beginning of the present Dōshisha.

Niijima believed that in the future Dōshisha and the churches should free themselves from foreign financial support. As a result of his leadership, the Congregational Church was the first to gain complete independence. This movement is explained more fully in the section on the Dōshisha affair of 1895.

**The Methodist Church of Japan** like The Church of Christ in Japan grew out of the work of a number of mission boards. In the order in which they arrived in Japan, the three most important are the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, the Methodist Church of Canada, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Three of the most famous missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, were J. Soper, M. C. Harris, and J. C. Davison. The first Methodist church was founded in 1875. In the same year, Soper built the Methodist Episcopal Church in Tokyo and baptised Tsuda Sen and his wife. Tsuda Sen founded Japan's first Agricultural school, and his daughter, Tsuda Umeko, was the founder of the now-famous Tsuda College in Tokyo. Harris was in charge of the station at Hakodate



and baptized the members of the Sapporo Band. Davison, working out of Nagasaki, had great success evangelizing throughout Kyushu and in 1878 founded a church in Kagoshima. The most famous Japanese in this denomination was Honda Yōichi who had become a Christian as one of the first members of the Yokohama Church, and who later became the first Japanese bishop in the Methodist church. Honda returned to his family home, Hirosaki, from Yokohama. There he founded a private school. He became a Methodist when he established a church in company with a number of other young men who had been baptised by a Methodist missionary.

The Methodists flourished in Japan from 1877 to 1884, and reported in their 1884 General Conference that there were 28 churches, 13 missionaries, 23 Japanese pastors, and 907 members.

The other two groups of Methodists entered Japan in 1873 and 1886. The three denominations wanted to unite since basically, in doctrine and in organization, they were the same. Additional small Methodist splinter groups which had come into Japan disagreed. Therefore, the conference held in 1890 failed in its goal of unification. The three original groups co-operated in publishing a magazine beginning in 1891, and a number of outstanding leaders appeared among the Japanese. These leaders all favored unification. Their wish was fulfilled in 1907 when the three groups came together to form the Methodist Church of Japan with Honda Yōichi as its first bishop. None of the splinter-group missions joined them. By 1910, combined membership of the three which had united was twelve thousand.

### 3. CHRISTIAN CULTURAL ACTIVITY

#### a. Education

After 1873, the number of Christian schools slowly increased. They became an important force in higher education, particularly



for women. As they increased in number, three different types emerged.

The first is the "pure" type, "pure" in the sense that it was entirely supported by missionaries. These schools developed from the private institutes the missionaries had started in their homes. The missions supervised these schools, and for the most part provided their administrators. They emphasized English in the curriculum and generally offered a Western-style education somewhat alien to the national spirit. The government still opposed Christianity, and so was prejudiced against these mission schools. Young men who looked forward to later official recognition did not enter them. As a result, most of the graduates from the men's schools became ministers. At the time when Aoyama Gakuin University was still an English School and Meiji Gakuin University a theological school, they both received most of their funds from abroad and clearly belonged to this group. Most famous among the institutions in this type, however, were the Ferris Girls' School in Yokohama, Kobe Girls' College, and Kassui Girls' School in Nagasaki. As their students increased, institutions of this type tried to emphasize Japanese elements more in their curriculum. Many became free of the mission boards, and, by the end of Meiji, pure mission schools had all but disappeared. Before 1890, however, the girls' schools, which formed the majority, undoubtedly belonged to this group. One historian of education in Japan has described conditions as follows:

Graduates of the women's colleges became most famous for their ability at Western languages. Later students, feeling not a little embarrassed by this reputation, asked for more of the languages. The school administrators acceded to these requests with the result that women's education became exceedingly Western-oriented in a period when all education had too much Western influence.

Naturally, the lives of these students were completely alienated from those of the common people.

The second type is schools like Dōshisha which Japanese built with assistance from both Japanese and foreigners. For the most part, they were financially independent of the missions. Administrative posts shifted between Japanese and foreigners depending on whether the administration feared political pressure or desired foreign funds. In addition to schools operated entirely by Japanese, this type also includes those which gradually liberated themselves from the status of pure mission school. Most of the schools are in this group; Dōshisha has already been described. Meiji Gakuin was similar to Dōshisha. In the beginning, missionaries dominated it. Later, they shared responsibilities with Japanese, and finally, the Japanese took over the administration completely. A strong Board of Trustees exercised administrative control. The fact that seven of its fourteen members were Japanese differentiated Meiji Gakuin from the usual mission school.

The third type school was founded on the basis of Christian ethics but had no connection with missionaries. Meiji Jogakkō belongs in this class. It was founded by Iwamoto Zenji, a famous Christian editor, who made the school Christian but nondenominational and employed very talented young men as teachers. They instilled in their students character training which freed the girls from feudal restraints but did not alienate them from other Japanese. These teachers included Shimazaki Tōson and Kitamura Tōkoku, both of whom were later to achieve fame as authors.

The government hoped to separate religion from education. Young men considered education all powerful as a means of improving their lot in life. Government policy made them scoff at religion. The actual aim of the government in demanding the separation of religion from education was to suppress religion covertly in the name of education. The zealous Christian leaders of schools always found some way to escape this



suppression. The contribution of their schools to Meiji society was to provide access to the Western spirit, that is, its ethics.

#### b. Translation and Publication

The First Missionary Conference of 1872 made two important decisions. The first, as has been seen,\* was to support the interdenominationalism of the Yokohama Church, and the second was to translate the New Testament into Japanese. A committee including Dr. J. C. Hepburn began work in 1874. Their most difficult problem was to decide the literary style they should use in the translation. One possibility was Chinese literary style which most scholars had used for serious writing during the previous thousand years. Another possibility was the style used in such Japanese classics as the *Genji Monogatari*. The committee had rejected both of these possibilities and a number of others when one missionary, D. C. Greene, said:

One thing which characterizes a country in decline is the loss of its language. India is a modern example of this and Judea an ancient one. Japan is in the ascendancy. Its traditional language should exist as long as its people do. We should use pure Japanese without concerning ourselves over whether it is elegant or common. A style too reminiscent either of Chinese or of English is bad.

As a result of this excellent advice, the committee decided to develop a new style which could be understood by all the people.

The next problem facing the committee was to find someone to print this book. This was difficult since the Bible was still officially outlawed in Japan. One of the committee members, Okuno Masatsuna, did the preparatory work and found a printer who agreed to carve the printing blocks if Okuno took the responsibility. This he agreed to do. The title page contained

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\* See page 178



the following statement in bold type: "Published by the translation committee of the American Bible Society." The committee included the word "American" because at this time any book was valued highly if it claimed to have been written by Americans.

The missionaries decided in 1876 to begin the translation of the Old Testament while the translation of the New Testament continued. Very few Japanese had the qualifications necessary for such work, however. Those who were the best qualified, the enthusiastic young graduates of the mission schools, were all busy at evangelization. As a result, the missionaries elected a committee to do the whole translation themselves. In two years this committee translated the first three chapters of Genesis and the books of Isaiah and Malachi. After a few false starts, a three-men committee consisting of G. F. Verbeck, P. K. Fyson, and J. C. Hepburn was formed in 1882. A Japanese committee consisting of Matsuyama Takayoshi, Uemura Masahisa, and Ibuka Kajinosuke joined them two years later, and the combined committee finished its work in 1887.

This translation of the Old Testament in company with the translation of the New Testament which had been published in 1884 became the standard Japanese translation. A service of thanksgiving was held in Tokyo in 1888 to celebrate the completion of the whole translation. Previously the Bible had been available only in Western languages or Chinese. The appearance of the Japanese editions was very welcome. Another interdenominational committee revised the Bible between 1910 and 1917.

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Hymns were not at first a part of Christian meetings, and when the Christians did sing, the hymns were always in English. But as Christianity grew, hymnals became indispensable. Before 1877, each of the churches composed or translated hymns for itself. In this year, the Methodist missionary, J. C. Davison, published the first hymnal of any size, that is, with over fifty

hymns. Other hymnals appeared with the notes as well as the words. Davison published another hymnal with over 240 selections in 1884. It was the first of the hymnals printed in movable type and bound in Western style.

Up to this time, making a hymnal had consisted of collecting hymns that were handy and publishing them simply. The United Church, however, began in 1883 to chose committees to publish collections which were carefully selected. In 1886, the United Church started working co-operatively with a committee from the Congregational Church which published a hymnal with 263 selections in 1890. Davison enlarged his collection again in 1895. Gradually, however, dissatisfaction developed over the diversity of hymnals, and in 1903 a joint committee published the hymnal which was in use until revised in 1954.

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Publication was from an early date an important function of Christian work. Bible translation was one aspect of this publication. Another was magazines and newspapers issued to keep Christians in contact with each other and to serve as organs of evangelization. What were these magazines and newspapers like?

First is the *Weekly Miscellany* (Shichiichi Zappō) which Imamura Kenkichi started in Kobe in 1875. Uemura Masahisa describes this magazine as follows: "I cannot forget the feeling of awe the *Weekly Miscellany* inspired in us. We learned about Western life and civilization from it. Its readers welcomed the chance to sip such nectar as the translation of *Pilgrim's Progress*." This magazine had great success in encouraging the early believers. After many financial difficulties, a Christian publishing house in Tokyo, the Jūjiya, took it over. The Jūjiya specialized in the sale of hymnals and Bibles.

The next magazine of importance was the *Rikugō Zasshi*. The Y.M.C.A. had just been formed as the result of a talk by Kanda Naibu. This magazine was to be its organ. Uemura reminisces about it as follows:



I think it was in spring of 1880. A number of young Christians held a meeting in one of Kozaki Hiromichi's rooms.... After discussion, they organized the Tokyo Young Men's Association. It seems to me that this was the first time that the title "Young Men's Association" was used in Japan. Ibuka, Kozaki, and I were elected officers. We decided upon two meetings a month, one of which should be open to the public and would include lectures on religion as well as scholarly matters.... In addition, the organization decided to publish a magazine called the *Rikugō Zasshi*. We decided to have it published by the Jūjiya.

The members other than Kozaki could put up only one hundred yen capital for the project, so Kozaki gambled his entire resources to get the *Rikugō Zasshi* started. At that time, there was only one other intellectual magazine, the *Tōyō Gakugei Zasshi*, which graduates of Tokyo University published. Many of the young and influential Christian writers of the day contributed to the *Rikugō Zasshi*. These included Uchimura Kanzō as well as the founders, who themselves became famous. The *Rikugō Zasshi* made the scholarly world secretly admire the strength of Christianity.

The *Keiseisha* opened in Tokyo as a Christian scholarly publishing house in 1883. It later published an interdenominational organ which, after a number of changes in name, became the *Kirisuto Kyō Shimbun*. Through a succession of changes in editors, this paper gradually lost its interdenominational character and became almost exclusively Congregationalist.

Because of this change in policy, Uemura Masahisa began a denominational organ for the Church of Christ in Japan (Presbyterian). This first appeared in 1890. The name, originally *Fukuin Shūhō*, was later changed to *Fukuin Shimpō*. This magazine was greatly praised and ranked with the *Rikugō Zasshi* as one of the twin luminaries of the Christian world.



### c. Charitable Work

Social welfare work at first consisted of direct measures against the social evils existing in society. As time passed, emphasis changed to preventative measures aimed at cutting out the source of these evils. Changes in methods paralleled these changes in aims. Scientific methods replaced early stopgap measures; organized co-operation replaced individual effort. Christian social work developed the same way. At first, individual missionaries did what they could singlehandedly. They could do no more than touch on a few of many social evils as acts of generosity. Fortunately, they were skilfully training successors at the same time in their homes and schools. Here they planted seeds which flowered first into professional relief work, and then into socialism. In Japan, backward economically and with a particularly large depressed class, focusing attention on social ills meant that many Christians became Christian socialists. This section covers only the early stages of this work, for the greatest development belongs to the latter half of Meiji.

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Catholics were more active than the Protestants in work with orphans. One of the first nuns founded a girls' school as soon as she arrived in Japan in 1872. She took in large numbers of children who had been abandoned as a result of the War of the Restoration and gave them an education in domestic science. From its founding to the present time, this school has taken care of over five thousand orphans; the number alone pays high tribute to the efforts and success of these missionaries. Another of the many orphanages is the Urakami Yōikuen founded in 1874 by one of the Urakami Christians, Iwanaga Matsuko. In the early days, members of the board of trustees helped by pitching in at farm work. Up to the present, the school has graduated several thousand students. Protestant work with

orphans belongs to the section on later Meiji.

Medical work also continued. There were two distinct types. One was general therapy and the other was specialized care of diseases such as tuberculosis and leprosy which required long hospitalization. Protestants predominated in the former and Catholics in the latter. The low medical standards and the prevalence of eye and skin diseases had frightened early missionaries. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that there were over ten thousand victims of leprosy, all care for them was entrusted to six private agencies until the enactment of the Leprosy Prevention Law in 1909. Christians led in the care of leprosy, particularly in formulating preventive social policies. The first leprosarium was the Kōyama Fukusei Hospital founded in 1887 by a Catholic named Testevuide. It provided free service in a family-like atmosphere. Treatment and prevention of leprosy was very difficult at first because of the misconception that leprosy spread only by heredity. Members of families containing a victim of leprosy were afraid to have the fact become known. People like Testevuide, however, enlightened the Japanese and hastened the enactment of the Leprosy Prevention Law.

A medical missionary, A. C. MacDonald, continued Dr. J. C. Hepburn's tradition of general medical practice. He received public funds to build a hospital in Shizuoka for the benefit of the poor and the samurai who had become impoverished by the loss of their stipends. MacDonald arrived in Japan and started this work in 1873. Subsequently he earned the respect of Japanese by going into direct charity medicine. Another doctor, J. C. Berry, had arrived earlier in Kobe in 1872. Struck by the distress of the poor, he decided to open a charity clinic in the Kobe concession. This was against the regulations of the concession. The prefectural governor, struck by Berry's zeal and his personal and professional reputation, however, did not punish Berry. Instead, the governor invited him to become an advisor to the Kobe hospital. Berry accepted on the condition that he be allowed to establish a charity clinic in this hospital.



It is said that he further turned back all his salary to be used for the care of the poor.

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Prison reform was another result of Berry's work. Berry visited the Kobe jail as prison physician in 1873: "The conditions were unbelievable" and made him "shudder." He personally called on the Minister of Home Affairs to urge prison reform. The government had established a prison system in 1869 with penitentiaries for long term offenders. Conditions in these prisons were hellish. Berry's work bore fruit in 1888 when for the first time a native Christian, Hara Taneaki, became a prison chaplain. Hara had traveled through Hokkaido the previous year observing prison conditions. There he had seen the extreme cruelty under which inmates were slowly driven to despair. After his training, Hara applied to be sent to Kushiro in Hokkaido. He used a grading system on the advice of Dr. Berry with great success. This system gave prisoners credit for good behavior and improved their morale. Hara's work came to the attention of his superiors with the result that they appointed a number of other chaplains. These men later studied social work in Europe and the United States, returning for the most part to government service. They became the key men in drafting crime-prevention legislation. Thus Berry's individual work developed into a social-reform movement of national consequence.

This missionary-centered charity work gradually came under Japanese control and became the point from which socialism developed.

#### 4. CHRISTIANITY AND CHANGES IN PUBLIC OPINION

##### a. Nationalism and the Resurgence of Chinese Studies

Beginning in 1880, the Finance Minister, Matsukata Masa-



yoshi, inaugurated a policy of deflation to halt the inflation caused by the Satsuma Rebellion and subsequent military preparations. This dealt a severe blow to the poor. In the rural areas, landlords grew wealthy by buying farm land at deflated prices. In the cities, small- and medium-sized industries went bankrupt while the zaibatsu prospered with government contracts and protection. The difference between rich and poor continually increased. Finally, farmers of the urban middle class joined the new Liberal Party to clamor for aid. This was the beginning of clear-cut opposition to the government. The authorities strengthened the Public Association Law in 1882 and the following year passed regulations restricting newspapers and publications in general. The government also developed a national ethic centered around the person of the Emperor as a means of increasing nationalism. Confucianism eventually became the mainstay of this national ethic.

As a result of the government's change in policy:

Many of the young men threw away their English books and turned once more to Chinese literature. Teachers of English who, for a while, had had many students closed their doors and returned to Tokyo where life was easier for them. Public school teaching emphasized what the Education Ministry called "general education" which neglected foreign languages.

The shift in emphasis brought about a number of changes in Christianity. First, Chinese classical studies, pure nationalistic thought, and Buddhism all attacked Christian internationalism. Second, the group of Christians which had been evangelizing left the countryside for the cities as interest in things Western declined. Former samurai, now poverty stricken, also congregated in the cities. Both the people to whom Christianity appealed and their teachers left the rural areas. This hindered further development of Christianity in the provinces for many years.

Uemura Masahisa attempted to resist changing attitudes with

the following article in the *Rikugō Zasshi* in 1882:

According to a newspaper, it is rumored that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has decided to hinder the dissemination of Christianity. The government should not interfere with its people's religious freedom. They cannot succeed in any case. Some may say that this rumor should not cause suspicions, but there are now many people who think Christianity should be proscribed. Public opinion may be misled unless the authorities explain their intention. The government must not further deteriorate to the place where it constrains our religious freedom.

The government had just published the *Yōgaku Kōyō*, a compendium of Confucian ethical codes for use in schools all over Japan. This book was part of their plan to unify the national spirit by means of Confucianism. This was at variance with Christianity's theory of human equality. Kozaki Hiromichi criticized it:

In Confucianism, the state swallows up the individual; man becomes the property of some prince or government, and the individual cannot have any rights. Unless I have rights, I am not free. Individuals do only as their rulers tell them.... In such a case, what is the value of the individual?

But the government continued to encourage Confucian morals and to issue more and more arbitrary regulations. It also continued to discriminate against Christianity in a number of ways. The laws still did not permit Christian funeral services. When one Christian died in 1876, a Christian service was conducted, but "the coffin was also brought into a temple and they had a priest perform simple rites in order to satisfy the government requirement" that "funeral services must be conducted with the assistance of Shinto shrines or Buddhist temples." As late as 1886, "when a Christian died and they tried to



bury his body in a public cemetery which had formally belonged to a temple, the priests closed all the doors of the temple and would not let them bring the coffin in. When an appeal was made to the police, they purposely delayed in answering the call." Later, the government went from hampering the acts of individual Christians to interference in their thoughts and faith:

Councillor Inoue grieved at Christianity's daily increasing strength. After consultation with cabinet ministers and councillors on how to control this increase, he was told that the best thing to do was to support Buddhism. He discussed the problem at length with his friend Yamagata who also was a councillor. Yamagata agreed with Inoue. He said that he had completely given up Shinto sermons for soldiers and that he was changing to Buddhist sermons. He also said that in the event any of the soldiers should become Christian, he would have the officers admonish them earnestly.

The government was not alone in its opposition to Christianity. Uemura Masahisa said in 1882: "Bigoted priests naturally do everything they can to prevent the progress of Christianity. But what a disgrace it is for those claiming to be scholars and politicians to paddle around after these priests doing the same thing." Next to the Government, the most formidable opposition came from Buddhists and scholars who laid great stress on scientific thinking.

The Buddhist case against Christianity relies on two main points which became commonly accepted. Shimaji Mokurai's *New Thoughts on the Resurrection* presents the first of these: "If the resurrection of Jesus himself is wild fantasy, how much more so is resurrection for men in general?" Shimaji took the particularly symbolic sections of Christian doctrine and interpreted them as superstitions.

The second accusation against Christianity is that Japanese



Christians because of foreign loyalties, could not fight on behalf of Japan in the event of an attack from the West. Because Christianity was a foreign religion, its Japanese adherents would become traitors. Christianity's opponents believed that "Western powers send large number of missionaries into barbarous and semi-civilized countries in preparation for taking them over." Here we see the Meiji government in retreat, willing to overlook more than ten years of progress, return to isolation, and reinstall Buddhism as the official religion: it was willing to sacrifice all this advance to strengthen its own position.

The evolutionists and agnostics in Tokyo Imperial University embellished these two arguments and made them acceptable to the intellectuals. Buddhist attacks had not previously influenced progressive intellectuals because of their reactionary and defensive tone. The new approach was to attack Christianity indirectly by pointing up the conflict between science and religion and by claiming that any religion hindered the progress of civilization. This confused many Christians who were for the most part young men and who had come to believe that Christianity alone represented the spirit of modern Western culture. This quotation by a well-known historian illustrates the point:

The people who at that time challenged Christianity to a direct conflict on theoretical lines were members of the so-called English empirical school. After gathering its strength over a long period, Tokyo Imperial University suddenly began to champion evolution and agnosticism. Beginning in 1880, it made two contributions to the Japanese intellectual world. The first was the theory of evolution as presented by Professor E. S. Morse, an American professor of biology at Tokyo Imperial University. The second was Katō Hiroyuki's refutation of individual rights theory. From this time on, intellectual trends were about ten or twenty years behind those in Europe and indiscriminately imitated them.

The theory of evolution as they interpreted it taught the survival of the fittest in the natural world as well as attempting to disprove the existence of God. Katō Hiroyuki's book, *A New Theory of Rights*, warped this thesis to the advantage of the Meiji officials by saying that only the strongest had the right to rule. A clash ensued between this theory and two other beliefs. These were, on the one hand, the traditional Christian belief in God and man's equality and freedom before Him, and, on the other hand, the theories of those new forces demanding political rights. Katō Hiroyuki had previously led those who favored political freedom. He changed his position after he became president of Tokyo Imperial University. Shifts in government policy reflected in its university appear to have influenced Katō's sudden defection from the liberal camp.

This attack did not perturb Christianity in the least. The *Rikugō Zasshi* took the lead in a counterattack. This is what they said about the pamphlet, "The Irrationality of Christianity," which the Honganji branch of Shin Buddhism had published:

We understand that up to the present they have published about seven hundred thousand copies of this pamphlet and distributed them widely. The many people who have attended the recent Buddhist lecture series in Tokyo have received copies. We believe that, rather than harm, this will benefit Christianity. . . . Distributing such pamphlets is like passing out advertisements for Christianity.

Another example is Uemura Masahisa's sarcastic response to a short article by Inoue Tetsujirō, a leader of intellectual attacks on Christianity:

We have heard for a year that you were writing a splendid book. We have long known that you were the greatest scholar in Japan. We feel sure that anything you write will be outstanding, and should be used as a model for our own work.



We have wanted to see it as soon as possible, but up to now we have heard nothing; our despair is complete.

Christian opinion, however, could not combat the influence of the change in official attitude. These two events which occurred during 1884-5 in the provinces reflected popular attitudes: "A number of people made a straw effigy of Christ. They impaled it on a spear and marched around the town with it." In another place, townsmen "threw rocks, snakes, and frogs" among attendants at Christian services, saying that "all Christians, to the last man, should be slain with spears. . . . It is said that, in spite of these actions, the police looked calmly on instead of trying to quiet the disturbance." A number of Christians could not endure this sort of oppression and so left the faith. Most of those who turned apostate were from the lower classes where family pressure to leave Christianity was greater than in the middle and upper classes.

Conditions in the cities differed markedly from those in the provinces. Here the vigorous young middle class clearly opposed the government, and Christianity continued to attract converts in spite of national policy or provincial oppression. Continuing, if slow, growth in the cities prepared the way for the great Christian expansion in the middle eighteen-eighties and helped to determine the class of people among whom it would grow.

#### b. Revivals and Quick Expansion

The *Rikugō Zasshi* furnishes an example of the enthusiasm with which the Christians joined battle, first with the government, and then with Japanese society in general. Its editors believed in the Christian God and considered it patriotic to make Japan Christian. Even social pressure could not dampen their enthusiasm; on the contrary, it deepened their faith. Certain congregations in 1883-4 reacted against this social pressure with pent-up spiritual force. The revivals which

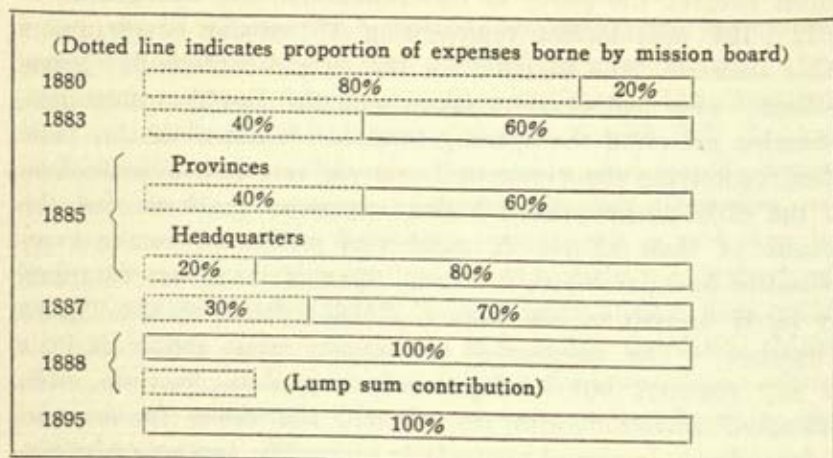


released this spiritual energy started after the Second Missionary Conference held in Osaka in 1883.

Only fourteen had attended the First Missionary Conference which adopted the policy of interdenominational evangelism in 1872. 106 missionaries representing 18 mission boards and 4 Bible societies came together for the second conference. James Ballagh, who had come to Japan with the first Protestant missionaries, delivered the opening sermon. It described the basic ideas underlying the evangelical zeal and interdenominationalism of the early missionaries. It also expressed gratitude for the results of their effort. A number of problems affecting evangelization had developed, however. One of them was described by H. H. Leavitt in his lecture, "Self-support of the Native Churches." The question of self-support arises sooner or later in any country, but in Japan where patriotic motives often prompted affiliation with the church, the desire for financial independence developed particularly early. The Japanese advocate of self-sufficiency who is best remembered today is Sawayama Pauro who made his announcement in the same conference where Leavitt spoke. Sawayama had long feared that missionary sectarianism would destroy the early Japanese interdenominationalism and would confuse the Japanese Christians. He therefore had insisted that the churches free themselves from the missions and adopt evangelical methods consistent with Japanese customs. The conference decided that the Japanese churches were not yet able to support themselves. Leavitt's and Sawayama's opinions, though not immediately accepted, strongly influenced later developments.

Naturally, those who were aware of the continuing semi-dependency of the churches did not agree with the extreme position presented by Leavitt and Sawayama. But, just as naturally, no one opposed self-support in theory. Kanamori Tsūrin represents those who favored gradualism. He felt that all funds for church maintenance and evangelism should come from Japan, even though the local Christians still needed

TABLE 1: PROPORTION OF EXPENSES BORNE BY  
LOCAL CHURCH AND MISSION BOARD:  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.



assistance for supporting services—education and charitable work—which required large sums of money though not directly connected with evangelism. Without going further into details, it can be said that this question of self-support excited more interest than any other among the many Japanese present. The following generalizations sum up the results of the conference. The first is that the church expanded and at the same time became more denominationally minded directly in proportion to its concern about self-sufficiency. The second is that this conference marked the change from missionary domination to Japanese leadership.

Table 1 refers to the Congregational Church and shows the percentage of total expenses borne by the mission board from 1880 to 1895, the first year of complete independence. After 1883, the Japanese churches furnished the majority of funds, and leadership slowly passed to the hands of native pastors. Of course, the missionaries and native pastors continually established new churches which temporarily needed support,



but, in general, they also achieved independence. All denominations did not succeed as well as the Congregationalists did, but all at least attempted self-sufficiency.

The wish expressed by many of the missionaries in the Second Conference was fulfilled when the Christian faith, long suppressed, suddenly expanded quickly. At the same time, the movement for political rights, up to then similarly suppressed, became very active. Both movements at last had the strength to face society at large. This comparison of the total number of Christians indicates a very great increase:

1878	44 churches	1,617 members
1882	93 "	4,367 "
1885	168 "	11,000 "
1890	300 "	34,000 "

The craze for everything Western between 1885 and 1890 explains the threefold increase during that time. But the expansion of two and one-half times between 1882 and 1885 is not so easily accounted for. In order to understand this earlier increase, it is necessary to examine the revivals of the period. Revivals occur when evangelization is difficult, and a great deal of effort is necessary to win converts. They do not usually start up when the church is expanding with little trouble. They appear when the long-frustrated spiritual strength of the faithful suddenly finds an outlet, or when the believers feel that failure in evangelization is due to their own lack of diligence. Uncontrollable emotion accompanied by tears seizes them. Such physical reactions appeared in the revivals of 1883.

How did this famous series of revivals start? According to the recollections of one Christian, it started after James Ballagh, the first minister of the Yokohama Church, had had a dream. In this dream, Ballagh had seen a flock of sheep gathered on the edge of a sharp precipice. He was surprised to see that the sheep did not fall, although they appeared about to fall.



He then noticed that they were not falling because a ray of light from heaven was leading them. Yet their shepherd was enjoying a nap at some distance from his charges. Ballagh concluded from this dream that he and his colleagues were still not working hard enough at their evangelism. He offered up a passionate prayer and determined to redouble his efforts to lay hold the hearts of his congregation. Ballagh may have felt that evangelistic zeal was declining. His zeal inspired all the members of the church. Prayer meetings became more fervent and many people suddenly awakened to interest in Christianity. Revivals followed in the Yokohama Theological School and a girls' school, both of which trained evangelists. Students in Tokyo, hearing about these revivals, visited Yokohama partly out of curiosity. They were also seized with the spirit of revival and transmitted the fervor back to Aoyama Gakuin and the Methodist Girls' School. The zeal spread to the other churches. Nor was it confined to the Tokyo area alone. Young men, fired with enthusiasm in Tokyo, renewed activity in the provinces. One member of the Yokohama Church gave up ambitions of politics and went to Takasaki where he baptized over fifty people and founded a church in the short space of eleven months. Believers increased and churches grew up in a number of localities. In the Yokohama Church which had started the revival, "There were eighteen persons applying for baptism and many more who did not yet desire baptism but were receiving instruction; approximately three hundred were attending Sunday services." In the Tokyo Methodist Girls' School, "gradually eighteen, then twenty, and then thirty received Christ's grace and were baptized; recently another thirty have applied for baptism." The *Rikugō Zasshi* inspired its readers with the following statement:

Trusting in God, we can easily conquer an enemy force of ten million. "If God be with us, then who can be against us?" If all the Christians are moved by the holy spirit, and

if God will but once open the hearts of our countrymen, Christianity can become Japan's religion in seven or eight (not seventy or eighty) years.

At the height of enthusiasm, in 1883, the Third General Conference of Christians met in Tokyo. Thirty-eight churches sent representatives to the conference and the total attendance was over five hundred, an unprecedented number. A series of lecture meetings for persons not yet Christian followed the conference. Almost four thousand people packed the hall to the doors. The speakers themselves caught the spirit of the revival; the voice of Kozaki Hiromichi, who usually spoke in low tones, could be heard in the far corners of the room. Tsuda Sen in delight called out, "Miraculous! Miraculous!" The various ministers who were present reported this enthusiasm to their home churches as a means of encouraging further conversions:

Rev. Oshikawa went to the conference leaving me to take care of things in Sendai. Those assembled at the conference were greatly blessed, and Rev. Oshikawa sent me a telegram which said: "Great things are happening. Gather the congregation together and pray fervently." We brought them together immediately and prayed earnestly. . . . Sendai also was greatly blessed. . . . The ministers returned from this conference full of enthusiasm; Christian activity increased markedly all over the country. The number of believers grew daily.

Students of Dōshisha took part in the most intense of these revivals in March, 1884. The students had become increasingly worked up since a prayer service in the first week of the year. They prayed unceasingly from early morning until late at night. The climax came in the prayer meeting on March 17. Almost all of the two hundred students in school made confessions of faith and received baptism. Some of them even suffered mental



aberrations which forced the school to close for a week. A characteristic of these conversions was that those who showed the most effects were not the theological students in the upper classes, but the first- or second-year students. Those who had had the shortest contact with the faith experienced the most violent conversions. This is one psychological characteristic typical of a revival. The new converts, seized with an urge to evangelize, sent representatives to the churches around Kyoto where they started their own revivals and converted others.

In November, 1883, the Christians in Tokyo, continuing their enthusiasm, commemorated the four hundredth anniversary of Luther's birth. The meeting attracted an audience of 1,500. The following year, Christians held a series of lectures which drew several thousand people and was commemorated in a contemporary woodblock print. The famous socialist, Katayama Sen, said, "The meetings were full every day. Kozaki Hiro-michi, Uemura Masahisa, Ibuka Kajinosuke, and others preached the gospel fervently. Actually, *the ministers at that time lived by faith because they had no alternative under such oppressive conditions.*" Here is the reason behind this outburst of religious zeal which occurred in spite of government oppression. It is just within such inconsistencies that the special characteristics of a revival appear.

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During the late eighteen-eighties a craze for all things Western—called "Westernism"—swept over Japan, partly with government assistance. Uemura Masahisa used these words to describe it:

The government adopted Westernism mainly to force our country to appear civilized, especially in the political sense. But as when one has taken medicine and it has had its effect, not only the digestive organs but the whole body feels refreshed, so this action of the government resulted in great activity, not



only in politics, but throughout all Japanese society.

The period of Westernism was both strange and confused. During the years 1881-5, a terrible depression plagued rural areas. The government took no measures to alleviate it, leaving the farmers no alternative to forming groups and demanding rights. Sporadic revolts finally broke out. The government made these revolts the excuse to suppress the movement for popular rights and to dissolve the Liberal Party. Next, in order to shift the people's attention from domestic to foreign affairs, it took up the question of revising the treaties with the Western powers. Westernism developed out of a political gesture which had as its purpose treaty reform. Such confused motivation naturally invited many contradictions. The government suddenly became very friendly to Christianity. Uemura lampoons this Westernism and the embarrassment it caused the Christians:

From the religious point of view, Westernism was an official invitation that Christianity prosper. From the point of view of ordinary life, it was an extreme adoption of Western things: apprentices, instead of singing popular Japanese tunes casually let fall foreign phrases like "all right" or "good bye"; English teachers spread throughout the land; housewives and young women discarded Japanese forms of hairdress and Japanese clothing; instead they made their hair up in the Western fashion, like balls of horsedung. . . . Words and paper cannot express how strange it was. This was the period of Westernism: it was just as if the people had become drunk. In a short period they would have to come to their senses, but right then they were intoxicated with foolishness. . . . Among the intellectual leaders, Fukuzawa Yukichi proposed that Japanese improve themselves as a race by marrying with white men; Mori Arinori called for the reform of Japanese literature; Kanda Naibu and others, foreseeing that foreigners would soon be allowed to reside everywhere instead of being confined to the concessions,

established a society to encourage the Romanization of Japanese. Toyama Shōichi's intellectual switch was particularly interesting. He had written a book entitled *The Contradictions of Christianity* for which the arch conservative Inoue Tetsujirō wrote the preface. Within a year, he recommended the adoption of Christianity because of its concern for social reform. He went on to say that if Christianity were accepted, Western music should be brought in with it. We can see how the people poured out admiration for Christianity. . . . Equal legal opportunity for both sexes excited great interest, and Western social customs were all the rage. Women's education naturally flourished and mission schools for women filled to overflowing. . . .

The government officials came to the conclusion that the Powers considered Japan immature and barbarian because our religions were idolatrous. To remedy this, they decided to make us the equal of the other nations even in this respect. *But religion is religion. Even after hundreds or thousands of years, the faith remains insufficiently developed. One cannot lightly change or exchange it as he can food, drink, or clothing. Therefore, many thinking Christians felt that this attempt to adopt Christianity was a positive harm rather than a benefit.* But even as the tides and winds slowly turned in our favor, we could not rest. Tens and hundreds of missionaries came in and rushed all over the country with hardly enough time to warm their chairs, just like Confucius during his middle years. The Foreign Minister eulogized Christianity and himself took on the work of introducing it. . . . Others joined him, one opened a Bible-study organization while his friends went out evangelizing. The former Communications Minister studied the four Gospels. Two other government officials who had just returned home from abroad energetically spread the faith they had learned there.

Westernism and the cordial reception of Christianity were just a dream from which "in a short period they would have to



come to their senses." Uemura goes on to explain the reasons that led them finally to awaken. The people realized that the treaty proposed by the foreign minister was not in the best national interests and, carried away by feelings of inferiority and regret, they turned anti-foreign and scorned Christianity as anti-Japanese.

The following characteristics of Christian development during the Period of Westernism are important. First, the intellectuals opportunistically followed the government lead. The word "patriotism" held a magic charm for them. Members of the pro-Western group like Fukuzawa Yukichi and Toyama Shōichi exemplify this. They supported Christianity during the period of Westernism. Later, they changed their point of view for the third time and attacked Christianity. Second, the women's movement started and Christianity contributed to its development. Thirdly, some members of the upper classes who had not before been attracted to Christianity changed their minds and joined it. The conditions which brought about these conversions also evoked new evangelistic methods. The women's movement will be discussed first.

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The liberation of women had not previously been a part of the Christian program. Under the feudal system, women were nothing more than "tools for procreation," their marriage arranged for utilitarian ends. Christianity started to criticize such feudal family relations harshly. The government at the same time was beginning to move toward greater opportunities for women. An Imperial edict in 1871 encouraged education for them. This edict, read to a group of nobles, urged them to study and to diffuse knowledge so that "Japan's ancient habits may change and she may take her place among the powers of the world." The end of this edict emphasized the importance of education for women:



Many Japanese women do not have sufficient learning because we have not yet established a system of women's education. How to bring up children is a particularly important part of a mother's education, and so the government is going to make it easier for men going abroad to take their wives or sisters. While in the West, these ladies are to learn the essentials of women's education and child care.

The object of this edict was to enable upper-class women to mix with foreigners. It had little connection with the life of the average person, but it became the first step in the liberation of women. In the same year, Kuroda Kiyotaka, just back from the United States, selected five young girls to study in America. He envied the high status and intelligence of American women, and wanted Japanese women to have equal opportunities. Included in these five was Tsuda Umeko who later founded Miss Tsuda's School (now Tsuda College). All of these girls were daughters of samurai who had become petty government officials. Kuroda's aim was to lay the foundation for middle-class girls' education. He partly realized his wish in 1872 when, as director of the Hokkaido Colonization Office, he opened a girls' school to provide good wives and intelligent mothers for the colonists. The government committed itself to women's education at this time. In 1874, it opened the Tokyo Women's Normal School as part of its new policy:

The number of students has gradually increased since the establishment of the educational system. Women's education, because of long tradition and negligence, however, has not kept pace, so that there is a gap between the abilities of men and women. This is a real deficiency.

The education offered stopped at making good wives and intelligent mothers, however; it hardly touched the problem of equal rights which is basic to the spirit of women's education.

This had to await action from unofficial groups such as the Christians. The following excerpt from a lecture by Uemura Masahisa describes conditions at this time:

There are many interpretations of equality between the sexes, and the problem, seen in its entirety, is very difficult. But in this point it is very clear: men and women should follow the same morals. . . . If society expels an immoral woman, it should likewise expel an immoral man. The observance of this rule would be a great advance for women's rights in Japan. Actually, equal rights before civil governments are unimportant. They are but the shadow of the reality which looms above it lofty and immovable. What is this reality? It is that men and women are measured without distinction, by the same yardsticks of morals and responsibilities. When we have made this truth a part of us and observe it to the letter, the status of women will become respectable.

Uemura's thinking was several steps beyond the legal interpretation of equal rights for women envisioned by the government. As early as 1875, one church took concrete steps to express its convictions. It gave women the franchise in church elections, an unthinkable concession judged by previous standards. Furthermore, in 1880 another church elected women as deacons. During the period of Westernism, churches elected women elders with the same rights as their male counterparts.

Christianity's most conspicuous contribution to women's rights, as mentioned earlier, was in women's education. This was especially true during the craze for Westernism. Seventy per cent of today's Christian girls' schools were started before 1889, and most of the seventy per cent appeared during the period of Westernism.

In 1887, there were seventeen non-Christian girls' schools in Japan. Eight of them were in Tokyo. These had 136 teachers and 2,363 pupils. The following year there were in the Tokyo-



Yokohama area alone twelve Christian girls' schools with 157 teachers, 41 of whom were foreigners, and 1,541 students.

This shows how large a proportion of the total was made up by Christian schools. Most of these were overly Westernized, and so lost their strength in the later period of reaction.

In the provinces, Mrs. M. C. Leavitt founded The Japan Christian Women's Temperance Union in 1886, and Yajima Kajiko followed her in preaching temperance, purity, and pacifism from the woman's point of view. In 1889-90, a group composed primarily of Shimada Saburō, Ebara Soroku, Tsuda Sen, Honda Yōichi, and Uemura Masahisa petitioned the government to outlaw prostitution. One of the prefectural assemblies did outlaw it in September, 1891. Church members were largely responsible. The Salvation Army later co-operated in this work. These facts attest that Christianity continued the fight for the liberation of women which had begun as part of a shallow Westernism.

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Members of the upper classes started to become Christians during the period of Westernism. Kataoka Kenkichi, Nakajima Nobuyuki, Saitō Mibuo, and Shimada Saburō, all later to become members of the Diet, were converted; government administrators and legislators became Christian in accordance with the government program of Westernism. Members of the nobility and zaibatsu followed them. Kozaki Hiromichi's church doubled in membership every year; "High ranking government officials were among the group which every Sunday overflowed the hall which measured twenty-four by thirty-six feet. There was nothing to do but enlarge it the next year." The Congregational Church entered into the urban upper classes. The following figures show that its growth was somewhat more marked than that of the United Church. The latter concentrated on rural evangelization, particularly among provincial legislators who were fighting for democratic rights:



# ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH AND INCREASING EVANGELISM

	Number of churches	Number of believers
1886:		
Congregational Church	31	3,468
United Church	?	6,094
1890 :		
Congregational Church	61	10,142
United Church	72	10,495

As the number of members in each sect approached ten thousand, several characteristics about Christianity's social structure became clear. The first had been true since the beginning: most Christians were young men and students. Christianity far surpassed other religions in its youth and intellectual ability. This was largely due to the government's policy of Westernism and to the fact that Christianity came to the Japanese through Western Learning. The second characteristic, as Kozaki Hiromichi put it, was:

There is not one neighboring country where the majority of Christians are not women. In as many as eighty or ninety per cent of the American churches, the ratio of women to men is two to one. . . . However, in Japan the situation is reversed; for four men there are three women.

This was true in spite of the fact that Christianity had more educational institutions for women than for men. It shows that surface Westernism had not dispelled the feudal aura surrounding Japanese women. The third characteristic was, as one missionary put it, that "some Christian teachers regretted that Christian development had been biased in the direction of the so-called 'middle class.' They frequently asked how they could increase its success among the lower classes." As the former samurai lost their class consciousness during the eighties, the emphasis of evangelism had gradually shifted from the middle to the upper classes. It had drifted away from

the peasants and city laborers. Christianity had become an urban and intellectual religion.

That Japanese Christians favored non-denominationalism in opposition to some of the missionaries has already been discussed. This spirit reached its zenith in the great Third General Conference of Christians of 1883. Out of this conference arose a plan to unite the Congregational and the United (Presbyterian) Churches because of similarities in doctrine. Both churches selected committees in May, 1887. Everything proceeded smoothly until the committee had completed a draft constitution. The Congregational Church balked at the many doctrinal points to which it would be bound. Its opposition continued in spite of large concessions by the United Church. The United Church then could not accept the next proposal put forth by the Congregational Church. As a result, in 1890 the Congregational Church announced its decision to give up plans for union. It was a great loss that the churches could not unite in a time of such expansion. If they had done so, Christianity would have been much better able to defend itself in the succeeding period of adversity. Expansion during the period of Westernism strengthened denominational feeling and ruined prospects for union. Many of the shallow converts also deserted Christianity during the following years. These facts attest that the success of the late eighteen-eighties was not the steppingstone to further expansion that many had hoped it would be. The following figures, compiled from United Church statistics, compare the period of rapid growth with the period of adversity which is taken up in the following chapter:

	Baptism	Apostasies
1881-1890	9,850	983
1891-1900	7,770	3,795

During the second decade of Meiji (1877-86), apostates numbered about one-tenth the number of converts, while during the next

ten years approximately half the number of converts left the church. The following statistics show how baptisms for all the Protestant denominations gradually declined:

1887	4,332
1888	4,730
1889	3,096
1890	1,940

These figures only prove once again the shallowness of Westernism.





## *Chapter Three*

### THE PERIOD OF TESTING

(1891—1900)

#### 1. SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND CHRISTIANITY

THE rapid expansion of Christianity which characterized the late eighteen-eighties ceased when the government policy which supported it suddenly changed. The basic foreign policy of the government was to preserve Japanese independence. The treaties which Japan had signed with the Powers in 1858 included what the Japanese considered to be galling infringements upon their sovereignty. The most humiliating infringements were the extraterritorial rights Europeans resident in Japan had. Until the treaties were revised in the last few years of the nineteenth century, the immediate aim of foreign policy was to gain the same rights over foreigners resident in Japan that other countries had over foreigners in their territory. At the same time, government domestic policy was to unify the people and to strengthen the nation so that it could deal with the Powers as equals. In the late eighties, the authorities used the desire for treaty revision to increase nationalistic sentiment and to win popular approval for their policy of national independence based on strength. Individuals were asked to endure infringements on their rights so that the nation might achieve its goal of equality with the Western Powers.

Perhaps the government had gone too far in encouraging the people to expect revision of the treaties; the Itō Cabinet dissolved in 1887 because the people, now aroused, blamed Foreign

Minister Inoue for not pushing negotiations fast enough. The government program to increase national consciousness had become too effective. The people embarrassed the authorities by asking for something they could not produce. The people then became disillusioned with things Western, for they had hoped to achieve equality with the West and treaty revision by adopting Western customs. Reactionary forces which drew strength from this disillusion started a magazine in 1888 called *The Japanese* which both Buddhists and Shintoists supported in an attempt to improve their own position. The same year, The National Religio-ethical Society of Japan began to denounce Christianity as an enemy of national peace. Other patriots founded the Japanese National Religion and Morals Association which attempted to reject Christianity and Western literature by asserting traditional Japanese faiths. The Kuroda Cabinet which took office in 1888 tried to hasten treaty revision in the face of this adverse sentiment. They suppressed the opposition, asked for opinions on treaty reform from the Powers, and set to work making their own propositions. The new Foreign Minister, Count Ōkuma, proposed compromise on the problem of extraterritoriality. The Powers received this very well, but it only increased internal opposition. Count Ōkuma resigned in 1889, a few days after an extremist had hurled a bomb at him.

This resignation was the turning point; for the time being, public opposition to foreign policy forced the government to cease considering treaty revision and to concentrate on domestic problems. The government decided to compromise rather than to face this reactionary force directly. The period of Westernism had weakened the feudal ethics which supported the government. The authorities now hastened to implement the new Constitution which systematized these ethics and gave them modern overtones. This shift in policy surprised the Christians who had become accustomed to the success which Westernism had meant for them. The new measures led to a period of testing for Christianity.



The paternalistic constitution repudiated the natural rights of man: "In Japan the Emperor bestows the franchise on the nobility and commoners. It is not at all their right as individuals." In order to be true to its basic principle, this Constitution had to repudiate Christianity's equality of all men before God. This was not at once apparent. The Constitution in Article 28 granted freedom of speech on the condition that the people "did not disturb the peace or neglect their duties as subjects." At first, the Christians accepted this constitutional assurance at face value. They braved a blizzard in Tokyo the day the Constitution was promulgated to hold a joint service of thanksgiving. When Tsuda Sen read Article 28, a number of people in his audience were overcome by tears. Some Christians, citing the passage, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," preached that there was no conflict between religious freedom and the Constitution. But the constitutional limitation that the people should "not neglect their duties as subjects" meant, in fact, that Christians had to conform to government policy. Internationalism, basic to Christianity, conflicted with the national ethics of the emperor system. Contrary to what the Christians had expected, oppression of Christianity reappeared.

On the day the government promulgated the Constitution, an assassin took the life of Mori Arinori who was at the time Minister of Education. The powers behind this assassination were the priests of the Ise Shrine who feared both Westernism and Christianity. This was the prelude to reaction against Christianity and the liberal policies Mori had represented.

In spite of these reactionary developments, the first elections of 1890 showed the contribution Christianity was making to the battle for democratic rights. Nine Christians were elected to Diet. Five of the nine, including Kataoka Kenkichi and Shimada Saburō, were members of the Church of Christ in Japan (Presbyterian). Their election attested the basic strength of the Church of Christ which had worked quietly among provincial intellectuals prominent in local politics. Of the other four,

three came from the Congregational Church and one was a Methodist.

Conflict with the non-Christian world increased as Christianity itself gained strength. The Education Rescript, issued in October, 1890, aggravated this conflict. In May, the Yamagata Cabinet had revised the Primary Schools Law. At the same time, it had established a compulsory national education system which stressed the importance of moral education—education which would increase respect for the spirit of the Constitution. The government had been preaching the ethics of the emperor system since 1882 through such required texts as the *Yōgaku Kōyō*. In the Education Rescript, unlike the *Yōgaku Kōyō*, a facade of Western ethics concealed the Confucian content. But the Education Rescript contained nothing fresh and new; its aim was to sanctify the Emperor. The government distributed photographs of the Emperor along with copies of the Rescript. Some of the groups which received them placed them on special altars. On some occasions, offerings of wine, food, and money were placed before them. As this custom spread, people began to feel that anyone who refused to worship before the Imperial photograph or Education Rescript was not a true Japanese. The first victim of this cult was Uchimura Kanzō.

Various schools early in 1891 directed that ceremonies be held to commemorate the issuance of the Rescript. Some made an act of respect a part of the ceremony. The most famous case was the First Higher Middle School, the preparatory school for Tokyo Imperial University. Here Uchimura, a lecturer, acting on the spur of the moment, refused, in the presence of the whole student body and faculty, to bow before the Rescript when all others were bowing. The nationalists among the students set up a clamor. Uchimura himself had not meant any disrespect, but as a Christian he felt that he could not bow if by bowing he committed a religious act. He protested that he could not worship before the Rescript, but that he was second to no man in his respect for the Emperor. The excitable students ignored



his defense and spread their story among the general public. Uchimura had to resign. Uemura Masahisa and others wrote an article for publication in the Christian *Fukuin Shimpō* entitled "An Open Letter on the Case of Lese Majesty." The government banned distribution of this issue of *Fukuin Shimpō*.

Similar cases occurred in other parts of Japan. This is a newspaper article discussing one such case:

It is rumored that one student in a primary school, while looking at the Emperor's picture, said, "What's this?" and struck it with his fan. A teacher immediately called him aside. When asked the reason for his conduct, he replied haughtily, "I did this because an evangelist has told me to revere nothing else but God." The student had to leave school because of the ensuing uproar.

According to reliable research, the facts of this incident were very simple. The picture of the Emperor had been placed for safe-keeping in a box high on one of the classroom walls, and a sparrow had constructed a nest on top of the box. One student clapped his fan against his hand in order to frighten the sparrow away. Another student secretly reported this as an act of disloyalty. The gratuitous inclusion of a reference to Christianity betrays the reactionary origin of this article.

Events of this sort repeatedly appeared as nationalism increased. Christianity once again was considered evil. The climax of this movement was a literary battle which has been called "The Conflict Between Religion and Education."

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The tide of nationalism reached its greatest height after the government had given up Westernism. A number of nationalistic societies had appeared between 1888 and 1891. Even scholars like Fukuzawa Yukichi who had previously stood for democratic rights turned toward reaction. Buddhists, both professional



scholars of Buddhism and laymen, appeared very patriotic when they preached destruction of their competitor, Christianity, as an expression of their concern for Japan's welfare. Inoue Tetsujirō presented this point of view most penetratingly in his article, "The Conflict Between Religion and Education," which appeared in 1893.

The literary battle which this article started grew out of the Uchimura affair. When Christians like Uchimura felt that they were not being understood, their attitude stiffened and they became very critical of their attackers. Uchimura said:

People make me out as disloyal to Japan because I would not worship the Rescript. But how about the shop which sells copies of the Imperial likeness along with unclean pictures? What about the people who solemnly worship a photograph of the Emperor in the morning and join in barbarous feasting in the evening? What about the people who reverently bow before the Rescript and then drink sake together? The sound of it nauseates me.

Uchimura then pursued his critics by asserting that many of them, rather than Christians themselves, were disloyal and disobedient to the spirit of the Rescript. Inoue answered that disloyalty among Buddhists arose from individual failure and was not a shortcoming of Buddhism itself. Disloyalty among Christians, on the other hand, arose not from individual shortcomings but from the perverted teachings within Christianity.

The main points against Christianity in Inoue's "The Conflict Between Religion and Education" follow. First, Christianity was internationalistic: "In a word, the main idea of the Rescript is nationalism; but Christianity is deficient in the nationalistic spirit. . . . Therefore, it is naturally incompatible with the nationalism of the Rescript." Inoue as a scholar had to admit that nationalism had produced the Rescript. But as an apologist for the government, he could not forgive Christianity's internationalism.

The first point led to the second: Christianity preached disloyalty to one's parents and to the state:

Paul's attitude is that one should obey the rulers because they represent God's will. . . . One obeys the rulers because he owes obedience to God. In other words, one does not obey the rulers themselves, but only God. . . . If Christians pay their highest fealty to Paul's opinions, they cannot be loyal to Japan's Emperor.

This statement betrays the government's intention and the reactionary nature of the Rescript.

Christians responded to Inoue's attack with two contradictory points of view. The former was resistance. This resistance demonstrated the elements of internationalism and modern bourgeois ethics in Christianity. It is illustrated by Uchimura's and Uemura's response to Inoue. The latter point of view was a compromise with nationalism stemming from the feeling of national emergency which the Japanese converts had first felt during the Restoration. Manifestations of both these trends can be found throughout Meiji. The former was most prominent during the early years. With increasing oppression from the government, however, the spirit of compromise increased. Before the effects of the Uchimura affair had been felt, most critics had minced no words in their opposition to nationalism.

Within a few years, however, most critics had become more cautious. Takahashi Gorō, for instance, had earlier analyzed Inoue's attack on Christianity as a temporary phase of anti-foreignism and the Oriental inferiority complex which underlay anti-foreignism. But when Takahashi came to the Education Rescript, he avoided criticism and admitted it as a universal system of practical morality. He ended by saying that the Rescript was Japanese customary morality, and so there was no contradiction between it and Christian faith. Inoue did not answer the article because he realized that he had public opinion



on his side. Inoue later reminisced: "Gradually the Christians realized the futility of their opposition under such circumstances and became more like the rest of the Japanese." This change of attitude was reflected in social phenomena and church statistics.

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Before describing the effects of this change on Christianity, it is necessary to look at the economic and political conditions of the period which included the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars.

The First National Diet opened in November, 1890. The Diet was no more than one means by which the conservative government planned to calm troubled political waters. The House of Peers consisted of aristocracy and those who paid high taxes. It functioned as a supervisory organ over the House of Representatives which was directly responsible to public opinion. Control by the House of Peers meant that the bicameral system in Japan had to support the government aims that underlay the Constitution. The Education Rescript distorted the spirit of the Charter Oath and the Imperial Constitution severely qualified the Oath's assurance that "all matters will be decided by public opinion."

The movement for political rights lost none of its vigor in spite of these efforts on the part of the government. During the first Diet session, the minority party fought hard to reduce the budget. The government forced its bill through the Diet over this opposition. The authorities then directly interfered in the second election, held in February, 1892. Provincial officials restricted the activities of opposition candidates, particularly where the opposition had strength. Twenty-four men were killed and four hundred were wounded as a result of this oppression.

The electorate selected one-third of the lower house from among the opposition parties in spite of this interference. In the third Diet session, a bill passed the House of Representatives censuring the government's interference in the election. In



response, the government turned to Itō Hirobumi, the principal author of the Constitution, to form the second cabinet. It apparently planned to compromise with the opposition, hoping to satisfy them with the appearance of constitutional government and treaty reform. The authorities aimed in this way to weaken the opposition and to consolidate their own strength.

Influences of this policy extended into the national economy. The Sino-Japanese War diverted the attention of the common man from his own economic difficulties to external affairs, encouraged patriotism, and squelched discontent. The farmer suffered under terrible taxes and high rents. Large-scale industry ruined household manufacturing which up to then had provided most of the middle class. The owners of small shops had to quit business and to send their workers elsewhere. The samurai lost their class consciousness as their members joined the growing ranks of the impoverished. This increase of poverty caused domestic markets to contract. As a result, the government encouraged the spinning industry, one of Japan's largest industries at the time, to increase the export of cheap goods. The need for markets in turn reminded the government of the need for more armaments and helped persuade them to found military industry.

These economic and social conditions deeply influenced Christian evangelism. One specific example is the difficulties in which the class who had done the early evangelizing—the samurai—suddenly found themselves. Some former samurai had turned to Christianity to improve their position in the new society. Those who had not succeeded were now resigned to their fate and had no interest in Christianity. Later, the graduates from the new schools—the new intelligentsia—would turn to Christianity, but their numbers were still limited. Sufficient time had not yet elapsed for the development of a modern middle-class intelligentsia who would later accept Christianity.

In the Fourth Diet of 1892, the government proposed

increased taxes for military preparation, although it recognized its own serious financial plight. The Diet, representing the voiceless discontent of the public, opposed the measure. Thereafter, the government suspended and dissolved the Diet a number of times. The officials, at their wits' end, decided in 1893 to use the absolute authority of the Emperor:

An Imperial Command ordered the Diet to co-operate with the government, donated one tenth of the Imperial Household revenue, a sum of ¥300,000, for the succeeding six years to the government, and commanded the civil and military bureaucracy to donate one-tenth of their salaries for the construction of warships.

This demonstrates the true ineffectiveness of the Diet. The Imperial prerogative had come to be like a dagger poised over its head.

The Diet's strength decreased every time the government unsheathed this dagger, and the government itself became increasingly autocratic. The Sino-Japanese War broke out over control of Korea just as the government had completed its plans for imperialistic expansion. The government succeeded in its great gamble with a series of victories over the Ch'ing government of China. The people suffered no direct loss and forgot their troubles in exaltation over the military victories, just as the government had hoped they would. The people began to revel in the superiority feelings of the "Greater Japanese Empire." The inferiority complex toward other nations disappeared with Japanese military successes. The people were told that war was very profitable because of the great reparations which Japan had received.

In April, 1895, Russia, Germany, and France intervened to demand the retrocession of the Liaotung Peninsula to China after the peace treaty had awarded it to Japan. This hurt the people's pride. A superiority complex, when suppressed, increases



within the individual. In this case, the Japanese considered retrocession of Liaotung a national shame. The government used this feeling of shame as an excuse for increasing armaments.

At the end of the war, a consciousness of the gulf separating classes had started to develop. This appeared clearly in the facts of everyday life, as one contemporary observed: "Look at the increase in industry, at new factory construction, at the increase in day laborers; and look at increased military preparations, at increased taxes, at increased commodity prices, and at the poverty of the indigent." The government disregarded the undeveloped state of the Japanese economy and impeded the development of a new middle class by taxing labor unduly. The middle class which has been the usual seedbed for Christianity increased only in proportion to the growth of the population. To grow further, Christianity had to spread beyond its middle-class orientation. At the same time, the social inequities brought on by the changed economic situation challenged Christians to obey their tenets about the equality of man and to aid the impoverished laboring class. It is not at all strange that many Christians joined the early socialist movement.

Kozaki Hiromichi summed up how the social milieu at the time of the Sino-Japanese War affected the Christian churches with the following words:

As a result of this war, the people's attention turned completely away from religion. In the years preceding and following it, Christianity made less progress than ever before. Popular self-confidence increased, and faith in the Western nations, and particularly their missionaries, decreased after the triple intervention over Liaotung. Those who before the war had considered Christianity the religion of superior nations no longer recognized it as such after the war. Some of them even became anti-foreign. Many factors directly and indirectly hindered evangelism.

Here are some figures which support this statement. Table



2 gives statistics for The Church of Christ in Japan (Presbyterian) covering the period from October, 1890, to December, 1900. The number of church members did not increase markedly. The number of churches actually decreased. The increase in evangelistic stations probably indicates that the churches were unsuccessfully increasing their evangelism. The constant number of baptisms is probably due to the continuing interest in Western studies and the fact that most believers entered Christianity through Western Learning. However, each year the number of apostates was more than half the number of baptisms, a great increase over the previous period. The total number of Christians declined slightly. This decrease was as small as it was because the core of the churches retained their already well established faith. The steady increase in church income reflects the bettering financial conditions of the Christian community. These figures and similar ones from other denominations lead one to inquire whether the difficulties of Christian evangelism were not due in part to the fact that the Christian community did not expand beyond its own class. Another result was a great reduction in the number of students entering Christian schools. Meiji Gakuin had a number of famous teachers like Dr. Hepburn, as well as "large grounds, a four-story dormitory, and a three-story lecture hall." Even these could not exempt it from the general trend. During the seven years following 1894, its junior college division graduated only nine students, and its high school division only twenty-nine.

The weaker members of the Christian community could not escape the general drift toward nationalism. During the Russo-Japanese war, a number of Japanese became pacifists. Uchimura Kanzō was best known. The majority of the churches, however, followed the spirit of the times to support the war.

TABLE 2: THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN JAPAN: 1891-1900

YEAR NUMBER OF	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	TOTAL
Churches	73	72	72	72	71	70	71	69	71	71	
Evangelistic Stations	38	58	76	79	85	103	102	110	109	109	
Ministers	58	65	75	75	75	80	78	112	135	103	
Evangelists	88	103	113	113	115	125	113	111	108	91	
Baptisms	748	885	1,296	701	494	845	683	780	758	675	7,770
Apostates	301	474	734	503	—	321	—	693	481	288	3,795
Church Members	11,253	10,862	11,118	10,787	11,064	11,324	11,131	10,609	10,849	11,117	
Yen Contributed	16,628	17,434	24,697	16,223	15,468	17,602	20,463	22,014	28,788	39,897	219,214

## 2. NATIONALISM AND DISSENSION AMONG THE CHRISTIANS

The new nationalism also appeared within Christianity. One expression of it was the drive for Japanese control of the churches. The Congregational Church had demonstrated its desire concretely by refusing further financial aid and declaring its independence from the American Board in 1894. The other churches followed its example after the new nationalism set in.

An exaggerated fear of public opinion accompanied this nationalism. One victim of this fear was a minister named Tamura Naoomi. Tamura had been graduated from one of the early Christian academies and had proved himself very capable in developing Sunday Schools. He had subsequently studied in America, returning in 1886 at the height of interest in things Western. He utilized his American experience to take advantage of this interest. The element most needed to bring Japan abreast of the great powers, he thought, was equality of the sexes. His work on this subject, *The American Woman*, compared the position of women in the Western World with that of their sisters in Japan and showed up the shortcomings of the Japanese family system. The public received his opinions very well during the period of Westernism, but, in the reaction that followed, he was finally dismissed because of these same ideas. In 1892 when Tamura was in America again, he published a book in English entitled *The Japanese Bride*. It was based on his former work and attacked Japan's feudal family system. Tamura felt that he should state the truth even if it did not agree with the political temperament of the day. Others felt, however, that he exaggerated the facts to the shame of Japan. Secular newspapers, looking for faults in Christianity, criticized his lack of patriotism. Christian publications, responding to the changing currents of opinion, joined them. The *Fukuin Shimpō* criticized Tamura for not knowing "the true character of American women," and for destroying the "beautiful customs



of Japan." The majority of the churches banded together to force Tamura's resignation, though many individuals criticized this excess. Christianity should have moulded social thought rather than follow it. *The People's Friend* (Kokumin no Tomo), a famous liberal magazine, commented:

If we are to call a man a traitor for nothing more than writing *The Japanese Bride*, then the Japanese world of letters is indeed very restricted. . . . We cannot support Tamura's dismissal. *The Christian Church should not truckle to an extreme and narrow patriotism*; rather it should show its own magnanimity.

The Congregational Church and Dōshisha provide additional examples of this changing attitude. Nationalistic strains were strong in Congregationalism because of its many leaders who had come from the Kumamoto Band. The Congregational Church's confession of faith adopted in 1891 and its evangelical policy announced in 1895 contained phrases which reflected the trend toward traditional Japanese thinking. Individual members were also known for their criticism of missionaries. One of these members famous for his criticism complained that with the passage of time the quality of missionaries was falling and that many missionaries needlessly confused the Japanese by not understanding their ways: "Missionaries to Japan should make the values of patriotic Japanese their own. . . . They should never force people of other countries to adopt their own customs." He recognized the achievements of mission education, but he felt that its sudden relapse after the failure of treaty reform indicated its real weakness: "Missionary education has been primarily a means of evangelism. Therefore, missionaries have frequently failed to provide good education. Japanese Christians should reject such assistance from foreign mission boards and missionaries."

The Dōshisha affair arose from these same two factors: the conservatism reappearing throughout the society and the nationalism

of the Kumamoto Band. Niijima Jō, a graduate of Amherst College with many friends abroad, had himself been the tenuous link between the mission and Dōshisha. Niijima's death in 1883 severed this link just when Dōshisha was engaged in a drive to achieve the status of university. Members of the Kumamoto Band in Dōshisha took over its direction. But the mission boards and friends abroad had donated money on the basis of confidence in Niijima alone; with the change in administration, they lost their point of contact. The new administration adopted a rather liberal interpretation of theology and doctrine. They planned to include elements in the curriculum more attractive to Japanese students as a means of increasing their enrollment. They also tried to lessen the influence which the foreign teachers had in policy. Neither the mission boards nor the missionaries understood the difficulties of the new administration. They increased these difficulties by their groundless suspicion. The new president invited Captain Janes, the man who had converted the members of the Kumamoto Band, to speak at Dōshisha. This precipitated an open break. Janes's lecture completely accepted contemporary liberal trends in Western thinking which were known as the "new theology." The main characteristics of this theology were its denial of the literal truth of all statements in the Bible and its tolerance of religious traditions other than Christianity. Janes's point of view angered the very orthodox missionaries who censured the administration for allowing Janes to speak.

In actual fact, very few of the teachers were foreign, and the yearly stipend from the mission board amounted to only ¥2,700. Therefore, many people felt it wise to sever relations with the mission board and to widen the scope of Christian education in an attempt to attract more students. In 1896, Dōshisha founded its middle school. At this time it struck out on a radically new policy. It gave up the Bible as its text for moral education and accepted the resignation of foreign teachers. The school continued to decline, and in 1897, another new president was



elected. This president, Yokoi Tokio, proposed to remove the clause that Dōshisha was "founded on Christian morals" from the charter. He hoped that this change would gain draft deferment for Dōshisha's students and thus encourage applicants for enrollment. The government education regulations placed schools which provided religiously oriented education in a special category which did not grant their students draft exemption. To delete the clause which referred to Christian morals from the charter would mean that Dōshisha was no longer true to the ideals for which it had been founded. The proposed amendment was dropped when it became clear that the Japanese Christian community as a whole and the missionaries opposed it.

Most Christians at the time of the Sino-Japanese War agreed with the government's policy. The Japanese were still unacquainted with the tragedy of modern war, and the government had not yet bared its territorial ambitions. Therefore, there were no Christian pacifists as there were during the Russo-Japanese War. Uchimura Kanzō, later to become one of the most famous of these pacifists, actively supported the government. His attitude, expressed in his own English for a foreign audience, was typical of Christians:

Depreciate not the divine humanity by denying it altogether a nobler motive than the love of gain.... We believe that the Corean War now opened between Japan and China to be such a war,—I mean, a *righteous war*. Righteous we say, not only in legal sense,...but righteous in moral sense as well.... China behaved against us, now for more than a score of years, as unneighborly and insolently as we have ever been able to bear in our history.

The Christians made a righteous war their ideal. On the dawn of victory, Uchimura said, "Love is the best political policy.... Our military prowess wells out of great mercy;" the Japanese should forget their hatred of the enemy and take



compassion on him. But what did the government and people in general, as opposed to Uchimura, think? Victorious Japan received a large reparation from China. The government disclosed its imperialist aims by demanding territory, and the people, forgetting their war casualties, became proud. Uchimura realized his mistake: "A 'righteous war' has changed into a *piratic* war somewhat, and a prophet who wrote its 'justification' is now in shame." Some Christians agreed with Uchimura. But many other Christians who had not personally experienced the sorrows of war joined the rest of the Japanese in heady exaltation. Christians were still easily influenced by public opinion. Even the pro-war majority, however, acted from the purest of motives and more than compensated for their support of the war by their activities on behalf of those who had been harmed by the war.

The various churches established a committee to console the wounded, encourage the troops, and pray for victory. The opinions of the chairman of this committee, Honda Yōichi, represent Christian thinking in general. This outline of a wartime speech delivered before Japanese troops illustrates his position:

God is assisting Japan and particularly the Emperor. Christian doctrine is to sacrifice one's own life for others; the code of a military man is the same. Military men must be particularly virtuous in order that they may be pure sacrifices. The soul is immortal; soldiers need not fear.

Like Uchimura, Honda considered this war to be a righteous war. He also took for granted that Japanese should sacrifice their lives for their country. But the phrase, "for the benefit of the Emperor," which he used gives rise to doubts. Righteous wars are those which man fights at God's behest. Is there really such a thing as a righteous war in the present world? Is not the struggle against war the only really righteous war? Later opposition to war itself arose because this war had been fought

"for the benefit of the Emperor." This opposition expressed itself at the time of the Russo-Japanese War.

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New theological currents in the West also influenced Japan. As theological thinking advanced, the Japanese ceased to believe in the infallibility of the scriptures as they had been taught to believe. Theological disputes developed as a natural result.

A tremendous emotional experience rather than theological struggle had led to the conversions of the first Christians. Christians were few and, partially as a result, they concentrated on evangelism. They had no time to argue among themselves. Many Christian doctrines such as the immaculate conception, the trinity, and the creation, however, troubled thinking men. Scientific thinking and the logical analysis of doctrine derived from it strengthened these doubts. The theories of evolution and comparative religion which entered Japan in the eighteenthies forced the young Christians into a period of reflection. Christianity had to muster all its resources to answer the questions raised by these ideas. There were no harmful long-term effects, however, and the intellectual ferment caused by the ideas led to the first systematic Christian thought in Japan.

Man cannot long retain a religious faith about which he has reservations. Strength derived from conviction yields him impervious to attack. But any faith totters before doubts which well up within the individual himself. The Japanese Christians now found themselves in such a position. On the one hand, fiery revivals bred a faith which did not yield to attacks either religious or scientific. On the other hand, the Christians, eager for intellectual development, avidly read imported books and attended lecture meetings until they found themselves torn by inner doubts. The *Fukuin Shimpō* described this condition as follows:

Most religious faith today results from study rather than from



personal experience.... It is much more the consequence of intellectual processes than is the faith in Western countries.... Strong counter-arguments easily shake such intellectual faith.

The churches longed for theological discussion. They had become dissatisfied with American orthodoxy. They turned to the comparatively free interpretations of European theology which were introduced to Japan by the German Universal Evangelical Mission. Unitarianism with its tradition of British deism and liberal American theology followed shortly afterward. Its claim that the Bible was the work of man rather than the word of God satisfied the intellectualism of Meiji Christians. Aoki Shūzō, while the Minister to Germany, became interested in the Universal Evangelical Church. After he returned home, he helped to call a missionary, W. Spinner, to Japan in 1885. The Japanese did not yet understand the new philosophy and so treated Spinner with particular respect. They invited him to speak frequently, particularly in the large and influential churches. He opened a Bible class among his students and trained evangelists in his way of thinking. In 1887, he founded a church which was to minister particularly to students and intellectuals. Many students accepted the liberal theology. The orthodox churches responded by calling the liberal theology "destructive." This only spurred the students on.

A scholar newly returned from Europe wrote that Unitarian doctrine was more rational and less mystic than orthodox belief, and that, therefore, it was more suited to the Japanese mind. A Unitarian missionary named Knapp said in 1887 that the only faith for the intellectual was Unitarianism which "absolutely denied that Christ was the son of God in any sense other than that all men are the sons of God." Fukuzawa Yukichi who was known for his opposition to Christianity apparently approved of this speech, for he reviewed it in a newspaper article. Unitarianism gripped the hearts of the intellectuals. Knapp, observing this, reported to the Boston General Meeting of



Unitarians in 1889 that Unitarianism was destined to become the Christianity of Japan. He suggested the following remedy for the fact that evangelization of the other denominations was not flourishing, particularly among "upper class Japanese, scholars, and well-known figures:"

First, we should follow the Japanese proverb, "By capturing one general you can get a thousand men." We should concentrate on upper-class Japanese and leaders. The second point derives from the first. Many Japanese leaders are men of action and businessmen. We must also act practically and strive after practical results. Third, and most important for evangelism in Japan, we must *fit in with the Japanese national character*. The Japanese never want to feel that they are using imported ideas. Therefore, it is necessary to concur with Japanese patriotism and nationalism.

Knapp correctly analyzed two other points. The first was that most of the scholars, intellectuals, and government men—the so-called upper classes—were interested in Christianity only as a matter of convenience. The second was that the authoritarian doctrinal education provided by the other missionaries was building up inflexible attitudes and presenting them as the only possible Christian interpretation.

Unitarianism and free theology did not flourish as Knapp had predicted because he recognized only the negative fact that the other denominations were failing and did not get down to the bases of this failure. The non-Christian intellectuals who had shown interest in free theology were only curious about a rational interpretation of doctrine. They had no interest in the faith itself. The upper classes were basically not religious and, in any event, they formed only a small part of the total population. Finally, the reason for orthodox Christianity's inactivity was not merely that its dogma was behind the time. It was that the middle class which forms the backbone of Protestant

Christianity was not yet expanding fast enough, and so evangelism had reached the saturation point. Knapp overlooked this very important fact. The greatest failing of Unitarian evangelism, however, was that it aimed *only at the old intellectual class, and forgot to serve the people*. Many scholars joined the Universal Evangelical Church, the Unitarians, and the Universalists; one even became Education Minister. But all churches which accepted the free theology emphasized religious lectures rather than experience in faith. The average man, hungering for faith, found little to help him.

Theological thinking divided into two schools as a result of the new Unitarian interpretation. This argument over theology became an important factor in the decline of Christianity in the nineties.

In 1889, Kozaki Hiromichi brought forth a defense of the Bible to answer the doubts which the new theology was breeding among the students. He called his interpretation of the Bible the "inspiration theory." He knew the foolishness of ignoring the new theology and higher criticism, and so he tried to use them. He agreed in general with the historical development of the Bible as expounded in higher criticism. "The authors of the Bible wrote under the grace of the holy spirit which inspired their reason, emotions, and intelligence. Therefore, the thoughts expressed in the Bible do not transcend those of humans." But to the extent that it was written under God's inspiration, Kozaki continued, we should revere the Bible as the irrefutable standard for morals and faith. Kozaki emphasized an ethical interpretation which urged men to seek God's will directly and to govern their deeds in accordance with it. In the ensuing debate, some missionaries and members of Kozaki's own denomination branded this opinion as heretic. At this time, Kanamori Tsūrin and Yokoi Tokio sided with the missionaries instead of Kozaki, but they gradually changed their opinions. In 1891, Kanamori joined the camp of the new theology.



Yokoi Tokio followed him in 1894:

We can never know the true first principle. God appears in everything. . . . But we must not depart in the final analysis from the position that man is human. . . . We must base what we revere to be God or believe to be God on our moral sensibilities as humans.

It has already been shown that Yokoi had earlier proposed to lessen Christian influence in Dōshisha. The faith of many other believers was shaken when these two outstanding theologians lost their faith and left Christianity.

A well-known Christian layman requested that Kanamori and Yokoi assist the church in its hour of need:

Will you please stop frittering away your time with theological abstractions and doctrinal battles which can be of no consequence? The people of Japan are starving for the gospel. . . . Think of how best you can do practical evangelism. . . . The greatest failing of Oriental religion is its emphasis on controversy at the expense of practical effort.

From its beginning in Japan, Protestantism had had three main schools of thought. The debate over the new theology brought on a clear definition of the differences between these three schools. The first was led by Uemura Masahisa whom Ebina Danjō had characterized as "ecclesiastical and spiritual." This, the largest of the three groups, furnished leadership for most of the Christians in Japan and was the most similar to Christianity in the West. The second school was the Bible-centered group founded by Uchimura Kanzō which Ebina had described as "spiritual and individualistic." It attacked the new theology and believed firmly in Biblical revelation. Its stubborn adherence to its own interpretation of Christianity often invited criticism from non-Christian society. The third school was



Ebina's own "national-spiritual" interpretation. This tried to use the breadth of interpretation afforded by the new theology to make Christianity, instead of Buddhism and Shinto, the pillar of Japanese nationalism. For most Christians including Ebina, however, Unitarianism itself was too liberal. Ebina made this distinction: "Intellectually I can almost completely agree with Unitarianism and free theology. But in terms of emotions, religious experience, and ethical motivation, I find it very difficult to agree with them."

Traditional Christianity considered Unitarianism a dangerous and alien element. The rift between orthodox theology and Unitarian thinking, however, stimulated other theological thinking. Its violent disputes matured Japanese Christianity intellectually. A spirit of Christian nationalism accompanied the introduction of the new theology. The group that accepted this nationalism and new theology, the third group mentioned above, met stiff resistance from the rest of the Christians.

Traditional theologians did not compromise doctrinally with nationalism because of the large number of Biblicists among them. The width of doctrinal interpretation offered by the new theology, however, enabled non-Christian elements to enter Christianity. Ebina Danjō went so far as to identify the Shinto god of creation, Ame-no-Minakanushi-no-Kami, with Jehovah. He concluded that Christianity was nothing more than the religious development of the Japanese spirit. Christianity had to prepare for a direct encounter with nationalism in order to rid itself of this compromise and to clarify the difference between the simple Shinto ancestral gods and the Christian God. Ōnishi Hajime, a professor of philosophy at Waseda, described these conditions early in the eighteen-nineties as follows:

Some people who make quick decisions say that a great change is taking place in Japanese Christianity. This is not the case; the majority of Christians maintain their traditional faith and customs. There is some truth, however, in what

these people say: new ways of thinking have appeared among one group of Christians.

Most people see only the theological aspect of these new ideas, but they really spring from two sources. The first source is progressive theology, and the second is a desire for greater Japanese cultural independence. Some people emphasize the first and some the second, but both are always present within the new thinking. One comes from the desire for knowledge, and the other comes from national self-consciousness. It is easy to see why they appear together in the new thinking. The Japanese want to make these new ideas appear peculiarly Japanese when they take them over. They are not satisfied with orthodox theology which naturally is Western dominated but want to adopt and use the new theology. The two elements—progressive theology and cultural independence—bear a close relationship to each other and will form the basis for new Christian thinking in Japan.

Ebina Danjō was not a nationalist in the jingoistic sense of the word. But the nationalistic strains in his patriotism influenced him to favor Japanese Christianity in order to make it comprehensible to as many Japanese as possible. Other Christian leaders, for similar reasons, attempted to fuse Christianity with Buddhism and Confucianism.

During the years 1901-2, Uemura Masahisa carried on a spirited debate with Ebina on the subjects of the new theology and nationalism. Both used magazines which they edited: Uemura appeared in *Fukuin Shimpō* and Ebina in *New Man*. These doctrinal debates educated the Christians in the essentials of their faith and the necessary measures for further evangelization.

This debate resulted in a new determination to evangelize which eclipsed the various arguments. The Japan Evangelical Union (Nihon Fukuin Dōmeikai) had existed since 1878 as a liaison organization between the main denominations in Japan. Its twelfth general meeting, held right after the end of the



great Uemura-Ebina debate in April, 1902, decided on the following basic principle for Christian evangelization: "We believe our Lord Jesus Christ was God, who came into the world for the salvation of man; and we believe in the Bible as the perfect standard for faith and action." Only after the adoption of this resolution could the denominations again plan co-ordinated evangelical drives.

Ebina later modified his views so that they agreed with the above decision. His debate with Uemura proved to have been a necessary trial for strengthening the church: Uchigasaki Sakusaburō, a famous Unitarian, said that although Uemura and Ebina appeared to be enemies, "they agreed basically; the Christian spirit of love undergirded both their positions." By the power of this love, they turned to good advantage the harm done by the new theology and did not sell out the church to the forces of nationalism.

The new theology also affected social thinking. In Europe, capitalism was entering the highest stage of development. The rift between the rich and the poor had grown wider in proportion to the tremendous increase in capital. Christian socialism and the Social Gospel appeared in the West in response to these inequalities and came to Japan with the new theology.

During the middle nineties, Abe Isoo, Murai Tomonori, and others studied in the United States and then returned to churches in Japan. Here they broke with traditional theology, gave up their pastorates, and concentrated on the new theology and socialism. Their spirit of philanthropy developed into Christian socialism. This Christian socialism sent many leaders into the labor movement in late Meiji. It is described more in detail later. Suffice it to say here that Christian socialism entered Japan through the medium of the new theology.

Aside from its influence on socialism, the new theology did not have many lasting effects. Its denominations succeeded in winning converts only among a small group of intellectuals. As late as 1925, it had less than ten clergymen and something



over five hundred members. Thus, Unitarianism had spiritual and intellectual influences but practically no strength as an organization.

### 3. NEW VITALITY

This section covers two fields in which Christianity showed great vitality in spite of government pressure: education and social reform.

The unequal treaties were finally amended in 1899. Missionaries were no longer confined to the port cities but could reside any place in Japan. Nationalists feared that this would enable Christianity to spread through the whole nation. Inoue Tetsujirō and Katō Hiroyuki abetted this fear among the educated classes with their writings. One of the Christian members of the Diet, Ebara Soroku, explains Diet attitudes at this time in the following words:

One person made the following motion: "Foreigners will come in as soon as the treaties have been revised. That cannot be stopped; what we must consider now is the spread of Christianity. Officials and people alike must guard against it with all their might. The Constitution forbids that we close the churches. Since the adult Christians are fools, we can ignore them; *what is really dangerous is to have the young people go to church.* We should forbid the foreigners permission to build new schools and keep those already built from expanding. In addition we should forbid any religious ceremonies within the school buildings." . . . Almost the entire Diet favored his motion. I stated that these proceedings worried me. I said that if they loosely specified religion instead of naming Christianity specifically, the educational authorities would mistakenly interpret it to mean that religion in general was harmful to education. . . . Thus, Japan would become irreligious, completely apart from the original

intention of the law.... This changed the attitude of the Diet so that they turned down the motion the same evening.

For a while, it appeared that Ebara's strategy had succeeded, but finally the Diet passed a bill stating that "private schools can neither hold religious services nor offer religious education .... without government permission." Public opinion opposed this bill, and the Privy Council, recognizing that the Diet had gone too far, vetoed it. The Education Minister, however, in spite of the veto, published it as a directive of the Education Ministry the following day. This was the famous Directive Twelve.

This unexpected blow greatly hurt the Christian schools. In August, 1899, six of them met to plot counter-moves. They sent their conclusions to all other Christian schools. The statement said in part:

The attitude of the Education Ministry restricts the freedom of parents to select the type of education they want for their children. It thus conflicts with the spirit of the Constitution. ... Take a firm stand on this issue. Do not compromise Christianity either by applying for special permission or by obeying the regulation.

The schools had a definite choice. If they taught religion, their students would lose privileges granted other students. These privileges included draft deferment and the possibility of entering government higher schools. To continue to teach religion would mean a sharp drop in applications for admission, particularly from men. The schools reacted variously: some gave up religious education while others determined to continue courses in religion as long as they had any students. Missionaries did not come flocking into the country, however, as the authorities had expected they would. The Education Ministry, therefore, returned the special privileges, even to the schools



which taught religion, in 1901.

Beginning at this time, standards in government schools passed and remained ahead of those in the Christian schools. Christian schools boasted that their students enjoyed the same rights as those in government schools. These claims were not effective, however, before the obvious fact that the government schools were better.

The government did not plan to confine its control of Christianity to education. As concern over foreigners residing inland mounted, the authorities began to request laws regulating Christianity as a religious organization. The laws they envisaged would be similar to those governing Buddhism and Shinto. The Home Ministry, at about the same time the Education Ministry issued Directive Twelve, circulated another regulation in draft form to the various religious organizations. This regulation proposed control over the construction of churches and the licensing of ministers. It also proposed that Christianity be treated on the same basis as other religions. As a result, Christians offered very little opposition. Buddhist opposition, however, defeated the proposal. The Buddhists felt that such public recognition of Christianity would give it an undue advantage in evangelization.

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During Meiji, Christianity had more converts among young people than any other religion. Directive Twelve indicates the government's alarm at the way Christianity had influenced these youths. As evangelism began to lag in the nineties, Christian leaders decided on youth as the most profitable field for evangelization; the religion which concentrated on youth would win.

One of the most conspicuous fields of work was the Young Men's Christian Association. As students turned to Christianity, the YMCA grew and faced the problem of bringing together representatives from its branches to plan further expansion. Its members also demanded that the Japanese YMCA join the



YMCA's of other countries in a world organization. The "Y" then initiated yearly summer conferences to help accomplish these ends.

In June, 1889, L. D. Wishart, the International Committee Secretary of the YMCA, arrived to open the first summer conference at Dōshisha. Over five hundred students from schools throughout Japan attended. These conferences continued for four or five years with great vigor. Their students included Yamamuro Gumpei, later to become famous as the Japanese chief of the Salvation Army, and Shimazaki Tōson, one of Japan's most famous modern novelists. Shimazaki reported his intense excitement at these meetings "as his cheeks first flushed and then turned cold." Interest in the conferences gradually fell off as concern for Christianity lessened and international relations became strained. In 1903, only 170 persons attended.

Although interest in the summer conferences lessened, the Student YMCA movement increased in strength. This organization resembled the other YMCA's except that its members were all university students. The pioneer organization from which it developed had started in 1883 under the direction of Uchimura Kanzō, Kanda Naibu, and others. John R. Mott assisted personally in organizing it officially as part of the World YMCA in 1895. Twelve years later, it attracted world attention by acting as host to the international conference of Student YMCA's. Its members included many men who later became famous in education and scholarship.

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Sunday Schools were another aspect of flourishing Christian activity. They developed greatly from the early nineties in spite of the fact that the churches in general did not grow. Table 3 on the following page presents this fact graphically. One reason for the success is that these schools provided training other religions did not offer. The other reason is that they provided convenient education for the children of the middle and

TABLE 3:  
INCREASE IN SUNDAY SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP

1881	(PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ALONE)		
Churches:	25		
Teachers:	89	(67 men and 22 women)	
Students:	838		
1888	(ALL PROTESTANT CHURCHES)		
Churches:	212		
Sunday Schools:	272		
Students:	12,559		
1898	(ALL PROTESTANT CHURCHES)		
Churches:	885		
Sunday Schools:	901		
Students:	35,033		

intellectual classes at a time when education was not yet universal. Sunday Schools became models of practical spiritual education for children. The number of students attending schools and the desire of the parents that these children increase their ability grew together. Sunday School attendance went up as a consequence. Toward the end of the century, regional Sunday School unions developed to increase evangelism and to combat increasing nationalism. For the first time, the Sunday Schools became well enough organized to act effectively as training centers for future Christians.

In 1906, the World Sunday School Association sent F. Brown to assist the Sunday School movement in Japan. As a result of his visit, it was decided to organize the Japanese Sunday School Association and to make it part of the international group. The first general meeting in May, 1907, drew up regulations and officially started the organization. The orderly development which began at that time has continued to this day.



The Buddhists also showed great interest in the development of Christian Sunday Schools. One pastor said that in the nineties: "The development of Sunday Schools drew much more attention from the Buddhists than it did from the Christians. For almost three years, priests came regularly to observe my Sunday School. Christians showed no such enthusiasm."

Why did not church members increase as the size of these youth organizations increased? The main reason is that graduates of Sunday Schools and youth groups did not go on to become Christians. Christian methods for training youth attracted attention because of their novelty or superiority. Most students used the educational facilities and then blended in with the rest of non-Christian society. Some actively tried to forget Christianity since it might hinder their worldly success. Others never passed beyond considering it "Western Learning." One minister said:

Do students generally become Christians? Unfortunately we cannot say that they all do. . . . Graduates of Christian schools usually are indifferent toward the churches. Even those who become Christians as students do not identify themselves with it after they have been graduated. This has led to the development of the phrase "student Christian." . . . Because they have tired of Christianity in school, we cannot approach them later. . . .

Christian educational institutions flourished because of Christianity's exotic flavor, the attraction of Western Learning, and the fact that these schools provided one source of cheap and convenient primary education for the middle class. The salaried classes, to some extent, were using Christianity as an aid to their own ambition.

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The increased social cleavage that accompanied the Sino-Japanese War has already been discussed. Some among the



Christians were searching for the basic causes of this cleavage.

While the feudal family and the system of apprentice labor were still strong, Christianity was content to offer spiritual consolation to stragglers in this society. As the number of poor increased with the development of capitalism, however, stopgap measures could no longer allay the poverty. Many Christian humanitarians felt a responsibility for assisting these unfortunates. Some of these humanitarians became socialists and actively engaged in political opposition to the government. Others resisted the government oppression passively and did charitable works within the limits of the law. Both groups were necessary: those who concentrated on the eventual complete overhaul of society, and those who treated specific and limited cases of poverty. As might have been expected, many Christians were in the first group. Specific works of charity are discussed in this chapter. The question of Christian socialism is taken up in a later chapter.

**Orphanages and nurseries for children** were one important aspect of charitable work. Many of these originally opened to aid the victims of natural calamities.

The most famous orphanages established in Meiji are the Okayama Orphanage founded in 1887 by Ishii Jūji, the *Gyōseien* founded in 1888 by Hongō Sadajirō, and the *Hakuaisha* founded in 1890 by Kobashi Katsunosuke. At one time, the Okayama Orphanage housed over twelve hundred children. The work of all these orphanages in alleviating suffering has served countless children. The people who founded these institutions all made something out of nothing. Hongō joined his children in breaking new land for cultivation. The work was made harder because they could not even afford proper tools. Ishii, when in severe need, prayed and fasted until given the means to continue. Many, like Kobashi and Hongō, died young.

The advancement of capitalism always harms the family system. Children of the poor often have to fend for themselves. Nurseries became necessary as capitalism progressed in Japan. During

Meiji, there were only eleven nurseries, but Christians founded six out of these eleven.

**Medical work** continued to be a part of Christian service. As the poor became more numerous, the scanty medical services available to them became even less adequate. Religious organizations at first concentrated on general medical treatment in order to alleviate this need. Later they turned to removing such causes of disease as overwork and bad living conditions. The missionaries established many hospitals as well as excellent tuberculosis sanatoria and leprosaria. The development of these large co-operative organizations to replace work by single medical missionaries and the transfer of administration from missionaries to Japanese characterized Christian medical work in late Meiji.

**Movements against social evil** paralleled their counterparts in the United States. Japanese Christianity had included an active prohibition and anti-prostitution element almost from its inception. These movements did not gain momentum, however, until Christianity acquired greater strength. A missionary living in Nagoya, U. B. Murphy, gave new impetus to the movement against organized prostitution in 1900. Murphy hoped to gain for the girls the right to leave their profession if they wanted to. The proprietors of brothels took the issue to court to protect their business. Kozaki Hiromichi organized an anti-prostitution league to develop public opinion in support of Murphy, and the Salvation Army assisted with all its forces. A number of non-Christian socialists also assisted the campaign, but Christians supplied the leadership. The Salvation Army went beyond asking for the right of free decision; it encouraged the complete abolition of prostitution. In 1900, it opened a home for girls and assisted those who had left prostitution to find other jobs. This movement did not have any appreciable effects. Prostitution cannot be completely eliminated unless the basic structure of society is changed.

**The Salvation Army** arrived in Japan in 1895. Christianity



up to that time had emphasized faith alone: "If the soul is saved, the body can save itself." But the Salvation Army believed that "to succeed in saving the souls of the poor, one must also care for their bodies." The founder of the Salvation Army, William Booth, said, while working in the slums of London in 1865, that "one-third of all the people in England would not be able to live one week without the assistance of charity." Japan, in economic difficulties after two wars, approximated this state. Labor conditions were pitiful, and strikes, though disorganized, were frequent. Talk about the soul by itself could not solve these conditions. The Salvation Army arose to answer the demands of the poor. Its regulations included the following statements: "1. If people are poor because they are bad, reform them. 2. If people are poor because of their environment, reform the environment." Their practical work extended to cheap lodgings, low-cost restaurants, industrial training centers, and employment offices, as well as homes and hospitals for women. Their concern for the living conditions of those who became Christians gave them entree among the poor who were very wary of other evangelists.

There were fourteen in the first group of Salvation Army missionaries. They bought a Japanese home in Tokyo for their headquarters and began their work wearing Japanese clothes to conform with local customs. They amazed Tokyoites by playing musical instruments on street corners and by singing militant hymns. The Buddhists feared their power and tried to hinder it by spreading rumors that the Army's members were insane: "Ah, this idiotic religion has come to Japan. Can we stand silently by while this happens? It is highly improper to enter a foreign country with a military organization like that." This only increased public curiosity; many attended the evangelical meetings and applied for admission to the Army. Yamamuro Gumpei, who later became Lieutenant General and head of the Salvation Army in Japan, entered it at this time. The first large-scale activity of the Army was the anti-prostitution drive mentioned



earlier. Some people greatly admired the Army because its members did not resist the attacks by the pimps and ruffians the brothels hired but quietly retired, later to return again. Others who did not understand the Army thought it a part of "the Socialist Party." By 1900, however, the Army had twenty-one platoons, seventy-six officers and a publication, *War Cry*, with a circulation of 10,600. In 1907, the General-in-Chief, William Booth, visited Japan and had an interview with the Emperor. This greatly improved the reputation of the Army. The increasing gap between social classes brought on by the two wars indicated the need for the Salvation Army. The best symbol of this need was the copper poisoning caused by the Ashio copper mine near Nikko.

**The Ashio Copper Mine Scandal** shocked many Christians in addition to those in the Salvation Army. In 1897, the public learned that poisonous refuse from this mine was laying waste a whole river valley and ruining the farmers. The socialists attacked the large-scale capital which operated the mine. Many Christians agreed with the position of the socialists. Almost all the leading Christians joined in lecture tours, trips to examine the extent of the damage, and attempts at a solution. This ability to criticize the government indicates that Christianity had not yet lost its vitality. Its fervor at this time was one of its last acts in opposition to the growing tides of nationalism.

## *Chapter Four*

### THE PERIOD OF STABILITY

(1901—1912)

#### 1. PLANS FOR REVITALIZING THE CHURCH

AS was stated in the last chapter, the vitality of the church ebbed between 1891 and 1900. But Table 4 which covers the first decade of the twentieth century shows increases in all categories except the number of churches. The churches decreased because of mergers and consolidations. The number of believers, however, almost doubled. This chapter describes how this new activity emerged from the stagnation of the late nineties.

By 1899, Japan had succeeded in its drive for Westernization. It had defeated China. The treaties had been revised to give Japanese rights equal to those of foreigners. Japan had passed through the industrial revolution and had amassed enough capital to afford large-scale military outlay. Manufacturing was shifting from cottage industry to factory production. But the Sino-Japanese War had been no more than a fight between Asian states. Japan could not be recognized as a major power by this victory. The Triple Intervention in Manchuria illustrated the basic weakness of her position. The government gambled that it could force Japan into equality with the Western powers by means of the Russo-Japanese War. It succeeded in modernizing Japan and at the same time developed a large amount of capital. Suffering beset the people, but national consciousness and feelings of superiority compensated for this suffering. Members of the new middle class, salarymen with a Western-type

TABLE 4: THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN JAPAN: 1901-1911

YEAR NUMBER OF	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907*	1908	1909	1910	1911
Churches	71	74	75	78	78	79	59	61	63	64	66
Mission Churches	108	105	109	111	112	109	140	148	147	168	182
Evangelistic Stations	91	—	130	140	151	113	128	137	148	187	228
Ministers	75	75	86	89	86	102	118	121	133	132	142
Evangelists	89	85	88	90	88	80	86	91	86	90	100
Baptisms	1,182	1,187	1,506	1,062	1,441	1,820	2,289	2,108	1,827	1,947	1,799
Apostates	350	257	612	556	273	345	516	446	1,041	461	650
Sunday School Members	5,822	—	8,183	8,961	8,913	11,032	11,318	6,595	10,215	11,171	13,771
Church Members	11,851	12,467	13,511	13,931	15,076	16,346	18,157	19,568	19,838	21,219	21,917
Yen Contributed	37,920	37,102	48,246	46,067	58,203	71,707	102,887	98,807	87,086	108,003	99,708

\* The year in which non-self-supporting churches lost their status as church. See pages 291-2



education, joined Christianity. And with victory in the Russo-Japanese War, the nationalists could afford to be tolerant toward Christianity.

Beginnings of the new vigor in Christianity can be traced back to 1897. The debate between Uemura and Ebina which had taken place at this time illustrated how Christianity was groping in the dark and yet had not lost its zeal for evangelization. The members of the newly developing intellectual classes were attracted to Christianity by the ceaseless desire for further knowledge that characterized the ministers. Ebina's church filled with Tokyo Imperial University students; Uemura's church bulged with students from all over Tokyo. The new youth organizations offered the members of the growing intellectual classes many opportunities to become Christians. Unfortunately, the influences of the argument over new theology still lingered to frustrate united evangelization. For a time, the churches hotly debated theological questions, but the air of stagnation these induced brought on feelings of guilt. Many revivals developed out of this uneasy atmosphere.

The churches planned special evangelization to mark the opening of the twentieth century. They held prayer meetings as scheduled in 1901, but attendance was poor, and the expected interest did not develop. Suddenly as Pentacost approached, revivals started in Tokyo and spread throughout the country.

How did the Russo-Japanese War affect Christian progress? How did Christianity react to it? At first it was split into two camps: those who co-operated with the war effort as patriots and those who opposed the government's position as pacifists. Skepticism resulting from the cruelty of modern war and Christian humanism brought forth this pacifism. As Japan achieved modern military strength, her Christianity, in common with that of other nations, began to doubt the worth of modern civilization.

The opening of hostilities united most Christians in the name of "justice"—for as they saw it Japan's position was just—and co-operation in keeping up the morale of the forces at the front.

They also dispatched Honda Yōichi and Ibuka Kajinosuke, both clergymen chosen by the government, to the West as apologists for Japan's position. The contribution of the YMCA was especially outstanding. In addition to preaching, its representatives operated public baths, laundries, barber shops, circulating libraries, and moving picture shows for both officers and men in the combat zones. The universal praise this activity received did much to correct prejudices against Christianity.

Christians also joined Buddhists and Shintoists in a mass meeting held in Tokyo in May, 1904. This meeting proclaimed: "The Russo-Japanese War is for the safety of Japan and for the lasting peace of the Far East; it is for the cause of civilization and humanity." Preaching the righteousness of this war, though it made the authorities friendly to Christianity, was in the long run a disservice since it weakened Christianity's prophetic voice.

Other Christians such as Uchimura Kanzō, Abe Isoo, and Kinoshita Naoe, however, flatly opposed the authorities and branded war as the basic cause of social evil. Uchimura argued from the basis of actual facts: "Since Manchuria belongs first to the Manchurians, in dealing with the Manchurian question we should consider the well-being of the Manchurians before anything else." He recognized that the war originated from the imperialistic ambitions of both Russia and Japan and tried to prevent either from intervening. He also revealed a humanistic Christian basis for his position: "It is a great mistake to think that the sword can attain freedom. . . . Passive resistance, as first exemplified by Christ, . . . has purchased freedom. War seems like a short cut to justice, but is really an extremely long way around."

Meetings which supported the war and statements like that of Uchimura made it clear that there was no single Christian attitude toward war. This lack of a single position on war harmed Christianity. At the same time, however, it profited, in many respects. In the first place, churches were encouraged to



work for self-sufficiency and self-supported evangelization. In the second place, Japan's victory over Russia brought international recognition to Japan's Christianity along with all other facets of its society. General Booth's visit, the large crowds at the meetings commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of evangelism in Japan, and the fact that two international conferences—those of the World Student Christian Federation and the World Sunday School Convention—met in Japan: all of these events reflected this international recognition. Finally, war production expanded the social classes among which Christianity found members.

The old suspicion of Christianity, however, did not disappear. One reason was that some much-publicized Christians became pacifists. Another reason was that popular dissatisfaction with The Treaty of Portsmouth (1905) led first to anti-Westernism and then to movements against Christianity. One mob attacked a number of Christian churches in Tokyo, though the churches had absolutely no connection with the treaties.

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Christianity had to tighten its organization and to increase its evangelization if it expected to expand further. In order to tighten its organization, it increased efforts for self-support and closed weak churches. At the same time, it increased its evangelization through mass meetings and overseas mission work.

The Church of Christ in Japan (Presbyterian) and the Congregational Church, among others, tried to achieve self-support. The Church of Christ in Japan in a resolution adopted in 1905 called for complete independence from mission boards, even if this meant that the number of churches and believers might diminish:

1. All churches belonging to the Church of Christ in Japan must meet high requirements as to facilities and program.
2. Churches which have not met these requirements, i.e. which



cannot support themselves, by September, 1907, will lose their status as churches and will be called "mission churches."

3. Hereafter, the Presbyteries will not recognize any gatherings as churches unless they give promise of future strength.

The number of believers and the total contributions increased in spite of the decrease in the number of churches. Missionaries lost their position of leadership and became partners with the Japanese ministers under Japanese leadership.

The Congregational missionaries had started independent evangelism after the Japanese Congregational Church broke away from the mission board in 1895. These missionaries made converts and formed new churches. The question then arose as to whether these converts should be included among the statistics of the Congregational Church or those of the mission board. In 1903, the mission board acceded to the request that "all the mission churches be transferred" to the control of the Japanese Church. At the same time, the Church decided on January, 1906, as the date when all churches, including those started by missionaries, should become self-supporting. They achieved this goal. Concurrently, the Christian churches started overseas evangelism. Ironically, the progress of Japanese imperialism made this evangelism possible.

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The first Japanese to carry Christianity out of Japan were a number of pastors who voluntarily accompanied the troops in the 1895 campaign against the Formosan aborigines. Presbyterian missionaries were already working in Formosa, and so the Church of Christ in Japan, which was affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, was the one to send missionaries. These missionaries succeeded greatly in education, but they did not attempt to make converts. Their work may be regarded as a by-product of the military campaign, and not a real measure of Japanese Christian strength.

Evangelism started in Manchuria and Northern China at the request of Christian soldiers in the expeditionary force. As in Formosa, the missionaries did not evangelize the local populace. Theirs was really only a colonial church established for the sake of prestige. Japanese Christianity did not pioneer but followed in the wake of military success. Overseas "evangelism" merely reflected territorial expansion.

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Christianity slowly became one of Japan's major religions. In April, 1909, the Church of Christ in Japan celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, and in October the Protestant churches in general commemorated the beginning of missionary work. Many well-known figures, both Japanese and foreign, attended both meetings. One missionary reported at the April meeting:

Protestant Christians now number about 75,000. . . . There are over 500 pastors and over 300 students preparing for the ministry. About 200 churches are completely independent and over 500 partially independent. . . . There are about 1,200 Sunday Schools whose teachers and students total 90,000. The contributions from all the Protestant Churches in the last year were 260,000 yen.

The Japan Evangelical Union and the missionaries jointly sponsored a conference in October. The prime minister, education minister, mayor of Tokyo, and the American ambassador extended their greetings, and many famous Japanese spoke in the five-day session. This was the first time important officials publicly recognized Christianity by their attendance at Christian functions.

## 2. CHRISTIANITY AND MEIJI LITERATURE

Meiji literature and Christianity are inseparable. In spite of



general antipathy to Christianity, most textbooks, translated works, and Japanese literature published during early Meiji had a Christian atmosphere.

Writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi, Nakamura Keiu, and other members of the Meirokusha had as their purpose popular education in things Western. The writers felt that they had to describe Western religions if they were to write about Western culture. For this reason, Christianity takes its place with American and British liberalism and European idealism as an important influence in modern Japanese thought.

Even the government could not stem the infiltration of Christian thought. One example is a set of Japanese-language primary-school textbooks published by the Education Ministry and used from 1873 to 1890. These were direct translations of the *U. S. Readers* by M. Wilson, and so included much Christian thinking. Other middle- and high-school texts were even more explicitly Christian. Autobiographical novels written during this period show how the students blindly accepted this influence and reflected it in their own writing.

The translations of the Bible and hymnals also influenced literature greatly. Uemura Masahisa and Matsuyama Takakichi emerged as authors and poets of real stature as a result of these translations. Uemura's translation of the *Psalms* and Matsuyama's translation of *Isaiah* drew the acclaim of the most famous contemporary critics: "The greatest translation of Meiji is without doubt the pious and painstaking rendition of the Bible. . . . At that time Japanese literature was much retarded. I am amazed that they produced such excellent writing."

Critical magazines were another field in which there was great Christian influence. In the eighteen-eighties and nineties, two groups, graduates of Tokyo Imperial University and Christian thinkers, led Japanese intellectual life. Most of the well-known journals were Christian. The *Rikugō Zasshi* and *Fukuin Shimpō* have already been described. Others which attained prominence were *The People's Friend* (Kokumin no Tomo), *The Ladies' Magazine*



(Jogaku Zasshi), *Literary World* (Bungakkai) and *Japan Review* (Nihon Hyōron).

**The People's Friend** was published by graduates of Dōshisha. It opposed nationalism with Western liberalism and Christian humanism. It was regarded, alongside the *Rikugō Zasshi*, as the best critical journal of its time.

**The Ladies' Magazine** aimed at educating women for democracy. Iwamoto Zenji, the founder of Meiji Jogakkō, edited it and gave young writers like Shimazaki Tōson their first chance at publication. He also published translations by his wife, Wakamatsu Shizuko. She was an excellent writer in her own right. Her translations of such Western favorites as *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and *Enoch Arden* became classics as the first children's literature in Japan.

**The Literary World** was founded by young writers like Shimazaki Tōson who had got their start on *The Ladies' Magazine*. It did not confine itself to literary criticism, but included many new works of literary merit. One of the editors later said: "We had one point in common: we were all romanticists and liberal Christians with a tincture of Zen. Uemura Masahisa dismissed our Christianity as 'swampy religion.' . . . We were also politically liberal."

They talked of Dante and Goethe and lost themselves in Bashō, but their sentimentality turned on them. They became introspective, and their leader committed suicide. At the same time, graduates of Dōshisha and members of the Congregational Church had taken control of the *Rikugō Zasshi*. They opposed the sentimentalism and individualism of *The Literary World* with the rationalism of the new theology and the idealism of nationalism. The graduates from Meiji Gakuin with their tradition back to the missionaries of Yokohama favored individualism. But the Congregational group who sprang from the Kumamoto Band were nationalistic. This was the biggest difference between them.

**The Japan Review** was Uemura Masahisa's magazine. Its

importance lies more in its breadth of criticism and depth of influence than in its literary excellence. Uchimura Kanzō's *Study of the Bible* (Seisho no Kenkyū) and Ebina Danjō's *New Man* similarly excelled in criticism and excellent reviews. Uemura's breadth, as revealed in *Japan Review*, was tremendous: "He contributed in four fields: as an author of Christian books, a translator and critic of Western literature, a critic of Japanese literature, and a journalist." The other two magazines are each memorials to the similar breadth of their editors.

Belles-lettres were also influenced by Christianity, though very few of them dealt directly with Christianity. What is called "Christian literature" for the most part refers to fiction written by men who had been strongly influenced by Christianity. These men formed three general groups: naturalists, romanticists, and socialists. The naturalists wrote autobiographically of the conflict between their own desires and Christian principles. Shimazaki Tōson is the most famous member of this group. The romanticists were very philosophical and tried to achieve an ideal inner life through introspection. This introspection withdrew them from the problems of everyday life. The socialists were the opposite of the romanticists. They tried to reform society through Christian humanism. The most famous of this group, Kinoshita Naoe, gave great inspiration to the early labor, socialist, and pacifist movements. His followers have influenced proletarian literature down to the present. These three groups all contributed greatly through their Christian idealism and humanism. They also all attacked nationalism, though indirectly.

### 3. LATER DEVELOPMENTS

From the beginning, the Japanese wanted an independent and self-supporting church. Early mission-directed evangelism had two shortcomings. In response to requests from the home mission boards, the missionaries emphasized denominations to



the confusion of prospective Christians. Secondly, because they were unacquainted with Japanese ways, the missionaries introduced customs which were difficult for Japanese to understand and which were really a part of Western culture rather than a part of Christianity. Only independent Japanese-led evangelism could avoid these two shortcomings.

The churches achieved self-support at the time of the Russo-Japanese War. The next problem was to unite the various sects for co-operative evangelism. The Japan Evangelical Union had been established to perform this function. Now was the time to strengthen and to enlarge this organization. Its last conference in 1906 recognized that it had not lived up to its expectations because of "shallow basic faith and lack of qualifications among the individual members." The president, Kozaki Hiromichi, said:

Sect differences among supporting members hindered the Union greatly. When opening the general meetings, I used to wonder if I were not really conducting its funeral service. . . . But once the meetings had started, a certain spirit welled up. . . . The general meetings usually sparked reinvigorated faith throughout the nation. . . . At these times, the churches really worked effectively together. Seen in the light of Japanese experience, there is no reason other than convenience for Japanese Christians to belong to any particular sect. Conditions here differ from those in the West. There, denominational differences have historical roots. At this time, especially, when movements for unification are flourishing in the West, to preserve sect differences in Japan is deplorable. . . . Our biggest problem is denominational unity.

The conference then appointed a commission to draw up plans for such a union.

The Federation of Christian Churches in Japan (*Nihon Kirisuto Kyōkai Dōmei*) was the name given to the organization which developed from these plans in 1911. The new organization was to continue co-operation by the major Protestant denominations.



Since it assumed all the functions of evangelism and social work, it became extremely important to the future expansion of Christianity. Its seventy-five thousand members were sufficiently numerous so that neither the government nor other religious groups could ignore it. Christianity had become one of Japan's three major religions.

The government acknowledged Christianity's importance in what has come to be known as the "Conference of the Three Religions." This conference was called as the result of domestic economic conditions. Directly following the Russo-Japanese War, conditions were bad in spite of surface prosperity. The 1908 stock market crash in Tokyo brought on an unprecedentedly severe depression. The government issued a special edict to calm popular discontent, but this had little effect. Just at this time, the Vice-Home Minister, Tokonami Takejirō, returned from a trip to the West. He had learned from his trip that religion formed the spiritual basis for popular life in the West and he recommended that Japan use religion to calm this popular unrest. The "Conference of the Three Religions" which the government organized on his suggestion was only an ill-founded attempt at political strategy.

In the name of the Home Minister, Hara Kei, the government invited seventy-one representatives of the three major religions to attend the conference in February, 1912. Four cabinet ministers also attended the meeting which had as its professed objective the "healthy spiritual development and the social welfare of the nation." The representatives of the three groups differed so greatly in doctrine and organization, however, that they could not possibly work together, even toward such vaguely defined objectives. On the first day, none of the guests said anything, all listening in silence to the government's proposals. The following day, Tokonami received suggestions from the three religious groups and himself worked these suggestions into a statement. He then published this statement as the conclusion of the conference. The conclusion had no relevance to the

social distress of the times and had no meaning in terms of religion; it was nothing but a nationalistic statement:

1. We agree each to encourage his own religion, to assist Imperial prosperity, and to foster popular morals.
2. We hope that the government officials will respect religion and facilitate relations between the government, education, and religion, thus contributing to the national welfare.

One of the Christian delegates to the conference said on the second day: "If the rest of the meetings are like yesterday's, the whole conference will be meaningless. I thought from the beginning it would be that way and did not expect much from it." This lack of interest arose because the government had planned the conference to achieve political ends. During Meiji, the government attitude toward religion changed many times, but in every case it aimed at using religion to assist the government's immediate political ends.

One year later, Uchimura Kanzō ridiculed the conference in the following words:

I felt that in Japan a beautiful new bird had been developed out of the peacock, the crane, and the parrot. At that time, those of us who depend on the Gospels of Christ alone were ridiculed because of our narrowness. It was neither Shinto, Buddhism, nor Christianity, but a new religion which the government had concocted for its people. But what has happened to it? One year later who ever mentions it? It was just a temporary diversion. What I thought would be a rare and beautiful bird turned out to be a monster, a dayfly which was born only to die immediately.

How did this conference affect Christianity? It achieved for Christianity official recognition as one of the three major faiths. But in return for this recognition, the Christians lessened their



criticism of the government. Some Buddhists had complained to Tokonami that the invitation of Christians to this conference meant official recognition. Tokonami replied that this was true, but that the government "had to lure Christianity into support of its own position, and therefore could not exclude it." One of the objectives of the conference, thus, had been to dupe Christianity.

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During later Meiji, a number of new Protestant groups appeared in Japan. One was the *Mukyōkai*, founded by Uchimura Kanzō. The others were the result of missionary work by the small Protestant denominations which are often called "splinter sects."

Uchimura was a member of the Sapporo Band, the young men who became Christians while attending the government's agricultural school in Sapporo. These students in Japan's frontier based their faith on the Bible and were guided by the teachings of William S. Clark, the first president of the school and the founder of the Band. Its members were completely separated from the missionaries and their followers who worked in organized churches. After graduation, the students established an independent church which remained free from any denominational affiliation. Thus Uchimura later did not have the advantages of church affiliation which accrued to people like Uemura and Kozaki who went into the ministry. On the contrary, a series of misfortunes seem to have pushed him toward an almost fanatic faith. If he had had any desire to serve in the bureaucracy, he could have easily succeeded. But he hated the reactionary government even more than his Christian contemporaries did, so co-operation with it was impossible. His strong concept of Christian justice did not permit any compromise. His dismissal from a public school after refusing to bow before the Education Rescript only strengthened his isolation.





Niihima Jō



Kozaki Hiromichi

Early Japanese Protestant Leaders. With the exception of Niihima who died in 1890, all of these men lived until well after World War I. Kozaki is shown at twenty-five, the other three as they appeared early in the twentieth century when they were in their forties.



Ebina Danjo

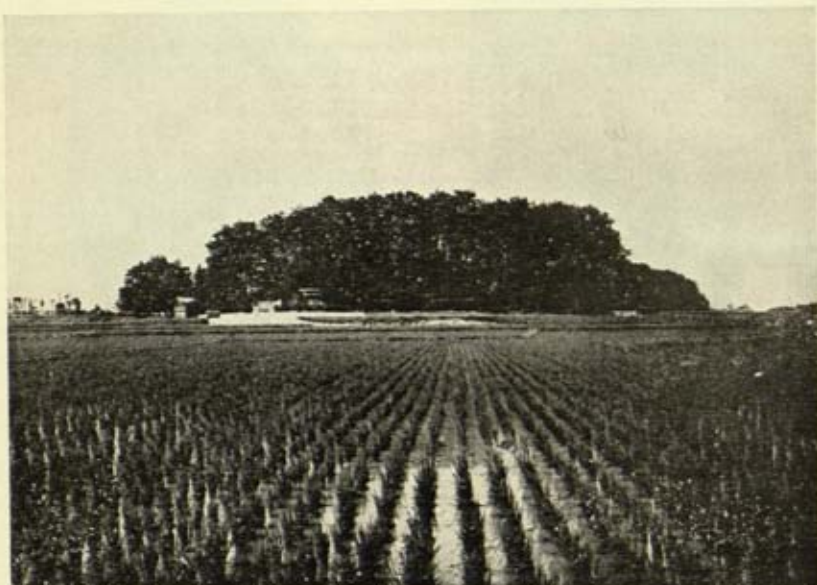


Uchimura Kanzo

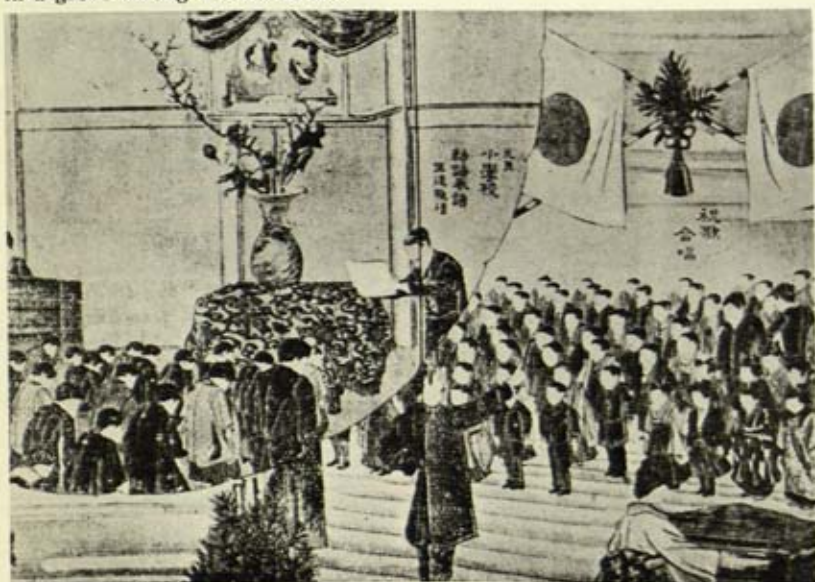


Uemura Masahisa

## PROMOTION OF THE EMPEROR CULT



One method was to discover and encourage public reverence of Imperial mausolea. This shows the grave of the fifth-century Emperor Yūryaku set in a grove among the rice fields.



The Education Rescript was one way of training children in loyalty to the Emperor. This print shows (left) the proper attitude for listening to the Rescript and (right) children singing appropriate songs.



The more public injustice hurt him, the stronger became his criticism of that injustice. He attacked both the government and the shortcomings of Japanese Christianity which rendered it powerless before the government. He also published an English-language book, *How I Became a Christian*. This was to acquaint Western readers with the problems that becoming a Christian brought to the life of a convert. During the Sino-Japanese War he had supported the government because he believed that the war was righteous. But after the war, he was disillusioned; it had not benefited the Japanese people but had aided only the reactionary government and irresponsible capitalism, both of which he hated. He became a convinced pacifist. A popular critic, Tokutomi Sohō, switched from trenchant opposition against military preparations to support of the government. Uchimura criticized his position severely:

The people continually talk of respect for the Emperor, but they never seem to think of respect for themselves. Tokutomi deceived the people for more than ten years. Now at last he has fallen to the point where he aligns himself with the feudal government. Very few voices, however, are raised against his brazen lack of respect for the people.

When a man separates himself from other people, all of his personality traits become more pronounced. Uchimura's extreme interest in Bible study, though rooted in his basic belief, was accentuated by his lack of connections with the organized church and his isolation from society, especially after he became a pacifist. His dauntless pacifism brought on much criticism, but at the same time it attracted people who respected his integrity and loyalty to principle. A number of young men and women gathered around him and soon formed themselves into a group of disciples. Uchimura continued his writing with increasing influence. In 1900, he established *Study of the Bible*, the small but scholarly monthly which remained his personal organ until

he died in 1930. In response to requests, he also opened Sunday Bible-study meetings. At first, these convened in his home, but later they moved to a large hall in downtown Tokyo. Many men who later became famous as scholars and writers became acquainted with Uchimura through these meetings.

Along with the publication of his journal, Uchimura perfected his principle of *Mukyōkai*, or "non-church." In this he criticized institutional Christianity as overly ritualistic, observing form at the expense of spirit, and bound down by organization and finances: "The real church is without organization. There is no organized church in heaven. . . . Neither is there baptism nor holy communion. Where is our church? It is anywhere and everywhere in the universe, created by God."

Uchimura did not confine himself to spiritual matters. He also wrote on social problems and joined the socialists like Kōtoku Shūsui and other Christians like Abe Isoo at the time of the Ashio Copper Mine Incident and the Russo-Japanese War. Kōtoku Shūsui wrote a book in 1901 called *Imperialism*. Uchimura said in his introduction to this book: "He . . . is a sincere socialist. I consider it an honor to have him as a friend." Uchimura continued to criticize injustices, but he never became a socialist. The Unitarians, because of their modern interpretation of the Bible and desire to apply Christian ethics, gradually moved from theology to direct concern with social evil. People like Abe Isoo, Katayama Sen, and Kinoshita Naoe followed this path from Unitarianism to socialism. Uchimura opposed them with the following words:

In the first place, Christianity deals with heaven while socialism tries to reform this world. Second, Christianity does not preach complete economic equality. . . . Third, Christianity and socialism differ in their methods. Christianity does not decide on a set social system and try to force others to adopt it.

Man's most immediate task was "to reform himself" by faith



"and then to reform society." Uchimura did not agree with the socialists that social revolution would make men happy. This, of course, cut him off from them.

Because of their Christian individualism, the members of *Mukyōkai* have kept aloof from the streams of nationalism and irresponsible capitalism. In this sense, they may be called prophets, but they have not been pioneers in social reform.

The second new interpretation of Protestantism which appeared in Japan at this time were the so-called "splinter sects." Constant sectarian disputes have done more than anything else to hamper Christian evangelism in Japan as they have in the West. During the twentieth century, there has been concerted effort to unite various denominations in the West. This has been reflected in Japan. The Protestant churches which have resulted from the union of several small denominations and the Catholic and Episcopal Churches which have not permitted sectarian divisions have thus become the strongest.

In America, the main source from which Christianity came to Japan, the ecumenical movement has not succeeded in overcoming denominational differences. If it were to succeed, it would affect Christian expansion all over the world. But Protestantism traditionally recognizes the individual's freedom of belief. This has naturally led to divergent doctrinal interpretations.

Many small denominations have arisen as a result of this divergent interpretation. Each has sent missionaries to Japan. Few gained more than a thousand members during the Meiji era. The large denominations tended to lose their prophetic voice and to compromise with the government. The smaller groups, however, accustomed to suspicion and extremely strong in their faith, continued to speak out against official policy. The Society of the Friends and the Holiness Church were particularly outstanding. The larger denominations tended to lose evangelistic fervor and to preoccupy themselves with problems of church organization. The smaller denominations, on the other hand, each bent on establishing a branch in Japan,

developed many new methods of evangelism. The Seventh Day Adventist use of tent evangelism is a case in point.

The necessity for joint Christian action increased in the latter half of Meiji. There is no room for denominational conflict in modern society. The basic problem is between Christianity and society at large. Christian denominations cannot be content to confine their activity to their own membership. Some Christians realized this during the closing years of Meiji. They concerned themselves particularly with social problems. This chapter ends by discussing the relationship between the socialist movement and Christianity.

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Japanese socialism emerged from two intellectual currents: Christianity and French liberalism. The Christians who became socialists did so because of their broad spirit of Christian philanthropy.

It has already been said that Christians made the conversion of the individual a prerequisite to social reform. They also felt that the only real utopia was the kingdom of God, and they rejected the idea of a man-made ideal society attainable through violent revolution. Therefore, sooner or later, they had to part from the Marxian socialists. This split with another group having comparable immediate aims lessened the effectiveness of Christian social action. A further handicap was Christianity's identification with the Japanese intellectual classes. Katayama Sen, later to become one of the most famous Japanese socialists, had returned to Japan in 1897 and had established a settlement house on the Western pattern. He grieved that Christianity was not answering social problems:

Christianity had already become the tool of the rich. Even some of its leaders like Uemura Masahisa said to me, "We are just as happy if laboring people do not come to our church." But many clerks and low-income salarymen attended Uemura's



church. These people themselves were (white collar) laborers of a sort, but this is how they felt about other laborers.

In the late nineties, a number of socialist organizations developed among individuals with a concern for social justice. In 1898, some Christians organized "The Society for Studying Poverty" which later in the same year changed its name to "The Society for Studying Socialism" and broadened its membership to include materialist-socialists. As noted above, the Christians who originally led this group utilized the new theology in order to make Christianity applicable to social problems. The *Rikugō Zasshi*, by that time the organ of the Unitarians, published a column on socialism in every issue. People began to wonder whether "the Unitarian Church had not become a sounding board for socialism."

The government passed the Peace Preservation Act in 1900 because it feared the rapidly expanding power of the labor unions. As a result, the socialists decided to change their emphasis from study to political action. In 1901, six members of this group, all later to become famous, formed the first Social Democratic Party and published a declaration in the various Tokyo dailies. This declaration contained eight ultimate objectives and twenty-eight proposals for specific action.

The objectives were (1) the elimination of racial discrimination, (2) the elimination of military preparations, (3) the elimination of class distinctions; (4) national ownership of the means of production, (5) national ownership of public transportation; (6) equitable distribution of property, (7) equal opportunity for everyone to obtain political office, (8) equal opportunity for education. The twenty-eight proposals for specific action included, among others, the limitation of armaments, tax reduction, prohibition of child labor, a national labor law, universal suffrage, and repeal of the Peace Preservation Act. This platform was too advanced for the primitive state of the Japanese labor movement. These six intellectuals were drifting in the clouds

far above the masses. This was the shortcoming of most Christian socialists.

The government dissolved the party the same day it formed. The three things in the declaration which angered the government were the demands for armament reduction, elimination of the House of Peers, and universal suffrage. Police secretly informed members of the party that they would be permitted to continue if they dropped these three provisions, but the members preferred to be martyrs to their ideals. The bureaucrats at the turn of the century considered democracy more dangerous than socialism. Socialism seemed eccentric and potentially dangerous but too remote to be a practical threat. The socialist demands which they feared were the demands which coincided with those of the democrats.

These six men then concentrated on the issue of pacifism. In July, 1901, Uchimura, Abe Isoo, and Kinoshita Naoe, all Christian humanists, united with Marxian socialists like Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko to form the Society of Idealists. The society was dedicated to pacifism. All of these men were friends of Kuroiwa Ruikō (Shūsui), publisher of the most influential newspaper in Japan, the *Yorodzu Chōhō*. Kuroiwa had made the *Yorodzu* into a liberal, anti-government organ. When, shortly before the Russo-Japanese War, Kuroiwa shifted the paper's position to support government objectives, the others left the *Yorodzu*. Kōtoku and Sakai organized the *Commoner's Newspaper* (Heimin Shimbun) to carry on the struggle for pacifism from a purely Marxist point of view. The Christians separated themselves from direct connection with the *Commoner's Newspaper* though they continued to contribute to it.

The Christians co-operated because the *Commoner's Newspaper* continued to support pacifism. In opposition, the government adopted subtle Prussian means of oppression. It planted articles in newspapers which rumored that the socialists were offending Imperial prestige. This resulted in a loss of revenue which the publishers tried to recoup by publishing socialist novels and



pamphlets. Socialists defied oppression by traveling through the country selling this literature. In their propagandizing pacifism, they resembled Christian evangelists and the people at large called these trips "missionary peddling," an interesting example of Christian influence on the contemporary socialist movement.

The socialists gradually became impatient at government oppression. The editors of the *Commoner's Newspaper* devoted all of their first anniversary issue to a translation of the Communist Manifesto, though the government suppressed its publication. The decision to publish the Communist Manifesto brought on a clear break between the Christian and the Marxian socialists. Japanese socialism went Marxian, and the Christians who had started the socialist movement withdrew from it.

The *Commoner's Newspaper* ceased publication in 1905 and the groups—Christian and Marxian—which had co-operated in it each started its own publication. The Marxists started a magazine called *Light* (Hikari) which advocated direct action, while the Christians Kinoshita Naoe and Abe Isoo started a monthly called *New Age* (Shin Kigen).

But there was no longer interest in the material *New Age* presented, and it had to cease publication after one year. Its authors had hoped to obtain a mass following through serializing Tokutomi Roka's *Black Current* and publishing articles by Uchimura, but such an intellectual approach had lost its appeal. Kinoshita completed the last issue with the following words: "*New Age* could digest neither Christianity nor socialism. It has turned out to be a hypocrite. In trying to serve two masters at the same time, it became a treacherous retainer. In attempting to please two lovers at the same time, it became a lascivious prostitute." In the same year, the activists had organized a number of students and laborers into the second Japan Socialist Party.

Christian socialism actually was a plaything of the intellectuals. It was another name for the left wing of religious humanism. Christianity never lost the intellectual tinge which, in spite of

its humanism, separated it from the masses. This humanism ended in grandiose plans. The intellectuals' desire to lead the masses actually estranged them from the masses. Continuing police oppression aggravated this lack of specific goals and separation from the people. That is why the Christian socialists' attempt to practice their ethics failed.

#### 4. POST-MEIJI DEVELOPMENTS

In 1909, the Protestants had over 75,000 members while the Catholics, as early as 1890, had had 44,000. Many of these Catholics belonged to families which had been Christian for as long as three hundred years. The Russian Orthodox Church in 1904 had 28,397 members.

The main Protestant denominations each had over ten thousand members by the end of the eighteen-nineties. The yearly rate of increase was only three to five percent. A major factor hindering the growth of Christianity was that it did not spread beyond the intellectual class.

The Church of Christ in Japan (Presbyterian) is a case in point. In 1912, thirty of its seventy churches were in the Tokyo Presbytery and seventeen more were in the Osaka area. The church centered in the metropolitan areas where the intelligentsia lived. The splinter sects also tended to congregate in the large cities. The Catholics at first worked among the lowest classes and the farmers, but soon they became even more closely associated with the highest social classes than were the Protestants.

In these circumstances, Christianity should have extended its evangelism into the rural areas. But there, the traditional suspicion of Christianity and the remnants of feudalism were too strong. Christianity fled back into the cities. Here it has remained. One wonders whether this identification with the intellectuals has prevented it from gaining the strength necessary



for prophetic objection to the super-nationalism, imperialism, and economic injustice which have characterized much of twentieth-century Japan.





*Part Four*

RELIGION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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*Oguchi Ichi*

*Takagi Hiroo*





## *Chapter One*

### LATE TOKUGAWA SOCIAL CHANGES

THE purpose of Part Four is to examine how religion and society reacted on each other during the social turbulence of Meiji. A knowledge of the Meiji Restoration and the capitalistic structure which followed it is basic to understanding this reaction.

Recent interpretations of Meiji history divide the period into three stages. The first period, known as The Establishment of Absolutism, extends from the reform of the Tokugawa government in 1841 to the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877. The next stage, called The Period of Capital Accumulation, extends to the opening of the Diet in 1890. The remainder of Meiji is called the Period of Imperialism.

According to this interpretation, the Restoration resulted from the revolt of lower-class samurai who overthrew the Shogunate and established new political authority. Backed by the former feudal rulers, rich farmers, landlords, and businessmen, these new leaders developed an industrialized capitalism. Usurers closely affiliated with the government dominated this state. The lower-class samurai had started the revolt in league with the depressed classes. But once they obtained power, they betrayed these depressed classes who were at the same time the main producers of the society, the farmers, by their land tax policies.

These policies hit small-scale farmers particularly hard. The social-reform measures directly preceding the Restoration had given these members of the lowest classes some hope. The new government completely dashed these hopes and even increased

the suffering by their capitalistic policies. This has great significance in terms of religious history. Shortly afterward, a number of new and unofficial Shinto sects developed among the frustrated people. These include *Tenrikyō* and *Konkōkyō*, both of which are still strong, and both of which developed partly out of popular dissatisfaction with political measures. On the other hand, Christianity grew among the intelligentsia and the middle class which the new urban capitalism had produced. Religious fanaticism among the lower classes and revolts which Shinto and Buddhist priests organized preceded the development of these new religions. The roots of all of these religious phenomena can be found in social developments.

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The Japanese pre-Meiji economy was based on land taxes paid in rice. As feudal lords began to convert their tax rice into money, however, the resultant circulation of currency enriched the merchant class. By the middle of Tokugawa, the merchants of Tokyo, Osaka, and provincial capitals possessed great wealth, while the feudal lords were impoverished. The lords had no recourse but to increase their rice income, either by taking a larger share of the farmers' production or by opening new lands. They were also forced to go into business themselves, an extreme which threatened the basis of their existence—the rice economy. To reduce the danger of this threat, they established monopoly markets for their commodities:

The central government and the feudal lords took measures against this developing mercantile economy. These measures inevitably increased the suppression of the farmers who formed the productive majority of the population, and who themselves had started light manufacturing in their homes. The measures the government adopted included confiscating merchant capital, reminting of coinage, forcing loans, controlling the stock market, and monopoly sale of commodities.



The people inevitably suffered. Abortions and infanticide became common, and parents frequently deserted their children. From the middle of the eighteenth century, crop failures and famines increased in number and in scope, so that the population ceased to increase.

Parallel with the emergence of a mercantile economy, the peasant class itself began to change. This change began in the areas surrounding the provincial capitals and slowly extended into the countryside. Money from the cities and the wealthy farmers went into loans to poorer farmers. When the farmers could not pay, they became tenants of their creditors. The new class distinction that resulted was between farm tenants and landowners. The landlords established breweries, merchandized the products of their tenants' handicraft, or dealt in raw materials. They also challenged the hereditary rights of the feudal lords to the land. The feudal lords attempted to continue their control by allying themselves with their new adversaries. In most clans, the daimyo had monopolized the sale of all the products he received from his land. Thus, while still a feudal lord, he himself had become a merchant dealing in products which he received as taxes. Most daimyo, however, owed large sums to the merchants in Osaka and Tokyo. A mutual dependence developed between them. Because the feudal lords' right to the land arose from the feudal system, however, they were digging their own graves by allying with the merchants whose power was later to overwhelm them.

As the daimyo became poorer, the samurai under them received less stipend. Samurai of the lowest class had to supplement their income by cottage manufactures. Some of the new capitalist landowners and merchants bought their way into the ranks of the lower-class samurai. These merchants-turned-samurai came to have great influence in clan politics. As a result, the clans split into three factions: the upper-class samurai who still received sufficient income from their hereditary stipend; the

impoverished lower-class samurai; and the merchant-samurai whose rank as samurai was low, but who wielded great influence because of their business ability. The changes in class structure continued into the cities and economic instability became chronic due to market speculation and the government's monetary policy. Continuing instability made the cleavage between classes even more pronounced.

The whole Tokugawa feudal system was, thus, decaying from within. A series of peasant uprisings finally destroyed it. These had become chronic after the seventeen-sixties. As has been said, the Tokugawa government tried to reform its policies in 1841, and a number of the clans carried out reforms in local government at about the same time. Most of these reforms stopped at strengthening the old feudal system. They failed since they were not attuned to new social conditions. The clans of Satsuma, Chōshū, and Hizen, which were later to lead the Meiji Restoration, were significant exceptions. They adopted temporarily successful basic reforms which called for co-operation between wealthy farmers, new landowners, and merchants. This temporary success could not halt the general deterioration which was, on the contrary, actually hastened. Just at this time, Perry's ships forced Japan to resume international intercourse. No one, particularly the government officials, realized the extent of the crisis. The Tokugawa government plodded along trying only to save itself. No way was open to the development of a modern state in the Western meaning of the word. The fact that forces opposed to the Tokugawa did not have a modern bourgeoisie supporting them only deepened the crisis.

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The reforms of 1841 mentioned previously attempted to forestall the destruction of feudal society. They failed because they were basically conservative and because the people had lost confidence in the government. Of course, the average man did not have any clear-cut practical suggestions for solving these



problems. But the people did grasp vaguely the source of their difficulties. The objective of their revolts was to reduce land taxes, and the targets of their ire were not the samurai who legally controlled them, but the new landlords and merchants. The masses, awakened to the true cause of their misery and having failed in their riots, adopted methods of passive resistance without precedent in Japanese history. These assumed the form of a religious mass movement, the *okage mairi*.

The *okage mairi* contained two elements which greatly influenced politics and religion at about the time of the Restoration. The first was the attitude of the participants toward the Ise Shrine, an attitude of devotion which was important to the later emperor-centered State Shinto. The second was an embryonic theory of social reform which became one source of the new Meiji religions.

The people had not traditionally put any special faith in the Ise Shrine. Individuals, however, gradually began to visit local shrines and temples and then to take longer pilgrimages to the Ise Shrine. The feeling developed that each person should visit it once during his lifetime. One factor which assisted this was that by the beginning of the nineteenth century farmers were able to save up a little money. They pooled this money and sent off certain of their members on these pilgrimages. The trips did not have the same nationalistic significance that they attained during Meiji or later. But the name of the Ise Shrine became known throughout the nation.

The theory of social reform embodied in *okage mairi* was a demand for personal freedom. A trip to some distant temple or shrine was the only excuse for which a farmer could set foot outside his own clan. One did not need permission from his superiors. Although check points everywhere restricted travel, the mere statement that one was going to visit a temple or shrine sufficed as a password. The special significance that such words as *okage mairi* took on, then, can be easily imagined. It is ironic that the name of the Ise Shrine which at that time

connoted liberation should have under State Shinto caused so much suffering. These pilgrimages gradually came to include a desire for social reform because of the idea of freedom associated with them.

One more important aspect of religious history during this period, as was described in detail in the introduction,\* was the development of a new attitude toward Japanese classics by the National School of philosophy. Students influenced by this attitude contrasted things Japanese with those that were Chinese or Confucian. This contrast implied a criticism of feudalism. There is little doubt that the National School criticism developed as at least an unconscious attempt at liberation from this society.

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\* See pages 22-28



## *Chapter Two*

### RELIGIOUS EFFECTS OF SOCIAL CHANGE DURING MEIJI

AS has has been described earlier, the reforms of 1841 failed except in a few outlying clans. The failure of the reforms deepened the cleavage between the various classes. The Tokugawa government was very weak when Commodore Perry forced open the ports and signed the Treaty of Kanagawa (1854). In spite of this weakness and her relatively poorly developed economy, Japan was forced into the highly developed markets of Western Europe. The trade that resulted from opening the ports ruined the weak domestic markets because of the advantages the treaties gave the Western powers. The first result was price inflation. Newly rich businessmen sprang up, but the lower-class samurai and the impoverished peasants suffered.

Perry's arrival in Japan resulted in changing the class struggle which had been gradually developing within the clans into a national political force. Twelve years earlier, the lower class samurai, landowners, and merchant-samurai had appeared as the reforming faction in clan politics. In 1853, these same people were against opening the ports. The Tokugawa government overruled them and signed treaties opening Japan to the West. Afterwards, these reformers who had opposed foreign intercourse turned against the Shogunate and united with the supporters of the Emperor vis-a-vis the Tokugawa.

One author describes the economic effects of opening the ports this way:

The first result of resuming foreign trade was a marked increase in all prices. Primarily affected were those products for which there was a foreign market. These included raw silk, tea, hair oil, and marine products. . . . The second effect was to increase the profits from the exported goods, both to their producers and to the dealers who had monopoly control over their distribution. This encouraged manufacturing and stimulated anew the commercial farmers but conferred no particular benefit upon the large mass of impoverished peasants. On the contrary, they suffered greatly from the commodity inflation. The third effect was a catastrophic blow to silk weavers all over the country. This resulted from inflation in the price of raw silk which came about as an unexpected result of the new production. . . . Since silk weaving was Japan's largest industry, this caused greater or less distress all over the country.

This economic dislocation directly affected government tax income and violently shook the foundations of the whole feudal system. But all the government could do in response was to strengthen the monopoly system, to exact even more taxes from both the farmers and the newly wealthy businessmen, and to debase metal currency or issue paper notes. As a result, the lower class samurai, peasants, and city poor suffered directly or indirectly from the opening of the ports. Those who were interested in politics recognized that this was the source of their difficulty. Therefore, they became increasingly antforeign. But the rest of the people turned their energies against the Shogunate. On the eve of the Restoration, peasant revolts occurred all over Japan and threatened to become chronic. In Nagoya, a number of people started a religiously inspired dance called the *ee ja naika*. The literal meaning of this name was that any action was all right. The participants said they had started these dances because lucky charms like those sold at a shrine had dropped from the sky. A demand for freedom fostered the development of these dances.



The Meiji Revolution ostensibly succeeded because of its slogan of "Restore the Emperor" and its promise to govern by popular discussion. Actually, however, the new government gained power by posing as the friend of the peasants and encouraging them to rise up against their overlords. For instance, in one area where they had particularly wooed the peasants, "The people were elated. When they saw the announcement calling upon those who had suffered under the old regime to protest, they imagined that they had achieved the freedom to criticize the government." But at the same time, the revolutionary forces had assured the various daimyo that "they would certainly not have to answer the peasant's demands for lower taxes." This shows that the masses were to be allowed freedom only to an extent which fit in with the new government's plans. This attitude betokened later Meiji rule.

The Meiji Government had promised in the Charter Oath to rule in accordance with "public opinion." Actually, they used this as a pretext to get clan support for the central government, and they deceived the masses. After they had thus compromised with the Shogunate, the new rulers found ways of preserving, at least temporarily, some of their political and economic privileges. To retain these privileges required money. They tried to solve the problem by issuing unconvertible notes: this only increased the burden of the masses, still exhausted from the results of the civil war. Popular discontent with these compromises brought on large-scale revolts more serious than those which had occurred under the Shogunate. Thereupon, the government found their friends among the great landlords and the wealthy capitalists, like the Mitsui family, who had made their money as usurers during the Tokugawa era. They also enrolled enlightened former samurai, land owners, and merchants as government officials.

The following policies show that the government utilized these enlightened elements to strengthen central control. The large merchants received tremendous profits from the inflation



which followed the issue of nonconvertible paper money and debasement of the coinage. At the same time, the government gave them loans, capital, and special privileges in the form of semiofficial foreign-trade and exchange companies. These policies started in 1869. In this way, a very close affiliation developed between the high-ranking government officials and what later became the zaibatsu. By various means of direct assistance, these corporations became primitive agents of official capital accumulation. Most of the wealth for these official companies came directly from the national treasury. Since the government at this time received practically all its income from land taxes, these companies expanded into zaibatsu at the expense of the peasants.

Government protection of the large landowners resulted in a continuation of peasant revolts. In 1872, the Grand Council of State recognized the right of peasants to own and dispose of land. This officially recognized and accentuated the tendency toward landlordism which had started under the Tokugawa.

A continuing problem during early Meiji was the government's financial structure. This is why in 1873 it made the land tax payable in a uniform cash rate rather than in kind. This apparently slight change accompanied by the official recognition of tenancy forced a complete shift in the peasant way of life. The peasants handled less cash than any other social group. To pay taxes in cash, the less fortunate farmers had to mortgage their land and to become tenants. Another factor was that previously the farmers, even though tenants, had had the duty of paying land taxes as direct producers. The new tax law shifted this duty to the owner of the land. That is to say, it publicly recognized the landowner's right to charge rent. Later in 1877 when the small farmers had all become tenants, the land tax was lowered. Since the landowners did not lower their rents, they profited greatly. A subsequent reduction in taxes made them wealthier than they had been in the Tokugawa period. Their wealth provided the primary capital accumulation

for national capitalism.

This change in the tax laws also brought into being the labor force necessary for this capitalistic production. The farming class, forced into dire circumstances by the tax laws, offered its surplus population to industry. The very low wages paid these industrial workers made competition with advanced foreign capital possible, and further hastened primary capital accumulation. As a result, what had been the peasant class in Tokugawa split in two. Part of the farmers became landowners protected by the government. They continued to operate small shops and breweries on the side, as they had before the Restoration. The other part lost their land and became either tenants or urban laborers. The vague hopes of social reform they had held at the time of the Restoration turned out to be mere fantasy.

There were also great changes in the way of life for the daimyo and samurai during these years. The daimyo lost their land but were compensated in cash. In 1884, the government guaranteed them status by giving them ranks of nobility. They had been in financial difficulties at the end of Tokugawa, and their position after 1884, though greatly changed, was not appreciably worse. The samurai received cash settlements in place of their feudal stipends. Some of them entered the new government as officials, but the majority planned to use the stipends as capital for going into business or farming. For the most part, they failed.

The people manifested their dissatisfaction with the inequalities of the new policies in a series of revolts similar to those at the end of Tokugawa. This finally developed into popular demand for parliamentary government.

Japanese capitalism really began to develop after the National Diet opened in 1890. The laborers could not afford out of their low wages to purchase the products they produced. Therefore, the government had to acquire colonies in order to find outlets for its goods. The Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese



Wars provided these colonies and markets. The war orders increased the strength of the zaibatsu. But the people did not benefit. They lost their husbands and fathers, bore the brunt of war expenditures, and suffered from the inflation. This development of capitalism greatly influenced religion.

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The effect of the Meiji Restoration was to establish absolutism throughout Japan. Absolutism needs a kind of mythology to support it. The Meiji Restoration allied itself with State Shinto, that is, the cult of emperor worship, in order to establish this absolutism. This section describes the relationship between the development of absolutism and the various religions.

The major religious policy of the Meiji government was to gain popular acceptance for State Shinto. The first step in this policy was the separation of Shinto from Buddhism. The second step was to establish Shinto parishes. These have already been covered in Part One.

The separation of Buddhism from Shinto was intended to dislodge Buddhism from the privileged position it had formerly held, and to absolutize the position of the Emperor by unifying worship and government. The riots which followed the proclamation separating Buddhism from Shinto subsided quickly, and were followed by other riots aimed at protecting Buddhism. The people realized that what they had at first welcomed was helping not them, but the government bureaucrats alone. They developed folk chants in the form of Buddhist sutras as a means of criticizing government policy:

Listen, listen  
 People listen:  
 Guvment's order's  
 All a lie.  
 "Don't you mingle  
 Gods and Buddha."



Buddha himself  
 Amida too  
 Never, never'd  
 Pay them\* heed.  
 Even simple  
 Mountain beggars,  
 Changed to Shinto  
 Strut like bailiffs.  
 While reciting  
 Shinto chants,  
 They look fine  
 But they can't eat.

The separation of Buddhism from Shinto succeeded only in weakening the institutional aspects of Buddhism. The people retained their traditional faith.

The second policy, the establishment of Shinto parishes, failed. By using the Shinto priests and local officials, the government tried to establish a system of Shinto parishes to replace the Buddhist Parish System of the Tokugawa government. As the Three Doctrines clearly indicated, the reason for uniting worship and government was to provide an ideological support for the emperor system. All attempts to do this, however, failed.

The government also organized the Shinto shrines on a national scale and assigned each of them ranks. They hoped by this means to use the shrines as a part of the national education system, but the people did not react as the government had hoped they would. The popular faith continued to be a mixture of Shinto and Buddhism; the people had no interest in government policy and wanted only to retain their local religious festivals. Popular attitudes began to change late in the eighteen-eighties, however, with the end of the period of Westernism. The government formulated the theory of a

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\* the government officials.

national family-state centered around the Emperor, and had it taught even in primary schools. The keystone in this development was the statement in the Constitution which declared the Emperor to be "sacred and inviolate." State Shinto acquired strength for the first time as it became an emperor-worship cult.

A number of religious phenomena appeared in response to this developing absolutism. These included *okage mairi*, *ee ja naika* dances, violence against Buddhism, violence in protection of Buddhism, and oppression of Christianity. All of these appeared on the surface to be very much like revolts.

Participants in the *ee ja naika* dances used the rumor that lucky charms had fallen from the sky as justification for frenzied group dancing which turned into riots. They generally hoped to achieve social reform. The participants felt that everything depended upon the repetition of the words *ee ja naika* as a magical formula. What sort of social reform did they desire? "Better distribution of wealth, land reform, and abolition of feudal burdens." Almost all the new religions which have developed from the time of the Restoration to the present have expressed a desire for "social reform," and the number of believers increased quickly after reform became impossible because of political absolutism.

Word of events like these at the end of the Shogunate spread unexpectedly rapidly into all areas because of the great movement of people. Young patriots actively propagated their ideas, and many peasants traveled on pilgrimages. Merchants and their wares moved between clans as the mercantile economy spread. News of an uprising in any area spread quickly to other areas.

The new religious movements included the thirteen sects of Sect Shinto. Among these, *Kurozumikyō*, *Tenrikyō*, and *Konkōkyō*, are almost separate religions. *Kurozumikyō* had a number of followers among lower-class samurai at the end of Tokugawa, but it later fell far behind the other two, both of whose founders came from among the farmers and both of



which developed from strong rural traditions. *Tenrikyō* is treated in detail as the outstanding representative of these religions.

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A woman named Nakayama Miki had a religious trance in 1838. The religion she founded, *Tenrikyō*, considers this as the date it was founded. The religion has become one of the most active in Japan. It grew slowly at first, and only by 1865 did it have sufficient numbers in the area where it had started so that local Buddhist and Shinto priests were complaining of its strength. Two years later, the headquarters of Shinto granted it the right to proselyte under the control of the Yoshida Sect of Shinto. In 1880, it was officially organized for the first time and the government made it affiliate with Buddhism. Five years later, Shinto once more took control of it and in 1908 after four requests, the government finally granted it the status of an independent religion. By that time it had 2,158 churches.

Mrs. Nakayama—now known familiarly as “Miki”—set forth the main points of *Tenrikyō* in two long poems. The first is the *Mikagurauta* which Miki recorded from divine inspiration in 1867. The second is the *Ofudesaki*, a collection of short verses composed between 1869 and 1881 when Miki was in religious trances.

*Tenrikyō's* two outstanding characteristics are its many followers from among the rural and urban poor and its many similarities to a folk religion. One historian of *Tenrikyō* describes the class orientation in these words: “The founder made it a rule of evangelization that the lower classes receive primary attention; the wealthy and the scholars could wait. As a result, efforts at proselyting remained almost entirely confined to the lower classes during the early years.” As shall be seen later, *Tenrikyō* doctrine also particularly appeals to the poor. Nakayama Yoshikazu, a relative of the family, describes *Tenrikyō's* similarity to a folk religion thus:



The thirst after a popular religion had caused numberless false faiths to develop. This thirst indicated that everyone was searching for a true faith applicable to the problems of his life.... The rich Buddhist-Shinto atmosphere which had resulted from strong faith and action provided a matrix for folk religions in Japan. The weakening of organization and controls at the end of Tokugawa provided just the right conditions for the development of these religions.

Mr. Nakayama goes on to comment on Miki's earlier years. The founder was at first a member of the Jōdo Sect, but did not follow it exclusively. At the same time, she was a believer in a simple folk religion. The object of her faith was not necessarily Shinto or Buddha; she was satisfied only by following her own religious conscience. Another authority says:

*Tenrikyō*... originally worshiped *Tenrin-ō-no-mikoto* as its chief deity. The name of this deity was a combination of Buddhist and Shinto elements, *Tenrin-ō* being the name of a Buddhist deity and *mikoto* the suffix given the name of a Shinto deity.... This was early changed from *Tenrin-ō*, to *Tenri-ō*, which means the Lord of Eternal Truth. *Tenrikyō* dropped its Buddhist elements and gradually developed on its own a doctrine and theology.... It is still in its infancy and attracts people as a folk religion because of its simplicity and naïveté.

These two characteristics of *Tenrikyō* development—its attraction for the poor and its similarity to a folk religion—show that it arose from the same causes as the frequent revolts and riots which accompanied early capitalistic development. *Tenrikyō* was well suited to become a poor man's religion because of its folk quality; because it identified itself with the poor, it naturally had a deep connection with folk religion. The relationship between *Tenrikyō* and the peasants can be discovered by reference to the life of the founder.

Nakayama Miki was born in 1798 into a wealthy farming family near Tambaichi in Nara Prefecture. She married a man of her own class. The family into which she married were known as "cotton dealers" and her husband was nicknamed "wealthy Zembei." After the death of her husband in 1855, however, she fell upon hard times, finally putting out the last seven and one-half acres of the family land to a long-term mortgage. She then peddled vegetables and spun cotton thread for a living. The cause of her sudden reverses is not known, but the fact that she still had that much land to mortgage shows that she was not really impoverished. Further, her husband's nickname of "wealthy Zembei" indicates that he had been a money lender. He was a member of the class which formed the backbone of the Meiji government as well as acting as its agent to suppress the peasants: a landowner-merchant. This class arose with the mercantile-money economy. One evidence of the fact that Miki was in this class is that she was able to pay priests for their services in cash. She lived in an area where the farmers had advanced rather far in a mercantile-money economy, and she herself was in that class until she fell into a state of relative poverty.

Miki shared the feelings of the peasants around her. In 1830 when she was thirty-two, she observed an *okage mairi* pilgrimage which passed through Tambaichi on its way to the Ise Shrine. The pilgrims, over ten thousand in number, made a deep impression on the people of Tambaichi and, presumably, on Miki. Eight years later, Miki had her first trance. In 1867 when *ee ja naika* dances spread throughout the whole country, Tambaichi was once more on the route one group of pilgrims followed. After this experience, she wrote the *Ofudesaki* which became the main source of *Tenrikyō* doctrine. This letter, written by someone else in 1867, gives an insight into what the people were seeking in the *ee ja naika* dances:

In the last two or three days, many lucky charms have fallen



from the sky in Yokohama and the people in other places are excited. Everybody is wondering whether similar charms might not fall here also. If this should start here (in Yokohama) and all Edo (Tokyo) be carried away, public unrest would cease; if dances should start in addition, it would be even more fun!

Miki shared the thrill of anticipation mentioned in this letter. A few months previously, she had composed the *Mikagurauta* which echoes the words which the poor were using in *ee ja naika* dances. In the *Mikagurauta*, Miki advised her followers to achieve a state of religious exaltation which would be like "heaven on earth." This would release them from suffering and cruelty. They should then come together to continue this state of blessedness. The way to do this was to organize financial co-operatives for mutual assistance. This would spare them from the hardships of rebellion which would otherwise break out. Miki's teaching was like that of the *ee ja naika* dancers in that it recognized the connection between religion and the desire to alleviate economic distress. But Miki's proposal of financial co-operatives to mitigate economic distress showed that she had gone far beyond the crowds who joined the *ee ja naika* dances in finding a solution to that distress.

Miki shared the sufferings as well as the expectations of the peasants. From 1873 until her death in 1886, she suffered as much at the hands of government officials as did the peasants who had lost their land under the reforms of the tax system.

Two points in the allegories of the *Ofudesaki* are particularly interesting from the point of view of social history and Miki's identification with the masses. One is the consciousness of conflict between the upper and the lower classes. The other is the comparison between foreign lands and Japan.

The *Ofudesaki* shows two periods in the development of Miki's social conscience. These periods are divided by the year 1874. Before that time, she thought that religious exaltation would finally be realized through co-operation with the members



of the new government who would come to understand her religion. Beginning in the eighteen-sixties, priests from the other religions who felt that she was poaching on their preserves began to exert pressure on her. As a result, *Tenrikyō* was put under the control of the Yoshida Sect of Shinto in 1867. With the subsequent separation of Shinto from Buddhism, however, the people who had opposed *Tenrikyō* lost their influence in government policy. Miki took this as a sign that the new ruling class would help her.

The *Ofudesaki* also shows Miki's attitude toward the Western powers. She spoke from the standpoint of the farmers whose misery had been increased with the opening of foreign trade. She said that the gods were angry at foreign intervention and that some day the new government would assert itself against the foreigners.

Miki lost her confidence in the government at the time that it changed the tax system. In 1873, after Miki had performed incantations for rain in a neighboring province, the men who had asked for her aid were fined. In the following year, the police destroyed her meeting house and subjected her to an examination. Miki could no longer believe in the new rulers and predicted that the gods would harm the government. Her attitude became less outspoken in 1875 after the police had detained her and ordered her to cease proselytizing.

Miki felt that two groups opposed the ruling class. The first were the gods, and the second were the lower classes. She considered members of the lower classes to be equal to the upper classes before the gods. The gods, moreover, supported the ruled rather than the rulers. She divided the lower classes into four groups: farmers, laborers, artisans, and merchants. These were the very groups who had lost status with the dissolution of the feudal system. It is not clear what she actually meant by the ruling class. It may be assumed, however, that she meant the whole Meiji government. She thought the ruling classes were aligned with foreign capital and were un-

conscious puppets of the foreign countries. In the end, however, the gods of Japan would help the people regain their independence.

There were two methods by which the people could relieve the pressure from above until Japan did regain its independence. The first was to increase the number of *Tenrikyō* believers, and the second was to induce a state of religious exaltation by dancing to the music of various Japanese primitive instruments. As a result, the gods might offer direct relief. In 1869, Miki felt that the upper classes would help bring about this religious exaltation. Beginning in 1875 after her detention by the police, however, she realized that suppression by the authorities was a prerequisite for the exaltation.

This religious exaltation would bestow many practical benefits upon those who experienced it. These included regulation of the time of birth and strength for the mother so that she could go to work immediately after giving birth; prevention against smallpox as well as other diseases; a secret means for preparing fertilizer; and incantations for rain. In summary, performing the dances would insure continued health, the single property of the peasant. *Tenrikyō* is often said to have an affinity with Christian Science in that good health depends upon the believer's mental attitude. In *Tenrikyō*, however, this attitude itself results from the performance of religious dances. For Miki, these dances were both the source and the result of faith.

Miki felt class differences greatly. After she turned against the ruling class when the government reformed the land tax in 1873, she went closer and closer to the peasants who were searching for some way out of their difficulties. The part that the religious rites played in the lives of the faithful will be explained later. Suffice it to say here that in Miki's case there was a connection between the rites of *Tenrikyō* and the *ee ja naika* dances which she herself had experienced. Her own personal background made it easy for her to accept the dances.



When she looked for a religious solution to her problems, then, she naturally turned to religious rites and their performance as a way to material prosperity. This close connection between *Tenrikyō* and the *ee ja naika* dances explains why the farmers cast their lot with *Tenrikyō* when open revolt could not have achieved their objectives.

Miki's theories provided an emotional outlet for the people who had no other way to express dissatisfaction with the government. The people had many grievances. In the recent past, many revolts had attempted to right these grievances, but the new government had too firm control to permit further revolts. Many people, some who had even previously participated in revolts, joined *Tenrikyō* to assuage their frustration.

Miki had long thought of organizing her followers into something resembling a financial co-operative, but she did not actually do so until about 1880. Until that time, most of her followers had joined her out of curiosity. Before 1875, she wrote that she did not even have fifty-five followers. Evidence indicates that by 1880 the number of faithful was increasing, and in 1881 the group went on a pilgrimage together for the first time.

*Tenrikyō's* first period of rapid growth was between 1890 and 1892. After that, it continued at an accelerated rate, spreading beyond the immediate vicinity of Nara. The financial panic of 1890 and government suppression of liberal political tendencies which began about then appear to have been factors in this growth. It is difficult to say to what extent *Tenrikyō* answered the religious needs of the people, but very little of what satisfaction they obtained was derived from the doctrines of the *Mikagurauta* and the *Ofudesaki*. At first, Miki's followers requested nothing more than prayers for easy delivery, recovery from illness, and good crops. As the movement increased, it developed social implications because of the dances Miki developed. These dances appear to have taken an increasingly large part in the religious life of believers. One evidence



attesting this is that Buddhist (particularly Shin Sect) criticism of *Tenrikyō* after 1893 concentrated on these dances and the sexual indulgence that often followed them.

Early *Tenrikyō* did not consist of much more than these supplications and dances. According to a church history, Miki "did not feel the need of written doctrine because in the beginning she confined her activities to the lower classes. The only work she printed was the *Mikagurauta*." Numerous other works were published in 1900, but as late as 1908 when the sect was recognized as an independent religion, the *Ofudesaki* had still not been published. The *Mikagurauta* oracles in verse form were purposely written in the vulgar language, so that the masses could comprehend them. *Tenrikyō* also has a few secret works of doctrine. No one but convinced believers read these other doctrinal works, and Miki forbade that they be made public.

Miki's two main works contain some extremely penetrating social commentary in addition to their religious elements. This commentary includes a utopian vision as well as relentless criticism of those in power. But they are all abstract and emotional, and her followers respected Miki more for her power as a fetishist than for her religious teachings. Though the writings were very abstract, the fetishes were very practical. The dances which otherwise served no function brought these two together. This gives us an insight into the hopelessness of the common people in Meiji. Those who had sought practical solutions in the riotous dances at the end of Tokugawa lost themselves in the *Tenrikyō* dances which provided religious inspiration in addition to the promise of practical relief. *Tenrikyō's* importance in Meiji religious society was that it tried to answer the basic problems of the masses.

## *Chapter Three*

### GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES TOWARD RELIGION

THE purpose of this chapter is to discuss government attitudes and policies toward religion. Four subdivisions cover government ordinances affecting religion, the position of the Emperor, government relations with the followers of religion, and believers' attitudes toward war.

The Meiji government issued its first ordinance affecting religion at the time it took power. This ordinance contained two provisions: religion and government were to be unified by means of Shinto; and all Shinto priests were to become government employees so that the government could use the shrines to achieve this unity. It was difficult to use the shrines for propagating Shinto since they had adopted many Buddhist elements. For this reason, the government next issued an ordinance separating Shinto completely from Buddhism.

This ordinance apparently succeeded but actually did not. The common man's religion hardly changed at all. The Buddhist priests and employees displaced by this order could be rehired as Shinto functionaries if they wanted to be. During the following ten years, the government issued a number of orders designed to strengthen the power of the shrines as part of government administration and to channel shrine receipts into the government coffers. In 1868-9, the government surveyed the lands of the temples, and, in 1871, it confiscated them. It kept the land itself rather than give it to the farmers because of its own financial difficulties.

After the government had ordered the separation of Shinto



from Buddhism, rescripts and ordinances concerning religion followed each other in rapid succession to the exclusion of other government business. This concentration on religion seems strange in the light of other important financial and organizational problems which remained unsolved. The government's aims became clear when it appointed propagandists in 1869. The job of these propagandists was to increase popular reverence toward the Emperor and thus to strengthen his authority. To that end, the government felt it also had to control the folk religions which were related to neither Shinto nor Buddhism. Interference with religious freedom went even further. Two examples will illustrate this. The first was local, originating in Kyoto. Here authorities proscribed a number of Buddhist festivals and customs on the ground that they were "completely erroneous superstitions which squandered time and resources as well as confused children." The second was a national government regulation concerning funeral services: "It has recently come to our attention that individual families are themselves conducting funeral services for their deceased. This practice is henceforth prohibited: all funeral services will be conducted by Shinto or Buddhist priests." An order to the priests supplemented this: "Up to the present, Shinto priests have not conducted funeral services, but if, in the future, any parishioners request a Shinto funeral, you are to assist the next of kin in every particular." Both of these examples may be interpreted as attempts to jettison old and no longer fitting customs, to strengthen reverence toward the shrines, and to purify them by rejecting Buddhist elements.

There is a humorous example of how this attempt to increase reverence toward shrines led to a man's being fined for answering a call of nature: "During a visit to a famous shrine in Tokyo, a merchant without thinking broke wind while standing near the hedge which surrounded the shrine. According to the people who were standing by, an officer immediately arrested him and collected a very large fine before releasing him." This



example of official interference seems laughable to us. It was not so laughable then. The attitude it reflected was entering deeply into everyday life and implanting fear in the hearts of the people.

The government continued its efforts to differentiate Shinto from other religions and to bring the shrines and other religious organizations under its own control. In February, 1870, it sent out Imperial messengers to the twenty-nine leading Shinto temples to urge the restoration of national Shinto rites. All shrines were organized into various grades and ranks under strict government control. When the government established the Department of Religion and Education in 1871, it also arranged the priests into a rigid hierarchy, replacing hereditary succession to the priesthood by government appointment. The Shinto priests became government officials, and the central government assumed responsibility for their upkeep through its local administrative offices. The government's penchant for arranging things into neat categories extended even to the gods and to the temples which were to revere them. As soon as the government had completed its control over the shrines and their priests, it quickly advanced another step toward achieving its basic aims by establishing the *Daikyōin*\*. These aims were to insure unquestioning loyalty to the Emperor and to make Shinto a tool for controlling the people. Description of the latter of these aims is postponed until later; the former question will be dealt with now.

In 1869, the government had appointed "propagandists" to implement its religious policy. Their particular job was to emphasize "reverence for the gods" through the local shrines. In 1871, the government established the Shinto Parish System under the Department of Religion and Education. This made the shrines even more effective agents for its control. The Shinto Parish System was meant to replace the Buddhist Parish System which had existed under the Tokugawa government.

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\* See pages 72-3

Each household had to buy good luck charms from the local Shinto priest. The priest came to be regarded as a government official. The Department of Religion and Education further strengthened the government's program of educating the people.

The Department of Religion and Education ranked its priests—called “national priests”—in a hierarchy of fourteen grades. In May, 1872, the government established the *Daikyōin* as an educational center for national priests. Previously, the officials had directly controlled Shinto priests but had had no authority over Buddhist priests. The Department of Religion and Education assumed control over both Shinto and Buddhist priests under the name “national priests.” The *Daikyōin* strengthened this system of official propaganda by bringing together the national priests from various temples and shrines. In spite of all its power and organization, the *Daikyōin* lasted only three years. It failed because of its weak doctrinal theory and because its power over Buddhism had been too autocratic.

The government had one purpose which remained consistent behind all these administrative changes. This purpose was to indoctrinate the people with the idea of the Emperor's divinity and to strengthen Imperial authority.

From 1875 when the *Daikyōin* closed, the government attitude changed and remained the same for about fifteen years. It no longer tried to control religion so closely. During this time, Protestant Christianity and the Buddhist attack on Christianity prospered. The government was much more lenient toward religions than it had been earlier. Local religious festivals were revived, often to the disgust of the press which generally favored more modern thinking. Many of the roadside Buddhist statuettes had disappeared, but now they were replaced and festivals in their honor reappeared. Religious customs with long tradition cannot be legislated out of existence in only ten years.

Christianity advanced rapidly in the cities. The Buddhists reacted vigorously to this Christian success. In 1883, an Osaka



woman divorced her husband and then was baptized. She next applied officially to Westernize her name. The newspapers played up the affair. In Kyoto, about a hundred ruffians tried to wreck a lecture hall which was being used by the Christians, and many anti-Christian rallies were organized. A Tokyo newspaper reported the following facts about Osaka:

### **Anti-Christian Lectures Extended One Week Because of Crowds**

In Osaka where the Shin Sect of Buddhism has been traditionally strong, many weak believers joined Christianity during its recent popularity. Now, large numbers of these people have begun to return to their former temples, and crowds have been attending anti-Christian lectures since the end of last month. . . . The burden of these lectures is that loyal Japanese should love their country and stick to traditional Japanese religions.

Christianity prospered in the cities and converted many weak persons. Most of the people, however, associated patriotism with the traditional Japanese religions and crowded into anti-Christian lectures. Conditions limiting religious freedom did not greatly affect the average man. Meiji economic and social policies were not in accord with popular desires, but its religious policy was. It arose from a shrewd knowledge of popular sentiment. The government used religion cleverly for its own ends.

Policy toward religion changed in the early eighteen-nineties. The government firmly established the emperor system in opening the Diet, proclaiming the Constitution, and issuing the Imperial Rescript on Education. The state had grown strong enough to suppress popular discontent.

Article 28 of the Constitution of 1889 granted freedom of religion on the condition that the people did not disturb the peace or neglect their duties as subjects. Itō Hirobumi, the chief architect of this Constitution, clarified the government's intent further in his *Commentary on the Constitution of the*

*Empire of Japan.* Part of this has already been quoted on pages 145-6. Itō continued from what was quoted there to say:

No believer in this or that religion has the right to place himself outside the pale of the law of the Empire, on the ground of his serving his god, and to free himself from his duties to the State, which, as a subject, he is bound to discharge. Thus, although freedom of religious belief is complete and exempt from all restrictions, so long as manifestations of it are confined to the mind; yet with regard to external matters such as forms of worship and the mode of propagandism, certain necessary restrictions of law or regulations must be provided for, and besides, the general duties of subjects must be observed. This is what the Constitution decrees, and it shows the relation in which political and religious rights stand toward each other.

The people were subjects of the Emperor, and the Emperor was "sacred and inviolable." Therefore, this Constitution, which at first glance appears reasonable, gave rise to many problems. One was Uchimura Kanzō's refusal to bow before the Education Rescript in 1891. Another famous problem occurred in Kumamoto the following year. A teacher in the English school told his students that the government should not interfere in matters of scholarship. The governor heard about it and dismissed the teacher on the grounds that his opinion was contrary to the national interest. Christian liberals including Uemura Masahisa and Honda Yōichi protested that this violated the freedom of religion promised in the Constitution.

The governor then called in local officials and named two things as forbidden to elementary-school teachers. The first was connection with a political party, and the second was belief in Christianity. Principals were to dismiss any Christians without hesitation. In another town, the principal of the primary school learned from the police that some of his pupils were



reading the Bible. He told them they had three days in which to stop or to leave school. One of the students refused to stop and was expelled. Christian leaders again protested that this was unconstitutional.

Another problem the Constitution brought up concerned the rules affecting familial succession. These also had a very close connection with religion. They were codified in the new civil law which was written to supplement the Constitution. The main points were as follows:

1. The family is the basis of society.
2. The family centers about the father.
3. The peculiar Japanese hereditary succession is to be strictly maintained. Ancestral spirits dwell in the family house. The head of the household is the living embodiment of these spirits. Naturally, the eldest son should succeed as the head of the family.
- . . . . .
5. The family system is the basis of the Japanese polity.
6. The family system binds each individual to all his relatives.

The heads of households, who embodied the spirits of their ancestors, bound the nation together by their reverence for the Emperor who was the spiritual father of all Japanese. The government, by its control over the head of each household, insured each citizen's loyalty to the Emperor. The laws of succession alone did not perfect this control, but they were an important part of it. This is how the system worked in detail.

The average Japanese house had a Buddhist altar for ancestor worship. This was called the *butsudan*. Each home also had a shelf containing objects of Shinto worship. It was used to honor the local and national gods and was called the *kamidana*. The ancestors of the house were thought to have their residence in the *butsudan*. The Japanese considered themselves a large family centered around their ancestors. National mythology

bound these ancestors, as gods, to the Imperial family. Since the *butsudan* existed for ancestor worship and the ancestors were bound to the Imperial family, this ancestor worship became at the same time worship of the Imperial ancestors and served indirectly as the spiritual nexus for the Japanese nation. Worship of gods at the *kamidana* served the same purpose. This worship of the ancestors was an hereditary rite. That is to say, social custom resulting from the Shinto myths about the gods of Japan bound the individual to continue ancestor worship.

The dead had supernatural powers and could either benefit or harm the remaining members of the family. Yasukuni Shrine was built to honor the souls of Japan's war dead as a national expression of this sentiment. The souls of the dead were supposed to have different resting places depending on the nature of their death. Those killed in wars became national gods. They were worshiped by the Emperor at the Yasukuni Shrine as well as by their own families at home. Those who died peacefully were worshiped only in the home. Thus, the Yasukuni shrine brought the people particularly close to the Emperor because of his place in the ancestral religion. Wars increased as Japan turned toward imperialism. The people and the Emperor were bound more closely together in proportion as deaths from these wars also increased. Everyone took it for granted that those who had been killed in battle would be worshiped as national gods in the Yasukuni Shrine. This strengthened the power of the central government and at the same time increased the prestige of families who had lost members in war. The people became increasingly receptive to State Shinto and to emperor-centered militarism. The worship of the Emperor as a living deity began in Meiji. The ancient household worship of ancestors became a part of this Emperor worship and played a large part in supporting it.

In 1899, a bill to control religions was proposed and rejected in the Diet. The purpose of this bill was to codify the relationship between various religious organizations and the state.



It did not pass because the Buddhists objected to the fact that under it Christianity would be handled as a religious group on the same level with Buddhism.

Legislation regarding religion may be divided into two periods. Until the dissolution of the *Daikyōin* in 1875, the government tried to make Shinto the national religion. Later, it tended not to interfere with religion. During the second period of control, it actually developed an emperor-centered cult while proclaiming freedom of religion in the Constitution.

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During the Tokugawa Period, the Emperor had been a prisoner of court etiquette with no political and very little economic power. By the end of Meiji, he was one of the wealthiest monarchs in the world, and emperor both in name and in fact.

The Japanese feudal government claimed that its political power was based on higher authority. It divested the Emperor of real power and made him spend all his time in ceremonies, while claiming that its own authority came from him. The Emperor never had authority, nor was he considered divine. The Tokugawa government, if it ever felt the need of divine sanction, had borrowed it from the tradition associated with its own founder, Tokugawa Ieyasu. As a result, the Meiji government utilized every opportunity to make the people believe the Emperor was divine. It was government policy to insist that he was a god until he declared himself human at the end of World War II. Therefore, the question of his divinity is an important part of the religious history of the period.

One thing that strikes students now when speaking to people born in early Meiji is the intimacy with which they refer to the Imperial family. In contrast to this, there is a kind of fear in the words of those who were born later. They refer to the Emperor as if he were actually a living god.

The peasant revolts that greeted the Imperial forces at the end of Tokugawa did not result from loyalty to the Emperor

but from expectation of economic gain. At first, the people barely realized that the Emperor existed. The government adopted various methods to teach them respect. The propagandists, the national priests, and the official designation of twenty-nine shrines as "national shrines" have all been mentioned. The government went on to decide on two great national holidays: the traditional date of the Emperor Jimmu's accession to the throne and the birthday of the reigning Emperor. They also replaced popular traditional holidays with Shinto festivals which up to that time had been conducted within the Imperial household only. These drew attention to the Imperial line and to the reigning Emperor.

The government had to picture the Emperor as benevolent and kind in addition to emphasizing his authority. The Emperor Meiji made a total of ninety-six official visits around the country to demonstrate these qualities. In 1874, photographs of him were put on prominent display for a few days all over the country. They were received so enthusiastically everywhere that the authorities had to lengthen the period of exhibition.

At some places, the photographs became objects of worship. The people who revered them considered the Emperor to be one of the living deities frequently found in Japanese religions. This is one newspaper report of how the people at the same time were receiving another popular religious leader as a god:

One high-ranking priest was on his way to attend the opening ceremony for a new meeting house and stopped one night at a village inn. The word spread that a great religious official was in the village and several hundred farmers gathered around the inn. The crowds seized the cushions upon which he had sat for a few minutes while leading services. They saved every last drop of his bath water in bottles. It is all right to revere him, since a man in his position is considered to be a direct descendant of God, but this is going too far.



The chief abbot of the Shin Sect is one religious official who is regarded as a living Buddha. Examples of men considered to be living gods are not rare in the history of religion, and in early Meiji, the people seem to have been particularly receptive to the idea. From the beginning of Meiji, the government tried to switch the old loyalty toward the Tokugawa government to the person of the Emperor. The Department of Religion and Education ordered that people could build no personal shrines, but at the same time, it constructed large national shrines dedicated to men who personified the spirit of loyalty. Among these national centers for worship, the Yasukuni Shrine particularly emphasized loyalty through military service.

The Yasukuni Shrine was founded to honor the souls of the thirty-five hundred members of the Imperial forces who died at the time of the Restoration. Later, the spirits of other people were also admitted. These people had all served the Meiji government and were honored by it in this way. By 1911, the total had risen to 117,000. This number included many groups in addition to military men: provincial police, members of the nobility, former clan daimyo, Shinto and Buddhist priests, women, farmers, and artisans. Increasing the categories of those who could be enshrined in Yasukuni was one more way of increasing popular acceptance of it.

The fact that a person becomes a Buddha and is worshiped by his successors when he dies has already been explained. The Japanese consider that no person should be worshiped as a Shinto god, however, unless he is particularly outstanding. What the average Japanese could not aspire to was realized when he died in battle and was enshrined in Yasukuni. This honor particularly moved the families of the bereaved. The shrine had a regular program for these relatives when they arrived on pilgrimages from all parts of Japan:

They met the Emperor after which the spirits of the dead

wept with their relatives because of this great favor. Thus, they were consoled and retained their reverence for the Emperor. After the services, the authorities presented them with wine and cakes in the name of the Emperor and took them on tours to the usual sightseeing spots as well as to the Imperial grounds which were not normally open to visitors.

The general populace appreciated the Emperor's trips around the country, but no one felt his benevolence as greatly as these bereaved families. Those who had previously never set foot out of their native village valued this favor the most. The Yasukuni Shrine bound the Emperor to his people. As the number of war dead increased, it completed the work which the propagandists and the national priests had set out to accomplish.

The important point to remember is that State Shinto did not consist of shrines alone. Behind them lay the authority of the Emperor and long religious tradition.

The government intended that State Shinto should supersede the traditional Japanese religions. They wanted to tie Buddhism into the Emperor system through the home worship of ancestors; they hoped similarly to connect folk religions to the Emperor system through Sect Shinto. Until State Shinto had gained control over these traditional religions, there was no trouble between Christianity and the Emperor system. These two clashed just when the edifice of State Shinto had been completed. Uchimura Kanzō's refusal to bow before the Imperial Rescript was the first example of this clash. Christianity ceased its opposition to State Shinto after Uchimura's act and the later acts of Christian pacifism had failed.

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The supporters of different religions reacted variously to the government program. The term "supporters of religion" is used rather than "believers in religion" because the support



of a religious organization is not always limited to its believers. One example in Japan is the villagers who have a deep faith in Buddhism as a family religion but who support local Shinto shrines as members of the community. During Meiji, the heads of almost all households represented their families in supporting both Buddhist temples and State Shinto shrines. In addition, members of these households often believed as individuals in one of the sects of Sect Shinto. Thus, they themselves believed in one religion but were also included among the supporters of others. Christians, on the other hand, usually rejected other religions and would have no part in their support. Conversely, members of other religious groups did not support Christianity. Its believers and supporters were one and the same group.

Some of the many peasant revolts during the early years of Meiji resulted partly from religious causes. One example is the 1873 revolt in Fukui Prefecture where the people destroyed all government records regarding land ownership.

Fukui contained many temples of the Shin Sect of Buddhism. After plotting among themselves, the priests told the local leaders that the government policy of abandoning traditional class distinctions was a preliminary to accepting Christianity officially. The revolt followed immediately. The priests called the meeting in reaction to the government's removal of anti-Christian signs, and the people attended with the purpose of demonstrating against Christianity. Their objective changed when they heard that a riot had broken out in a nearby village. They then started to burn titles to land and to destroy the houses of money lenders. The villagers still talk of the speed and efficiency with which the leaders carried out this revolt. This efficiency resulted from the traditionally strong organization of Shin Buddhism. The objective of the revolt changed from reaction against government religious policy to reaction against government economic policy. It succeeded because it used the capacity for united action which only the Buddhist

organization possessed. Most Japanese were traditionally organized around the local shrine for the purpose of celebrating festivals. This organization did not transcend village limits and in fact, isolated each village from the others. This Shinto organization, as a result, served the government well in effecting its policies, since it could control the village by having local officials control the shrine. Shinto organization, however, could not unite the members of various villages against central authority. In this case, the Buddhist priests used their regional organization to bring men together from various villages. This gave the people a sense of unity which transcended village lines and provided a basis for combined action.

This is one outstanding example of a case where the local supporters of a religious group included all the members of the community. In cases like this, people can turn to solving practical problems when the opportunity presents itself, even though the original reason for which they assemble is religious.

*Tenrikyō* organization was just the opposite. The supporters of *Tenrikyō* formed new religious groups within their own villages. Though the individuals had a corporate religious expression of their discontent, they did not have organizational ties extending beyond their own village which might serve as the basis for political action. They tried to solve political problems in religious terms. People naturally turn to this kind of religious expression when they feel that they cannot satisfy their political demands under the existing government. Such religions develop very quickly since they appear to provide a panacea for all ills.

The farmers supported religious groups like *Tenrikyō*, but the small urban intellectual classes did not. Many lower-class samurai and urban intellectuals entered Christianity, particularly Protestantism. Most of them were relatively free from the social bonds imposed by village life. These intellectuals consciously acted as individuals rather than as part of a family unit. They usually tried to express their Christian faith in political activity. This activity developed into liberal political



movements.

There is no direct religious connection between Christianity and these political movements other than the fact that they both were supported by intellectuals and were based on Western ideas. The socialist movement is different. Quick expansion of Japanese capitalism after the Sino-Japanese War induced many social problems. Various kinds of Christian charity arose to face these problems by religious social action. Part Three has already discussed how this developed into socialism.

Japanese Christian socialism did not expand further due to the nature of its supporters, the Japanese intellectual class. It is still, however, the best example Meiji affords of the political application of religious idealism, and it did perform the service of introducing socialism into Japan.

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The various religious groups had differing views regarding the wars of Meiji. Both Buddhism and Christianity backed the government when it declared war on China in 1894. A newspaper commented on this in the following words:

### **Christians Also Join In Encouraging Popular Martial Spirit**

Christians have been collecting money and enlisting nurses as part of a large-scale support of the war. In the near future, they will send representatives all over the country to distribute handbills and to encourage people to rally behind the government. Honda Yōichi goes to the Kansai while Ebina Danjō goes to the Tōhoku and Iwamoto Zenji goes to the Shinetsu.

Buddhist priests in general let the army use their temples for temporary barracks and sent priests as chaplains into the army. Shin Buddhism in particular cared for the bodies of the dead and conducted funeral services as well as other religious rites.

Shinto did not directly assist the prosecution of the war except for special services for the war dead which it held in the Yasukuni Shrine in December, 1895.

It is a fact that the organizations of both Christianity and Buddhism officially supported the war. To determine the attitude of individual believers toward their religion or to discover what the believers hoped to find in religion at this time is more difficult. All that is definitely known is that the war brought neither heightened religious consciousness nor religious salvation to the average man.

In the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, Buddhism, particularly Shin and Zen, was even more active on the field of battle than in the Sino-Japanese War, consoling the living as well as saying funeral rites for the dead. Many Christian groups did the same kind of work. At the same time, a small but vocal segment of the Christian community became pacifists.

The Conference of Religionists which represented almost all religious bodies, but not the pacifists, adopted the following resolution in Tokyo in May, 1904:

Japan's War with Russia is for her own safety and the eternal peace of the Orient, as well as for world civilization, righteousness, and humanity, irrespective of religion or race. Therefore, we religionists support it and we proclaim its real meaning to the whole world. We appeal to the world's sense of justice, and we hope that this action may hasten the achievement of glorious peace.

This declaration was in part an answer to the Western fear of the "Yellow Peril" rather than a jingoistic endorsement of policy. In essence, however, it supported the government's position.

Opposed to this was the action of Uchimura Kanzō and the Christian socialists who became pacifists right before the Russo-Japanese War. Pacifism developed at this time, not because the



power of the state had weakened, but because the forces opposing it had grown strong enough to demand attention. Most of the pacifists with the exception of Uchimura Kanzō were socialists. The great social problems which had developed during the ten years of Japanese capitalism were the real cause of pacifism.





## Chapter Four

### RELIGION AND CULTURE

RELIGION during Meiji had a profound influence on the development of modern thought and on social problems. The most outstanding examples of the relationship between religion and modern thought are between Protestantism on one hand and liberal political movements on the other. Both have been covered in Part Three. Another influential group was professional scholars who made contributions in fields other than their own specialities. Four are important.

Ōnishi Hajime taught philosophy, psychology, logic, ethics, and esthetics at Waseda University. He was very much influenced by Christianity from his youth on. He edited the progressive Christian magazine *Rikugō Zasshi* and wrote studies on such subjects as *New Tendencies in Japanese Christianity* (Wagakuni Kirisutokyō ni Okeru Shin Keikō), *Historical Studies in Buddhism* (Bukkyō no Rekishiteki Kenkyū), *Religion and Education* (Shūkyō to Kyōiku), and *The Problem of Revelation* (Tenkei no Shozai). His interests broadened into the problem of religion as such rather than Christianity alone.

Kiyozawa Manshi was a priest of the Ōtani subsect of Buddhism who became dean of the Shin Sect University and edited the magazine *Spiritual World* (Seishin Kai).

Anezaki Masaharu was the first professor of comparative religion at Tokyo Imperial University. He wrote many works including the English-language *History of Japanese Religion*. He also was very influential as a social critic.

Raphael Köber was born in Russia and educated in Germany.

He taught Western philosophy and Greek in Tokyo Imperial University. His essays are widely read in Japanese translation. His broad philosophy arose from strong Christian conviction.

The influence of these professors did not end with their own students. Through their writings, it extended to Japanese intellectuals in general. The religious contributions which these men made through their lives and works went beyond sectarianism into the realm of religious philosophy.

Another group of four who deserve mention were literary critics.

Kitamura Tōkoku published the *Literary World* and wandered through the fields of politics and religion seeking salvation. He finally took his own life. He was a Christian who could not find peace within Christianity.

Takayama Chogyū edited the magazine *Sun* (Taiyō) while lecturing at Tokyo Imperial and Waseda Universities. Chogyū himself was an admirer of Nichiren and championed his teachings in all his writings.

Kuroiwa Ruikō translated many works into Japanese and built up the *Yorodzu Chōhō* until it was the largest newspaper of its day. He wrote a treatise on religion in which he did not advocate any particular religion but tried to reconcile pantheism and deism.

Tsunashima Ryōsen was at different times in his life a Christian and a member of the Shin Sect of Buddhism. He edited a literary magazine at Waseda University and published several mystical works on religion.

These four men were much better known than the scholars mentioned previously and had a correspondingly wide and profound influence. None of the members of either group represented particular sects or narrow religious points of view. This interest in religion without reference to specific sects flourished between the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese Wars. The middle class which had begun to develop in the cities became the reading public for these authors.



Buddhism has been the most important religious system in Japanese literature, and some literary works have been little more than Buddhist apologies. It lost its hold on the hearts of the people during Tokugawa when it became the state religion, and popular literature became secular.

Literature during Meiji and later has continued this emphasis on the secular, although during a short interval Meiji produced many works based on religious thinking. These began to appear in the middle eighties and increased with the flowering of Meiji literature around the turn of the century. Their popularity reflects the growth of the urban classes as well as their interest in religion. The members of these new classes, however, formed a very small segment of the total population. The religious experience of the masses was closer to the folk religions.

Folk religions are shot through with superstition. For this reason, they do not properly have a place in modern thought and culture, but diametrically oppose it. During the early years of Meiji, one man appeared with what he claimed to be the petrified corpse of Buddha. Some Shinto groups actively defended the traditional practice of erecting phallic symbols along the highways. Rural folk continued to believe in the traditional power of foxes and badgers over people, and particularly women. Articles describing similar phenomena still appear in the newspapers almost daily. The number of persons who believe in these superstitions has decreased, but the superstitions themselves continue. People still believe that they can use religion for their own benefit; they believe that demons can possess people and that they should regulate their lives by the position of the sun and the stars. Religious thought and literature have reached a high level, but the religious life of the masses remains far behind it. What brought on this disparity?

Meiji Westernization affected only the intellectuals and the middle class. The peasants and impoverished former samurai who were over eighty percent of the population, far from

improving their position, became even poorer. After the farmers lost their land, they gravitated to the cities where they became day laborers. Modern Japanese culture developed at their expense. These masses turned for religious leadership to Sect Shinto which had developed out of their traditional folk religions. They found peace neither in the Buddhism which had availed itself of Western philosophy nor in the Christianity which had come as a part of Western influence.

The first social problem which faced the new Meiji government was what to do with the former samurai who had lived off government stipends. The government could no more afford to continue paying them than its predecessor could. After all, the Tokugawa government had fallen because of these burdens of a feudal economy.

What part did religion play in solving the problems of these former samurai? It is true that the Christians of the Kumamoto and Sapporo Bands came from lower-class samurai families. But the total number of Christians was small. The principles of Zen Buddhism in the background of the samurai class is supposed by some to have been important in their later activity. The Zen tradition made the samurai self-reliant, and this reliance enabled them to demand more liberal political policies. This does not take into account the economic realities of their plight. Neither Christianity nor Zen, as is sometimes alleged, played an important role in solving this social problem.

Religion did play a considerable role, however, in the solution of peasant problems. No matter how modern the facilities for medical care in the cities, the farmers were unable to use them. They had no recourse except to their traditional incantations and magic spells. Although the butt of jokes by their more sophisticated countrymen, they continued to join new religions which promised longevity and recovery from disease. In effect, the farmers solved—or rather, were forced to solve—their problem of poverty unconsciously in terms of an entirely different social mechanism: religion.



In Japan, urban labor has very close affinity with farmers, and city workers may well be described as laborers whose home base is in the countryside. This was even more true during Meiji than it is now. These conditions produced a large number of impoverished surplus farm workers who wanted to become day laborers in the cities. When the ranks of the unemployed urban workers became too large, they returned to the countryside. For this reason, the urban proletariat did not develop as it did in Europe and America where the workers could not return to the land.

Although they both lived miserable existences, there were two distinct groups of urban laborers. The first worked for regular wages and the second were employed by the day. The first group went on to organize unions after the first strike which occurred in a textile factory in 1889. The others, so impoverished that they could not even afford to join *Tenrikyō* or any other organization which might help them, had to work out their problems by themselves.

The role played by religion in solving poverty can only be understood when one has first comprehended these two facets of the problem itself. Salaried workers try to find a way out by realistic political means instead of through religious devotion. The day laborers try to find relief within the very lowest forms of religious experience. Some people are so poor that they cannot even afford Sect Shinto. As a result, they turn to folk religions which cost them nothing but tend to ease the pains and frustrations of their existence.

THE END





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