

ative, which is coexistent with the Heavens and the Earth.

"Such conduct on your part will not only strengthen the character of Our good and loyal subjects, but conduce also to the maintenance of the fame of your worthy forefathers.

"This is the instruction bequeathed by Our ancestors and to be followed by Our subjects; for it is the truth which has guided and guides them in their own affairs and their dealings toward aliens.

"We hope, therefore, that We and Our subjects will regard these sacred precepts with one and the same heart in order to attain the same ends."

XXIV

MORAL PRACTICE

ONE noticeable characteristic of the Japanese is the publicity of the life of the individual. He seems to feel no need for privacy. Houses are so constructed that privacy is practically impossible. The slight paper shoji and fusuma between the small rooms serve only partially to shut out peering eyes; they afford no protection from listening ears. Moreover, these homes of the middle and lower classes open upon public streets, and a passer-by may see much of what is done within. Even the desire for privacy seems lacking. The publicity of the private (?) baths and sanitary conveniences which the Occidental puts entirely out of sight has already been noted.

I once passed through a village and was not a little amazed to see two or three bath tubs on the public road, each occupied by one or more persons; nor were the occupants children alone, but men and women also. Calling at the home of a gentleman in Kyushu with whom I had some business, and gaining no notice at the front entrance, I went around to the side of the house only to discover the lady of the place taking her bath with her children, in a tub quite out of doors, while a manservant chopped wood but a few paces distant.

The natural indifference of the Japanese to the exposure of the unclothed body is an interesting fact. In the West such indifference is rightly considered immodest. In Japan, however, immodesty consists entirely in the intention of the heart and does not arise from the accident of the moment or the need of the occasion. With a fellow missionary, I went some years since to some famous hot springs at the foot of Mount

Ase, the smoking crater of Kyushu. The spot itself is most charming, situated in the center of an old crater, said to be the largest in the world. Wearied with a long walk, we were glad to find that one of the public bath tubs or tanks, some fifteen by thirty feet in size, in a bath house separate from other houses, was quite unoccupied; and on inquiry we were told that bathers were few at that hour of the day, so that we might go in without fear of disturbance. It seems that in such places the tiers of boxes for the clothing on either side of the door, are reserved for men and women respectively. Ignorant of this custom, we deposited our clothing in the boxes on the left hand, and as quickly as we could accommodate ourselves to the heat of the water, we got into the great tank. We were scarcely in, when a company of six or eight men and women entered the bath house; they at once perceived our blunder, but without the slightest hesitation, the women as well as the men went over to the men's side and proceeded to undress and get into the tank with us, betraying no consciousness that aught was amiss. So far as I could see there was not the slightest self-consciousness in the entire proceeding. In the tank, too, though it is customary for women to occupy the left side, on this occasion they mingled freely with the men. I suppose it is impossible in England or America to conceive of such a state of unconsciousness. Yet it seems to be universal in Japan. It is doubtless explained by the custom, practiced from infancy, not only of public bathing, but also of living together so unreservedly. The heat of the summer and the nature of Japanese clothing, so easily thrown off, has accustomed them to the greater or less exposure of the person. All these customs have prevented the development of a sense of modesty corresponding to that which has developed in the West. Whether this familiarity of the sexes is conducive to purity of life or not, is a totally different question, on which I do not here enter.

In this connection I can do no better than quote from a popular, and in many respects deservedly popular, writer on Japan. Says Mr. Hearn, "There is little

privacy of any sort in Japan. Among the people, indeed, what we term privacy in the Occident does not exist. There are only walls of paper dividing the lives of men; there are only sliding screens instead of doors; there are neither locks nor bolts to be used by day; and whenever the weather permits, the fronts and perhaps even the sides of the houses are literally removed, and its interior widely opened to the air, the light, and the public gaze. Within a hotel or even a common dwelling house, nobody knocks before entering your room; there is nothing to knock at except a shoji or a fusuma, which cannot be knocked at without being broken. And in this world of paper walls and sunshine, nobody is afraid or ashamed of fellow-man or fellow-woman. Whatever is done is done after a fashion in public. Your personal habits, your idiosyncrasies (if you have any), your foibles, your likes and dislikes, your loves and your hates must be known to everybody. Neither vices nor virtues can be hidden; there is absolutely nowhere to hide them. . . . There has never been, for the common millions at least, even the idea of living unobserved." The Japanese language has no term for "privacy," nor is it easy to convey the idea to one who does not know the English word. They lack the term and the clear idea because they lack the practice.

These facts prove conclusively that the Japanese individual is still a gregarious being, and this fact throws light on the moral life of the people. It follows of necessity that the individual will conform somewhat more closely to the moral standards of the community, than a man living in a strong segregarious community.

The converse of this principle is that in a community whose individuals are largely segregarious, enjoying privacy, and thus liberty of action, variations from the moral standards will be frequent and positive transgressions not uncommon. In the one case, where "communalism" reigns, moral action is, so to speak, automatic; it requires no particular assertion of the individual will to do right; conformity to the standard is

spontaneous. In the latter case, however, where "individualism" is the leading characteristic of the community, the acceptance of the moral standards usually requires a definite act of the individual will.

The history of Japan is a capital illustration of this principle. The recent increase of immorality and crime is universally admitted. The usual explanation is that in olden times every slight offense was punished with death; the criminal class was thus continuously exterminated. Nowadays a robber can ply his trade continuously, though interrupted by frequent intervals of imprisonment. In former times, once caught, he never could steal again, except in the land of the shades. While this explanation has some force, it does not cover the ground. A better explanation for the modern increase of lawlessness is the change in the social order itself. The new order gives each man wider liberty of individual action. He is free to choose his trade and his home. Formerly these were determined for him by the accident of his birth. His freedom is greater and so, too, are his temptations.

Furthermore, the standards of conduct themselves have been changing. Certain acts which would have brought praise and honor if committed fifty years ago, such, for instance, as "katakuchi," revenge, would to-day soon land one behind prison doors. In a word, "individualism" is beginning to work powerfully on conduct; it has not yet gained the ascendancy attained in the West; it is nevertheless abroad in the land. The young are especially influenced by it. Taking advantage of the liberty it grants, many forms of immorality seem to be on the increase. So far as I can gather by inquiry, there has been a great collapse not only in honesty, but also in the matter of sexual morality. It will hardly do to say dogmatically that the national standards of morality have been lowered, but it is beyond question that the power of the community to enforce those standards has suddenly come to naught by reason of the changing social order. Western thought and practice as to the structure of society and the freedom of the individual have been

emphasized; Spencer and Mill and Huxley have been widely read by the educated classes.*

Furthermore, freedom and ease of travel, and liberty to change one's residence at will, and thus the ability to escape unpleasant restraints, have not a little to do with this collapse in morality. Tens of thousands of students in the higher schools are away from their homes and are entirely without the steadying support that home gives. Then, too, there is a wealth among the common people that was never known in earlier times. Formerly the possession of means was limited to a relatively small number of families. To-day we see general prosperity, and a consequent tendency to luxury that was unknown in any former period.

To be specific, let us note that in feudal times there were some 270 daimyo living in the utmost luxury. About 1,500,000 samurai were dependent on them as retainers, while 30,000,000 people supported these sons of luxury. In 1863 the farmers of Japan raised 30,000,000 koku of rice, and paid 22,000,000 of it to the government as taxes. Taxed at the same rate to-day the farmers would have to pay 280,000,000 yen, whereas the actual payment made by them is only 38,000,000 yen. "The farmer's manner of life has radically changed. He is now prosperous and comfortable, wearing silk where formerly he could scarcely afford cotton, and eating rice almost daily, whereas formerly he scarcely knew its taste." †

It is stated by the *Japan Mail* that whereas but "one person out of ten was able thirty years ago to afford rice, the nine being content to live from year's end to year's end on barley alone or barley mixed with a modicum of rice, six persons to-day out of ten count it a hardship if they cannot sit down to a square meal of rice daily. . . . Rice is no longer a luxury to the mass of the people, but has become a necessity."

*It is stated that Mill's work on "Representative Government," which, translated, fills a volume of five hundred pages in Japanese, has reached its third edition.

†The *Japan Mail* for February 5, 1898; quoting from the *Jeji Shimpo*.

Financially, then, the farming and middle classes are incomparably better off to-day than in olden times. The amount of ready money which a man can earn has not a little to do with his morality. If his uprightness depends entirely or chiefly on his lack of opportunity to do wrong, he will be a moral man so long as he is desperately poor or under strict control. But give him the chance to earn ready cash, together with the freedom to live where he chooses, and to spend his income as he pleases, and he is sure to develop various forms of immorality.

I have made a large number of inquiries in regard to the increase or decrease of concubinage during the present era. Statistics on this subject are not to be had, for concubines are not registered as such nor yet as wives. If a concubine lives in the home of the man, she is registered as a domestic, and her children should be registered as hers, although I am told that they are very often illegally registered as his. If she lives in her own home, the concubine still retains the name and registry of her own parents. The government takes no notice of concubinage, and publishes no statistics in regard to it. The children of concubines who live with their own parents are, I am told, usually registered as the children of the mother's father; otherwise they are registered as illegitimate; statistics, therefore, furnish no clew as to the increase or decrease or amount of concubinage and illegitimacy, most important questions in Japanese sociology. But my informants are unanimous in the assertion that there has been a marked increase of concubinage during recent years. The simple and uniform explanation given is that multitudes of merchants and officials, and even of farmers, can afford to maintain them to-day who formerly were unable to do so. The older ideals on this subject were such as to allow of concubinage to the extent of one's financial ability.

During the year 1898 the newspapers and leading writers of Japan carried on a vigorous discussion concerning concubinage. The *Yorozu Choho* published an inventory of 493 men maintaining separate establish-

ments for their concubines, giving not only the names and the business of the men, but also the character of the women chosen to be concubines. Of these 493 men, 9 are ministers of state and ex-ministers; 15 are peers or members of House of Peers; 7 are barristers; 3 are learned doctors; the rest are nearly all business men. The women were, previous to concubinage, Dancing girls, 183; Servants, 69; Prostitutes, 17; "Ordinary young girls," 91; Adopted daughters, 15; Widows, 7; Performers, 7; Miscellaneous, 104. In this discussion it has been generally admitted that concubinage has increased in modern times, and the cause attributed is "general looseness of morals." Some of the leading writers maintain that the concubinage of former times was largely confined to those who took concubines to insure the maintenance of the family line; and also that the taking of dancing girls was unknown in olden times.

It is interesting to note in this connection that some of those who defend the practice of concubinage appeal to the example of the Old Testament, saying that what was good enough for the race that gave to Christians the greater part of their Bible is good enough for the Japanese. Another point in the discussion interesting to the Occidental is the repeated assertion that there is no real difference between the East and the West in point of practice; the only difference is that whereas in the East all is open and above board, in the West extra-marital relations are condemned by popular opinion, and are therefore concealed.* A few writers publicly defend concubinage; most, however, condemn it vigorously, even though making no profession of Christian faith. Of the latter class is Mr. Fukuzawa, one of Japan's leaders of public opinion. In his most trenchant attack, he asserts that if Japan is to progress in civilization she must abandon her system of concubinage. That new standards in regard to marital relations are arising in Japan is clear; but they have as yet little force; there is no consensus of opinion to

* The best summary of this discussion which I have seen in English is found in the *Japan Mail* for February 4, 1899.

give them force. He who transgresses them is still recognized as in good standing in the community.

Similarly, with respect to business honesty, it is the opinion of all with whom I have conversed on the subject that there has been a great decline in the honesty of the common people. In feudal days thefts and petty dishonesty were practically unknown. To-day these are exceedingly common. Foreign merchants complain that it is impossible to trust Japanese to carry out verbal or written promises, when the conditions of the market change to their disadvantage. It is accordingly charged that the Japanese have no sense of honor in business matters.

The *Kokumin Shinbun* (People's News) has recently discussed the question of Japanese commercial morality, with the following results: It says, first, that goods delivered are not up to sample; secondly, that engagements as to time are not kept; thirdly, that business men have no adequate appreciation of the permanent interests of business; fourthly, that they are without ability to work in common; and fifthly, that they do not get to know either their customers or themselves.*

"The Japanese consul at Tientsin recently reported to the Government that the Chinese have begun to regard Japanese manufactures with serious distrust. Merchandise received from Japan, they allege, does not correspond with samples, and packing is, in almost all cases, miserably unsubstantial. The consul expresses the deepest regret that Japanese merchants are disposed to break their faith without regard to honor." †

In this connection it may not be amiss to revert to illustrations that have come within my own experience. I have already cited instances of the apparent duplicity to which deacons and candidates for the ministry stoop. I do not believe that either the deacons or the candidates had the slightest thought that they were doing anything dishonorable. Nor do I for a moment suppose that the President and the Trustees of the Doshisha at all realized the gravity of the moral aspect

* *Japan Mail*, January 14, 1899.

† *Japan Mail*, June 24, 1898.

of the course they took in diverting the Doshisha from its original purposes. They seemed to think that money, once given to the Doshisha, might be used without regard to the wishes of the donors. I cannot help wondering how much of their thought on this subject is due to the custom prevalent in Japan ever since the establishment of Buddhist temples and monasteries, of considering property once given as irrevocable, so that the individuals who gave it or their heirs, have no further interest or right in the property. Large donations in Japan have, from time immemorial, been given thus absolutely; the giver assumed that the receiver would use it aright; specific directions were not added as to the purposes of the gift. American benefactors of the Doshisha have given under the standards prevailing in the West. The receivers in Japan have accepted these gifts under the standards prevailing in the East. Is not this in part the cause of the friction that has arisen in recent years over the administration of funds and lands and houses held by Japanese for mission purposes?

In this connection, however, I should not fail to refer to the fact that the Christians of the Kumiai churches,* in their annual meeting (1898), took strong grounds as to the mismanagement of the Doshisha by the trustees. The action of the latter in repealing the clause of the constitution which declared the six articles of the constitution forever unchangeable, and then of striking out the word "Christian" in regard to the nature of the moral education to be given in all departments of the institution, was characterized as "fu-ho," that is to say, unlawful, unrighteous, or immoral. Resolutions were also passed demanding that the trustees should either restore the expunged words or else resign and give place to men who would restore them and carry out the will of the donors. This act on the part of a large majority of the delegates of the churches shows that a standard of business morality is arising in Japan that promises well for the future.

*The constituency of the Doshisha consists principally of Kumiai Christians.

Before leaving this question, it is important for us to consider how widely in lands which have long been both Christian and commercial, the standards of truthfulness and business morality are transgressed. I for one do not feel disposed to condemn Japanese failure very severely, when I think of the failure in Western lands. Then, again, when we stop to think of it, is it not a pretty fine line that we draw between legitimate and illegitimate profits? What a relative distinction this is! Even the Westerner finds difficulty in discovering and observing it, especially so when the man with whom he is dealing happens to be ignorant of the real value of the goods in question. Let us not be too severe, then, in condemning the Japanese, even though we must judge them to be deficient in ideals and conduct. The explanation for the present state of Japan in regard to business morality is neither far to seek nor hard to find. It has nothing whatever to do with brain structure or inherent race character, but is wholly a matter of changing social order. Feudal communalism has given way to individualistic commercialism. The results are inevitable. Japan has suddenly entered upon that social order where the individuals of the nation are thrown upon their own choice for character and life as they have been at no previous time. Old men, as well as young, are thrown off their feet by the new temptations into which they fall.

One of the strongest arguments in my mind for the necessity of a rapid introduction into Japan of the Gospel of Christ, is to be built on this fact. An individualistic social order demands an individualizing religion. So far as I know, the older religions, with the lofty moral teachings which one may freely admit them to have, make no determined or even distinct effort to secure the activity of the individual will in the adoption of moral ideals. The place both of "conversion" and of the public avowal of one's "faith" in the establishment of individual character, and the peculiar fitness of a religion having such characteristics to a social order in which "individualism" is the dominant principle, have not yet been widely recognized by writers

on sociology. These practices of the Protestant churches are, nevertheless, of inestimable value in the upbuilding both of the individual and of society. And Japan needs these elements at the earliest possible date in order to supplement the new order of society which is being established. Without them it is a question whether in the long run this new order may not prove a step downward rather than upward.

This completes our detailed study of Japanese moral characteristics as revealed alike in their ideals and their practices. Let us now seek for some general statement of the facts and conclusions thus far reached. It has become clear that Japanese moralists have placed the emphasis of their ethical thinking on loyalty; subordinated to this has been filial piety. These two principles have been the pivotal points of Japanese ethics. All other virtues flowed out of them, and were intimately dependent upon them. These virtues are especially fitted to upbuild and to maintain the feudal order of society. They are essentially communal virtues. The first group, depending on and growing out of loyalty, was concerned with the maintenance of the larger communal unity, formerly the tribe, and now the nation. The virtues connected with the second principle—filial piety—were concerned with the maintenance of the smaller unit of society—the family. Righteousness and duty, of which much was made by Japanese moralists, consisted in the observance of these two ideals.

The morality of individualism was largely wanting. From this lack sprang the main defects of the moral ideal and of the actual practice. The chief sins of Old Japan—and, as a matter of fact, of all the heathen world, as graphically depicted by Mr. Dennis in his great work on "Christian Missions and Social Progress"—were sins of omission and commission against the individual. The rights of inferiors practically received no consideration at the hands of the moralists. In the Japanese conception of righteousness and duty, the rights and value of the individual, as such, whatever his social standing or sex, were not included.

One class of defects in the Japanese moral ideal arose out of the feudal order itself, namely, its scorn of trade. Trade had no vital relation to the communal unity; hence it found and developed no moral sanctions for its guidance. The West conceives of business deceit as concerned not only with the integrity of the community, but also with the rights of the individual. The moral ideals and sanctions for business honesty are therefore doubly strong with us. The old order of Japan was in no way dependent for its integrity on business honor and honesty, and, as we have seen, individuals, as such, were not thought to have inherent rights. Under such conditions, it is difficult to conceive how universal moral ideals and sanctions for business relations could be developed and maintained.

One further point demands attention. We naturally ask what the grounds were on which the ethical ideals were commonly supposed to have authority. So far as my knowledge goes, this question received almost no consideration by the ordinary person, and but little from the moralist. Old Japan was not accustomed to ask "Why?" It accepted everything on the authority of the teacher, as children do, and as all primitive peoples do. There was little or no thought as to the source of the moral ideals or as to the nature or the function of the social sanctions. If, as in a few instances, the questions were raised as to their authority, the reply ordinarily would be that they had derived their teachings from ancient times. And, if the matter were pressed, it would be argued that the most ancient times were nearer the beginning of men, and, therefore, nearer to Heaven, which decreed that all the duties and customs of men; in the final resort, therefore, authority would be attributed to Heaven. But such a questioner was rare. Moral law was unhesitatingly accepted on the authority of the teacher, and no uncomfortable questions were asked. It is easy to see that both of the pivotal moral ideals, *i. e.*, loyalty and filial piety, would support this unquestioning habit of mind, for to ask questions as to authority is the beginning both of disloyalty to the master and of irreverence to the parents and ancestors.

The whole social order, being one of authority, unquestioned and absolute, moral standards were accepted on the ipse dixit of great teachers.

In closing, we revert to our ever-recurring question: Are the moral characteristics wherein the Japanese differ from other races inherent and necessary, as are their physiological characteristics, or are they incidental and transient, liable to transformation? Light has been thrown on this problem by every illustration adduced. We have seen in detail that every characteristically Japanese moral trait is due to the nature of her past social order, and is changing with that order. Racial moral traits, therefore, are not due to inherent nature, to essential character, to brain structure, nor are they transmitted from father to son by the mere fact of physical generation. On the contrary, the distinguishing ethical characteristics of races, as seen in their ethical ideals and their moral conduct, are determined by the dominant social order, and vary with it. Ethical characteristics are transmitted by association, transmission is therefore not limited to the relation of parents and children. The bearing of this fact on the problem of the moral transformation of races could be easily shown.