

COMMUNAL AND INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS IN
THE EVOLUTION OF JAPANESE RELIGIOUS
LIFE

OUR study of Japanese religion and religious life thus far has been almost, if not exclusively, from the individualistic standpoint. An adequate statement, however, cannot be made from this standpoint alone, for religion through its mighty sanctions exerts a powerful influence on the entire communal life. Indeed, the leading characteristic of primitive religions is their communal nature. The science of religion shows how late in human history is the rise of individualistic religions.

In the present chapter we propose to study Japanese religious history from the communal standpoint. This will lead us to study her present religious problem and the nature of the religion required to solve it.

The real nature of the religious life of Japan has been and still is predominantly communal. Individualism has had a place, but, as we have repeatedly seen, only a minor place in forming the nation. From the communo-individualistic standpoint, in the study of Japan's religious and social evolution, not only can we see clearly that the three religions of Japan are real religions, but we can also understand the nature of the relations of these three religions to each other and the reasons why they have had such relations. Japanese religious history and its main phenomena become luminous in the light of communo-individualistic social principles.

Shinto, the primitive religion of Japan, corresponded well with the needs of primitive times, when the development of strong communal life was the prime problem and necessity. It furnished the religious sanctions for the social order in its customs of worshiping not only the

gods, but also the Emperor and ancestors. It gave the highest possible justification of the national social order in its deification of the supreme ruler. Shinto was so completely communal in its nature that the individual aspect of religion was utterly ignored. It developed no specific moral code, no eschatological and soteriological systems, no comprehensive view of nature or of the gods. These deficiencies, however, are no proofs that it was not a religion in the proper sense of the term. The real question is, did it furnish any supra-mundane, supra-legal, supra-communal sanctions both for the conduct of the individual in his social relations and for the fact and the right of the social order. Of this there can be no doubt. Those who deny it the name of a religion do so because they judge religion only from the point of view of a highly developed individualistic religion.

In view of this undoubted fact, it is a strange commentary on the failure of Shinto leaders to realize the real function of the faith they profess that they have sought and obtained from the government the right to be considered and classified no longer as a religion, but only as a society for preserving the memories and shrines of the ancestors of the race. Thus has modern Shinto, so far as it is organized and has a mouth with which to speak, following the abdicating proclivities of the ancient social order, excommunicated itself from its religious heritage, aspiring to be nothing more than a gate-keeper of cemeteries.

The sources of the power of the Shinto sanctions lies in the nature of its conception of the universe. Although it attempted no interpretation of the universe as a whole, it conceived of the origin of the country and people of Japan as due to the direct creative energy of the gods. Japan was accordingly conceived as a divine land and the people a divine people. The Emperor was thought to have descended in direct line from the gods and thus to be a visible representative of the gods to the people, and to possess divine power and authority with which to rule the people. Whenever Japanese came into contact with foreign peoples, it was natural to consider them outside of the divine providence, aliens, whose presence in the

divine land was more or less of a pollution. This world-view was well calculated to develop a spirit of submissive obedience and loyal adherence to the hereditary rulers of the land, and of fierce antagonism to foreigners. This view constituted the moral foundation for the social order, the intellectual framework within which the state developed. Paternal feudalism was the natural, if not the necessary, accompaniment of this world-view. Even to this day the scholars of the land see no other ground on which to found Imperial authority, no other basis for ethics and religion, than the divine descent of the Emperor.*

The Shinto world-view, conceiving of men as direct offspring of the gods, has in it potentially the doctrine of the divine nature of all men, and their consequent infinite worth. Shinto never developed this truth, however. It did not discover the momentous implications of its view. Failing to discover them, it failed to introduce into the social order that moral inspiration, that social leaven which would have gradually produced the individualistic social order.

No attempt has been made either in ancient or modern times to square this Shinto world-view with advancing knowledge of the world, particularly with the modern scientific conception of the universe. Anthropology, ethnology, and the doctrine of evolution both cosmic and human, are all destructive of the primitive Shinto world-view. It would not be difficult to show, however, that in this world-view exists a profound element of truth. The Shinto world-conception needs to be expanded to take the universe and all races of men into its view, and to see that Japan is not alone the object of divine solicitude, but that all races likewise owe their origin to that same divine power, and that even though the Emperor is not more directly the offspring of the gods than are all men, yet in the providence of Him who ruleth the affairs of men, the Emperor is in fact the visible representative of authority and power for the people over whom he reigns. With this expansion and the consequences that flow from it, the world-view that has cradled Old Japan will come into

* Cf. chapters xiii. and xxxi.

accord with the scientific Christian world-view, and become fitted to be the foundation for the new and individualistic social order, now arising in Japan, granting full liberty of thought and action, knowing that only so can truth come out of error, and assured that truth is the only ground of permanent welfare.

Throughout the centuries including the present era of Meiji, it is the Shinto religion that has provided and that still provides religious sanctions for the social order—even for the new social order that has come in from the West. It is the belief of the people in the divine descent of the Emperor, and his consequent divine right, that today unifies the nation and causes it to accept so readily the new social order; desired by him, they raise no questions, make no opposition, even though in some respects it brings them trouble and anxiety.

Our study of Buddhism has brought to light its extremely individualistic nature, and its lack of a social ideal. Its world-view we have sufficiently examined in the preceding chapter. We are told that when Buddhism came to Japan it made little headway until it adopted the Shinto deities into its theogony. What does this mean? That only on condition of accepting the Shinto sanctions for the communal order of society was it able to commend itself to the people at large. And Buddhism had no difficulty in fulfilling this condition, because it had no ideal order of society to present and no religious sanctions for any kind of social order; in this respect Buddhism had no ground for conflict with Shinto. Shinto had the field to itself; and Buddhism was perfectly at liberty to adopt, or at least to allow, any social order that might present itself. Furthermore, by its doctrines of incarnation and transmigration, according to which noble souls might appear and reappear in different worlds and different lands, Buddhism could identify Shinto deities with its own deities of Hindu origin, asserting their pre-incarnation. Having accepted the Shinto deities, ideals, and sanctions for the social order, Buddhism became not only tolerable to the people, but also exceedingly popular.

The Shinto-Buddhistic was in truth a new religion, each of the old religions supplying an essential element.

One real reason, beside its accommodation to Shintoism, why Buddhism was so popular was that it brought an indispensable element into the national life. For the first time emphasis began to be laid on the individual. Introspection and deliberate meditation were brought into play. Arts demanding individual skill were fostered. A gorgeous ritual, elaborate architecture, complex religious organism, letters and literature, all gave play to individual activity and development whether in manual, in mental, or in aesthetic lines. The hitherto cramped and primitive life of the Japanese responded to these appeals and opportunities with profound joy. The upper classes especially felt themselves growing in richness and fullness of life. They felt the stimulus in many directions. The reason, then, why Buddhism flourished so mightily, and at the same time caused the nation to bloom, was because it helped develop the individual. The reason, on the other hand, why it failed to carry the nation on from its first bloom into full fruitage was because it failed to develop individualism in the social order. Its religious individualism was, as we have seen, in reality defective. It was abstract and one-sided. It did not discover the whole of the individual. It did not know anything of personality, either human or divine. It accordingly could not recognize the individual's worth, but only his separateness and his weakness. It taught an abstract impoverished idea of self, and made, as the whole aim of the salvation it offered, the final annihilation of all separateness of this individual self. We can now see that its individualism was essentially defective in that it poured contempt on the self, and that if its individualizing salvation were consistently carried out, it was not only no help to the social order, but a positive injury to it. Its individualism was of a nature which could not become an integral part of any social order.

This character led to another inevitable difficulty. Although Buddhism ostensibly adopted Shinto deities and the Shinto sanctions for the social order, it could not wholeheartedly accept the sanctions nor take the deities into full and legitimate partnership. It found no place in its circle of doctrine to teach the important tenets of Shintoism.

It left them to survive or perish as chance would have it. In proportion as Buddhism absorbed the life and love of the people, Shinto fell into decay and with it its sanctions. Then came the centuries of civil war during which Imperial power and authority sank to a minimum, and Japan's ignominy and disorder reached their maximum. What the land now needed was the re-introduction, first, of social order, even though it must be by the hand of a dictator, and second, the development of religious sanctions for the order that should be established. The first was secured by those three great generals of Japan, Oda Nobunaga, the Taiko Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu. "The first conceived the idea of centralizing all the authority of the state in a single person; the second, who has been called the Napoleon of Japan, actually put the idea into practice," but died before consolidating his work; the third, by his unsurpassed skill as a diplomat and administrator, carried the idea completely out, arranging the details of the new order so that, without special military genius or power on the part of his successors, the order maintained itself for 250 years.

Yet it is doubtful if this long maintenance of the social order introduced by Ieyasu would have been possible had he not found ready to hand a system of essentially religious sanctions for the social order he had established by force. Confucianism had lain for a thousand years a dormant germ, receiving some study from learned men, but having no special relation to the education of the day or to the political problems that became each century more pressing. In the Confucian doctrines of loyalty to ruler and piety to parents, a doctrine sanctioned by Heaven and by the customs of all the ancients, Ieyasu, with the insight of a master mind, found just the sanctions he desired. He had the Confucian classics printed—it is said for the first time in Japan—"and the whole intellect of the country became molded by Confucian ideas." The classics, edited with diacritical marks for Japanese students, "formed the chief vehicle of every boy's education." These were interpreted by learned Chinese commentators. The intelligence of the land drank of this stream as the European mind refreshed itself with the classic waters of

the Renaissance. The Japanese were weary of Buddhist puerilities and transcendental doctrines that led nowhere. They demanded sanctions for the moral life and the social order; in response to this need Buddhism gave them Nirvana—absolute mental and moral vacuity. Confucianism gave them principles whose working and whose results they could see and understand. Its sanctions appealed both to the imagination and to the reason, antiquity and learning and piety being all in their favor. The sanctions were also seen to be wholly independent of puerile superstitions and foolish fears. The Confucian ideals and sanctions, moreover, coincided with the essential elements of the old Shinto world-view and sanctions. In a true sense, the doctrines of Confucius were but the elaborated and succinctly stated implications of their primitive faith. Confucianism, therefore, swept the land. It was accepted as the groundwork and authority for the most flourishing feudal order the world has ever seen. Japan bloomed again.*

This difference, however, is to be noted between the Shinto ideal social order and the Confucian, or rather that development of Confucian ethics and civics which arose during the Tokugawa Shogunate; Shinto appears to have been, properly speaking, nationalistic, while feudal Confucianism was tribal. Although in Confucian theory the supreme loyalty may have been due the Emperor, in point of fact it was shown to the local daimyo. Confucian ethics was communal and might easily have turned in the direction of national communalism; it would then have coincided completely with Shinto in this respect. But for various reasons it did not so turn, but developed an intensely local, a tribal communalism, and pushed loyalty to the Emperor as a vital reality entirely into the background. This was one of the defects of feudal Confucianism which

* It is not strange that in all the centers of this new learning Confucius was deified and worshiped. In connection with many schools established for the study of his works, temples were built to his honor, in which his statue alone was placed, before which a stately religious service was performed at regular intervals. Thus did Confucianism become a living and vitalizing, although, as we shall soon see, an incomplete religion.

finally led to its own overthrow. Shinto, as we have seen, had long been pushed aside by Buddhism and was practically forgotten by the people. The zeal for Confucian doctrine brought, therefore, no immediate revival to the Shinto cultus, although it did revive the essential elements of the old communal religion. We might say that the old religion was revived under a new name; having a new name and a new body, the real and vital connection between the two was not recognized. We thus discern how the religious history of Japan was not a series of cataclysms or of disconnected leaps in the dark, but an orderly development, one step naturally following the next, as the sun follows the dawn. The different stages of Japan's religious progress have received different names, because due to specific stimuli brought from abroad; the religious life itself, however, has been a continuous development.

Another difference between Shinto and Confucianism as it existed in Japan should not escape our attention, namely, in regard to their respective world-views. Shinto was confessedly a religion; it frankly believed in gods, whom it worshiped and on whose help it relied. Confucianism, or to use the Japanese name, Bushido, was confessedly agnostic. It did not assume to understand the universe, as Buddhism assumed. Nor did it admit the practical existence of gods or their power in this world, as Shinto believed. It maintained that, "if only the heart follows the way of truth, the gods will protect one even though he does not pray." It laid stress on practical moralities, regardless of their philosophical presumptions, into which it would not probe. When pressed it would ascribe all to "Heaven," and, as we have seen, it had many implications that would lead the inquiring mind to a belief in the personal nature of "Heaven." Had it developed these implications, Bushido would have become a genuine religion. It was indeed a system of ethics touched with emotion, it was religious, but it failed to become the religion it might have become because it insisted on its agnosticism and refused to worship the highest and best it knew.

It is interesting to observe that the ideals and sanctions

of Confucianism produced effects which proved its ruin. They did this in two ways; first, by developing the prolonged peace necessary for a high grade of scholarship which, turning its attention to ancient history, discovered that the Shogunate was assuming powers not in accord with the primitive practice nor in accord with the theory of the divine descent of the Imperial house. Imperialistic patriots arose, whose aim was to overthrow the Shogunate and restore the Emperor. They felt that, doing this, they were right; that is to say, they became inspired by the Shinto sanctions for a national life. They thus discovered the defect of the disjointed feudal system sanctioned by feudal Confucianism. The second cause of its undoing grew out of the first. The scholarship which led the patriots against the usurper in political life led them also against all foreign innovations such as Buddhism and Confucianism, which they scorned as modern and anti-imperial. The Shinto cultus thus received a powerful revival. With the overthrow of the Shogunate in 1868 Confucianism naturally went with it, and for a time Shinto was the state religion. But its poverty in every line, except the communal sanctions, caused it in a short time to lose its place.

The two causes just assigned for the fall of Bushido, however, could hardly have wrought its ruin had it been more than a utilitarian and agnostic system of morality, calculated to maintain the social ascendancy of a small fraction of the nation. As a religion, Bushido would have secured a conservative power enabling it to survive, by adapting itself to a changed social order. As it was, Bushido was snuffed out by a single breath of the breeze that began to blow from foreign lands. As an ethical system it has conferred a blessing on Japan that should never be forgotten. But its identification with a class and a clan social order rendered it too narrow for the national and international life into which the nation was forced by circumstances beyond its control, and its agnostic utilitarianism did not provide it with sufficient moral power to cope with the problems of the new individualistic age that had suddenly burst upon it. In all Japan there remains to the present day only one of those old Con-

fucian schools with its temple to Confucius. All the rest have fallen into ruins or have been used for other purposes, while the gold-covered statues of the once deified teacher have been sold to curio-dealers or for their bullion value. In the worship of Confucius, Bushido almost became a religion, but it worshiped the teacher instead of the Creator, maintaining its agnosticism as to the Creator, as to "Heaven," to the end, and thus lapsed from the path of religious evolution.

This brings us down to modern times—into the seventies. Already in the sixties Japan had discovered herself in a totally new environment. She found that foreign nations had made great progress in every direction since she shut them out two hundred and fifty years before. She discovered her helplessness, she discovered, too, that the social order of Western peoples was totally distinct from hers. These discoveries served to break down all the remaining sanctions for her particular type of social order—Confucianistic feudalism. The whole nation was eager to know the political systems of the West. So long as the Shinto ideal of nationalism was not interfered with, the nation was free to adopt any new social order. Japan's political and commercial intercourse being with England and America, the social order of the Anglo-Saxon had the greatest influence on the Japanese mind. Japan accordingly has become predominantly Anglo-Saxon in its social ideas. Much has been made of the fact that the new social order has come in so easily; that the people have gained rights without fighting for them; and this has been attributed to the peculiarity of Japanese human nature. This is an error. The real reason for the ease with which the individualistic Anglo-Saxon social order has been introduced has been the collapse of the sanctions for the Confucian order. No one had any ground of duty on which to stand and fight. The national mind was open to any newcomer that might have appeared. I am referring, of course, to the thinking classes. All the rest, accustomed to submissive obedience, never thought of any other course than to accept the will of superiors.

Furthermore, the new social order in one important re-

spect fell in with and helped to re-establish the old Shinto ideal, that, namely, of nationalism. In the treaty negotiations, the West would deal with no intermediaries, only with the responsible national head. Western ideals, too, demanded a strong national unity. In this respect, then, the foreign ideals and foreign social order were powerful influences in building up the new patriotism, in re-enforcing the old Shinto social sanctions.

Thus has Japan come to the parting of the ways. What Japan needs to-day is a religion satisfying the intellect as to its world-view, and thus justifying the sanctions it holds out. These must be neither exclusively communal, like those of Shinto, nor exclusively individual, like those of Buddhism. While maintaining at their full value the sanctions for the social life, it must add thereto the sanctions for the individual. It must not look upon the individual as a being whose salvation depends on his being isolated from, taken out of the community, as Buddhism did and does, nor yet as a mere fraction of the community, as Confucianism did, but as a complete, imperishable unit of infinite worth, necessarily living a double life, partly inseparable from the social order and partly superior to it. This religion must provide not only sanctions, but ideals, for a perfect social order in which, while the most complex organization of society shall be possible, the freedom and the high development of the individual's personality shall also be secured.

The fulfillment of such conditions would at first thought seem to be impossible. How can a religion give sanctions which at the very time that they authorize the fullest development and organization of society, apparently making society its chief end, also assume the fullest liberty and development of the individual, making him and his salvation its chief end? Are not these ends incompatible? What has been said already along this general line of thought has prepared us to see that they are not. The great, though unconscious, need of the ages, and the unconscious effort of all religious evolution has been the development of just such a religion. As the "cake" of social custom was at first the great need for, and afterwards the great obstacle in the way of, social evolution, so

the sanctions of a communal religion were at first the great need for, and afterwards the great obstacle in the way of, religious evolution and of personal development. Through its sanctions religion is the most powerful of all the factors of the higher human evolution, either helping it onward or holding it back.

Has, then, any religion secured such a dual development as we have just seen to be necessary? As a matter of fact, one and only one has done so, Christianity. This religion clearly attains and maintains the apparently impossible combination of individualism and communalism by the nature of its conception of the method of individual salvation. Its communalism is guaranteed by, because it rests on, its individualism. At the very moment that it pronounces the individual of inestimable worth,—a son of God,—it commands him to show that sonship by loving all God's other sons, and by serving them to the extent of self-sacrifice, and of death if need be. Its communalism is thus inseparable from its individualism and its individualism from its communalism.

Christian individualism embraces and includes thoroughgoing communalism. True and full Christians are the most devoted patriots. As the acorn sends forth far-reaching roots into the soil for moisture and nourishment, and a mighty trunk and spreading branches upward for air and sunlight, so the seed of Christian life develops in two directions, individualism as the root and communalism as the beautiful tree. They are not contradictory, but supplementary principles. While his own final gain is a real aim of the individual, it is only a part of his aim; he also desires and labors for the gain of all; and even the individual gain, he well knows, can be secured only through the communal principle, through service to his fellow-men. His own welfare, whether temporal or eternal, is inseparably bound up with that of his fellows.

The Christian religion finds the sanctions for any and every social order that history knows, in the fact that all physical and social laws and organisms are part of the divine plan. Because any particular social order is the association of imperfect men and women, it must be more or less imperfect. But the Christian, even while he is

seeking to reform the social order and to bring it up to his ideal, must be loyal to it. And for this loyalty to fellow-men and to God, the highest conceivable sanctions are held out, namely, an endless and infinite life of conscious, joyous fellowship with souls made perfect in the Kingdom of God, and with God himself.

A comprehensive study, therefore, of the real nature and the true function of religion in relation to man's development, whether individual or communal, shows that Christianity fulfills the conditions. A comparative study would show that, of all the existing religions, Christianity alone does this. It alone combines in perfect proportion the individual and the communal elements, and the requisite sanctions.

An expansion of communal religion is taking place in modern times. The community now arising is international in scope, interracial and universal in character. Cultivated men and women the world around are beginning to talk of national rights and national duties. Europe is thought to be justified in suppressing the slave trade and its accompanying horrors in Africa, and condemned for not preventing the Turk from carrying on his wholesale slaughter of innocent Armenians. The Spaniard is despised and condemned for his prolonged inhumanities in Cuba and the Philippines, and the American is approved in warring for humanity and justified in interfering with Spain's sovereignty. The conscience of the world is beginning to discover that no nation, though sovereign, has an absolute right over its people. Right is only measured by righteousness. International righteousness, duty and rights, regardless of military power, are coming to the forefront of the thinking of advanced nations.

Looked at closely, and studied in its implications, what is this but a developing form of communal religion? No nation is conceived as existing apart; each exists as but one fraction of the world-wide community; in its relations it has both rights and duties. Does this not mean that appeal has been made from the communal sanctions of might to the supra-communal sanctions of right? We do not simply ask what do other nations think of this or

that national act, but what is right, in view of the whole order of the nature which has brought man into being and set him in families and nations. In other words, national rights and duties are felt to flow from the supra-mundane source, God the Creator of heaven and earth and all that in them is. The sanctions for national rights and duties are religious sanctions and rest on a religious world-view.

Now the point of interest for us is the fact that Japan has entered into this universal community and is feeling the sanctions of this universal communal religion. The international rights and duties of Japan are a theme of frequent discourse and conversation. Japan stoutly maintained that the war with China was a "gi-sen," a righteous war, waged primarily for the sake of Korea. Many a Japanese waxes indignant over the cruelty of the Turk, the savage barbarity of the Spaniard, and the impotence and supineness of England and Europe. I have already spoken of the young man who became so indignant at England's compelling China to take Indian opium, that he proposed to go to England to preach an anti-opium crusade. Japan is beginning to enter into the larger communal life of the world, although, of course, she has as yet little perception of its varied implications.

Many a student of New Japan perceives that she is abandoning her old religious conceptions, and that many moral and social evils are entering the land, who yet does not see that the wide acceptance of some new religion by the people is important for the maintenance of the nation. Some earnest Japanese thinkers are beginning to realize that religion is, indeed, needful to steady the national life, but they fail to see that Christianity alone fulfills the condition. Many are saying that a religion scientifically constructed must be manufactured especially for Japan.

The reason why individualistic religion takes such an important part in the higher evolution of man is, in a word, because the religious sanctions are so much more powerful than all others, either legal or social. For the legal sanctions are chiefly negative; they are also partial and uncertain, and easily evaded by the selfish individual. The social sanctions, too, are often far from just or impartial or wise. Furthermore, the rise of individualism

in the social order secures privacy for the individual, and so far forth removes him from the restraints and stimuli of the social sanctions. It is the religious sanctions alone that follow the man in every waking moment. Not one of all his acts escapes the eye of the religious judgment. He is his own judge, and he cannot escape bearing witness against himself.

Now, it is manifest that where superior beings and man's relation to these and the corresponding religious sanctions are defectively conceived, as, for instance, quite apart either from the individual or the communal life, they are valueless to the higher evolution of man and have little interest for the student of social evolution. In proportion, however, as man advances in intellectual grasp of religious truths and in susceptibility to the moral ideas and religious sanctions they provide, conceiving of morality and religion as inseparable parts of the same system, the more powerfully does religion enter into and promote man's higher evolution. An individualistic social order demands the religious sanctions more imperatively than a communal social order; for, in proportion as it is individualistic, the social order is weak in compelling, through the legal and social sanctions alone, the communal or altruistic activity of the individual. Altruistic spirit and action, however, are essential to the maintenance even of that individualistic order. The more highly society develops, therefore, the more religious must each member of the society become.

The same truth may be stated from another standpoint. The higher man develops, the more impatient he becomes with illogical reasonings and defective conceptions; he thus becomes increasingly skeptical in regard to current traditional religions with their crude, primitive ideas; he is accordingly increasingly freed from the restraints they impose. But unless he finds some new religious sanctions for the communal life, for social conduct, and for the individual life,—ideals and sanctions that command his assent and direct his life,—he will drop back into a thoroughgoing atomic, individualistic, selfish life, which can be only a hindrance to the higher development both of society and of the individual. In order that men advancing in

intellectual ability may remain useful members of society, they must remain subject to those ideals and sanctions which will actually secure social conduct. While disregarding the chaff of primitive religious superstitions and ceremonials man must retain the wheat; he must feel the force of the religious spirit in a deeper and profounder, because more personal way than did his ancestors. Increasing intellectual power and knowledge must be balanced by increasing individual experience of the religious motives and spirit. This is the reason why each advancing age should study afresh the whole religious problem, and state in the terms of its own experience the prominent and permanent religious truths of all the ages and the sanctions that flow from them. Hence it is that a religion only traditional and ceremonial is quite unfitted for a developing life.

Japan is no exception to the general laws of human evolution. As her intellectual abilities increase, the forms of her old religious life will become increasingly unacceptable to the people at large. If, in rejecting the obsolete forms of religious thought, she rejects religion and its sanctions altogether, atomistic individualism can be the only result, and with it wide moral corruption will eat out the vitality of the national life.

That Christianity alone, of all the religions of the world, fulfills the conditions will not need many words to prove. As a matter of fact Christianity alone has succeeded in surviving the criticism of the nineteenth century. In Christendom, all religions but Christianity have perished. This is a mere matter of fact. As for the reason, Christianity alone gives complete intellectually satisfactory sanctions for both the communal and the individualistic principles of social progress. Christianity, as we have sufficiently shown, has both principles not unrelated to each other, but vitally interrelated. For these reasons it is safe to maintain not only that Japan needs to find a new religion, but that the religion must be Christianity in substance, whatever be the name given it.

The Japanese have been described as essentially irreligious in nature. We have seen how defective such a description is. But have we not now traced one root of

this seeming characteristic of New Japan? The old religious conceptions have been largely outgrown by the educated. They have come to the conclusion that the old religious forms constitute the whole of religion, and that consequently they are unworthy of attention. The spirit of New Japan is indifferent to religion; but this is not due to an inherently non-religious or irreligious nature, but to the empty externalism and shallow puerilities of the only religions they know. How can they be zealous for them or recognize any authority in them? Those few Japanese who have come within the influence of the larger conception of religion brought to Japan by Christianity are showing a religious zeal and power supporting the contention that the generally asserted lack of a religious nature is only apparent and temporary. Preaching the right set of ideas, those which appeal to the national sense of communal needs, by supplying the demand for sanctions for the social order; ideas which appeal to intellects molded by modern thought, by supplying such an intellectual understanding of the universe as justifies the various supra-communal sanctions; and ideas which appeal to the heart, by supplying the personal demand of each individual for a larger life, for intercourse with the Father of all Spirits and for strength for the prolonged battle of life—preach these and kindred ideas, and the Japanese will again become as conspicuously a religious people as they were when Buddhism came to Japan a thousand years ago.*

But if the real nature of a full and perfect religion is to save not only the individual, providing sanctions for

* Writers on the history and philosophy of religion have much to say about the differences between national and universal religions. The three religions which they pronounce universal are Mahomedanism, Buddhism, and Christianity. The ground for this statement is the fact that each of these religions has developed strong individualistic characteristics. They are concerned with individual salvation. The importance of this element none will deny, least of all the writer. But I question the correctness of the descriptive adjective. Because of their individualistic character they are fitted to leap territorial boundaries and can find acceptance in every community; for this they are not dependent on the territorial expansion of the communities in which they arose.

his conduct, but also to justify the social order, and to provide sanctions that shall secure its maintenance, any religion which fails to have both characteristics can hardly claim the name universal. We have seen that Buddhism lacks one of these elements. In my judgment it is not properly universal. So long as it exists in or goes to a land already provided with other religions securing the social order, it may continue to thrive. But, on the one hand, it can never become the exclusive religion of any land for it cannot do without and therefore it cannot depose the other religions; and, on the other hand, it must give way before the stronger religion which has both the individual and communal elements combined. Buddhism, therefore, lacks a vital characteristic of a universal religion. It may better be called a non-local, or an international religion. We now see another reason why Buddhism, although found in many Oriental lands, has never annihilated any of the pre-existing religions, but has only added one more to the many varieties already existing. It is so in Thibet, in China, in Burmah, and in Japan. And in India, its home, it has utterly died out.

Many of the efforts made by students of comparative religion to classify the various religions, seem to the writer defective through lack of the perception that social and religious evolution are vitally connected. From this point of view, the classification of religions as communal, individual, and communo-individual, would seem to be the best.