

and the issues of the world to come was found to be a formidable factor in the State.

It must be confessed that the line of cleavage between the two systems is still very difficult to trace, as the great mass of the people are practically both Sintoists and Buddhists. The latter cult, by its stronger intellectual character, has accomplished more for education and for all the elements of an advancing civilization than the old faith. It has also introduced moral precepts of a more positive character than the simpler nature worship had ever inculcated. Modern Japan as it stood at the time of Commodore Perry's expedition was greatly indebted to Buddhism, and it owed much also to the teachings of Confucius, which with the introduction of the Chinese language had gained a strong foothold. Both of these systems are still active and aggressive in their influence, though lacking the one element of strength which Sintoism enjoys in its alliance with the Government. When the present Mikado assumed full power he proclaimed the Sinto faith as the religion of the State.

Well he might, for he had witnessed a manifestation of its power as a supporter of his throne such as few sovereigns in the world's history have known. The voluntary surrender of their power and their feudal estates by the daimios of all the provinces to one ruler could only have been brought about by that reverence which the sovereigns of Japan have so long received as the sons of the gods.

Moreover, the Sinto temples are enshrined in the pride and reverence of the people as the resting-places of the national heroes. There are no idols there, but the images of the great men of the past are legion. Buddhism has adroitly followed this example, but the images are only borrowed and seem out of place. They properly belong to Sintoism and the national system.

The Japanese Government from time to time canonizes the great men who in their lives have been public benefactors, and thenceforth they are enshrined. Every prefecture in the empire has its Sinto temple. The system seems entrenched in the national life however little of aggressiveness it may manifest as a religion.

Buddhism of the old stamp can scarcely retain its power, but it never cares to retain any particular type. It has undergone many changes in the past centuries and is ready for many more. It is the most flexible and adjustable of all systems. It is divided into twelve distinct sects as it now exists in Japan. What new attitude it will assume in the new ordeal to which the full blaze of Christian truth is subjecting it remains to be seen. German philosophy, Indian theosophy, and American Unitarianism are doing what they can to keep it in good heart against the incursion of the "Western religion" which missionaries are striving to introduce.

What, then, is the outlook? The foes of Christianity love to dwell upon what they call the small and ineffectual efforts and smaller success of our Christian propagandism, and they point in contrast to the widespread conquests of Buddhism on the same field fourteen hundred years ago. But they forget that those conquests which we have seen to have been only partial were the result of hundreds of years of slow growth. We have been at work a quarter of a century, the first decade of which showed little fruit, and yet no other such transformation ever occurred even in a century or in two centuries. The nation was never so awakened before, and it is not strange that some reaction should have occurred and some real fear lest all trace of the past should be lost.

The fact that neither the Buddhist nor the Confucian faith ever entirely won Japan after so many centuries of experiment may properly raise the