

SIMILARITY AND CONTRAST—CHINA, JAPAN, KOREA.

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EAST Asia presents to the Christian Church a mission field second in importance to no other. China, with four hundred and ix millions, Japan, with fifty millions, and Korea, with ten millions of people, give us a grand total embracing about one-third of the human race. To put this fact in another way; every third babe that opens its eyes in this world looks up into the face of a yellow mother and toddles about in a heathen home. Every third grave on earth is dug in yellow soil, while yellow men gather about it to grieve and lament over a soul that has gone out into a future unlit with a single ray of Christian light and hope.

This vast field, continental in extent, possesses some things in common. The people are one in race, origin, history, civilization, and religion. In a large sense the principles underlying the varied conditions confronting Christian missions are the same; that is, we find certain prevailing race characteristics, in spite of very pronounced dissimilarity in many things. It is impossible to write accurately the history of any one of these three empires without frequent reference to the other two. They cherish in common the principle of filial piety as the corner-stone of their civilization. Confucius, Gautama, and the nameless myriads of priests and priestesses of Shamanite spiritism have been their religious instructors. Throughout this great area the position of woman, reduced to its final analysis, is much the same. The spirit which animates law and custom speaks in the same tone, and the philosophy of life which controls individual conduct is the same. The hopes, fears, and aspirations of the people are projected out in the same general direction morally. The great yellow race is ill with one malady, and it will find recovery through only one remedy—the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, while this is true as a general proposition, at the same time the individuality of the three empires is so pronounced and developed that they stand as distinctly aloof from each other as England, France, and Russia do in Europe. Note the contrast in the respective governments. In China it is patriarchal in form, with the family as the model, and the action of the sovereign in the empire can not be controlled by written laws any more than it would be possible

to regulate the authority of a father over his family by a written constitution in that family. Among the people the idea of equality, based on brotherhood and modified by the elements of education and native talent, is held so that the humblest Chinese boy—born, it may be, in a coolie's mud hut, or cradled in a house-boat on the Yang-tse or the Min—may rise, in spite of these, to be a Minister of State or a Viceroy. This is not true in Korea. While the Chinese model dominates, the Koreans have added the idea of caste to their governmental system, so that the ruling class and their families enjoy privileges and powers not held by the corresponding class in China, and which are subversive of the common people's right to life and property. Japan stands to-day in sharp contrast to the political organization of her neighbors. Her government is a copy of constitutional monarchy as it prevails among white nations, and her people enjoy that peace and security which come from law equitably administered in the empire.

Another contrast is found in the general spirit of the people. The Chinese from the dawn of history have been commercial and industrial in their character. They have been manufacturers, to supply the needs of the vast continental hordes under, or adjacent to the dynastic rule. They have been inventors of curious implements and labor-saving devices. They have been traders, carrying out of China its products and returning with the wealth of other peoples. The cast of mind is commercial. They are a nation of merchants. On the other hand, Japan has ever adored the sword. It is the soul of the Samurai. Their history is a record of battle. The greatest national heroes are Yoritomo, a Japanese Charlemagne, and Hideyoshi, a Japanese Napoleon, albeit both paused short of the imperial yellow. The national sports are martial. Modern Japan, in the midst of its abounding and increasing development, preserves the graces, the spirit, and the impulses of Japanese knighthood. They are a nation of warriors. Korea is neither the merchant nor the warrior. Secure in her hills and valleys, just bending her energies sufficiently to produce enough to eat and wear, she has remained a sort of recluse. Study and meditation, the poetic frame of mind—these specially charm her. The national ideal is the scholar. The civil or literary nobility take precedence over the military nobles, and both are far above the merchant class. The Koreans