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1st Prize, Class A

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Royal Colonial Institute.

Very Good +
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Essay Competition. (Class A)

"How far is the introduction of Western Civilization beneficial to Eastern Nations possessing a culture of their own?"

"Viator"

"Civilization," said Matthew Arnold, "is the humanization of society." It includes, therefore, the development of man, not only intellectually, but socially and morally. It is more than 'reaction to environment,' it is that impulse towards progress which is characteristic of human evolution, and this progress depends, not only upon the influence of the individuals who compose a nation, but also upon the stimulus derived from the interaction of nations thus constituted. Hence the development of a nation or of a people is rapid and beneficial when it comes into contact with other nations liberal in thought and action. That prosperity which is purely material and independent of this intercourse, leads only to the cessation of mental and moral development, and, as all history shows, must inevitably decay. It is from the lessons which the Past has taught, and from the ideals which Christianity has introduced, that Modern Civilization must attempt permanency.

It will be evident, then, that nations differ less in blood or race than in their ethical ideals and environment. Here lies the contrast between Occident and Orient, for, while the environment (or education) of the Western World has been partial to individualism and to the qualities of leadership, for centuries past Oriental thought and religion has inclined to the discouragement of any expression of personality---

Ryan Bryan. "the individual can succeed in rising above the mass only in defiance of society."

One outstanding result of this submergence of the individual beneath the mass, of the 'concrete' beneath the 'abstract', has been the despotism of custom, "everywhere", according to J.S. Mill, "the standing hindrance to human advancement." Lafcadio Hearn has remarked that, while the western mind apparently proceeds along a straight line of thought, the oriental mentality moves in wonderful curves and circles; and although the figures thus formed do not typify progress, they do represent stability. It is significant that such races as the Indian and Chinese, after advancing for a certain time and then halting, have survived while other empires have fallen to ruin.

Ch. Crane

The reverence for the Ideals of Antiquity which is inherent in such systems constitutes a remarkable difference between the two cultures which are being considered. It is important to realize that in most cases life in the Far East is "an organization of social, political and economic norms already mature when Athens and Sparta were in the making." The Greek culture, indeed, first broke from the old traditions, but European ascendancy is of comparatively recent growth, dating no further back than the Renaissance. Only then did European nations enter those fields of knowledge with which Asiatic peoples had long been acquainted. Geographical discovery and the Industrial Revolution, however, soon increased Western prestige.

Until recently, then, Europe and Eastern Asia had only intermittent contact, and when connection was secured the Westerner went in uninvited to possess the land, taking with him "his religion, his aggressive determination to trade, and his

Grane. superior fighting equipment." The West attempted to rouse the East from its apparent lethargy and after some resistance the Eastern nations submitted to the pressure and began to throbb with a new life.

Kinglake Contact was thus secured, except in the case of missionary enterprise (and even here the 'worldly' element was not lacking) for reasons purely material. Eastern nations inevitably regarded the medley of Western Ideas to which they were suddenly introduced, as a complex structure performing its task, according to the Pasha of the Pashalik of Karaghokoldouk, - "whirr! whirr! all by wheels! - whizz! - whizz! all by steam." (Now, for the other part, were there lacking those Westerners whose sole assertion was that "the British Jernam is still, thank God, the British Jernam") It was inevitable, also, that, with Western Methods, many attendant evils should be introduced. It would, indeed be idle to assert that Western civilization has attained perfection. Moral and intellectual progress have not kept pace with each other. This must be realized, and remedied. Yet the statement that "our whole social and moral civilization is in a state of barbarism", still remains an exaggeration, and inconsistent with history.

Satomi It is usual to hold that, while Eastern civilization has devoted itself to development in the spiritual realm, while the Western World has advanced mainly along material lines. To a degree, certainly, these estimates are correct. But, as it has been already shown, in the development of society 'spiritualism and materialism are simply two aspects of the same thing.' No race holds a monopoly of either. Their complete coordination is essential to the unification of the world. For this reason an understanding of the nature of Eastern civilizations is essential to prove the interdependence of the cultures of 'East' and 'West'. And since the 'East' unlike the modern 'West', is not a unity, a brief study

of the three representative Oriental peoples of India, China, and Japan - will show, not only their definite national trends and characteristics, but also the nature of the influence which European ideas and ideals will exert upon them.

(v. G. L. Dickinson) India is preeminently a land of spiritual thirst. Her people have always striven with a passionate longing to learn the nature of God and the soul. The saint and the ascetic, seeking for the universal mind, unseen and eternal, is everywhere the object of veneration. To the Indian philosopher life is unreal and illusory, and for him the aim of Western effort - "the process of living in time" has no reality. "Escape" is the keynote of Indian religion. With this view of the illusoriness of life, of the insignificance of man and the ascendancy of nature, all Indian history and institutions harmonize. And this leads on to an outstanding characteristic of the civilization of India - the system of caste, or the determination of rank exclusively by heredity.

G. L. Dickinson It is the enormous differences of ^{the} classes and creeds which have formerly disunited India, that creates the 'Indian Problem' of today. For, while large numbers of Indians have been trained in the principles of 'self-government' and 'liberty', those principles, if further applied at the present juncture, would place the government under native control, and revolution would certainly ensue. The anomalous position which arises is only another outcome of the clash of Eastern and Western Ideas. Meanwhile, the unhappiness of those Indians in whom a national self-consciousness is developing, too often makes them bitter and unjust. "The educated classes are aware of the weakness of their own system" and yet cannot fall in with the system of the West." They are further

perplexed by the universal problem, more pressing in India than anywhere else: "How can religion be reconciled with positive knowledge?"

Nor is Western influence prevalent solely in politics and religion. It is having far-reaching effects upon social conditions. Railways, industrialism, education, are gradually weakening 'caste' as they are weakening the forces which fostered it. A wider outlook is also the cause of the elevation of woman's status. To trace all the wide-spread effects would be impossible. But it remains to notice that the Arts of India, with those of China and Japan, have collapsed before the Western influx. It is doubtful whether they would have justified the prolongation of their existence.

India, then, is passing through a renaissance. and as she looks back over those periods of greatness in which she led the world in humanity and civilization, she will certainly resolve to gain the respect of the nations once more, either by independence or by partnership. Our attempts to force our own interpretation of history and 'our seeming contempt for their intellectual achievements' still estrange Indians from us. Yet they cannot, with fairness, overpraise their past or detract from the merits of British Rule, which, apart from material improvements in government and

Ed. Thason.

Ed. Thason

administration, has changed 'the very soul of India' and made her "capable of giving her own noble gifts, first to her sons, whatever their race or creed, and then to the world". In the present transformation something will certainly be lost and it would be disastrous if there were produced a 'lifeless imitation' of Western Culture.

(V. S. S. Rabin-
nath Tagore)

Fortunately, Indian civilization has a very tenacious life of its own, making it all the more worthy of giving its peculiar contribution to the philosophical thought of the world.

In contrast to the Indians, the Chinese have always been profoundly secular. They have, of course, saints and religions, but most of their worship has degenerated into superstition, and nothing could be further from the mysticism of India than the rationalistic spirit which impregnates Confucianism. Chinese art and social institutions also bear a closer relation to the West than those of India. The Chinese, for instance, are as democratic as ourselves. On the other hand, they are still an agricultural people (for the most part) maintaining their veneration for the Past which is exemplified in ancestor-'commemoration' and in the importance attached to the 'Family'. And it is this 'narrow conception of cosmic-centred duty' that, in spite of its faults, 'has conferred perpetuity upon Chinese civilization'. To the same source may ^{be} traced many of the weaknesses of China - the feebleness of the State, the paralysis in science, the large amount of official corruption, and the degradation of woman. The force of tradition has arrested, or perverted, growth. In Chinese, says Murdoch, 'study' means 'poring over antiquity': this fully exemplifies the attitude of the Chinese mind.

A.J. Hubbard

Murdoch

B. Kidd

Until the last century, then, China, partly because of her social system, partly also because of her elaborate script and idiom, has had little incentive to general change. But less than a hundred years ago there began "the competitive exploitation of Chinese resources by English-speaking peoples... amidst conditions of international intrigue and of moral outrage and degradation" almost without parallel in history. Meanwhile Western missionaries worked a more beneficial change by introducing an education which has created a student-class, often incompetent and inexperienced, but jealous of foreign aggression, and determined to meet it by carrying out their own reforms. This, of course, is not the

concerted aim of the Chinese nation, which, as yet, can hardly be said to exist - a national self-consciousness cannot be created in a moment.

It is certain, however, that a general intellectual renaissance has commenced. And in China, where the intellectual and moral factors have always been supreme, this movement has the appearance of being still more important than the purely political and economic changes. It has already had its effects in the growth of a public opinion, in industrial progress and in social improvements, amongst the most remarkable of which has been the recognition of the dignity of womanhood. China is awake to her own needs and is already discerning the elements of Western civilization she may adopt with advantage. Industry, for instance, is not advancing so quickly as in Japan, largely because the trend towards Western methods is being counter-acted by attempts to save China from some of the disadvantages of the older system. Even in education, "the fundamental non-utilitarian spirit is winning through."

R.O. Hall.

B. Russell

The Chinese, therefore, when they acquire Western culture, do not become purely imitative. But it is difficult to acquire Western knowledge without acquiring also the "mechanistic outlook" which is apt to cultivate "the will at the expense of perception." This seems to be the worst effect that contact with the West will have on Chinese mentality. The Chinese thirst for education, however, is derived from a high opinion of knowledge as a good thing in itself, and although that knowledge, based in the past upon the study of classical literature, has produced little deep thought, the influx of western ideas has provided the needed stimulus and the Chinese "have entered into every branch of knowledge

B. Russell not forsaking those things which have a purely ethical interest." They have, indeed, preserved the distinctive merit of their civilization - "a just conception of the ends of life."

Rortze It is in this spirit of "production without possession, action without self-assertion, development without domination," that the Chinese, in spite of their financial greed and political corruption, are definitely superior to European peoples. Hence they are pacifist and contemplative and without the idea of 'progress' which dominates Western thought and which, in European relations with Asia has too often supplied unworthy motives. From this also, proceeds the tolerance of the Chinese, together with their misunderstood eagerness to 'save face'. Their motives are quite foreign to the 'restlessness and pugnacity' of the West. And it is here that contact could be mutually beneficial. The myth of the 'subtle Orient' may be at last exploded and the fetish of material progress may be worshipped less ardently by Western nations, from whom the Chinese, if not 'goaded into' militarism' may learn the "indispensable minimum of practical efficiency" which will enable them to preserve something of those supreme ethical qualities which the modern world will find indispensable.

B. Russell

When Japan was forced to enter into relations with Western Powers during the years following 1854, its institutions had reached a stage of development identical with that of medieval Europe. Feudalism and its coincident growth, Chivalry, were grouped around the national religion of Shintoism as in Europe they had for their centre the Catholic Church. This system was suddenly shaken to its base. The nation awoke from its policy of trying to ignore the present by idealizing the past and a period of friction with foreign powers commenced. The Japanese, formerly without any conception of world-relations, had now to learn that "rights may have to be sacrificed for the sake of right" and that real advancement can come only when "duties no less than rights" are emphasized.

Ingram Bryan

A rapid transition from 'feudalism' to modern conditions at once commenced, and for a time England and America played a beneficent part in helping to establish present-day forms of government, industry and education. To be thus influenced by foreign nations was no new thing for Japan, already indebted to China and India for most of its religion and civilization. It seems part of the racial genius, perceptible even in the national "science" of jujitsu, to take captive the conquerors.

R. Heene, v.)

And yet it is all too possible that Japan, in attempting to save ~~her~~^{its} life by losing it in the rapid acquirement of benefits conferable by Western nations, may have been unsuccessful. The distinctive feature of the national psychology is "to be more concerned with action than with thought," and it is an illomened feature of the transition that the artistic and aesthetic tastes which are the birthright of the Japanese, have been perverted by their love of imitation to mere mechanical production, generally

resulting in the deadening of the 'creative sensibility' and in the loss of beauty in art and architecture.

G.L. Dickinson But not only have the aesthetic tastes of the nation been effected. The adoption of the Western industrial system has been accompanied by "all the evils of unjust distribution which constitute ... the problem of the West," while there still exists an over-praised system of bureaucratic government with the Emperor as its nominal head. With the growth of a free press and of a national system of education, it is impossible for these conditions to survive, but in the meantime pride in continued success is tending to produce an egotism foreign to the spirit of true patriotism.

A.M. Pooley. For the Japanese themselves appear to regard their rapid rise as an unmissed blessing and claim entire independence of more conservative China. They can produce a long list of reforms which have undoubtedly been beneficial and which prove the growth of their sense of nationhood. Yet if estimates given in such books as "Japan at the Cross-roads," are correct, the political and social condition is still critical. The characteristic of 'building for impermanency' is still strong (one of the psychic influences of Buddhism) is still strong. And "the self-reliance which follows a struggle for existence is lacking, and self-conceit is but a poor substitute."

To sum up. The good effects of contact with the West will probably be less moral than physical and intellectual: the former of these being due to the adoption of flesh diet and to improved conditions of marriage: the latter, to the gradual diffusion of education.

A General consideration of Eastern life, insofar as it is untouched by Western influences, seems to make it possible to confirm the statement that Oriental peoples, like the Athenians of Pericles' proud boast, "are lovers of beauty combined with plain living." The mass of the people live on the soil, gaining thereby a certain breadth of outlook and a general simplification to which Western nations have long been strangers. It has been seen, also, that "throughout the East there has been a development of culture in some respects higher than that of the modern West." There is a finer contemplation of nature and of the purpose of life, shown in Oriental religion, literature, and art, which "if not the purpose of human life, are signs that the purpose is being fulfilled."

G. L. Dickinson

In the other hand, the East has fallen far behind in 'the machinery of life', which has made living more comfortable for the majority of mankind in the West. And pre-occupation with material things does not necessarily imply materialistic ideals so long as the general level of life is raised and more opportunity given for the advent of "sweetness and light." The East, in spite of its lower tension, seems unable to abolish its abounding poverty which in some measure must be the result of a failure in the moral and intellectual code. "The patience that is patient of inertia is unwholesome and futile." Some measure of action is essential to progress and to civilization.

Yet it is doubtful whether the balance between activity and contemplation can be restored by an interchange of the elements in which either East or West is lacking. It is hard to forecast that there will never be perfect mutual comprehension, but it is certain that the nations, though they may receive a stimulus from one another, must work out their own

salvation without taking a 'short-cut' to a higher plane.

There are, however, two principles, both depending upon Christian ethics, which must help to bridge the gulf that at present exists and to which the Western world is indebted for any unity and spirit of a common brotherhood that it possesses.

H. G. Wood. First is a 'faith in the solidarity of mankind' - an ideal quite foreign to theory in such pessimistic creeds as Buddhism, though fortunately recognised, to some extent, in practice. Second, and correlative with this is 'faith in the reality of true progress' - a faith with which the existence of independent and exclusive nation-states, and the dependence upon force as the method of settling disputes, are quite inconsistent.

It seems reasonable to believe that Eastern Nations will recognize the value of these ideals - unrealized as they are - and that they will find in the West "a store of knowledge, with its resultant power,

F.S. Marvin

(v. Viset. Haldane)

and a keener consciousness of the whole of man-
kind" than they themselves possess. 'Divergence in
the material spheres' and complete uniformity in ideals
and culture must be the aim of all. For common principles,
if discovered, may show that the best is not as discovered
from the West in the foundations of faith as we assume
and that

Robt. Bridges

man's grace
Compact of all, must all embrace.
China and Ind, Hellas or France,
Each hath its own inheritance
And each to Youth's rich market brings
Its bright divine imaginings

List of Books Consulted.

- Robt. Briffault: 'The Making of Humanity'
A.J. Hubbard: 'The Tale of Empires'
B. Kidd: 'Western Civilization'
F.S. Marvin: Western Races and the World
Unity of Western Civilization (Art. by H.S. Wood)
History of India: Ed. Thomson
What can India teach us? Max Muller.
Sua: Sir W. Birdwood.
The Civilizations of India, China, and Japan: G.L. Dickinson
An Inaugural Lecture: Murdoch
China & Britain: R. O. Hall
The Problem of China: Prof. B. Russell
China Awakened: Zyau (Art. by Ch. Brane)
The Soul of the Far East: P. Lowell
Political Development of Japan: Uehara
Japanese Civilization: Ingram Boyan
Japan at the Cross-Roads: A.M. Pooley
Japanese Civilization: Satomi.
Japan: Kokoro: Lafcadio Hearn.
Outline of History: H.B. Wells: (with H. Bellor's 'Companions')
'Cothen': A.W. Kinglake
Encyclopedia Britannica. (Arts. 'China' & 'Japan').
The Clash of Colors: B. Matthews.
Hobbes Journal (July: Art. by Vincent Haldane).