

in other respects, and then, in every case, defeat them with his unbounded tolerance.

But in spite of this repetitiousness in the plot, the book is, as we have said, never dull, and each encounter is vastly interesting. Perhaps this is because every single one of Father Chisholm's opponents represents a fine character study, starting with Father Tarrant, the administrator of the seminary in Spain, who could not get away from the belief that the only reason behind a student's running away from the seminary for three days must be worldly or carnal desires; Father Keezer, the vicar of a poor industrial district, who took out his bitterness at the lack of interest on the part of his parishioners on his young curate; Mother Maria-Veronica, of a noble German family, who could not conquer her feeling of social superiority over the commonness of Father Chisholm; Bishop Mealey, a good example of "muscular Christianity," a type also met with in the YMCA; and finally young Monsignor Sleeth, who is so impatient with the old vicar Father Chisholm and his strange ideas about the value of other religions.

Among the few Chinese characters he introduces, Mr. Chia stands out, a fine Chinese gentleman, typical in his agnosticism, who offers to become a Christian out of gratitude for Father Chisholm's having saved his son's life. He is by no means converted but simply wishes to give Father Chisholm "face." He, too, is won over after thirty years of contact with Father Chisholm's great tolerance.

Cronin has shown great skill in handling the parts dealing with China. As he has apparently never been to this country, he has avoided the pitfalls of mistaken local color by an admirable restraint. There is hardly a

single false note struck throughout these chapters.

Another aspect Cronin touches upon, and one which particularly affects the foreign reader in the East, is the influence of the war of 1914 upon a little white community of three nuns—one Belgian, one German, and one French. He shows the tragic conflicts arising within this group, a group living in China hundreds of miles from anywhere, a group which has been together for several years and which, for all they know, will remain together till the end of their lives.

Although Cronin limits himself mainly to the theme of religious tolerance, it is tolerance in all fields of life that he preaches, indeed a fine sentiment in a book published in the year 1941. Through Father Chisholm he tries to prove that the ideals of man are the same all over the world. We cannot express this better than by the words of the author, in a little scene where Monsignor Sleeth observes old Father Chisholm instructing a child to write out certain sentences:

"He read: 'I faithfully promise to oppose bravely all that is stupid and bigoted and cruel. Signed, ANDREW. P. S. Toleration is the highest virtue. Humility comes next.'"

He looked at it bleakly, for a long time . . . He even waited with a chilled face until the next was prepared. 'Our bones may moulder and become the earth of the fields but the Spirit issues forth and lives on high in a condition of glorious brightness. God is the common Father of all mankind.'

Mollified, Sleeth looked at Father Chisholm. 'Excellent. Didn't Saint Paul say that?'

'No.' The old man shook his head apologetically. 'It was Confucius.'—V.

JAPANESE MAGAZINES

Whatever Gods May Be

Japan is in the process of a religious revival. One aspect of this revival is the space devoted to religious problems in the magazines recently published. Although the greater part of the articles concerns such subjects as "The Religions of the Co-Prosperity Sphere" or "Islam in the East Indies," and so forth, the observer will also come across articles by competent writers dealing with religion as such. H. Kishimoto's article on "Shugyo" (Religious Exercises) in *Chuo Koron* stands out. In Japan, as everywhere else, religion has several different aspects, of which the principal ones are its public and private sides. If priests march in procession to and from a shrine, or if the souls of warriors are venerated as war gods, this is a matter of public importance; but it needs a different sort of religion to induce people to lead decent lives. A man who has attended a service in church will not necessarily abstain from beating up somebody afterwards; therefore another path must be trodden if spiritual enlighten-

ment is to be attained. This, according to Mr. Kishimoto, is where religious exercises come in.

The basic idea of all religious exercises is the same, as, for instance, is that of all military exercises: man is not complete in himself; he has to undergo a process of training and reshaping which will make him as different from what he originally was as a sword is from a steel bar. In the language of the Greek mystics and the New Testament, the initiate must die to himself and the world, like a seed which is destined to bring forth a plant and a flower and a fruit. Likewise for the Japanese initiate, the ego and all its conceits has to go.

For a considerable time after he has squatted down on the tatami or the hard, cold stone, to embark on the quest of the Unseen and the "Super-Self," the feeling of unworthiness will grow until the mind grasps the means of getting rid of the bondage of the ego and the illusions which are part and

parcel of egoism in all its forms. The process of the Greek *gnōti sautōn* or the Sanskrit *Tat tvam asi* ("know thyself"; "this is thee") is necessary for the first stages of these Japanese exercises, just as it is for Christian or other exercises of a similar nature.

What, then, will a man do, asks Mr. Kishimoto, who, by getting rid of illusions, desires to develop a strong personality, will power, and unswerving faith? Many spiritual schools in Japan practice sitting (*suwaru*) as a fundamental exercise. By patiently sitting upright in quiet surroundings the mind is led into a state of absolute quiet, and a new, inner world unfolds itself, untroubled by the outer world. The most famous representative of this system is the Zen school. Often additional exercises are resorted to, such as counting of breath (*susokukan*). In this case the only physical function still acting within the meditating person is breathing. Instead of combating and suppressing respiration, the mind concentrates on it and so cannot be deviated by it. There are two groups in Zen, namely, *Mokusho-Zen*, which achieves its aim by sitting completely still, and *Kanwa-Zen*, which uses as an auxiliary means the *ko-an*, or questions for meditation, of which there are said to be 1,800. These are outwardly concrete questions, but they cannot be solved by the intellect. If the solution is found by inward concentration, then knowledge (*satori*) is at hand.

Other groups place seeing (*miru*), in the center of their exercises. To this system belongs "skeleton-seeing" (*hakkotsukan*). This is a Buddhist exercise requiring mental contemplation of the decay of a youthful body into a skeleton. The transitoriness of all earthly matter is thereby brought home.

Another important exercise is based on the Indian practice of reciting *mantras*, or verses taken from the scriptures. Such *tonaeru*, or reciting, is very common in Japan, says the author. It is believed that the constant repetition of these *mantras* brings about concentration of will power. All worldly thoughts are eaten away by it. The spiritual force called upon—Buddha, Christ, the Sun Goddess, the Kwannon—penetrates ever deeper into the mind of the devotee, who thereby attains a state similar to the *satori* in Zen.

A purely or predominantly spiritual path is not for everyone to tread. Many climbers of the "upward path" prefer, perhaps as a preparatory stage, asceticism in its various forms. Walking (*aruku*) is conspicuous in Japan. People cut themselves off from worldly life, making unceasing pilgrimages from one holy place to the next, till a state of insensibility is reached. Such people will not know whether it rains or shines, or whether they have had food or not. They thereby "acquire merit" and reach a state of purification which only they themselves can wholly appreciate. To some extent, the entire nation takes part in exercises of this sort; there are fifty

holy mountains (*reizan*) in Japan, climbed by over a million people every year.

Typical of Japan are those people who make use of the purifying effect of bathing in icy waterfalls. This exercise takes away all bodily feeling and therefore helps one to find a short cut to "ego-lessness" (*muga*). Others again obtain certain psychological effects through touching fire, an Oriental practice dating from time immemorial. It has been rightly said that the strongest man is he who can eat one peanut. In Japan there are those who go without tea or salt. The idea is that the intense suffering which accompanies such apparently trifling sacrifices conveys strength to body and mind and works a regeneration of faith. Confucius' "eating little" is perhaps of a similar pattern. This exercise leads finally to fasting and abstaining from drink, which is also practiced in Japan, even if not on an Indian scale. "Religious exercises," the author concludes, "resemble the polishing of a jewel. Again and again the same spot is polished and slowly the luster grows. Likewise the true man only appears after constant religious training."

Not So Fanatical

Another study of exceptional interest is "Islam in Southern Asia," in *Sozo*, written by C. Matsushima, president of the Islamic Society of Japan. According to him, Islam in the East Indies is less rigid than elsewhere because it has not succeeded in displacing the ancient Hindu culture of the islands. Innumerable customs were taken over from that splendid period, and Arab austerity could gain no foothold in everyday life, although the Indonesians are a "people of the Book" and value the Koran highly. In the East Indies the same maxim holds good as in India or Africa: whatever happens in one Islamic country has a strong tendency to spread to the whole Mohammedan world, as was demonstrated during the revolts in Palestine.

Living-Spaces of Faith

A *Zadankai*, or Discussion Party, of a lively nature on religious and cultural questions is reported in *Kaizo*. The Co-Prosperity Sphere should be divided into three blocs, Buddhist, Mohammedan, and Christian. The latter, though not the least in importance, is the smallest, as it is practically confined to the Philippines. The immense wealth of religious art in Java must be protected with the aid of the Ministry of Education and the Army, just as in China the Buddhist monuments of Ta-tung are being protected. Many religious or semi-religious customs in India and southern Asia present a problem for the organizing power which is up against such disease-spreading habits as throwing corpses into rivers or having them torn apart by vultures. In other words, what Amenhotep and others discovered thousands of years ago is still a commonplace, namely, that popular customs, especially if tinged with religion, are a tough matter to cope with.—P.