

J. M. T. Winther and His “De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan” of 1915¹

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De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan [The lastest ten years in Japan] was published by Lohse Forlag, Copenhagen, in 1915. The content of the 98-page booklet was first serialized in *Nordisk Missionstidsskrift* [Nordic Mission Periodical] nos.1-4, 1915, written by a Danish missionary in Japan, J. M. T. Winther. Comparing changes in Japan between 1904 and 1913, Winther wanted his readers to understand the conditions for mission in Japan, its achievements, current situation, and challenges, and appeal to them for commitment to the work in Japan (Winther 1915:3. Below, all references to this publication will be shortened to the page number). As such, *De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan* exemplifies Winther’s quest for recognition, support and corporation in spreading the light and liberation of Christ among the Japanese that began a few months after he arrived in Yokohama on 7 September 1898 and ended with his death in Kobe on 2 March 1970.

A brief review of Winther’s biography is followed by a summary of his points along with a discussion of the “Other” in *De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan*.

Jens Mikael Thøgersen Winther (1874-1970) was born in Denmark and called

¹ This article is based on my presentation at the conference “Viewing Each Other” organized by professor in Japanese Studies, Dr. Yoichi Nagashima, and held at Copenhagen University, 20-21 March 2017, in celebration of 150-year of establishing diplomatic contact between Japan and Denmark. I am grateful to professor Nagashima for inviting me and the Japan Foundation for sponsoring the conference.

in 1896 by the Lutheran Mission Society in Ballum, then a part of Germany, now in Denmark, to join its missionary P. Lygum who was then returning to China, They went via the U.S.A. where Lygum decided he could not continue. Winther then studied theology at the Trinity Seminary founded by the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. When he graduated in 1898, plans were changed so he went to Japan to investigate the climate and options for mission there, but if dissatisfied proceed to China. The result was positive. Being one of very few Lutherans at that time, Winther was permitted to work with the United Lutheran Synod South in its work in Saga that had begun in 1891².

From then on, he had to stimulate the interest of his supporters to ensure their commitment in prayers and finances. The only means was texts. Personal letters and annual reports were just the beginning. Winther's letters from the field were sufficiently frequent to warrant The Lutheran Mission in Denmark to start a monthly newsletter, and the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America included his information in its weekly "Danskeren." (Hermansen 2014). His untiring enthusiasm and keen analytical talent shines in his writings, so one understands why Winther was a key person in the formation of Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church.

De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan translates as "The latest (*actually last*) 10 years in Japan" which says little, but to the readers of the journal *Nordisk Missionstidsskrift* where it was published in 1915, it would naturally have focus on the time span 1905-1914 and on "Christianity in Japan". Winther intended the latter but the time frame was to be 1904-1913. He explains that he wrote some of the text in 1913 but most of it in the summer of 1914 (95). 1904 and 1913 were selected, "In part because this is exactly ten years, in part because these ten years are complete as they begin and end with a war. As the statistics for 1904 ends in March 1905 we cannot get any closer to

2 I have discussed Winther's story in details in Hermansen 2014.

the end of the Japanese-Russian War; likewise ends most statistics for 1913 in March 1914 and were published in July 1914 and thus the latest available.” (40) The statistics were not the sole reason for the title. For Winther, the changes in conditions for mission over that decade in the 20th century were promising and as important.

How did the conditions change? Society as such moved from a strong conviction that Japanese values were all Japan needed to be affirmative of Christianity. Why? Because of graft and corruption (13) in all parts of society otherwise considered its core pillars – businesses (13, 15), the navy (17), the imperial court (18), and even the biggest sect of Buddhism, The True Pure Land West Honganji School (18). The financial scandals were bad but the anarchist plans of murdering the Emperor (= the High Treason Incident) in 1910 (15) were worse, and together these acts demonstrated that the moral injunctions indoctrinated by the schools were not enough to save the moral of Japan. That was the conclusion drawn by a string of most important persons in Japan, beginning with the Emperor. Another change occurred in the Japanese Church. *Dokuritsu* = *independence* (43) was the buzz word of the 00s, but in the 10s it was replaced by *gōdō* = *unification* (48).

Let the decade under discussion be THE PRESENT. For Winther, that explained why Japan needed missionaries. He outlined the tasks for THE FUTURE to reach the 40 million unreached. At the end of the book, he reviewed THE PAST in “A Few Necrologies” – eight Japanese and ten non-Japanese whose actions in life significantly influenced the standing of Christianity in Japan.

“Background and Religious Issues”

Winther’s description and analysis of Japanese politics and economy rely on many statistics and verifiable facts so the text reads almost like a 21st century history book dealing with that period, for example James L. McClain’s *Japan: A Modern History* (McClain 2002). But unlike McClain, Winther’s concern was with how the conditions influenced mission. Ever since the Meiji Restoration began in 1868, the

De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan		Japanese' mood towards foreign countries
i. Background		= the west has been swinging between
1. The national and the foreign	... 3	almost total submission to a high degree
2. Constitutional issue	... 5	of chauvinism. "Christianity is viewed
3. Industrial issues	... 7	as the ultimate foreign wherefore the
4. Economic issues	... 10	attitude towards the foreign is essential
5. Moral issues	... 14	to the Church. Currently we are viewed
ii. Religious issues	... 19	with a somewhat balanced view, but the
iii. The Church and its work	... 39	US and its California question confounds
1. A few Statistics	... 39	the situation." (4) ³ As McClain would do
2. Independence	... 43	90 years later, Winther observes that rapid
3. Unification	... 48	industrialization was based on harsh working conditions, where young women in the
4. Doctrine and life	... 54	textile industry often contracted tuberculosis. He on one hand notes that influential
iv. The tasks of the Church	... 60	industrialists as legislators resisted labor law improvements in order to protect their
v. Important events	... 72	money (9), but on the other mentions how many employers offered education options
vi. A few necrologies	... 84	for their employees though most workers were too busy or too exhausted to make
Postscript	... 95	good of the offer. Winther praises the famous industrialist Shibuzawa Eiichi for his

Figure 1 De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan – list of contents

industrialization was based on harsh working conditions, where young women in the textile industry often contracted tuberculosis. He on one hand notes that influential industrialists as legislators resisted labor law improvements in order to protect their money (9), but on the other mentions how many employers offered education options for their employees though most workers were too busy or too exhausted to make good of the offer. Winther praises the famous industrialist Shibuzawa Eiichi for his sponsorship of several events and organizations favorable to Christianity and for having said that the only piece of spiritual literature he took along on a journey to Manchuria had been a New Testament (31). Winther dose not explain Shibuzawa's take on the problematic labor conditions, whereas McClain highlights that Shibuzawa's mills in Osaka were the first in the world having electric lighting installed that the machines could be operated non-stop (McClain 2002, 229) implicitly pushing the laborers harder.

3 The California Alien Land Law of 1913 (also known as the Webb-Haney Act) prohibited "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning agricultural land or possessing long-term leases over it, but permitted leases lasting up to three years. It affected the Chinese, Indian, Japanese, and Korean immigrant farmers in California. Implicitly, the law was primarily directed at the Japanese. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California_Alien_Land_Law_of_1913)

The High Treason Incident (*Taigyaku jiken* 大逆事件) in 1910 is discussed briefly by McClain who explains how the radicals behind the coup were severely punished (McClain 2002, 376-377). But for the contemporary Winther, there was more to it: He agrees with the government’s interpretation that the attack was a consequence of the lack of moral, and the lack of moral stemmed from a deficiency in the education. “Most importantly, the Japanese people as such was forced to first consider and then admit that the Japanese teachings of loyalty were insufficient as a precaution against the most despicable crimes, and that something with a much stronger spiritual strength was called for. One concluded that religion was necessary.” (16) At first, this had negative consequences for the Christians. They experienced systemic harassment as when schools began to make visits to shrines and temples on Sundays compulsory (20). Some New Buddhist and Shinto organizations were hostile towards Christians (28), and right after the revelation of the High Treason Incident, some pastors were put under very strict police surveillance although no Christian individuals had been involved in the coup planning, unlike “five Buddhist priests or sons of such,” and despite the leader being known as a staunch anti-Christian (15). Most of the perpetrators of the High Treason Incident were executed in January 1911. A year later, followed an administrative opening towards Christianity.

“The government likely intended to revive Shinto with a main emphasis on ancestor worship and emperor worship [despite the constitutional right to freedom of faith, CMH]. But it could not find agreement. A political party that wanted to head in a different direction was about to make a public policy statement around New Year’s 1912. (...) The leader of this movement was Tokonami⁴, a bureau chief of the Ministry of Interior, whose resort includes anything religious.” (20) On 17 January 1912, Tokonami held a meeting with some members of the press where he informed

⁴ Winther refers to the bureaucrat as Tokonami but in the records of Japan’s National Diet Library his name is Shiba Junrokurō 斯波 淳六郎 (1861-1931). Shiba was the head of the Bureau of Religion (*shūkyō kyōkuchō* 宗教局長) from 1900 till the bureau was abolished in 1913 (Cf. Jinji kōshinsho 1915). In this paper I use Winther’s choice to facilitate search in his text.

about the idea of having a conference with representatives of Shinto, Buddhism, and Christianity.

Winther takes Tokonami's statement as evidence of the need for religion, but also as a demonstration a lack of understanding of religion because Tokonami argued the differences among religions were superficial, whereas to Winther they were fundamental (21-22).

Newspapers concluded that Tokonami wanted a unification of the three religions, but the bureaucrat clarified that he meant: 1) the conference to demonstrate the need for religions; 2) not a unification, but cooperation among the religions for the sake of the moral and spiritual progress of the nation; 3) to give Christianity a position equal to that of Shinto and Buddhism.

The Conference of the Religions (*Sankyōsha kaidō* 三教者会同) was held on 25 February 1912. The government and representatives of many religions met (cf. Motoda 1912). The readers of *De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan* are given details of the speeches along with negative reactions from leading opinion makers. They learn that Tokonami did not waver. As a direct result of the conference, school teachers were instructed on not to harass Christian pupils and colleagues. With a touch of his humor, Winther comments that the change of attitude still had to manifest itself in Kyushu, his part of Japan, for "Kyushu is like Vendsyssel used to be: far from the capital and the sky is high above."⁵ The conference coursed a change of mind among the intellectuals, so a group of professors from Tokyo Imperial University invited over 200 religion affiliated persons for a dinner. The dinner was chaired by the university's professor of religion ANEZAKI Masaharu. Following the dinner, "A group of scholars, state (bureaucrats) and religious leaders formed a society for Discussion of the Religious Issue. They settled on *Concordia* for its name in English, whereas we

⁵ Vendsyssel is an area in the north-west of Jutland, indeed far from the Danish capital of Copenhagen and known for its strongminded population of farmers and fishers. In Winther's understanding, the Japanese in Saga, where he started, were exceptionally firm in their resistance to Christianity.

note that its name in Japanese is *Kiitsu* that means ‘A return to unity.’” (26) The group existed from June 1912 to December 1942 (cf. Wikipedia Japan)⁶.

In this section of the book, Winther introduces various kinds of others: The Japanese in general; the different social strata and classes from the lowest paid child labor through the young adult textile worker and the successful industry leader to their majesties; and three kinds of non-Christian Japanese grouped by their attitude towards Christianity: the positive, the negative and the unreachd.

Winther held the emperor and the empress in high regard, and gives his Scandinavian readers several pieces of evidence of their positive attitudes. First, when William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, visited Japan in April 1907, the emperor received him in audience and as an exceptional honor permitted him to wear his uniform (35 and 75). Second, “recently, the emperor [Taishō] visited even a Christian School and the following day he sent a prince of blood to plant a tree in commemoration and to deliver a gift of 100 yen.” (65) The third and final proof were two poems; one by the Emperor Meiji, and one by his consort, Empress Shōken. Winther renders them in Japanese with his Danish translation:

“Me ni mienu Kami no kokoro ni Kayou koso Hito no kokoro no Makoto narikere” *Menneskets Hjertes Sandhed* (: *sande Hensigt eller Opgave*) *er at have Fællesskab med den usynlige Guds Hjerte* (35).

A literary translation of Winther’s Danish into English is, “The truth (: real purpose) of the human heart is to have fellowship with the invisible God’s heart” (Emperor Meiji)⁷.

6 婦一協会（きいつきょうかい）は、1912年（明治45年）6月20日に設立された、宗教者同士の相互理解と協力を推進する組織である。1942年（昭和17年）12月20日に解散した。

7 Emperor Meiji’s poem of “Truth” was included as the first verse of the school song of

“Hitori nomi Omou kokoro no Yoshi ashi wo Terashiwakuran Ame tsuchi no Kami”⁸ *Kun én alene belyser og forstaar det gode og onde i Hjertet, som tænker; og denne ene er Himlens og Jordens Gud* (Empress Shōken) (35).

In English, Winther’s translation is, “Only one enlightens and understands the good and the evil of the thinking heart; and that one is the God of Heaven and Earth.”

The translation of emperor Meiji’s poem reflected Winther’s position as a Christian, for *kami* could just as easily be translated with a plural form (*guder/ gods*) given the lack of number in the poem. On the other hand, *hitori* at the beginning of the Empress Shōken’s poem is the numeral for one person and it is emphasized by *nomi* “only” so together they mean “one alone” or “only one,” wherefore *kami* in this case logically is a single deity. Still, one could argue that even if only that deity knows the human heart, this does not preclude the existence of other deities, so *God* with a capital g is an interpretation after all.

Emperor Meiji died in 1912 and his consort died in 1914. Meiji’s son and successor, Emperor Taishō, too, was positive towards Christianity (73). The majesties aside, Winther introduced other Christianity-friendly non-Christians. The list includes Shibusawa Eiichi, mentioned above, and

Baron Kuki Ryūichi 九鬼 隆一 (1854-1931) who defended Christianity in a discussion of the Imperial Rescript on Education. Though Kuki did not dare criticize the venerated rescript per se, he argued that the concept in Christianity of “Two Governments” based on Jesus words in Matthew 22:17-21 was more supportive of the

Konan Women’s Academy in 1927, cf. its website where the words are rendered 目に見えぬ神の心に通ふこそ 人の心まことなりけれ (<http://gakuen.konan-wu.ac.jp/history/kouka.html>). The poem is also used on a *mikuji* – fortunetelling slips - sold at the Meiji Shrine in Tokyo, where Meiji and his empress are worshipped, cf. <http://www.meijijingu.or.jp/about/3-2.html>

8 Here I have applied the layout in DSTAIJ; the last stanza ought not to have been divided between *tsuchi* and *no*. The poem was published in several newspapers when the empress died, Winther noted.

empire than Confucianism. He argued that Confucianism supports a potential revolt against injustices, where Christianity would support any earthly ruler (29-31);

Count Ōkuma Shigenobu (大隈 重信, 1838-1922), who served as minister in several governments and two times as Prime Minister of Japan, and who founded several political parties and Waseda University, is quoted for, “the strength of a people is not decided by the size of its army or the numbers of ship of war; it depends on the strength given by Jesus Christ’s religion” (31)⁹;

“Morimura, director of *Japans Nationalbank* for eighteen years from its foundation in 1882, now a board member, and trader on a grand scale (...) and regarded as one of the founders of Japan’s industrialization” had no doubt that Faith in God was the answer to long list of problems of moral in Japan, he said in an interview “last year.” (31-32) As elsewhere, Winther only gives the family name, but the first mentioned position is wrong. *Japans Nationalbank* means The Bank of Japan, founded in 1882, but it has never had a governor by the name of Morimura (cf. Bank of Japan, n.d.). In the late 1800s, Morimura Ichizaemon VI 森村市左衛門6代 (1839-1919) was a famous industrial leader and trader, a co-founder of the Morimura Brothers, Inc. (cf. Morimura Bros., Inc., 2014). Ichizaemon was a board member and supervisor (*kanji* 監事) of the Bank of Japan from its inception. Together with his brother Toyo 豊 he opened the Morimura Bank in 1897 (cf. Morimura Bros., Inc., N.D.). Toyo died in 1899, wherefore Winther must be quoting Ichizaemon.

A final example of a supportive non-Christians is in the obituaries headed by Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841-1909). Itō, known as a key person in drafting the first Japanese Constitution, four times Prime Minister of Japan, and as the first resident general of Korea (cf. National Diet Library, Japan, 2013), is praised for his support of Christianity and the Christians when he defended his inclusion of freedom of religion

⁹ When *De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan* was published, Ōkuma held the title of Count (伯爵 *hakushaku*). In 1916 he was promoted to Marquis (侯爵 *kōshaku*) and in 1921, posthumous, to Prince (公爵 *kōshaku*).

in the Japanese Constitution. “The Prince showed kindness towards the Christians till his death. Therefore, his memory should be honored. That a Korean assassinated him in Harbin is only one of the sins this poor people has committed against their own country; for in Japan the Koreans had no truer and more sympathetic friend than the Prince.” (84-85). Here Winther sides with Itō, the individual. He is fully aware of and informs his reader about the atrocities committed by Japanese in Korea (38-39), but does not criticize the Japanese colonization of Korea.

The Christians in Japan

The remain of *De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan* is focused on the situation of Christianity in Japan. Here again, the people fall into one of three categories: Japanese Christians, Japanese non-Christians and foreign missionaries. First, some statistics clarifies the relative meager progress of the church.

Winther warnes of the inaccuracies of the figures and notes that they do not include members of the Salvation Army, or of Uchimura Kanzō’s “free” groups or the “Nicodemus Christians” who for whatever reason cannot join the church officially. Yet, he choses to present them to his Scandinavian readers.

Of course, quantity is not everything. That is Winther’s position, too. While moderately happy with the increase of Christians, he is concerned with the quality, and sees a danger in the tendency towards *liberalism and humanism* (54-57). He claims that the liberals were gradually realizing the deficiency of their positions, so more were now praying: Preaching with their heads, praying with their hearts. “Where Christ is owned by the heart, he will sooner or later appear on the tongue as well.” (57)

Kind	1904	1913	Change in percent
Members of Protestant Churches	66,133	102,790	55
Members of Roman Catholic Church	58,086	66,689	14,5
Members of Orthodox Churches	28,597	32,246	13
Congregations (of which are independent)	498 (92 [18%])	857 (182 [21%])	
Christian centers (with 6 or more annual sermons)	708	1256	
Churches (buildings)	374	594	59
Pastors	442	728	64
Not ordained evangelists	559	713	27
Missionaries (Families)	266	299	11
Missionaries - single men	38	43	13
Missionaries - single women	286	368	28
Seminars	15 (with 186 students of theology)	17 (more than 500 students)	
Bible women schools	9 (141 students)	17 (about 250)	
Sunday schools	1188	1875	58
Teachers and pupils of the Sunday Schools	57,033	108,495	90
Primary education (kindergartens)		About 9000 pupils	
Girls' Higher School	37 (4281 students)	59 (c. 5000)	
Boys' Higher School, many night schools,	15 (2120)	Ordinary schools 13 (5550), night schools included (more than 7000)	

Winther's comparison of statistics from 1904 with 1913 within the Japanese Christian World

Like their pastors so the Japanese Christians ... how they differed from those in the West. According to one of them, they were concerned with Good vs. Evil, Right vs. Wrong rather than with Life vs. Death. Consequently, they did not focus much on salvation but more on correct living (58).

Winther reasons that this state of affairs stems from insufficient baptismal

preparations; working people, whose calendar did not include a weekly day off, did not have time for church attendance; when they attended the quality of the sermons were more ethical and therefore focused on the sinner and not sufficiently focused on sin: when sin was mentioned, the kinds were not fully enumerated; when they were enumerated, the lack of baptismal preparation left the person unprepared to use his/her bible, and the sermons were of no help in that respect (59). Bible studies were the remedy – in individual churches and in gatherings of several churches. “Perhaps they will show a double lane out of the muddle, in part by helping the participants directly, and in part by demonstrating to the pastors how interesting, attractive and beneficial genuinely Biblical sermons can be.” (60)

As was mentioned above, at the beginning of the 20th century, the Japanese churches sought independence. Winther identifies three causes that prevented the Episcopal, the Congregational, the Presbyterian and the Methodist – the four big protestant churches – from gaining true independence. First, the move in that direction came too early: the Japanese members donated money but not enough to fund an expansion of the membership. Instead, the church organizations followed a policy where they wanted to be free of the missionaries but also wanted the overseas boards to continue their financial support. The individual pastors worked hard, but were often unable to reach beyond his congregation or congregations, wherefore the inflow of new members dwindled. Second, “The Japanese, and in particular those living in the towns, are nomadic.” The Japanese workers moved frequently, so a member often stayed only a few years, then moved away but kept his or her affiliation with the baptismal church. Over time that connection weakened, while local churches in the member’s new area did not benefit from the arrival of a Christian. Winther argues this to be the main cause for the stagnation of congregations (47-48). A third reason, he speculates, might be that the generally high expectations of Christians during emergencies likely prevented some from joining the Church (48).

For these several reasons Winther is critical of the *independence* trend, but

for other reasons he is equally skeptical of the trend towards *unification* that replaced it. He opinions that applying a rational approach whereby A and B were merged, would not alleviate the lack of pastors or pastoral outreach; ignoring or suppressing differences would create stress, wherefore congregations would dwindle.

Rather than unify, cooperation is the solution for him. The missionaries of the protestant denominations had set an example when they formed a federation that published a yearbook etc. Not mentioned in the book but in fact Winther was active in these activities. The Japanese churches followed the lead and formed a federation in December 1911. *De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan* includes an excerpt of the constitution for the federation so one gets an idea of the scope and the commitments of this work. Both the group of missionaries and pastors’ group elected 15 persons for the continuation committee of the Edinburgh committee (53-54).

Thus, The World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh 1910 was supportive of Winther’s position. That was confirmed by the work of the Mott Conference, named after John Raleigh Mott (1865-1955), who led the Edinburgh Conference¹⁰. Unlike the government’s Conferences of Religions, Winther participated in the Japanese Mott Conference, and in a working group that emerged from it.

In *De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan*, the Mott Conference is dealt with as one of five important events. In chronological sequence, the events were:

1. 1907, The World Federation of Christian Students’ World Conference in Tokyo, 3. - 7. April¹¹.

10 “As one of the founders of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America (1893), Mott led the planning for the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910, served as its chairman, and headed its continuation committee. In 1912 and 1913 he circled the globe to stimulate the formation of national associations of students, youth, and churches and to conduct mass evangelistic crusades in China and India.” (Thomas 1998).

11 Winther gives details on the financial and thus political attention paid by many influential men in Japan and the public overseas support from the USA, the UK, Norway and Sweden and criticized the lack of public support from the Danish government. He notes that even the Buddhists, who hosted a gathering at the same time, sent a representative. He dose not,

2. 1907, the visit by Salvation Army General William Booth that began on 16 April.
3. 1909, the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the first Protestant missionaries, 5 - 10 October.
4. 1913, the Mott Conference in April.
5. 1913, A visit by 29 businessmen from the US and Canada that showed their Japanese colleagues the importance of Sunday Schools, for the men were on their way to a World Congress for Sunday Schools in Swiss, held there on 8-15 July. The group left Hawaii for Yokohama on 1 March¹².

The events were important for different reasons, but they all stimulated the interest in Christianity. The first, second and fifth events more than the third and fourth reached beyond the Church; number one because it was the first world conference of any kind to be hosted in Japan, number two because of the celebrity status of General William Booth, and number five because the business men appealed to business people.

The third event naturally emphasized a review of the past, but also became an occasion of reconciliation and break down of prejudice and barriers. “This was the first time missionaries and native pastors were gathered on absolutely equal terms. (...) Within that one week, they got to know other people than the few they had tried to work with so far. (...) The celebration helped the Japanese to express appreciation of the missionaries and their work (...). It helped some of the missionaries break down

however, mention that Tokyo hosted an Industrial Expo from the beginning of April, though it got much coverage news, e.g. Asahi Shinbun April 1907.

12 The *World-wide Sunday-school work; the official report of the World's seventh Sunday-school convention, held in Zurich, Switzerland, July 8-15, 1913* includes a “Report of Commission No. 4: The Orient” with a chapter on A Sunday-School Tour Around the World and five chapters specifically on the Sunday Schools in Japan, (Trumbull 1913, 228-243). Winther does not mention it, but the group of “29 – fourteen business men and Sunday-school specialist plus members of their families” came to learn the situation of the Sunday-schools in Asia (Trumbull 1913, 229). This was probably also in part to prepare for the eighth Sunday-school convention, planned to be hosted in Tokyo in 1916 (Trumbull 1913, 233-238)

the mistrust that had built up over the past six or seven years. (...) The mutual relations between the native churches were also greatly improved by the celebration.” (78-79) To be fair, Winther outlines the critic of the event voiced by “our Søren Kierkegaard-like friend,” Uchimura Kanzō, who is said to desist the embracement of the church by the nobility and business people (77-78).

The Mott Conference gets much coverage in *De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan*: the details of the conference are described on pp. 81-83, and Winther’s evaluation of the first six months after it is given on pp. 67-69. As opposed to the 50th missionary anniversary, the Mott conference was focused on the present and the future. Where the 1907-World Conference in Tokyo resulted in 1700 baptisms, the vision of the Mott Conference was bigger yet: A three-year mission drive by the churches in cooperation. That was the result of intense talks, first held by missionaries and Japanese pastors in separate groups over two days each, then in mixed ones (82). Mr. Mott was most inspiring as his theology, matched Winther’s well and “he did not lecture or give a sermon without mentioning Luther or quoting some of his central statements.” (81) And the conference stimulated the spirit of cooperation wherefore it could be seen as building on what had been started by the 50th anniversary. They did not come for the 1909 event, but in 1913, even the bishops of the Episcopal Church participated. Participants in the conference developed an appreciation of cooperation that did not demand a renunciation of differences (83). The immediate results were positive. A thousand audiences or more would flock where the mission pushes were made and hundreds would sign up for baptismal preparations (68). Nevertheless, Winther was skeptic. Right before the paragraphs about the first successes, he discusses the exhaustion among pastors, who, “certainly commit more sin by working too much than by doing too little. Loss of health, nervous breakdown, even madness occurs terribly often considering the number of pastors.” (67) And right after the appraisal of the new push, Winther voices concern that an extraordinary push would usually be followed by a period of relaxation, so “in the end what had been won might be lost

again.” (68) This concern echoed his observation of what happened in Japan after the Japanese-Russian War in 1905 – the enthusiasm and feverish commitment replaced by a slack atmosphere. He opined that the lay people had to be activated and dedicate themselves more to the work; then success would be within the reach.

Ōuchi Saburō 大内三郎 (1987) has summarized the result of the mission push, in Japanese called *Zenkoku kyōdō dendō* (全国協同伝道 nationwide cooperate mission): the number of churches grew from 586 in 1910 to 1505 in 1920, and the number of Christians rose with forty thousand in ten years to 164,500. More than one million tracts were handed out and 27,350 people became seekers (Jp. 求道者 *kyūdōsha*).

The tasks of the Church

Twelve of the 98 pages in *De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan* are focused on the tasks facing the Church. The soil is great but the workers are too few, was the argument of Winther who demonstrated the potential and enormity of the task with statistics on the ratio of Christians. 1 in 200 are Christians in Tokyo proper, in Tokyo with suburbs the ration is 1:357. In Japan as such 1:920, but in Kyushu 1:490 and in Saga Province, where Winther began his mission, 1:5580. “It is morning, but the morning has only just broken, and the darkness still hovers over the people.” “Compare the situation with India and Africa,” he invites, observing that missions were ready to send more missionaries to those areas, which was good, although the need was so much greater in Japan. Continuing with the light metaphor he argues, “Africa is called the “dark continent”. That is likely true, but - - - what are we then to call the so-called “Land of the Rising Sun”? Africa has one Christian for every 110 inhabitants. That is much brighter than even the heart of the Japanese capital, 7 times brighter than Japan as such and 10 times as bright as Kyushu, with its magnificent, powerful, and excellent millions of people.” “For God, the soul of a black person has the same value as of any person, I suppose. But count on what a Japanese can do for or against the Kingdom

of God! Look, whose influence reaches the furthest! So even if the ratio of Japan was true in Africa too, Japan would still need so much more [attention/work].”

The first task for the Church to succeed is to *Increase the Missionary Force*. They might not agree on the degree of the increase, but everyone, native and foreign in Japan, agrees on the need for an increase. However, the past ten years had seen little increase. There was, for instance, a Lutheran Church (in America?) that wanted to send 5 families but only managed to send 2 (62).

“Why do people not want to come to Japan?” Winther asks and speculates that Japan is not perceived as romantic as India or Africa; “It lacks the lions and life threatening climate of Africa, the snakes and tigers of India, the robbers and Boxers of China and the Cannibals of the Southern Seas, and our earthquakes and volcanoes hardly ever dangerous. However, the Japanese self-consciousness of the Japanese, could it not stand in for all of those dangers? It will certainly occasion as much self-sacrifice.” (62)

The second task is to ready the missionaries for their job, probably more difficult in Japan than in any other country, he argues:

Here is a thousand-year old culture, now tangling with that of the West. Here are mores, so complicated that they are hard to acquire, and so important that they must be acquired. Here, the language is so developed and rich on vocabulary, forms and grammatical kinds that if one put it on one side of the scales and then put Latin, Greek, and Hebrew on the other side, those who wanted the lighter would choose the three. Here is a literature so multifaceted and complex that even the specialists find it challenging. Here are religious ideas, deep-rooted, little mentioned, hard to catch, often self-contradicting and not yet fully discussed by anyone. Here is a long and moving history, comparatively well known, but not so easy for a foreigner to get familiar with. Here are so many areas where all the missionary’s dedication, courage,

faith and enthusiasm can find work. The more he becomes an expert in every area without losing the warmth in his heart and his simple-mindedness the better(63).

What has been done to help the missionaries? A language school has been established in Tokyo. And in Karuizawa, the summer recreational area for more than half of all missionaries in Japan “from the beginning,” a Dane [= Winther] had launched and coordinated a long-wanted summer school, essential for the new-comers, and useful for the old hands as well (63). In the first year, 1913, the participants had lectures on language, literature, history, religion, mores and manners, jurisprudence, and the missionary’s environment [culture?]. The very best of the best accepted to teach, including professor Anezaki, Tokyo Imperial University, on Buddhism; Mr. Sekiya, the Chief of Education in Korea; and professor Naruse, the founder of Japan’s first Women’s University. The purpose was to get first-hand information and to network with these leaders of Japan. In Winther’s archives are his letters to Uchimura Kanzo asking him to come to Karuizawa and teach again referring to “Your kind visit and interesting lectures in Karuizawa last summer were very much appreciated.” (Kumamoto, June 23rd, 1913). Uchimura declined, cf. Winther’s next letter to him, dated June 30th, 1913.

Thus prepared, the missionaries had three main areas of work: preaching, charity and teaching – all needing continuation and expansion. Winther himself was involved in the first and the last, but his discussion of the second demonstrates his awareness of the need for charity and his recognition of why missionaries should get involved: What Winther termed Charity (Velgørenhed in Danish) made Christianity popular. He wrote:

Charity. Christian Japanese have made good progress but put together all the work done by the natives and the foreigners is like a drop in the sea. There

are most orphanages, three asylums for patients with Hansen's disease, some activities for the blind, a few small homes for the elderly, etc. Everywhere is just a beginning. There is still not a single institution for the mentally ill. While I am writing this, penetrating screams are heard from the neighbor house. A mentally ill person is locked up in a small scary but solid plank shed, 2 or 3-meter square. It is worse than a Danish pigsty. His screams often wake us up in the night. A missionary addressed this issue in a newspaper, writing that from his study he could hear three such sad people locked up in his neighborhood. Others are neglected, the targets of children's scorn and adults' insensitivity. The other day, a visitor asked if the Christians have an asylum for such wretches; one of his friends was a mentally ill person and (some) would pay whatever it took. I winced, as I had to confess that no such a place had yet been made. Hospital work done with true Christian love or human sympathy would definitely not be a superfluity. Skills in handling the knife are not all a patient needs. We have had sad examples of this fact. Work for released prisoners, fallen women, jobless, homeless, etc. all need expansion.

In 1919, on behalf of the Lutherans, Maude Powlas started Jiaien in Kumamoto that was a complex of a home for prostitutes, an orphanage, and a home for the elderly.

The third task for the church was a university, a job for collaboration (79). The idea was conceived by the joint committee of pastors and missionaries, he notes. Only in 1950 did such a university become a reality with the founding of International Christian University in Tokyo.

To Winther, education and charity were only indirect paths. The main work was preaching the gospel and it seemed insurmountable. The rural areas with 80 percent of the population (40 million) were unreached. The uneducated masses were skeptical or even scared of the Christians, suspecting them of wanting the livers of people for medical purposes (66-67). He speculates on how to do the work; Some had

tried to go on preaching tours in the countryside, but Winther finds that almost futile given the anti-Christian propaganda was constantly there unlike the occasional priest or missionary (69). Some agreed with this view and had concluded the time was not ripe for rural mission. Winther, on the other hand, argues that the time would never be ripe, wherefore other approaches had to be considered. He suggests Sunday-schools as the means. It was work one could entrust to lay people; “It is easy to get attention and with a slide projector hundreds of children will gather in no time.” “Begin with preaching obedience to parents and patriotism – this will break down skepticism, and may even evoke appreciation from the parents; next, tell about the almightiness and omniscience of God – this will add a new dimension to obedience and loyalty; this brings one to the love of God and finally one can talk about the salvation. Not a direct path, but a more certain one that at least will prevent the next generations from growing up with a negative attitude to Christianity.” In Winther’s opinion that strategy would work better than the huge investment of resources following the decision of the Mott Conference.

The use of a slide projector typifies Winther’s general attitude towards new methods in service of mission especially if missions and churches would work together. In that light, he recommends trying a *Newspaper Mission*. The idea had come to him from missionary Albertus Pieters¹³ in Oita who had started such a *newspaper mission*. Winther gives examples of the effect, but also notes how Pieters’ mission board did not approve of the method, and how he thinks it could be improved in efficiency if missionaries in Japan formed a joined press bureau. In fact, when Winther returned to Japan in the late 1920s after some years in Denmark, he eventually became involved in and responsible for a newspaper mission based in Fukuoka.

A fourth task of the Church is to build up a work among Japanese emigrants,

13 Albertus Pieters, 1869-1955, served in Japan 1891-1923, working first at Tōzan Gakuin 東山学院 in Nagasaki, and later in Kumamoto and Fukuoka, where he edited a mission paper 伝道紙, cf. 日本キリスト教歴史大辞典, p. 1160 and *The Japan Christian Year Book* 1957.

but nothing much has yet started (72).

In sum, the doors are open, but it will take more missionaries for Christianity to enter them, in the cities, the rural areas and overseas.

Winther rounds up *De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan* with eighteen necrologies for individuals in the history of Christian mission in Japan: eight Japanese and ten non-Japanese. He only lists their family names wherefore their personal names and Chinese characters for the Japanese are based on modern biographies in *Nihon Kirisutokyōshi Daijiten* and Wikipedia, and where those sources differ with Winther's data for the person's year of birth or death, these information are given in square brackets.

The Japanese

1. Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841-1909), a statesman who helped Christianity and the Christians.
2. Miyoshi Taizō 三好退蔵 (1845-1908), baptized in London [Baptized in Berlin as a student in 1883/85]; lawyer, vice-minister in the Ministry of Justice.
3. Kataoka Kenkichi 片岡健吉 (1849-1904 [1844-1903]) partner in the Meiji restoration, member of parliament 1890, baptized in Japan [1885], strong Christian, who often preached on Sundays, the head of Doshisha from 1903 [1902].
4. Tsuda Sen 津田仙 (1835-1907 [1837-1909]), baptized in the Methodist church in 1875 [3 Jan 1874], father of Tsuda Ume and a strong propagator of the Kingdom of God.
5. Okuno Masatsuna 奥野昌綱 (1823-1910), assistant to Hepburn on his dictionary, baptized as the 27th protestant Christian in Japan, and the first to preach a genuine Japanese sermon, hymn composer.

6. Honda Yōitsu 本田庸一 (1848-1912), one of eleven who made the first evangelical congregation in 1872. The first Japanese ordained for the Methodist church. Bishop. A talented orator.
7. Kobayashi Chūbei 小林忠兵衛 (1851-1910), unsuccessful until 1897, when he launched a toothpowder that made him rich; supporter of YMCA and other Christian activities. Known for his care for his factory workers.
8. Sasamori Uchirō 笹森 卯一郎 (1867-1912 [1911]), pastor in the Methodist church, baptized by Honda. “One day he was listening to a poor sermon that made him so angry that he took the word. Half an hour later, 30 students signed up as candidates of baptism.” (89)

The ten non-Japanese:

- A. Hepburn, James Curtis (1815-1911), in Japan 1859-1892 as medical missionary, made the first Japanese-English dictionary, Bible translator etc. His wife opened the first school for girls.
- B. Williams, Channing Moore (1829-1911 [1910]), founder of the American Episcopal Church in Japan in 1859. Bishop of China and Japan until the first Japanese was baptized in his church in 1874. Started the higher education of his church in Japan. “He worked harder than most, prayed, suffered, endured and hoped much because he loved much.”
- C. Ms. Miller, Mary Eddy born Kidder (1834-1910 [1913]). Dutch Reformed Church of America. Followed Ms. Hepburn in 1870. Headed the first girls’ school in Japan from 1875. Editor of a women’s magazine for 29 years, and in 1893, she started a magazine for children.
- D. Greene, Daniel Crosby (1843-1913), sent by the Congregational Church of America in 1869. Participated in the first Bible translation and died during its later revision. A liberal Christian, who “was not a theologian, and let us hope the quality of his faith was better than his theology.” (91)

- E. Davis, Jerome Dean (1838-1910), conservative Christian, member of the Congregational Church of America [American Board], a strong support for Nijjima at Doshisha. Fought against, but was defeated by, the liberal trends in the school after Nijjima death. Participated in the Edinburgh Conference in 1910.
- F. De Forest, John Kinne Hyde (1844-1911), the Congregational Church of America, journalist and evangelist. Theologically he moved from “normal” to becoming first an evolutionist, then a liberal and finally a radical.
- G. Awdry, William (1842-1910), a suffragan bishop¹⁴. So completely opposite in theology from De Forest mentioned above. Outspoken in his critique, but loved the Japanese. Built him home in Tokyo so it would suit a Japanese successor. Served the Episcopal Church 1896 to 1908, when illness forced him to retire.
- H. Evington, Henry (1848-1912), Church Mission Society, bishop of Kyushu. Translator of a book of liturgy and a prayer book.
- I. Bishop Schereschewsky, Samuel Isaac Joseph (1831-1906) American Episcopal Church. He belonged to China [where he worked for many years], but because he spent his last twenty years in Japan translating the Bible into Chinese two times, we saw him often and thought of him as one of us. Prof. Max Müller, Oxford, reckoned him one of the six most talented orientalist in the world.
- J. Bishop Nikolaj Ioan Demitrovich Kasatkin, (1836-1911 [1912]), Russian Orthodox Church. A unique church builder in Japan and the world. With more than one page, this is the longest of the necrologies.

¹⁴ A suffragan bishop is a bishop subordinate to a metropolitan bishop or diocesan bishop. They may be assigned to an area which does not have a cathedral of its own. Wikipedia.

In his postscript, Winther discusses the significance of the war in Europe for the Japanese conception of Christianity and estimates that it is positive. Till then, it had been an argument against Christianity that a Christian could not be a patriot and defend his country like a true Japanese, but the war has disproved that logic for all to see, so now more Japanese show interest in the religion he concludes.

Discussion and conclusion

“I Like Japan—You want to know the reason? It is difficult to give off-hand the reason for a basic conviction. I like the Japanese people; I like the Japanese culture; I like the Japanese traditions. I even like the Japanese cuisine” (newspaper clipping of an interview with Winther in his diary, 1958 between p. 180 and 181 (April 14-16)). And in a letter, Winther stated that, “We should hate the sin, not the sinner.” This attitude and that position color *De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan*, and help us see “the other” in the text from his perspective. As explained, “the others” were his readers and his missionary colleagues but above all the Japanese. Winther identified many types of Japanese, helping the Scandinavians grasp the complexity: The Emperor, people of the nobility, a general and unnamed people of the armed forces, bureaucrats, politicians, un-educated rural people, anonymous children, youth and women working under harsh conditions in the industries. There are the 40 million = 80 per cent of the population, living in rural areas and unreached by Christianity, there are the people of other religions, there are those who hinder the Christian mission and others who support it without being Christians. The Christians are further discussed according to their denominations and their status as clergy and lay.

Winther clearly expressed his disagreements with several missionaries and Japanese, and we note how few of them were identified individually, in contrast to the many with whom he sympathized. Uchimura Kanzō is one of the exceptions. Uchimura is probably paid so much attention because of his comparative fame in Denmark, due in the first place to his autobiography *Hvorledes jeg blev en Kristen*,

Udtog af min Dagbog (How I became a Christian), published in Danish in 1906, and in the second place because he had been discussed in Carl Skovgaard-Petersen’s book *Fra Nutidens Japan* based on a visit to Uchimura the author had made together with Winther in 1911. Readers of *Nordisk Missionstidsskrift* and of *De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan* knew of Uchimura. Winther’s distinction between the sin and the sinner also applied to Uchimura. Therefore, I suppose, did Winther invite Uchimura to lecture at the Karuizawa Summer-school, for two years. We observed a similar approach to the *liberal or humanistic* Christians. We saw it in Winther’s reflections on the 50th anniversary for the arrival of the first Protestant missionaries and the Mott Conference, where he expressed mildly positive surprise when he reported how people came together and worked with one another across denominational divisions.

The discussion of Independence (*dokuritsu*) vs. Unification (*kyoudou*) illuminated the frictions within and among denominations. Winther wanted neither preferring a more flexible solution: cooperation where practical and mutually profitable such as in publishing and education of missionaries. Winther was practicing what he preached, for example in his cooperation with other Lutheran missionaries from the very beginning of his work in Japan. This could, of course, be seen as a-matter-of-cause decision, but it was not. Other groups of Lutherans did not join right away, and at least one of them never did. On the other hand, collaboration could be challenging, he pointed out, referring to the observation of “several missionaries” who had found it to be easier to work with people of a different denomination than with a pastor of their own (52).

What can be deducted from the text about J.M.T. Winther? He held explicit conservative values; authorities were to be respected, and were expected to act with decency, wherefore graft was despicable. He was sympathetic towards the suffering, but though he realized how financial injustices caused much of the suffering, he did not advocate any fundamental changes to the systems. Instead he aimed at changing the humans in the systems by making them realize their sinfulness and he was not

afraid of criticizing “the sin” he saw in others no matter their status. He expressed gratitude for the charity from the rich and other power holders.

Was his discussion racist, when it focused on the qualities of Japanese versus the Indian or African peoples where he advocated for work among the former more urgent and claimed the total result would be better? I think, yes. He explicated that for God, there is no difference in the value of hearts regardless of skin color, but among human beings, for now, the Japanese would be a better investment for the sake of God. Perhaps he was merely using commonly held values without really sharing them? His reflections on the California Issue where he lamented the ranking of Japanese below the Polacks and Italians could be a soft critique of the racial thinking as such. Yet, his comments on the Koreans in relation to the assassination of Itō Hirobumi seem much in tune with the paternalistic attitude held among Japanese intellectuals versus the Koreans and other Asians at that time. This issue needs further investigations.

Turning from the content to his style, it has an elegant mix of the academic with the personal and a touch of down to earth humor; statistics and the general are appropriately balanced off with Sunday-school stories. Thus, we might see a parallel between morally sore state of Japan (3-19) that can only be healed with the acceptance of Christianity and the story later told about “the notorious black smith who lived in the mountains. Until two years ago his neighbors distasted him for good reasons. Now he has gained their confidence and he has turned his home into a center of Christian influence in the area.” The change came about when mission reached him through a newspaper advertisement (71). Japan, too, would be healed, Winther argued if religion and Christianity in particular was allowed to thrive in the schools and society at large.

Despite the eloquent style and the enthusiastic tone, Winther’s appeal for collaboration and more Danish or Scandinavian missionaries did not yield much. Only one new family came: Ditlev Gotthard Monrad Bach (1887-1974) and his wife Ellen Sigrid, ne Knudsen, (1893-), both born in Denmark, were sent by The United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, arrived in 1916 and stayed till the

outbreak of World War II. Was the fearsome Japanese self-confidence not sufficiently challenging for the brave or was it the World War that kept people away?

Though the articles on and the book edition of *De Sidste Ti Aar I Japan* did not move many people physically, they informed many, some of whom kept Winther and his work in their prayers and supported it financially. Winther carried on, and for his steadfast service that often sought to develop “the other’s” understanding of “the other” he was awarded an order by both Denmark and Japan in 1958.

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