

***Images of Japanese Society
in Spanish Catholic Mission
Journals (1914-1923):
Customs and Daily Life***

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a) Neutral: Morally Neutral: Exotic Components

- i) Oddness in town planning
- ii) Etiquette in the House
- iii) Bad Hygiene
- iv) Bathing customs

b) Advantages

- b-1) Missionary advantage: Japanese Empire as Influential Base for Far Eastern Evangelization
- b-2) Missionary-Moral Advantages: Social and Cultural Merits
 - i) Japanese Solidarity System
 - ii) High Interest of the Japanese in Education and Culture

c) Disadvantages

c-1) Morally Neutral-Missionary Disadvantages:
Life Instability and Poverty of the Japanese

c-2) Missionary Disadvantages: Theological
issues

i) Assimilation of Modern-European
Material Civilization in Japanese Town
Planning

ii) Pagan Customs in Educational
Institutions

c-3) Moral Disadvantage: Public Vice

i) Traditional Indifferent Reaction to the Nude

ii) Drunkenness

a) Neutral:

Morally Neutral: Exotic Components

iii) Oddness in town planning

iv) Etiquette in the House

v) Bad hygiene

vi) Bathing customs

“something rare from around here”

“The houses of purely Japanese style,
whose intrinsic value is sometimes very
considerable for the natives; but
completely negligible for the foreigners...”

(1920, *Misiones Dominicanas*)

b) Advantages

b-1) Missionary advantages: Japanese Empire as Influential Base for Far Eastern Evangelization

“Japan, which has such an important role in the destiny of the Far East” (1919, *Misiones Dominicanas*)

“the preponderance and the situation of this empire in all the Far East, where there is an established hope open to Catholicism, and for the same reason, to the salvation of humanity.” ... (1919, *Misiones Dominicanas*)

b-2) Missionary-Moral Advantages: Social and Cultural Merits

i) Japanese Solidarity System:

-The University students as Milkmen,
organized in the students committee.

(1918, *El Siglo de las Misiones*)

- "*seinen kuai*, 'Associations of youth' who
provide the service, covering from 15 years
to 21.": To help the community.

- "ex-servicemen", having military service
until 30 years, to maintain the spirit of
discipline and patriotism." (1923, *L.M.Ct.*)

ii) High Interest of the Japanese in Education and Culture

“Our system of Education covers compulsory teaching for all children from six to fourteen years...there are around eight million children..., those who do not go to school number around 100.000; this represents 2 per 100. ... we have 180.000 schools for all these children.” (1923, *Las Misiones Católicas*)

“The anxiety with which these Japanese devour all kinds of writing is incredible. The written word exercises much more influence among them than the spoken word.”

“In a total of 4.448 published books, only 5 are catholic!”

(1921, El Siglo de las Misiones)

“...after three years of dedication to a language... they pronounce and speak the language pretty well, almost fluently; but as for writing, that is another matter.”

- The tendency of copying in a notebook.
- the lack of exercise in composition,
- the lack of custom in memorizing,
- the productivity relative to the time in learning languages, even though they spend 30 hours of classes per week.

c) Disadvantages:

c-1) Morally Neutral-Missionary

Disadvantages:

Life Instability and Poverty of the Japanese

Hardship involved in subsistence

-Hard climate (flooding, typhoon)

-Frequent hunger, rice riot (1919)

“How can we expect much fruit from our preaching,...these people are...warring about securing the food necessary for their sustenance and the way to be free from so much misery?” _

c-2) Missionary Disadvantages: Theological issues

i) Assimilation of Modern-European Material Civilization in Japanese Town Planning

“with wide streets of asphalt and such proud buildings that sometimes one forges the idea of finding herself in Europe.”

“All their zeal (the Japanese) lies in materialism and in imitating European usage and customs.” (1919, *Ms. Dominic.*)

“...the severity of their heart, so tyrannized and oppressed by the ties with the material things...” _

ii) Pagan Customs in Educational Institutions

“...here there are no activities, special evenings or academic acts such as in Europe. The acts of the whole year are reduced to three examinations,...” (1919, E)

“Apart from the national festivals and... school expeditions, there are no vacations. If the Christian festivals fall on class days, there is no alternative but to go. Next year, 1919, it will fall to our lot to have to work hard during the days of Easter.”

c-3) Moral Disadvantage: Public Vice

i) Traditional Indifferent Reaction to the Nude

“...even to bathe in the presence of the other sex...is regarded as normal in this country.”

「きわめて潔癖に驚くほど容易に貞潔を守ります。」

「概してこの点に関しては葛藤がほとんど無いからです。」(井手勝美, キリシタン思想史、1995, pp. 112-3)

「彼らは粗食で、生来、我々のような強烈な情熱や嗜好を有していないから、この結果、彼らは官能に**関**しても、生来、強烈な刺激や欲望を有してはいません。」

-In the public baths, the two sexes can see each other.

“The Japanese are accustomed to see each other naked from their childhood, not only in the bath, but also in their own houses. So, we see frequently, ..., that a young man passes completely naked in front of the women, ...they remain as calm and impassive as if nothing had passed.”

“...the Japanese women pull up a little the *kimono*, ...the men...those who are not so modest, with a small cloth which imperfectly does the work of the fig leaves, like our Father and Mother in paradise after the sin.”
(1914, El Correo Sino-Anna...)

ii) Drunkenness

“It seems that the inhabitants are very dissolute. Their public vices however are no different to those common to all the Japanese; ...gambling, alcohol and the pleasures of the flesh.... About these vices no Japanese troubles himself, nor does it matter to him that others know it, even among educated people and those in hierarchical position.”

In Conclusion:

Thank you