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Edited by

Jens Holger Schjørring and Norman A. Hjelm

Translations by

David Orton

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Contents

CHAPTER 9

Asia in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries*

Klaus Koschorke

1 Christian Asia around 1800

Around 1815 the French abbot J. A. Dubois (1770–1848), a missionary in India for many years, complains about the almost complete demise of Catholicism on the Subcontinent:

> The Catholic branch of the Christian religion was introduced into India more than three hundred years ago, at the time of the Portuguese invasion [in the 16th cent.]. […] The low state to which [the Christian religion] is now reduced, and the contempt in which it is held, cannot be surpassed. There is not at present in the country […] more than a third of the Christians who were to be found in it eighty years ago, and this number diminishes every day by frequent apostasy. It will dwindle to nothing in a short period; and if things continue as they are now going on, within less than fifty years there will, I fear, remain no vestige of Christianity among the natives. The Christian religion, which was formerly an object of indifference […] is at present become, I will venture to say, almost an object of horror. It is certain that during the last sixty years no proselytes or but a very few have been made.[1]
>
> SOURCE VOLUME, TEXT 39

Around 1800 the Catholic mission, supported by the colonial state, found itself in deep internal and external crisis – both in India and globally. In Europe the Enlightenment, the devastations of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, the collapse of the old church order as well as the wave of secularizations had taken away the ideological, institutional, and economic basis from the mission orders. The church state was occupied for a while by French troops, the Roman mission center – the Propaganda Fide – was temporarily suspended, and the Jesuit order, the most important instrument of overseas Roman mission, was disbanded from 1773. Latin America saw the end of the First Colonial Age, and subsequently many European clergy and members of orders were also to leave with the Spanish (or Portuguese) colonial masters.

In India, Portuguese possessions in the region around Goa shrank. In the reports of European travellers such as the Scot Claudius Buchanan in his "Christian Researches", around 1808 Goa was depicted as a refuge for shady backwardness and the home of a tyrannical Inquisition. In other regions such as China, from the reign of Emperor Yongzheng on (reigned 1723–1735), the Christian religion was banned following the "rites controversy". In 1724 all Catholic missionaries, with the exception of a few court astronomers, were expelled from the country. An imperial edict of 1800 confirmed the prohibition, already long in existence, and in 1811 two of the four famous churches erected by the Jesuits in Peking (Beijing) were destroyed, and in 1827 a third. Since the mid-17th century, Japan was in any case a "closed country". There, the so-called "Christian century" – the short blossoming period, or the phase from the arrival of the Jesuits in 1549 to the expulsion of all missionaries in 1639 –

* Translated from German to English by David Orton

1 Quoted from the documentary source book: Koschorke, Klaus / Ludwig, Frieder / Delgado, Mariano (eds.), *Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, 1450–1990* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, MI / Cambridge, UK, 2007. This source volume is also available in German and Spanish (see bibliography). – The present article refers several times to documents from this source volume; in each case they are indicated by the number of the relevant document preceded by "Text".

was long past. In hermetically closed Korea, from 1784 on the initiative of Korean *Literati*, an underground Catholic church had formed, but in the years that followed it was exposed to the most violent persecutions. Generally speaking, most regions of Asia were closed to European missionaries in the first half of the 19th century.

Decline, however, affected not only the Catholic missions but equally the colonial Protestant churches in Asia. In various regions – such as Sri Lanka, South India, Malacca, and in the Indonesian archipelago – in the mid-17th century the Dutch had replaced the Portuguese as colonial masters. In place of the Catholic church, reformed churches established themselves there, although, squeezed into the straitjacket of colonial church dependencies, they never came to real fruition, despite sometimes extraordinary initiatives like the establishment of two seminaries for the training of an indigenous clergy in Sri Lanka. Remarkably enough, it was Catholicism that regenerated itself in the underground and later found increasing support as an anti-colonial alternative. In 1799 the "United East-India Company" (Dutch East India Company) went bankrupt. At the same time, in broad swathes of Africa and Asia, Dutch rule collapsed. Most of their possessions were permanently appropriated by the British – with the exception of the island of Java and other parts of present-day Indonesia, which were returned to the Netherlands in 1815. But the demise of the Dutch colonial church in Asia had, in part, begun long before. Around 1812 the above-mentioned Claudius Buchanan describes the situation in Sri Lanka as follows: "Most of the churches [in Jaffna] […] are now ruins. The Dutch clergy who used to minister here have gone to Batavia [Jakarta] or Europe. The entire district is now in the hands of Roman priests. […] (In the south of the island) a large number of (Singhalese) Protestants had returned to (Buddhist) idolatry. […] It is probably right to say that in no age has Christ's religion fallen into such dishonor as in recent times." (Text 40)

Christianity in Asia, as is well known, is very much older than the Catholicism and Protestantism of Western missionaries. When the Portuguese reached South India in 1498, they met an ancient community that had enjoyed a continuous existence there for more than 1,000 years, in the shape of the Thomas Christians. Since the 6th century the latter belonged to the Asiatic network of the East-Syrian "Nestorian" "Church of the East", which experienced its heyday in the 13th/14th century and extended from Syria to East China and from Siberia to South India. In other regions like Sri Lanka, East-Syrian Christianity had long since disappeared by the time the Portuguese arrived. In the Middle Kingdom, too, at the beginning of the 17th century the Italian Jesuit and missionary Matteo Ricci found no survivors of the former East-Syrian presence. In South India, on the other hand, around 1800 there were still considerable numbers of Thomas Christian congregations, albeit in many cases split in terms of confession and jurisdiction. In the early 19th century, the isolated East-Syrian "Nestorian" churches of western Asia (in the region of present-day Turkey, Iran, and Iraq) were weakened by schisms and internal disputes. Another widespread ancient oriental Christian faith community in Asia was that of the Armenians. By 1800 they were to be found not only in present-day Armenia and various provinces of the Ottoman Empire, where they enjoyed limited autonomy in the context of the so-called Millet system, but were constantly exposed to persecutions, sometimes violent. Armenian merchants were also to be found on the road in the trading colonies of Persia, in Indian Bengal, on the Malay Peninsula, and in other regions.

A new factor in early 19th century Asia was *Protestant mission*. As mentioned above, the Dutch (and other Western European powers) had already previously extended efforts for the spread of the Protestant version of the Christian faith within their territories, however without great success. Particularly significant since 1706, in missiological terms, was the Danish-Halle Mission in the southern Indian colony of Tranquebar, as here,

for the first time, the concern was not primarily with religious support for European settlers or company employees, but with the conversion of indigenous people. But the founding of *Serampore* in Indian Bengal indisputably marks a new stage. Established in 1800, it quickly developed into a missionary center with regional and transregional impact. Bible translations into many Indian and Asiatic languages were prepared here, duplicated by means of newly introduced printing techniques, and exported to various regions in India and beyond, and educational institutions were set up. Serampore was founded by British Baptists associated with William Carey (1761–1834) – layman, autodidact, and linguistic genius – who had initiated the "Baptist Society for the Spread of the Gospel among the Heathen" in 1792 in Nottingham, England. Even the form of this organization was significant: as a free association of (in religious terms) mature citizens, independent of the colonial state and established churches, it became a model for the 19th century Protestant missionary movement. Initially, it was generally religious "non-conformists" or free-church revivalist circles in Great Britain and on the continent of Europe (and soon also in the USA) that were the driving force in this new wave of Protestant mission initiatives. It was only later that that the inclination toward missionary involvement grew in the established churches of Europe.

In the beginning, Carey's evangelistic endeavors in Bengal were where possible impeded by the local British colonial administration. In concrete terms this was the British *East India Company* (EIC), which regarded religious subterfuge as detrimental to its commercial interests. That is the reason why in 1799 Carey moved out of British Calcutta (Kolkatta) into the (then still) Danish-ruled Serampore a few miles outside the city, and why a few years later the American Baptist Adoniram Judson was deported to Burma soon after his arrival in Calcutta in 1812 on one of the first ships to leave, whereupon – in the still independent upper part of the country – he became a pioneer missionary among the Karen people. Then in 1813, against bitter resistance from the EIC, the so-called mission clause was adopted in its charter, renewed by the British parliament, which permitted British societies to engage in evangelistic activities in areas under the control of the EIC (Text 41). In 1833 this license was then extended to non-British societies as well. Subsequently, alongside English Anglicans and Scottish Presbyterians, German and Scandinavian Lutherans, French Jesuits, Swiss Reformed, and American Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists, came into the country. The bursting abundance of Euro-American missionary Protestantism thus was able to make successive incursions into India. In many cases, unlike in the territorially and confessionally separated churches of Europe, it was present in very close proximity, sometimes in parallel, sometimes in competition – an essential precondition for the early strengthening of the Indian ecumenical movement toward the end of the century.

The Protestant missionary movement in Asia was not only engaged in evangelistic efforts. In many places it achieved effects far beyond the emerging mission congregations. As a factor of modernization and a channel of a multidirectional exchange of knowledge, in some cases it had a far-reaching impact on traditional Asian societies. Even before the first chapels, in many places, schools and hospitals were erected by the missionaries. And in their fight against many traditional mores and customs, regarded as "social evils", despite often reproducing and reinforcing Western cultural stereotypes, they also inspired local reform movements and emancipation efforts. This is particularly true for the second half of the 19th century, which Kenneth Scott Latourette has called "the great century of Protestant missionary advance". The promotion of female education is one of the areas in which Western missionaries and indigenous Christians often claimed a leading role. The development and numerical growth of the Protestant mission congregations ran a very varied course in the different regions. Even where the Protestant communities were numerically inferior to the Catholic communities , they were

frequently the tone-setting point of reference in public debates and interreligious argument. Reform and modernization efforts in Hindu India or Buddhist Sri Lanka in the last years of the 19th century frequently took their orientation from the model of missionary Protestantism, which was both resisted and imitated.

2 South Asia (Focusing on India): Mission as a factor of modernization

2.1 *Serampore*

As mentioned above, the new impulse for Protestant mission in 19th century India took place in Serampore in Bengal, after earlier beginnings in southern Indian Tranquebar. Serampore was a Danish mini-colony in the vicinity of Calcultta (now Kolkatta), to which the Baptist pioneer missionaries associated with William Carey (1761–1834) moved in 1799, the British colonial administration having refused them permission to stay in the Bengali metropolis. Danish Serampore soon developed into a missionary center with transregional impact. Evangelistic activities (including street-preaching) were one feature of this new enterprise; commitment to education was another. First, schools for girls were founded and in 1818 Serampore College was established "for the education of Asian Christians and other young people in eastern literature and the European sciences" (Text 45). The college later developed into a renowned university conferring academic degrees transregionally.

Special attention was paid to Bible translation as well as the – closely associated – introduction of printing press technology. By the year 1820 the New Testament was available in Bengali, as well as Sanskrit, Oriya, Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, Assamese, and Gujurati. In total, parts of the Bible were translated into forty languages of India and the neighboring countries – such as the Maldives, Burma, Java, and China. Here, for the first time, scripts were created for many Indian and East Asian languages. From a letter by William Ward, a close associate of Carey's, from the end of 1811, we learn:

> As you enter, you see your cousin, in a small room, dressed in a white jacket, reading or writing, and looking over the office, which is more than 170 feet long. There you find Indians translating the Scriptures into the different tongues, or correcting proofsheets. You observe, laid out in cases, type in Arabic, Persian, Nagari, Telugu, Panjabi, Bengali, Marathi, Chinese, Oriya, Burmese, Kanarese, Greek, Hebrew and English. Hindus, Mussulmans and Christian Indians are busy – composing, correcting, distributing. Next are four men throwing off the Scripture sheets in the different languages; others folding the sheets and delivering them to the large store room; and six Mussulmans do the binding. Beyond the office are the varied type-casters, besides a group of men making ink; and in a spacious open-walled-round place, our paper-mill, for we manufacture our own paper.
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> TEXT 44

2.2 *Stages in Mission and Colonial History*

The charter of the British East India Company (EIC), renewed in 1813, brought limited freedom for Christian missions and led to the establishment of an Anglican hierarchy in India. English and Scottish missionaries, but not missionaries of other nationalities, now had access to the British-ruled territories. This restriction was dropped in 1833. In the following years, missions from various countries (including the German-Swiss Basel Mission) came to India, and the broad denominational and national spectrum of missionary Protestantism gained entry to the Subcontinent. Around 1900 there were eleven different Protestant societies active in Madras City alone, representing six different denominations. By the end of the 19th century, ten different Baptist, thirteen Presbyterian, two Congregationalist, six Anglican, seven Lutheran, three Methodist, and three

Herrnhuter (Moravian) societies were working in all of India. They came from England, Scotland, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, the United States, and other countries.

Starting in the 1830s, step by step Catholicism recovered from its absolute low point at the beginning of the century. Prominent among the returnees were the Jesuits. In 1838, French Jesuits began to reoccupy the abandoned territories of the old Madura Mission. In Bengal, English, Irish, and Belgian members of the Societas Jesu were active, in the north the Capuchins, and in the south missionaries of the Parisian Society. Many other orders and societies from various European countries followed. This beginning resurgence occurred during the pontificate of Gregory XVI (1831–1846), who had previously been prefect for propaganda – i.e. the Roman mission headquarters – and as pope reorganized the Catholic mission in India under the Vatican-appointed "Apostolic Vicars". This led to the so-called *Padroado Propaganda Conflict*, which temporarily took on the form of an internal Catholic schism. It resulted from the competing jurisdictional claims of Portugal, which refused to let go of its old – but long since invalid – patronage rights in India, and the efforts of the Vatican missionary center (*Propaganda Fide*) to set up new structures there. The conflict brewed for a long time and only came to a provisional end with the concordat of 1886.

The Mutiny ("great revolt") of 1857/58, later declared to be the first national revolution, shook British rule in India. It led to the end of the British East India Company. British India – a conglomerate of directly ruled territories and principalities with limited autonomy – now became a crown colony and a "jewel" in Queen Victoria's empire, who had herself proclaimed Empress of India in 1877. In terms of religious policy, her government took the line of strict neutrality toward the various religions of the country. The Christian communities suffered setbacks from the revolt, but continued to grow constantly. Around 1860 the number of Catholics is estimated at above one million. In 1900 the estimate was 1,920,000. The emerging Protestant churches were of course smaller. But in the succeeding period they experienced much greater growth: from approx. 139,000 around 1860 to approx. 1,200,000 around 1900. The Orthodox and Syrian churches of India had approx. 650,000 members around 1900.[2]

2.3 *Mission as a Factor of Modernization*

The missionary movement led not only to the founding of denominationally separated (and numerically mainly modest) mission congregations. It was prominently represented in many ways in the public arena through its publishing, its social (and sociopolitical) activities, the introduction (and use) of new technologies, as well as its involvement in medicine and education. Missionaries were often perceived to be pioneers and promoters of Western modernity.

To take the example of the *printing press*: This was part of the basic equipment of almost every major mission station. In early 19th century Madras, for instance, most of the privately run presses were in the possession of Christian missionaries. Their techniques for religious publishing inspired, conversely, the Hindus, and such innovations as the Hindu Tract Society followed the example of the Christian Madras Religious Tract Society. Questions of caste, childhood marriage, and other traditions of Hindu society deemed "social evils" were not only the subject of concerned consultations at mission conferences. They also became the theme of public campaigns and representations to the colonial government. The early example of a successful campaign was the struggle against "sati", the custom of the immolation of widows, the abolition of which in Bengal was also demanded, in particular, by the great Hindu reformer Ram Mohan Roy. This practice was prohibited in 1829. *Medical mission* – the running of hospitals and dispensaries, the sending out

2 The religion statistics here and in the following paragraphs follow Moffett, Samuel H., *A History of Christianity in Asia*. vol. II: *1500 to 1900*, Maryknoll, New York 2005 if not indicated otherwise.

of doctors and the medical training of indigenous helpers – was a key aspect of mission work from the beginning. Later it became the hallmark of American societies in particular.

The influence of the missions was particularly far-reaching in *education*. From the days of the Scottish educational pioneer Alexander Duff (1806–1882), Christian colleges – such as the Scottish Church College in Calcutta and Wilson College in Bombay – played an important part in the spread of Western education. Graduates from these colleges found good positions in the state administration, but also as judges, lawyers, teachers, and professors. From the middle of the century, missionary foundations were exposed to stronger competition, by state institutions such as Madras University, established in 1857, and from the 1880s onwards increasingly from new schools founded by the Theosophists. The missions nonetheless maintained their strong position in the educational sector, and the Indian Christian community was able to boast that, directly after the traditional elite of the Brahmans and despite their heterogeneous composition, they had the highest level of literacy, especially in South India. Such a renowned institution as Madras Christian College – founded for the Hindu upper classes in 1837 – functioned as an elite training ground not only for the majority of Hindu students but also for future leading Christian personalities like the later first Indian bishop, V. S. Azariah (1874–1945). Other mission-run colleges also attracted more than their fair share of students. Particularly phenomenal were successes in the field of *female education*. Christian women had the highest level of education in Madras (the city since 1996 has been known as Chennai). Because of their leading role in this field, Indian Christians very quickly regarded female education as a key feature of Christian progress. Beyond the religious boundaries, such Christian figures as the educator and social activist Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922), from a Brahman family, enjoyed respect and recognition. She was regarded, and not only in Christian circles, as visible proof of the emancipatory power of Christianity.

2.4 *Reactions, Reception and Stimuli outside the Mission Churches*

It is a feature of the history of Christianity in India that the positive reception of missionary stimuli often took place outside of mission church channels. An early example of this is provided by the Bengali reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833), one of the leading figures in Bengal's cultural life in the early 19th century and often called the "father of modern India". Himself a lifelong Hindu, he referred to Jesus as the "perfect teacher" and sought to reform the popular Hinduism he criticized partly in the light of the ethical teaching of Jesus and specifically of the Sermon on the Mount. *The Precepts of Jesus: The Guide to Peace and Happiness* is the title of a book he published in Bengali and English in 1820. It contains excerpts from the ethical (but not the dogmatic) passages of the New Testament (Text 51). He rejected the proposal of the Serampore missionaries that he should become a Christian. Instead, in *Brahmo Samaj* he founded a movement that was to play an important role in the Hindu Revival of the 19th century. Conversely, however, through it many individuals found their way to the Bible and to the Christian church.

Other Hindu reform movements were also affected, to varying degrees, both by Christian stimuli and by opposition to missionary Protestantism. A counterpart to Brahmo Samaj, originally located in Bengal but finding increasing numbers of supporters throughout India, was Prarthana Samaj, founded in Bombay in 1867. Ramakrishna Mission, with its teaching that all religions are ultimately one, developed from 1870 out of the life and teachings of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Arya Samaj, a more militant organization for the reform and defense of Hinduism, began in Bombay in 1875. Following his appearance at the World Parliament of Religions in 1893, Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) caused an international stir. When an itinerant

monk, he had always carried his two favorite books with him: the Bhagavad Gita and a work entitled *The Imitation of Christ*. Christianity contained nothing of value – he claimed – that was not also to be found, and even better, in Hinduism. Indian Christians on the other hand saw in the many social and religious reform movements of the late 19th century a proof that the "ferment" of the Christian message was in operation in Indian society. Reconsideration of the ethical dimensions of the Hindu tradition was – according to an opinion frequently expressed around 1900 by both Christians and a significant number of Hindus – a consequence of response to the message of Jesus.

2.5 *"Pioneers of indigenous Christianity"*

At an early stage there was an independent adoption of biblical stimuli among Indian Christians. Krishna Mohan Banerjea (1813–1885), for instance, one of the first converts of Alexander Duff and later professor at Bishop's College in Calcutta, observed: "Having become Christians, we have not ceased to be Hindoos." He pointed to parallels between the Old Testament and the Vedas, the Hindu holy scriptures. Very similarly, A. S. Appasamy Pillai (1848–1926) described the Rigvedas, the most ancient part of the four Vedas, as an "anticipation" of Christianity. Upadyaya Brahmabandhav (1861–1907), from a Brahman family, first baptized as an Anglican and later a convert to Catholicism, attempted to describe the relationship between Christianity and Hinduism in terms of the Thomist concept of the natural and the supernatural. In 1969 Kaj Baago called voices such as these, "pioneers of indigenous Christianity",[3] and set in motion a systematic conservation of and research into their literary heritage.

Other Indian Christians sought to express the new faith in forms of traditional culture. H. A. Krishnapillai (1827–1900), for instance, author of *Rakshanya Yatrikam* ("The way of Redemption"), was a well-known Tamil Christian poet. His aim was to compose Tamil Christian songs (lyrics) analogous to the classical Hindu epics. Around 1860, Krishnarao Sangle (1834–1908) of Ahmednagar composed songs in Marathi, with Indian rhythms. Around the same time, Vishnupant Karmakar began to use the Indian form of the *Kirtan* oratorio (narrative singing) for Christian work.

From the 1860s on, there were first local efforts to found Christian communities or churches free of missionary control. Early examples are the "Hindu Church of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1858), "The Bengal Christian Association for the Promotion of Christian Truth" (1868), and the "Bengal Christian Samaj" (1887). Transregional significance was achieved after 1886 by the project, launched in Madras, of a "National Church of India", which will be discussed extensively later.

2.6 *Mass Movements*

It was not only among Western-educated Indians that the missions had success. From the 1860s onward, in various regions, quite independently of one another, there were increasing instances of shifts of allegiance by entire ethnic or social groups, especially among members of the lowest castes (Dalit). Such "mass conversions", however, were not an entirely new phenomenon. Already in the 16th century there had been similar movements among the fishers caste of the Parava in the south and in the 19th century among the Nadar, in the district of Tirunelveli, also in southern India. But they changed the social profile, in particular, of the emerging Protestant communities, which had formerly placed more emphasis on the principle of individual conversion. Quite remarkably, these group conversions were generally the result of local initiatives. "Significantly, mass movements began not with the missionaries but under Indian Christian leadership, and they centered not among the elite of Indian society but among the lowest of the low, the 'outcasts' (better called *dalits*, the 'oppressed')."[4] By the outbreak of the

3 Baago, Kaj, *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity*, Bangalore / Madras 1969, passim.

4 Moffett, *Asia*, 420.

First World War, one million Dalits had accepted Christianity. Such mass movements took place in present-day Andhra Pradesh, for example, among Telegu-speaking groups and led to rapid church growth among Baptists and Lutherans. Another regional center of this was the Punjab, where the Chuhra caste joined Presbyterian churches. An influx to the Anglicans and Catholics began in Chota Nagpur. Another wave of conversions followed among the mountain tribes in the border region between Indian and China, leading to strong growth in Baptist churches in Assam and the Naga Hills.

2.7 *Indian Christians as a "Progressive Community"*

In terms of regional distribution, the focus of Indian Christian Christianity lay in the south of the country. In the late 19th century, Madras (now Chennai) developed to become the center of a small but influential elite of Protestant Christians. This group comprised teachers, lawyers, state employees, doctors, and other socially high-standing and financially independent persons and gained a reputation as a "progressive community". Themselves a minority within a minority, they nonetheless saw themselves as at the forefront of the "social, religious, and intellectual progress" of the country as a whole. They formed their own associations (such as the Madras Native Christian Association) and sought links with similar associations of Indian Christians in other parts of the country and overseas (e.g. in South Africa and Great Britain). They launched numerous initiatives and published their own newspapers and periodicals. A prominent example is the *Christian Patriot*, founded in 1890, the name of which already indicates its program: to be both Christian and patriotic, in times of national awakening and increased charges of "denationalization" over against Indian Christians. The *Christian Patriot* criticized both missionary paternalism and fundamentalist Hindu tendencies in parts of the Indian national movement. The newspaper had a considerable circulation. In New York J. R. Mott was one of its subscriber, and Gandhi's journal *Indian Opinion* commented from South Africa. The *Christian Patriot* praised the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh as a "universal event", at the same time criticizing the small numbers of "oriental" delegates at this meeting. Letters to the Editor complained, on the one hand, of the "poor" performance in Edinburgh of V. S. Azariah (later appreciated as a pioneer of Christian ecumenism), as too "shy", and expected the Conference, on the other hand, to concede "absolute independence" to Indian Christians. Great interest was paid to the emancipation efforts of indigenous Christians in other countries, and V. S. Azariah – after his appointment as the first Indian bishop of the Anglican Church in 1912 – was placed in the line of his "great African predecessor" Bishop S. A. Crowther of Nigeria.

2.8 *Sri Lanka*

Majority Buddhist Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) – since 1803 a British crown colony – differed from India in its religious context, among other things. Notable, here, was a series of public disputations between Christians and Buddhists between 1865 and 1899, which caused a stir far beyond the country's boundaries. A prominent example is the famous religious debate of Panadura in 1873, where the Singhalese Methodist minister David de Silva and the Buddhist monk Mohottivatte Gunanda Thera faced each other in front of an audience of 4,000 (Text 52). Both sides claimed victory. At any rate, this debate gave the Buddhists a considerable boost after a long phase of stagnation. But the Christian community continued to grow. Around 1900, with approx. 379,000 members (of whom 296,000 were Catholics and 83,000 Protestants) it made up 10.6 % of the population of the island nation.

2.9 *Myanmar*

Myanmar (Burma) came entirely under British control only after the Third Anglo-Burman War of 1885/86, which led to the annexation of Upper Burma. The British had first occupied parts of the country in 1824. But already in 1813 the

above-mentioned Adoniram Judson as well as, later, other American Baptists were active there as missionaries – with the result that the majority of the Christian population of the country still belong to one of the Baptist churches. The Baptist preachers had success primarily among certain ethnic minorities – the Karen (from 1827), the Chin (from 1845), and the Kachin (from 1876), who in some cases converted in closed groups –, but barely at all among the Buddhist Burmans themselves. This also applies to other Christian communities such as the Anglicans, who settled in the British-controlled territories but were also active outside them. Thus in the 1870s, at the invitation of King Mindon, who ruled Burma from 1853 to 1878, they set up schools in the then still independent Mandalay (Text 50). Catholics had also settled sporadically in Burma since the 16th century, but little trace of them was still to be found at the beginning of the 19th century. A recovery began in the 1860s. Around 1900 there were approximately 70,000 Catholics and 162,000 Protestants in the country. Both groups experienced rapid growth in the following period.

3 Northeast Asia (China, Japan, Korea): The Opium Trade and the Smuggling of Bibles

For Europeans (and especially Western missionaries), China, Japan, and Korea were "closed" areas around 1800. A feature also shared by these three countries is the fact that in the course of the 19th century they were forcibly "opened" for trade with the outside world – China from 1842, initially by the British, as a result of the opium wars and the system of "unequal treaties" (with massive restrictions of sovereignty for the empire), Japan from 1854/55 by American gunships, and Korea from 1876. In Korea, however, it was not Western powers but the newly awakened Japanese imperialism that forced the opening of this "closed-off" nation, finally formally occupying it in 1910. It was in this context that the Protestant communities that emerged in this country developed in a unique way to become champions of the Korean national identity.

3.1 *China*

Around 1800, only remnants of the former Catholic communities were in existence. While around 1700 there had still been approx. 800,000 Christians in the Middle Kingdom, around 1800 their number had fallen to an estimated 187,000. They survived under the most difficult circumstances. In 1800 an edict of the emperor, Jiaqing, renewed the prohibition of Christianity that had been in place since the early 18th century. Two severe persecutions in 1805 and 1811 brought an end to the 200–year presence of Catholic scholars at the imperial court. In the years that followed, acts of repression increased. Even language instruction for foreigners was subject to the death penalty.

The beginnings of the Protestant presence among the Chinese therefore lay, in the first instance, largely outside the Middle Kingdom. As missionary activities were strictly forbidden in China itself, the Briton Robert Morrison (1782–1834), frequently called the pioneer of Protestant mission to China, made a plea for the education of lay evangelists outside the country – in the wide belt of overseas Chinese communities extending from present-day Thailand via Malaysia as far as the Indonesian archipelago. In 1817 such a support site was set up in Malacca. It quickly developed to become a center for missionary translation, publishing, and educational activities. The German, Karl Gützlaff (1803–1851), also gained his knowledge of Chinese initially in the Chinese diaspora communities in Java, Singapore, and Thailand, before he undertook his famous travels along the Chinese coast between 1831 and 1833. As he did so, he smuggled Christian tracts into the country, out of necessity on opium boats. Gützlaff's translation of the Bible, in particular his version of parts of the Old Testament, was later to play an important part in the revolutionary Taiping movement in China (see para. 5.3).

From 1842 (following the First Opium War of 1840–1842), missionaries were for the first time permitted to stay legally in five "treaty harbors" as well as in Hong Kong (then a British Crown colony). In order to spread the "glorious gospel" in the interior, Gützlaff developed the project of evangelization of the huge empire by means of indigenous agents. In the form he had developed, the project failed. However, in the 1860s there were moves to establish the interdenominational China Inland Mission by the Briton, T. Hudson Taylor, which – open to men and women of different denominations and nationalities – by the end of the 19th century had developed into the largest Protestant mission organization in China. Around 1880 the number of Chinese evangelists exceeded that of foreign missionaries. The Second and Third Opium Wars led to the Treaty of Tianjin (1858) and the Convention of Peking (now Beijing) (1860), which enabled free access to the interior to missions of both confessions. The Convention of Peking fell into sad notoriety because of a falsification by the French Catholic missionary Abbé Delamarre, functioning as a translator. He smuggled a clause with additional special rights for the missionaries into the text. The consequences of the forced opening were ambivalent. On the one hand, the number of Protestant and Catholic societies and orders operating in China rose sharply. On the other hand, the principle of exterritoriality, which took the missionaries (and in many cases also their indigenous converts) beyond the legal reach of the Chinese authorities, led to numerous local conflicts. Above all, however, the "unequal treaties" have remained firmly ingrained in the collective memory as a national humiliation for China. France, in particular, used the instrument of the "Catholic protectorate" to pursue its own power-political and economic interests in the country.

Around 1860 there were few baptized Protestants in China. For 1870 the number of Catholic Christians is given at 404,000. Around 1900 the number of Protestants will have risen to approx. 436,000 and that of Catholics to 1,200,000. In the Catholic communities that long remained underground, after 1860 European clergy increasingly took control once again. This led to repeated conflicts and complaints by indigenous Christians as a number of documents recently found in the Vatican archives show.[5] Alongside their evangelistic activities, the established Protestant missions became especially active in the educational sector and the social arena. Besides founding congregations, they therefore had an impact on a broad public. Numerous renowned educational institutions came into being from the 1880 onward, originally as missionary foundations, from St. John's College in Shanghai (*1879), Shantung Christian University (*1904), through to Tsinghua University in Peking (*1911) and other institutions of multidisciplinary learning. The same applies to the founding of hospitals and journalistic enterprises. For instance, one of the most prominent secular Chinese journals in the 1880s, called *Wangua gongboa*, had been a development from missionary publishing.

In 1895 China suffered a further national humiliation in defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War. The backwardness of its political, economic, and social structures was plain to see. It triggered reform efforts as well as vociferous disputes between reform advocates and their opponents at the imperial court and in the public arena. In 1905 the traditional Confucian system of examination was abolished. Chinese now poured overseas in large numbers, to Tokyo for instance. A Western-educated elite had already formed previously outside the empire in the Chinese diaspora, and it was increasingly sympathetic toward Christianity as a promoter of social modernization. Sun Yat-sen, for instance, from 1912 the first provisional president of republican China, was a baptized Christian. He had been educated at an Anglican school in Hawaii in the 1880s and had subsequently joined a Christian church, like various others of his revolutionary comrades.

5 Bays, Daniel H., *A New History of Christianity in China*, Malden, MA / Oxford, UK 2012, 52f.

The so-called Boxer Rebellion of 1899/1901, which was directed against the foreign "barbarians" in general and Western Christianity in particular, was clearly a xenophobic counter-movement. Approximately 250 foreign missionaries and 30,000 Chinese Christians were its victims. But at the same time it accelerated the indigenization of the country's Protestant churches. Independent Christian communities were established under Chinese leadership, and in 1903 the Chinese Christian Union (*Jidutu hui*) came into being in Shanghai. At the first World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, the Chinese delegate Cheng Ching Yi attracted public attention with his plea for a united Chinese church, free from the denominationalism of the missionaries. One year later (1911), the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty fell, and the Chinese Edinburgh follow-up conference in Shanghai in 1913 pointed emphatically to the "present unprecedented opportunity" that now presented itself for the evangelization of the "whole" of the Middle Kingdom. This required further development of the national and "indigenous character" of the church under Chinese leadership (Text 71a). This expectation of a rapid Christianization of the huge empire was not, of course, realized. What followed, instead, was the First World War, a moral catastrophe for Western Christianity and the end of the Christianity-Civilization model. Later there was the additional disappointment at the unfulfilled hopes that the American president (and Presbyterian) Woodrow Wilson had awakened with his "Fourteen Points". Both developments were decisive factors that contributed considerably to the rise of the "Anti-Christian Movement" in 1920s China (Text 81).

3.2 *Japan*

Until the middle of the 19th century, Japan was also one of the "closed" countries. It was only a squadron of the American fleet that forced the opening up of Japanese ports to trade (and as a staging post on the sea route from San Francisco to Shanghai), from 1853/54. From the 1870s, on its own initiative the Land of the Rising Sun then sought a relationship with the Western world. It modernized at breathtaking speed. At the beginning of the 20th century, Japan had advanced to be a model of Asian progressiveness, admired on all sides and imitated by the elites of other Asian countries.

Before the appearance of American gunboats in 1853/4, the Dutch were the one European nation permitted to trade with Japan, and they were restricted to a single port. Survivors of shipwrecks were deported at the first opportunity, and it was strictly forbidden to bring Christian books into the country. As late as 1848, a stranded American businessman had to demonstrate his non-adherence to Catholicism by treading on an image of the Madonna – the customary test for Japanese suspects. He only survived the subsequent cross-examination by the governor of Nagasaki because, as the records of this incident show, the interpreter deliberately gave a false translation of the American's statements about his religion (Text 56a). After the first treaties with Western powers the prohibition of Christianity initially still stood. American missionaries who came into the country after 1859 could at first work only as teachers or doctors in the foreign districts of the port cities. The "hidden Christians" (*Sempuku/ Kakure Kirishitan*), who had survived in the underground for more than two centuries and first identified themselves to a European priest in 1865, continued to be persecuted (see para. 5.2).

Things changed fundamentally only following the so-called *Meiji-Restoration* of 1868. The Tokugawa-Shogunat – the feudal military government that had ruled since 1603 – was removed from power in a putsch, and the emperor was reinstated as the country's ruler. For almost 300 years he had functioned only as a powerless symbol of national identity. The reformers (despite their label) had no interest in the restoration of the old system but in a comprehensive reshaping of Japan as a nation that was a match for the West. The new slogan was "(Western) civilization and enlightenment". In 1871 Japanese delegates travelled to Europe and

the United States to study the legal, governmental, economic, and educational systems there and familiarize themselves with modern technologies. They returned with the knowledge, among other things, that freedom of religion was an indispensable precondition for the international recognition of Japan as a "civilized" nation. In 1873 the public notice-boards announcing the prohibition of Christianity were removed (Text 56d). But the prohibition was not formally abrogated until the Meiji constitution promulgated in 1889, which set out for the first time the principle of freedom of religion (Text 56e). At the same time, however, the "Rescript on Education" issued in 1890 regarded veneration of the emperor as the spiritual center of modern Japan, which was firmly interwoven with state Shinto.

The missionaries who flooded in successively after 1859, came from various countries. For the Catholics these were, in particular, French – including the priest Bernard Petitjean (1829–1884), who was the first to meet the underground Catholics in 1865 (see para. 5.2). The Protestant pioneers initially came from America (Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, and Episcopalians), followed later by missionaries of other nationalities. In 1861 the Russian Orthodox Church also began a mission, first in Hokkaido and then in Tokyo. In total, 53 Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox missionaries were working in Japan in 1873.

More important, however, were the activities of Japanese converts. From the very start, 19th century Japanese Christianity was primarily an urban movement among students and intellectuals of the upper middle class. 30% of the early Japanese Christians came from the ranks of the *Samurai* – following the Meiji restoration a disempowered but still influential class of the warrior nobility. "Japanese students, usually from the samurai background, were the most open social group in the nation to Christian evangelism, and they became electric proponents of the Christian faith. They gave the protestant movement its first outstanding national leaders."[6] In 1872, Masahisa Uemura (1858–1925) founded, together with a number of secretly baptized fellow students (and schoolchildren) the first Protestant congregation, in Yokohama. From the "Covenant of Believers in Jesus", a student Christian association in Sapporo (Hokkaido), came Kanzo Uchimura (1861–1930) who was later to found the Japanese Non-Church Movement (*Mukyokai*) (Text 78). Niijima Jo (Joseph Neesima, 1843–1890) became well known internationally after founding *Doshisha*, the largest of the early Christian schools, in Kyoto in 1875. Doshisha was later granted university status.

"Christianity as wave of the future" and as a channel of modern knowledge, indispensable in overcoming backwardness – for a while, this was a widespread idea among educated Japanese. Occasionally the idea even arose (on the part of the influential educationalist Fukuzawa Yukichi, for instance) that Christianity should be declared the national religion. "Our Japan is a new country. The old institutions and ancient customs are fast dying out. Kyoto around 1885.[7] Christianity was spreading "like fire on a grassy plain, so that in capital and country there is no place where it is not preached", lamented a Buddhist anti-Christian tract of 1881 (Text 53). Then, however, in the early 1890s a nationalistic reaction to the uncritical adoption of Western models was to be observed, associated with a revival of Buddhism and Shinto. Among both Protestants and Catholics the – in some cases – enormous growth rates of the 1870s and 1880s receded markedly. Overall, the Japanese Christians remained a small but in many cases tone-setting minority.

National enthusiasm was boosted by Japan's victories in the wars against China (1895) and Russia (1904/05). The latter was an event of significance for Asia as a whole. For, at the climax of Western colonialism, it shattered the myth of

6 Moffett, *Asia*, 514.

7 Thelle, Notto R., *Buddhism and Christianity in Japan. From Conflict to Dialogue, 1854–1899*. Honolulu 1987, 61.

European invincibility. It strengthened pan-Asian efforts across the continent and led at the same time to an intensification of contacts between Japanese Christians and other Asian churches. An Indian initiative prompted the visit of a delegation of Japanese Christians to India in 1906. Their lecture tour across the whole Subcontinent met with huge interest. Japan was presented as a model of successful emancipation for other Asian churches as well. The speakers claimed that indigenous leadership figures, a far-reaching financial and organizational independence from the missionaries, as well as the promotion of education for women in particular were part of the Japanese recipe for success. Christianity had come to the Land of the Rising Sun from the West, but"… we immediately make it our own – make it Japanese", and they were even endeavoring to develop a form of Christianity superior to the West.[8] Toward India and other Asian churches there was a close feeling of affinity.

An international conference organized mainly by the Japanese branch of the World Student Christian Federation took place in Tokyo in 1907. It was the first ecumenical assembly in Asia with a majority of Asian delegates. Its main theme: Asia can only be evangelized by its own sons. The future – was the common conviction – belonged to the "national church organizations". The role of Japan in the evangelization of the whole continent was discussed. At the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, Japan was represented by a small but prominent delegation of indigenous church leaders. At the subsequent Asian Continuation Committee Conferences, in 1912/13 , Japan separate conferences of indigenous church leaders and Western missionaries were held. Thus the ability of Japanese Christianity to stand on its own feet became apparent in organizational terms as well.

3.3 *Korea*

The history of Korean Christianity is unique in many regards. Next to the Philippines, Korea is the Asian country with the highest proportion of Christians in the population (2005 census: 29.32%). For its main branches, the Catholic and the Protestant, this was due largely to a process of self-Christianization. Unlike other Asian countries, Korea was, moreover, subject not to European colonial rule, but Japanese. In the country's national movement, Korean Christians soon took a leading role.

The beginnings of Catholic Christianity go back to 1784. A group of Confucian scholars decided to learn more about the "Western knowledge" that, in the hermetically closed Korea, had become known through Jesuit tracts in Chinese. In 1783 they sent one of their own – Lee Seung-Hun (Yi Seung-Hun, 1756–1801) – to Peking as a member of the annual royal tribute commission, where he visited Catholic priests and was baptized in the northern church. Later he returned to Korea with Christian writings. These were discussed in the circle of his friends and held to be true, whereupon the other members of this circle were also baptized by Yi Seung-Hun. Despite the bloody persecution that soon began, they disseminated the new teaching step by step throughout the country and began the production of theological literature, first in Chinese and then in Korean (Text 33a–b). By 1794 there were already around 4,000 Catholics.

All of this took place about 50 years before the first European priest entered the country in the person of the Frenchman Pierre Maubant in 1836. The numerous martyrdoms of the 19th century, following successive waves of persecution (1801, 1815, 1827, 1839, 1846), were precisely documented by indigenous Christians. The persecution of 1866/67 caused the most casualties. At this time the Catholic community in all provinces of the country numbered approx. 23,000 faithful.

8 Koschorke, Klaus / Hermann, Adrian / Burlacioiu, Ciprian / Mogase, Phuti (eds.), *Discourses of Indigenous Christian Elites in Colonial Societies in Asia and Africa around 1900. A Documentary Sourcebook from Selected Journals*, Wiesbaden 2016, 128f.

The beginnings of Protestant Christianity are traditionally traced back to the activities of American missionaries beginning in 1884. But Korean Christians who had accepted the new faith outside the country (in Manchuria or Japan) had brought the faith to Korea before this. Thus, for instance, the pioneering Korean evangelist Suh Sang-Yun, who founded a first house church in his home village of Sorai in 1883. "As in the case of Catholicism, it is the boast of Korean Protestants that baptised Koreans established Protestant communities […] before any foreign missionaries had been admitted to the country."[9] The first American missionaries – the physician, Dr. Horace Allen, the Presbyterian, Horace G. Underwood, and the Methodist, Henry G. Appenzeller – quickly won recognition through their initiatives in health and education. In practice the prohibition of Christianity was not abrogated until the early 1890s. The establishment of schools (from 1886 for girls as well) and hospitals and the dissemination of Western medicine were among the important areas of activity of the missionaries. Of key importance were Bible translations and the production of Christian literature in Hangul, which reached a broad readership. Step by step, the confessional spectrum of missionary activity expanded as well, and other missions were active in the country besides Presbyterians and Methodists.

At first, Christianity spread primarily in circles of the urban intelligentsia and reform-oriented forces which saw in Protestant Christianity a modernizing force and a precondition for social change as well. "The Protestant Jesus appeared to be more activist than Buddha, more progressive than Confucius, more powerful than the spirits of traditional religion and more modern than the Catholic Lord of Heaven."[10] After 1900 the number of Protestant Christians exceeded that of the Catholics. A key factor in the rapid growth of Christian congregations lay in the so-called Three-Self principle. Actually, this was an older missionary concept, known in Korea under the name *Nevius Plan* in particular, which placed emphasis on the fastest possible founding of self-supporting, self-extending, and self-governing indigenous communities. It was followed with particular resolve in Korea, becoming official policy first among the Presbyterians after 1891. From a report by the Presbyterian mission from 1902:

> From the beginning [since 1886], Korean Christians have not been allowed to expect paid employment from the missionaries, nor have they received it, except in comparatively few and clearly exceptional cases. They have been taught to live the Gospel, and to spread it without pay among their countrymen. We are now seeing the fulfillment of the prophecy made in […] 1896, in which it was said that 'the native Christians have by word of mouth, and by printed page, and by the testimony of reformed lives, carried the Gospel into hundreds of towns and villages …'. The believers meet in one another's houses until they are strong enough to build, unaided, a church.
>
> TEXT 58B

After the end of the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894/95, Korea came increasingly under Japanese control. In 1905 the country was declared a Japanese protectorate and in 1910 formally annexed. From the start, Korean Christians played a disproportionately important role in the gradually forming national movement – despite the often rather dampening influence of conservative American missionaries. The "Independence Club" (*Dognip Hyeophoe*), formed already in 1896 and prohibited soon afterwards, which quickly maintained branches in the whole of the country, was closely associated with the Protestant churches. With increasing acts of Japanese repression after 1905, the patriotic commitment of Korean Christians was also strengthened. Multiple factors

9 Kim, Sebastian C. H. / Kim, Kirsteen, *A History of Korean Christianity*, New York 2015, 59.

10 Kim-Kim, *History*, 81.

played a crucial part in this: the autonomy and independence efforts demanded by the Three-Self principle; Protestant churches, schools and Bible classes as an exercise field for indigenous leadership; countrywide organization structures (such as in the form of national mission conferences), which facilitated transregional communication, as well as the offer of alternative modernization by the Protestant churches (as opposed to presumed Confucian backwardness and coercive Japanese modernization). With the annexation of the country in 1910, conditions became even further exacerbated. Political and social organizations of the Koreans were forbidden, while religious ones continued to be permitted. At this time of "national hopelessness" the international links of Korean Christians became increasingly important – on the one hand through the use of missionary networks and on the other through support of the growing overseas Korean diaspora. A decisive date after the end of the First World War was the Korean independence movement of 1 March 1919, which the Japanese suppressed by force. It was proclaimed at the same time in different places inside and outside the country. It was signed by 33 religious leaders, including 16 Protestants (11 of them ordained ministers), 16 representatives of the Cheondogyo (a syncretistic neo-Confucian reform movement), as well as two Buddhists. (Text 80)

4 Thailand, Indochina, Indonesia, Philippines: A Plurality of Colonial and Extracolonial Contexts

4.1 *Thailand*

Thailand (until 1939, Siam), the "Land of the Free", was never a colony. As a buffer zone between the self-defining British Empire in India and French-dominated Indochina, it was able to maintain its independence in the 19th century. This distinguishes Thailand from the other regions under colonial rule that are also the subject of discussion in the present Section 4. Another reason for its independence, alongside the rivalry of the neighboring colonial powers, was its long series of skillful rulers from the Chakri dynasty, in power since 1782. This applies especially to King Mongkut (Rama IV, 1851–1868), the reformer who prepared Siam's way to modernization, as well as his son Chulalongkorn (Rama V, 1868–1910) who defended the independence of the country against the British and the French while at the same time opening it up to Western influences. In 1870 as well as in 1878 he issued an edict of religious tolerance. Already before this, Protestant missionaries had been well received and were engaged, for instance, as teachers at the royal court. Despite this basic tolerant attitude, the fruits of missionary work were modest. Baptisms among the Thais were rare; conversions were mainly among Chinese people living in the country (Protestants in particular), Vietnamese (Catholics), and later also among the mountain peoples in the north.

The Catholic beginnings in the country reach back to the 16th century. In 1554, two Dominican priests assumed the position of military chaplains for Portuguese soldiers at the royal court, converting around 1,500 Thais. Franciscans and Jesuits followed, and in 1673 an Apostolic Vicariate was set up for Siam. The 18th century was then marked by a series of severe persecutions, and in 1779 all missionaries were expelled from the country, though later they were called back. In the following decades, bitter rivalries between the Portuguese and the French deteriorated, ending only in 1834 with a re-ordering of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the Catholic mission in Siam. Prominent representatives of the Catholic mission in the 19th century were the Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Pallegoix (linguist and bishop, 1805–1862) who initially maintained good contacts with the royal court, and Jean-Lois Vey (1840–1909) who was appointed bishop and Apostolic Vicar in 1875.

The beginnings of Protestant missions are associated with the names August Friedrich Gützlaff and Jacob Tomlin, who came to Bangkok in 1828 on behalf of the London Missionary Society (LMS).

They stayed only for a short time. Continuous missionary work was done only after the arrival of American Baptists (1833), Congregationalists (1834), and Presbyterians (1847). The first Protestant church in Thailand was set up for Chinese immigrants, by Baptists in 1837. In the *Bangkok Recorder*, American missionaries in 1844 published the first self-printed periodical in the country; and it was on a mission press that for the first time a royal decree was printed – against the trade and consumption of opium – in 1839. In 1868 the American Presbyterian Daniel McGilvary (1828–1911) built a station in Chiang Mai, which became the center of mission among the Lao peoples in the north of the country. A mission to the Thai peoples in China and French Indochina was also contemplated. Success, however, was limited to certain regions. There were no mass conversions as there had been among the Karen in Burma or the Dalits in India. Around 1900 Protestant congregations in Thailand had around 5,000 baptized members, with 30,000 in the Catholic churches. Catholic and Protestant missions wielded considerable influence, well beyond the limited area of the emerging mission congregations, through their system of schools, hospitals, and printing presses.

4.2 *Vietnam*

In the 19th century, what is now Vietnam was subjected little by little to French rule. In 1862 the southern third of the country became a French colony with the name Cochinchina. By 1884, the central part (Annam) and the northern part (Tonking) had also been occupied. In 1887 these three Vietnamese territories were then formally integrated into the union of French Indochina. The steady advance of the French and the development of Catholic missions in the region were very closely linked. The growing presence of the French provoked indigenous defensive reactions and was a key factor in the successive persecutions of Christians in the 19th century, which in turn strengthened the missionaries' call for protection by the French state. On the other hand, recent studies have shown the strength of support by the local Catholic intelligentsia in the anticolonial resistance of Annamese literati after the complete occupation of the country. Particularly noteworthy is the story of three Catholic priests – Nguyen Than Dong, Nguyen Van Tuong, and Dau Quang Linh –, who were convicted as revolutionary trouble-makers in Saigon in 1909.[11]

The beginnings of the Catholic presence in the region go back to the 16th century. In Faifo, a coastal town in central Vietnam, Jesuits expelled from Japan founded a mission station. Of particular importance was the work of the French Jesuit Alexandre de Rhodes (1591–1660), who quickly acquired a thorough knowledge of the local culture and language. Through his work as a translator – among other things, he developed an early Vietnamese alphabet, which is still in use today in simplified form – and as the author of a catechism that was subsequently widely welcomed, he laid the foundations for future mission work, which soon bore considerable fruit. By the beginning of the 19th century Christianity had found entry to Vietnam by such means. The number of Catholics around 1800 is estimated at approx. 300,000. Under the Nguyen emperor, Gia Long (reigned 1802–1820), who had also been able with French help to release himself from Chinese sovereignty, the missionaries in his kingdom enjoyed freedom of movement. This was to change under his successors. There were severe persecutions under the emperors Minh Mang, Thiêu Tri, and Tu Dúc. "The reason for the increasing conflicts lay especially in the divided Vietnamese society in which the upper class, educated by Confucian standards and oriented to Chinese traditions through centuries of dependence on the 'Middle Kingdom', stood over against a peasant, Buddhist, but religious syncretism-inclined lower class. The oppressed peasants were […] more ready to take

11 Keith, Charles, *Catholic Vietnam: A Church from Empire to Nation*, Berkeley etc. 2012, 1ff.

on Christianity, especially as Buddhism [...] found itself in a process of demise."[12]

In 1825 emperor Minh Mang refused entry to foreign missionaries. French interventions to liberate missionaries took place in 1843 and 1847. They triggered strong reactions against the Catholic minority. An edict by the emperor Tu Dúc in 1851 (Text 57) led to the deaths of 115 priests and 90,000 faithful. An almost automatic consequence was the ever more urgent call for protection by the French missionaries, following a military intervention in Indochina. The emperor of France, Napoleon III who made the instrument of the Catholic protectorate a cornerstone of his foreign and colonial policy, responded to this appeal. In 1859 Saigon the Mekong Delta fell into the hands of the French. Their later incursions into the north again prompted renewed Christian persecutions, even though religious motives were now playing an ever smaller part in French colonial policy.

From 1884, the whole of Vietnam was united under French rule. In the following years the number of European missionaries rose sharply. This new generation, however, was far less familiar with local conditions than the mission veterans who had worked in the country for decades, and as a result they were more critical toward the "heathenism" that they believed they could discern in many customs in Vietnamese society. This in turn led to increased conflicts within the Catholic congregations. The increasing involvement of Catholic intellectuals in anticolonial activities is also part of the picture. "Modern ideas", the bishop of Hanoi complained in 1906, had "infiltrated the hearts of indigenous priests and catechetes".[13] The clergy mentioned above belonged to a group that wanted to send students to Japan where revolutionary thinkers from other Asian countries had also made their way.

Meanwhile, the growth of the Catholic Church continued. Around 1900 it had approx. 900,000 members (8.2 % of the population as a whole). Today, despite developments after 1945, Vietnam is the Asian country with the second-highest proportion of Catholics in the population. Protestant missionaries were not officially granted entry into the country until 1911. Isolated earlier incursions – still illegal – remained without long-term effect. The modest growth of Protestant fellowships began only later. A contributory factor in the shaping of the country's religious profile from the late 19th century onward was also the various syncretistic movements that were affected, to varying degrees, by Christian influences. A prominent example from a somewhat later period is the Caodai sect, which came into being in 1926.

4.3 *Indonesia*

From the mid-17th century, the Dutch had a presence on the Indonesian archipelago as colonial masters – first in the form of the "Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie" (VOC), which went bankrupt in 1799, the Dutch state acting as its successor. From 1810 to 1815, the British occupied the Dutch territories. In 1816, however, Dutch rule was restored on the island kingdom, in the context of a global balancing of interests between the European colonial powers. In the preceding decades, however, it had extended only to Java, southern Sumatra, and a few spice islands. Colonial subjection of most areas of present-day Indonesia – under the name "Dutch East Indies" – was concluded only in 1909.

The end of the VOC brought with it changes in religious policy. The previous monopoly of the reformed colonial church collapsed. In 1806 the principle of freedom of religion was proclaimed, and Catholic priests were able to enter the country. In Batavia (now Jakarta) the first Catholic church was officially opened in 1808 (for the Dutch and Indo-European community there). The old VOC church was reorganized in 1817 (Text 42). As the "Reformed Church in the East Indies" it now regained almost the status of a state church, though being financed by the state it could not engage in mission, being.

12 Gründer, Horst, *Welteroberung und Christentum. Ein Handbuch zur Geschichte der Neuzeit*, Gütersloh 1992, 374.

13 Keith, *Vietnam*, 79.

By a union decreed by King William I in 1820, the other Protestant churches in the colony were obliged to join it.

At the same time, however, various newly formed mission societies of different denominations and nationalities became active in the outlying regions. In 1827, for instance, the Dutch Mission Society began its work on Celebes (now Sulawesi) and the German Rhenish Mission in south Kalimantan in 1836. Catholic missions generally began later. After 1859, the Jesuits were active on all the main islands. Missionary activities were subject to clear restrictions, however. The missionaries had to acquire a special working permit from the colonial administration, which was in each case limited to a particular area. 1854 saw the prohibition of a "dual mission", by which the mission work of only one church or movement was permitted in any area. This principle was not, however, recognized by various groups, especially the Roman Catholics, and was frequently infringed, which led in many cases to serious conflicts. For a long time it was forbidden to engage in mission among Muslims. Java – apart from its three biggest ports – remained closed to Christian missionaries until 1850. For some individual areas this even remained the case until the end of the colonial period. Precisely because of the religious neutrality of the policies of the colonial administration, in the 19th century Islam was able to make great strides. In addition, the construction of new roads and the opening-up of hitherto inaccessible areas was useful precisely to Muslim traders, who spread their faith at the same time.

New Christian communities arose in various parts of the country. The most impressive growth was among the Minahasa and especially the Batak in the mountain regions of northern Sumatra. The increase in Christian congregations led to the emergence of one of the largest national churches of Asia and Indonesia's largest Protestant denomination, the "Christian-Protestant Batak Church" (*Huria Kristen Batak Protestan* / HKBP, with currently approx. 4.5 million baptized members). In 1824 British Baptists made a first unsuccessful foray into this region. The work of the German Lutheran missionary Ludwig Ingwer Nommensen (1834–1918) had a lasting impact. Arriving in the still not colonially occupied highlands in 1862, he began his work among the Toba-Batak, adherents of traditional tribal religions. He gained the confidence of local chiefs (*Raja*), gave them responsibility in the emerging communities, translated the New Testament and Luther's Small Catechism, and set up a seminary for the training of indigenous workers. By the time of his death in 1918 the church had approx. 180,000 members, 14 ordained Batak priests, 78 teachers, and 2,200 elders. The ordination of indigenous ministers (first performed in 1885) was unique and was not practiced by other missions or orders active in the island kingdom in the 19th century. Increasingly, the Toba and Karo-Batak integrated Christianity into their cultural identity.

Different figures are given for the number of non-European Christians on the Indonesian archipelago around 1900: for the Catholics the numbers range between barely 27,000 and 56,000 and for the Protestants between 250,000 and 470,000.[14] The main growth phase in any case followed later. New challenges came in the early 20th century with the rise of national consciousness, modernizing reform movements within Islam, and increasingly secularizing tendencies within European colonial society.

4.4 *Philippines*

The Philippines, finally – still the most Catholic country in Asia with a Catholic population proportion of 81 % in 2015 – were a Spanish colony until 1898. Unlike the Spanish possessions on the American continent, which had already achieved independence by the beginning of the 19th century, the Philippine archipelago was subject to Spanish rule until 1898. The Americans followed them as colonial masters up to 1946, and this much to the

14 Moffett, *Asia*, 629; Aritonang, Jan Sihar / Steenbrink, Karel (eds.), *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, Leiden / Boston 2008, 161.

disappointment of the Philippine revolutionaries who had fought for the country's independence in the 1890s and had proclaimed a short-lived "first Christian republic in the Orient" in 1896. Protests against foreign rule continued, however, and were a decisive factor in the founding of the Rome-independent *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* in 1902.

Controversies in relation to the indigenous clergy played an important part in the development of the Philippine national consciousness in the 19th century. From the beginning, there were tensions between the privileged Spanish members of orders and the native Philippine (secular) clergy. The latter were given numerous congregations in the first decades of the 19th century, i.e. in times when there was a general shortage of priests, despite racist resentment and criticism of their often rather modest education. In view of the part played by indigenous priests in the emancipation of the South American colonies, they faced growing mistrust in the Philippines too on the part of both liberal and conservative governments. From around 1825, the Spanish *patres* began to ask for their parishes back, now led by Philippine secular priests. Tensions were heightened in the 1860s, when the Jesuits who had been expelled in 1768 also returned to take back their former congregations. The former complained of the "unreliability" of the Philippine clergy, while the latter demanded an end to racial discrimination. The situation developed in such a way that, increasingly, any advocacy of the rights of the indigenous clergy was taken as an attack on Spanish rule over the island kingdom. In 1872 there was an armed revolt in the arsenal of Cavite in the vicinity of Manila, following which three prominent indigenous priests were among those condemned to death. Among them was José Burgos, who had made a stand with a manifesto for the Philippine clergy in 1864.

The 1872 execution of these three priests, still celebrated as heroes, lent wings to a new wave of patriotism and anticlericalism. The latter was directed particularly against the wealthy Spanish church and the European-dominated monastic orders. Despite criticism of the dictatorial colonial government in Manila, for a long time the fact that the country belonged to Spain remained unquestioned. The concern was more with equal rights for Filipinos and Spaniards. In 1884, for instance, a large number of people demonstrated in Manila and forwarded a petition that pledged loyalty to the Spanish crown, combined with sharp criticism of the monastic orders: "Long live Spain! […] Away with the monks!" The subsequent Philippine national hero José Rizal (1861–1896), executed in 1896, who remonstrated in his writings against the church's abuse of power and corruption, advocated peaceful reforms within the framework of the existing system. Growing tensions culminated in the armed revolution of 1896 to 1898. A number of monks lost their lives. The military intervention by the Americans in 1898 was first welcomed by the revolutionaries and later – when they took the country into their permanent possession – unsuccessfully resisted (1899–1902). After 1898 most of the Spanish clergy left the country.

The collapse of Spanish rule was accompanied by the hope for a Philippine national church with its own hierarchy. When Rome refused to appoint Filipino bishops, in 1902 the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* (IFI) was founded with the former military chaplain Gregorio Aglipay (1860–1940) as "supreme bishop". The motivating force in this was a group of Philippine intellectuals (*Illustrados*) under the leadership of Isabelo de los Reyes (1864–1938), who – while recognizing the meanwhile established American rule – had signed up for the religious and social and political reform of the country. IFI and trade union newspapers, for instance, were distributed together throughout the island kingdom. For a time, about 25% of the country's population belonged to the IFI. In 1906 the IFI had to return to the Roman Catholics most of the church buildings it had taken over, following a judgment by the Supreme Court. At an early date, the IFI sought contact with other Rome-independent churches of Asia (in Goa and Sri Lanka, for instance) and Europe (the Christian Catholic Church in Switzerland) and that contact still exists today. Another independent church

under Filipino leadership was the "Iglesia ni Christo" founded by Felix Manalo in 1913.

Starting in 1899, various Protestant missions came into the country with the Americans. Prominent among them were Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists. There was no cooperation with the Roman Catholics. In the eyes of most American missionaries, the Roman Catholics had no biblical knowledge and practiced a religion of empty forms and ceremonies. Early attempts at cooperation with the IFI also failed (Text 79b). In 1901 the Protestants agreed on a so-called Comity Agreement, which provided for the division of the country among the various denominations, and decided upon the founding of an evangelical union under the name Iglesia Evangelica. Notably, the Anglicans under the mission bishop Charles F. Brent did not join this union. They restricted their missionary activities to Chinese immigrants as well as adherents of traditional religions and refused to convert indigenous Catholics. At the same time this was an early sign of interdenominational respect, which foreshadowed Brent's later leading role in the Faith and Order wing of the burgeoning Ecumenical Movement.

5 Indigenous Versions of Christianity

The Western missionary movement was just one factor among others in the emergence and development of Asian Christianity. There were Christian churches and communities that existed long before members of European orders and missionaries came to the continent, and they arose or spread in many cases quite independently of any Western missionary presence and after the end of European colonial rule. Even where they were established in the colonial context, in subsequent years Christian communities often developed a dynamic of their own which set them apart from their colonial beginnings. In each case, it was ultimately the indigenous people involved who decided on the acceptance, rejection, selective appropriation or modification of the missionary message. For an understanding of the polycentric structures of the history of Asian Christianity it is necessary to take into account, more than hitherto, the range of indigenous initiatives, different forms of interaction with the local culture, and the plurality of regional centers of the expansion. Some of the relevant examples of non-missionary expansion (as in Korea) have already been mentioned in the present discussion. Other aspects will be given attention in what follows.

5.1 *India: The Thomas Christians*

First, then, to the Thomas Christians, the oldest branch of Indian Christendom. When the Portuguese under Vasco da Gama first stepped upon Indian soil in 1498, they soon encountered the local Thomas Christians. The various churches of the Thomas Christian tradition trace their beginnings back to the ministry of the Apostle Thomas in India, which may, to be sure, be a legend. Not open to dispute, however, is their long-standing and uninterrupted presence in the south of the subcontinent, which goes back continuously at least to the 3rd century, if not even the 2nd. In the 6th century the Indian Thomas Christians integrated into the pan-Asian network of the East Syrian (so-called Nestorian) "Church of the East", which experienced its highpoint in the 13th / 14th century and still exists today. Linked by the patriarchate in Mesopotamia as an organizational center and using the Church Syriac language as a means of communication – which is still of great importance today – the Indians were at the same time in contact with other branches of the Church of the East in Asia. They initially welcomed the arrival of the Portuguese in India in the 16th century. But in 1599, at the notorious Synod of Diamper, they were more or less forcibly inserted into the Portuguese colonial church. It was only in 1653 that a portion of the Thomas Christians were able to separate again from dependence on Rome, but then they did not any longer – as before – join the East Syrian "Nestorian" (Chaldean) branch of the oriental churches, but went over to the West

Syrian rite of Miaphysite ("Jacobite") Orthodoxy, whose center was in Antioch. From that time on the Indian Thomas Christians were split, into a wing in union with Rome and an independent Syrian Orthodox branch. In the course of the 18th and 19th centuries, further schisms took place, as a result of internal jurisdictional disputes and encounter with Western missions.

British Anglicans were pleased to run into Rome-independent Thomas Christians in South Indian Kerala at the beginning of the 19th century. They saw them as potential allies and a possible instrument for the evangelization of the whole of India. For, in their eyes, the Thomas Christians were free of the numerous errors of the Catholic tradition, recognizing, for instance, neither the papacy nor purgatory. Unlike the "tyrannical" Catholic hierarchy in Goa, the Anglicans therefore sought to support the Indian Thomas Christians in a "brotherly" manner. This entailed the setting-up of a theological seminary in Kottayam and the translation of the Bible into the indigenous Malayalam. Even the notion of a church union was entertained. On the whole, though, the Anglican missionaries hugely underestimated the differences between the two church traditions. Tensions arose, and in 1836 Metropolitan Dionysius IV ended collaboration with the Anglican Church Missionary Society. The definitive break then followed in 1889, the reform wing within the Syrian Orthodox community separating as the Mar Thoma Syrian Church – as a church in the Thomas Christian tradition which remained oriental in rite and at the same time had become open to important elements of Western reformed theology. Further tensions arose in the early 20th century. In the present day, the once undivided Indian Thomas Christianity is divided into about seven fractions, "divided into two rites (East Syrian, West Syrian) and four confessions (Antiochene-Diophysite, Miaphysite, Catholic, Western-Reformed)".[15]

A key factor for the survival of the Indian Thomas Christians was their integration in the Indian social system. Without missionary contact, they had survived many centuries as a separate community in the recesses of the southern Indian caste system. To other, Western-educated, Indian Christians of the 19th century for a long time they therefore appeared backward, lethargic, and saddled with many "social evils" of Hindu society that were not really ascribable to Christianity as a modern and emancipatory movement. This view of things changed toward the end of the 19th century at the same time as the rise of the Indian national movement, which criticized missionary Christianity increasingly as "denationalizing". The Thomas Christians now suddenly gained a new reputation as representatives of a precolonial Christianity and of the "old honorable Christian church of India", older than all missionary enterprises of the past. Awakened from their centuries-long "sleep", without external financial support and free from "missionary control", this "ancient Mother Church of India" had managed to assert itself for more than one and a half millennia in the midst of a hostile environment, and in recent times it had also opened up in a new way to the social challenges of the present day – such was the comment of an Indian Christian newspaper in 1911. In addition, both Mar Thoma Christians and representatives of the Syrian Orthodox community participated in various ecumenical initiatives at the beginning of the 20th century. New appreciation came to them even from the camp of the Hindu nationalists. Vivekananda called them "the purest Christians in the world", and Gandhi and Nehru praised them as representatives of an Asian Christianity, not imported from the West. Christian voices outside of India echoed these sentiments.

5.2 *Japan's "Hidden Christians"* (Sempuku Kirishitan / Kakure Kirishitan)

In Japan as well, the European missionaries and priests flooding into the country from the 1860s onward, met a long-existing community of

15 Hage, Wolfgang, *Das orientalische Christentum* (Die Religionen der Menschheit 31), Stuttgart 2007, 374.

indigenous Christians: the *Sempuku Kirishitan*, or "hidden Christians" who had survived in the underground for 250 years under the cruelest persecution and in complete isolation from the rest of the Christian world. A famous scene was played out in Nagasaki on 17 March 1865: near the church of the French priest Bernard Petitjean, built for foreign residents, fifteen inhabitants of the nearby village Urakami identified themselves as Christians. "The hearts of all of us here do not differ from yours," an old woman whispered to the priest and asked him about a statue of Mary and the celebration of Christmas (Text 59a). Nagasaki, on the south island of Kyushu, had been a center of Christian mission in the 16th century. There, Petitjean now met first hundreds, and later thousands, of "hidden Christians". In total, at this time there will have been roughly 30,000 *Sempuku Kirishitan* in the vicinity of Nagasaki and on the offshore Goto islands.

The *Sempuku Kirishitan* were the descendants of Japanese Christians who had kept their faith "in secret" and passed it on from generation to generation in the form they knew. They held services in secret rooms in their private homes, passed on Bible stories and parts of the liturgy orally – as possession of printed books was too dangerous and they could be confiscated by the authorities. After the expulsion of all Catholic clergy in the 17th century they had been reliant on lay leaders to perform their celebrations and rituals. As time went on, the Virgin Mary took the form of a Bodhisattva (Maria Kannon), and the veneration of their martyrs took place in the form of the popular custom of ancestor veneration. At his first encounters with these underground Christians Petitjean was impressed by their knowledge of Catholic theology: they knew about the Trinity, the Fall, the Incarnation, and the Ten Commandments. Many knew the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, the Apostles' Creed, the Salve Regina, as well as the sacrament of penance. At this time their religious organization consisted essentially of two offices: that of the *Chokata* – a man who could read and write and led the congregation as well as the Sunday prayers, and the *Mizukata*, who performed baptisms.

Later, the *Sempuku Kirishitan* also gave Petitjean a copy of their sacred book, the writing *Tenchi Haijmari no Koto* ("The Beginning of Heaven and Earth"), in which – permeated by Latin and Portuguese loan words – the biblical account of creation was combined with Buddhist mythology and various local traditions. Originally transmitted orally, this collection of partly folklore stories was later committed to writing and increasingly gained dogmatic importance (Text 59b). Scholarship regards this text as an attempt to Christianize Japanese traditions and at the same time as a "Japanization of Christianity", in the words of the anthropologist Christal Whelan.

News of the reemergence of the "hidden Christians" in 1865 caused a sensation. But few from all of the *Sempuku Kirishitan* rejoined the Roman Catholic Church, setting aside some practices regarded as unorthodox. Others did not recognize the faith of their forefathers in the Catholicism of the French missionaries, and continued to live in their own communities. Centuries of isolation had changed their faith and let hiddenness become an integral component of their self-understanding. There are still independent communities of "hidden Christians" today, especially on the Soto islands in the south of the country, referred to in scholarly literature as *Kakure Kirishitan*. Some of them have meanwhile lost awareness of their Christian origins.

The hidden Christians of Urakami (now a suburb of Nagasaki), who identified themselves to the French priest Petitjean in 1865, were afterwards exposed to further persecutions. Many were sent into exile, from which they did not return until 1873. In 1895 they began construction of their own church – the Urakami cathedral – which was completed in 1910. On 9 August 1945 the Americans' second atomic bomb exploded directly above this church, destroying it almost completely.

5.3 *China: The Taiping Movement*

The Taiping Movement in 19th century China arose under quite different circumstances. It was a Christian-inspired mass movement (1850–1864), the Chinese version of the German Peasants' War, perhaps, which brought the Manchu (Qing) Dynasty that had ruled since 1644 to the brink of collapse. It emerged in the rebellious areas of southwest China, and was initially only very indirectly connected to the Western mission movement. An initial link was through Christian tracts circulating in the interior of the country. The Taiping leaders regarded themselves as Christian, preached the biblical message to the exclusion of all other doctrines (despite various syncretistic elements), championed a puritan ethic and aimed at friendly contact with missionaries and other representatives of the West. Yet they remained independent in their actions and theology. The military suppression of the Taiping rebellion in 1864 (supported in the end by the Western powers) claimed millions of victims.

Its leader was a certain Hong Xiuquan, who experienced a series of visions, which began in 1837. Under the influence of the study of the Chinese Bible – which he came to know by means of tracts of the Chinese convert Liang Fa and later by study of the Gützlaff Bible translation – he began to understand these visions as revelations of the Christian God and to interpret them in the light of the Old Testament prophecies. From this he inferred that his mission, like that of Joshua in the land of Canaan, was to topple the old gods of China and instead create a "Heavenly Kingdom of Peace". The precise knowledge of this vision was regarded as indispensable for his followers, together with a catechism consisting of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and other prayers, which – a contemporary record tells us – "every rebel in the year 1854 possessed and which is today still in countless hands" (Text 61 a+b). Hong Xiuquan called himself Jesus Christ's younger brother. In 1853 he had himself proclaimed king in Nanjing, the "New Jerusalem". He preached the equality of all people, organized state examinations on the basis of the Bible and made transgression of the Decalogue, blasphemy, and opium-smoking subject to the death penalty. Hong welcomed European visitors as "transoceanic brothers", and he claimed that China was an equal member in the family of "Christian" – that is, Western – "nations".

How Christian was the Taiping Movement? Answers to this question are as controversial today as they were then. It has been called the Chinese "version of Old Testament Protestant Christianity" by authorities such as John K. Fairbank. His fellow countryman Daniel H. Bays speaks of "China's first indigenous Christian movement".[16] The Chinese historian Lee Chee Kong states: "The Taiping Movement started as a Christian-influenced movement with elements also from Chinese writings, but it ended as a revolutionary movement."[17] In the beginning, 19th century missionaries welcomed it as a sign of the worldwide outpouring of the Holy Spirit, hoping for a new China under Christian leadership. Later, their voices became more and more critical – especially when the movement shifted into open rebellion. Chinese contemporaries and bitter opponents like the Hunanese Zeng Guofang saw the war between the Taiping and the Manchu Dynasty as a conflict between two civilizations, the Confucian and the Christian (or the "religion of Jesus and the Western barbarians"). The Taiping regarded themselves as called by the Christian God and as children "of the same heavenly Father" as their Western visitors. For the latter also knew the "heavenly rules" in the shape of the Ten Commandments, as they were delighted to see (Text 61.d). But at any rate Taiping monotheism with its egalitarian and universalist tendencies showed what revolutionary consequences even just a partial reception of biblical stimuli could have in the social conflicts of

16 Bays, Daniel H., *Christianity in China. From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, Stanford 1996, 53.

17 Kong, Lee Chee, art. "Taiping Rebellion", in: Sunquist, Scott W. (ed.), *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity*, Grand Rapids, MI / Cambridge, UK 2001, 814f.

the time and the upsetting of a centuries-old hierarchical social order.

5.4 *Expansion of Christianity by Migrants and Indentured Laborers*

One important factor in the description of Christianity as a polycentric movement has been receiving increased attention in recent times: non-missionary expansion as a consequence of regional or transregional migration. This is true on the global scale – the beginnings of the Protestant presence in West Africa in the early 19th century, for instance, cannot be adequately described without taking account of African-American re-emigration from the other side of the Atlantic and the Sierra Leone experiment – and applies especially to Asia as well. The migration streams of the 19th century changed traditional religious geographies. In many cases, they also led to a first Christian presence in regions or among groups where no Western missionaries had worked before.

Indian contract workers ("indentured laborers") for instance, so-called "coolies", circulated as a cheap workforce in the expanding British Empire. From the mid-19th century on, they were engaged in increasing numbers on the tea plantations of Ceylon, the minefields of South Africa, and various islands of the Caribbean. In Guyana, Trinidad, and Surinam they became a departure point for rapidly growing Hindu communities. Conversely, however, members of the Christian minority also found entry to numerous overseas regions. Tamil Christians from South India stand as an example: around the turn of the 19th to the 20th century their presence is documented in such disparate areas as Sri Lanka, Burma, Malaysia, the Nicobar Islands, Mauritius, South Africa, Uganda, British Guyana, Trinidad, and Fiji. There they often became indigenous multipliers of the Christian faith. This occurred partly through their mere presence in regions in which European missionaries had not worked before – such as in the tea estates in the mountains of Sri Lanka, where Tamil coolies had brought their south-Indian Catholic or Protestant Christianity with them in the mid-19th century (Text 69) – , but also by targeted missionary activities. The evangelistic efforts of Indian Christians among the Indians of South Africa are particularly noteworthy. They went there as teachers and catechists, partly as employees of established missions and partly on their own initiative, or they were recruited by the indigenous mission societies that formed at the beginning of the 20th century. There they sought to bring their needy fellow countrymen both social and spiritual aid. Others were active in East Africa.

In *China*, as mentioned above, Western missionaries were barred from legal residence until 1842. But there were already a growing number of Chinese Christians and congregations among expatriate Chinese on the margins of the empire, in present-day Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. At first – as a continuing consequence of earlier migration – this was true particularly for Chinese Catholics and then in the course of the 19th century increasingly for Protestants as well. The most impressive example of an early indigenous expansion among ethnic diaspora networks is *Korea*. In the catastrophe of 1910, when Korea was annexed by Japan, Korean evangelists were already in transit among their compatriots in Siberia, Manchuria, Japan, Hawaii, California, Mexico, and Cuba. A little later (1913), further transcultural missionary activity came in the north-Chinese province of Shantung – even though Protestant congregations had only started to form in Korea itself in the 1880s. The further history of Korean Christianity in the 20th century cannot be described without taking adequate account of the global Korean diaspora. A comparable example, though the situation is different as it is very much older, is *Armenian* Christianity and its diaspora, which goes back to the European Middle Ages. The rapid spread of the Baptists in *Burma* (Myanmar) in the 19th century has much to do with the migrations of the Karen and Kachin. The same is true of the Christian congregations of Chinese and Vietnamese migrants in *Thailand* at this time.

6 Transregional Developments and Challenges since 1890: Colonialism, Nationalism, Revival of the Continent's Traditional Religions, the Beginnings of the Indigenization Movement in Christian Asia

Toward the end of the 19th century colonial pressure on Asia increased. By analogy with the European powers' "scramble for Africa" that began with the Berlin Congo Congress of 1884, one could also speak of a colonial race for Asia. This took the form of a formal conquest, or – as in the case of China, which remained nominally independent – a "scramble for concessions", such as the demarcation of zones of influence. With the formal annexation of Upper Burma in 1886, the British rounded off their colonial possessions in southern Asia, structuring this region in British India, which comprised present-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka. The French concluded their acquisitions in Indochina, creating in 1886 the "Indochinese Union" which brought together the three protectorates of Annam, Tonking, and Cambodia together with the colony Cochinchina, under uniform French administration. In 1909 the Dutch concluded the colonial penetration of present-day Indonesia with the subjection of the last local ruler in Aceh. Russia, which had already advanced slowly into Central Asia in the 1860s and 1870s, reached the borders of Afghanistan in the course of its territorial expansion in the 1880s. Around 1898, the United States, relinquishing its anticolonial tradition, replaced the Spanish as colonial masters in the Philippines, Guam in the Pacific, and Puerto Rico in the Caribbean. The German Empire also participated in the colonial competition of the Western powers, acquiring the "concession" of Jiaozhou in northeast China in 1898, and in the Pacific the Caroline, Marian and Palau islands. Separated off between the colonial empires, rounding off their territories, were isolated buffer zones: Siam (Thailand) between French Indochina and British India and Persia between the English colonial empire and the Russian Empire. China itself remained nominally independent, but was divided up in spheres of influence. And in reaction to the so-called Boxer Rebellion it was an international coalition of eight powers – England, France, Germany, Russia, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Japan, and the USA –, which occupied Peking in 1900 and laid enormous war reparations upon the Middle Kingdom, among other things for the destruction of missionary property – an event which remained in traumatized memory.

Increasingly, from the end of the 19th century, were also *nationalistic counterreactions*. The "national awakening" of the peoples of Asia ensued in the individual regions at different moments and in differing but still comparable processes. In 1886 the Indian National Congress was founded in India (Text 63b). Initially little more than an association of moderate notables, from the turn of the century it increasingly became a platform for radical voices. In Indochina as well, which experienced a series of smaller revolts, resistance against French colonial rule was far from extinguished, and instead of the traditional loyalty to the king, Vietnamese patriots now called increasingly for "love of the fatherland". In the Spanish-ruled Philippines as well, from the second half of the 19th century there was resistance among the indigenous elite against political, economic, and religious discrimination on the part of the colonial masters. While this movement was reform-oriented, in the 1890s "Katipunan", the Philippine secret society, planned violent actions against the Spanish. National sentiment strengthened in China, parallel to insight into the serious need of reform for state and society, within educated circles. After 1900 this was expressed increasingly in the anti-imperialist struggle for a revision of the "unequal treaties" and the demand for the restitution of lost rights.

The interlinking of these initially rather heterogeneous and regionally separate developments was boosted by the *Russo-Japanese War* (1904/05), which ended with a victory of "yellow" Japan over the "white" tsarist empire. Thus, at the climax of Western colonialism and imperialism, the

myth of European invincibility was permanently shattered. As far as the remote villages of Bengal, this event was discussed with incredulous astonishment (Text 65). The frequently repeated opinion in India was: if even relatively small Japan with its 50 million inhabitants could deal a devastating defeat to Russia, a world power, why should not 320 million Indians be able to defend themselves against only 150,000 British on the Subcontinent? The days of undisputed white predominance seemed to have come to a definitive end. National movements across the whole of Asia experienced a huge upswing. Furthermore, Japan's victory was also celebrated as a victory of an "oriental" – and non-Christian – nation over the "Christian" empire of the tsars. "Asia is one" was the slogan now heard in many places; and instead of going to Oxford, Cambridge or Yale, students from the British colonies and other Asian countries, but also from the Arab world, now streamed in growing numbers to Tokyo. Tokyo became especially attractive to Chinese students, in whose country the traditional examination had been abolished in 1905 – a development that was to have consequences for Christianity as well.

The beginnings of political nationalism were associated in many places with a *revival* of the continent's traditional religions. Prior to the formulation of political demands came, as a rule, the rediscovery of one's own culture – often encouraged by European archaeology and philology, which made the long-disregarded or forgotten "splendors of the East" accessible to a broad public. For instance, in its edition of 18 January 1899, the Ceylonese journal *The Hindu Organ*, published in Jaffna, expressed its view of this religious revival as a pan-Asian phenomenon:

> Everywhere throughout the East there is a revival of [Asian] learning and literature, and the work of rescuing the glory of the Oriental religions from the forgotten past is going on apace. In India, Burmah, Siam, Annam [Vietnam], Japan and even in China, which … sent a representative to the Parliaments, the need for religious and moral education is largely felt. Not that our ancestors did not pay to the subject as much attention as is now attempted. They went further in that respect than we who live amidst the materialistic tendencies of the present age can conceive of. In fact, our ancestors lived, moved, and had their being in religion.
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> TEXT 62

Similar observations are also found in descriptions by Christian missionaries and European colonial officials. Anglican missionaries complained also of the burgeoning of anti-Christian agitation, as we read for instance in a report from Sri Lanka of 1899: "The whole character of Buddhism has changed during the last few years. Whereas some time ago the mass of the people knew nothing of Buddhism […], Buddhism is now a popular force opposed to Christianity. It is taught in schools which vie with our own. […] [The Singhalese] are now from a kind of patriotism setting themselves in many ways against Western fashions, and reverting in dress and manners to ancient usage." (Text 64b) And in 1910 in India the British colonial official Valentine Chirol described the change of mood in the past decades in the following way:

> When I first came to India – say 30 years ago – the ambition of young India was to be, intellectually at least, more English than the English. The superiority of Western literature and Western ethics was as generally recognized as that of Western science and Western methods of government. Somewhere in the [18]80's the pendulum began to swing back. […] Already in the 90's the movement had set in which has developed into the extraordinary Hindu revival in the last few years – back to the Vedas [Hindu scriptures], back to Kali-worship… back to the golden age when, before the advent of the wicked Englishman, prosperity reigned and all the virtues flourished!
>
> TEXT 63A

Hindu revival and national consciousness increasingly went hand in hand, and conversely missionary Christianity was now attacked more and more as "denationalizing". Why, for instance, should an *Indian* belong to the (Anglican) Church of *England*? "One more Christian, one fewer Chinese", was a quite similar widespread slogan in China.

But this religious revival, simultaneously observable in various regions, was by no means simply a revivification of traditional forms of belief. To a large degree it was associated with *modernizing stimuli* proceeding from the argument with Western ideas and Christian mission. In organizational matters in particular, in the adoption of many of their propaganda techniques, and in the elaboration of international communication structures, the Protestant mission movement in many cases became a model that was sometimes contested and sometimes imitated. In rejection or imitation, the "leaven" of the gospel was also effective in "reawakening Hinduism" – such was the comment, for example, of C. F. Andrews, the British missionary and later confidant of Gandhi, in 1912. The historian Axel Michaels made a very similar observation in relation to India: "In Indian intellectual circles, an ethical reform Hinduism formed which condemned Hindu excesses (immolation of widows, the caste system, etc.) because of Christian influence, strove for a democratization of the Hindu religions without the priestly dominance of the Brahmans, and represented intellectualist liberation teachings."[18] The most outstanding example of a Christian-inspired neo-Hindu reform movement was the *Brahmo Samaj.* In response to Christian universalism, the Ramakrishna student Swami Vivekananda (1836–1902) proclaimed Hinduism as a universal religion which, moreover, was in harmony with modern science. Other associations, such as *Arja Samaj*, founded in 1875, responded by advocating an emphatically "Vedic" Hinduism, purged of harmful Western or Islamic influences. In 1898, the so-called Hundred Days reform movement in China became notable for the founding of a Confucian "church" (Church of Confucius), which was later – after the fall of the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty in 1911 – re-adopted as a project for a national religion.

Buddhist modernism originated in Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon. The country was more heavily exposed to the influences of more than three centuries of European colonial rule and Christian mission than neighboring India. Around the middle of the 19th century, traditional Buddhism seemed threatened by an unstoppable decline. Soon, however, an upward turn gradually arose which found expression in a series of public disputes between 1865 and 1899. The Buddhists made increasing use of the ideas and forms of organization of their Christian opponents. This situation has been dealt with in the sociology of religion under the rubric of *Protestant Buddhism*. Thus, for instance, instead of YMCA's, Buddhist YMBA's were founded (as well as the later Hindu YMHA's, Muslim YMMA's and finally Catholic YMCathAs), instead of Christian catechisms a Buddhist Catechism was disseminated, and – especially remarkable in a country which traditionally had a lunar calendar rather than a seven-day week – the setting-up of "Buddhist Sunday schools" was promoted. An explicit emphasis was placed on the rational elements of Buddhist doctrine and their compatibility with Western science, and the significance of the lay element rather than the traditional precedence of monastic orders was brought to the fore. Meanwhile, further efforts were made to set up an international network for Buddhism. In 1891 the Ceylonese Anagarika Dharmapala (1864–1933) founded the Bodhgaya Mahabodhi Society. Its aim was to unite Buddhists from all countries – from Ceylon to Tibet and Japan – and make the Indian Bodhgaya the center of Buddhist religion once again. Japanese Buddhists began to send missionaries to other Asian countries as well.

The rise of national movements, combined with the restrengthening of the continent's traditional religions, confronted the – geographically, confessionally, and culturally – extremely heterogeneous

18 Michaels, Axel, *Der Hinduismus. Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Munich 1998, 63f.

Protestant mission communities of Asia with, for the first time, a uniform challenge. This challenge was the more pronounced since national identity was being increasingly defined in terms of religious adherence: a true "Indian" now also had to be a devoted "Hindu" and the Singhalese patriot was expected to be at the same time a committed Buddhist. In Japan, Shinto and Buddhism experienced a considerable upswing as thoroughly "Japanese" religions.

In response, in the Christian camp there was increased pressure and an evident need to look for an "indigenous" and "national" form for the Christian communities that were the products of Western mission. These trends, observable simultaneously or at different times in different places, might be referred to as an *indigenization movement*. In its concrete demands it was far from uniform, and was heavily dependent on local conditions. But it marks a thoroughly consistent state of discussion in the various churches and regions of Asia in the early 20th century.

Some individual features:

– The demand to overcome the imported confessional "sectarianism" of the missionaries by developing "national" organizational forms of indigenous Christians (more on this in para. 7).
– The demand for "indigenous leadership", as had long been anticipated in the – originally missionary – concept of the "Three Selves". Africa had had African bishops since the days of S. A. Crowther, observed the *Christian Patriot* (1898) in India, continuing with the comment: "When is India to have her native Bishops?" In 1899 another journal, the *Indian Christian Guardian* complained in a similar way: "It [is] acknowledged by all that India is sadly behindhand as regards the Episcopate" (Text 67).
– The development of new forms of liturgy, the use of indigenous musical instruments, and recourse to local musical traditions would be further examples. Tamil lyrics, for example, were played at the opening sessions of the National Church of Indian in Madras in 1887 (Text 77b). Instead of the musical accompaniment of services with a harmonium, customary in many mission churches, traditional instruments were now increasingly brought in.
– The adoption of local forms of architecture rather than the standard model of Victorian/Late Gothic church buildings is another paradigm toward which indigenous Christians were often initially reserved. Traditionally designed sacred buildings threatened to remind people too much of the "pagan" heritage that had been overcome. In colonial Ceylon (Sri Lanka), for instance, in 1918 the foundation stone for a chapel erected in Singhalese style was laid for the renowned Trinity College in Kandy. However, preliminary discussions and debates took place already at the beginning of the 20th century.
– The same applies to the establishment of Christian ashrams. A well-known example is the founding of the Christikula Ashram in India in 1921 (Text 68). Earlier debates and discussions in this area are also documented, however, in India and Sri Lanka as early as 1905, often in connection with the establishment of indigenous missionary societies.
– The formulation of an Asian Christian contextual theology itself is a development which ensued in an elaborated form only in later decades. On the other hand there were early efforts on the part of the 19th-century Indian "Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity" (Kaj Baago) to relate the gospel message to the religious traditions of the country (see para. 5 above). Japanese theologians – as we learn from the visit of a delegation of Japanese Christians to India in 1906 – rediscovered the "oriental Christ" which the West had long illegitimately coopted, and sought to give it back to the nations of the East. This is a foretaste of the debates that were later conducted in the 1970s, for instance, in the framework of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT).
– The use of indigenous names for baptized Christians is another example that caused much heated discussion in the early 20th century

in various regions, in Asia and in Africa. Because of the theophoric character (or pagan background) of many indigenous names, it had long been customary to give converts overtly "Christian" (and Western) names at their baptism. This practice was increasingly questioned, and the maintenance of traditional names even for new Christians was the subject of lively discussion in the Christian press in Asia.

– The same applies to traditional clothing and lifestyles. In both the ecclesiastical sphere (such as sitting on the floor during services) and in household customs (e.g. eating with one's fingers), local customs were hesitantly rediscovered. This subject also played a part in the transcontinental exchange of indigenous Christian elites from various regions, now gaining momentum. For instance, in 1914 African Christians pointed approvingly to the example of V. S. Azariah, the first Asian bishop of the Anglican colonial church, who dressed modestly in the conventional Indian style.
– Finally, Bible translations, a core activity particularly of Protestant missionaries in the 19th century, were no longer produced solely by missionaries (and their local "helpers") in closed committee sessions. Repeatedly they became the subject of public debates, were published in alternative versions in both the missionary and indigenous Christian press, and were discussed in the broader arena of a committed Christian public, often controversially.

In 1908 the north-Indian lay Christian Surendra K. Datta (1878–1942) published the tract *The Desire of India*. It could be described as a kind of manifesto of this early indigenization movement (although this term does not appear in it at all). Datta then worked from 1924 to 1926 as, among other things, a political representative of the Indian Christian community in the country's legislative assembly. He called for a cultural indigenization and the self-government and self-propagation of the "Indian church" and regretted the absence of a genuinely Indian theology, in developing which Indian Christians could learn much from such movements as the non-Christian sect *Brahmo Samaj* (Text 66a). Similar voices from Japan and China were to be heard. At the same time, in various places, there were first debates about the model of a "fulfillment theology", which viewed the Christian faith not as a contrast but as a "fulfillment" (Matt 5.17) of Asia's religious aspirations.

Protagonists of the indigenization movement were both committed indigenous Christians as well as liberal missionaries such as C. F. Andrews, the later friend of Mahatma Gandhi, and A. G. Fraser, who was long active as a pedagogue in Uganda and later in Sri Lanka. "To-day", reads his analysis of 1908, "the National Movement [in Ceylon and India] is anti-Christian. I have met men profoundly convinced of the truth of Christ, wistfully desirous of accepting Him, yet turning away because to accept Him seemed treachery to their people and nation." From this, Fraser derived the call not to preach an "English Christ" but "to preach the Christ of India and Ceylon […] Only in the power of the risen Lord and Christ can a disciple fulfill the ethic of Buddha." (Text 66a) It was voices like these that increasingly shaped the climate and the debates of Asian churches in the period prior to the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910.

7 National Church Initiatives, The Early Asian Ecumenical Movement, and Networking among the Indigenous Christian Elites around the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910

The area where the emancipatory efforts of Asian Christians were most clearly expressed was the Asian ecumenical movement. For nowhere did the much-criticized "foreign" character of missionary Christianity seem more striking than in the multiplicity of denominations imported from Europe, which often displayed proof of their "foreign" origin in the very name they bore (such as the

Anglican "Church of England"). At an early stage, overcoming the "sectarianism" of the missionaries was therefore one of the central demands of indigenous Christian elites in different regions.

"The eye of hope", we read in an Indian Christian journal around 1898, "would fain discern the time when the deplorable sectarian differences which characterize our Western Christianity, and which have acquired a foothold to no small extent in India, shall be superseded by a freer and fuller growth of [...] spiritual life [...]. We warn ... not only against the English [Anglican] and Roman [Catholic] missions, but also against the Scotch, German and American missions" (Text 69a). "Denominationalism has never entered the Chinese mind, nor are they interested in it," declared the Chinese delegate Cheng Ching Yi at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, attracting much attention. That same year, in India the Anglican bishop of Bombay, J. E. Palmer, noted: "I have heard it said often, that if we, foreign missionaries, left India in a body to-day, all Indian Christians would very quickly unite and form one Indian Church. I have heard said it again and again that it is only we foreign missionaries who keep the Indian Christians from unity" (Text 69b). Such constant criticism reinforced pressure on the mission churches to cooperate more closely. From 1900, cooperation indeed clearly increased, leading at the same time to many local initiatives by indigenous Christians.

A typical reaction was the growth of *national church movements*. Thus, in 1886 the National Church of India (NCI) was founded in Madras. It sought to unite all Indian Christians, irrespective of their denominational affiliation and free from missionary controls, step by step into *one* national church. Its liturgy and worship thus was to correspond with the "national sentiments" and "aspirations" of indigenous believers in India (Text 77). In the early phase, in particular at a personal level, there were links to the Indian National Congress, founded in 1885. Although the NCI was only in existence until about 1930, it played an important role as a crystallization point in the efforts of south-Indian Protestants to achieve autonomy. There were independen ce efforts there – in view of authoritarian structures and growing paternalism in parts of the colonial church establishment – and also in other regions, such as in the Anglican Church of Sri Lanka (Text 76) and the Baptist congregations of Burma. In China, as well, after 1900 the desire for church independence strengthened among many Protestant Christians. Thus in 1906, as mentioned above, a mission-independent transregional organization called the Chinese Christian Independent Church (*Zhonghua Yesujiao zilihui*) was brought into being. Further initiatives of this sort followed. In Japan, the Non-Church Movement (*Mukyokai*) founded by Kanzo Uchimura (1861–1930) spread apace from 1900 onward. Uchimura emphasized the importance of being both Japanese and Christian, and derived from that declaration the necessity of not belonging to a mission-led ecclesiastical organization of a particular denomination (Text 78).

In general, church independence efforts in Asia were less radical than the movements emerging at the same time in Africa. From the 1890s, there was a wave of establishments of independent African churches in West Africa. Largely, they were a reaction to the step by step disempowerment of S. A. Crowther (1808–1891), the first African bishop of the modern period and a symbolic figure for the hopes of the Western-educated African elite. As a rule, these independent churches of West Africa, like the so-called Ethiopic churches mushrooming at the same time in South Africa, quickly completed the break with the whites-dominated mission churches, while such groups as the Indian NCI sought a gradual transition.

But in both contexts, the mission churches of Asia and those of Africa, a crucial role was played by the debates that took place around the turn of the century concerning the so-called Three Selves. This formula describes the goal of a self-governing, self-supporting, and self-extending "native church". Originally a missionary concept formulated in the 19th century by different missionary figures in various regions – thus for West Africa and India

by Henry Venn of the British Church Missionary Society and for East Asia by the American missionary Rufus Anderson, a Congregationalist and John L. Nevius a Presbyterian – in the late 19th century it developed increasingly into a slogan for the emancipation efforts of indigenous Christian elites on both continents. For increasingly, as time passed, representatives of the ecclesiastical establishment and colonial society answered the demands of indigenous Christians for equal rights with a "not yet – the time is not ripe". The equality that had originally been promised by the Three Selves formula now became postponed to an indefinite future – perhaps in 30, 50 or 100 years' time if ever. The unavoidable consequence was the increase in movements for church independence or for national churches, especially among the Western-educated Christians of Asia.

Church independence was not only a concern to be found in the Protestant context. There were similar movements in Catholic Asia as well. The most outstanding example of a Rome-independent church is the Iglesia Filipina Independentiente (IFI), discussed elsewhere. Founded by a group of Filipino *Illustrados* ("Enlightened ones") in 1902, for a time it comprised as many as 25 % of the population of the island state, and still exists today. The schism with Rome was the culmination of the long-lasting struggle of Filipino clergy and intellectuals against their institutional discrimination in the Spanish-dominated colonial church of the country (Text 79). It is notable that very quickly after its founding, the IFI made efforts to establish links with other Rome-independent movements – globally (as in the USA and with the Christian Catholics/Old Catholics in Switzerland) and especially in Asia. Thus it made contact with the "independent Catholics" in Sri Lanka and Goa, who for their part had asked for IFI clergy to be sent to their church. There were protests by indigenous clergy and Catholic intellectuals against the European-occupied church hierarchy in other countries as well. The example of revolutionary clergy in Vietnam in the early 20th century has already been mentioned, and already around 1880 in China European missionaries believed they saw a deep disinclination toward all things foreign among the entire Chinese clergy, linked with the desire for their own Chinese bishops.[19]

The past 19th century had been the century of the quite worthy Western missionaries, the *Christian Patriot* (Madras) stated in its 28 September 1901 edition. The 20th century, however, will belong to the "native Christians" and will be marked by "the self-support, the self-government and the self-extension of the Native Churches".[20] One area in which this program could most easily be put into effect, was a series of evangelistic activities such as the *founding of indigenous mission societies.* Thus, in Serampore in 1905 – with conscious adoption of the symbolism of this place, where one hundred years previously a new epoch of Protestant mission work on the subcontinent had been heralded – the "National Missionary Society of India" (NMS) was founded as an initiative of Indian Christians. This act was seen as evidence of Christian patriotism, following the slogan: *"Indian men* [sic], *Indian money, Indian leadership".* In just a short time, the NMS could point to about 100 branches throughout the country. Its aim was not to compete with the Western missionaries, but to be active in hitherto "unreached" areas both inside and outside India – in Burma, Sri Lanka, and Singapore, for instance. The NMS also became important as a kind of "training ground" for indigenous leadership. One of its sources of inspiration, among others, was the example of an association of Christian students from Jaffna (Sri Lanka) who had been working among their Tamil compatriots in South Africa since 1901.

Analogous movements existed at the beginning of the 20th century in various Asian countries. For many Christian congregations in Korea such missionary activities gained almost programmatic importance. Already in the catastrophic year of 1910 – when the country lost its political

19 Metzler, Josef, *Die Synoden in China, Japan und Korea, 1570–1931*, Paderborn etc., 1980, 108.

20 Koschorke, *Discourses*, 48.

independence – Korean evangelists engaged in mission among their compatriots in Siberia, Japan, Manchuria, Hawaii, California, Mexico, and Cuba, shortly to be followed by transcultural missionary activities among the local population in north-Chinese Shandon. For many Korean Christians, in place of its lost national sovereignty, the country was now gaining a new function as an independent center for Christian world mission. From the turn of the century, Japanese Christians also began to send their own evangelists into neighboring countries. "The recognition of the responsibility of the Christians of Japan for the evangelization of Formosa, Korea, Manchuria and North China […] has been strengthened by the developments of the last year, until now it is generally shared by all intelligent Christians (sc. of Japan)" – runs the declaration by Japanese delegates at a conference in Tokyo in 1907.

This *Tokyo Conference of 1907* is deserving of particular attention. For it was the first ecumenical assembly in Asia with a majority of Asian delegates. Roughly 500 of the approximately 627 participants came from different Asian countries, most of them from Japan, China, and India. The conference was organized primarily by the Japanese branch of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) – one of those organizations, like the YMCA, which had rapidly developed into a meeting-place and forum for exchange between indigenous Asian elites. The conference drew a great deal of attention among the Japanese and in the international missionary press. Reports emphasized the "equality" in status of the Western and Asian conference participants. The main theme of this meeting was the evangelization of Asia "by its own sons". One of its results consisted in closer cooperation between Christian representatives and future church leaders from the continent.

There had previously been an increase in direct contacts between Asian Christians from different regions. In 1906, for instance, a delegation of Japanese Christians visited India. They came "at the special request and invitation of the Indian YMCAs". The theme of their much-celebrated lecture tour, which took them from the north to the south of the subcontinent, was the question: "What can [Christian] India learn from Japan?" Their answer: (1) freedom from the denominationalism and "sectarianism" of the missionaries; (2) indigenous leadership; (3) promotion of female education. It was agreed that there would be regular contacts and reciprocal visits.

The *World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh* in 1910 has been regarded as the peak of the Protestant mission movement of the 19th century and, at the same time, as a starting-point for the ecumenical movement of the 20th century. Far too little attention has been paid to the extent to which Edinburgh reacted to the developments and debates in the emerging churches of Asia and Africa. This was achieved by, among other things, intensive preparatory correspondence with both the missionaries and with the indigenous church leaders in the overseas "mission fields". Above all it was the "awakening of great nations", especially in Asia, which in the eyes of the conference demanded a completely new quality of cooperation, both between the various missions (active in Asia and Africa) and between the churches of the West as well (Text 70). The decisive question was whether the Asian national movements – especially in India, Japan, and China – would go their way *with or without* Christ. Both options seemed possible. This prompted an urgent call for an intensification of cooperation and the fostering of indigenous leadership structures. Just seventeen Asian delegates participated in Edinburgh. However, they were given a prominent position in the conference program and on their return quickly received leadership positions in their respective home churches – thus V. S. Azariah in India, C. Y. Chen in China, and J. S. Motoda in Japan.

Of great importance for the long term were then the Asian Edinburgh Continuation Committee Conferences. Thirteen of these took place in various Asian countries in 1912/13. They led to the formation of National *Missionary* Councils, which later (around 1924) were converted in some cases into National *Christian* Councils – in India with

the standard, for instance, that 50% of the seats were to be reserved for Indian Christians. This laid the foundation for self-administration by Asian churches, which in further developed form still exists today. Notable, too, has been the participation of non-Protestant churches (such as the orthodox Mar Thoma Church in India) at the Edinburgh Continuation Conferences. Such themes as the necessity for national (rather than denominational) organizational forms, the development of an "indigenous character" for the Asian churches that had emerged from Western mission, as well as a changed relationship to local culture and non-Christian religions had, from now on, a prominent position on the agenda of Asian Protestant Christianity. In the resolutions of the national China conference in Shanghai in 1913, for instance, we read: "In view of the great awakening in China [i.e. after the fall of the Manchu Dynasty in 1911], [...] it is the united opinion of the Conference that there is an imperative need for able Chinese Christian leadership" (Text 71).

While Edinburgh 1910 marks a first climax in intra-Protestant globalization and the regional mission conferences of Madras (1902) and Shanghai (1907) had previously already introduced stronger coordination in Protestant mission work on the Asian continent, in Catholic Asia important centralization processes took place during the pontificate of Pope Leo XIII (1878–1903). In 1886 in India – in the territories outside the waning Portuguese patronage – a regular church hierarchy was established for the first time and six archdioceses (in Agra, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Pondicherry, and Verapoly) were created, along with numerous other dioceses that were placed directly under the *Propaganda Fide* in Rome (Text 73). 1891 saw the installation of a regular church hierarchy in Japan, with a metropolitan in Tokyo and three suffragan bishops in Osaka, Nagasaki, and Hakodate. Korea was initially allocated to the Japanese province, but in 1894 it was separated and allocated to the Chinese region. In 1880, five regional synods were held for the first time in China (in Beijing, Shansi, Hankow, Szechuan, and Hong Kong); and from 1891 a representative of the Apostolic See had a residence in Peking (Beijing). Starting in the 1890s, the idea of a Chinese national synod was repeatedly discussed, but did not come about until 1924 because of French resistance.

These measures not only reduced earlier organizational deficits in the Catholic missions in 19th century Asia, they also strengthened the role of the Vatican missionary center – the *Congregatio De Propaganda Fide*. This, however, did not completely remove the rivalry with the traditional or new mission protectorates of the European colonial powers (such as that of the Portuguese in India and the French in China). But this competition was increasingly limited, or – as in the case of India – markedly reduced through clarification of areas of responsibility. At the same time these measures led to numerous innovations in Catholic education and other fields of church activity. Thus in 1893 a papal seminary for the training of new generations of indigenous priests in India, Burma, and Ceylon was founded in Kandy-Ampitiya (in present-day Sri Lanka). It still exists as a national seminary, having produced a remarkable number of Asian church leaders in the course of the 20th century.

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