

COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

FOR

Oriental Immigrants

By Secretary George Warren Hinman

"No clearer or more convincing word has been spoken on the subject We wish that it could be broadcasted over the whole land."—EDITOR CONGREGATIONALIST.

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ECONOMIC necessity has been responsible for many strange world contacts. The gold seekers in California sent to Chili for their wheat, to Hawaii for the education of their children and to China for a supply of laborers. Later on it was easy for California to develop a food supply at home and to call back her children to better schools, but her importation of men from Asia could not be disposed of so easily. The oft-repeated mistake of treating labor as a commodity has brought America problems in the South and the East as well as on the Pacific Coast. And one great function of The American Missionary Association has been to humanize relations with racial groups who are being exploited for their labor value.

Dr. Haynes in "The Trend of the Races" says: "It is very difficult to divide the problem of race from the economic problems." The reason is that economic exploitation or economic competition lies at the root of most of the race problems in this country or any other. "Any group which desires material advantages from the exploitation of another group" says Seligman in "The Negro Faces America", "always takes pains to characterize its victims as inferior." It is idle for Southern white men to say, as did a prominent denominational secretary recently, that the South does not seek to exploit the Negro. The selfish motive is often well hidden, glossed over with a very amiable attitude. But, as a matter of fact, most white people who are concerned with race questions are in two classes, those who profit by, or those who suffer from, the competition of cheap alien labor.

The scientific philanthropist must not merely relieve distress, but remove the cause. To do effective work in the solution of Oriental problems on the Pacific Coast, we must know why the Chinese and Japanese and Koreans and Hindus have come in such numbers, and adapt our missionary treatment to a real diagnosis of the disease. Practically the whole country is convinced that unrestricted Oriental immigration would be a serious menace to our national health, though few have been through the smoke screen of racial prejudice to the real interests that are threatened. These interests are economic interests, the standards of living of the

middle class farmer and artizan and merchant. These have been threatened by the unfair competition of a labor supply which has in the past been solicited and imported with as little thought of moral responsibility and social consequences as when you buy foreign goods before the tariff goes up.

But it is not the Chinese and Japanese who should be blamed for coming where their labor is eagerly sought at a much better price than it commands at home. At the height of the anti-Japanese agitation in California, a prominent newspaper attempted to develop public sentiment for importing tens of thousands of *Chinese* to meet the labor shortage. The delegate in Congress from Hawaii has been playing on anti-Japanese feeling to secure legislation allowing the importation of Chinese laborers. Chinese and Japanese laborers will normally obey the law of supply and demand and will come to Hawaii and California if we have no tariff laws against foreign labor as we have against foreign goods. But why is that to their discredit? Protection of American workers, equally with protection of American manufacturers, from the competition of either European or Asiatic labor, is probably essential to the maintenance of friendliness between America and the nations across either ocean. Let us not give the American people a pretext for using that form of mob violence, race prejudice, to secure a protection which they think the laws do not furnish. Our laws and agreements against importation of Oriental labor, both Chinese and Japanese, are in fact strong and well enforced, except where duplicity and greed of Americans weaken their efficiency. But lack of confidence in the protection which immigration laws should afford shows itself in a widespread hysteria of prejudice against Orientals.

It is only a year and a half since we restricted European immigration. The importation of Italians into the Southern states years ago aroused more bitter antagonism and more serious consequences than have ever been recorded against the Japanese on the Pacific Coast. The United States Government paid \$250,000 to Italy as indemnity for the lives of eleven Italians murdered in race riots. Just recently there have been violent race riots on account of the introduction of foreigners into Southern cotton mills. Neither Japanese nor Negroes were involved, yet results were much the same, indicating that race problems are to a large extent problems of alien competition. It was high time that American standards and ideals should be protected by the restriction of immigration, before patriotic citizens should be tempted to extra-legal measures of prejudice and violence. If men could have seen dispassionately the real issue involved in unrestricted immigration either from

Europe or Asia and included *all* foreign peoples under our three per cent immigration law, accepting the Oriental's only claim, that he should have equal treatment under our laws, we should not have had the anomalous situation to which Commissioner of Immigration Husband has called attention, namely, that the Chinese and Japanese are more favored than European nations through the exempt classes under the Chinese Exclusion Act and the Japanese Gentleman's Agreement.

But our present problem is not with those Orientals who have *not* come and who *will* not come if immigration laws are fairly and honestly enforced. It is a question of Christian responsibility for those who are actually here because of the law of demand and supply in the labor market. Does the employment of Chinese faithfulness and industry, of Japanese shrewdness and energy, in developing the great resources of the territory of Hawaii and the Pacific Coast involve no other obligation than the payment of the lowest wage required to hold the workers? Modern business organizations count on welfare work for their employes as a recognized part of the current costs of the enterprise. Still more clearly is it understood that the state must meet fixed charges to safeguard health, promote education and maintain the moral standards of its citizens, without distinction between voters and unnaturalized aliens. There is, however, a constant temptation to dodge these fixed charges of civilization in dealing with ignorant alien laborers. When these are further handicapped by a popular prejudice which regards them as coolies, or of an essentially different breed, "lesser breeds without the law," the state and the individual employer find no difficulty in ignoring such obligations. "You can get good work out of them, and you don't have to take care of them as you do for a white man." That is a characteristic attitude which is responsible for the social isolation of Oriental communities and careless disregard of their human rights and needs.

A few years ago an enthusiastic promoter conceived a great scheme for cotton raising in Arizona and appealed to your secretary to enlist thousands of Japanese laborers. He could hardly take seriously my insistence that twenty-five per cent of the capital invested in the enterprise should be assigned to proper housing and welfare work for the men. A letter came to my office recently from a good friend of the Association complaining that "your highly-educated Chinese (product of our A. M. A. missions) will not work as a domestic, but will of course go into the office, run an elevator or an auto, but going into the homes, never." The assumption that we are teaching the ideals of American Christianity to Chinese young men and women in our missions and our public schools

in order that they may be better domestic servants or laundrymen would be amusing if it did not imply an attitude of mind which has given to the new anti-Christian movement in China one of its strongest weapons. Christianity is being denounced by Chinese student groups as a tool of capitalists to exploit ignorance and helplessness. We must confess with shame that it has been easy to value a man's *work* more than his development of character and life, especially if he be of an alien race.

Co-operation for mutual economic advantage, between races as between individuals, is a perfectly justifiable and necessary condition of satisfactory relations, of those pleasurable contacts in the face of which, Dr. Haynes says, race prejudices decay and die. Our A. M. A. missions for Orientals do not ignore economic conditions. There are employment agencies in connection with all our Chinese and Japanese churches. The members help each other to find work and are able to earn money to pay a considerable part of their own church expenses. As a result, we have gone farther than any other mission board in developing self-supporting churches among Chinese and Japanese in the United States. Our A. M. A. missions are not run with the idea of pauperizing the Orientals in religion and then exploiting them in business. But this mission policy, even if followed by all mission boards, would not be enough. There must be a change in the national attitude.

As a nation we have admitted into the United States (not including Hawaii) during the last seventy years nearly half a million Asiatics. Only a quarter of that number are left and the numbers of Chinese and Hindus are steadily decreasing. The nation has profited financially by the industry, economy and self-restraint of the Oriental immigrants. The wealth they have produced for us and for themselves is very large in the aggregate and the expense of government on their account much less than for most other alien groups. We have left them very largely to their own methods of social direction and group control. But this very fact, this indifference to the conditions of segregated Oriental communities, has bred a suspicion and a racial prejudice which is likely to overbalance all the economic benefits from Oriental labor in the United States. This public indifference to any but the economic aspects of our relations with Oriental immigrants has been only slightly mitigated by a few Christian missions which often substituted patronage for exploitation with little better results.

Most of those who dislike the Chinese and Japanese would cordially agree that we are likely in the end to get more harm than good out of the cheap labor supply provided by the Oriental immigrants. But they

do not see that it is their own fault, the fault of their selfish attitude in the matter, not the fault of the Orientals. We can change the balance to the credit side, however, if in a large and adequate way, we accept, even at this late day, the social responsibility of the federal, state and local governments and of every religious and every civil agency which is, in fact, implied when an immigrant is admitted through Ellis Island or through Angel Island. There is an inescapable moral obligation which we owe to every immigrant not alone individually as Christians, but collectively as citizens, and it has never been properly recognized toward the Orientals in America.

Our public schools have generally met their obligation to the children of Oriental immigrants as they have to those of immigrants from Europe. In two cities of California, public school authorities are actively co-operating with A. M. A. missions in educational work for Orientals. And yet public school facilities for Oriental immigrants are generally inadequate. The fine Chinese public school in San Francisco does actually provide accommodation for only about half of the Chinese of school age. Almost every other obligation of a government to its people except education has been slighted toward the Oriental immigrants. For the older Oriental in America "the blessings of a Christian civilization" mean almost nothing except a chance to make more money. The police supervision of Chinese communities is notorious. The Chinatown squad is changed frequently and usually retires with a large harvest while "tong" murders continue and respectable Chinese are afraid to utter a public protest knowing that their savings and their lives are in danger. Conditions at the immigration station at Angel Island, San Francisco, are physically much better than in former years, but the handling of Orientals, coming and going, still is more like the methods of a penitentiary than an Americanization class.

There have been only a few ineffective investigations through civic agencies of sanitary and vice conditions in the various Oriental communities and very little interest in such studies since the Chinese don't or can't effectively protest against the conditions under which they live. The Associated Charities, with practical control of state aid funds in California, has apparently made no sympathetic investigation of social conditions in Chinatown. The Juvenile Courts and the Probation officers bring to the Presbyterian Mission Home in San Francisco and to its heroic superintendent, Miss Cameron, the cases of delinquent Chinese boys and girls, and beg the missions to provide homes for orphans and half orphans of Chinese. The Japanese are very generally providing by their own

agencies for their dependent children. There is scarcely a state or private institution for dependent American children which will do anything for Chinese or Japanese. The state and the community seem quite ready to shunt all responsibility upon mission boards. That admirable plan of Americanization launched by the California Commission on Immigration and Housing entirely ignored the Chinese and Japanese. Its poster, "Advice to Immigrants", in a dozen different languages, did not include the Chinese or the Japanese, though many large banks issue special circulars in those languages to get the Oriental business. In fact the modern Americanization movement, in every part of our country, seems to have entirely overlooked the Oriental immigrants.

Thus the Chinese and Japanese have been compelled to fall back on the restraints and traditions of their own Oriental civilization, and have organized national associations for the protection and control of their own people. These, however, have finally given way before the indifference of the American community, and the tyranny of the fighting and gambling "tongs" has come to dominate the Oriental communities instead of the ideals of American government. Japanese in California have had to petition American municipal authorities to close Chinese gambling houses. One of the finest of the smaller cities of California, with an unusually strong and advanced community spirit, tolerates in its suburbs one of the most squalid and disgraceful Chinatowns I have ever seen.

These conditions will not be adequately met until the educational and moral uplift of Orientals in America is regarded as a positive community responsibility, not as a casual opportunity for missionary societies or philanthropic individuals to do good work and accumulate merit. That is a Buddhist notion, not a Christian one. Is there any good reason why Americanizing and Christianizing work for the large and distinct Oriental groups in Pacific Coast cities should not have equal recognition with the work of the Y. M. and Y. W. C. A.'s and the Salvation Army as a definite community obligation for which the people of the city, and not some denominational mission board, are largely responsible? From the pioneer beginnings of A. M. A. work for Orientals, our veteran missionary, Dr. Pond, always emphasized the idea of local responsibility. But later the division of the work among a large number of mission boards, operating with little relation to one another, and often competitively in the same community, supplied an excuse for ignoring civic responsibility for the Oriental groups.

In the San Francisco Bay Region, the largest center of Chinese population, twelve thousand or more, fifteen Protestant organizations and one Catholic carry on work for the Chinese, reaching perhaps one-half of the population more or less effectively, but so completely occupying the field as to discourage any thought of new civic agencies with a comprehensive social program for the Chinese. Coincidentally, nine Chinese fighting tongs dominate the Chinese community by the terror of their gunmen, protecting their members in gambling, smuggling opium and importing slave girls and other Chinese contract laborers. With the aid of unscrupulous American lawyers, many of them in high position, but not hesitating to take retaining fees from the worst of the tongs, these organizations regularly bring ignorant and helpless boys and girls from China contrary to our immigration laws and exploit their labor for the enrichment of their masters; hard-working Chinese from the country districts and inland cities are fleeced or blackmailed when they come to San Francisco, and American sight-seeing companies join with conscienceless Chinese in stirring up the curiosity of tourists by parading and exaggerating the disgraceful social conditions in Chinatown.

One needs the burning words of a Hebrew prophet to challenge the misdirected effort of these sixteen Christian organizations working for Chinese in the San Francisco Bay Region, with their \$650,000 worth of property and their \$75,000 expended each year, employing 105 persons and enrolling over five thousand adherents, yet without any comprehensive social program or any considerable influence upon the civic or even the religious life of the great cities of San Francisco and Oakland to persuade them to accept proper community responsibility for this section of their population.

The Chinese church itself, established in ten different denominational branches in the San Francisco Region, stands practically helpless before social conditions of tong terrorism and blackmail, unrebuked vice and exploitation, which would hardly be tolerated in any city of China. The reason for its helplessness is that it has been taught to serve denominational interests rather than community interests, and has frequently been pauperized instead of being trained for its task of the social salvation of its community.

There is abundant evidence to show that any church or group of churches, with a spirit of union and with vision and leadership, can secure from its community abundant co-operation in a program of social betterment. But long-continued effort has not yet succeeded in uniting the

missionary forces working for Chinese in the San Francisco Bay Region even for their limited program of elementary educational work. Separate night schools and day schools and kindergartens and Chinese language schools must be maintained to recruit the denominational Sunday Schools and churches. "Some other mission will get our children", if we do not duplicate every attraction that is offered by another denomination. And when members are received into the Chinese churches these churches are so hampered in their control of their buildings and activities by the paternalism of the mission boards that they develop little initiative even when their leaders do get together to consider common interests.

At the present time a proposal by the Home Missions Council's committee seeking to unify the educational and social work of the mission boards in the San Francisco Bay Region is held up because the individual boards are not yet ready to authorize action on what they have accepted in principle, and because the Chinese churches are not free to plan and dispose their equipment and their work for what they are slowly coming to see are the best interests of the community. Should we not learn from the action of the National Christian Conference in Shanghai that the Chinese Christians can be and must be trusted in plans for the future of their work? Without the development of a community spirit under Chinese Christian leadership demanding for the Chinese community the accepted standards of American civilization, and a broad-visioned co-operative policy on the part of the mission boards, there is little hope that the San Francisco Bay communities will recognize any general civic responsibility for the betterment of conditions in their Chinatowns.

The local community cannot, however, be held wholly responsible. There is a national responsibility absolutely involved in our admission of Oriental laborers during those years before the Geary law and the Gentlemen's Agreement, and in meeting this national responsibility the mission boards must be leaders and prophets. The American Missionary Association in its Oriental Missions accepts this function of showing the way to a general recognition and acceptance of community obligation.

Of primary importance to secure this result is a careful social survey, indicating the lines of a needed social program which shall offer all that is necessary for the Christianization and Americanization of the Orientals in every community where there is any considerable group. There has been much propaganda for and against the Oriental in America, and some discussion of their economic value to the country, but little scientific study of the Christian social problem which their residence here involves.

Until this summer there was no detailed survey of even the work now being done by mission boards for the Chinese and Japanese through which one might study the adequacy and efficiency of the work and the problem of a proper distribution of mission agencies. There were found to be mission boards so blind to the idea of community responsibility for the Oriental immigrants that they declined to furnish the public with statistics of their work and their financial outlay. They appeared to regard their methods of work and their expenditures as a matter concerning only their denominational interests and no concern of competing denominations and the general public. It is this attitude which explains public apathy in the face of our Americanization problems.

The first edition of the Oriental Missions Directory shows that sixteen mission boards working for Chinese on the Pacific Coast with an annual expenditure of \$100,000 and buildings worth \$800,000, had only seven thousand adherents out of 35,000 Chinese west of the Rockies. Eighteen mission boards working for Japanese on the Pacific Coast use \$115,000 a year and property worth nearly a million and count 8,000 adherents out of a hundred thousand Japanese in that district. Only 20% of the Chinese and less than 8% of the Japanese are reached even by the very limited program of the mission boards, though at a cost of about \$15 a year and \$120 in buildings for every Chinese and Japanese church member and school pupil reported by the missions.

The work of the mission boards is thus seen to be utterly inadequate in reaching the whole of the Oriental population in the Pacific District, albeit the competitive crowding of missions into San Francisco is likely to discredit the work needing to be done for the unreached 80% of Chinese and 92% of Japanese. It is extremely doubtful whether the unassimilated Oriental communities scattered all through the Pacific District can ever be Christianized and Americanized unless the mission boards abandon their denominational emphasis and narrow vision and lead their supporters in every church to an acceptance of local community responsibility for the Chinese and Japanese residing there. This might be a harder job, but it would be vastly more effective than making large appropriations for denominational mission work.

The American Missionary Association will be satisfied with nothing less than a community program for Orientals in America directed by the Christian spirit to meet all the social needs of these Oriental groups which we have admitted and allowed to settle in our country. This program must co-ordinate all the present missionary activities of the many denominational boards and join with them, in harmonious co-

operation, the Americanization committees, the Associated Charities and all the ordinary social agencies. It must include the public schools, especially public night schools for adult immigrants, in non-competitive adjustments with our mission educational work, police, sanitary and housing control for the Oriental communities, carried on in a spirit of Christian service instead of the graft which usually fattens upon their civic helplessness.

An adequate missionary program for Orientals in America must also include aggressive campaigns against the tongs and the gambling dens as the Christian church fought the saloon in American social life; we must uncover and suppress that distinctively Chinese form of the social evil, the trade in slave girls. The A. M. A. has no rescue work for these unfortunates as do the Presbyterian and Methodist boards. Our special contribution must be arousing public sentiment for prevention rather than cure. Many new lines of activity are required for an adequate program of Oriental missions, some of them conditioned on the co-operation of the local community and some on whole-hearted co-operation between the mission boards. Proper hospital and amusement facilities for Oriental communities would do much to correct unsanitary and vicious conditions. Band concerts, community singing, with playgrounds and gymnasiums for young and old, would crowd out gambling dens and discount the attractions of the tong club house. Mission boards should co-operate in sending out traveling evangelists, preaching to the scattered groups of Orientals in their own language, and selling Bibles and Christian literature.

Mission work among Orientals at ports of entry is an almost unoccupied field. The Y. W. C. A. has a port worker for Japanese at San Francisco, but there is no one for the Chinese. Only an American who can speak the language of the immigrant can do this work. The government has many thousands employed in the effort to control Oriental immigration on the Pacific Coast, but there are only 350 persons all told employed in the Oriental missions for the Christian Americanization of those who are admitted. Immigration inspectors are constantly on the watch against the smuggling of Chinese and Japanese across the borders of Canada and Mexico. We find that the Oriental newspapers, banks and large merchants have close and extensive contacts with the Orientals in these neighboring countries. Should not our Oriental missions also seek such contacts, since many of these immigrants have been influenced by mission work in their home land, and would be glad to receive Christian publications and occasional visits from leaders of the Chinese and

Japanese churches in the United States? A missionary of the American Board in Mexico urges your secretary to make a survey and plan Christian work among the thousands of Chinese on the west coast of Mexico, who are almost as accessible for our work as the Japanese in Washington and Utah.

Buddhist temples for Japanese and Taoist temples for Chinese located in various American cities are frequently mentioned as evidence that the Oriental will always be an alien element in our civilization. These temples exist largely because the Oriental does not feel welcome to our religious and cultural opportunities. National associations among the Chinese and Japanese, Chinese and Japanese language schools and newspapers are not primarily efforts to perpetuate alien traditions in America. They are the Oriental's only recourse when he is shut out from real participation in the life of the American community. Many Chinese and Japanese children, born in this country, forget the language of their parents. But, debarred from full participation in American life, they turn to their parents' language and their national interests as the only adequate field for their activity. They will not be satisfied with the limited economic opportunities offered them in American life even at the risk of appearing disloyal to the land which gave them an education and ambition to be of service.

And yet the Japanese Associations are spending large sums on Americanization campaigns among their own people and are inviting American missionaries to be their official advisors. Many Japanese are earnestly considering the question of the complete Americanization of the American-born Japanese. I have recently had a letter from the secretary of a very important Japanese Association asking for suggestions as to how he might launch a great movement for the American-born Japanese boys and girls. But a community indifferent or hostile to the assimilation of these new Americans would be a very serious obstacle to his altruistic purposes. Only when the influence of the church has led the community to accept responsibility for all its people irrespective of race or color will this secretary's generous plan have a fair chance of success.

An adequate program for Orientals in America means a sincere effort at assimilation by the American community, with the assurance that those who have become American in spirit shall be treated as Americans. Immigrants from China and Japan must not be regarded as seasonal laborers for whom we assume no other obligation than the minimum wage necessary to hold them during a brief stay, much less

their children born in America. To *them* the community and the nation owes the same obligation as to the descendants of the Pilgrims.

Missions for Orientals should aim definitely at a Christian social group, self-dependent and conscious of social obligations to its community whether American or Oriental, eager for fellowship with Americans in a mutual sharing of American ideals. We find that Japanese and Chinese on the Pacific Coast in spite of the aloofness of most Americans are eager to take their full share in any community enterprise. In Riverside, California, where the Japanese mission is generally accepted as a community interest, the Japanese have contributed liberally to the cost of the new community hospital. The Chinese Christians are no longer content to be cared for and protected by mission superintendents against extortion and persecution. They realize the shame of social conditions in the typical Chinatown. One came to me willing and offering to risk his life if the black hand of the tongs could be lifted from the San Francisco Chinese community.

This aim of our Oriental missions cannot be realized except as the community generally, under the influences of a prophetic message of community responsibility, offers to Orientals, as to all other aliens lawfully admitted, every opportunity and every protection afforded by American civilization. The American Missionary Association has been engaged for seventy-five years in a crusade of brotherhood. Never more than now is it called to proclaim a gospel of brotherhood and to press home on its constituency no mere appeal for more money, but a frank acceptance of personal and community responsibility, bringing into full fellowship and brotherhood the Orientals in America equally with all other aliens who come to us. Neighborliness to Orientals in the community, a national policy toward them dictated by intelligent good will, a faith in the assimilative power of friendly contacts,—these must be stimulated and developed in our American churches quite as much as their gifts. Long distance support of Oriental missions will not answer. It pays better, in the end, to create these attitudes in our Christian churches for the missionary's personal message is constantly being discounted by the attitude of an unfriendly community.

That early mayor of San Francisco who said to the Chinese residents, "You will yet study in the same schools, vote at the same polls and bow at the same altars as our own countrymen" had a faith in Americanism which later generations have largely lost. His statement implied an acceptance of community responsibility for that great influx of Oriental

aliens which was never actually carried out. We have accomplished magnificent results with individuals in the Oriental Missions of the A. M. A. We shall not be satisfied without a Christianization of the community life of the Oriental groups, and an acceptance by American communities of definite responsibility for those Orientals whom we have admitted and their children born in America.

