Far East Religions Gaining in Stature

Recent meetings of church position at one time or another. to save their souls from hellfire. the great impoverishment of the often called Zen Buddhism Two of the chief advocates of theme that Christian with the it is presenty opposed, viewed The mission of a Christian in a Christian heritage." theme that Christian Churches with suspicion or, at best, con-non-Christian society should be in the East have come of age. sidered "foreign" by the govern- to make Christ clear through He asked the Western relation to Buddhism is largely That have a come of age. sidered "foreign" by the govern- to make Christ clear through He asked the Western relation to Buddhism is largely the through the society should be

They have passed beyond the ment and a large part of the his way of life, his love and his Churches to make an effort to a matter of historic accident. ders, Dom Aedred Graham, 0.P., "mission" stage toward a great population in all but a few of motivation, the Jesuit said. Such appreciate "the spiritual riches Although many of its expreser employment of indigenous these countries. forms and styles with less cul-tural dependency on Western The degree of governmental willingness to respect other, reor social opposition varies. It is ligious traditions. parent Churches.

almost non-existent in Japan,

an approach, he observed, will and treasures of non-Christian sions reflect the Buddhist cul-take "a lot of dialogue" and a religious and cultures." ture in which it developed, Zen Catholicism," and the Trappist

A beginning has already been men of varied religious beliefs poet, Thomas (Father Louis) Merton, who died last week. made toward such appreciation, and even by atheists.

At the same time, more than almost total in Communist In the past, he said, "Christ even among Catholics who have one religious thinker in the China. Between these extremes, janity, the religion of man, came been considered traditionally It is not a theology but a Father Merton, a student of West has been suggesting that India is the scene of the most to be identified with one of the least hospitable to "outside" re-mode of perception, sometimes Zen, for years, had been writing Christianity should approach vocal and widespread criticism faces of man, the white race; in ligious ideas. called a "way of liberation" essays on the subject since the Eastern religions not merely in of Christians, particularly of this way ancient and highly dea missionary spirit but in an missionaries, and some state veloped cultures were excluded The Eastern system that has thought patterns (including reg- them in a new book, "Zen and attempt to add its own know-governments have passed re- from making their contribution had the most impact on the ular logic) which are considered the Birds of Appetite" (New

ledge and perceptions. strictive laws. Similar opposi- to the patrimony of Christ, to West in recent years is Zen-distortions of reality. Directions).

Numerous incidents indicate very intense, seems to have died both the growth and the accli-down. matization of Christianity in the

Orient. In Japan, the number of OUnder social, cultural and Christians approach the mil-sometimes political pressure, lion mark, almost one per cent most Christian Churches in the of the total population. East have made vigorous efforts

In India, a new, indigenous as possible with the local cul-Roman Catholic religious wom-ture. With few exceptions, the leadership of the Churches is to identify themselves as much strikingly different from those now native. In some dioceses, of most Catholic nuns and one Catholic and Anglican, the first that has immediate significance native bishop has been installed to Indians of any faith - the within the last few years. bright saffron robes traditional-

Sometimes the appointment of ly associated with Hindu and Buddhist holy men. native leadership has been a

Oriental ideas of color have in Red China, where all foreign Oriental ideas of color nave in Red China, where an iorega-had another impact in Hong missionaries have been im-kong, where the Chinese color prisoned or expelled and con-symbolism prevails and white tact with the outside world is means mourning, red a mar-almost totally cut off. But even riage. These have been adopted when it is not done in response. now in Catholic Church liturgy to political pressure, the estab-

At the Asia-South Pacific Congress on Evangelism in Sing-apore, Wee Hian Chua, assistant general secretary of the Ver

general secretary of the Inter The feeling is widespread that national Fellowship of Evan the function of the missions, if gelical Students of Hong Kong, not ended, is at least changed. noted that Christianity has not Emphasis is growing on social yet convinced one billion young action and development aid people in Asia. If it is to do so, through the missions and on he said, it must not slavishly dialogue rather than one-way ad-opt Western methodologies. |evangelism, with the represen-

Most Asians reject Christian. ity as a Western religion, Wee said. "This means that we must communicate the method.

communicate the unchanging Christianity must escape from Gospel in the thought-patterns its static veiw of God and of and culture-forms of our own physical reality "governed by nation." the Aristotelian concepts of

Only a few generalizations are possible in discussing an area that includes India, Burma, Cey-lon, Indonesia, North and South Vietnam, China, Korea, and Ja-pan, But the similarities in the

pan. But the similarities in the He said, in a debate on conlife of Christians there are version, that there is no theo-significant. Prevailing conditions logical validity in trying to con-and trends include the following: vert Hindus or Moslems in order

•Throughout the region, Christianity remains a relatively small part of the population. CATHOLICS,

•It exists amid ancient, well- EPISCOPALIANS MEET

developed cultures which are Kansas City, Mo. — (NC) usually dominated by one or Kansas City, Mo. - (NC) -more of the major Eastern re Official representatives of the ligious: Islam, Buddhism, Hin. U.S. Catholic bishops and of the Anglican (Episcopal) Church durism, Shinto and Taoism. in the U.S. held their sixth ofCourier-Journal - Friday, Dec. 20, 1969



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The customs, thought pat ficial dialogue meeting at a reterns and basic outlook of these treat house near here. cultures generally have a strik. The principal subject discus-ing difference from the West sed by the group was reportedern ideas, based largly on Greek ly the role of the bishop and philosophy, which are the chief the structure of the church, as conceptual vocabulary of Christ-viewed by the two denominations. However, details of the iamity.

•In virtually all of the coun-presentations and the nature of tries in question, Christianity the discussion were not dishas met firm government op-closed.

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