

## On Charitable Enterprise in Europe and America

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*Translator's note:*

*The essays in Jotoku ronsō were intended for young women, and are therefore written in what was then simple and direct language. Other topics in the volume include education, literature and art. The cream of late Meiji intellectual society contributed, including Okuma Shigenobu, Masaki Naohiko (head of Tokyo School of Fine Arts), and Mizukuri Genpachi (historian of the Western world). Shibusawa's contribution, although appearing to be a simple travelogue, offers insight into his perception as philanthropy as a natural outgrowth of business. He also touches on many debates about social welfare that continue until this day, including the effect of poverty on crime, whether prisons should be about punishment or reform and whether responsibility for poverty lies in the individual or society.*

I recently made a visit to Europe and America, the main purpose of which was to try and observe commerce and industry. However, I also was able to visit some charitable enterprises and will relate a glimpse of them so that they might serve as reference for you.

### AMERICA'S CHARITABLE ENTERPRISE

I will begin from America. New York could be called the capital, the commerce and industry being on the grandest scale of anywhere in the country. Three or four *ri*<sup>1</sup> distant is a place called Philadelphia where there is a school called Girard College.<sup>2</sup> College is like *daigaku* in Japanese, and Girard is a person's name. In other words, a person named Girard<sup>3</sup> founded the school in 1878.<sup>4</sup> This Girard was a Frenchman who emigrated to America at the age of 15 or 16 and became a man of wealth. Because he had no wife or children<sup>5</sup>, he desired that upon his death all of his personal wealth be used for an educational institution for the poor people of Philadelphia and bequeathed the funds necessary to invest in this project. The endowment for this project was 6,850,000 dollars, or 13,600,000 if we convert it to yen. The school was the result of investing the entirety of this enormous fortune for the education of the poor. At present as many as 1630 students are accepted there. The building is similarly grand. America is a place where land values are very high so even that as a rule even very few millionaires have big mansions. Nevertheless

<sup>1</sup> 1 ri is equal to about 2.44 miles. The distance between New York and Philadelphia is actually about 95 miles.

<sup>2</sup> Still operating in northern Philadelphia.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Girard (1750-1831). Emigrated to Philadelphia in 1776. He kept America solvent after the War of 1812 and was the wealthiest man of his time.

<sup>4</sup> This is a mistake. The first students were enrolled 1848.

<sup>5</sup> He had a wife, Mary Lum (1758-1815), who was committed to a mental institution and predeceased him. He also had several mistresses

the campus of this college is very big.<sup>6</sup> The auditorium, dormitory, classrooms, factories, etc. are all grand and well appointed and the teaching is kind and attentive. The students are taught from six or seven into their twenties and



when they grow older than that, they are put to work in various jobs until they can stand on their own two feet. Furthermore, a military education is provided for those who desire one. The instructors for this are active military personnel. Just when I was visiting this school, I witnessed their war games and such and they were impressive. In any case, if there is enough capital this enterprise can be magnificent. There are many other relief enterprises in America but I have just described one that I personally witnessed.

In Germany all efforts are expended on a workers society and labor protection laws are very complete. The charitable

enterprises, like those of the famous iron manufacturer Mr. Krupp,<sup>7</sup> is mainly the construction of boarding houses where many laborers are accommodated and the low rent is deducted from their wages. The surplus of their salaries might be put into savings in some suitable method, in view of encouraging them to prepare for the future. Those boarding houses are just like a town; they have schools, churches and clubs. The houses are constructed like tenements [*nagaya*] but the divisions are 9 *shaku* or 6 *shaku*.<sup>8</sup> However if the person is elderly, the pension system is used and that person is looked after until they die. Moreover, those who are widowed or orphaned are appropriately supported, etc. and there is not a single point to criticize. Therefore workers can engage in their business with complete peace of mind. The German Emperor<sup>9</sup> generally praises these enterprises. He once visited them and after observing the various kinds of clubs, he appraised the kind of foods that the workers ate and then he just took the lid off a pot that was cooking and looked at the food, and at the same time, the Crown Prince took the lid off of a small pot. Well, these

**Figure 1 Main Building of Girard College ca. 1900. Collection of the Library of Congress**

large and small pot lids, having been by the hands of the Emperor and the Crown Prince, decorated the room

to commemorate the honor.

<sup>6</sup> 44 acres

<sup>7</sup> This was probably Fredrich Alfred Krupp (1854-1902).

<sup>8</sup> One shaku is slightly less than a foot.

<sup>9</sup> Wilhem II (r. 1888-1918)

## Charitable Enterprise in England

My sojourn in England was short so I regrettably wasn't able to closely observe much. In London, many of the workers live in East London. In this area there is something called the Alexandra Trust<sup>10</sup> which is a place that supplies food to workers at the cheapest price. When artisans and the like want something a little tastier than on regular days, they often go to this place. It is a system where a ticket for just what would convert to six or seven yen and take it to this place to eat well, which is a comfort from their daily labors. It is said that when Edward VII, who had his coronation ceremony during my trip, was still the Prince of Wales, he would sometimes come to this place and eat soup with the poor. All of English poor laws have an individualistic tendency, and this one thing should be understood, even people who receive relief, are much more appreciative of receiving the payment for one of these than of receiving things. This is probably because this respects the feelings on both sides and the receiver does not feel like a beggar.



Figure 2 Alexandra Trust Dining Hall. Rodney Burton [CC-BY-SA-2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons

## FRANCE'S REFORM ENTERPRISE

In France reform enterprises are well developed and there are many kinds but I heard that one of the most famous is Mettray.<sup>11</sup> Because the train schedules did not fit mine, I was unable to go but about two *ri* from Paris there is a reformatory called Gaillon and I was able to visit there.<sup>12</sup> Tokyo's orphanages have a reform section and I have always thought that this business must be handled with a great deal of care. When people suffer misfortune, because of their unfortunate circumstances, and at last exert great change through sheer will, often will fall into even worse circumstances. People like what are colloquially called *kapparai* [purse snatcher or sneak thief], begin with a good reputation and may or may not have an evil nature, but circumstances cause that nature to change, bringing forth an evil nature and a fall into misfortune and for that reason they should be reformed while they are still young. In France's reformatories, boys can be locked up from the age of six, and released by the age of twenty. Gaillon can house 300, with attention to housing and vocation.

<sup>10</sup> Alexandra Trust Dining Rooms were founded in 1898 through the philanthropy of Thomas Lipton. Located at 136-144 City Road London. Many tourists to London would stop by here to observe the efficient serving process. The building currently houses a restaurant.

<sup>11</sup> Founded in 1840. Until then juvenile offenders were incarcerated with adults.

<sup>12</sup> In Normandy.



Above I have examined how the four commercially advanced countries, America, Germany, England and France, are also advanced in the development of their charitable enterprises. No matter how prosperous a country is originally, no matter how beautiful the city, there are always poor people. Therefore, for enterprises to prosper, each part of the city represents the whole. In retrospect, the educational enterprises of our country are equal to those of the above four countries. Indeed, as far as I know the progress on labor issues and charitable enterprises I believe is much more significant.

*Translated by Martha Chaiklin*

Figure 3 Chapter-end graphic from original text



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