Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples
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2. Closed social nexus, rejection of universalist culture
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WAYS OF THINKING OF EASTERN PEOPLES: INDIA-CHINA-TIBET-JAPAN

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CHAPTER 34 THE ACCEPTANCE OF PHENOMENALISM

The Phenomenal World as Absolute

In the first place, we should notice that the Japanese are willing to accept the phenomenal world as Absolute because of their disposition to lay a greater emphasis upon intuitive sensible concrete events, rather than upon universals. This way of thinking with emphasis upon the fluid, arresting character of observed events regards the phenomenal world itself as Absolute and rejects the recognition of anything existing over and above the phenomenal world. What is widely known among post-Meiji philosophers in the last century as the "theory that the phenomenal is actually the real" has a deep root in Japanese tradition.

It was characteristic of the religious views of the ancient Japanese that they believed spirits to reside in all kinds of things. They personified all kinds of spirits other than those of human beings, considering them all as ancestral gods, and tending to view every spirit as a divine ghost. It is such a turn of thought that gave birth to the Shintō shrines, for in order to perform religious ceremonies the gods and spirits were fixed in certain specified places. The most primitive form of this practice consists in the invocation and worship of spirits in some specific natural objects, e.g., mountain, river, forest, tree, or stone. Forms of worship of ancient times were generally of this character. Herein also lies the original significance of the "divine hedge" and "rock boundary." Even to this day there remain shrines that are merely of this type.[1]

This way of thinking runs through the subsequent history of Shintoism down to the present day. "Nowhere is there a shadow in which a god does not reside: in peaks, ridges, pines, cryptomerias, mountains, rivers, seas, villages, plains, and fields, everywhere there is a god. We can receive the constant and intimate help of these spirits in our tasks, many courtiers are passing."[2] Takasumi Senge, the priest of the Shintoism of the Great Shrine of Izumo, praised such a pantheistic point of view as follows: "There is no place in which a god does not reside, even in the wild waves' eight hundred folds or in the wild mountain's bosom."[3]

Buddhist philosophy likewise was received and assimilated on the basis of this way of thinking. To begin with, the Tendai sect in Japan is not the same as in China. The Tendai scholars in medieval Japan, using the same nomenclature as that used in continental Buddhism, arrived at a system of thought that is distinctly original. This is what is called *Honkaku Hōmon* which asserts that the appearances of things in the phenomenal world are aspects of the Buddha. The word *Honkaku* or Enlightenment appears in the Chinese translation of the *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda-śāstra* (*Daijyōkishinron*), a Buddhist theological work, originally composed in India. On the Asian continent, the word for enlightenment meant the ultimate comprehension of what is beyond the phenomenal world, whereas in Japan the same word was brought down to refer to understanding things within the phenomenal world. In this way, the characteristic feature of Tendai Buddhism in Japan consists in emphasis upon things rather than principles. The Japanese Tendai scholars were not very faithful to the original texts of the Chinese T'ien-t'ai, but sometimes interpreted the original texts in a rather unnatural way, their interpretation being based upon the standpoint of Absolute Phenomenalism.[4]

The Japanese esteem the sensible beauties of nature, in which they seek revelations of the absolute world.

"Cherry blossoms, falling in vain,
Remind me of the Treasure plants,
That adorn paradise."[36]

There is no inkling of a view that regards the natural world as cursed or gruesome. Dōgen says: "There are many thousands of worlds comparable to the sūtras within a single spade of dust. Within a single dust there are innumerable Buddhas. A single stalk of grass and a single tree are both the mind and body (of us and Buddhas)."[37]

Relevant to such an idea was the conception prevalent in medieval Japan that even grass and trees have spirits and consequently are eligible for salvation. The idea that even the things of "no-heart" (the objects of nature that have no spirits) can become Buddhas, based upon the Tendai doctrines, was particularly emphasized in Japan. This constituted an important theme for study in the Japanese Tendai sect, and the idea was inherited also by the Nichiren (1222–1282) sect.[38] Nichiren sought the superiority of the Hokke (Lotus) Sūtra in its recognition of the eligibility of the grass and the trees to become Buddhas. There appear time and again among the Japanese Buddhist writings the following lines: "When a Buddha, who has attained enlightenment, looks around the universe, the grass, trees, and lands, all become Buddhas."[39] In *"Noh"* songs we often come across such an idea which was taken for granted socially and religiously in those days. "The voice of Buddhahood of such a holy priest makes even the grass and trees predestined to become Buddhas . . . . Even the grass and trees have attained the effect of becoming Buddhas being led by the power that mankind is bound to be reborn into the Pure Land only if they invoke the Buddha's name and practice *nembutsu* prayer . . . . Had it not been for the teachings of Buddhahood, the spirit of the decayed willow tree which is impermanent and soulless would not have attained the Buddhahood." (*"Yugyō Yanagi."*) The "Noh" song, *"Kochō"* (Butterflies), relates the story of an insect becoming a Buddha owing to the power of the Hokke Sūtra; *"Kakitsubata"* (Iris), *"Yugyō Zakura"* (The Cherry Tree of the Itinerant), *"Fuji"* (Wisteria), and *"Bashō"* (The Banana Tree) decribe the grass and trees becoming Buddhas; and *"Sesshō Seki"* (The Stone Destroying Life) is about the stone becoming a Buddha by being given a holy robe and bowl. More recently, a *jōruri* (a ballad drama) called *"Sanjūsangendō Munagi no Yurai"* has for its main theme a story of a willow tree becoming a Buddha, based upon the religious faith of the Jōdo-shin sect.

men, rather than hostile to them? This seems to account only in part for the prevalence of the characteristic thought tendency of the Japanese to take the phenomenal world as absolute.

This-Worldliness

While religions of the world very often tend to regard this world as the land of impurity and the other world as the blessed land of purity where one seeks the Heaven of eternal happiness, primitive Shintoism recognizes the intrinsic value of life in this world. Each one of the Japanese people is considered a descendant of gods and goddesses. In primitive Shintoism, one can find no profound reflections either upon the soul or upon death.

The ancient Japanese called the soul *"tama."* Man's *tama* can function independently of his body, and assist in the achievement of his work. Various ideas about *tama* are nothing more than expositions of its utility in worldly enterprises. One's *tama* is supposed to remain in this world and to continue functioning after one's death, and essentially no distinction is drawn between the states of one's *tama* before and after death.[43]

In Japanese mythology, nothing is said about the future world. Indeed, there was an idea expressed that after one's death, one goes to the land of the night, a dark place supposedly located underground. When one dies, one is naturally buried underground and there is a common belief in every country that there exists a Hades. And it is also natural that death is universally abhorred. But it appears that the ancient Japanese expressed little fear of death, and rarely worried about life after death. Japanese mythology as a whole is attached to this world and makes much of this life.[44] Consequently, such a metaphysical concept as *karma* or moral law of cause and effect (i.e., post-mortem rewards for good deeds and punishment for bad ones) is lacking. They regarded death as impurity, and enjoyed solely the life of this world.

As far as this-worldliness itself is concerned, the Chinese religions of Confucianism and Taoism are also rightly called "this-worldly." Even the Zen sect is touched with its influence. In the case of the Japanese, primitive Shintoism alone was mingled with animism, Shamanism, and the tendency to attach great importance to a limited social nexus, so that this-worldliness in Japan came to assume a number of deviations and variations.

Once men became conscious of philosophical or metaphysical doubts, however, they could no longer rest assured with such easy-going religious faith. They felt an internal urge to search into some deeper truth about men. It was in an answer to such spiritual demands that Buddhism flowed into Japan. It was only natural, when Buddhism was introduced to Japan, that there were those who rejected it and those who supported it.

Unconditional Belief in a Limited Human Nexus

On the whole (allowing always for a minority of exceptions to our generalizations), Indians regard man as the subjective performer on a metaphysical stage, while peoples of the Western Hemisphere have, from ancient times, inclined to be more empirical; in both cultures, however, men is regarded as possessing potentialities of universal significance. Most Japanese, on the other hand, tend to look upon man as a being subordinated to a specific and limited human nexus; they conceive him in terms of his relations to a circumscribed society.

Thus a human event, in this way of thinking, is not a purely personal event but an event having some value and emotional significance in a narrowly given sphere of social relations. This characteristic way of thinking seems to manifest itself in the Japanese use of an intransitive verb in the passive voice— a form expressing the subject as being indirectly affected by some event or act; for example, *"Kare wa tsuma ni shinareta"* (literally, "It happened to him that his wife died"); or, *"Kare wa kodomo ni nakareta"* (literally, "It happened to him that his child wept.") An objective event—a wife's death or a child's weeping—is here stated in its relation to one's interests and feelings. Such a statement of the event contains an entirely different significance from that contained in the Indo-European statement "His wife died," or "His child wept."

The people to whom a human nexus is important place great moral emphasis upon complete and willing dedication of the self to others in a specific human collective. This attitude, though it may be a basic moral requirement in all peoples, occupies a dominant position in Japanese social life. Self-dedication to a specific human nexus has been one of the most powerful factors in Japanese history.

In the moral sense of the early Japanese, good and evil were considered as a matter of social morality and not as a matter of fortune, as they are generally regarded in a primitive civilization. Good was not something that profits the self but something that profits others in a social group. Evil was not something that harms the self but something harmful to others or the welfare of the whole. Good and evil concern not the interests of the individual but those of others or the whole.[15] Later the highest virtue was considered to be sacrifice of the self for the sake of the sovereign, the family (especially the parents), or the community. This feudal morality assumed an extreme form after the Meiji era when it came to be expressed in the form of sacrifice of one's life for the state or the emperor. Attachment to one's native place and to neighbors from the same region are variations of this attitude.

In contrast to this we find only a few cases in which sacrifices of life were made by the Japanese for the sake of something universal, something that transcends a particular human nexus, such as academic truth or the arts. And if we exclude the persecutions of the True Pure Land sect, the Hokke sect, and Christianity, cases of dying for religious faith are exceptional phenomena. Sacrifice of all for the sake of truth, when it went contrary to the intentions of the ruler, was even regarded as evil.

Such a tendency of thinking was an influential factor in the assimilation of foreign thoughts. A good deal of Chinese thought was adopted by the Japanese, but not all of it was readily acceptable to the Japanese. Though Confucianism, which laid particular stress upon the proper order of human proprieties, was enthusiastically accepted, the liberalism of some Chinese heterodox thinkers was entirely ignored. The Taoism of Lao-Tzŭ and Chuang-Tzŭ, which valued the welfare of individuals, never spread widely among the people of Japan. Christianity, with its persistent teaching of belief in God, met the fate of persecution, and was finally uprooted by law when it came to be feared that its teachings might result in the neglect of duties to feudal lords and parents. In the Satsuma Clan the followers of the True Pure Land sect were put to death because of the fear that they would be disobedient to the clan lord.

Universal religions advocate the transcending of limited human relations. This facet of religion, however, is scarcely seen in Japanese religions. A feature common to various Japanese religions is their emphasis on group propriety. From ancient days the importance of an established, limited human nexus has been in the consciousness of the Japanese. As the psychological example parallel to it, we may cite the fact that the Japanese statement of judgment (or reasoning) is severely limited to the environment which includes the speaker and listener. Universal religions from abroad had to be transformed to suit such a tendency of thought.

In spite of the various Western modern thoughts introduced after the Meiji Restoration, the individual as a social entity has not come to be fully grasped by the general public. While the Japanese are keenly conscious of their membership in their small, closed nexus, they are hardly fully aware of themselves as individuals, or as social beings, to the extent the Western peoples are.

In the light of such a way of thinking, it is easy to understand why Japanese Buddhists have tended to disregard the Universalistic Buddhist Precepts. The traditional, conservative Precepts of Hīnayāna Buddhism, which had been observed among the clergy until the Nara period (710–784), were abandoned by Saichō (Dengyō Daishi) who adopted instead the Precepts of Māhayāna Buddhism. The so-called *Endonkai*, the Māhayāna Precepts adopted by Saichō, stipulated that Buddhist novices need not comply with the Hīnayāna Precepts. It was in this way that Buddhism came to be more readily practicable in Japan. This tendency to ignore the Precepts became stronger in Japanese Buddhist Sects, especially, in the Pure Land Buddhism. In the True Pure Land sect founded by Shinran, it was thought that even violators of the Precepts could be saved by the boundless mercy of Amitāyus Buddha. Buddhism, we note, has thus been completely transformed for the sake of practicability. Japanese society as

the ground of Buddhist practice had rejected the religious practices of India and China. Japanese society was too tightly formed; the restrictive power of its secular community over religious circles was too great to permit priests to continue their imported practices.

This hardly means, however, that Japanese Buddhism was *immoral* or *amoral*. Monks and faithful alike observed assiduously the requirements of their limited human nexus; they were highly moral in this respect. They were devoted to their parents and loyal to their sovereign. They were in every respect quite different from the monks and novices of India and China. Moreover, Japanese monks were devoted workers loyal to the interests of the order to which they belonged. If the followers of one sect founder are divided into a number of different orders, monks in one of the orders become devoted to his particular order to the point of boycotting the other orders. To them the welfare of their small separate orders are their main concern and the doctrine to which they all adhere is reduced to a secondary concern. Here again they are moral in the limited sense that they are devoted to their limited human nexus. The precepts to be kept by an individual as an individual in relation to the Absolute, by an individual in relation to another individual *qua* individual tend thus to become neglected. The interests of their own small limited nexus become the factors determining their actions.

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Even the traditional and conservative Buddhists in India were aware of the fact that the disciplines are hard to observe strictly in their original form and that they undergo changes according to differences of time and place. "The Buddha announced to various priests, 'Although these disciplines are constituted by me, it is not necessary that you should use them all, if you find them not pure in other districts. As to disciplines that are not established by me, you should not hesitate to practice them all, if it is necessary to do so in other districts.' "[100]

In spite of these concessions made by the Buddha, the Japanese are the only Asiatic people who have forsaken almost all of the Buddhist disciplines. How should we account for this fact?

We shall later dwell upon the tendency of the Japanese to hold fast to a specific and closed social nexus. The repudiation of disciplines may seem on the surface to be incompatible with such a tendency. But these two are not necessarily in conflict. The disciplines are not always in agreement with customary morality. The eating of meat and flesh was permitted under certain circumstances by early Buddhism, whereas it was prohibited by most of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Drinking was prohibited both in Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism. Marriage for the priest was not allowed except for the esoteric Buddhists of later periods. These are important problems from the standpoint of religion, but from the point of view of defending the interests of the closed social nexus, they do not count very much. Quite prevalent among the Japanese are the double-barreled attitudes of ignoring the disciplines on the one hand and of self-sacrificing devotion to the interests of the closed social nexus on the other. Such attitudes gave rise to their idea that the assertion of natural desires and the repudiation of the disciplines do not necessarily mean the abandonment of the moral order.

The lack of the guiding spirit is often talked about and people frequently allude to the corruption of priests. But such phenomena are more deep-rooted than the mere responsibilities of priests: they are imbedded in the traditional Japanese way of thinking.

We have reflected mainly upon the domain of religion, but similar ways of thinking seem to be prevalent in other domains also.

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What then was the attitude of the Japanese in accepting the universalistic doctrines of foreign countries? The attitude receptive to a foreign religious thought as universal and international and the attitude of looking up to Japan as absolute are by no means compatible. When the former attitude is accepted, the latter is rejected. In fact, however, the tendency to think in conformity with the limited human nexus of Japan seems to be the most prevalent.

This ambivalence and conflict of universalism and nationalism appeared in the pattern of the acceptance of Buddhism. At first Buddhism was accepted, by Prince Shōtoku and a group of bureaucrats under his control, as a universal teaching that everyone should follow. Buddhism was estimated thereby as "the terminating end of four lives (four kinds of all living creatures) and the ultimate religion of all nations," and among the Three Treasures of the Buddha, the Law, and the Brotherhood (*saṅgha*), the Law or the religious doctrine was especially esteemed. They preached, in consequence, "Why should any period or any man not reverence this law?"[143] According to Prince Shōtoku, "The Law" is "the norm" of all living creatures, "the Buddha" is in fact "the Law embodied," which "being united with Reason" becomes *saṅgha*. So, according to this way of teaching, everything converges on the one fundamental principle called "the Law."[144]

Even among the various sects of Buddhism during that characteristically Japanese period of Kamakura (1185–1333), the sense of the universality of "the Law," as preached in Buddhism, was not lost. Dōgen (1200–1253), the Zen master, says: "Because there is the Way, Buddhas and their forerunners are comprehended. Without the Way there is no comprehension. Because there is the Law, things are originated. Without the Law nothing is originated."[145] Here too the Law and the Way are used interchangeably. Shinran (1173–1262) himself quotes a sentence by Nāgārjuna: "See, enter and acquire the Law, and live in the solid Law, and

don't vacillate."[146] Nichiren also esteems the Hokke Sūtra as the Truth more highly than he does the Buddha. "I am asked why I should make the prayer of the Hokke Sūtra, instead of the Buddha (Shākyamuni), the principal object of worship. I answered that. . . . while the Buddha is the originated, the Hokke Sūtra is the originator. While the Buddha is the body, the Hokke Sūtra is the spirit."[147] "The Hokke Sūtra is just as superior to a Buddha as the moon to a star and as the sun to artificial light."[148]

Among the Japanese, however, there is a strong tendency to understand such a universal law only in reference to some particular or specific phase of things. Moreover, the Japanese sought a standard for the evaluation of different thoughts by laying emphasis upon historical and topographical specificity or particularity.

In Japan, the Tendai doctrine, which laid the foundation for the doctrines of other sects of Buddhism in Japan, puts emphasis upon "Things," while in China the doctrine of the same sect regards "Reason" as most important. "Things" here mean observable *specificities or particularities* limited in time and space. Shimei (Ssu-ming, 1060–1128), a Chinese Tendai scholar, preached that the first half (*Shakumon*) of the Hokke Sūtra explains the perfect Truth in conformity with the Law of Reason (the perfect Reason), while the second half (*Honmon*) of the Sūtra exposes "the perfect Truth" in accordance with phenomena (perfect Things). Even this latter truth expresses for him the eternal Buddha. In contrast, Eshin (942–1017), a Japanese Tendai scholar, while accepting this two-fold interpretation, interpreted "the perfect Reason" to mean the comprehension of the multiplicity of the phenomenal world through the indiscriminatory Truth (*Sessō Kishō*), and "the perfect Thing" to mean the revelation of the Truth through the multiplicity of phenomena.[149]

The tendency to attach more importance to things than to reason is one of the characteristics of the Japanese Zen sect, in contrast to that of China, and the teachings of the Japanese priests like Dōgen (1200–1253) and Hakuin (1685–1768) prove it.

Based upon this pluralistic way of thinking, most of the Buddhist sects in Japan teach that doctrines should always be made "apropos of the time." Especially the idea of the age of degeneration penetrated deep into the core of the doctrines of various sects, which admitted that they were in the age of degeneration and religious doctrines ought to be made suitable to it. Each of the sects ended up claiming the superiority of their respective sūtras or doctrines, as most suited to the age of corruption. This fundamental tendency is most manifest in the teachings of Nichiren, based upon the Japanese Tendai doctrine.

CHAPTER 36 NON-RATIONALISTIC TENDENCIES

The Tendency to Neglect Logical Rules

We have already indicated the marked tendency of the Japanese people to give special attention to those subjective and social relations and actions which form the basis of mutual understanding and loyalties to the family, clan, and nation. Upon this limited basis, there is little intention to make each man's understanding and expression universal or logical, so that, in general, the thinking of most Japanese tends to be intuitive and emotional. I should now like to discuss this aspect of Japanese ways of thinking.

As a preliminary step for discussing the main problem, we should call attention to some logical characteristics perceived in common Japanese linguistic usage which provide insight into the daily thinking of the Japanese. As is often pointed out by linguistic scholars, the expressive forms of Japanese sentences put more emphasis upon emotive factors than on cognitive factors. The forms of expression of the Japanese language are more oriented to sensitive and emotive nuances than directed toward logical exactness. The Japanese language does not tend to express precisely and accurately the various modes of being, but is satisfied merely with vague, typological expressions. As for nouns, we have no clear distinction between singular and plural, nor is there a distinction between genders, and no articles are used. For verbs, also, there are no distinctions of person and number. In these respects, Japanese resembles Chinese. But what is different from classical Chinese, giving Japanese its distinctive atmosphere, is the so-called *"te-ni-o-ha,"* or the postpositional particles. This part of speech corresponds to case declensions or prepositions in other languages, and has the characteristic not only of expressing cognitive, logical relations, but also of expressing to some degree various delicate nuances of emotion. Thus this auxiliary part of speech, making its appearance amidst all kinds of words and sentences, plays the role of emphasizing some specific meanings, evoking attention to certain subjective aspects of things, distinguishing delicate variations of emotion, and leaves rich overtones of meaning just because of this ambiguity. Moreover, the abundance of auxiliary verbs and their complex usages show that the Japanese language is peculiarly sensitive in its grasp of emotion.

Thus, to interpret Buddhist ideas in poems, the Japanese people, using concrete imagery, appealed to sensuous intuition and added the flavor of emotional moods to general ideas. In the Indian versification of Buddhist doctrines, on the contrary, the contents are almost always abstract and general propositions, and the composition is systematic, with well-defined subject and predicate. It is philosophy disguised in verse-form. For example, one of the philosophers of Indian Buddhism, Nāgārjuna, in the above mentioned hymn in verse, says: "We preach that dependent causation is voidness. It is temporary, being dependent (upon something else). It is the Middle Way itself."[57] This metaphysical verse is far from anything poetic.

It has been frequently suggested that the Japanese people love purity and undefiledness,[58] and are proud of this fact. In Shintō, "purity" has been regarded as one of the most important virtues ever since ancient times. Although almost all peoples love this virtue, what the Japanese mean by "purity" differs considerably from other peoples' ideas. In Japanese, "purity" is expressed by various acts and ideas such as frequent bathing, daily sweeping and dusting, purification ceremony (*misogi*), great exorcism (*ō-harai*), image for redemption (*katashiro*), dislike of defiledness, abstinence (*monoimi*), tidiness of appearance. All of these are concrete acts, which appeal to the senses and unsophisticated sentiment. Their aim is not purity in any metaphysical or religious sense, based on a poignant consciousness of sinfulness. In this sense, the Japanese people are essentially different from the Indians. The Indians value religious and metaphysical purity more than sensuous purity. It was one of the ideals of early Buddhism that the monks who renounced the world should collect thrown-away tatters and wear them. Though in ragged clothes, they believed that they could attain spiritual purity. The clothes were called Pāṁsukūlika (*"Funzōe"* in Japanese, meaning "lavatory clothes"): "They are thrown away and not unlike lavatory clothes. And furthermore, they belong to no one. Therefore, they are called 'lavatory clothes.' "[59] To the Japanese, however, it is unbearable to wear such clothes. The Japanese clergymen kept the word *"Funzōe,"* but its meaning was changed to signify neat and tidy clothes. Dōgen emphasized the duty to clean the body.[60] And, although Buddhism has shaped one of the main currents of Japanese culture in the past, the common people are rather inclined to consider that the temples and clergymen are impure. This view is deep-rooted, perhaps owing to the fact that the Japanese people have been less apt to value spiritual and religious purity than sensuous and aesthetic refinement. And this corresponds to one of the characteristics of Japanese ways of thinking, that is, lack of consciousness of the universal.

Some of the Japanese Buddhists were thus led to recognize the particularly sacred significance of physical labor. And the Lotus Sūtra came to be accepted as a scripture to commend physical labor. The following poem, known to have been composed by Gyōki, says:

> "That I have attained the Lotus Sūtra
> Was possible only through
> Making firewood, gathering herbs,
> Drawing water, and laboring thus."[287]

This idea comes up in the tale of the Lotus Sūtra, which relates the story that in the past the Buddha entered priesthood and lived in seclusion, practicing asceticism with a hermit. "I followed a hermit, supplying daily necessities, gathering fruits, drawing water, picking up firewood, cooking meals, and making my own body a place of repose, but I never felt tired."[288] This story, which is only slightly touched upon in the Hokke Sūtra, appeared to Gyōki (668–749) as something very important, and gave him the impetus to carry out his meritorious works of social welfare.

It is a historically well-known fact that the Buddhists endeavored to go directly to the people through various works of social welfare. To illustrate, during the Nara period, Dōshō (629–700) spent his last years in travelling around the country, providing ferryboats, building bridges, and doing many other things for the good of the people. The social welfare works of Gyōki are said to have resulted in the construction of "six bridges, three water tanks, nine charity houses, two ferry depots, fifteen ponds, seven canals, four conduits, and one straight road."[289] It is also well known that Kūkai, early in the ninth century, had a reservoir constructed and built the university Shugei Shuchiin. After that a tremendous number of roads, harbors, and lodging places were built by priests and productive activities were carried out by them. During the Kamakura period, the Ritsu sect was particularly popular among common men and women on account of their endeavors in social welfare works. Eison (1201–1290) of the Saidai Temple and Ninshō (1218–1303) of the Gokuraku Temple had roads opened up, bridges constructed, wells dug, rice fields cultivated, bathrooms, hospitals, and homes for beggars built, not to speak of the construction of temples and towers, giving commandments to men and women ecclesiastical and secular, copying scriptures and drawing the images of Buddhas. That some Buddhists are enthusiasts in social welfare works is a phenomenon common to India and China. So it would be too rash to conclude that it is a manifestation of the characteristics only of the Japanese. It is noteworthy, however, that the Ritsu sect, which originally belonged to Hīnayāna Buddhism, should plunge into such practical and positive activities. It was particularly against the traditional disciplines that Ninshō carried out public works which were deeds of altruism. But it was not considered to be a breach of discipline either by himself or by his contemporaries. Japanese Buddhists came to maintain the view that one should repudiate traditional disciplines *in the name of disciplines for the promotion of productive activities.*

First, at the time when Buddhism was introduced into Japan, it had to have, in order to be diffused among the common people, a shamanistic character, since the shamanistic religious modes were then influential. The Ritsu sect, having preserved the manners of Conservative Buddhism, had little influence over the Japanese. This sect did not meet with great favor among the people; however, some other sects of Buddhism did meet with approval among the populace, because they made concessions to the shamanistic tendency to a considerable degree.

The most striking phenomenon in Buddhism as it was introduced into Japan was that there were relatively many nuns in proportion to priests. This may have been due to the fact that great importance was attached to nuns, paralleling the importance of female mediums who had particular qualifications to serve the gods.[2]

As a new religion, Buddhism was compelled to meet the popular requirement that it should be effective in exorcism. The Japanese type of Buddhism was largely one of prayer and exorcism. It mainly aimed at praying for benefits and wealth in this world and the next, in the interest of the state as well as of individuals. Even the reading of sūtras was considered to have an exorcistic significance, so that the most philosophic Buddhist schools could not be secure in their positions unless they compromised with this tendency. Although Ekan, who came to Japan in 625 (he was born in Korea, and studied Buddhism in China), introduced the doctrine of the Sanron sect, members of which reasoned always with extreme logical accuracy, it is said that he himself prayed for rain on the occasion of a long drought, and when he obtained a heavy rain, Empress Suiko, who reigned in 593–629, appreciated very much his service and appointed him a bishop. Nevertheless, the philosophic sects of Sanron (Three Treatises) and Hossō (Idealism) were ultimately not diffused among the Japanese. Sects which sought to spread all over the country had to adopt shamanistic or magical interpretations of Buddhism.

If we look at the course of diffusion of Buddhism, we note that the new religion was, in the first place, accepted by the nobility to meet its requirements in the mid-sixth century. The nobility at that time constructed many temples for the purpose of praying for the prosperity and permanency of their aristocratic life. Prayers were addressed to Śākyamuni for recovery from sickness and long life, to Avalokiteśvara for protection from evil, and also to the other Bodhisattvas: Bhaiṣajya-guru, Maitreya,

The Four God-kings, etc. From the Suiko period on, there were erected many statues of Avalokiteśvara. As for sūtras, the *Suvarṇaprabhāṣa Sūtra* (Sūtra of Golden Splendor), the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* or Hokke (Lotus) Sūtra (especially the 25th Chapter on Avalokiteśvara), *Ninnō-prajñā-pāramitā Sūtra* (Sūtra of the Perfect Wisdom of Benevolent Kings), the *Bhaiṣajyaguru Sūtra*, and so on, were recited; but this was for the main purpose of supplication, for health, long life, and recovery, since the sūtras were believed to be pregnant with magical power. After the centralization of political power in Japan, there was a vigorous advocacy of the principle that Buddhism should have as its object the protection of the state, the tranquility of the Imperial Court, and the wealth of the people. This was based upon the popular belief that the State should be guarded, that people's lives should become easier by the miraculous virtue which might be given in reciting and copying sūtras and treating monks and nuns with dinners, etc.

It was almost the same in the Heian period (after 784), excepting that the esoteric school then was more popular than the earlier schools of Buddhism. About the 7th and the 8th centuries, as far as we know now, one hundred and thirty-seven scriptures of esoteric teaching were imported, including such fundamental scriptures of that type as the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* (The Great Sun Sūtra), the *Kongōchōkyō* (The Diamond Head Sūtra), *Susiddhi-sūtra* (The Sūtra of Perfection).

Apart from Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, gods, and spirits mentioned in the above scriptures, there were, as objects of worship, the bodhisattvas of esoteric lineage: Kannon with Eleven Faces, Kannon with Nine Faces, Kannon with a Thousand Hands, Amoghapāśa, Kannon with Horse-head, Beautiful-sight Kannon, Vajragarbha (Bodhisattva), Peacock-King (*Mahāmāgurī*), five powerful Bodhisattvas, and so forth. Buddhistic morality sometimes manifested itself in the decree of liquor prohibition and in forbidding the taking of all animal life, but they were invoked only under the particular circumstances of drought, deluge, indisposition of His Majesty, and other national calamities. This was, after all, an application in the Buddhist mould of the theocratic way of thinking peculiar to Japanese antiquity. Various Buddhistic services in the Court were of the same magical significance as Shintō rituals. They bore just the same meaning as the rituals of Shintō purification in their motives and purposes.

It is noteworthy that, in Japan, the Imperial family and the nobility were closely associated with esoteric schools. The instances when the members of the Imperial family and Court nobility became devout believers are too many to be enumerated in detail. These converts believed solely in the esoteric teaching, including not only the Shingon sect but also the Tendai sect.

In general, Indian religions and Chinese Buddhism are contemplative, focused on the vision of truth. In such religious, faith is merely the first step toward entering the innermost recesses of the religion. It is simply preparatory. However, when these sects were introduced into Japan, faith came to be recognized as the very essence of religion. Therefore, Japanese Buddhism is, above all, a Buddhism centering around faith. The Japanese emphasize purity of faith. (Even the Zen sect, in which faith is comparatively less esteemed, exhibits this trend in Japan.) This faith is of two kinds: (1) faith in a certain real person (founder, teacher); (2) faith in an ideal person (a specific Buddha or Bodhisattva). In practice, however, both appear so commingled that it is difficult to differentiate them. In either case the focus is on a specific individual.

The Closed Social Nexus & Sectarianism, Familism, Nationalism

It was the Japanese tendency to emphasize the limited human nexus rather than religious faith that gave rise to the segmentation of quite a number of religious sects, each with its exclusive and closed order, in line with the general Japanese propensity for cliquism or clannishness. Among the Zen sect, as an example, it is not the difference in the religious faith or doctrine but *merely such specific factors of human relationship* as the inheritance of the master's "endowments" that account for the split of the religious school into multitudinous sects and factions.[229] The Master-and-disciple relationship has been jealously maintained. It is one of the characteristics of Japanese Buddhism to make much of the inheritance of the lineage of religious doctrines.[230] Today the communication media are so well developed that any single individual is susceptible to the influence of various ideas of many individuals. Should one insist, under such circumstances, on maintaining the absolute authority of *just one* master toward his disciples, that would inevitably foster the sectarian relationship. And nothing is farther removed from this idea than the original Buddhist stand: "Do not depend upon men, but upon the law."

The emphasis upon the inheritance of the master's endowments naturally gave rise to the system of secret and oral instruction. The Tendai sect, after being transplanted from China into Japan (c. 805), introduced later an eclectic book called *Sanjū-shichika no Hōmon* or the "Three-fold-seven-point Gates to the Law" which is a secret oral instruction transmitted from the master to his disciples. It was conceived to have been established during the period before Tōyō Chūjin (1065–1138) and after Kakuchō (960–1034), and it is of great significance in Japanese Tendai theology.

Such a tendency as exists in the religious life of the Japanese cannot be defended simply as a token of respect for the purity of faith. It is attributable rather to the social inclination of the Japanese in general toward the establishment of some form of limited and closed human nexus. To say the least, the segmentation of closed religious sects cannot be ascribed to a difference of religious convictions in these respective sects, since the Japanese in general are so markedly indifferent to religious dogmas, apart from family-affiliation to a sectarian temple and the devotion to the clan and Emperor.

Even scientists and mathematicians were not free from the tendency to form a closed society. The results of the studies by the mathematician, Yoshihiro Kurushima (died 1753), were not transmitted as his work, but were mostly mingled with those of the preceding mathematical school of Kowa Seki (1642–c. 1700), because the leaders of this school wished to credit them to be their own or their master's productions, in order to add to their fame or influence.[237] In such a secluded society Japanese mathematics developed only to a limited extent. The concepts of differential calculus and integration were found by the Japanese a century after Newton and Leibniz, but Japanese mathematics did not develop greatly till the time of the introduction of Western mathematics. "The usage of keeping inventions in secrecy must have considerably delayed the progress of science, for those to whom the secret subjects were imparted were not, and could not be, always the best minds of their times. Unfortunately, the spirit of vested interests ruled the conduct of scholars."[238]

Then a question should be raised as to why the tendency toward sectarian clannishness is conspicuous among the Japanese in general. It might be tied up with the Japanese inclination to love and enjoy the small-scaled and closed way of communal living. In search of the empirical basis of the tendency to exclusiveness among such small-scaled communities, we have to take into consideration the factor of a social mode of living adapted to the topographical elements of the environment. The density of population of the narrow island since ancient days might be taken as a proof that life here used to be comparatively easy and peaceful. On the other hand the same fact may account for the formation of the traits of

exclusiveness. Such problems ought to be discussed independently. Suffice it to point out that these characteristics are distinctive of the Japanese in general, as cultural manifestations.

(f) As pointed out in preceding sections, the Japanese attach great importance to a limited and specific human nexus, and the family, the lord-and-vassal relationship, the clan, the state (or the Emperor), and even universal world religions, once transplanted into this country, were transformed to fit their clannish propensity. Scarcely any thought has been given to any universal external law which every man should follow beyond the confines of this limited human nexus. Generally speaking, the Japanese mode of adopting a foreign religion was confined to those cases which were considered helpful to promoting and developing some concrete human relationship which the Japanese regarded as absolute. For those individuals who took religious faith seriously, it might have implied "devotion and obedience," but for the Japanese society as a whole it only meant "absorption and adoption." Consequently, although Buddhism has been the flesh and blood of Japanese culture for more than the past ten centuries, the people by and large still regard it as "an imported system of thought." In this respect, our attitude differs fundamentally from those of Western nations in regard to Christianity and from those of southern Asiatic nations in regard to Buddhism. As for those nations, universal world religions are conceived to be such integral parts of their own culture that they are linked to the formation of the respective nations themselves. But for the Japanese, in contrast, such a conception is totally absent. What is called the non-religious character of the Japanese is explicable partly by their attachment, on the one hand, to the limited concrete human nexus and partly by the conscious or unconscious indifference, on the other, to the dogmas of universal religion.

Japanese Buddhism was thus able to broaden its sphere of influence as a popular religion when it linked up with the native custom of ancestor-worship. It is recorded that as early as the 2nd year of the reign of Empress Suiko (593), higher officers of the Court dedicated temples to their Empress and parents; the Rescript of Emperor Temmu (3rd month of 686 A.D.) commands: "Every family in every Province should possess a temple, and services should be conducted with the Sūtras and the image of the Buddha." This was the origin of the *butsudan*, or Buddhist shrine, found in every Japanese home. It is not known to what extent this rescript was enforced but, later, after the prohibition of Christianity, during the reign (in the early 17th century) of the Tokugawa Shogunate, Buddhist services became a family routine among the Japanese.[34] Chapels with Buddhist images have been built in homes of other Asiatic nations in the past and present, but these, unlike the case of the Japanese, have had nothing to do with ancestor-worship;[35] and we must remember that Chinese ancestor-worship was associated with Taoism rather than Buddhism. In Japan, significantly, mortuary tablets of ancestors were placed in homes with Buddhist shrines. The Japanese, thus, were made ever aware of the spirits of all their ancestors, of the immediate ones through the Buddhist mortuary tablets and of the distant ancestors through the presence of the Shintō shrine. (The family Shintō shrine, however, is connected with ancestor-worship to a much lesser degree. Shrine Shintoism does not in general practice ancestor-worship. The coexistence of the two kinds of shrines in Japanese homes cannot, therefore, be regarded merely as the result of the mixing of Shintoism and Buddhism.)

Buddhism, when brought to the Japanese soil, thus became linked with a kind of clan-consciousness. It became a vogue with aristocracies to have family temples built; the Kōfukuji, for example, was the temple of the Fujiwara clan. Headships of these temples were assumed by the members of the owner-families who had renounced secular life to become priests. (Temples similar to the Japanese family temple seem to have existed in India of the later periods.) It is interesting to note that Buddhism which had always aimed at all mankind rather than at any clan-system should come to be associated with clan-consciousness in Japan.

Amida Pure Land Buddhism, for instance, took root in the soil of Japan by virtue of a doctrine which preached, not the individual's future

happiness and peace of mind, but rather the peaceful repose of the dead. The Sūtra of Infinite Life (*Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*) was explained to the people at the lecture meetings held in the third year of Hakuchi (652 A.D.). Amida's Paradise came to be depicted in the mural paintings of the Hōryūji's Golden Hall, the well-known *maṇḍala* of the Taima-dera showing Paradise was completed; and all of these were expressions of the Amida Pure Land Buddhism of the time. Amida Pure Land Buddhism flourished more and more in the subsequent Nara and Heian periods.

Yet, of course, there were those who rejoiced at the Wonderful Vow of Amida and who, quite free of any customs of ancestor-worship, found individual salvation in the teachings of Amida Buddhism. Shinran (1173–1262), for example, reflected: "The vow of Amida (Amitābha) who meditated for five aeons is, when I consider it well, meant for me alone. Gracious, indeed, is the previous vow of Amida, who wanted to save me from the many fetters of *Karma*." He also said: "I have never performed invocation to Amida even once for the peaceful repose and benefit of my dead parents. Why? All living beings are parents and brothers to each other in the long process of transmigration. All should be saved and become Buddhas in future life. If I could actually accumulate some merit by my own power, I would help my dead parents by the grace of Invocation to Amida. (But it is not I who can save me, but Amida himself.) So I should give up the self-conceited attitude of hoping to save myself and others by the grace of religious practice (and I should rely on the grace of Amida). After I have been saved and become a Buddha I would save those who will come in contact with me."[36] But the Jōdo sect was not able to spread among the common people with this sort of teaching. To become the largest religious sect in Japan, as it did, it had to adopt the traditional customs of ancestor-worship. And today many who have lost the true faith of the Pure Land sect are still associated with it on the strength of this one facet of it which has to do with ancestor-worship.

The Bon Festival was instituted in the Suiko era (592–628 A.D.). Records have it that the Bon Festival was held in the third year of Emperor Saimei (657 A.D.), and in 650 A.D. the "Sūtra of Bon" was preached in temples in Kyoto as memorial services for expressing gratitude to the ancestors of the seven preceding generations. The Bon Festival, with this new meaning added, became widely practiced after this time, and is still practiced today, commonly known as "*O-bon*."

The system of memorial days and anniversaries was not a traditional feature of Buddhism. Indian Brahminism, we know, teaches a form of ancestor-worship, and the Brahmins celebrate on new moon and full moon nights what is known as Ancestor Festival, but these festivals differ widely from the memorial days and anniversaries observed in memory of any

specific ancestors. Buddhism does occasionally encourage ancestor-worship, but it has never instituted a system of memorial days and anniversaries such as that devised by the Chinese. In China memorial services were held on the 49th day, 100th day, first anniversary, and third anniversary. Immediately after the introduction of this system the Japanese, of the remote past, observed the 49th day, 100th day and first anniversary, leaving out the third anniversary. Many more anniversaries, however, were added later in the Middle Ages; namely, third, seventh, 13th, 17th, 25th, 33rd, 60th, 100th, and 300th anniversaries. This was essentially the same as the system of memorial days commonly observed today, viz. 49th day, 100th day, first, third, seventh, 13th, 17th, 25th, 33rd, and 50th anniversaries.[37] Thus we may say that the system of memorial days and anniversaries was elaborated in Japan, a fact which does seem to attest to the dominance of ancestor-worship among the Japanese.

We have already made mention of funeral services. Funerals and memorial services are the two most important functions of Buddhism in Japan of today. How much will be left of the activities of the Buddhist temple, if these are taken away? "Collectivity orientations have remained a dominant part of the social environment of Japan. Such orientations are operative in a number of spheres, including the family, occupational groups, community life, and politics. The collectivity orientations are fostered in the family situation where individual goals remain largely subordinated to those of the family as a group. The traditional orientations can still be seen in many areas outside the family. The relations of the landlord and tenant in rural Japan or of the owner and worker in small and medium factories are based on simulated family ties."[38]

"The traditional pattern of the work collectivity in the framework of true or simulated kinship organization appears to remain important in spite of contractual agreements. In contemporary Japan, the traditional simulated familial ties exist in various degrees, however small or large. This factor becomes important, for it perpetuates the influence of the collectivity interest and goals over the individual. New group patterns, in many cases of activities such as we find in modern banking companies and in large factories, where the employer-employee relationship is based on a purely cash nexus, often seem to replace the older traditional scheme of organization under a simulated family system."[39]

The familistic custom of Japan undeniably appears pre-modern and even backward to the eyes of Westerners. But on the other hand, one cannot deny its socially favorable effect on present-day life. One scholar, who is a Japanese-American, recognizes in this respect its great importance for the maintenance of social stability in post-war Japan.

Further, in the older language, the word *ōyake* ("public") originally had the sense of "the principal family,"[177] which meant the Imperial House. In contradistinction, all the people were called *koyake* (minor families). Thus the Imperial House came to be regarded as the principal ancestral family of all the Japanese.[178] Consequently, in Japan there was originally no conception corresponding to "public." Among the Japanese, public affairs consisted in nothing but relations with the Imperial Family.

It would seem that the tendency to regard the Emperor as divine has existed in Japan since very ancient times. When one looks at the many legends related in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihonshoki* (History of Japan), one finds that stories of the gods are not told for the purpose of demonstrating the greatness of the divinities believed in by the ancients; on the contrary, it is only for the purpose of showing the divine character of the Emperor that accounts are given of the gods and of the historical blood relations of these gods. To be sure, in the Occident it is a historical fact that Alexander the Great and the Roman emperors were deified, but this was a matter of the deification of these men as individuals; this is quite a different thing from a national legend rooted in the primitive faith of a people. The theory of the divine right of kings in modern Europe has as its premise the Christian conception of God, and aimed at giving a basis to the power of princes in the will of God.[179] And the theory of divine right in medieval India is to be understood in the same way. Thus, in archaic Japanese religion, the living totality of the nation is embodied symbolically in the Imperial ancestral sun-goddess and in the divine authority deriving traditionally from her. Here we find the unifying idea in the traditional stories of the historical age of the gods. Consequently, the people, united into one nation from various familial or political groups, give concrete expression to their corporate will through the Emperor or the divine Imperial ancestor who directs the government.[180] Thus, in the society of that time, bound together by ritual, the distinction between submitting to or opposing the authority of the totality of society is a distinction between submitting to or refusing to submit to the ruler who is the concrete manifestation of that authority—and this in the last analysis is reducible to submission or non-submission to the authority of the Imperial ancestor goddess. Therefore, it has been felt that the moral distinction between goodness and wickedness is nothing but the distinction between submission or non-submission to the divine authority of the corporate whole, and this means the distinction between submission and non-submission to the Emperor.[181] Therefore the Japanese people have generally felt that the rule of Japan by the Imperial House, generation after generation, has been maintained on the basis of the general will of their ancestors since antiquity.[182]

The introduction of Chinese Confucianism into Japan caused almost no friction or disharmony; only the doctrine of abdication and rebellion presented difficult problems. This doctrine maintains that the Emperor holds his position of Emperor so long as he receives the mandate of Heaven; if he should lose the confidence of Heaven he will inevitably lose his position; such a doctrine is under any circumstances hard to reconcile with the traditional Japanese concept of the Emperor. Therefore, this point became a problem for scholars. The following admonition to posterity is ascribed to Sugawara-no-Michizane (845–903): "The mystery of the eternal existence of our divine country is something we dare not try to understand. Although we study the Chinese classics of the three royal dynasties, of Chou King, and of Confucius, the Chinese national tendency of revolution is something we should be deeply concerned about."[186]

With such a tendency of thinking prevailing, it was natural that the individual as a free and independent agent should not have even been conceived by the Japanese till modern times. And it must be said that the retarded development of their cities was in part responsible for this. For there hardly ever arose in feudal Japan cities that were autonomous, possessing their own judicial powers. Unlike cities in China, Japanese cities were not residences of emperors; nor had they the importance of a fort city controlled by a feudal baron; they were without administrative organizations of bureaucrats. Japanese cities were rather nothing more than densely populated areas controlled by warriors. Even after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, when cities expanded rapidly, their citizens did not come to possess the self-consciousness of European citizenry. And particularly noteworthy here was the fact that there was a constant flow of farming population in and out of the cities. This farming population continued to be bound by blood relation and economy to the farming village during its residence in the city, and was free to go back to the country if subsistence in the city became difficult. This situation formed an obstacle to the growth of a general public morality as well as to an ethics for the individual in Japan.

The ultimate form in which the Japanese concept of emphasis upon a specific limited human nexus manifested itself was ultra-nationalism. Japanese ultra-nationalism did not suddenly appear in the post-Meiji period. Its beginnings can be traced to the very remote past.

The boast that Japan was the best country in the world has existed from very early times. It, no doubt, began at first in a love of the native country, pure and simple, without ambitions for expansion and conquest. Probably the earliest use of the phrase *Dai Nippon* (Great Japan) is found in some writings by Dengyō.[61] Dengyō (767–822), who had studied in China, was more keenly aware than his contemporaries of the fact that Japan's territories were smaller and her wealth and resources much more limited than China's. What Dengyō actually meant by "Great Nippon" was that Japan was a land most suitable to Mahāyāna Buddhism (Buddhism of the Greater Vehicle). Many Buddhists of later date believed that Japan was superior to all other lands, as we can see clearly in the following line from a poem by Ean (1225–1277), a Kamakura Zen monk:

> "To the end of the end of the last generation will
> This land of Ours surpass all other lands."

As has already been pointed out, the inclination to regard as absolute a limited specific human nexus naturally brings about a tendency to disregard any allegedly universal law of humanity that every man ought to observe at any place at any time. Instead, the standard of the evaluation of good and evil is identified here with the consideration of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of conduct judged solely by reference to the particular human nexus to which one happens to belong.

That Japan is the supreme country of all the countries of the world and that to defend such a country is of absolute religious significance was maintained particularly by the Shintoist thinkers: "Our Great Japan is the country of gods. Our country is founded by a heavenly ancestry; the reign of our country is transmitted forever by the Sun Goddess. Such things have happened to this country of ours that nothing is comparable to them in other countries. That is why this country is called the country of the gods."[140] These words were taken as a motto up to quite recently. According to Kanetomo Urabe (1435–1511), who advocated Shintoist Monism, "Shintoism is the root of all the teachings. Those two doctrines (Confucianism and Buddhism) are differentiations of Shintoism."[141] It goes without saying that the movements of the Shintoists and the scholars of the Japanese classical literature of the Motoori and Hirata schools had much to do with propagandizing and convincing people of such chauvinistic ideas as those just mentioned. There were some, among the Shintoists and the scholars of the Japanese classical literature themselves, who expressed their opposing opinions, but such a tendency was too weak to combat the general trend of thought.

It was not that Shintoists were completely lacking in universalistic character. That Shintoism is not the way merely of Japan but that of all nations is maintained mainly by sectarian Shintoists. The Kurozumu sect and the Misogi sect emphasize that "the four seas are brothers"; the founder of the Misogi sect teaches, "You should regard people of the world as your own parents and children"; the founder of the Revisionist sect (Kunimitsu Nitta) advocates, "You should expand this sect to all nations," and "You should treat all nations as one family and one body." The Konkō sect, in particular, worships as its principal god "the Golden God of the Universe," which has never appeared in the classics of our country, and which leads us to think that the Konkō sect itself is a world religion. "Under heaven there are no outsiders" is advocated by the founder of the Konkō sect. Shrine Shintoism in general, however, has not been inclined to universalism, except for those cases where the Buddhist idea of benevolence was adopted.[142]

The view that a specific and concrete system of human relationships is absolute tends to carry with it the notion that the defense and development of the system is also an absolute. When the existence of the system of human relationships to which one belongs is endangered, one is apt to defend it even by recourse to force. In the Japanese way of thinking, the use of force was not generally discussed as ethically good or evil, or as justified or not under various particular conditions. One is inclined, instead, to seek a sacred cause in the mere act of defending a specific human nexus. High esteem for arms had a very important place among the thought tendencies in Japan, at least in the past.

Such a tendency was already obvious in the ancient mythology. This land was then called "the country of one thousand fine halberds," the name suggestive of the fact that the Japanese were, since ancient times, a nation of military prowess. A comparison of the Japanese myths with those of other nations reveals some characteristics of the Japanese people. For instance, Finnish mythology, as represented in the Kalevala, is said to be rather lacking in the concept of respect for military power. In Japanese mythology, however, instances of conquest by arms occur very frequently, and the concept of respect for military power is consistently followed. It is noteworthy, as archaeological remains prove to us, that no violent interracial conflicts seem to have occurred on Japanese soil. Nevertheless, on the conceptual level there is a strong tendency toward respect for military power, which constitutes a distinct characteristic of Japanese mythology.

In later periods other nations admitted and the Japanese themselves boasted that they were brave and superior in military matters. Kanzan Matsumiya (1686–1780) writes: "The Japanese are high-spirited and fond of arms. Valour and dauntlessness make up their distinctive style."[239] Atsutane Hirata (1776–1843) also comments as follows:

"The Japanese are endowed with extraordinarily courageous spirit, which one may as well call either fearlessness or heroism. Which is it? Being defeated by their enemy or having a grudge against their enemy, and yet having failed to take their revenge, they calmly commit *harakiri* without flinching. Such is the way of the Japanese who, faced with an emergency, are never afraid of death.[240]

The underlying motivation for such prowess is an absolute devotion to one's lord.

"I will not from today
Turn back toward home. . . .
I who have set out to serve
As Her Majesty's humble shield."[241]

Whether in devotion to one's feudal lord or in loyalty to the Emperor, the identical way of thinking is present. It is a vastly different matter in the case of the Indians. The Indians, indeed, also have their own epics of wars. But they always use religious teachings to encourage their heroes. Indians are taught that those brave soldiers fallen on the battlefield will be reborn in *the Heaven of Indra*[242] or that they will dwell with the god *Viṣṇu*.[243] It would be totally inconceivable to the Indians that one should march to the battlefield with the conviction that: "Into hell may I fall; punishment by the gods may be upon me. I pray nothing but to serve my lord, with utmost loyalty."[244]

A question may be raised here. We have already said that among the Japanese there is a familial inclination to affection. Is it not incompatible with the propensity for military prowess? Banzan Kumazawa (1665–1691) was already conscious of this problem: "An old friend asked: 'Japan is a land of military prowess. Why is it then that she is also said to be the land of benevolence?' I answered: 'It is exactly because she is the land of benevolence that she is the land of military prowess. Is it not obvious that the benevolent are always brave?' "

The fact that the Japanese of the past esteemed military force does not imply that they used violence merely for the sake of destruction. Insofar as they had to maintain and defend the interests of a specific system of human relationship—a feudal clan, the state, a group of gangsters, or whatever—they appealed to force. In combat they were brave. The virtue of self-sacrifice was always manifested. But if the leader of the system to which one belonged should ever order cease fire, they would stop using force at once, and instantaneously establish peace, as was seen at the end of World War II. The reason is that their objective was not to kill men and destroy things but to defend the human nexus by force.

It may be argued that the psychological unrest caused by the social disturbances during the medieval period, together with the introduction of Buddhism, gave rise to the consciousness of man's sinfulness; and that the Japanese were originally lacking in such a consciousness. It is true that the Japanese of antiquity regarded sin as a kind of material entity, which could easily be purged by means of a ritual of purification. (In this respect, the Japanese have much in common with the Brahmanists of ancient India.) The lack of sin-consciousness is also noticeable among present-day Japanese. It may be rightly asserted that, generally speaking, the Japanese are not at all very sin-conscious and that this fact is closely tied up with the this-worldly tendency of the Japanese, which we have pointed out in an earlier chapter. And there are features in the history of thought in Japan which disprove the points we have just made. Take, for instance, the case of the acceptance of Confucianism. Sorai Ogyū, a Confucianist with characteristically Japanese attitudes in some respects, supported the theory that the good or evil of a deed is judged by its results as against the theory, as held by the Chinese Confucianists of the Sung period (960–1126), that it is judged by the motives of the doer.[338]

Whether or not the Japanese in general were acute in religious and moral self-reflection is difficult to decide. But one thing at least is clear, that in accepting the Buddhist thought of China, such moral transformations as have been discussed above were effected by some of the Japanese Buddhists. It was also reported by the European missionaries, who came to Japan in the sixteenth century, that crimes were relatively few, and order reigned among the Japanese.[339] In any case, although they are weak in "sin-consciousness" in its religious sense, they are sensitive in "shame-consciousness" in its practical and moral sense. For the Japanese, whether or not one infringes religious disciplines is a matter of little consequence. A matter of vital importance for them traditionally has been whether or not one conforms to the mores of a particular social nexus to which one belongs. A question may be raised as to whether the presence of moral consciousness, as just mentioned, may be inconsistent with the lack of the spirit of criticism, as discussed earlier. But the inconsistency disappears when one understands "the moral consciousness" to be applicable only to those acts within one's own immediate group.

Let us now consider how the Japanese themselves think of this repudiation of Buddhist discipline in general, on the one hand, and the observation of moral practice within a particular human nexus, on the other.

Onkō (1718–1804) was the most prominent among the high priests of the Shingon sect of the past who instructed and enlightened common people without recourse to magical practices but by means of preaching only. And it was the discipline of Ten Good Vows which was ordained as

follows: love and save all living creatures with a heart of benevolence; do not deprive anyone, from the highest officials down to common men, of his proper due but let him be in his proper place; observe decorum in man-woman relationships; do not utter a falsehood; do not use flowery words, which impair the virtues of adults and go against the way of heaven and earth; do not insult others, or do not put others to shame; do not use double-tongued speech; do not be avaricious; do not yield to anger, which nullifies all good deeds; do not have a "wrong view," i.e., believe in the Buddha, in the Law, and that the virtuous power of gods is not futile.[340] He wrote many books on the subject of the Ten Good Vows, and often preached about them at various places.[341] He was interested neither in the abstract thinking of Indian Buddhism nor in the doctrines contained in the labored commentaries of Chinese Buddhism, but he was mainly concerned with the direct approach of preaching practical virtues. Surprisingly erudite as he was, remarkably well versed as he was in Buddhist philosophy, and especially, forerunner though he was in the modern method of studying Sanskrit, he thought that the discipline of the ten good deeds was enough so far as the enlightenment of the common people was concerned. Those who wished to listen to Onkō's preachings—from the Emperor to the common people—were not interested in metaphysical discussions, but solely in the moral teachings that would be of immediate use in concrete acts of everyday life. (That was why only his philosophical and doctrinal dissertations were written exclusively in *Chinese*.)

Onkō followed the tradition of Indian Buddhism when he tried to realize Buddhism within everyday acts through the discipline of the Ten Good Vows. The listing of virtues after the fashion of Indian Buddhism, however, was not to the liking of the Japanese in general, who looked for the one central virtue directly posited. It is the virtue of *"honesty"* or *"truthfulness"* which was originally adopted from Buddhism, that emerged from such a demand and came to be generally recognized as the central virtue by the Japanese.

The word "honesty" has come into use since the Nara period (710–784).[342] The Imperial rescripts, issued at their several enthronements, of the Emperors Ninmei, Montoku, Seiwa, and Yōzei during the Heian period (794–857) unanimously state "an honest heart" to be the virtue that all the subjects should strive for.[343] Probably influenced by them was the doctrine of the Ise Shrine instituted by the *Five Books of Shintoism* during the Kamakura period (1185–1333), according to which the Sun Goddess was supposed to have said: "Divine protection is based upon honesty." During the Muromachi period (1336–1573), the virtue of "honesty" as the doctrine of the Ise Shrine came to prevail among the entire populace.

According to Chikafusa Kitabatake (1293–1354), the three divine treasures of the Japanese Imperial family symbolize the virtues of "honesty," "benevolence," and "wisdom" respectively.

Although a concept corresponding to the virtue of "honesty" may very well have existed since primitive Shintoism, the term itself was adopted from Buddhism. The word "honesty" may have come also from the Confucian classics,[344] but it appears in Buddhist scriptures as well.[345] It was generally recognized by the Japanese of those days that the virtue of "honesty" in later Shintoism originated from Buddhism.[346]

The Jōdo doctrine esteems, in particular, the three states of mind, namely, sincerity, belief in the efficacy of prayer, and wishing to be reborn into the Pure Land, which are requisite for rebirth in paradise. It was Shinran who made these three states of mind converge upon one, "a heart of truthfulness, not mingled with illusion; a heart of honesty, not adulterated with falsehood."[347] According to Shinran, a religious faith ultimately amounts to honesty, or being loyal and truthful. Many other Japanese priests also extol the virtue of honesty in this sense.[348]

The virtue of honesty was especially emphasized by Nichiren, who considered that it was for honesty of heart that the Hokke Sūtra preaches the Truth, and therein he recognized the ultimate significance of the Lotus Sūtra. "The Hokke Sūtra teaches one 'to be honest and to avoid trickery,' and talks about those who are 'completely truthful,' 'straightforward in nature and flexible in intention' or 'gentle and straightforward.' It is the sūtra to believe, for those who are as honest as an arrow shot straight from a bow-string, and as a string drawn straight by a carpenter."[349] Thus he traces the authentic source of the virtue "honesty" to the Hokke (Lotus) Sūtra. He then divides "honesty" into two categories, i.e., "the honesty of this world" and "the honesty beyond this world,"[350] and maintains, "Nichiren is the only individual in Japan who is honest both in this world and beyond this world."[351]

At the beginning of the Tokugawa period in the 17th century, Zen Master Shōsan Suzuki, developed a theory of professional ethics of his own in his book, *"Rules of Conduct for Every Citizen,"* in which he urged that Buddhism put into practice was nothing but the virtue of "honesty" acted upon.[352] Neither in India nor in China was an assertion made so explicit that Buddhism was nothing but honesty put into practice, although Buddhist teachings in these countries had similar implications.

Thus, both Shintoists and Buddhists in Japan attached great importance to the word "honesty," which had appeared only sporadically in Buddhist scriptures, and finally accorded it the position of the central virtue in the general scheme of Japanese ethics.[353]

The virtue of honesty seems to be in harmony with the Japanese propensity to loyalty.[854] Such a moral consciousness probably emerged from the tendencies of the Japanese to make much of limited human relationships, their fondness for fashioning a closed social nexus, and the tendency to demand complete loyalty and mutual trust among those who belong to that nexus.

These characteristics seem to be manifest also in the forms in which the Japanese accepted Chinese thought. Chinese learning was accepted by the Japanese in the past as ethical teaching. From among various Chinese types of thought, the Japanese selected, in particular, Confucianism, strongly imbued with a moral set of precepts appropriate to a closed social nexus. This Confucianism itself was then interpreted in terms of "loyalty and fidelity," by Jinsai Itō (1627–1705), who made these notions the two central virtues of his doctrine, while the virtue of "sincerity" was stressed in the Kaitokudō school; and this line of interpretation was carried out thoroughly by the Mito school.[855] All of these three schools of Japanese Confucianism aimed at "no falsehood, no deception," as their ideal. Herein lies one of the characteristics of Japanese Confucian doctrine.

A tendency such as this emphasis on loyalty and fidelity also characterizes the Japanese acceptance of Christianity. It is pointed out that Christianity during the Meiji period (1868–1912) was fundamentally ethical and cultural in nature. Different systems of thought—Buddhism, Chinese ideas, and Western religions—met with different forms of adaptation in Japan, and each of these forms has distinct significance. But at the same time the common denominators among all of these forms of adaptation ought not to be overlooked.

Those who observed the moral confusion in Japan immediately after World War II may be led to doubt the proposition that the Japanese in the past were moralistically inclined. As far as the observance of honesty within a closed social nexus is concerned, however, little difference seems to be discoverable between traditional and recent Japanese morality. The difference seems to lie rather in the fact that what was considered to be morally tenable in Japan's "closed-door" past becomes untenable under rapidly changing worldwide social and economic conditions to which Japan is adapting itself. The traditional concept of honesty as loyalty to the clan and Emperor is applicable only to the conduct of man as a member of the particular and limited human nexus to which he belongs; it is not applicable to the conduct of man as a member of human society as a whole. This shortcoming of the traditional moral concept suddenly proves to be a weakness that needs to be overcome at a time of social confusion in the rapidly changing relations of Japan to the rest of the world.