MODERN TREND IN RELIGIOUS THOUGHTS

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I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

People often say that Eastern countries had nothing which could properly be termed a modern age before the introduction of Western civilization. They say that there had not yet appeared what might be called "modern" ways of thinking.

This appears at first glance to be true, but if we investigate the history of modern Eastern thought more thoroughly, we come to see the gradual indigenous development of modern conceptions of man and ethical values, corresponding to, yet different from, those in the modern West.

In this article, I propose to discuss some features of the thought in Japan, of nearly the same period as the modern West.

Generally speaking, it might be said that many religious sects have remained as mediaeval in their behaviour as in their manner of valuation. What then do we mean by mediaeval ways of valuation? They are generally characterized by the following features:

(1) The absolute authority of traditional religions was admitted by the people in general who were under their strict control. Traditional symbols were stereotyped for a long period.

(2) Consequently, religious orders were extremely influential in the realm of social relations.

(3) The absolute sacredness of religious canons was stressed. Scholarship was no more than deduction from, and the elucidation of, the fundamental dogmas of religions. Learning was, in the main, scholastic. Free thinking was not permitted; heretics were punished, scepticism was abhorred.

(4) The tendency of thought was, generally speaking, other-worldly. Religious life was regarded as noble, secular life as vile and mean.

(5) As for social structure, a feudalistic hierarchy of status was accepted by the common people, and was enforced by authority.

(6) Cultural life was limited to the upper classes; common people hardly

participated in it.

Such ways of thinking and behaviour were characteristic of the mediaeval West and Japan. And if we assume that modern ways of thinking involve the casting off of these, it is necessary that we should investigate Japanese thought from the same viewpoint as Western thought, although we should not overlook the difference which exists between them.

The literature written in this period is voluminous. However, focusing our investigation, we want to point out and discuss some conspicuous features in the change of thought which can be found in the works of some Japanese thinkers of the past four or five centuries before the introduction of Western civilization at the Meiji Restoration.

As the motivating power we shall first mention and discuss the critical attitude.

II. CRITICAL ATTITUDE

1. Consciousness of Ego

It is said that modern thought began with the consciousness of ego (*cogito ergo sum*). The attitude of esteeming man as such makes one aware of the problem of ego.

In Japanese Buddhism the process of the appearance of ego-consciousness can be noticed. Master T'ien-t'ai 天臺 (538–597), the founder of the Chinese T'ien-t'ai school, declared that one should not entertain doubt towards one's own master.[1] This way of thinking was most conspicuous in later Zen Buddhism, which esteems transmission from master to disciple. But in modern Japan the opposite attitude was expressed. "To be honest one must declare one's own doubts, if he has any, as I do."[2]

Even in Zen Buddhism a critical attitude was expressed towards the founder. To illustrate: Dōgen 道元 (1200–1253) denounced the theory of 'perceiving one's own nature intuitively' set forth in the Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch. But Tenkei 天桂 (1648–1735), his spiritual descendant, rejected Dōgen's opinion as 'absurd sheer nonsense.'[3] According to the traditional attitude, "one's own enlightenment should be conveyed face

1 *Mo-ho-chih-kuan* 摩訶止觀, Vol. 4b, in *Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 46, p. 45b.

2 Ishida Baigan, *Seiri Mondō* 性理問答 (Dialogue on Human Nature and Natural Order). Translation, Introduction and Notes by Paolo Beonio-Brocchieri, Roma, Istituo per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1961, p. 13.

3 Kagamishima Genryū 鏡島元隆, *Dōgen Zenji to sono Monryū* 道元禪師とその門流 (Zen Master Dōgen and His Followers), Tokyo, Seishin-shobō, 1961, p. 112.

to face, from master to disciple, and it should be approved by a single master." It is likely that this attitude reflected the feudalistic tendency of the Tokugawa period. But Tenkei gave a different interpretation.—— In this phrase "master" means 'one's own self'; "disciple" also means 'one's self'; "a single master" means 'one's self.' So, the whole phrase means 'the attainment of one's own or true self by oneself.' We need not practise under the guidance of a single teacher. Even by looking at peach blossoms one can make one's own self clear.[1]

But the Japanese ego-consciousness was greatly different from the Western one of the same period. In Zen Buddhism it was supposed that the true spirit of religion should be handed down from master to disciple. According to the Western way of understanding, the self of the master must be something different from that of the disciple. But Tenkei asserts that both are one; i. e., essentially the transmission of the spirit of religion is done from the Great Self to the Great Self. "The transmission of the Self cannot be caused by others. It is the transmission from one's self to one's self."[2] Master Dōgen taught 'learning one's self,' and Tenkei explained that it was nothing but the way of following 'the Great Self.' 'To learn (know) one's self' was interpreted as meaning 'to know one's Mind.' 'To know one's Mind' was emphasized by such Zen priests as Munan 無難 (1603–1676), Bankei 盤珪, etc. Ishida Baigan 石田梅巖 (1685–1748) also said: "To know Mind is said to be the beginning of learning (science)." It was said that it should be found out by oneself.

As the Japanese concept of the self differs from the Western one, its ethical implication became different. In the West individualism was regarded as the basis of ethics. But in Japan the removal of conflict between different individuals was regarded as the ethical ideal. This was probably due to Buddhist influence, but even among non-Buddhists this thought is noticed. Ishida Baigan, the founder of the Shingaku 心學 school, said as follows: "Real learning consists in attaining complete *freedom from the personal Mind.*" "You must conceive this *selflessness* as a Law."[4] Among the thinkers of the modern West egoism and individualism were clearly distinguished; but among the Japanese thinkers of the same period this distinction was not so clearly made.

However, the thinkers who advocated the significance of the indi-

1 G. Kagamishima, pp. 106, 108.
2 G. Kagamishima, pp. 120, 124.
3 *Seiri Mondō*, p. 57.
4 Ibid., p. 57.

vidual were not entirely lacking. For example, Ninomiya Sontoku 二宮尊徳 (1787–1856) valued the individual in a way that was unusual for his time. Once, pointing to the statue of the Buddha that represents him as saying when he was born, "Between heaven and earth only I am holy," Sontoku said to his disciples. The Buddha did not use those words out of false pride, nor must they be applied exclusively to him. The teaching ought to be that every man thinking of himself should feel, that between heaven and earth there is no more noble man than he, for were he not existent there would be nothing.[1] Originally this legend came into existence in order to glorify the superhuman quality of the Buddha among later devout Buddhists.[2] Sontoku's interpretation seems to have been a slightly modernized one. But here we find the assertion of the dignity and significance of the individual in its incipient stage.

The consciousness of ego and the critical spirit finally led to the appearance of some materialists. In the modern West materialism occurred: Bacon and Hobbes, in England, and La Metree, D'Olbach, Diderot, etc., were its advocates before Marx and Engels. With regard to the Japanese counterparts, as those who prepared the way for materialism we can mention Kaibara Ekken 貝原益軒 (1630–1714), Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728), Dazai Shuntai 太宰春臺 (1680–1747), Tominaga Nakamoto 富永仲基 (1715–1746), Miura Baien 三浦梅園 (1723–1789), Minakawa Kien 皆川淇園 (1731–1804), and those who approached materialism Kamada Ryūō 鎌田柳泓 (1733–1821), Yamakata Bantō 山片蟠桃 (1746–1821), and Andō Shōeki 安藤昌益 (1707-*c.*1760), although Japan prior to the Meiji Restoration may be said to have had no materialists in the strict sense of the word.[3] They were anti-religious, but their thoughts were limited to a small circle, and they left little influence. It was only due to the efforts of some foreign scholars such as the late E. H. Norman[4] and a Russian communist scholar that Japanese intellectuals in general came to notice the existence of materialists in the late feudal days.

1 Robert Cornell Armstrong, *Ninomiya Sontoku, the Peasant Sage*, The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, Vol. XXXVIII, Pt. 2, Yokohama and Tokyo, 1910, p. 19.

2 This legend is not mentioned in the Pali four Nikāyas, but in the later works such as Buddha-biographies.

3 Japanese materialism in the Tokugawa period and after the Meiji Restoration is discussed in Saigusa Hiroto 三枝博音, *Nihon no Yuibutsuronsha* 日本の唯物論者 (Materialists of Japan), Tokyo, Eihō-sha, 1956.

4 E. H. Norman, *Andō Shōeki and the Anatomy of Japanese Feudalism*, The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, Third Series, Vol. II, Tokyo, Asiatic Society of Japan, 1949.

2. Empirical Inquiry

In the West the modern age began with critical inquiry by means of doubt. Doubt was encouraged in China as in the West.

In the West doubts were first directed towards miracles which were essential to the faith of the mediaeval ages. In Japan also we can trace a similar movement. Miracles were already repudiated in the Mediaeval Ages by Master Dōgen who said: "People commonly believe that occult powers of Buddhas are such as exhaling water and fire from the body or inhaling water from the ocean into the pores of the body." These may be called "small occult powers," but they are not worthy of the name of the true occult powers. The true occult powers, that is to say, "great occult powers," exist within and only within the simple everyday occurrences of "drinking tea, eating rice, drawing water, and carrying faggots." This is the "occult power of Buddha" or "the occult power of one who aspires to be a Buddha." One who practises this power will eventually become "an occult-power Buddha." It means that the true miracle is the fact that one lives righteously one's own daily life.[1] Suzuki Shōsan 鈴木正三 (1579–1655) repudiated miracles set forth by Catholicism. He said: "There should be no miracle in the true religion. In Japan the chief miracle workers are foxes and badgers."[2] But in Japan the problem of miracles did not cause much trouble, because miracles were not regarded as essential to Buddhism.

Ninomiya Sontoku said that the true teaching should be read from the unwritten sacred book of nature. He had a poem, "Without sound, without odour, heaven and earth repeat over and over again the unwritten sacred book." If you wish to read this book you must close your physical eyes and open your spiritual eyes. He says there are mistakes in the written books and therefore he compares them with the unwritten book of nature and unless they are in harmony with the universe-book he rejects them.[3]

His sole reliance upon experience led him to practical attitude. Ninomiya said: "True learning does not consist in knowledge of books; it must be practical and capable of practical application."[4]

In Japan some ingenious intellectuals engaged in scientific researches and inventions. For example, the activities of Hiraga Gennai 平賀源内 (1728–1779) have many similarities to those of Benjamin Franklin in his

1 *Shōbō Genzō* 正法眼藏, Chap. 25, Jinzū 神通.
2 Suzuki Shōsan, *Ha-kirishitan* 破吉利支丹 (Refutation of Christianity).
3 R. C. Armstrong, p. 18.
4 R. C. Armstrong, p. 19.

experiments with electricity, etc. But their attempts did not develop.

3. Nature and Natural Law

The concept of a "natural order" had become widespread in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe. Corresponding to it in Japan of nearly the same period the concept of natural law was advocated by many thinkers.

Universality of truth came to be stressed. Master Munan said: "Confucius said: 'My doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity.'[1] The purport of this saying is (the Way's) pervading Heaven and Earth. It is tantamount to the Buddhist Great Wisdom (Maha-prajñā)."[2] Whether such an interpretation of the Great Wisdom is right or not is in need of further examining. But Munan took it for asserting universality of truth. Such an opinion was conspicuous among liberal Zen priests and Shingaku teachers and scholars of a new tendency, such as Jiun Sonja 慈雲尊者 (1718–1804) in the Tokugawa period, etc.

St. Jiun, the pioneer of Sanskrit scholarship in Japan, stressed the idea with a rationalistic attitude. "In this world there are the true Laws which benefits it always. Those who have open eyes can see these Laws as clearly as they see the sun and moon. Whether a Buddha appears or whether a Buddha does not appear, (regardless of it) this world exists, and human beings exist. These Ten Virtues will always be manifest along them (i. e., so long as they exist)."[3]

Here we are surprised by the striking similarity of the concepts of natural law between Grotius and Jiun. However, Grotius was a Westerner. He says: "And yet God may be called the author of natural law, since He is the author of Nature, and therefore wills this law to be valid." Jiun's opinion is quite different. According to him, nature and law are nothing but Buddha himself.

Jiun found the essence of Buddhism in observing natural law, which could be termed as the observance of the Ten Virtues. "It is true of only the teachings of the Ten Virtues that they never change. Throughout all the ages, both ancient and modern, and throughout all lands they constitute the suitable and true Path for both the wise and the ignorant, the superior man and the inferior man, and for both men and women."[4]

1 *Analects* 論語, IV, 15.

2 *Jishōki* 自性記.

3 *Jūzen Hōgo* 十善法語 (The Ten Buddhism Virtues. A sermon preached in 1773 by Katsuragi Jiun.), The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, Vol. XXXIII, Yokohama and Tokyo, Pt. 2, p. 44.

4 Ibid., P. 55.

Natural law should be the basis for ethical conduct throughout all countries. "Just as heaven and earth exist, so also are there various countries in existence. Sun, moon, and stars move according to the laws of heaven, while mountains, seas and rivers are governed by the laws of earth. As there are various countries, so there exist men to inhabit them. The human nexus is constituted by the relationships between lord and subject, parents and children, husband and wife, between brothers, and between friends."[1]

However, Jiun was not a law scholar. Whereas Grotius made a quite extraordinary impression on the statesmen of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and influenced later legal thought, Jiun was an individual thinker and his thought was forgotten.

Ishida Baigan, the founder of the Shingaku school, admitted Nature, which is good. "A healthy person can taste food and enjoy it, but a man sick with fever even if he does eat, cannot taste good food and so does not enjoy it. The people who do not understand Good Nature are like that."[2] Using the technical terms of the Neo-Confucianists of the Sung 宋 period, he explains Nature. "The movement of the Forms is the ever spreading Ether of Heaven and Earth. As it can be clearly seen that Heaven and Earth and myself are single, harmonious thing, we can deduce that the theory of Good Nature is evident and in agreement with the Doctrine of Changes."[3]

Our human individual is a microcosm, and in this sense it partakes of Nature. "Inspiration and Expiration are negative and positive. Those who follow this are good. The Internal Substance which rules the deeds of our External Functioning is Nature. From this you can see that, man, as a whole, is a small Heaven and Earth. If you fully conceive your being as a small Heaven and Earth, you will never complain for lack of anything."[4]

In the behavioural context it can be called Human-Heartedness. "The peace of one's mind is Human-Heartedness. Human-Heartedness is Heaven's original Ether. This Ether from Heaven generates and keeps alive all these Thousand Things. The aim and the reason for learning is to get to know one's mind. Our duty is to feed nature through our mind while we breathe. If we follow the Way of Human-Heartedness and Love and Propriety even a little, we may live in peace."[5]

1 *Jūzen Hōgo*, p. 55.
2 *Seiri Mondō*, p. 26.
3 Ibid., p. 25.
4 Ibid., p. 29.
5 Ibid., p. 41.

Considered in terms of the Forms, another term of the Neo-Confucianists, Nature is called the Mind. "It is the Mind which identifies itself in the Forms. See how the Mind exists even in birds and animals! Frogs are naturally afraid of snakes. It is not surely a mother who teaches her offspring that snakes are dangerous and will gobble them up and, of course, tadpoles do not study and do not gradually learn all this. The fact is that if you are born under the Form of a frog, the fear for snakes comes straight in the Mind from the Form. Let us consider something analogous: when summer comes a flea clings to man's body. Here again, do a flea's parents teach it to live by sucking men's blood? Is it taught if it sees a man's hand approach, it must jump away immediately lest it lose its life? The reason is that when a flea jumps away it acts in accordance with the Forms and not because it has learnt to do so."[1] "Birds and Beasts have no Personal Mind and therefore comply perfectly with the dictates of the Forms."[2] The explanation of nature with these illustrations is not so different from that of the West. But it seems that Nature was equated with the Mind by him. "What is called Nature is the Internal Substance of Heaven, of Earth and Man."[3]

The final goal of ethical conduct was, according to him, to recover one's own original Mind. "To attain something by following the Law means to attain the Mind."[4] "If you just let yourself go, and become receptive, everything is natural, easy, evident."[5] One might be surprised, when he knows that he wants to apply his theory even to politics. "By ruling without acknowledging this Order (Principle) a ruler will not be able to govern his country."[6] His thought may sound too idealistic, but when we find a highly idealistic Western counterpart in Fichte, we need not be surprised.

Ninomiya Sontoku, the "Peasant Sage," emphasized the indebtedness of mankind to nature and to fellowship. Man's true nature, Sontoku taught, consists in pious devotion to the order of nature, which manifests itself in the moral order of human life, especially in the relation between the lord and his subjects, parents and children, benefactor and recipient in general, expressed in grace and gratitude. Nature evolves and changes by itself, but man has to conquer his instinctive selfishness and endeavour to conform to the moral order of life.[7] Contrary to the general trend

1 *Seiri Mondō*, p. 43.
2 Ibid., p. 44.
3 Ibid., p. 55.
4 Ibid., p. 56.
5 Ibid., p. 33.
6 Ibid., p. 60.

of naturalism, Ninomiya Sontoku emphasized frugality, which is an outcome of the sense of indebtedness, and gratitude for the benefit bestowed.

The most radical conception of Nature was held by Andō Shōeki, who said: "It is erroneous to designate as 'the Way' various teachings such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Taoism, and medicine. By the Way ought to be implied the single motivating power of Nature, that is the unique principle of practical virtue."[1] He severely criticized traditional religions. "Saints (or sages) of all ages stole Heaven's way, made arbitrary institutions out of it, sold benevolence and righteousness, bought (i. e., received) taxes, and ate and dressed by so doing. The saints' followers sold the laws of the saints and bought the world of avarice to eat and dress without labour."[2]

The terms 'law' and 'natural law' had been used from antiquity on, and we find it rather difficult to discern the difference between the ancient and the modern usage of these terms. This point should be subjected to further study.

4. The Idea of Evolution

The idea of nature or natural law was common to both East and West. But what was lacking in Eastern countries was the idea of evolution. There were the ideas of change, manifestation and development there. But people there did not think of evolution clearly. The idea of evolution appeared first in the modern West. It seems that this idea did not occur in Eastern countries prior to the introduction of Western civilization, although its influence has been very strong since then.

In correspondence with this feature, dialectical thinking was not clear in Eastern countries before the introduction of Western civilization. The T'ien-t'ai and San-lun 三論 philosophies of ancient China and Japan had some dialectical thinking, but it did not develop in the line of dialectics. In modern Japan there were some individual thinkers who held some dialectical ideas. Ishida Baigan set forth the thought that Negative and Positive are two things and yet they cannot be separated. But even if it seems one, it has the two aspects of Motion and Quiescence.[3]

Miura Baien expressed a theory of dialectics of his own. "The

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7 Anesaki Masaharu 姉崎正治, *History of Japanese Religions*, London, Kegan Paul, 1930, pp. 302–303.

1 E. H. Norman, p. 159.

2 E. H. Norman, p. 146.

3 *Seiri Mondō*, pp. 19–20.

way to understand nature (or the universe) is dialectics (*jōri* 條理). The secret (*ketsu* 結) of dialectics is to see synthesis (*gōitsu* 合一) in antithesis (*han* 反). It is to give up one-sided preoccupation and to correct marks (*chōhyō* 徵表).——*Yin* 陰 and *Yang* 陽 are antithetical to each other, and constitute a battle. As they are antithetic to each other they can be brought to synthesis."[1] Here we find the thought of dialectics in its incipient stage. But his opinion was not set forth so systematically as the system of Hegel.

III. CHANGE IN VALUATION OF TRADITIONAL SYMBOLS

1. *The Problems*

Modern valuation of man begins with the discarding of charismatic authorities in general. Moderns generally do not admit the significance of particular men who are qualified with higher magical or spiritual power by birth or by esoteric practice.

To this fundamental attitude there are three corollaries:

(1) Denunciation of esoteric religious practices which are regarded as endowing the practitioner with charismatic authority. Here "esoteric" means "to be intended for only a secluded group of disciples or inmates who are qualified by a religious authority."

(2) Denunciation of the charisma of a particular person who has been given prestige by peculiar practices authorized by something above men. "Charisma" means possessing certain extraordinary, divine powers which inspire people to follow a specific pattern of behaviour laid down by an authority.

(3) Denunciation of systems of esoteric religious practices, which have tended to be formalistic. Denunciation of esoteric religious austerities was the starting-point for the development of modern thought.

2. *Denunciation of Religious Formalism and Stress on Inner Devotion*

The esteem of religious rites is based upon the attention paid to the outer symbolical expression of our religious feeling. Stereotyped symbols do not necessarily express human values. The effort then to recover oneself as man implies the devaluation of esoteric or formalistic religious rites and symbol, and stress on inner devotion.

However, it was only independent individuals who expressed the

1 H. Saigusa, *Miura Baien no Tetsugaku* 三浦梅園の哲學 (The Philosophy of Miura Baien), Tokyo, Daiichi-shobō, 1931, p. 132; also *ditto, Nihon no Yuibutsuronsha*, p. 93.

attitude of iconoclasm. For example, Mokujiki 木食 (1718–1810), the itinerant, said:

"My voice has become hoarse
Due to repetition of Nembutsu prayers 念佛
But, alas, no reply!
Amida 阿彌陀 and Shakya 釋迦 Buddha are taking a siesta!"[1]

Therefore iconoclasm did not occur as a nation-wide movement among Japanese Buddhists. A work entitled *Daijingū Sankeiki* 大神宮參詣記 (The Diary of a Pilgrim to Ise Shrine 伊勢神宮) by Saka-Shibutsu 坂士佛, father of Jubutsu, runs as follows:

> "It is quite usual with us and it is of great significance, that we do not carry with us any rosaries like Buddhists and we do not present any material offerings to the Sun-Goddess at Ise; in other words, there is no selfish desire or petition on our part. This is called inner purity or heart-purity. We worshippers cleanse ourselves with lustral water ceremonially; we call this outer purity or bodily purity. So purified, without and within, we are all-purity itself like the Divinity. The deity is immanent in man and man is inherent in the deity; there is neither the divine nor the human; there is no difference in essence at all between them. When I [the author] was so told by the Shinto priest at the Shrine of the Sun-Goddess, I was overwhelmed with tears of pious gratitude."[2]

Watarai Nobuyoshi 度會延佳 (died in 1690) said: "Complete sincerity is the absolute principle of Shintoism."[3] The new Shinto sects which appeared at the end of the Tokugawa period showed a strong tendency to discard all doctrinal subtleties and complicated ritualism, and to establish a religion of the simple pure heart. On the occasion of the Meiji Restoration fanatic nationalists took images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and copies of scriptures out of Buddhist temples, and burnt them. But this was not a movement which occurred from within Japanese Buddhism itself, but which was instigated by aggressive Shinto revivalists. Shinto iconoclasm was carried out within its own tradition without any religious influence from abroad.

Religious rites can be regarded as symbols, in essential respects, expressing and communicating one's own religious feelings and will to act in accordance with religious values. But they themselves should not

1 *Yanagi Muneyoshi Senshū* 柳宗悦選集 (Selected Works of Yanagi Muneyoshi), Vol. 9, Tokyo, Shunjū-sha, 1955.

2 Katō Genchi, *Shinto's Terra Incognita to Be Explored Yet* (for private circulation), Gotenba, Japan, 1958, pp. 13–14.

3 *Jingū Hiden Mondō* 神宮祕傳問答, cited in Katō.

be regarded as absolute, however long they may have been traditionally observed. If they come to bind and hamper men, they cease to be such. Some modern thinkers of Japan took this view, and tried to restore the basis upon which religious symbols exist.

3. Denunciation of the Charismatic Authority of an Individual

In the mediaeval age, both in the East and West, spiritual teachers claimed special authority over their disciples and followers. They assumed the role of superior men and were regarded as higher than common people. Very often they served as living gods or deputies of God or gods.

Such an attitude was criticized very often by Zen masters, but not necessarily in modern times. One of the religious leaders of modern Japan who is noteworthy in this connexion is Suzuki Shōsan who denied the authority of the founders and previous masters of various sects. He said: "Looking into written sayings of previous masters, it does not seem that there have been persons who have practised with zeal."[1]

Master Munan, explaining the phrase: "Transmission outside the doctrines," said:

> "As the essence of religion lies originally outside of the doctrines, we cannot help. It was a big blunder that Lord Shakya taught the excellent teaching!"[2]

Here a Zen master actually admonishes the founder of Buddhism!

Andō Shōeki judged Confucian scholars and Buddhist clergy as the spiritual oppressors of his age, in the same way as Winstanley decried the clergy and lawyers as the chief deceivers of the people. Yet neither Shōeki nor Winstanley can be properly termed atheists. The one preserved a veneration for the genial gods of old Japan and, like a pantheist, he seems to have equated them with the forces of Nature; the other, puritan and protestant, looked to the Scriptures as his sole guide to morality and political practice.[3]

In order to ridicule the secluded life of recluses, Munan teased recluses, saying: "One who will become a recluse in mountains without attaining enlightenment is due to become a beast!"[4]

1 *Roankyō* 驢鞍橋, Pt. 1, in *Zenmon Hōgo-shū* 禪門法語集.
2 *Munan Zenji Kana-hōgo* 無難禪師假名法語, in *Zenmon Hōgo-shū*, Vol. 1.
3 E. H. Norman, p. 315.
4 *Jishōki.*

4. Denunciation of Religious Differences

The attitude of denouncing charismatic and scriptural authority, on the one hand, and that of denouncing religious rites, on the other hand, led thinkers to reject differences between religions.

This tendency occurred among reformative religious leaders of Japan at nearly the same period as in the West. Tenkei, the liberal Sōtō 曹洞 Zen teacher, did not deny the distinction between various sects,[1] but he denied distinctions such as Rinzai 臨濟, Sōtō, etc. in Zen Buddhism. Tenkei, being a monk of Sōtō Zen, eliminated or criticized the passages in Dōgen's works in which Master Dōgen, the founder of Japanese Sōtō Zen, praised the lineage of Sōtō, and rejected the lineage of Rinzai. It would be difficult to think of his liberal attitude apart from his social background that he preached in the city of Ōsaka, the most prosperous commercial centre of Japan. Most Shingaku teachers taught Buddhism in general. Kyūō 鳩翁 (1783–1839) said:

> "Different sects look up to the same moon shining on the summit.... Each one should keep the teaching of one's own sect carefully, and endeavour not to compute with other."[2]

When the above-mentioned standpoint is theoretically pushed to the extreme, the distinction between various religions should be abolished. Master Munan said: "Mind is called Gods, Heaven or Buddha in three countries (i. e., Japan, China and India). Their terms are different, but the same in essence."[3]

When we come to think further theoretically, what is called a religion itself comes to be useless. Mokujiki, the itinerant priest, blamed the narrow attitude of sectarianism.

> "It would be useless to be staunchly devout to Buddhism; When I asked Dear Amida (about what Buddhism is), he replied: O! Conglomeration of falsehood!"[4]

Ishida Baigan asserted that one should foresake the specific appellation of each religion. "When you have attained the Mind, you are free from either the names of Buddhism or of Confucianism."[5] "There are no different Minds and whoever believes that thanks to Buddhism he can attain a different Mind, is foolish, and will never come to any

1 G. Kagamishima, p. 116 and 22.

2 Furuta Shōkin 古田紹欽, *Kinsei no Zensha-tachi* 近世の禪者達 (Zen Buddhists in Modern Japan), Kyōto, Heirakuji-shoten, 1956, pp. 126–135.

3 *Jishōki.*

4 M. Yanagi, Vol. 9, p. 321.

5 *Seiri Mondō*, p. 54.

good."[1] Both the Shingaku movement originating from Ishida Baigan and the Hōtoku 報德 movement originating from Ninomiya Sontoku, were more or less eclectic and attempted to extract from various religions what was most essential to religion and beneficial to practical ethics and popular instruction. This feature can be found in the thought of Master Jiun, the pioneer of Sanskrit scholarship also.

In spite of these new movements, however, denominational boundaries were strictly laid down by the Tokugawa Government, and overstepping them was prohibited.

In the field of religion highly liberal movements such as unitarianism or universalism occurred. The Shingaku scholars of Japan advocated that Mind alone is the basis of religion and minimized all authorities.

Every dogmatic religion overlooks the practical significance of symbols, and worships not only images but also theological opinions. These are nothing but the outer symbols of the absolute. These forms are employed by religions only to focus their faith. When the worshippers confuse these outer symbols with the deeper true reality, they get into idolatry.

The current diverse religious groups which are bound within themselves by means of dogmas, rites, and ceremonies, militate against the formation of a universal human society. If we realize the true significance of symbolism, then we shall not insist on any one route by which men reach knowledge of reality or truth. To reject the differences between religions, follows logically from a higher valuation of man.

It seems that such a non-sectarian tendency was easier to appear in Eastern countries than in the West. However, all movements of such a tendency had a stumbling block. Any new religious movement of this kind was based upon, so to speak, the greatest common measure of the several existing religions which were prevalent in those days. So any non-sectarian movement had to face the ironical danger that the movement itself tended to be sectarian at the end.

IV. CHANGE IN VALUATION OF MAN

1. Value of Man as the Supreme—Stress on Human Love

The ethics of esteeming man as such presupposes man as the supreme value. Some may want to realize it through faith in God, while others may not assume God. But love or compassion directed to others was regarded as the fundamental principle of human action.

1 *Seiri Mondō*, p. 55.

This attitude was emphasized by some thinkers of nearly the same period in Japan, although the latter did not have the belief in the Son of God.

In Christianity the relationship between Christ and his followers is sometimes explained in comparison to that which exists between bride and bridegroom. On this point Kabir's mental attitude about faith is nearer to Western religion than to ancient Brahmanism and Buddhism. Among Chinese and Japanese Buddhists, however, even in modern ages, the idea of lover-sweetheart relationship between Buddha and man never took place, although the idea of compassion has been greatly extolled. In China and Japan this idea has been regarded as something secular.

Love replaces everything according to modern thinkers. The spirit of emphasizing love or compassion which is perceived in these thinkers becomes the basis for all kinds of moral action. It raises the valuation of man.

Some modern thinkers asserted that sin is justified for the glory of God. However, in China, Japan, and other Asian countries of the same period such a justification did not occur, for Buddhism does not presuppose creation by God, and so there was no need of justifying it.

In China and Japan of the same period, there was a tendency for the esteem of love to be set forth in the form of esteeming human physical nature.

In modern Japan Confucianists tried to accept man's natural dispositions against the traditions of Chinese Confucianism and Buddhism. Ogyū Sorai recognized the intrinsic value of Japanese novels, in spite of their immoral contents.[1] Dazai Shuntai called man's natural feelings the real feelings, which he defined to be "likes and dislikes, sufferings and rejoicing, anxiety and pleasure, etc." And he maintains "... There is not a single human being devoid of these feelings.... Love of one's parents, wives and children is also the same among the noble and the low. Since these feelings are originated from the innate truthfulness, never stained with falsity, they are called the real feelings."[2] His standpoint was pure naturalism. "There are no double-dealings in the deeds overflowed from the natural dispositions, wherein the inside and outside are so transparent that they are one and the same thing. The natural dispositions are the innate true nature of men."[3] He defiantly

1 Iwahashi Junsei 岩橋遵成, *Sorai Kenkyū* 徂徠研究 (Studies on Ogyū Sorai), Tokyo, Seki-shoin, 1934, p. 433.

2 *Keizairoku* 經濟錄, Vol. 1, fol. 10.

3 *Seigaku Mondō* 聖學問答, 3, quoted in Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎, *Nihon Kogakuha no Tetsugaku* 日本古學派之哲學 (Philosophy in Japanese Classical Study Group), Tokyo, Fuzanbō, 1921, p. 693.

declared: "I would rather be a master of acrobatic feats, than to be a moralist."[1]

Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730–1801), refuting Confucianism and Buddhism, said:

> "The pure mind is the natural mind." "The Confucian scholars who are most highly esteemed as men of wisdom, and the Buddhist priests who are revered as saints, admire the beauty of stars and flowers, but they pretend never to have seen a beautiful woman. What a deception of mind!"[2]
>
> "They hate the natural inclinations of man, but are not these same inclinations the divine laws?"[3]

In such words of Motoori there sounds unmistakably the same feeling of joy and love of nature and man as was proclaimed in the European Renaissance. Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤 (1766–1843), the founder of Jingoistic Shintoism, said: "To comply with the natural dispositions is called the Way.... At the time of man's birth man is provided with the inborn true feelings of benevolence, justice, propriety and intelligence. Not to falsify or not to distort them is the true way of humanity.... One should indeed stop acting like a sage and completely abandon the so-called Mind or the way of enlightenment, and all that are affected and Buddhaish."

Onkō 飲光 (Jiun Sonja), a modern Buddhist thinker, preached that morality means to follow man's natural dispositions.[4] Tokugawa Nariaki 德川齊昭, the nationalist leader, who attempted the revival of Confucian scholarship in the late feudal age of Japan, said: "What is spreading the Way (Kōdō 弘道)? It is man himself that can spread the Way."[5] It is interesting to know that Ishida Baigan came to say that saints and ordinary men are not essentially different with respect to human nature. "All men are gifted with a never changing mind, but being blinded by the Seven Emotions they believe a Saint's wisdom is different from any other, and due to their blindness they are filled with doubts."[6] Miki みき (1798–1887) of Yamato, the founder of the Tenri-kyō religion 天理教 taught that the human being is the abode of divine charity.

1 *Seigaku Mondō*, quoted in T. Inoue.
2 *Tamakatsuma* 玉勝間.
3 *Kojiki-den* 古事記傳, I.
4 *Kodō Taii* 古道大意, Vol. 2, in Ueda Mannen 上田萬年 ed., *Hirata Atsutane Zenshū* 平田篤胤全集 (Complete Works of Hirata Atsutane), Vol. 7, Tokyo, Naigai-shoseki, 1932, p. 69.
5 *Kōdōkwanki* 弘道館記 (A Prologue for Founding the Kōdō Institute), translated by Katō Genchi, Tokyo, Meiji Shōtoku Kinen Gakkai, 1937.
6 *Seiri Mondō*, 42–43.

Corresponding to the new trend Buddhist masters came to reject the former attitude of asceticism. Master Hakuin 白隱 (1685–1768) said: "'To cast away oneself' does not mean 'to ill-treat oneself' or 'to disregard diet and health.'"[1] Moreover, a new trend occurred in Buddhism also. Master Jiun said: "What is called man is by nature endowed with the Ten Virtues. The world of humanity also is by nature endowed with the Ten Virtues.... In contrast to animals one should know man."[2] And then he elaborates on the distinction. In the mediaeval ages Japanese Buddhists were apt to emphasize the virtue of compassion, which should be extended to animals, and they did not much emphasize the superiority of man over animals. But here a reformist Buddhist leader emphasizes the dignity and significance of man.

As a corollary from the thought that man is the supreme, cruel punishments and customs, such as burning at the stake and duelling, which could be found in both East and West, disappeared although the date of disappearance differed from country to country. With the dying of religious fanaticism, Buddhist monks no longer burned themselves on altars as sacrifices to Buddha, as in the mediaeval ages, in China and Japan. The attitude of some Zen masters became more lenient towards the sins of disciples.[3]

But the humanitarian attitude in the modern ages was different from the attitude of mediaeval compassion. In Japan a limitation was put on that of the mediaeval ideal. For example, Ishida Baigan said: "If you try to realize the Way of government only through a mind of compassion and Love and without the Saint's Law, there will be but rebellions."[4] Anyhow it seems that humanitarian spirit developed in a rather realistic way.

2. *Equality of Man—Anti-discrimination*

The attitude of esteeming man as such leads one to discard all discriminations based upon traditional authority. Already in mediaeval Japan the equality of Man in the religious sense was advocated by religious leaders. Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1262) did not admit that women are less capable than men of attaining to the state of bliss. Nichiren 日蓮 (1222–1282) found one of the justifications for his belief in the

1 *Byōsha Bō-Koji ni Shimesu* 病者某居士に示す (A Letter to a Certain Sick Layman).

2 *Jūzen Hōgo*, p. 34.

3 To Illustrate: In a monastery headed by Master Bankei there was a monk who committed theft. He knew it, but he protected him not to be punished. (See, *Bankei Zenji Goroku* 盤珪禪師語錄, Iwanami-Bunko-bon, p. 234.)

4 *Seiri Mondō*, p. 51.

Lotus Sutra in its teaching of equality of women and men. The Orai (Esoteric) Teachings of the Japanese Tendai Sect advocated the equality of all mankind.[1] But it did not develop as a social movement.

In Japan of the Western modern period the cry for equality was not so strong as in the West or in even India. Even brilliant Buddhist leaders such as Master Jiun who was so progressive in other respects acquiesced in the existing hierarchical social system of the society of those days. Master Jiun explained away the Buddhist teaching of equality in a different way. He said: "Buddhism teaches distinctions of grade and position. The equality it teaches is not such foolishness as that of breaking down high mountains, filling in deep valleys and making all into a dead level. Buddhism teaches us the way between lord and subjects, father and son, teacher and disciple."[2] But it does not necessarily seem to mean that he was backward, for in the modern West also these regulations were enforced, which look quite backwards in the eyes of contemporaries.

In Japan before the introduction of the Western civilization there were some Buddhist thinkers who advocated some theories which implied equality of men. The author of the *Saru-hōgo* 猿法語 (Sermon by a Monkey) denounced the concept of private property in the religious sense. "You should not make a discrimination between self and others. Riches such as gold, silver, fortune and treasures belong to the whole world. Even if they are in the hands of others, they do not belong to them. Even if I keep them, they are not mine. If they are confined in the hands of others without being utilized, they are of no use; if I do not utilize them, solely keeping grip of them, it is only like piling up stones."[3] Munan, a Zen priest, discouraged the custom of leaving property to one's own descendants. "You should not leave treasures with your descendants. It is certain that they are lost. To practise the teaching of Buddha is most important."[4] They asserted that riches should be used by the public. But their existence in society was marginal, and few people cared for their assertions. In Eastern countries there was little attempt to bring the ideal of equality into practice. It was only with the advent of Western forces that the feudal system of Japan collapsed.

1 Ogata Dōken 小方道憲, "Kuden Hōmon no Jissen Rinri 口傳法門の實踐倫理 (The Practical Ethic of the Oral Tradition)," *Nippon Bukkyō* 日本佛教, No. 2, October., 1958, pp. 41–49.

2 *Jūzen Hōgo*, p. 53.

3 *Saru-hōgo*, in *Zenmon Hōgo-shū*, Vol. 2, p. 253.

4 *Munan Zenji Kana-hōgo*, p. 378.

In Japan under the Tokugawa government women were not given equal status. But around the time of the collapse of the Tokugawa feudal régime some new religions, such as Isson-kyō 一尊教, Tenri-kyō, etc., were founded by prophetesses. A conspicuous religious phenomenon after World War II is the rise of new religions. Among a total of 120, about 48 were founded by ladies. This phenomenon cannot be found in pre-modern Japan.

3. This-worldliness

The principle of esteeming man as such and of loving men as equal beings tends to do away with the attitude of subjecting men to, and sacrificing men for, any higher beings, including God or gods.

The tendency of religious thought in the mediaeval age throughout many countries, was, generally speaking, other-worldly. People yearned for such a happy life in the future world after death, as in Heaven.

In Japan the turning-point from other-worldliness to this-worldliness seems to have occurred around the Kanbun period (1661–1673). Before that period, i. e., in the early Tokugawa period, printed books were published at the rate of Buddhist 3 : non-Buddhist 1. However, after this period the rate was reversed, and Confucian books were more and more printed. Japanese Confucianists and scholars of Japanese classics attacked Buddhism for its other-worldliness. Some reformist Buddhists changed their traditional attitude. The this-worldly character of Zen in the modern times was conspicuous in such Zen priests as Suzuki Shōsan who taught lay believers: "To pray for a happy future does not mean to pray for a world after death. It means to be delivered here and now and thus to attain a great comfort. Then, where do you think those afflictions come from? They are originated merely from the attachment to your own body. To be delivered from it is to become a Buddha."[1] But such an opinion was not generally accepted in the Tokugawa period.

Humanitarianism is closely connected with this-worldliness, and is one of the conspicuous features of the evaluation of man in modern times.

In Japanese Buddhism there appeared some reformists to affirm human life. Master Jiun said: "Some say that, since Buddhism teaches only the disciplines of the mind by the mind itself, it is of no use to the people, and that for the same reason it is of no value to those who govern the masses. Confucianism, it is said, teaches the regulation of conduct by forms, ceremonies and rules of etiquette. Because of this

1 *Roankyō*, Pt. 1.

Confucianism is of great use in teaching and edifying people. This objection to Buddhism is made by those who do not really know what Buddhism is, and who have seen only its shortcomings which arose after the dynasties of Sung and Yuan 元. Buddhism, which is the True Law, certainly teaches the Ten Virtues. By this teaching even ordinary men can regulate themselves and their homes, and finally can thus walk in the right path."[1]

However, the life-affirming attitude was more obvious among non-Buddhists. According to Kurozumi Munetada 黒住宗忠 (1780–1850), the founder of the Kurozumi sect of Shintoism, human life amounted to nothing but a realization of our intrinsic connection with the cosmic vitality. This communion he called *iki-tōshi* 生きとうし, i. e., "penetrating into life" or "pervaded by vitality."[2] Andō Shōeki clearly said: "Direct cultivation and happy eating, direct weaving and happy clothing—there is no Way but this. Talking of thousands of ways is false."[3] However, such an outspoken assertion could not be expressed publicly under the pressure of the Tokugawa Shogunate government. It was only after the Meiji Restoration that it became possible, but with the probability of being blamed by educators and social leaders.

4. The Esteem of Inner-worldly Activity and Vocational Ethica

As earthly life consists in action, this-worldliness tends to emphasize action in social life (*vita activa versus vita contemplativa*).

In Japan the spirit of activity was extolled. According to Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁齋 (1627–1705), the Japanese Confucianist, the world of reality is nothing but action, and action is in itself good. "Between heaven and earth there is only one reason: motion without stillness, good without evil. Stillness is the end of motion, while evil is a kind of death. It is not that these two opposites are generated together, but they are all one with life."[4] Ogyū Sorai and other characteristically Japanese Confucianists rejected the quietism of the Confucianists of Mediaeval China (the Sung period). Quiet sitting and having reverential love in one's heart were the method of mental training practised by most Chinese Confucianists of the Middle Ages (around the Sung period). These were ridiculed by Sorai: "As I look at them, even gambling seems to be superior to quiet sitting and having reverential love in one's heart."[5]

1 *Jūzen Hōgo*, p. 48.
2 M. Anesaki, p. 315.
3 E. H. Norman, p. 161.
4 *Dōji Mon* 童子問 (Questions by Children), Vol. 2.

Meditation was repudiated by some Zen masters whose quintessence would be in the practice of meditation. Suzuki Shōsan discouraged laymen from practising meditation; instead he encouraged them to carry on their duties.

The spirit of activity was encouraged among the merchants whose influence was gaining in society. Ishida Baigan, one of their ideological leaders, who founded the Shingaku movement, said: "Once Confucius stood by a river" and said:[1] "It flows on just like this not ceasing day and night!" He meant that a flowing river is the best means to be able to see quite easily towards the Internal Substance of the Way."[2] This somewhat twisted interpretation was similar to that which was given by Itō Jinsai.[3] Confucius lamented the transitoriness of everything by the saying, but Jinsai took it for meaning extolment of active generation and development of all things.

This spirit finally became the motivating power for modernizing Japan. The new religions which appeared around the turning-point leading to the collapse of the feudal régime also had the same notion. Kurozumi Munetada was severely ill of consumption for a long time. In 1874, at the age of thirty-five, on the morning of the winter solstice, while worshipping the rising Sun, he was awakened mentally and bodily to complete recovery from his chronic disease. Tokugawa Nariaki, one of the instigators for the Meiji Restoration, strongly emphasized the spirit of activity. "How can we [Japanese] subjects remain inactive without undertaking the propaganda of this Way and without revealing to the world the virtuous merits of our ancestors? It is with this aim in view that this Institute has been founded."[4] This attitude may not be so different from that in other countries in the modern ages. But Nariaki's taking action was aimed at "revering the Emperor and expelling the barbarians." In this case he meant by "barbarian" Westerners.

On the other hand, there was an isolated thinker, Andō Shōeki, who advocated The Way of Nature and Labour.[5] He protested against exploitation by feudal lords. Sympathizing with peasants for their miser-

5 Ogyū Sorai, *Rongo-chō* 論語徵 (Comments on the Analects of Confucius), cited in Iwahashi, p. 300.

1 *Analects*, IX, 16.

2 *Seiri Mondō*, p. 57.

3 *Rongo Kogi* 論語古義, Vol. 5. Cf. Yoshikawa Kōjirō 吉川幸次郎, *Shinajin no Koten to sono Seikatsu* 支那人の古典とその生活 (Chinese Classics and Life), Tokyo, Iwanami-shoten, 1944, p. 154.

4 *Kōdōkwanki*, p. 10.

5 Andō Shōeki, *Shizen Shineidō* 自然眞營道 (The Way of Nature and Labour).

able condition, he asserted the exultation of agriculture. According to Norman, he has two counterparts in the West. One is François Quesnay (1694–1774), a French *encyclopédiste*, and the most famous of the Physiocrats. Both lived at nearly the same time; both were physicians but agriculture was their real love.[1] Just as Quesnay found in China the exemplification of the natural order, so Shōeki in a reverse direction looked to Europe for one of his model states.[2] Another counterpart, Gerrard Winstanley was also a spokesman for the underprivileged and impoverished section of the community, the evicted tenant, the precarious day labourer, the copyholder vainly struggling against the onslaught of the enclosing landlord.[3] In this respect that labouring people were paid due attention, he has something in common with Saint-Simon (1768–1825), who asserted that the ultimate aim was to be the raising, intellectually and economically, of the working class, the class which suffered most.

A corollary from the attitude of esteeming activity was to denounce the life of monks. Mediaeval layistic leaders such as Shinran still held respect and esteem for the monks who were spending an ascetic life. They held them to be superior to them. But in the modern age some activistic thinkers despised monks for the reason that they were lazy and idle. Ninomiya disliked priests and scholars in general because he thought they were not producers, and so did not add to the prosperity of the country.[4]

In this connexion, the Buddhist custom of mendicancy or living by begging alms was severely attacked by Japanese Confucianists, and gradually it died out.

It is remarkable to notice that the above-mentioned trend of emphasizing activity is so similar to that of the West.

In Shintoism there was an idea called "yosashi" 寄さし which is an equivalent of "mikoto-mochite" みこともちて, its literal meaning being "by (the grace of) calling by God." It etymologically coincides with the Western concept of 'vocation,' 'Beruf.' Shintoists based their own vocational ethics on this concept,[5] 'calling.'

Towards the modern period of Japan there came to appear a theory that if a man put his heart and soul in his own secular vocation, then

1 E. H. Norman, p. 299ff.
2 E. H. Norman, p. 303.
3 E. H. Norman, pp. 305ff., 315.
4 R. C. Armstrong, p. 9.
5 Nishida Nagao 西田長男, *Nihon Shūkyōshisō-shi no Kenkyū* 日本宗教思想史の研究 (Studies on the History of Religious Thoughts in Japan), Tokyo, Risō-sha, 1956, p. 178ff.

he was practising nothing other than the ascetic practice of Buddhism. Takuan 澤庵 (1573–1645), the Zen priest, taught: "The Law of the Buddha, well observed, is identical with the Law of mundane existence. The Law of mundane existence, well observed, is identical with the Law of the Buddha."[1] This point was especially stressed by Suzuki Shōsan, a Zen priest, who claimed to be the first man to apply Buddhism to matters of mundane existence. He wrote a book entitled *Banmin Tokuyō* 萬民德用 (The Significance of Everyman's Activities), in which he discussed problems of vocational ethics. He found absolute significance in the pursuit of any vocation, whether it be that of a warrior, a farmer, a craftsman, a merchant, a doctor, an actor, a hunter, or a priest. Because it is the essence of Buddhism, according to him, to rely upon the original self or upon "the true Buddha of one's own," and because every vocation is the function of this "one Buddha," to pursue one's own vocation is to obey the Absolute One. Thus he preached to farmers: "Farming is nothing but the doings of a Buddha."[2] To merchants he taught: "Renounce desires and pursue profits single-heartedly. But you should never enjoy profits of your own. You should, instead, work for the good of all others." Since afflictions of this world, it is said, are predetermined in former worlds, one should torture oneself by working hard at one's own vocation, in order to redeem the sins of the past.[3] It is noteworthy that, immediately after the death of Calvin, an idea similar to his appeared almost contemporaneously in Japan. The fact, however, that it never grew into a religious movement of great consequence ought to be studied in relation to the underdevelopment of a modern *bourgeois* society in Japan.

However, in a much wider circle of Shinshū 眞宗 believers a change to inner-worldly asceticism appeared. In the early period Shinshū stressed salvation by faith alone and paid little attention to ethical demands. By middle Tokugawa times, however, salvation and ethical action came to be indissolubly linked. No more was heard about the wicked being saved. Ethical action became the very sign of salvation.[4]

The Hōtoku (lit. 'To Return Virtues') teaching, which derived from Ninomiya Sontoku, emphasized energy and work for agricultural population. The purport of his teaching is as follows: "We owe our life

1 *Ketsujō-shū* 結繩集.
2 *Roankyō*, last part.
3 Ibid., p. 337; *Banmin Tokuyō* in *Zenmon Hōgo-shū*, last part, p. 536ff.
4 R. N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion. The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan*, Chicago, Free Press, 1961, p. 118.

and its preservation and enjoyment first to the benefits received from Heaven and Creation, then to those we receive from our sovereign, our country, our parents, and other sources innumerable. We have laws and social obligations which compel us to return, in some degree, the benefits received from parents, sovereign, and country; but there are no laws obliging us to render thanks by our actions for the great benefits bestowed on us by Heaven; therefore men are prone to neglect and to forget this their first duty. Some indeed remember, but generally they think it enough to show their gratitude by ceremonies of worship and thanksgiving, and not by deeds. This should not be so. We must bear in mind the will of Heaven, and try to cultivate our Heaven-sent virtues and sincerely and earnestly work to promote the progress and development of all Creation."[1] Even for the great success of industrial capitalism in modern Japan we can readily find a moral background on the part of common people in the teachings of Ninomiya Sontoku, an original philosopher-economist of the late Tokugawa period.

The moral-economic philosophy of Ninomiya with its four fundamentals: faith, labour, economy, and charity, may have been favourable to fair capitalist competition, although his influence remained chiefly among peasants. His spirit had dominated to a great extent the entire pre-war Japanese national education in moral practice. But the rise of capitalism in Japan after the Meiji Restoration should be viewed in a wider context.

5. *Layistic Tendency of Religion*

This-worldliness tends to free religion from the priesthood. With regard to the layistic tendency in Japan, we have to first take Shinran into consideration. Although Shinran belongs to the mediaeval age, his life and activities have so many things in common with Luther, especially in the respect of layistic religion.[2]

1 Yoshimoto Tadasu, *A Peasant Sage of Japan: The Life and Work of Ninomiya Sontoku.* Translated from the *Hōtokuki*, London, Longmans, 1912, p. 223.

2 The Jesuit missionaries who came to Japan in the middle of the 16th century at once became aware of relationship between Jōdo-Shinshū-Buddhism 浄土眞宗 and the "Lutheran heresy." Father Francesco Cabral reported on it in a letter dated 1571. (A. Schweitzer, *Indian Thought and its Development*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1957, p. 153.) "Like Luther, Shinran rejected pilgrimages, excises in penance, fasting, superstition and all magical practices. He abolished the celibacy of the priesthood, of the monks and of the nuns. True piety was to be preserved in the family and in the worldly calling. He recommended to the laity the diligent study of the holy scriptures. And he demanded that the people should be delivered from their ignorance by good schools." (p. 152.) "Man is not in a position in any way to earn bliss by his own merits. In

Shinran learned the traditional Tendai theology at the Hieizan 比叡山 monastery which was the scholarly centre of Japanese Buddhism. He practised meditation earnestly, but he could not get rid of carnal desires and mental afflictions. As Shinran found no spiritual rest, he prayed to Kwannon 觀音, the Buddhist counterpart of Mary. Shinran felt that his efforts had been unsuccessful. He had practised asceticism, unsparing of pains and thought, only to come to the conclusion that, notwithstanding all that had been done and all his faith in himself, he had advanced not a single step nearer the goal. He said to himself: "It grows dark, but the goal is still far off! Now there is but one way left to save my soul. I must seek for divine guidance." Then he prayed to the Kwannon of the Rokkakudō 六角堂 Temple daily.[1] Finally Kwannon appeared to him, and bade him study under Hōnen 法然 (1133–1212), the founder of Pure Land Buddhism who taught him that one can be saved solely by the grace and compassion of Amida Buddha.

About Shinran's marriage[2] there are some legends, but at any rate he spent a married life like the early Protestant leaders, and he was the father of several children. Since then his followers have all married. Shinran combined religion with a layman's life.

It is noteworthy that, in Japanese Buddhism as in Christianity there was a Protestant Reformation. Hōnen, etc., especially Shinran, cut themselves off from the abuses of the established sects just as Luther and Calvin did in Europe. In both cases the central principle was salvation by faith, not by works or ceremonies. The Pure Land Buddhism professed by them embodies the extreme doctrine of salvation by faith in Amida, the Buddha of Boundless Light. It is paralleled in the doctrine of absolute reliance on God as stated in the Augusburg Confession. They said that faith in Amida arouses a new motive and a feeling of gratitude which transforms life. Both reformations were accompanied by social, political and economic phenomena. There was the same sort of lay movement created, the same protest against the ascetic life of the monastic type, and the same encouragement of marriage, labour, and social activity, although social activity became conspicuous after Rennyo 蓮如 (1415–1499). The political implications, however, were much more marked in the West than in Japan in proportion as

spite of this, Shinran required ethical conduct, and, be it noted, required it like Luther, as the expression and the fruit of faith in redemption." (p. 152.)

1 Nakai Gendō, *Shinran and His Religion of Pure Faith*, Kyōto, The Shinshū Research Institute, 1937, p. 28.

2 G. Nakai, p. 28ff.

the emphasis on faith as opposed to works was more extreme in Pure Land Buddhism than in Christianity.

Shinran and Vallabha,[1] an Indian religious reformer, came to be worshipped as divine in later days, and the successors of both, who were the chief abbots of each sect, being their offspring, came to be revered enthusiastically by the believers, whereas in the West the worship of the descendants of Luther or Calvin did not take place. This seems to be due to the difference of social structure between East and West. That is, in the modern West the tendency to esteem the lineage of a person almost disappeared, whereas in India or Japan of the corresponding period this attitude still remained.

In the Tokugawa period, Suzuki Shōsan discouraged people from taking holy orders and becoming monks, thus forsaking their vocations in the world. He claimed to be the first Buddhist teacher who advocated lay Buddhism. Tenkei disregarded the distinction between clergy and laity.[2] The author of *Saru-hōgo* took the same standpoint. "When one engages in commerce with the spirit of compassion and equality, it is enlightenment, the goal of the way. When one is thus right and intelligent today, there is no need of being apprehensive tomorrow. So, if one lives right in this life, one should not worry about the future life."[3] However, the abolition of the distinction between clergy and laity was not actually realized, probably due to social pressure by the Government.

Although we cannot conclude that the layistic tendency is common to all modern religions, we may safely say that it appeared rather early in the modern age throughout many countries in both East and West, developed later, and is now conspicuous in many modern religions.

6. *Approach to the Common People*

The attitude of esteeming man himself led thinkers to a more affectionate view of the common people. They wanted to keep in close touch with the common people.

In Japan of the thirteenth century religious leaders came to advocate their teachings in Japanese, not Chinese, writings. Like Luther, Shinran composed hymns intended for use at divine service in praise of the

1 Vallabha was believed to have been an embodiment of a portion of Krishna's essence. (Monier Monier-Williams, *Brahmanism and Hinduism*, 3rd ed., London, John Murray, 1887, p. 134.)

2 G. Kagamishima, p. 107.

3 *Zenmon Hōgo-shū*, Vol. 2, p. 253.

redemption which follows upon grace. In the conduct of worship he assigned an important place to the sermon. Especially in the Tokugawa period many Buddhist works written in easy, understandable Japanese were published for the common people.

In the Mediaeval West logical works were written in Latin alone. Antoine Arnauld, together with Pierre Nicole compiled *La Logique de Port-Royal* in French for the first time in 1660. In ancient and mediaeval Japan works on Buddhist logic were written in classical Chinese alone. It was Echō Chikū 慧澄癡空 (1780–1862) that wrote a logical work in Japanese, which was entitled *Inmyō Inu Sanshi* 因明犬三支 (Buddhist Syllogism in Imitation of Masters' Works). However, the author claimed the work to be just an imitation of authoritative works. No attitude of protest against the tradition is displayed. Progressive scholarship was not carried on with confidence, but with humility. Here we find a problem.

What made a difference in popularization was the problem of printing. In the West the invention of the printing machine made it easy to spread knowledge. In China and Japan wood-block print was used, and it helped to a great extent.

7. Service to People

A movement which denounces religious bigotry and rites, and asserts the significance of love and activity in social life, tends to emphasize service to people. Among some thinkers, devotion to God appeared in the form of love to humankind. The spirit of service to mankind, even including those to come in the future, was enhanced in the modern ages.

Parallel to the increase of humanitarian activities in modern West, we find a similar move in Eastern countries also. In Japan of this period, some unique features can be seen along the same line. A humanitarian spirit was displayed even with regard to wars. To the mountain-locked province of his enemy, Uyesugi Kenshin 上杉謙信 (1530–1578), the feudal lord, sent salt in 1542 A. D., not to have the people of his enemy's province suffer from lack of salt.[1] The captives of the Korean Campaigns (1592, 1598) were treated in a brotherly manner in Japan, and were returned to their home.[2] After the Roman Catholic rebellion in Shimabara 島原 (1637), religious ceremonies were carried out and three big monuments were built, not for the memory of the victory, but for the

1 Tsuji Zennosuke 辻善之助, *Nihonjin no Hakuai* 日本人の博愛 (The Humanitarian Ideas of the Japanese), Tokyo, Kinkodō, 1932, p. 97ff.

2 Z. Tsuji, p. 108ff.

spiritual beatitude of the Catholic—pagan, in the eyes of the Japanese—converts who were killed in the rebellion.[1] This may have been due to the Buddhist ideal, but anyhow quite different from the cases in the Mediaeval West.

In Japan the spirit of solidarity was greatly emphasized, and mutual aid was practised among the people. Individual Buddhist priests engaged in humanitarian activities,[2] such as the distribution of rice and money to the poor and of medicines to the sick, engaging in healing, building bridges, instituting public baths, etc. For example, Tetsugen 鐵眼 (1630–1682)[3] raised funds to save the lives of starving people in the years of bad harvests. Ryōō 了翁 (1630–1707) established dispensaries and about 70 libraries in various cities. St. Mokujiki persuaded with feudal lords not to engage in battles, to save people from suffering.[4] But activities of this kind were not duly organized. Few humanitarian organizations were formed. They appeared temporarily, and eventually disappeared. The traditional solid family system and the spirit of solidarity among the people seem to have lessened the necessity of organized humanitarian activities.

As an outstanding figure in the attitude of rendering service to others, we can mention Ninomiya Sontoku. The teaching of morality and rendering help to others was combined by Sontoku with economic measures, such as a scheme for the rotation of crops, an organization for the circulation of capital, accumulation of funds for famine relief, and so on. Thus Sontoku viewed human life as a process of co-operation and mutual helpfulness, and in practice combined moral ideas with economic measures. His influence produced practical effects among the peasants.[5]

Among Japanese priests there were some who engaged in the cultivation of land. Jōin 淨因[6] who was a Shinshū priest,[7] converted

1 *Nihonjin no Hakuai.*

2 The details are mentioned in Z. Tsuji, *Jizen Kyūsai Shiryō* 慈善救濟史料 (Works of Japanese Philanthropy), Tokyo, Kinkodō, 1932.

3 Tetsugen's life is described in English in *The Light of Dharma*, August and October, 1901, San Francisco, pp. 22–25, and pp. 25–28. Also Washio Junkyōs. 鷲尾順敬 article in the *Hansei Zasshi* 反省雜誌, Vol. 12–13, 1897–1898.

4 Z. Tsuji, *Nihonjin no Hakuai*, p. 346.

5 M. Anesaki, p. 303.

6 Jōin 淨因, *Uyō Shūhoku Suido-roku* 羽陽秋北水土錄 (Records of Exploitation of North-Eastern Districts), 7 Vols., in *Nihon Keizai Taiten* 日本經濟大典 (Japanese Classical Works on Economies), Vol. 30, edited by Takimoto Seiichi 瀧本誠一, Tokyo, 1929. This work was written in the Temmei period (1781–1788).

7 Ibid., p. 10.

hundreds of acres of waste land into fertile paddy. This event is not worth mentioning. But his record of cultivation displays interesting traits of modern thought. "It is a silly thing merely to accumulate riches. But the attitude of believing indiscriminately in causes in previous existences according to the teaching of Buddhism, or believing in the mandate of Heaven according to Confucianism, or to 'waiting for good fortune laying in bed' according to a popular proverb, is a delinquency.[1] The affairs of the world will be neglected, people don't give regard to expenses of luxury, don't observe thriftiness then they would get less clothing in cold weather and less diet in sunny days." Here a Buddhist priest is rejecting the conventional application of the traditional teaching of *karman* to daily conduct. "I want to cultivate the waste land granted by our [feudal] lord, and to leave the merit to our descendants.... Merely to inculcate people and bestow beatitude in the after-life or them is not called the way to save people. Buddhas and Bodhisattvas bestow benefits in both the present and future lives."[2] However, this was an exceptional case, and generally speaking, economic activities were not closely related to Buddhism in this period.

The sympathy with the wretched common people led to severe criticism of the existing feudal system. Andō Shōeki said: "Rulers, supported by their warriors, devoured the cereals which were the product of the direct cultivation of the masses, and, when they stoutly resisted, gathered together the power of the warrior class to oppress the multitude and to punish those who had disobeyed the sage's orders, fearing the charge that they were usurping the world of Nature.... Their multitude of warriors under them eat without cultivating, and, since there is a shortage of cultivators, the world inevitably becomes agitated."[3] This thought seems not to have developed in the period under discussion, but it is noteworthy as a step in the development of modern thought.

8. Esteem of Ethical Values Instead of Magical or Mystical Elements

A high esteem of man as such leads to high esteem of ethical norms. Instead of magical, ecstatical, or fantastic elements, ethical values are regarded as extremely important in modern religion. Forms of religion as activity have to change. This feature occurred in Japan, parallel to the West.

In Japan the ethical character of religion was emphasized by some

1 *Uyō Shūhoku Suido-roku*, pp. 9–10.
2 Ibid., p. 11.
3 E. H. Norman, pp. 106–107.

Buddhists of new type. Master Jiun advocated the "Way to Become a True Man." He found the essence of Buddhism in the practice of the Ten Virtues (Good Vows), as opposed to the tradition of ritualistic Buddhism. He says: "Man's Path (or duty) by which a man becomes a (true) man consists in the observance of the ten virtues."[1] Then what is the ten virtues? They are (1) Not Killing, (2) Not Stealing, (3) Not Committing Adultery, (4) Not Lying, (5) Not Talking Frivolously, (6) Not Slandering, (7) Not Being Double-tongued, (8) Not Coveting, (9) Not Being Angry, and (10) Not Being Heretical.

Many traditional Buddhists thought that these vows are only rudimentary steps to religion, and that the essence of Buddhism lies in elaborate rituals and esoteric doctrines. But Master Jiun protested against such traditional preoccupations. He said: "Shallow scholars think that this moral for the laity (*Sekenkai*) is a thing of but small importance, that that for the monks who practise for their own merits (shōmon 聲聞, srāvaka) is imperfect, and that that for the Bodhisattva alone is high and noble. As a matter of fact this opinion has its origin in the false ideas that arise from attaching too much importance to names (or titles). This moral of the Ten Virtues is very profound, very magnificent."[2]

In the assertion that religion should be realized in the practice of moral, Jiun coincides with modern Western thinkers. But the concept of 'good and bad' differs greatly from the Western one. "Conduct conforming to the principle of reason (*ri* 理) in its relation to the three bodily, the four lingual and the three intellectual (mental) activities constitutes the Ten Virtues, while conduct in opposition to it constitutes the ten vices. The obedience to reason is nothing else than neither increasing nor decreasing nature. It is the maintaining of it in equilibrium. When the original nature (*honsei* or *honshō* 本性) is modified or perverted by this self-ness (*shii* 私意) the ten vices are the result. These modified or perverted actions of body, of speech and of thought are called the Ten Virtues. Although Buddhism *does not worry about the distinction between good and bad*,[3] goodness or virtue is always in accord with the nature of Buddha (Busshō 佛性), while vice is non-accordant with it."[4]

Ninomiya Sontoku, who also advocated the life of activity, had a

1 *Jūzen Hōgo*, p. 1.

2 Ibid., p. 2.

3 *Zenaku tomoni samatagenu* 善悪ともに妨げぬ. Atkinson, the translator, did not translate this phrase which is highly Buddhistic. Probably, he, as a Christian missionary, found the phrase too strange.

4 *Jūzen Hōgo*, pp. 2–3.

similar conception of morals. Of good and evil he says: "The difference between good and evil arises from man. If there were no men there would be no good and evil. Man thinks it good to develop waste places, and bad to neglect them, but the bear and the deer think waste places good. The thief thinks it good to steal, but the law pronounces it an evil. We cannot discern what is good and what is evil. It is like saying near and far. Suppose you put up two stakes one marked, far, and the other marked, near. Your position decides which is really far and which near."[1]

Banjin 萬仞, the Sōtō Zen master, said that the practice of Zen can be located in the observance of Disciplines. Hakuin denounced the custom of keeping concubines among the higher classes. Bankei admitted that women are more virtuous than men in many cases.

The attitude of emphasizing morals was very conspicuous among Zen masters who were very often blamed for being indifferent to moral distinctions.

V. CONCLUSIONS OF THE DISCUSSION ON MODERN THOUGHT

In Japan before the introduction of Western civilization there were not so many original thinkers who displayed traces of modern thought as can be found in the modern West. I intensively tried to find thinkers of this type, and yet I have not yet been successful. I think that even highly educated Japanese might find unfamiliar the names of some persons whom I have mentioned in this article. This fact means that modern thought appeared in Japan only sporadically, did not develop, and vanished in their incipient stages. This poses a big problem, and needs further thorough investigation.

The discussion so far has pointed out and introduced, topic by topic, some features of modern thought which are worthy of study in comparison with modern thought in the West. We do not mean that all thinkers of modern Japan asserted as mentioned above there were many more backward or conservative religionists than progressive reformers; they rigorously stuck to traditional or mediaeval ways of thinking and behaviour. Moreover, it is doubtless true that even progressive reformers betrayed the conservative attitude in many respects, although they were not conscious of them. However, we cannot neglect the fact that the above-mentioned features were sprouting. And so many traces of change can be regarded as a word, as centring around the attitude

1 R. C. Armstrong, op. cit.

of esteeming the value of man as such in preference to anything else. However, it is worth noting that these thinkers of modern Japan were not militant theologians like Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. They could not completely upset traditional religious organizations which existed from ancient days, nor reform political and deep-rooted social systems. The attempts of these reformers produced no overwhelming influence upon the nation as a whole.

Although I have pointed out many common features, you will still notice that some features conspicuous in the modern West are lacking in Japan of the same period. One of them is the idea of evolution. Some Japanese thinkers had the idea of change or development very conspicuously in this period, but did not entertain the idea of evolution; i. e., the idea that something that comes later is superior to the former thing replaced. This idea was lacking in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism and other Eastern religions. You will all be able to think of cases that exemplify this.

Another feature of great importance is that the spirit of experimentation was almost lacking in Eastern countries of the same period. In Japan natural sciences did not develop; many new attempts were killed in their incipient stages by the pressure of the feudal governments. Mahayana Buddhism, combined with Shintoism, posed no opposition to them, because its standpoint is flexible with regard to dogma, and found no contradiction to scientific attempts, whereas the feudal aristocracy tried to eliminate new attempts. Once the feudal system was destroyed, in countries where there was some opposition to science in one way or another by existing religions, it took some time to change people's attitudes.

The features which I mentioned as already existing in Japanese tradition were representative of minority groups. Political and religious authorities ignored them, or occasionally suppressed them. It was only after the infiltration of Western civilization that they began to exert considerable influence in different ways, always, however, modified by the existing traditions.[1]

1 The Meiji Restoration of 1868 was in some respects unquestionably the just parallel to the French Revolution in 1789.