BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF THE JAPANESE PEOPLE

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(The Society for International Cultural Relations)

1936

FOREWORD

In this age of round the world trips and international air services much is being done to dispel the mistaken ideas upon which many of the world's misadventures in the past have been based. But valuable as such intercommunication undoubtedly is, and in spite of the hospitality which nations now extend to foreigners, there is still a need for organizations which will foster a mutual respect among nations grounded on a thorough and scholarly understanding of the past as well as the present.

The Japanese people have been so engrossed in studying, appraising and adopting aspects of Western civilization that they have given very little thought to making their own civilization and culture known abroad. But with the growing interest in the Orient, Western scholars are coming to Japan in increasing numbers to learn something about the arts, the history and the culture of her people.

Language and other difficulties have heretofore made it difficult for foreign students to have access to the necessary materials. The Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai has therefore been established with the purpose of assisting in every possible way the studies of those who wish to learn something about Japan, and of encouraging a true exchange of ideas among the nations.

As one means of attaining this object, the Society con-

ducted a "Lecture Series on Japanese Culture" with the aid of leading Japanese scholars. The series began on October 15, 1935, and came to a successful close on December 6. This pamphlet is the record of a lecture delivered by Dr. Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki on October 29, at the K. B. S. Offices.

March, 1936.

KOKUSAI BUNKA SHINKOKAI

Buddhist Philosophy and Its Effects on the Life and Thought of the Japanese People

The subject selected for my lecture here this afternoon is "Buddhist Philosophy and Its Effects on the Life and Thought of the Japanese People." This is indeed a large subject, and I am quite sure that even for a scholar fortified with a far wider erudition, a far deeper insight, and a far greater facility for expression than myself, it is an almost impossible task to make this audience, however sympathetic and intelligent, grasp the significance of what Buddhism as philosophy purposes to teach, and—all this within a period of forty or forty-five minutes! Therefore, I cherish no idle hope for any kind of success in my talk to-day on Buddhist Philosophy. If I am able to make you feel at all like pursuing this subject further sometime in the future, I must congratulate myself on my lucky stroke.

1

Buddhism, however, being a great world religion, has eighty-four thousand ways of teaching at its command, any one of which is available on any occasion. One single word casually dropped from the lips of a master, or his gesture such as the raising of

the eye-brows, or the pointing of a finger at a flower, is sufficient to open the mind of his intelligent disciple.[1] Buddhism performs this miracle when necessary, that is, when conditions are thoroughly matured. But the topic I have to deal with to-day is the philosophy of Buddhism, and the business of philosophy is to deal with concepts, which is really the most roundabout way of reaching the truth. Practical religionists all avoid this.

Then what are the most important concepts in Buddhist philosophy? There are two: Śūnyatā and Tathatā in Sanskrit. Śūnyatā means "emptiness" or "void," and Tathatā "suchness" or "thusness." I am afraid both terms are unfamiliar to the Western mind. The former is quite likely to be misinterpreted even among Buddhists themselves. When we speak of "emptiness" or "void" we generally think of a state of negation where nothing is allowed to exist, a kind of mere expanse devoid of content, if such a state of things is at all conceivable. This is, however, from one point of view altogether natural, for our logic has never taught us to rise above dualism, and we have always interpreted all our experiences on the basis of a bifurcation or dichotomy. First of all, the subject stands against the object, the seer against the seen, the knower against the known. Once this antithesis is established, many other oppositions and contradictions become possible, and we are hopelessly involved in dilemmas and most vexatious uncertainties. But Śūnyatā is a concept even prior to the rise of this world of pluralities, at the same time conditioning the latter so that all individual existences have their being in it.

Tathatā generally translated as "suchness" points to an affirmative attitude of mind if Śūnyatā is to be regarded as more or

[1] *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, English translation, XLII, pp. 91–2.

less negative, although in fact Śūnyatā is just as affirmative as Tathata. Tathata may be explained as our most primary, absolutely unadulterated, and fundamentally irreducible experience, from which rise all the rest of our experiences. It has something akin to a sense-experience as far as its finality and irreducibility are concerned; but in fact it is more fundamental because sense-experience gains significance only in reference to this. The recognition of Tathata is the basis of Buddhist philosophy. For in a sense Tathata and Śūnyata are complementary. When you know what Tathata is, you also at once know what Śūnyatā is. They cannot be separated.

The relationship between the emptiness and the suchness of all things (*sarvasattva*) may be illustrated by the following dialogues which are recorded in a history of the Zen masters of China.

A monk asked Dōsan, "How do we escape the heat when summer comes and the cold when winter is here?"

The master said, "Why not go where there is no summer, no winter?"

"Where is such a place?"

"When the cold season comes, one is thoroughly chilled; when the hot summer is here, one swelters."

A monk came to Suibi and asked, "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming to this country from the Western land?"

"Wait until there is nobody around us and I will tell you," said the master.

They walked about in the monastery grounds. The monk said, "Nobody is around here now; pray tell me, O master, about the idea of Bodhidharma."

Suibi pointing at a bamboo said, "How tall this bamboo is!"

Then pointing at another bamboo, he said, "How short this one is!"

Sōzan accosted a monk and said, "It is terribly hot, and where shall we escape the heat?"

The monk answered, "Let us go down to the bottom of the furnace."

"But in the furnace how shall we escape the scorching fire?"

"No further suffering reaches us," concluded the monk.

2

Unfortunately, we have no time to pursue this course of study beyond the barest possible outline sketched here. Let us hurry to an exposition of a Mahayana canon known as *Yuima-kyo* or *Vimalakirti Sūtra* for in it we read all the fundamental teachings of Buddhism explained in a way most of us can grasp more intelligently than through dialogues just cited. This sūtra was one of the first three Mahayana texts studied and commented upon by Shōtoku Taishi early in the seventh century. That Buddhism came to Japan to stay and moulded the character of her people in more ways than one was due to this prince, who is justly regarded by the Buddhists as the father of Japanese Buddhism. He was great not only as a pious Buddhist student but also as statesman, educator, architect, social worker, and creator of various branches of art. Horyūji at Nara is the monument immortalizing his memory. The best way to appraoch Mahayana philosophy will then be to get acquainted with the contents of the *Yuima-kyo*.

The *Yuima-kyo* was translated first by Kumārajīva in A.D. 406. Owing to its deep philosophical and religious insight and

also probably to its dramatic setting and fine literary quality, the sūtra has wielded great spiritual and intellectual influence not only in Japan but in China. The knowledge of its teaching will surely help our understanding of Buddhism. It is not exactly known when this sūtra was compiled in India. This much we can say that the compilation took place prior to Nagārjuna, that is, some time in the beginning of the Christian era. The principal figure of the sutra is Yuima who was a wealthy householder of Vaiśālī in the time of the Buddha. He was thoroughly versed in Mahayana philosophy, he was a great philanthropist and an austere follower of Buddhism. Although living in the world as a layman, his immaculate conduct elicited universal admiration. One time he was seen indisposed. This was one of his *hōben*, ' skilful means" or "mysterious ways" (*upayakauśalya*), whereby he wanted to teach his people regarding the transitoriness of life. The whole town of Vaiśalī including great lords, Brahmans, officials, and other classes of people hastened to visit him, anxiously inquiring after his health.

3

The Buddha, learning of this, wanted to send one of his disciples to Yuima. But they all refused to comply with the Buddha's wish, excusing themselves on the ground that none of them was equal to the task of interviewing the great Mahayana philosopher-saint. They had all at least one experience previously with him, in which they were miserably worsted and had failed to carry out their line of argument against his. It may be interesting to our audience to cite one or two examples of such religio-

philosophical interviews between Yuima and the disciples of Buddha, for herein we can see what kind of discourse Yuima advances to defeat the Hinayana followers of the Buddha.

The great Kāśyapa was once going around begging for his food among the poor. Yuima appeared to him and said, "You need not purposely avoid the rich. When you go out begging, your mind must be entirely detached from discriminations, your heart must be filled with impartial love. Food should be received as if it were not received at all. To harbour the thought of reception is a discrimination. Rising above the ideas of self and not-self, of good and evil, of gain and loss, you are able then for the first time to make offerings to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with one bowlful of food received from your donor. Unless you attain this state of spirituality, you are a wasteful consumer of food which you try to gather from the poor, thinking that they might thus be given the chance to be charitable."

When Subhūti was asked to visit Yuima, he made this confession and excused himself as not worthy of the mission: "When I once called at the old philosopher's residence for my food, he filled my bowl with food and said: 'Only such a one is worthy of this food as has no attachment to it, for to him all things are equal. While in the midst of all forms of worldly entanglements, he is emancipated; he affirms all existences as they are, and yet he is not attached to them. Do not listen to Buddha, nor do you see him, but follow your heretical teachers and go wherever they go; if they are destined for hell, you just go with them; and when, by doing this, you feel no hesitancy, no reluctance, then you are permitted to take this food. Donors do not accumulate merit, charity is not the cause of bliss. Unless you are able to go in

company with devils and work with them, you are not entitled to this food.' When I heard this, I was thunderstruck and at the point of running away from him without the bowl. But he said: 'All things are after all like phantom existences, they are but names. It is only the wise who without attachment go beyond logic and know what Reality is. They are emancipated and therefore never alarmed.' This being the case I realize that I am not the person to go and inquire after his health."

4

To quote one more example from many. When the turn came to Maitreya, he had this to say. "When I was formerly at the Tushita Heaven, discoursing before the lord of Heaven and his followers on a life of non-retrogression, Yuima appeared and talked to me in this wise. 'O Maitreya, I understand that Śākyamuni the Buddha prophesied your attaining to the Supreme Enlightenment in the course of one life. Now I wish to know what this one life really means. Is it your past, your future, or your present one? If it is the past one, the past is past and no more; if future, the future is not yet here; if present, the present is "abodeless." (That is to say, the present has no fixed point in time. When you say this is the present, it is no more here.) This being the case, the so-called present life as it is lived this very moment by every one of us, is taught by the Buddha, as something not to be subsumed in the category of birth, old age, and death.

"'According to the Buddha, all beings are of Suchness (*tathatā*), and are in Suchness ; not only all wise and holy persons but every one of us—of course including yourself, O Maitreya.

If you are assured by the Buddha of attaining to Supreme Enlightenment and realizing Nirvana, all beings sentient and non-sentient ought also to be sure of their Enlightenment. For as long as we are all of Suchness and in Suchness, this Suchness is one and the same; and when one of us attains to Enlightenment all the rest too share it. And in this Enlightenment there is no thought of discrimination. Where do you, O Maitreya, put your life of non-retrogression 'when there is really neither attainment nor non-attainment, neither body nor mind?'

"O Blessed One, when Yuima gave this discourse at the Tushita Heaven, the two hundred Deva-lords at once realized the Kshānti in the Unborn Dharma. For this reason I am not qualified to do anything with this old philosopher of Vaiśālī."

5

In this way one after another of Buddha's disciples at this assembly refused to comply with his request which was full of grave significance. Finally, Mañjuśri accepted the mission. Accompanied by eight thousand Bodhisattvas, five hundred Śrāvakas, and hundreds of thousands of Deva-lords, he entered the city of Vaiśālī. Yuima, knowing this, had his room emptied of all the furniture, leaving just one couch on which he laid himself down; nor was he attended by any of his followers.

The interview of this wily philosopher-saint and the Bodhisattva whose wisdom had no peer among Buddha's disciples began in this manner:

Yuima: "O Mañjuśrī, you are welcome indeed. But your coming is no-coming, and my seeing is no-seeing."

Mañjuśrī: "You are right. I come as if not coming, I depart as if not departing. For my coming is from nowhere, and my departing is no-whither. We talk of seeing each other, and yet there is no seeing between the two. But let us put this matter aside for a while, for I am here commissioned by the Buddha to inquire after your condition. Is it improving? How did you become ill? And are you cured?"

Yuima: "From folly there is desire, and this is the cause of my illness. Because all sentient beings are sick I am sick, and when they are cured of illness, I also shall be cured. A Bodhisattva assumes a life of birth and death for the sake of all beings; as long as there is birth and death, there is illness."

6

While the conversation between Yuima and Mañjuśrī is going on in this strain there take place one or two episodes in regard to Śāriputra, one of the most intelligent Hearers (*Śrāvaka*) of the Buddha's followers gathered here.

Śāriputra happens to notice Yuima's room devoid of all furniture except the couch and wonders how the host is going to seat all the Bodhisattvas and Disciples who have come with Mañjuśrī. Yuima reading the mind of Śāriputra asks whether Śāriputra is come for the sake of the Dharma or for the sake of the seat. Assured of his coming for the sake of the Dharma, Yuima tells him how to seek the Dharma. Seeking the Dharma consists in not seeking anything, not getting attachment, from it grows every form of hindrance moral and intellectual, and one will be inextricably involved in meshes of contradictions and altercations. Hence no end of illness in this life.

Yuima learns from Mañjuśrī where to find the best seats as the latter in his spiritual pilgrimage has visited every possible Buddha-land in the entire chiliocosm. Yuima at once sends for thirty-two thousand seats from that Buddha-land. Every one of the seats elaborately ornamented is high and broad and fit for any august Bodhisattva to sit on. The apparently small room of Yuima accommodates all these seats, each of which is as Mount Sumeru. All the visitors are asked to sit. The Bodhisattvas sit easily, but the Śrāvakas are unable to climb up to the chairs which are altogether too high for them. Realizing how small the room is where this entire crowd is asked to sit, Śāriputra still wonders how that can be accomplished, because no one mustard seed can hold in it all the mountains of the world, and also because no one pore of the skin (*romakūpa*) can absorb all the four oceans together with their fishes, tortoises, crocodiles, etc.

Another incident which happened to Śāriputra and which is quite illustrative of the whole trend of this sūtra is his encounter with a celestial princess. She was among the assembly and listening to the grand discourse carried on between Yuima and Mañjuśrī. She made a shower of heavenly flowers fall over the audience. The flowers slipped off the bodies of all the Bodhisattvas but remained stuck to those of the Śrāvakas among whom was Śāriputra. He tried to brush them off but in vain. The goddess asked him why he did that.

Replied Śāriputra: "This is not in accordance with the Dharma."

The goddess: "Do not say so; these flowers are free from discrimination. But, owing to your own discrimination, they adhere to your person. Look at the Bodhisattvas. As they are entirely free

from this fault, no flowers stay on them. When all thoughts born of discrimination are removed, even evil spirits are unable to take advantage of such beings."

Śariputra: "How long have you been in this room?"

The goddess: "As long as the length of your own emancipation."

After some further dialogues in this vein, Sāriputra is surprised at the intelligence of this fair celestial debater, and finally asks her why she does not transform herself into a masculine figure. The goddess at once retorts: "I have been for these twelve years seeking for the femininity of my person, but I have not succeeded in this. Why should I then go through a transformation?"

7

These dialogues are, however, side-issues, and we must now follow the chief characters of the sūtra, Yuima and Mañjuśrī. Their conversation turns on the subject of non-duality, that is, Advaitism; Yuima wants to have it defined by every one of the chief Bodhisattvas assembled. After each has given his own view, Yuima wants Mañjuśrī to express his. Mañjuśrī says: "As I understand it, when there is not a word to utter, not a sign to see, not a cognizance to be taken of,—and when there is complete detachment from every form of questioning, then one enters the gate of Advaita."

Mañjuśrī asks: "O Yuima, what is your view now that we have all expressed ourselves on the subject?" Yuima remains silent and does not utter a word.

Thereupon Mañjuśrī makes this remark: "Well done, indeed,

O Yuima! This is really the way to enter the gate of Advaita, which no words, no letters can explain!"

This question of Advaita constitutes the main topic of the *Yuima Sūtra*, but there is another episode following this. The busy Śāriputra thinks of the meal time approaching, wondering how Yuima is going to feed these Bodhisattvas and other beings gathered in his ten-foot square room. Perceiving what is occupying the mind of Śāriputra, Yuima announces that a supernatural food will presently be served to every one of the assembled. He enters into a meditation and by means of his divine powers he transverses all the worlds numbering as many as the sands of forty-two Gangā rivers. Reaching thus a Buddha-land called Fragrance, Yuima asks the Buddha presiding over the land to let him have some of his food. The request is granted, and Yuima comes back with the food to the assembly, and every one of them is sufficiently fed though the amount is exceedingly small. The feeding, however, does not consist in partaking of a gross material meal; it is an ethereal one, to smell the fragrant odour of which is sufficient to appease whatever feeling of hunger all these strange beings have.

After this they all, including Yuima the great philosopher-saint, appear before the Buddha, who then tells them about the country from which Yuima comes. The country is called Abhirati, the land of Perfect Joy, which is presided over by the Buddha Akshobhya ("Immovable"). At the Buddha's request, Yuima miraculously brings the whole country right before the whole assembly. It is seen with its presiding Buddha Akshobhya, Bodhisattvas, Srāvakas, all classes of Devas and Nāgas and other spiritual beings, with its mountains and rivers and oceans, with its plants

and flowers, with its inhabitants of both sexes. One of the peculiar features of this Buddha-country is that it is provided with three sets of staircases leading up to the Tushita Heaven and also descending down to this world. The assembly is delighted with the sight and wishes to be born into this land of Akshobhya. The sūtra concludes with the usual request of the Buddha for the continuance of the Dharma on this earth and the promise of all those who are present at the assembly to follow the Buddha's injunctions.

8

I am afraid that I have spent too much time on the *Yuima Sūtra*, although the knowledge of its contents is highly recommended as a guide to the understanding of Buddhist thought and its influence on the Japanese people. However fantastic and extraordinary the teaching and behaviour of the principal character of the sūtra may appear to you, it is readily seen that the work has a deep religio-philosophical background. As I have no time to present this in a more digestible form of thought, I leave the task of reconstruction to you.

The one great historical fact we must not fail to mention in regard to the teaching of the *Yuima-kyo* in Japan is that it was the ever-memorable Shōtoku Taishi himself who wrote the first Japanese commentary on it more than a thousand years ago and only about fifty years after the official introduction of Buddhism into this country. When there was yet no religion, no philosophy, no sustained thinking, no literary work of creative imagination, the study of those Mahayana works must have caused an unprec-

edented mental upheaval among the intellectual classes of the time. But the most wonderful event in the annals of Japanese thought is that these Mahayana documents filled with the deepest religio-philosophical intuitions were readily grasped by a genius most favourably endowed, and made the foundation of Japanese thought and feeling which had yet to develop. Had it not been for Prince Shōtoku, Buddhism would not have found such a favoured land in which to grow and bear fruit.

9

If we want to know what effect Buddhist thought had on Japanese cultural life, the best way is to wipe out all the Buddhist temples together with their treasures, libraries, gardens, anecdotes, tales, and romances of various sorts, and see what we have left in the history of Japan. First of all, there would be no painting, sculpture, or even music and drama. Following this, all the minor branches of art would also disappear—landscape gardening, tea ceremony, flower-arrangement, and fencing (which may be classed as art since it is the art of spiritually training and defending oneself against the enemy, morally as well as physically). The industrial arts would also vanish, the first impetus to which was given by Buddhism. Shōtoku Taishi is still worshipped by carpenters and architects as the patron-saint of their profession; for it is a well-known fact that anything approaching architecture in Japan dates from the erection of Hōryūji.

The origin of Japanese education is traceable to the colleges established in connection with Hōryūji and Kōfukuji, while general education was for the first time designed by Kōbō Daishi

when he planned out his school known as Sōgei Shuchi-in in 828. Various works of social service including the hospital, the bath house, the botanical garden, and herb-hunting owe their first activities to the early Buddhists from the seventh century onward.

It was again due to the initiation of those indefatigable Buddhist monks who travelled throughout Japan in the early days of Buddhism for the propagation of their faith that the mountains were climbed, the rivers bridged, the roads built, the fields tilled, the wells dug, the hot springs discovered, the trees planted, and the canals opened for irrigation. Travellers in Japan, even in the remotest parts of the country, come across some legends in which Buddhist names are connected with old ponds, old trees surrounded with the sacred straw-ropes, curiously-shaped stones, etc. The name of Kōbō Daishi is to be especially mentioned in this connection.

Some years ago a party of army officials surveyed one of the high mountains in central Japan. When they reached the summit after a most laborious climb because there was no track ever trodden by human feet, they found there the top-rings decorating a Buddhist pilgrim's staff known as *shakujō*. This is generally carried by a travelling monk as we always see it in images of Jizō Bosatsu When the staff touches the ground, the metallic rings give out a sound which is supposed to frighten away small animals so that they will not be trodden upon and killed by the carrier—an act of humanity towards the lower creatures. By investigation these staff rings found at the peak of the high mountain proved

to be a thousand years old. Most certainly one of the early Buddhist pilgrims—could this have been Gyōgi Bosatsu?—must have climbed this trackless slope of the mountain, perhaps to discover a suitable site for a hut. Kōya San is now a prosperous town, and the climbing is made almost too easy by means of the cable. But at the time of Kōbō Daishi more than a thousand years ago we can well picture to ourselves all the possible obstructions of nature and also the threatening presence of wild beasts which the Daishi had to encounter and finally overcome. Before he singled out Kōya he must have scaled many other such high mountains in the neighbouring regions.

Next to Shōtoku Taishi and Gyōgi Bosatsu (668-749), Kōbō Daishi was the greatest benefactor of Japanese culture. It was he who composed the *Iroha*, the Japanese alphabet, in which the Buddhist thought of mutability and spiritual awakening is poetically expressed. Another arrangement of "the fifty sounds" known as the Japanese syllabary is no more than an adaptation of the Sanskrit Alphabet system—undoubtedly the work of a Buddhist Sanskrit scholar.

11

If I go on like this, there will be no end to recapitulating all the details of Buddhist influence on Japanese learning, literature, and the art of printing. Let it suffice to mention just a few most outstanding facts in the history of Japanese letters.

The first religio-philosophical work ever written by a Japanese, though in the Chinese language, was Shōtoku Taishi's commentaries on the three Buddhist sūtras: the *Hokke-kyo* the *Yuima-kyo*, and the *Shōman-gyō*.

The first book of fiction, known as *Taketori Monogatari* and written in the reign of the Emperor Daigo early in the tenth century, embodies the Buddhist idea of moral causation, while the materials are taken from various Buddhist works such as the *Jātaka Tales*, the *Gwatsujōnyō*, the *Agon-gyō*, and others.

The second *monogatari* comes from the brush of a court-lady, Murasaki-no-shikibu, who depicts the court life of her time in the latter half of the tenth century. The atmosphere is full of sentimentalism, and even signs of degeneration are visible. But the aesthetic life permeating the whole story is intersected with Buddhist rituals and prayers of every kind. The work is a genuine creation of the environment with which the author was in close contact. The transitoriness of life is strongly felt and at the same time an intense longing for earthly happiness is asserted—a mirror of the life that was going on in those ancient days about a thousand years ago.

One of the oldest prints now in existence owes its origin to the piety of the Empress Kōmyō, one of the most illustrious Buddhists in the history of Japan. She had a million miniature pagodas made for the purpose of distributing them in the various temples. Each pagoda contains a print of a short Buddhist text or Dharanī. The print seems to have been done from a metal plate, in the middle part of the eighth century. The regular printing from wooden blocks of the Buddhist books did not start until the early Kamakura period.

One of the remarkable facts in the history of Japanese Buddhism is that during the Ashikaga era from about the middle of the fourteenth till towards the end of the sixteenth century the Zen monks and their institutions were custodians of Japanese

learning, Shinto and Confucian, secular and religious. While they took little interest in their own scriptures, they were evidently active in various fields of human affairs. When the statesmen or generals of those days wanted to have any form of literary communication with the Chinese and the Koreans, they had to go to the Zen monks. The monks even manned the trading ships and were engaged in bringing Chinese money and goods to Japan. Their frequent visits to China qualified them even for this kind of work.

12

Let us now see what influence Buddhist philosophy exercised specifically on the Japanese view of life.

The Japanese people are regarded as not being profound in philosophy, nor deep in religious feeling. This statement may be interpreted in various ways. Whether it is correct or not will largely depend upon the definitions we give to the terms philosophy and religion. This, however, takes us into the field of thought where much discussion is always going on, and as I am afraid of digressing too much, let me briefly state that the fundamental conception of philosophy differs in the East from what is so understood in the West, and that in the East and especially in Japan, philosophy above all things is the art of looking directly into the working of the mind, and that in this respect there is not much distinction between philosophy and religion, except that in religion there is more feeling. This being so, the first business of philosophy is to train the inner consciousness so as to enable us to have an immediate perception of self. Philosophy with us Japanese so far has been an intuition and not the manipulation of concepts. Since

the introduction of Western, especially German, thought, the Japanese have begun to philosophize after the Western method, and before long we may have "philosophers" (so called) even among ourselves. In fact we have already at least one original thinker comparable to any of the living philosophers of the West; in depth of thought and dialectic subtleties his philosophy stands quite distinguished among the contemporary thinkers of Japan. But this philosopher's work is no more than an adaptation of Western methodology in the logical clarification of the fundamental Japanese intuitions in regard to life and the world. It is the growth of Japanese consciousness, especially the Japanese consciousness as nourished by Buddhist thought. Whatever profundity and penetration there is in modern Japanese philosophy has its roots deeply laid in the intuitions of the Japanese mind. And these intuitions have all been attained by the philosophical training that has been going on since the days of Shōtoku Taishi, Dengyō Daishi, Kobō Daishi, and others. Students of Japanese thought are strongly advised to acquaint themselve with Buddhist literature.

Now the peculiarity of intuition is that it has no words to express itself, no methods to reason itself out, on extended demonstrations of its own truth in logically convincing manner. If it expresses itself at all, it does so in symbols and images, and these are most puzzling to those who have not been initiated into them. Outwardly, they are senseless, even when they become somehow intelligible, their inward meaning is too apt to be left out. In this respect Zen has developed its own philosophy of intuition to such a degree that its uniqueness is a wonder of the world. In the history of the human mind there is nothing comparable to it. It

stands by itself. If ordinary philosophy based on logic and built up with concepts is said to move in a world of three dimensions, Zen philosophy is in the fourth dimension. No measure used in the former can be applied here, and there is no question here about profundity of thought or systematic reasoning.

For illustration, let me quote a Zen dialogue or two. When Nansen called on a master Hyakjō Nehan, the latter asked Nansen: "Is there something in Buddhism which all the sages of the past refuse to explain for others?"

Nansen: "Yes."

Nehan: "What is that?"

Nansen: "That which is neither mind, nor Buddha, nor a thing."

Nehan: "You have already explained it!"

Nansen: "This is all I can say about it. But what do you say yourself?"

Nehan: "I am not a great master, and how do I know what to explain and what not to explain?"

Nansen: "I fail to understand."

Nehan: "There, I have said enough for you!"

According to this, not to explain is to explain, and to explain is not to explain, which is the stock teaching of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*. It is also the doctrine of Śūnyatā, and Śūnyatā is something beyond demonstration of any kind, as we have already seen in the dialogue of Yuima and Monju. Ratiocination is of no avail here. Hence Hyakjō's paradox.

Kyōzan whose regular Buddhist name was Yejaku called on Sanshō, a brother-monk whose name was Yenen, and asked: "What is your name?"

Sanshō: "Yejaku."

Kyōzan: "That's my own name."

Sanshō: "My name is Yenen."

Whereupon Kyōzan gave a hearty laugh.

This dialogue is significant in more than one way. First, there is the mixing-up of the names of the two monks concerned, which is deliberately done. Secondly, these two monks know each other perfectly well and there is no need of Kyōzan's asking the name of his friend. Thirdly, Sanshō knowing this purposely gives his friend's name Yejaku as his own, and later when Kyōzan in a way protests, Sanshō calmly announces that his own name is Yenen. Finally, Kyōzan laughs heartily as if this were the finest joke ever made. One may ask where is the philosophy of Buddhism here? No marshalling of concepts, no measured development of ideas; but this almost nonsensical exchange of remarks which have apparently not the remotest reference to Buddhism or anything approaching the doctrine of Śūnyatā or Tathatā—what does it mean?

But from the intuitionalist point of view, this meaningless exchange of remarks and Kyōzan's hearty laugh have the greatest possible significance in Buddhist philosophy. I will not try here to probe into the inner meaning of the whole affair, but this much I can say that unless these dialogues are understood, in their proper light, we nave no right to judge the real value of Buddhism as philosophy or religious teaching.

When we speak of the Buddhist influence on the literature

and art and life of the Japanese people, we have to keep this mystic trend of Buddhist philosophy in mind; for there is no doubt that it has had a great deal to do in the moulding of the spirit of our forefathers. Intuitionalism requires pointers more than ideas to express itself, and these pointers are enigmatic and non-rational. They are shy of intellectual interpretation. They have a decided aversion towards circumlocution. They do not repeat, and brevity is their essence. They are like flashes of lightning. While your eyes blink, they are gone. That *Haiku* is a poetic form peculiar to Japanese literature, and that *Sumiye* is a favourite art of painting here, are to be considered in reference to the intuitionalistic philosophy of Buddhism.

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A frog jumps into the old pond,—this is a pointer to the Japanese mind, enabling it to have a fair view of the beyond. The mind, by the aid of the pointer, comes in contact with Reality which is thus directly grasped and the experience is altogether satisfactory. This, however, to some minds is far from being satisfactory, because there is no fine disposition of concepts known as dialectic. And these will judge the Japanese way as superficial or belonging to the realm of sensibility where there is no penetrating cognition, no far-reaching imagination. In the domain of intuition, however, there is no need for such, for things are directly handled, no intermediating concepts or ideas are called for and are most unnecessary encumbrances here. They are useful in the order where they belong—this goes without saying. The confusion of orders inevitably leads to misunderstanding.

A few strokes of the brush sometimes make a flower, and the spirit of a young maiden hovers about it; they sometimes make a mountain, and the majestic form of Fuji stands before one; they sometimes make a human figure, and the transcendent air of a Li-po or a Su Tung-po pervades the picture. In these the painter does not aim to have a realistic representation of the object he plans to have on his paper; rather, it is his own spirit which breathes in and through his works. As the spirit moves, the brush traces it out, and the tracing reads as figures or objects of nature. Therefore what we see before us is the painter himself, and not the form of the subject which he is imagined to have painted. The more refined in spirituality the painter is, the more refreshing and the more vibrating with life his pictures will be. So the first business of the artist is to have spiritual training, and the use of the brush and its technique follow.

Behind Japanese intuitions we can say that there is philosophy of time in opposition to philosophy of space. The latter characterizes generally the systems of Western philosophy. The specific feature of the philosophy of time is that it turns inwardly and intuitionally apprehends the facts of consciousness, whereas the philosophy of space is always conscious of an external world and endeavours to interpret inner experiences in terms of space. This means that space-philosophy postulates something permanently existing outside the thinker himself who hungers for immortality. Even time in this system is translated into a form of space; it is

comprehended as a kind of blank sheet spread from eternity to eternity, on which each instant moves, somewhat in the way individual objects fill space. Time here is conceived as a continuum composed of individual moments succeeding one after another apparently without interruption. When time expands like space, all its characteristics are destroyed. It is no wonder that the old conception of time has now begun to be done away with by the physicists. The philosopher has to follow them and reconstruct his notion of time on a more movable and flexible basis.

The philosophy of intuition on the other hand takes time at its full value. It permits no ossification as it were of each moment. It takes hold of each moment as it is born from Śūnyatā, that is, Emptiness, according to Buddhist philosophy. Momentariness is therefore characteristic of this philosophy. Each moment is absolute, alive, and significant. The frog leaps, the cricket sings, a dew-drop glitters on the lotus leaf, a breeze passes through the pine branches, and the moonlight falls on the murmuring mountain stream. The Japanese mind trained in the time-philosophy of Buddhism is quick to catch each movement of nature and expresses its impressions in a seventeen-syllable poem or in a few strokes of the brush.

Space-philosophy is like building a stone house and time-philosophy a frame house. Stones are piled one after another according to a definite plan and a grand cathedral is erected. For a straw-thatched tea-room timber as it comes straight from the woods is used, often unplaned, just cut to make it fit different parts of the hut. Timber cannot be piled up like stone or brick, its length and size are determined from the beginning. Every instant of time is like a piece of timber—complete in itself and alive

throughout its duration, however instantaneous that may be. A stone-building is grand and imposing as a whole, standing by itself apart from its surroundings. It is altogether individualistic. It does not merge into other objects. The straw-thatched hut is insignificant in comparison, but it harmonizes well with the woods in which it reposes. It is a living thing like the surrounding objects of nature. But when you begin to philosophize about it no logicians can exhaust its meaning, because it lives with nature itself. This part of the work, that is, philosophizing on Buddhist intuitions, will be left to modern Japanese thinkers who are taking in more and more of Western ideas in order to complement the work already accomplished by their predecessors.

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Finally, I wish to say a word about the Buddhist influence on the Japanese character. As we all know, Buddhism is singularly noted for its broad-mindedness, gentle-heartedness, and adaptability. The spirit pervading its entire constitution is not at all militant, or aggressive, or exclusive. It has a strong missionary spirit. In this respect it is self-assertive, but being adaptable to any new conditions its self-assertion is carried out without giving any offence to the cults and traditions of the people among whom it finds its new habitat. It does not attempt to attack or displace the state of affairs already in existence among such people. It quietly comes among them and is at home with them before long. Its march beyond the borders of its birthplace has never been marked with violence or blood-shed. This has been true not only in its

missionary movements but in its intellectual activities. This can best be illustrated in the teaching and cult of the Shingon sect of Buddhism in Japan.

Look at those Vedic gods, native gods, Nāgās, Kinnaras, Garudas, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and many others who are all in a most comprehensive manner taken into the Mandalas and made to perform their various functions according to the grand cosmic scheme of Shingon philosophy. When Shingon came to Japan it also succeeded in incorporating all the native gods as avatars of the Buddha Vairocana. Shinto has no philosophy, and therefore it has not been able to assimilate Buddhist thought into its own folds. The assimilation was to be carried on by Buddhism. The contact of Buddhism with Christianity was no exception to this general law. It was not Christianity but Buddhism that first started its assimilative function over the rival religion[1].

When Zen developed in China, it first swallowed up Taoism and then Confucianism. From the Taoistic point of view, there is so much of it in Zen that the latter can be said to be a variety of Tao philosophy and practice. Zen has also taken much of Confucianism into its own constitution, and when it came over to

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[1] Recently I read a newspaper account relating to the erection of a stone Jizō statue in the Tennōji grounds in Osaka. The Jizō carries a cross over his shoulder and on his back is engraved a passage from the Bible. The occasion is to be celebrated by both Buddhists and Christians in November this year. This strange combination came about owing to the wish of a prominent Osaka member, Riichiro Hamatani, of the Temperance Society. He was a devoted Christian and used to proclaim his faith loudly while still on earth. But curiously he wished to become an incarnation of Jizō the Bodhisattva after his death. This wish was respected by members of the Temperance Society throughout Japan, each of whom contributed ten *sen* to build a stone statue of Jizō in commemoration of his work for the cause of temperance. The authorities of the Tennōji, one of the most popular Buddhist temples of Osaka, took an interest in the affair. Hence the event above referred to.

Japan it brought much of the Confucian classical literature along with its own scriptures. That Zen has adopted poetry as a medium of expression along with *sumiye* painting proves that it has well adapted itself to the Chinese way of feeling. And this is no doubt the reason why Zen masters are good students of the Confucian classics and also of Shinto literature.

If Buddhism were, against its own nature, militant and aggressive, its missionary spirit would have caused many a sanguinary religious war and, with its superior religio-philosophical equipments, crushed many a system of primitive beliefs, mythologies, superstitions, and national traditions which are interesting and worth studying as records of human culture. This spirit of tolerance demonstrated on all sides and in every possible way by Buddhism and its followers was not a sign of weakness. It was what may be called *ōfuroshikiism* in which all kinds of things can find a place each according to its specific quality and function. Buddhism resembles Yuima's study, ten-feet square, in which the entire universe with all its mountains and rivers and oceans finds itself comfortably embraced. It is thus sometimes possible that the room itself comes not to have any boundaries of its own; that is to say, it may altogether lose its specific character. In fact this happened in India. Buddhism no more exists there as Buddhism; the ideas that have been identified as specifically Buddhist are now absorbed in other existing religious faiths in India. In China and Japan Buddhism fully retains its individuality owing to its highly metaphysical intuitions and its all-embracing love which extends even to the world of non-sentient beings—these are indeed the Buddhist differentia as distinguishing it from Shintoism, Confucianism, and Taoism.

This all-comprehensiveness of Buddhism which is not the same as being merely tolerant, must have made a great impression on the Japanese mind. Buddhism has been so sure of the truth of its religio-metaphysical intuitions that wherever transplanted it has allowed itself to establish a harmonious relationship with its new surroundings--moral, infellectual, and spiritual. It has never been aggressive, nor arrogant, it has always been in readiness to propose new theories if necessary to accommodate the old native beliefs already firmly established. Those who have come under the influence of Buddhism, therefore, always try to practise this spirit of generosity and of universal kindness even towards enemies.

You have perhaps already heard the word "*kuyō*" which is the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit term "*Pūjā.*" *Pūjā* originally means "reverence," "paying homage," or "adoration." In Buddhism at present this paying homage to one's spiritual superior consists in making offerings to him, usually material things. When a Buddhist priest gets a *pūjā* or *kuyō*, it means that he is given a dinner or a sum of money. The Buddha too has his *kuyō* in the shape of food, incense, flowers, and candles. These latter are also offered to the dead. In this case a *kuyō* offering means a kind religious consolation offered to the departed spirit, as it is always accompanied by sūtra-reading and other religious performances.

When we hear of a *kuyō* offering made to the *mushi* (insects), the *fudé* (brush), or the *hana* (flowers), the *kuyō* in these cases means a Buddhist service performed for the respective object, and it is here that I wish to refer to the Buddhist sensibility deeply

imbibed by the Japanese people. What is the meaning of the *kuyō* in this connection? Those outside Buddhism may have a good occasion here to enjoy a joke when they learn of the Buddhist idea of consoling the spirit of the insect, or of the flower, or even of the painter's brush which is a mere human creation. The *kuyō* is offered not only to these, but to the fishes caught in the fisherman's nets, to the animals killed by the butchers, to the corpses dissected by the medical students, to the enemies fallen in the battle-field, to the animals dead while in captivity, for instance in the zoological garden, and so on. In the case of the animals slaughtered or suffering natural death, or of enemies killed, the *kuyō* may have a sense, but what about the painter's worn-out brushes, the plants weeded out by the horticulturist, and the insects singing all night long in the autumn-field? To understand this, we must be acquainted with the Buddhist teaching of universal salvation both of sentient beings and non-sentient beings. Sengai, one of the greatest modern Zen Buddhists, used to fold his hands respectfully when weeding in his yard. He was sensitive to every life pulled out, however mean the form it assumed. The gardener weeds out those young plants not strong enough or not desirable enough for his purpose in order to give his full attention to the better ones, as when cultivating the morning-glories or chrysanthemums. The destruction of the young plants for the sake of the more promising ones, though good from a practical point of view, is an act going against the general principle of compassion. A *kuyō* in this case is a rite of atonement.

As to the painter's brush, it is no doubt a lifeless instrument constructed by human hands, and we can say that there is no "soul" in it, whatever we may mean by this term. But the fact is

that the brush is an extension of the painter's own arm, as every human instrument is, and as such it is endowed with life, for with it the painter can express himself and give spirit to his works. The brush in the hands of the painter is surely possessed of life and spirit. We often see in Buddhist or Shinto temple grounds a monument dedicated to the brushes used by the painters and calligraphers. Even apart from religious significance, it is a beautiful sentiment. If the machines, not to mention the workers in a factory, be treated with these humane, if not Buddhist, considerations, all economic problems might be successfully solved in a most amicable manner. This, however, is my dream.

There are many more points I should like to mention in regard to the Buddhist influence on the thought and feeling of the Japanese people, which is still active and observable in their character and expressions. Among them is the idea of *Sabi* or *Wabi*. This is the controlling factor in Japanese arts pure and applied. But to explain it fully requires another hour of talk and will be reserved for another occasion like this.

DISCUSSION

Q. How far can we distinguish Shinto influence from Buddhist influence ?

A. All Japanese are Shintoists whether they wish to be or not. Therefore it is impossible to separate Shintoism from Buddhism as to its specific influence upon Japanese life and character. It may yield better results to ask what influence Buddhism has had on Shintoism.

Q. I should be interested if reference were to be made to the influence of Buddhism on Shinto in the early period.

A. The Buddhist influence on Shinto is very difficult to tell in its earlier stage of development, because there was no Shinto before the introduction of Buddhism into Japan. Shinto grew conscions of itself only when it confronted Buddhism. Even then, this consciousness was not of a religious nature. Strictly speaking, Shinto is not a personal religion as is Buddhism or Christianity. It is a strong national feeling towards the founder of the country and his family. It has been highly sanctified almost to a form of religiosity.

When Shōtoku Taishi built all those fine buildings and temples which are still preserved in Kyoto, Osaka, and Nara, the Japanese must have been staggered. As to Taishi's Chinese commentaries on the three great Mahayana sūtras, the intellectual and religious feat executed by him must have seemed altogether superhuman even to the greatest of the intellectuals of his day.

Shinto had no philosophy until, influenced by Buddhism, it began to systematize itself during the Tokugawa period. Before that Shinto went under the name of Buddhism, thoroughly absorbed in the body of the latter.

Q. Has there been a revival of Buddhism in Japan of recent years ?

A. During the Tokugawa era and prior to it, Buddhism was patronized by the local governments as well as by the Imperial Court. Through too much protection thus given by politically and economically influential personages, Buddhism began to degenerate in more than one way. At the Restoration the Buddhist temples and monasteries were robbed of their material possessions, which was a great blow to their welfare.

Recently, Buddhism has come to stand on its own feet as exemplified by its social and educational propaganda. The Buddhists are no longer dependent on government support in any way. They are now able to carry on their own work, and people are taking much interest also in their doings. No doubt the coming of Christianity has stimulated Buddhist activites in fields hitherto neglected, or forgotten in too favourable surroundings. The so-called revival phenomena recently noticed by some must be ascribed to the reawakening of the Buddhist spirit excited anew by various circumstances, social, political, and intellectual.

Q. What marked differences are there between Buddhism and Shintoism ?

A. They are in fact altogether too marked, because Buddhism is

a religion, a world-religion, while Shinto is a national cult. Buddhism can be transplanted anywhere, but Shinto finds its home in the country where it has grown up. The reason why Shinto is often confused with Buddhism, especially by foreigners, is that Shinto has taken something of Buddhism into its own body, with the purpose of developing itself into a kind of personal religion.

All Japanese are Shintoists in the sense that they are born into the land of the Shinto gods. Just as we accept Mount Fuji and the cherry-blossoms, we accept Shinto. But Japanese Buddhists are not saved from their spiritual vexations or from the tragedy of birth and death by embracing the Shinto gods as their ancestral spirits.

Even when Shinto tries to become a religion, the one most marked difference between it and Buddhism is its poverty of imagination. No such rich imageries as we find in Buddhism are discoverable in Shinto.

You feel the differences at once as you enter Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples. In the latter you find symbols many and varied in nature. Buddhism, inheriting the Indian way of thinking and feeling, has transmitted this characteristic also to its Japanese followers. As a result it has encouraged the development of arts, especially sculpture, painting, and architecture. A great number of the "national treasures" of Japan come from Buddhist sources and have Buddhist significance.

In passing, let me remark that foreign missionaries formerly regarded those Buddhist sculptures we come across in temples as idols, and consequently concluded Buddhism to be a form of idolatry. The Japanese too failed to appreciate

the real artistic and spiritual value of those works of their own ancient masters.

On the other hand, the motive of the Shinto spirit is simplicity and naïveté and purity. Its symbol is the mirror.

As to many other differences, they are obvious enough even for strangers not to miss.

Q. What is the number of Buddhist monks now and what is their influence upon the people?

A. The term "Buddhist monks" is ambiguous, but understanding this to mean those Buddhists ordained as *sōryo* who belong to the hierarchies of the different sects and actually preside over the temples, and also those who are officially qualified to teach the doctrine of the sect to which they belong, their number must be over 100,000. The number of temples and preaching stations is said to be over 130,000.

What is the influence of the "Buddhist monks" upon the people? This is a difficult question to answer properly. I have, however, tried to depict though quite partially in my lecture certain features of Buddhist influence on the cultural life of the Japanese people. The general spiritual influence, I can say, has been to soften their character and to teach compassion towards all beings sentient and non-sentient. Where Buddhism prospers I am told no cruel crimes have taken place.

Q. What is the connection between Zen and Buddism ?

A. Zen is sometimes said not to be Buddhism but a syncretism of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism proper—whatever

this latter may be taken to mean. As I understand it, however, Zen is a form of Buddhism, for the spirit of Buddhism is the spirit of Zen. Naturally it grew up nourished by Chines feelings and thoughts before it came to Japan where it has now the strongest hold on the people. Żen discipline has something akin to that of the Franciscan order, and its monastic life still emanates a powerful spiritual influence among the Japanese, especially among the intelligentsia.

Q. Kindly outline the present Buddhist Revival Movement, e. g. its promoters, its progress, and its accomplishments.

A. I am not very well acquainted with this movement and things connected with it. But this much I can state: that the "Revival Movement" is the expression of a dissatisfaction felt in certain intellectual quarters over the state of things that has so far prevailed in Japan as a continuation of the feudalistic way of accepting the economic situations of the present day.

Q. How accurate were the words which were only spoken by Buddha and not written by himself, handed down for more than four hundred years before they were put into writing?

A. Professor Ui, who I understand is going to lecture to Group I, is a great student of Buddhism, especially in the field covered in this question, and I trust he will give you a scholarly answer.

Q. Can the effects of Buddhism on Japanese life be clearly distinguished from the effects of Shinto?

A. This I believe I have answered in one of my previous answers.

To repeat partly, I would say this : Buddhism is rich in imagination, and its intuitions are penetrating. Shinto intuitions lack this Buddhist penetration. They are too naïve. The white robes Shinto priests wear is characteristic of the quality of their undetstanding, which does not go beyond the realm of sensibilities. The Buddhist white is the final one which is reached only after experiencing all the varieties of colours. In Buddhism there is an intensity of imagination. For this reason Buddhists often take to rich colours apparently contradictory to their teaching. Shinto has no flowers but a green bough, while in the Buddhist garden every possible shade of colour may be seen.

Where these differences are observable, there are also differences of effects observable in the Buddhist and the Shinto influence upon the people of Japan.

As I said before, there is no philosophy in Shinto. No religion can exist without a philosophy of its own. When Shinto began to claim itself to be a religious faith it needed philosophy to give it a system. Ritualism is not enough. It must be explained in terms of the intellect. To do this Buddhist philosophy was made use of by Shintoists.

Q. Then can we consider that Shinto bases its philosophy on that of Buddhism ?

A. Yes.

K. B. S. Publications
Series-B. No. 19

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