THE JAPANESE SPIRIT

Since the end of the thirteenth century, when Marco Polo, on his return to Venice, wrote about 'Cipango,' an island, as he stated, '1500 miles off the coast of China, fabulously rich, and inhabited by people of agreeable manners,' many a Western pen has been wielded to tell all kinds of tales concerning the Land of the Rising Sun. Her long seclusion; her anxious care to guard inviolate the simple faith which had been gravely threatened by the Roman Church; her hearty welcome of the honoured guests from the West, after centuries of independent growth; the sudden, almost pathetic, changes she has gone through in the past forty years in order to equip herself for a place on the world's stage where powers play their game of balance; the lessons she lately taught the
still slumbering China through the mouths of thundering cannon: all this has called into existence the expression of opinions and comments of very varying merit and tone; and especially since the outbreak of the present war, when the daily news from the scenes of action, where my brethren are fighting for the cause of wronged justice and menaced liberty, is showing the world page after page of patriotism and loyalty, written unmistakably in the crimson letters of heroes' blood,—all this has given occasion to Europe and America to think the matter over afresh. Here you have at least a nation different in her development from any existing people in the Occident. Governed from time immemorial by the immediate descendants of the Sun-Goddess, whose merciful rule early taught us to offer them our voluntary tribute of devotion and love, we have based our social system on filial piety, that necessary outcome of ancestor-worship which presupposes altruism on the one hand, and on the other loyalty and love of the fatherland. Different doctrines of religion
and morality have found their way from their continental homes to the silvery shores of the Land of the Gods, only to render their several services towards consolidating and widening the so-called 'Divine Path,' that national cult whose unwritten tenets have lurked for thousands of years hidden in the most sacred corner of our hearts, whose pulse is ever beating its rhythm of patriotism and loyalty. Buddhist metaphysics, Confucian and Taoist philosophy, have been fused together in the furnace of Shintoism for fifteen centuries and a half, and that apart from the outer world, in the island home of Japan, where the blue sky looks down on gay blossoms and gracefully sloping mountains. The final amalgamation of these forces produces, among other results, the works of art and the feats of bravery now before you, each bearing the ineffaceable hall-marks of Japan's past history. Surely here you are face to face with a people worthy of serious investigation, not only from the worldly interest of mere policy, but from the disinterested point of view of a folk-psychologist. It is a study
which will open to any impartial observer a new horizon, more so than would be the case if he attempted the sociological interpretation of a nation the history of whose development was almost identical with that of his own. Here he meets totally different sets of things with totally different ways of looking at them; and this gives him ample occasion to realise the fact that human thought and action may evolve in several forms and through several channels before they reach their respective culmination where they all, regardless of their original differences, melt into the common sea of truth.

But this simple fact that 'God fulfils Himself in many ways,' as your Tennyson has it, so necessary to ensure freedom from national bigotry and conventional ignorance, so necessary too for a proper understanding of oneself as the cumulative product of a nation's history, has not always been kept in mind, even by those otherwise well-meaning authors, whose works have some charm as descriptive writing, but give only a superficial and
often misleading account of the inner life of the nation. True, a great deal of excellent work has been achieved by a number of scholars of lasting merit, from Kaempfe's memorable work first published in its English translation as early as 1727, down to the admirable Interpretation written last year by the late Mr. Lafcadio Hearn, in whose death Japan lost one of her most precious friends, possessing as he did the scholar's insight and the poet's pen, two heavenly gifts seldom found united in a single man. It is mainly through the remarkable labour of two learned bodies, the Asiatic Society of Japan and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, both with their headquarters in Tôkyô—in whose indefatigable researches the 'Japan Society' in this city has ably joined since 1892—that most valuable data have been constantly brought to light, furnishing for future students sure bases for wider generalisations. But owing to the numerous hindrances—some of which look almost insurmountable to the Western investigator—a fair synthetic interpretation
of Japan as a nation, explaining all the important forces that underlie the psychic and physical phenomena, still remains to be written. The most formidable of the difficulties which meet a European or American student at the very threshold of his researches is the totally different construction of Japanese society, a difficulty which makes it impossible to understand properly any set of the phenomena belonging to it apart from the others which surround them. One could as well cut a single mesh from a net without prejudice to the neighbouring ones! The proper understanding of things Japanese therefore presupposes freedom from your conventional philosophy of life, and the power of viewing things through other people’s eyes.

Besides this obstacle, there are many others; for example, that of the language. Like most other nations in the East, we have been accustomed, up to this very day, to use a written language, divided within itself into several styles, which is considerably different from the vernacular. To
make this state of things still more complicated, Chinese characters are profusely resorted to in the native writings, and are used not only as so many ideographs for words of Chinese origin, but also to represent native words. To make confusion worse confounded, they are not infrequently used as pure phonetic symbols without any further meaning attaching to them. So one and the same sign may be read in half a dozen different ways, according to the hints, more or less sure, given by the context. All this makes the study of Japanese immensely difficult. It is difficult even for a Japanese with the best opportunities; a hundred times more so, then, for a Western scholar who, if he cares to study the subject at first hand at all, begins this study, comparatively speaking, late in life, when his memory has well-nigh lost the capacity of bearing such an enormous burden!

Still, there have been many Western scholars who, nothing daunted by the above-mentioned hindrances, have done much valuable work. English names like
those of Sir E. Satow, G. W. Aston, B. H. Chamberlain, Lafcadio Hearn are to be gratefully remembered by all future students in this field of inquiry, as well as such German scholars as Dr. Baelz and Dr. Florenz. Leaving the enumeration of general works on Japan, whose name is legion, for some other time, let me mention one or two of those works of reference which a would-be English scholar of Japanese matters might find very useful. First of all Mr. B. H. Chamberlain's Things Japanese—a book which gave birth to Mr. J. D. Hall's equally indispensable Things Chinese—containing in cyclopædic form a mine of information about Japan. Dr. Wenckstern's painstaking Japanese Bibliography, with M. de Losny's earlier attempt as a supplement, gives you the list of all writings on Japan in European tongues that have appeared up to 1895. For those who want good books on the Japanese language, Mr. Aston's Grammar of the Japanese Written Language, Mr. Chamberlain's Handbook of Colloquial Japanese, as well as the same author's Monzi-no-Shirubi, a
Practical Introduction to the Study of the Japanese Writing, are the best. As for books on the subject from the pen of the Japanese themselves, Dr. Nitobe’s *Bushido, Explanations of the Japanese Thought*, and my brother K. Okakura’s *Ideals of the East*, besides a volume by several well-known Japanese, entitled *Japan by the Japanese*, are to be specially mentioned.¹

What I myself propose to do in this essay is to give to the best of my ability, and so far as is possible with the scanty knowledge and the limited space at my disposal, a simple statement in plain language of what I think to be the fundamental truths necessary for the proper understanding of my fatherland. I am not vain enough to attempt any original solution of the old difficulty; knowing as I do my own deficiencies, I should be well

¹ Professor T. Inouye’s little pamphlet, published first in French, entitled *Sur le Développement des Idées Philosophiques au Japon avant l’Introduction de la Civilisation Européenne*, will give you some idea of our philosophic system. For a serious perusal, its German translation, annotated and amplified, by Dr. A. Gramatzky (*Kurze Übersicht über die Entwicklung der philosophischen Ideen in Japan*, Berlin, 1897), is to be preferred.
satisfied if I could manage to give you some kind of general introduction to the Japanese views of life.

So much for the preliminary remarks. Let us now take a step further and see what factors are to be considered as the bases of modern Japan.

'To which race do the Japanese belong?' is the first question asked by any one who wants to approach our subject from the historical point of view. Unfortunately not much is known as yet about our place in racial science. If we do not take into account the inhabitants of the newly annexed island of Formosa, we have, roughly speaking, two very different races in our whole archipelago—the hairy Aino and the ruling Yamato race, the former being the supposed aborigines, physically sturdy and well developed, with their characteristic abundant growth of hair, who are at present to be found only in the Yezo island in the northern extremity of Japan, and whose number, notwithstanding all the care of our government, is fast dwindling, the sum-
total being not much more than 15,000. The Aino have a tradition that the land had been occupied before them by another race of dwarfish stature called Koropokguru, who are identified by some scholars with those primitive pit-dwellers known in our history as Tuchigumo,¹ whose traces, although scanty, are still to be met with in various parts of Yezo. Anyhow, we see at the first dawn of history the aborigines gradually receding before the conquering Yamato race, who are found steadily pushing on towards the north-east, and who finally established themselves as a ruling body under the divine banner of the first emperor Jimmu, from whose accession we reckon our era, the present year being the 2565th, according to our recognised way of counting dates.

Suggestions, audacious rather than strictly scientific, have been put forward as to the original home both of the Aino and the Japanese. The Rev. I. Dooman, for instance, proposed in his paper read before

Professor Milne, Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, vol. viii. p. 82.
the meeting of the Asiatic Society of Japan in 1897 to derive both from the people who had been living, according to him, on both sides of the great Himalayan range. 'The Aino,' he says, 'the first inhabitants of these (Japanese) islands, belong to the South Himalayan Centre; while the Japanese, the second comers, belong to the North Himalayan, commonly called Altaic races.'¹ But in face of the scanty knowledge at our command about the respective sets of people in question, such wholesale conjectures had better be postponed until some later time, when further research shall have supplied surer data for our speculations. As regards the Aino, we must for the present say, on the authority of Mr. Chamberlain, that, remembering how the Aino race is isolated from all other living races by its hairiness and by the extraordinary flattening of the tibia and humerus, it is not strange to find the language isolated too.²

¹ Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, vol. xxv.
² Memoirs of the Literary Department of the University of Tokyo, vol. i
WITH respect to the Japanese proper, the only thing known about their racial affinity is the theory proposed by the German scholar Dr. Baelz, as the result of his elaborate measurements both of living specimens and skeletons.¹ He considers the Yamato race to belong to the Mongolian stock on the Asiatic continent, from where they proceeded to Japan by way of the Corean peninsula. There are two distinct types noticeable among them at present, one characterised by a delicate, refined appearance, with oval face, rather oblique eyes, slightly Roman nose, and a frame not vigorous yet well proportioned; the other marked out by broader face, projecting cheek bones, flat nose, and horizontal eyes, while the body is more robust and muscular, though not so well proportioned and regular. The former is to be met with among the better classes and in the southern parts of Japan, while the specimens of the latter are found rather among the labouring

¹ Die körperlichen Eigenschaften des Japaner, vols. xxviii and xxxii, of Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für die Natur- und Volkerkunde Oostasiens.
population, and are more abundant in the northern provinces. This difference of types, aristocratic and plebeian, which is still more conspicuous among the fair sex, is with good reason attributed to the two-fold wave of Mongolian emigration which reached our island in prehistoric times. The first emigrants, consisting of coarser tribes of the Mongolian race, landed most probably on the northern coast of the main island somewhere in the present Idzumo province, and settled down there, while the second wave broke on the shores of Kyūshū. These emigrants seem to have belonged to the more refined branch of the great Mongolian stock. This hypothesis is borne out by our mythology, which divides itself into two cycles, one centring at Idzumo and the other at Kyūshū, and which tell us how the great-grandfather of the first great emperor, Jimmu descended from heaven on to the peak of the mountain Takachiho in Hyūga in Kyūshū. Accompanied by his brother, he started from this spot on his march of conquering migration to Yamato, fighting and subdu-
ing on his way tribes who on the continent were once his kith and kin.

It might perhaps interest you to know something of our prevailing idea of personal beauty, especially as, in such a homogeneous nation as the Japanese, ruled from time immemorial by one and the same line of dynasty, it may help us to make some vague conjectures as to the physical appearances of at least one of those continental tribes out of which our nation has been formed. The standard of beauty naturally fluctuates a little according to sex and locality. In a lady, for example, mildness and grace are, generally speaking, preferred to that strength or manliness of expression which would be thought more becoming in her brother. Tôkyô again does not put so much stress on the fleshiness of limbs and face as does Kyôto. But, as a whole, there is only one ideal throughout the Empire. So let me try to enumerate all the qualities usually considered necessary to make a beautiful woman. She is to possess a body not much exceeding five feet in height, with
comparatively fair skin and proportionally well-developed limbs; a head covered with long, thick, and jet-black hair; an oval face with a straight nose, high and narrow; rather large eyes, with large deep-brown pupils and thick eyelashes; a small mouth, hiding behind its red, but not thin, lips even rows of small white teeth; ears not altogether small; and long and thick eyebrows forming two horizontal but slightly curved lines, with a space left between them and the eyes. Of the four ways in which hair can grow round the upper edge of the forehead, viz. horned, square, round, and Fuji-shaped, one of the last two is preferred, a very high as well as a very low forehead being considered not attractive.

Such are, roughly speaking, the elements of Japanese female beauty. Eyes and eyebrows with the outer ends turning considerably upwards, with which your artists depict us, are due to those Japanese colour prints which strongly accentuate our dislike of the reverse, for straight eyes and eyebrows make a very bad impression on us, suggesting weakness, lascivious-
ness, and so on. It must also be understood that in Japan no such variety of types of beauty is to be met with as is noticed here in Europe. Blue eyes and blond hair, the charms of which we first learn to feel after a protracted stay among you, are regarded in a Japanese as something extraordinary in no favourable sense of the term! A girl with even a slight tendency to grey eyes or frizzly hair is looked upon as an unwelcome deviation from the national type.

If we now consider our mythology, with a view to tracing the continental home of the Yamato race, we find, to our disappointment, that our present knowledge is too scanty to allow us to arrive at a conclusion. Indeed, so long as the general science of mythology itself remains in that unsettled condition in which its youth obliges it to linger, and especially so long as the Indian and Chinese bodies of myths—by which our mythology is so unmistakably influenced—do not receive more serious systematic treatment, the recorded stories of the Japanese deities cannot be expected to supply us
with much indication as to our continental home. One thing is certain about them, that they were not free from influences exerted by the different myths prevalent among the Chinese and the Indians at the time when they were written down in our earliest history, the Kô-ji-ki or Records of Ancient Matter, completed in A.D. 712. There is an excellent English translation of the book, with an admirable introduction and notes, by Mr. B. H. Chamberlain. According to this book, the original ethereal chaos with which the world began gradually congealed, and was finally divided into heaven and earth. The male and female principles now at work gave birth to several deities, until a pair of deities named Izanagi and Izanami, or the 'Male-who-invites' and the 'Female-who-invites,' were produced. They tried and produced first of all the islands of Japan big and small, and then different deities, until the birth of the Fire-God cost the divine mother her life. She subsequently retired to the Land of Darkness or Hades, where her sorrowful consort
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descended, Orpheus-like, in quest of his spouse. He failed to bring her back to the outer world, for, like the Greek musician, he broke his promise not to look at her in her more profound retirement. The result was disastrous. Izanagi barely escaped from his now furious wife, and on coming back to daylight he washed himself in a stream, in order to purify himself from the hideous sights and the pollution of the nether-world. This custom of lustration is, by the way, kept up to this day in the symbolic sprinkling of salt over persons returning from a funeral—salt representing pure water, as our name for it, 'the flower of the waters,' well indicates. Our love of cleanliness and of bathing might be also recognised in this early custom. Impurity, whether mental or corporal, has always been regarded as a great evil, and even as a sin.

Now one of the most important results of the purification of the god Izanagi was the birth of three important deities through the washing of his eyes and nose. The Moon-God and the Sun-Goddess emerged
from his washing his right and left eyes, while Susanowo, their younger brother, owed his existence to the washing of his nose; three illustrious children to whom the divine father trusted the dominion of night, day, and the seas.

The last-mentioned deity, whose name would mean in English 'Prince Impetuous,' lost his father's favour by his obstinate longing to see Izanami, the divine mother, in Hades, and was expelled from the father's presence. He eventually went up to heaven to pay a visit to his sister, the Sun-Goddess, whom he gravely offended by his monstrous outrages on her person, and who was consequently so angry that she shut herself up in a rocky chamber, thus causing darkness in the world outside. In accordance with the deliberate plans worked out by an assembly of a myriad gods, she was at last allured from her cavern by the sounds of wild merriment caused by the burlesque dancing of a female deity, and day reigned once more.

The now repenting offender was driven down from heaven, and he wandered about
the earth. It was during this wandering that in Idzumo he, like Perseus, rescued a beautiful young maid from an eight-headed serpent. He won her hand and lived very happily with her ever after.

In the meantime the state of things in the 'High Plain of Heaven' ripened to the point that the Sun-Goddess began to think of sending her august child to govern the 'Luxuriant-Reed-Plain-Land-of-Fresh-Rice-Ears,' that is to say, Japan. Messages were previously sent to pacify the land for the reception of the divine ruler. This took much time, during which a grandson was born to the Sun-Goddess, and in the end it was this grandson who was designated to come down to earth instead of his father. On his departure a formal command to descend and rule the land now placed under his care was accompanied by the present of a mirror, a sword, and a string of crescent-shaped jewels. These treasures, still preserved in our imperial household as regalia, are generally interpreted to mean the three virtues of wisdom, courage, and mercy - necessary qualities
for a perfect ruler. It was on the high peak of Mount Takachihō that the divine ruler descended to earth. He settled down in the country until his great-grandson, known in history as Emperor Jimmu, founded the empire and began that unique line of rulers who have governed the 'Land of the Gods' for more than two thousand years, the present emperor being the hundred and twenty-first link in the eternal chain.

Such is, in brief, the story about my country before it was brought under the rule of one central governing body. Subjected to scientific scrutiny the whole tale presents many gaps in logical sequence. It betrays, besides, traces of an intermingling of the early beliefs of other nations. Still, it must be said that the divine origin of our emperors has invested their throne with the double habit of temporal and of spiritual power from the earliest days of their ascendancy; and the people, themselves the descendants of those patriarchs who served under the banners of Emperor Jimmu, or else of those who early learned
to bow themselves down before the divine conqueror, have looked up to this throne with an ever-growing reverence and pride.

In primitive Japan, as in every other primitive human society, ancestor-worship was the first form of belief. Each family had its own departed spirits of forefathers to whom was dedicated a daily homage of simple words and offerings in kind. The guardian ghosts demanded of their living descendants that they should be good and brave in their own way. As these families, of the same race and language gathered themselves around the strongest of them all, imbued with a firm belief in its divine origin, they contributed in their turn their own myths to the imperial ones, thus eventually forming and consolidating a national cult; and it was but natural that the people's heart should come in course of time to re-echo in harmony with the keynote struck by the one through whom the gods breathe eternal life. The whole nation is bound by that sacred tie of common belief and common thought. Here lies the great gap that separates, for
example, the Chinese cult of fatalism from our Path of Gods as a moral force. The Chinese have believed from the earliest times in one supreme god whom they called the Divine Presider (Shang-ši) or the August Heaven (Hwang-t'ien or simply T'ien), who, according to their notion, carefully selects a fit person from among swarming mankind to be the temporary ruler of his fellow-countrymen, but only for so long as it pleases the god to let him occupy the throne. At the expiration of a certain period, the heavenly mission (T'ien-ming) is transferred through bloodshed and national disaster to another mortal, who exercises the earthly rule until he or his descendants incur the disfavour of the ‘Heaven above.’ To this day the Chinese word for revolution means the ‘renovation of missions’ (kweh ming). This fatalistic idea, which is but a natural outcome of the almost too democratic nature of the people of the Celestial Empire and of the frequent changes of dynasties it has had to go through, is almost unknown in our island home in its gravest aspects;
more than that, ever since its introduction into Japan, this idea, along with the Indian doctrine of pitiless fate, has gradually taught us to offer a more resigned and determined service to our respective superiors, to culminate in the divine person of the Emperor himself. This is well illustrated by the fact that no attempt at the formal occupation of the throne has ever been made, even on the part of those powerful Shōguns who were the real rulers of our country; they knew full well how dangerous and fatal for themselves it would be to tamper with that hinge on which the nation’s religious life turns. Only once in our long history is there an example of an unsuccessful attempt (and it is the highest treason a Japanese subject can think of), when a Buddhist monk named Dōkyō, encouraged by the undue devotion of the ruling empress, tried to ascend the throne by means of the recognition of the higher temporal rank of the Buddhist priesthood over the imperial ministry of the native cult. This imminent danger was averted
by the bold and resolute patriotism of a Shintō priest, Wake-no-Kiyomaro, who, in Luther-like defiance of all peril and personal risks, declared fearlessly, in the very presence of the haughty and menacing head of the Buddhist Church, the divine will, 'Japan is to know no emperor except in the person of the divine descendants of the Sun-Goddess!'

Turning now to the question of language, we must confess that the linguistic affinities of Japanese are as little cleared up as the other problems we have been considering. The only thing we know about the Japanese language amounts to this: it belongs, morphologically speaking, to the so-called agglutinative languages, e.g. those which express their grammatical functions by the addition of etymologically independent elements—prefixes and suffixes—to the unchangeable roots of base forms. Genealogically, to follow the classification expounded by Friedrich Muller in his *Grundriss der Sprachwissenschaft*, who based his system on Haeckel's division of the human race by the nature
and particularly the section of the hair, Japanese is one of the languages or groups of languages spoken by the Mongolian race.

But this characterisation of our tongue does not help us much. One could as well point to the east at large to show where Japan lies! Notwithstanding the general uncertainty as regards the exact position of our language, this much is sure, that Japanese has, in spite of the immense number of loan-words of Chinese origin, no fundamental connection with the monosyllabic language of China, whose different syntactical nature and want of common roots baffles the attempts on the part of some speculative Europeans to connect it with our own tongue. At the same time, it is well known among competent scholars that Japanese, with its most distant dialect Luchuan, bears great kinship to the Corean, Manchurian, and Mongolian languages. It shares with them, besides the dislike of commencing a word with a trilled sound or with a sonant, almost the same rules for the arrangement of the component
elements of a sentence. According to the Japanese syntax, the following rules can, for instance, be applied to Corean without alteration:—

1. All the qualifying words and phrases are put before those they qualify. Attributive adjectives and adverbs, and their equivalents, are placed before nouns and verbs they modify.

2. The grammatical subject stands at the beginning of the sentence.

3. Predicative elements are at the end of a sentence.

4. Direct and indirect objects follow the subject.

5. Subordinate sentences precede the principal ones.

One thing worthy of notice is the fact that, notwithstanding the most convincing structural similarity that exists between these affiliated languages, they contain, comparatively speaking, few words in common, even among the numerals and personal pronouns, which have played such an important part in Indo-European philology. We must still wait a long
time before a better knowledge of linguistic affinity reveals such decisive links of connection as will enable us to trace our Japanese home on the continent.

Let us now consider what were the effects of the continental civilisation on the mental development of the Japanese within their insular home.

Before entering into details about the various continental doctrines implanted in our country from China and India, it may be well to tell you something of the mental attitude of the Japanese in facing a new form of culture, in many senses far superior to their own. Nothing definite can perhaps be said about it; but when we grope along the main cord of historical phenomena we think we find that the Japanese as a whole are not a people with much aptitude for deep metaphysical ways of thinking. They are not of the calibre from which you expect a Kant or a Schopenhauer. Warlike by nature more than anything else, they have been known from the very beginning to have had the soldier-like simplicity and the easy con-
tentment of men of action—qualities which the practical nature of Confucian ethics had ample chance to develop. The abstruse conceptions of Chinese or Indian origin have been received into the Japanese mind just as they were preached, and usually we have not troubled ourselves to think them out again; but in accordance with our peculiarly quick habit of perceiving the inner meaning of things, we have generalised them straight away and turned them immediately into so many working principles. There are any number of instances of slight hints given by some people on the continent and worked out to suit our own purposes into maxims of immediate and practical value. Ideals in their original home are ideals no longer in our island home. They are interpreted into so many realities with a direct bearing on our daily life. We have been and are, even to this day, always in need of some new hints and suggestions to work up into so many dynamic forces for practical use. Upon Europe and America the full power of our mental searchlight is now playing, in quest
of those new ideas for future development for which we have been accustomed to draw mainly on China and India. Even such a commonplace thing as the drinking of a cup of tea becomes in our hands something more: it becomes a training in store serenity, in the capacity of smiling at life's troubles and disturbances. Some day you might learn from us a new philosophy based on the use of motor cars and telephones as applied to life and conduct!

This, as you will see, explains why we have failed to produce any original thinkers; this is why we have to recognise our indebtedness for almost all the important ideas which have brought about social innovation either to China or to India, or else to the modern Western nations; and this notwithstanding so many national idiosyncrasies and characteristics which are to be found in the productions of our art and in our life and ways, and which are even as handfuls of grain gathered in foreign fields and brewed into a national drink of utterly Japanese flavour. We are, I think, a people of the
Present and the Tangible, of the broad Daylight and the plainly Visible. The undeniable proclivity of our mind in favour of determination and action, as contrasted with deliberation and calm; makes it an uncongenial ground for the sublimity and grandeur of that ‘loathed melancholy, of Cerberus and blackest midnight born,’ to take deep root in it. Pure reasoning as such has had for us little value beyond the help it affords us in harbouring our drifting thought in some nearest port, where we can follow any peaceful occupation rather than be fighting what we should call a useless fight with troubled billows and unfathomable depths. Such, according to my personal view, are the facts about our mentality considered generally. And now it is necessary to speak of the main waves of cult and culture that successively washed our shores.

The first mention in our history of the introduction of the Chinese learning into the imperial household places it in the reign of the fifteenth emperor Ô-jin, in the year 284 after Christ according to the
earliest native records, but according to more trustworthy recent computation¹ considerably later than that date. We are told that a certain prince was put under the tuition of a learned Corean scholar of Chinese, who, at the request of the emperor, came over to Japan with the Confucian Analects ( Lun-yu ) and some other Chinese classics as a tribute from the King of Kudara. But long before the learning of the Celestial Empire found its way through Corea into our imperial court, it had in all probability been making its silent influence felt here and there among the Japanese people. Great swarms of immigrants had sought a final place of rest in our sea-girt country from many parts of China, where raging tyranny and menacing despotism made life intolerable even for Chinese meekness; these, and the hands of daring invaders which Japan sent out from time to time to the Corean and Chinese coasts, had given us many opportunities of coming into contact with the learning prevalent among our continental neighbours. In

this manner Chinese literature, with its groundwork of Confucian ethics, surrounded by the strange lore derived from Taoism, and perhaps also from Hindu sources, had been gradually but surely attracting the ever-increasing attention of our warlike forefathers, who were to become in course of time its devoted admirers.

Now, Confucianism pure and simple, as taught by the sage Kung-fou-tsze (551-478 B.C.), from whom the doctrine derived its name, was, notwithstanding the contention of the famous English sinologue Dr. Legge, nothing more and nothing less than an aggregate of ethical ideas considered in their application to the conduct and duties of our everyday life. The great teacher never allowed himself to be considered an expounder of any new system of either religious or metaphysical ideas. He was content to call himself 'a transmitter and not a maker, believing in and loving the ancients. True to the spirit of these words, and most probably having no other course open to him on account of his
extremely utilitarian turn of mind, he devoted his whole life to the elucidation of the True Path of human life, as exemplified by those half mythical rulers of old China, Yaò, Shun, etc., from whom he derived his ideals and his images of perfect man in flesh and blood. These early kings were of course no creation of Confucius himself; the only thing he did was to place the forms, which popular tradition had handed down surrounded by legendary halos, in high relief before the people, as perfect models to regulate the earthly conduct of the individuals as members of a society. His attitude towards the ancient classics which he compiled and perpetuated was that of one transmitting faithfully. ‘He studied them, and exhorted and helped his disciples to do the same, but he did not alter them, nor even digest them into their present form.’\(^1\) In order to find concrete examples to show his ethical views more positively, he wrote a history of his native state Loò from 722 to 484 B.C., in which, while faithfully recording events, he took

\(^1\) Legge's *The Religion of China*, p. 137.
every opportunity to jot down his moral judgment upon them in the terse words and phrases he knew so well how to wield. As abstract reasoning had little charm for his practical mind, he systematically avoided indulging in discussions of a metaphysical nature. ‘How can we know anything of an After-life, when we are so ignorant even of the Living,’ was his answer when asked by one of his disciples about Death. Ancestor-worship he sanctioned, as might naturally be expected from his enthusiastic advocacy of things ancient, and also from the importance he attached to filial piety, which strikes the keynote of his ethical ideas. But here too his indifference to the spiritual side of the question is very remarkable. Perhaps he found the holy altar of his day so much encumbered by the presence of innumerable fetishes and demons, that he felt little inclination to approach and sweep them away. ‘To give oneself,’ he said on one occasion, ‘to the duties due to men, and while respecting spiritual things to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom.’
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The main features which he advocated are found well reflected in the first twelve out of sixteen articles of the so-called sacred Edict, published by the famous K'ang Hsi (1654-1722), the second emperor of the present Manchu dynasty, in 1670 A.D., which embody the essential points of Confucianism, as adapted to the requirements of modern everyday Chinese life.

1. Esteem most highly filial piety and brotherly submission, in order to give due prominence to the social relations.

2. Behave with generosity to the branches of your kindred, in order to illustrate harmony and benignity.

3. Cultivate peace and concord in your neighbourhood, in order to prevent quarrels and litigation.

4. Recognise the importance of husbandry and the culture of the mulberry-tree, in order to ensure sufficiency of food and clothing.

5. Show that you prize moderation and economy, in order to prevent the lavish waste of your means.
6. Make much of the colleges and seminaries, in order to make correct the practice of the scholars.

7. Discountenance and banish strange doctrines, in order to exalt correct doctrines.

8. Describe and explain the laws, in order to warn the ignorant and obstinate.

9. Exhibit clearly propriety and gentle courtesy, in order to improve manners and customs.

10. Labour diligently at your proper callings, in order to give well-defined aims to the people.

11. Instruct sons and younger brothers, in order to prevent them doing what is wrong.

12. Put a stop to false accusations, in order to protect the honest and the good.

Here too you see what an important place filial piety occupies, which Confucius himself prized so highly. The Hsiao King, or the 'Sacred Book of Filial Piety,' which is supposed to record conversations
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held between Confucius and his disciple Tsang Ts’an on that weighty subject, has the following passage: ‘He who (properly) serves his parents in a high situation will be free from haughtiness; in a low situation he will be free from insubordination; whilst among his equals he will not be quarrelsome. In a high position haughtiness leads to ruin; among the lowly insubordination means punishment; among equals quarrelsomeness tends to the wielding of weapons.’ These words, naïve as they are, express the exalted position filial affection occupies in the eyes of Confucianism. ‘Dutiful subjects are to be found in the persons of filial sons,’ and again, ‘Filial piety is the source whence all other good actions take their rise,’ are other sayings expressing its importance.

Along with this virtue, other forms of moral force, such as mercy, uprightness, courage, politeness, fidelity, and loyalty, have been duly considered and commended by the great teacher himself and his disciples. Among these, Mencius (373-289 B.C.) is most enterprising and attractive,
digesting and systematising with a great deal of philosophic talent the rather fragmentary ideas of his great master. It is he who, among other things, informs us, on the assumed authority of a passage in the Shu-King, how the sage Shun made it a subject of his anxious solicitude to teach the five constituent relationships of society, viz. affection between father and son; relations of righteousness between ruler and subject; the assigning of their proper spheres to husband and wife; distinction of precedence between old and young; and fidelity between friend and friend—an idea which has played such an important part in the history of the development of the Oriental mind.

Such were the main features of Confucianism when it first reached Japan, some centuries after the Christian era. But it was not until some time after the introduction of Buddhism from Corea during the reign of the Emperor Kimmei, in 552 A.D., that Confucianism and Chinese learning began to take firm root and make their influence felt among us. Paradoxical as it
looks, it is Buddhism that so greatly helped the teaching of the Chinese sage to establish itself as a ruling factor in Japanese society. This curious state of things came about in this way. The gospel of Shākyamuni has, ever since its introduction into our country, been made accessible only through the Chinese translation, which demanded a considerable knowledge of the written language of the Middle Kingdom. The keen and far-reaching spiritual interest aroused by Buddhism gave a fresh and vigorous impulse to the study of Chinese literature, already increasingly cultivated for some centuries. Now, the knowledge of Chinese in its written form has, until quite recently, always been imparted by a painful perusal of the Chinese classics and Chinese books deeply imbued with Confucianism. It was only after a considerable amount of knowledge of this difficult language had been obtained in this unnatural way, that one came in contact with the works of authors not strictly orthodox. This way of teaching Chinese through Confucian texts which we adopted from
China's faithful agent, Corea, necessarily led from the very beginning to an intimate acquaintance with the main aspects of the Confucian morals in our upper classes, among whom alone the study was at first pursued with any seriousness. Although skilled in warlike arts, gentle and loyal in domestic life, our forefathers were simple in manners and thought in those olden days when book-learned reasons of duty had not yet superseded the naive observance of the dictates of the heart and of responsibility to the ancestral spirits. They possessed no letters of their own, and consequently no literature, except in unwritten songs and legendary lore sung from mouth to mouth, telling of the gods and men who formed the glorious past of the Yamato race. So it is not difficult to imagine the dazzling effect which the Chinese learning, with its richness and its pedantry, with its elaborate system of civil government and its philosophy, produced upon our untrained eyes. Gradually but steadfastly it had been gaining ground, and making its slow way from the topmost rung to the
bottom of the social ladder, when the introduction of Buddhism quickened the now resistless progress. The would-be priests and advocates of the Indian creed felt a fresh impulse and spiritual need to learn the Chinese language, for which they had long entertained a high estimation. Owing to the extremely secular character of the Confucian ethics on the one hand, and on the other, to the fact that Buddhists deny the existence of a personal god, and are eager to minister salvation through any adequate means so long as it does not contradict the Law of the Universe upon which the whole doctrine is based, Buddhism found in the teaching of the Chinese sage and his followers not only no enemy, but, on the contrary, a helpful friend. It found that the sacred books of Confucian doctrine contained only in a slightly different form the five commandments laid down by Shākyamuni himself for the regulation of the conduct of a layman, viz.:

1. Not to destroy life nor to cause its destruction

2. Not to steal
3. Not to commit adultery;
4. Not to tell lies;
5. Not to indulge in intoxicating drinks; or the Buddhist warning against the ten sins; three of the body—taking life, theft, adultery; four of speech—lying, slander, abuse, and vain conversation; three of the mind—covetousness, malice, and scepticism.

It saw also that Confucian writings embraced its fifty precepts detailed under the five different secular relationships of
1. Parents and children;
2. Pupils and teachers;
3. Husbands and wives;
4. Friends and companions;
5. Masters and servants.

Our early Buddhists therefore did not see why they should try to suppress the existing Confucian moral code and supplant it with their own which breathed the same spirit, only because it had not grown on Indian soil.

Thus encouraged by the now influential advocates of the teaching of Buddha, them-

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1 Cp. Rhys Davids' *Buddhism*, p. 144.
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selves admirers of the Chinese learning, Confucianism began with renewed vigour to exercise a great influence on the future of the Japanese. This took place during the seventh century, when the reorganisation of the Japanese government after the model of that of the Celestial Empire made our educational system quite Chinese. In addition to a university, there were many provincial schools where candidates for the government service were instructed. Medicine, mathematics, including astronomy and law, taught through Chinese books, along with the all-important teaching in the Confucian ethics and in Chinese literature generally, were the branches of study cultivated under the guidance of professors whose calling had become hereditary among a certain number of learned families. In the course of the next two centuries we see several private institutions founded by great nobles of the court, with an endowment in land for their support. The native system of writing which had gradually emerged out of the phonetic use of Chinese ideographs made it possible
for Japanese thought, hitherto expressed only in an uncongenial foreign garb, to appear in purely Japanese attire. Thus we find the dawn of Japanese civilisation appearing at the beginning of the tenth century after Christ. The air was replete with the Buddhist thought of after-life and the Confucian ideas of broad-day morality. The sonorous reading of the Book of Filial Piety was heard all over the country, echoing with the loud recital of the Myōho-rengi-kyō (or Saddharma Pundarika Sūtra).

During the dark and dreary Middle Ages which followed this golden period, and which were brought about by the degeneration of the ruling nobles and by the gradually rising power of the military class, Chinese learning fled to the protecting hands of Buddhist priests; and in its quiet refuge within the monastery walls it continued to breathe its humble existence, until it found at the beginning of the sixteenth century a powerful patron in the great founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate. The education of the common people, too,
seems to have been kept up by the monks—a fact still preserved in the word *terakoya*, 'church seminary,' a term used, until forty years ago, to express the tiny private schools for children. It must be remembered that the education thus given was always of an exclusively secular character, basing itself on the Confucian morals.

Before passing on to the consideration of Laoism, let me say something about the so-called orthodox form of the teaching of Confucius, which is one of the latest developments of that doctrine. Orthodox Confucianism, as represented by the famous Chinese philosopher and commentator of the Confucian canon, Chu-Hsi (1130-1200), found its admirer in a Japanese scholar, Fujiwara-no-Seigwa (1560-1619), who in his youth had joined the priesthood, which however he afterwards renounced. He gave lectures on the Chinese classics at Kyōto. He was held in great esteem by Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa line of Shoguns, who embraced the Chinese system of ethics as preached by Chu-Hsi. During the two hundred
and fifty years of the Tokugawa rule, this system, under the hereditary direction of the descendants of Hayashi Razan (1583-1657), one of the most distinguished disciples of Seigwa, was recognised as the established doctrine.

According to the somewhat hazy ideas of Chu-Hsi’s philosophy, which I ask your permission to sketch here on account of the high public esteem in which we have held them for the last three centuries, the ultimate basis of the universe is Infinity, or Tai Kueh, which, though containing within itself all the germs of all forms of existence and excellence, is utterly void of form or sensible qualities. It consists of two qualities, li and chi, which may be roughly rendered into ‘force-element’ and ‘matter-element.’ These are self-existences, are present in all things, and are found in their formation. The ‘force-element,’ or li, we are told, is the perfection of heavenly virtue. It is in inanimate things as well as in man and other animate beings, and pervades all space. The ‘matter-element,’ or chi, is endowed with the male and the
female principles, or positive and negative polarities, as we might call them. It is, moreover, characterised by the five constituent qualities of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. Hence its other name, Wu-hsieng, or 'Five Qualities.'

Things and animals, except human beings, get only portions of the force-element, but man receives it in full, and this becomes in his person sing, or real human nature. He has thus within him the perfect mirror of the heavenly virtue and complete power of understanding. There is no difference in this respect between a sage and an ordinary man. To both the force-element is uniformly given. But the matter-element, from which is derived his form and material existence, and which constitutes the basis of his mental disposition, is different in quality in different men.

Man's real nature, or sing, although originally perfect, becomes affected on entering into him, or is modified by his mental disposition, which differs according to the different state of the matter-
element. Thus a second nature is formed out of the original. It is through this second and tainted human nature that man acts well or ill. When a man does evil, that is the result of his mental disposition covering or interfering with his original perfect nature. Wipe this vapour of corrupted thought from the surface of your mental mirror and it will shine out as brightly as if it had never been covered by a temporary mist.¹

Synoptically expressed and applied to the microcosm Chu-Hsi’s system will be as follows:

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\begin{align*}
\text{MAN} \\
\text{Infinity} \\
\text{Force-Element} & \quad \text{Original Nature of Man} \\
\text{Matter-Element} & \quad \text{Different Human Characters} \\
\hline
\text{Male Principle} & \quad \text{Wood-quality} \\
\text{Female Principle} & \quad \text{Water-quality} \\
\text{Fire} & \quad \text{Earth} & \quad \text{Metal} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Such is, in its outline, Chu-Hsi’s view, which received the sanction of the ruling Tokugawa family. But it was not without

its opponents in Japan as well as in China. Already in his own time, Lu-Shang-Shan (b. 1140 A.D.) maintained, in opposition to the high-sounding erudition of Chu-Hsi, that the purification of the heart was the first and main point of study. The same protest was more systematically urged against it by his great follower, Wang Yang-ming (1472-1528 A.D.), who found warm and able admirers in Japan in such scholars as Nakae Tôju (1603-1678), Kumazawa Hanzan (1619-1691), and Oshio Chûsai (1704-1837). Among other great opponents of the orthodox philosophy, such names as Itô Jinsai (1625-1706) and his son Tôgai (1670-1739), Kaibara Ekken (1630-1714), Ogyû Sorai (1666-1728), are to be mentioned. These scholars, getting their fundamental ideas from other Chinese thinkers, and eager to remain faithful to the true spirit of Confucianism itself, pointed out many inconsistencies in Chu-Hsi’s theory, and were of the opinion that more real good was to be achieved in proceeding straight to action.

1 Faber’s Doctrin of Confucius, p. 33.
under the guidance of conscience which was heaven and all, than in indulging in idle talk about the subtlety of human nature.

The philosophy of Chu-Hsi, although he calls himself the true exponent of Confucianism, is not at all Confucian. It is greatly indebted to Buddhism and Taoism, or better, Laoism, that is to say, to the philosophy originated by Lao-tze (b. 604 B.C.), one of the greatest thinkers that China has ever produced. Since Laoism, through the wonderful Tao-ten-king, a small book by Lao-tze himself, but especially through Chwang-tze, a work in ten books by his famous follower Chwang-chow, has exercised considerable influence on our thought for twelve centuries, a word about it may not be out of place before we go on to consider the doctrine of Shâkya-muni.

In Lao-tze we find the perfect opposite of Confucius, both in the turn of his mind and in his views and methods of saving the world. Lao-tze endeavoured to reform humanity by warning them to cast off all human artifice and to return to
nature. This may be taken as the whole tenor of his doctrine: Do not try to do anything with your petty will, because it is the way to hinder and spoil the spontaneous growth of the true virtue that permeates the universe. To follow Nature's dictates, while helping it to develop itself, is the very course sanctioned and followed by all the sages worthy of the name. Make away with your 'Ego' and learn to value simplicity and humiliation; for in total 'altruism' exists the completion of self, and in humble contentment and yielding patience are to be found real grandeur and true strength. Under the title 'Dimming Radiance' he says: ¹ —

¹ Heaven endures and earth is lasting. And why can heaven and earth endure and be lasting? Because they do not live for themselves. On that account can they endure.

Therefore the True Man puts his person behind and his person comes to the front. He surrenders his person and his person is preserved. Is it not because he seeks not his own? For that reason he accomplishes his own.'

Again we hear him 'Discoursing on Virtue':—

'Superior virtue is non-virtue. Therefore it has virtue. Inferior virtue never loses sight of virtue. Therefore it has no virtue. Superior virtue is non-assertive and without pretension. Inferior virtue asserts and makes pretensions.'

He talks about 'Returning to Simplicity':—

'Quit the so-called saintliness, leave the so-called wisdom alone; and the people's gain will be increased by a hundredfold.

'Abandon the so-called mercy, put away the so-called righteousness; and the people will return to filial devotion and paternal love.

'Abandon your scheming, put away your devices; and thieves and robbers will no longer exist.'

Such is the general purport of the doctrine expounded by Lao-tze. It is well to remember that this doctrine, which we may call for distinction's sake Taoism, has intrinsically very little to do with that form of belief now so prevalent among the Chinese, and which is known under the
name, of Taoism. Although this name itself is derived from Lao-tze's own word Tao, meaning Reason or True Path, and although the followers of Taoism see in the great philosopher its first revealer, it is in all probability nothing more than a new aspect and new appellation assumed by that aboriginal Chinese cult which was based on nature- and ancestor-worship. Ever since their appearance in history the Chinese have had their belief in Shang-ti, in spirits, and in natural agencies. This cult found, at an early date, in the mystic interpretation and solution of life as expressed by Lao-tze and his followers, the means of fresh development. The philosophical ideas of these thinkers were not properly understood, and words and phrases mostly metaphorical were construed in such a manner that they came to mean something quite different from what the original writers wished to suggest. Such an idea, for instance, as the deathlessness of a True Man by virtue of his incorporation with the grand Truth Tao that pervades Heaven and Earth, breathing in the eternity of the
universe, was easily misinterpreted in a very matter-of-fact manner, e.g. anybody who realised Tao could then enjoy the much-wished-for freedom from actual death. You see how easy it is for an ordinary mind to pass from one to the other when it hears Chwang-tze say:

"Fire cannot burn him who is perfect in virtue, nor water drown him, neither cold nor heat can affect him injuriously, neither bird nor beast can hurt him." ¹

Or again:

"Though heaven and earth were to be overturned and fall, they would occasion him no loss. His judgment is fixed on that in which there is no element of falsehood, and while other things change, he changes not." ²

We want no great flight of imagination therefore to follow the traces of development of the present form of Taoism with its occult aspects. The eternity attributed to a True Man in its Laoist sense begot the idea of a deathless man in flesh and blood endowed with all kinds of super-

natural powers. This in turn produced the notion that these superhuman beings knew some secret means to preserve their life and could work other wonders. Herbalism, alchemy, geomancy, and other magic arts owe their origin to this fountain-head of primitive superstition.

There is little room for reasonable doubt that in this way Taoism, although the name itself was of later development, has been in its main features the religion of China par excellence from the very dawn of its history. It has from the beginning found a congenial soil in the heart of the Chinese people, who still continue to embrace the cult with great enthusiasm, and in whose helpless credulity the Taoist priests of to-day, borrowing much help from the occult sides of Buddhism and Hinduism, still find an easy prey for their necromantic arts.

Not so with Laoism. One may well wonder how such an uncongenial doctrine ever came to spring from the soil of materialistic China. Some suggest that Lao-tze was a Brahman, and not a Chinese
at all. Another explanation of this anomaly is to be found in the attempted division of the whole Chinese civilisation into two geographically distinct groups, the rigid Northern and the more romantic Southern types: Laoism belonging to the latter, while Confucianism belongs to the former. In any case, the resemblance in many respects between the doctrine introduced by Lao-tze and the higher form of Buddhism is very striking. Let me take this opportunity of saying something about the religion of Shākyamuni, which has occupied our mind and heart for the past fifteen centuries.

But, first of all, let me say that I am not unaware of the absurdity of trying to give you anything like a fair idea of a many-sided and extremely complicated system of human belief such as Buddhism in the short space which is at my disposal. Very far from it. Even a brief summary of its main features would take an able speaker at least a couple of hours. So I humbly confine myself to giving you some hints on the belief, about which most
of you, I presume, have already had occasion to hear something, the religion which took its origin among the people who claim their descent from the same Aryan stock to which you yourselves belong. Those who would care to read about it will find an excellent supply of knowledge in two little books called *Buddhism* and *Buddhism in China*, written respectively by Dr. Rhys Davids and the late Rev. S. Beal, not to mention the late Sir Monier Williams' standard work. A perusal of the Rev. A. Lloyd's paper read before the Asiatic Society of Japan in 1894, entitled 'Developments of Japanese Buddhism,' is very desirable. There are also two chapters devoted to this doctrine in Lafcadio Hearn's last work *Jap in*. This enumeration might almost exempt me from making any attempt to describe it myself.

Buddhism has to begin with, two distinct forms, philosophical and popular, which may practically be taken as two different religions. Philosophical Buddhism—or at least the truest form of it—is a system based upon the recognition of the utter
impermanency of the phenomenal world in all its forms and states. It believes in no God or gods whatever as a personal motive power. The only thing eternal is matter, or essence of matter, with the Karma, or Law of cause and effect, dwelling incorporated in it. Through the never-ceasing working of this law innumerable forms of existence develop, which, notwithstanding the appearance of stability they temporarily assume, are, in consequence of the action and reaction of the very law to which they owe their existence, constantly subject to everlasting changes. Constancy is nowhere to be found in this universe of phenomena. It is therefore an act of unspeakable ignorance on the part of human beings, themselves a product of the immutable Karma, to attach a constant value to this dreamy world and allow themselves to lose their mental harmony in the quest of shadowy desires and of their shadowy satisfaction, thus plunging themselves into the boundless sea of misery. True salvation is to be sought in the complete negation of egoism.
and in the unconditional absorption of ourselves in the fundamental law of the universe. Shākyamuni was no more than one of a series of teachers whose mission it is to show us how to get rid of our fatal ignorance of this grand truth, an ignorance which is at the root of all the discontent and misery of our selfish existence.

Very different from this is the aspect assumed by the popular form of Buddhism. This is a system built up on the blind worship of personified psychic phenomena, originally meant merely as convenient symbols for their better contemplation, and in the transformation of the human teachers of truth into so many personal gods. This is the reason why Buddhism, so essentially atheistic, has come to be regarded by the ordinary Christian mind as polytheism, or as a dégradé form of idolatry.

Now all the many sects of Buddhism which have been planted in the soil of Japan since the middle of the seventh century, some of which soon withered,
while others took deep root and grew new branches, these two phases have always been recognised and utilised in their proper sphere as means of salvation. For the populace there was the lower Buddhism, while the more elevated classes found satisfaction in the higher form and in an explanation of that True Path which lies hidden beneath the complicated symbolic system.

Of the sects which have exercised great influence on Japanese mentality, the following are specially to be mentioned: the Tendai, the Shingon, the Zen, the Ōkōke, and the Jodo, with its offspring the Ikkō sect. Each of these chose its own means of reaching enlightenment from among those indicated by Shākya-muni, but did not on that account entirely reject the means of salvation preferred by the others. Some give long lists of categories and antitheses, and seek to define the truth with a more than Aristotelian precision of detail, while others think it advisable to realise it by dint of faith alone. But among these means of salvation the practice advocated by
the Zen sect is worthy of special consideration in this place, as it has exercised great influence in the formation of the Japanese spirit. Zen means 'abstraction,' standing for the Sanskrit Dhyāna. It is one of the six means of arriving at Nirvāṇa, namely, (1) charity; (2) morality; (3) patience; (4) energy; (5) contemplation; and (6) wisdom. This practice, which dates from a time anterior to Shākya himself, consists of an 'abstract contemplation,' intended to destroy all attachment to existence in thought and wish. From the earliest time Buddhists taught four different degrees of abstract contemplation by which the mind frees itself from all subjective and objective trammels, until it reaches a state of absolute indifference or self-annihilation of thought, perception, and will.¹

You might perhaps wonder how a method so utterly unpractical and speculative as that of trying to arrive at final enlightenment by pure contemplation could ever have taken root in Japan, among a people who, generally speaking, have

¹ E. J. Eitel's *Handbook of Chinese Buddhism*, p. 49.
never troubled themselves much about things apart from their actual and immediate use. An explanation of this is not far to seek. Eisai, the founder of the Rinzai school, the branch of the Contemplative sect first established on our soil, came back to Japan from his second visit to China in 1192 A.D.¹ This was the time when the short-lived rule of the Minamoto clan (1186-1219) was nearing the end of its real supremacy. Only fifteen years before that the world had seen the downfall of another mighty clan. The battle of Dannoura put an end to the Heike ascendency after an incessant series of desperate battles extending over a century, giving our soldier-like qualities enough occasion for an excellent schooling. 'The whole country during this period had been under the raging sway of Mars, who swept with his fiery breath the blossoms of human prosperity, and the people high and low were obliged to recognise the folly of

¹ Four years later the first temple of this school was opened in Hakata under the patronship of the Emperor Gotoba.