

The History of Japan
Really, What is so Great about it?

by TANAKA Hidemichi,
Professor Emeritus, Tohoku University

Introduction

Let me first talk about my personal experience. This will explain why I, a scholar specializing in Western culture, have been studying the history of Japan for more than twenty years and have finally written this book.

I was born during the War and was brought up in the midst of the post-war recovery years. I spent my childhood in Japan that was occupied by US Forces, and was obliged to accept an education which taught us that Japan in the past was feudalistic and poor, a history that deserved to be expunged. I was taught that that the history of Japan of the past was disgusting. I could not help but long for and greatly admire foreign countries. This was the experience shared by many young people at that time.

After entering university, I took to writing novels in the style of American literature of those days, which is a common inclination among literature-loving youths. Then I began to study French literature, only to feel discouraged soon after. However hard one may try to master Western languages, one can hardly compete with native speakers. Though I was in the department of French literature at Tokyo University, I quit and transferred to the department of aesthetics and art history. I thought that I could appreciate art works as much as any foreign researcher.

Fortunately, I passed the examination as part of applying for a scholarship grant from the French government, then studied at the University of Strasbourg for four years and wrote a doctoral thesis. After going through very strict accreditation, I was able to graduate *summa cum laude*.

With this achievement, feeling that I have finished my study of French culture and, upon the recommendation of my advisor, this time I applied to a scholarship sponsored by the Italian government, which was granted, whereupon I moved to Italy to study. In Italy, I was utterly impressed by the depth and refinement of Western culture and absorbed in studying it. I focused my study on Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo and learned the language. As a result, I was devoted to the study of “Renaissance” culture and after I had acquired a teaching position at Tohoku University, I commuted between Japan and Italy. I made new discoveries and often presented them to academic society. When the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City was restored, I had a chance to study it up close from the footing and again I wrote a thesis on the subject. The experience of witnessing with my own eyes the great works of Western civilization was a little overwhelming.

Then, when I went to Florence, I had a chance to meet Master Fosco Maraini (1912-2004) through an introduction by a friend of mine. He is a famed anthropologist.

Old as he was then, he was deeply interested in Asia. He had been to Japan when he was young.

Master Maraini told me, in the study of his home near Michelangelo Hill, the following:

I was tremendously shocked by Japan. Japan awoke me. There was a country with an excellent culture, without the reliance on Western Christianity nor the study of Western classics. Wherever I looked, I was able to meet people with consistent morality, sense of justice and mental maturity. Through this encounter, I came to learn that Western Christianity is not a supreme religion, but a relative and historical being. Any religion or any philosophy is nothing more than an attempt to explain human existence, time, death and evil. Although the Japanese people do not outwardly inform Westerners of their excellent thinking by means of books, visiting Japan myself, I found that they are living it. The very existence of such a country, Japan, poses a challenge to the West. Japan is a country much greater than the geographical position it occupies on a world map.

After reflection, Master Maraini's words awakened me and I realized, with some regret, that Japanese culture is a matured civilization in its own way, different from Western culture. It was a shame to have come to change my mind after being told how great Japan is by a foreign scholar. It was then that I realized for the first time in my life that I am a Japanese in the true sense of the word. At the same time, I felt irritated at the fact that no Japanese scholar has confidently stated what Japanese culture is like.

Japan—seemingly understood and yet not quite understood—I will look over Japan once again. After returning from Italy, my consideration of the national history of Japan was underway.

I decided to start studying Japanese culture. I thought it a rare opportunity for a Japanese scholar with knowledge of foreign cultures to understand the high quality of Japanese culture and the uniqueness of Japanese history through a comparison between Japan and foreign countries, and, thus, contribute to the study of my own country's history. After moving to Akita International University, I taught my class in English while I continued studying the culture of Japan and the Orient. Fortunately, I had appreciated many Japanese works of art, and my study began on the basis of valuable assets. At the same time, it meant sweeping away the education I had received during the years after the War.

When I talk about Japan's national history, I strongly feel three forces.

First is the force of tradition. It may be called the power of community, which will never be eliminated by whatever political or military powers exist at the time. More directly, it is the existence of the Emperor. It's a rock-solid fact that the emperor system runs through one hundred and twenty-five generations.

Such a force of tradition exists not only in politics, but also in the domain of economics. When world standards are applied, there are many Japanese companies with long histories that meet these standards. In Europe and America, there is a society called Les Hénokiens, which is an economic association composed of old firms with over two hundred years' since their founding. There are many Japanese firms that are members, which proves the power of Japanese old firms. In fact, the oldest firm in the world, established in 574, is in Japan. It is only Japan, out of the entire world, that has more than fifteen-thousand old firms that have over one hundred years of history since their establishment.

Moreover, each firm has its own role in society. Not only firms, but also workers of each profession compose a sharing society. It is not a class-based society, but a sharing society.

The second force is a passion for beauty. Japanese art, literature, theater and music are all excellent in their own unique ways, which are different from their foreign counterparts. When you are in a country that built its buildings with stone, you may be exceedingly overwhelmed by the fortitude and grandness of stone buildings. But if you return to Japan, you may notice that Japanese shrines and temples built of wood are breathtakingly beautiful, in perfect harmony with the surrounding trees and woods. And in them are housed old altars and Buddhist images. It's no exaggeration to say that in daily life many Japanese are poets, singers and designers. We can hardly see in other countries the like of the traditional culture of WAKA (Japanese poetry), HAIKU, flower arrangement and calligraphy, and accomplishments ranging from YOKYOKU (Noh songs) to Karaoke singing. And these are enjoyed by a great many people, compared with the only limited number of enthusiasts in other countries.

The third force is religion. Though they are unconscious of it, the Japanese are the most religious nation on earth.

Japanese people who come home from overseas trips notice while taking a walk in the neighborhood that there are many shrines and temples. They far outnumber the ubiquitous convenience stores. All across Japan, there are about eighty thousand shrines and as many temples, amounting to the total of one hundred and sixty thousand. On the other hand, the number of convenience stores is roughly fifty thousand. We have an impression that there are many churches and temples in European and Islamic countries.

But actually, Japan also abounds in shrines and temples.

Why, then, do the two religions of Shinto and Buddhism coexist? In other countries, if two religions meet, they always fight against each other. We hear nothing of such conflicts over religious faiths in Japan. You may wonder why. In the first place, why are there almost the same number of shrines and temples representing each religion? Usually, if a person is religious, he or she holds one religious faith--however, Japanese people often worship with both religions in mind. This is called an integration of Shinto and Buddhism, which is seen in no other country of the world.

This integration of Shinto and Buddhism may sound unfamiliar to many people. The Buddhists talk of Buddhism and the Shinto faithful speak of Shinto. But nobody can tell us how they can coexist. That is because these two kinds of religion complement each other, rather than stand independently.

Both religions, Shinto as a communal religion among the Japanese and Buddhism as a personal faith, share roles in Japanese life. Japanese people should be aware of the fact that the two religions complement each other to become a "national religion". This explains why there are so many shrines and temples. The first person who recognized this principle was Prince Shotoku. It is at shrines that people worship as a community and temples are for individual worship. People worship ancestors and nature enshrined in shrines, while folks confess their personal worries and funeral services are performed in temples. Not a few people mix them up, but the principle rule is as I have just explained. That's how temples and shrines coexist.

In other words, Japanese people's spirits are stable because of the three forces in the forms of respect for traditional values, attention to aesthetic values and devotion to religion. And those forces on the bases of society, politics and economy enable us Japanese to live in the world as a nation.

This thinking is quite different from a historical view based on economics such as typical of Marxists. The economic view of history regards human actions as derived from egoism based on material lusts regulated by tangible objects. Even Adam Smith, supposedly the first economist, thought like that. This may be natural thinking, to Westerners who believe that no one can live without struggling for survival. However, that is a secondary matter in Japan, which is originally gifted with a natural environment where human beings can live without excessive competition. It is only when individuals compete with each other that 'material lust' or 'egoism' is taken into account. In the mutual community, they are to be held back.

At present, in the academic world of history, only a very few scholars plainly mention the Marxist historical view. Instead, they intently probe into individual

historical facts in detail in the name of positivism, rummaging through historical sources and documents. Such shredding of history is the ultimate destination of Marxism. Hair-splitting history may account for a discrete view of history, but it cannot be an essential view of history. It is important to ask what significance the specific fact has in the total context of history and what value there is in it. On the other hand, such a near-sighted historical view lacks grander perspective.

In this book, I try to narrate the tales of Japanese history on the basis of values of humanity in the global perspective as much as I can, free from a Marxist historical view, historical view based on economics, or a Western-centered or China-centered historical view. It is the history of the country, national history, which highly regards the tangible legacy as well as written historical sources and puts more emphasis on culture than on economics.

I say the “national history,” instead of the “history of Japan”. But I do not mean to agitate for nationalism here. At present, we call our country’s history Japanese history. But it was in the 7th or 8th century that the word “Japan” was introduced. Before that, it was the country of YAMATO—China called our country Wa-koku. In this context, Japanese history refers to history from around the 7th or 8th century onward.

Moreover, Japanese history implies history seen objectively from abroad. It lacks identity of our own country’s history. Consequently, most “Japanese history” we now see can be said to be the history of a ruined country. There, it is taken for granted that history can be written apart from the standpoint of their own country. However, as long as a Japanese author writes history, unless he or she has lived abroad for a very long time and the identity has been shifted to foreign countries, the author basically cannot write a ‘history of Japan’. There cannot be history of a country without a concept of a country or national identity. Many Japanese historians and publishers of history books seem to have a strange preconception. Any country, when it discusses its own history, refers to it as a ‘national history’. When historians write a history of the world, their focus tends to be on their own country. If the author is Toynbee (Arnold Joseph, 1889-1975), his ‘world history’ centers on England, and if McNeill (William Hardy, 1917~, Canadian, Professor Emeritus, University of Chicago) writes, his history centers on America. A historian’s globalist vision is nothing more than an illusion. There is no such thing as a world citizen. History is a story strictly based on the position of one’s country.

Now, let us begin the story of the national history of Japan. I would like to tell what is really so great about the history of Japan—with its sulfured silver-like charms.

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Transition of Styles in the History of Japanese Culture

Style	Archaism (Period of the Quickening)	Classicism (Classical period)	Mannerism (Stylistic Period)	Baroque (Period of active movements)
Age (Period)	7th century (Asuka Period)	End of 7th to 8th centuries (Hakuho Period, Tenpyo Period) (Nara Period)	9th to 11th centuries (Jokan Period, Fujiwara Period) (Heian Period)	12th to early 14th centuries (End of Heian to Kamakura Periods)
Characteristics	Frontal Simplicity Archaic smile Crudity Tactile impression value	Noble simplicity and quiet greatness Linear, planar Absolute lucidity (Sculptural) Tactile impression value and circumference Circle, square Moderateness Idealistic	Imitation of Classicism Refinement Snake-like human body Imaginative anti-naturalism Melancholy Intellectual surplus Sensuality	Active movements Overly curvaceous Ellipse Contrast Picturesque Depth Relative lucidity Visual, spatial shadowing Realism Popularity
Major works	Kudara Kannon Zo (Hohryu-ji) Shitenno Zo (Hohryu-ji Central Hall) Guze Kannon Zo (Hohryu-ji Dream Hall) Shaka Sanzon (Hohryu-ji Central Hall) Miroku-Bosatsu	Shitenno (Toma-ji) Mural of Hohryu-ji Central Hall Sculptures of Hohryu-ji Five-storied Pagoda Judai-deshi, Hachibu-shu (Kofuku-ji) Fukukenjaku Kannon,	Shiten-myoo, Fudo-myoo, Taishakuten, Bonten, Go Bosatsu (To-ji) Nyoirin Kannon (Kanshin-ji) Shitenno (Kofuku-ji North Circular Hall) Shaka Kinkan Shutsugen Zu	Ban Dainagon Emaki Shigi-san Engi Emaki Unkei=Doji Zo (Kongobu-ji), Bishamonten (Ganryoju-in), Muchaku Seshin Zo (Kofuku-ji) Jyokei=Kongorikishi Agyo Ungyo,

	(Chugu-ji) Miroku-Bosatsu, (Kohryu-ji) <i>Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters)</i> <i>Fudoki (Records of Climate)</i> , and others.	Nikko-Gekko Bosatsu (Todai-ji Museum) Shitenno (Kaidan-do Hall) Junijinsho (Shinyakushi-ji) Ganjin (Toshodai-ji) <i>Manyoshu</i> (<i>Collection of the Ten Thousand Leaves</i>) <i>Kaifuso</i> (Anthology of Chinese Poems) and others	(Kyoto National Museum) Jocho= Amida Nyorai Zo, Unchu Kuyo Bosatsu (Byodo-in Temple) <i>Kokinwakashu</i> (<i>Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems</i>) <i>Makura no Soshi</i> (<i>The Pillow Book</i>) <i>Genji Mongatari</i> (<i>The Tale of Genji</i>) and others	Junijinsho (Kofuku-ji) Tankei= Nijuhachibushu Fujin, Raijin (Myoho-in Main Hall) Kosho=Kuya Shonin (Rokuharamitsu-ji) <i>Jigoku Soshi (Book of Hell)</i> <i>Heiji Monogatari</i> <i>Ekotoba (Pictorial Scroll of the Tale of Heiji)</i> <i>Heike Monogatari</i> (<i>The Tale of Heike</i>) <i>Hojoki (Essays from Small Square Hut)</i> <i>Tsurezuregusa</i> (<i>Essays Written as Time Passes by Leisurely</i>), etc.
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Story I The history of Japan commences in myths—The Age of the *kami-gami*¹

The beginning of the Japanese mythology

The oldest history books in Japan are *Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters)* and *Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan)*. (These two books together are referred to as the *Ki Ki*.) Though what is written in them somewhat differs, they share a common characteristic—both of them start from mythological legends, and these myths are intertwined with history.

And speaking of myths, Greek mythology is well known. Greek mythology depicts the intercourse between two worlds, one of the deities and the other of the humans. In addition, the *Ki Ki* and Greek mythology share similarity in that both writings describe the “origin” of a nation, for the Japanese and Greek peoples, respectively. Thus, the world of Japanese myths is more closely linked to that of Greek mythology than that of the Old Testament of Christianity. Theirs are not the world based on monotheism, but based on polytheism.

Mythological legends depicted in *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* cover tales of the world of *kami-gami*, in a historical sequence, from the birth of a nation through *kami*'s descending to earth, which is described as “Tenson Korin” (Heavenly Offsprings Descending on Earth) and to the enthronement of the first Emperor, Jinmu, and the unification of the nation by subsequent Emperors, in direct connection with historical facts.

Needless to say, Japanese myths are not by themselves historical facts. Although they may not be factually accurate, they are indeed ancient far-away memories of the Japanese people, images born out of vague memories together with their prayers and yearnings, lively transcribed. The Japanese myths eloquently show the spirit of the Japanese people, thus leading to the history of the Japanese people in its spiritual form.

Totally humane *kami-gami* active in Japanese mythology

Many mythologies throughout the world begin with the creation of heaven and earth. Japanese mythology is no exception. Even modern science can only offer a hypothesis to explain how and when the Universe was born. For that matter, the theory of the origin of the world really belongs within the realm of the imagination.

In Japanese mythology, first there is the appearance of three pillars of *kami* at

¹ There are many deities or spirits in Japanese mythology and the Japanese concept of “*kami*” is completely different from that of a “God” as defined by Judeo-Christians. Thus, “*kami*” or deity will be referred to in this book. “*Kami-gami*” means many *kami* or deities.”

Takamagahara (the Plain of High Heaven). *Kami* are counted by the pillar, for originally, *kami* were thought to reside in trees. It is written that at that time the earth was an oily substance floating on the water like jellyfish. One can vividly imagine a shapeless, chaotic world. In this shapeless world was born the first particle of life, like the sprout of a reed. Incidentally, Greek mythology depicts a similar story. But it is very different from the description given in the Judeo-Christian Old Testament. In Christianity, at the beginning, there is a God and then God Almighty creates nature and humans. In this respect, the Japanese mythology is closer to the Greek mythology and differs from Judeo-Christian mythologies.

Now, let's get back to the main story. From these three *kami* were born various *kami*. Among them were Izanagi (Male Deity Who Invites) and Izanami (Female Deity Who Invites) and together, after initial failures, they created an island. They descended on to this island and went on creating one island after another. They also created mountains and rivers.

Next, Izanami gave birth to *kami* of fire. Thereafter, however, she was burnt by fire and eventually died. In searching for his beloved wife, Izanagi descended to Yomi no Kuni (Underground World, the land of the dead) and was shocked to find his deceased wife Izanami extremely ugly-looking. Izanami was very upset and furious at having her ugly self seen and cried out, "How dare you! I will kill one thousand humans a day," to which Izanagi responded, "Well then, I will create fifteen hundred humans a day." Then he quickly fled from her. This incident hints that the Japanese population would come to increase through the ages.

Generally, when we speak of the gods and their deeds, we regard them as absolute, rendering the epithet of Almighty. However, here, we see that these *kami* of the Japanese mythology often erred—they initially failed in creating an island, got fatally burned or became appalled upon seeing one's ugly-looking deceased wife and fled. How totally human they were! This clearly shows how close and familiar *kami-gami* were to the Japanese people.

One cannot help but wonder how several *kami* came to be born out of one *kami*, and not through the intercourse between man and woman. Many *kami* were born from the male Deity Izanagi and from his left eye was born Amaterasu Omikami (Sun Deity), from his right eye, Tsukuyomi no Mikoto (Moon Deity) and from his nostrils came Susano-o no Mikoto (Valiant Intrepid Raging Male Deity). These three *kami* were held in charge of the Plain of High Heaven, the Night World and the Sea, and they became major characters in Japanese mythology.

“Nihon” –a place where the sun rises

Susano-o no Mikoto cried his heart out, longing to visit the underground world where his mother, Izanami, lived. Logically, it is strange that Susano-o no Mikoto thought Izanami to be his mother, for he was born from the male Deity Izanagi. However, people were so familiar and intimate with *kami* who were human-like that they would naturally sympathize with Susano-o in his love for his mother.

Susano-o no Mikoto was told by Izanagi to govern the sea, but he declined the order. I think this refusal of his has great significance. At the center of Takamagahara (the Plain of High Heaven) is the Sun Deity, Amaterasu Omikami. On the plain, there are mountains and rivers and everywhere trees and plants abundantly grow. There, Amaterasu Omikami plows the field and weaves. Takamagahara was a mountainous land or a kind of basin.

On the other hand, it was the sea that Susano-o no Mikoto was told to rule, far away and different from mountainous Takamagaharas, and Susano-o did not like the idea. This clearly shows that *kami* had perceived the difference between the mountain and the sea, the coast and inland.

As a consequence, Susano-o no Mikoto was expelled from Takamagahara, but soon returned to Amaterasu Omikami and proposed to give birth to babies. Thus, five male *kami* and three female *kami* were born. Feeling triumphant following the birth of his female children, for some unknown reason, he went on a rampage. Fearful of him, Amaterasu Omikami hid herself inside Amano Iwato (Heavenly Cave), upon which the entire world fell into pitch-black darkness.

This indicates that Amaterasu Omikami was truly the Sun Deity. She was also the mountain Deity.

The rest of the *kami* were dismayed at the sudden darkness brought about by the Sun Deity disappearing into a mountain cave. In an attempt to draw her out of the cave, Ama no Uzume no Mikoto (Heavenly Crowned Deity) danced a hilarious and fervent dance, naked, in front of the cave and other *kami* joined this feast, making a lot of fuss and applauding her dancing. Curious to know what was going on outside, Amaterasu Omikami slightly opened the rock door that sealed the cave and peeped through, upon which the other *kami* rushed to open the door and pulled her outside. Instantly, the world was filled with light again.

Some may raise an objection, saying the sun is not there to exclusively shine over Japan. Commonly, Sun Deities are mobile, like Helios of Greek mythology, moving freely across the sky. However, Amaterasu Omikami did not move from Takamagahara. In later times, Prince Shotoku called Japan “the country of the rising sun”. This reflects

the idea that Japan is located where the sun rises. The country name of “Nihon” means “the origin of the Sun”. The Japanese people supposedly thought that the sun always stays in Japan and had not imagined at all that the sun would freely move in the sky.

The origin of “Yamato” is “a people of the mountains”

Thus, Susano-o no Mikoto was once again expelled from Takamagahara (the Plain of High Heaven). Descending onto this earth, he went to Izumo (presently Shimane Prefecture). Izumo was not in the mountains, but was situated by the sea. This illustrates that Susano-o no Mikoto originated from the sea.

A grave incident occurred in Izumo. Yamatano Orochi (the Eight-Forked Giant Snake) was ravaging and greatly distressed the people, demanding that a young girl be offered as sacrifice. Susano-o no Mikoto challenged the snake and killed it to save the girl, to whom he was later married after his brave victory. The same kind of stories depicting heroic acts of subjugating terrible monsters to save people abound in Greek, Babylonian, Indian and Hittite cultures and the epic legend of Susano-o no Mikoto’s valiant and heroic act indicates characteristics typically seen in other continental myths.

Susano-o no Mikoto had a son by marriage to a local maiden. Their child was Okuninushi no Mikoto (Great Master Deity of the Land). Like his father, Okuninushi no Mikoto himself was involved in a curious incident, which turned out to be a very extraordinary thing to happen in Japan. It is the famous tale of the White Rabbit of Inaba (Tottori Prefecture).

Okuninushi no Mikoto saved a white rabbit, who was miserable, suffering from terrible pain, having had his skin peeled off by angry sea crocodiles. Okuninushi also conquered Yaso Gami (Eighty *kami*) who were jealous of him. Finally, Okuninushi no Mikoto went hunting and was burned to death by a huge stone that resembled a wild boar. However, somehow he was soon revived and came back to life. Here, and later, appeared a tale involving sea crocodiles, which were rarely found in Japan.

As we have seen, Japanese mythology abounds in tales connected to the sea. Presumably, these sea-related tales reflect the historical fact that people came from regions far beyond the sea and contributed to founding the nation that became Japan. *Kami-gami* came from far-off lands beyond the sea and gradually assimilated with nature, the environment and within the rhythm of everyday life here in Japan.

Such tales depicting the process of founding a nation by *kami-gami*, who came from distant regions beyond the sea, through assimilation with the Japanese environment and life, occupy a large portion of Japanese mythology.

The tale of Umisachi Hiko (Fisherman) and Yamasachi Hiko (Hunter) is among them.

They are brothers and the older brother, Umisachi Hiko, worked at sea and the younger brother, Yamasachi Hiko, toiled in the mountains. One day, they exchanged their respective fishing hook and bow and arrows. By accident, Yamasachi Hiko lost the hook and was compelled by his older brother to recover it. In searching for the hook, a distressed Yamasachi Hiko visited the Sea Palace and eventually came to be married to the princess of the Palace. Then, through luck brought by the marriage, Yamasachi Hiko was able to find the missing hook in the throat of a red snapper and returned it to his brother. But this episode does not happily end here. After a series of events, Yamasachi Hiko subjugated his elder brother. Sea crocodiles appear also in this tale. His wife, the princess of the Sea Palace, was the incarnation of a sea crocodile. Repeated appearances of sea crocodiles, which were originally non-existent in Japan, highlights the idea that the origin of this *kami* came from a faraway land beyond the sea.

Yamasachi Hiko was a mountain dweller. Umisachi Hiko lived by the sea. The sea people, whose origin was a faraway land beyond the sea, first followed the mountain people and gradually assimilated with them. This is the pattern of this story and the general pattern “from the sea to the mountains” which overlaps the process of Japan being integrated into a nation.

The leader who played a major role in the task of integrating Japan was Emperor Jinmu. This Emperor comes from Kyushu. Kyushu is far away from the then center of the nation, and this distance hints at the sea-related origin of people who came from somewhere distant beyond the sea. However, Emperor Jinmu accumulated power in the mountain province of Himuka (Miyazaki Prefecture) after his ancestors descended onto Takachiho no Mine (High Thousand Rice Ear Peak). So, Emperor Jinmu is originally from the mountains.

In his heroic endeavors to integrate the nation, Emperor Jinmu led his men, who knew the sea well, through the Inland Sea and landed Kii no Kuni province (Wakayama Prefecture) and his rule spread across the Yamato region (Nara Prefecture). Working through a tough route, here and there, he had to overcome very severe battles. And finally, he was enthroned at the Palace of Kashihara (Oak Tree Land) in 660 BC. We can render this series of events as a feat that symbolized the entrance of mountain people entering the court at the center of the nation.

The date of Emperor Jinmu's coronation was February 11, 660 BC, and this day was made Japan's National Foundation Day. Every textbook of the history of Japan,

published in the postwar years, says that Emperor Jinmu is not a real, but fictional figure. As a consequence, some people assert that the enthronement of the fictional emperor at the Palace of Kashihara cannot be real and that, therefore, it is wrong to set that date as National Foundation Day. However, the remains of defensive walls built against an oncoming army were actually found in Nara Prefecture. These walls were built by people who tried to prevent Emperor Jinmu and his army from spreading his rule over the Yamato region. The battles of Emperor Jinmu did take place. It will be further clarified in due course of time that the tales of his battles are not merely fiction.

By the way, the archaic name of Japan is “Yamato”. There are many explanations concerning the origin of the written form in Chinese characters of Yamato. Among them, I think it is proper to understand the description means “Yama no hito” (mountain people). Verbally it changes from Yama no hito, to “Yama hito” to “Yamato”. The sea people followed and assimilated with the mountain people. The process being led by the latter (“Yama no hito”, namely, “mountain people”) becomes the name of the nation. The popular view interprets “Yamato” as mountain site, but I would like to strongly emphasize that the major factor is people.

A tale that depicts the process of sea people becoming mountain people

The process through which Japan came to be founded as a nation is well described in the tale of Yamato Takeru no Mikoto (The Champion of Japan). He was a son of the twelfth Emperor Keiko. During his time, the prince succeeded in defeating, by surprise attacks, such rebels as Kawakami no Takeru of Kumaso (in the Kyushu Region) and the clan chief of Izumo (Shimane Prefecture). Further along, in the eastern Provinces, he met with more rebellions, but he managed to suppress them. Though this prince was a bit violent-natured like Susano-o no Mikoto and Okuninushi no Mikoto, he was an unparalleled hero, and his death was most dramatically narrated in the *Kojiki*.

On his way home to Yamato from the long and difficult campaigns to suppress rebels in various regions, he was stripped of his power by the mountain *kami* and died at the foot of Mt. Ibuki (Mie Prefecture). His corpse then changed into a big white bird, which flew up high into the heavens and then completely disappeared.

The epic depicting this occasion appears in *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*):

*Yamato wa Kuni no Mahoroba Tatanazuku Aogaki Yamagomoreru
Yamato shi Uruwashi* (“Yamato is a wonderful country, Mountains surrounding it in many layers, Embraced by these mountains, What a beautiful country Yamato is!”)

Recite this verse aloud and you will see, to your heart's content, how beautiful the Japanese language sounds.

This poem is considered to be an expression of the sea people's admiration for Yamato, that is, the mountain people. It also hints that the process of the sea people becoming mountain people did actually take place in the history of Japan.

From mythology to history

Henceforth, *Kojiki* narrates how the court of Yamato was formed. It marks the change of stages from the time of mythology to that of history.

I will be bold and say that Japanese mythology is the story of explaining the process through which the sea people become mountain people. Now, let me refer briefly to *Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan)*, a book which is as important as *Kojiki*.

The compilation of *Nihon Shoki* was completed in the fourth year of the Yoro Era (720). By Emperor Tenmu's decree, the compilation was planned around 681 (the 10th year of the Tenmu Era) and Emperor Tenmu's son, Prince Toneri, was the chief editor.

This book ardently tries to document, as factually and accurately as possible, records of events using as many sources as possible, for example, by quoting 11 different stories depicting one event. It is described that Amaterasu Omikami (Heavenly Shining Great Deity) was the first Deity, born from the two *kami* of Izanagi and Izanami and as her name indicates, she entered this world as a glorious, shining *kami*. It was probably the intention of the authors to clearly show who the ancestors of the Emperors were. *Nihon Shoki* chronicles events from the Age of *kami-gami*, through the first Emperor Jinmu and then to the fortieth Empress Jito. This shows their firm will and intention to record history itself. In this way, *Nihon Shoki* is really a book of national history.

Column 1: Mythology and history

“...for this discovery of yours [letters] will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves. The specific which you have discovered is an aid not to memory, but to reminiscence, and you give your disciples not truth, but only the semblance of truth; they will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will appear to be omniscient and will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without the reality,” says Socrates in *Phaedrus (dialogue)*, written by Greek philosopher Plato (427-347 BC).

The crooked attitude seen in modern historical studies is exactly concerned with

this point mentioned above. First, what happened is recorded in writing, and after analyzing and interpreting the text, it constitutes history. This kind of thinking lacks what is most vital and important in history.

Wisdom recorded by letters is nothing more than appearance. The wisdom cherished in the bosom of humans is spiritual wisdom. People may forget this essential fact, or rather they are so indulged in the convenient written letters that they do not bother to know there is such a vital thing as spiritual wisdom. Tsuda Sokichi, who was a leading scholar of the modern history of Japan, was like that and so were most historians. According to their view, *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* were written in order to strengthen the authority of the Emperors and to manifest the legitimacy of the sovereigns, and the mythological legends were also written for the same purposes. Without a shred of doubt, the Chinese book of *Wei-zhi Woren-chuan (History of the Wei Empire and Account on Japan)* is believed to be factual, because it was written in Chinese characters. Henceforth, academic interest and passion are wasted on a senseless search for the whereabouts of Queen Himiko. They should well know how writings can make up various distorted and totally untrue “facts”; and yet, they never learn.

Kojiki is composed of transcriptions which O no Yasumaro recorded what Hieda no Are recited from his memory. In other words, myths collected in *Kojiki* all come from what Hieda no Are remembered by heart. Modern people who are addicted to writing in letters simply suspect such an amazingly superb human memory: How can one possibly remember such a tremendous amount of events correctly and in detail?

However, this is merely the conclusion reached by those who cannot imagine how people lived in those days when there were no written characters.

Of course, though Hieda no Are possessed an excellent memory, he was not an exceptional genius. Long before the time Hieda no Are lived, it was a common and regular exercise for people to orally transmit what they held as memories in their hearts. Experiences inscribed on their minds by memory were conveyed orally. That was the only and sure way of communication. Hieda no Are, in a time without written words, might have been the last person to memorize the various events as well as his own experiences and to convey them to the next generation without analyzing or interpreting them. I am sure this is the main reason why the words narrated in *Kojiki* are so beautiful. How artistic and heart-moving!

There are many mythologies that exist throughout the world. Greek mythology, Egyptian mythology and Jewish mythology as told in the Old Testament—all of these were orally transcribed during times when writing was not yet invented nor introduced.

Greek mythology describes Zeus and other deities ruling this world. Jewish mythology states that one and absolute God mightily protects King David, his realm and the Jewish people. In both mythologies, it is very important that there exist revered rulers who are worshipped and respected by the people, and they bring peace and stability to the human world. Thus, these two mythologies point out that great rulers are indispensable in the human world. Myths recorded in *Kojiki* are not exceptional. It was extremely natural for our ancestors to have respectable Emperors.

While many of the mythologies throughout the world are piecemeal accounts or descriptions, the Japanese mythology tells, very specifically and in detail, tales of Kunitu Kami (aboriginal *kami* living in the land of Japan), who exist between the *kami* in heaven and the humans on earth. This is a major characteristic of Japanese mythology, which gives integrity and progression to the stories. Famed cultural anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1908-2009) highly regarded Japanese mythology, as incomparable in the world.

On the other hand, *Nihon Shoki* was compiled as history by those who knew how to write characters. However, unlike in cases of modern historical studies, the compilers did not either analyze or interpret the texts. This is clearly illustrated by their method of compilation: they narrated many different stories about one event. But they did not put additional analysis or interpretation to the entry. That's because people in those times fully understand that history following mythology encompasses memories of their ancestors' souls.

Leading poets of *Manyoshu* (*Collection of the Ten Thousand Leaves*) Kakinomoto no Hitomaro and Yamanoue no Okura write about totally personal sentiments and their way of living. But, at the same time, they are poets who hold great imperial reverence and make many congratulatory poems dedicated to the Emperors. Not just as knowledge, but as heart-felt sentiment, they see their revered Emperor live what the souls of the Japanese ancestors memorize. Duly, we would like to feel, with all our hearts, the memory of our people's souls conveyed in Japanese mythology and to accept and appreciate its message.

Story II The Life of Japanese ancestors—the Jomon and Yayoi Periods

Ancestors head for Japan, where the sun rises

Now, apart from historical documents, let's look at history, in terms of archaeological findings.

It is commonly believed that mankind first emerged in Africa, about six million years ago, and the oldest mankind known to this day is called “ape-man”. The ape-man walked on two feet, used two hands and was able to use tools.

Early humans left Africa and set out on a long journey about 1.8 million years ago. Man continued to walk across the Eurasian continent, southbound, and about a million years ago, they reached the island of what is now Java, Indonesia. It is estimated that humans arrived in what is now China around five to six hundred thousand years ago. Primitive *Homo sapiens* is called respectively Java Man and Beijing Man. Fossil bones of these primitive species have been unearthed.

It is very interesting that these species continued moving, gradually from west to east. Did they finally reach Japan?

In 1949, stone tools dating back to the Paleolithic Age were found at Iwajuku ruins in Gunma Prefecture. So, the answer to the previous question is “yes”—it is very likely that they went as far as Japan! What I have mentioned so far is about primitive *Homo sapiens*, like the ape-man and hominids.

Over the very long span of time, the new kind of a modern *Homo sapiens*, similar to us, emerged, circa two-hundred thousand years ago, also in Africa, the origin of the oldest primitive humans. And these *Homo sapiens* followed the route of their predecessors, leaving Africa and moving on.

About forty thousand years ago, they settled down in a region which is now called Europe. Some of them continued migrating eastward. When they reached the Himalaya Mountains, they split into two directions—northward and southward. The tribe moving northward went to Siberia, while those headed for the south went to Indonesia and finally reached the Japanese Archipelago. DNA profiling show that these people were mainly from Central Asia, the lake shore region of Lake Baykal and northeastern China and presumably settled in Japan.

They are not necessarily the direct ancestors of the modern Japanese. But I can say this much: They were possibly the remotest ancestors of the Japanese people. That is why Japanese mythology abounds with stories related to a far away memory of the Continent beyond the sea. This also explains the similarity found between many

mythologies of Greece, India, Indonesia and others, and that of Japan, having something to do with the route by which primitive people spread and settled in various regions. They came to Indonesia around fifty thousand years ago, and to Siberia, twenty or thirty thousand years ago. Even after they got to these places, they might have found themselves dissatisfied with the area for permanent settlement, and so continued to move eastward. East is where the sun rises. Our Japanese distant ancestors kept their long, long journey, yearning for the glorious land where the sun rises.

Their yearning and memory was crystallized in Japanese mythology in the form of the Sun Deity Amaterasu Omikami. The later appellation of our country “Nihon”, which also reads as “Hi no moto”, meaning the origin of the sunrise, is deeply rooted in the process how the Japanese people came to live here in this country in the east.

How our ancestors lived

A long, long time ago, in antiquity, the Japanese Archipelago was a part of the Asian Continent, the sea-level then being more than one hundred meters lower than the present-day level. At that time, megafauna (giant animals) like mammoth, Irish elk and *Palaeoloxodon naumanni* (closely related to the modern Asian elephant) lived and people caught them using a stone-headed spear and ate their meat. Fossils of Naumann’s elephant have been found around Tokyo.

About fifteen thousand years ago, the Upper Pleistocene (Ice Age) ended and the earth became warmer again. Accordingly, the sea surface rose, and this particular part of the Continent was separated from the main land mass and formed the Japanese Archipelago. Some time thereafter, some living on the Continent got on boats made of logs, oared eastward and reached the Japanese Archipelago.

Thus dawned the period when our original ancestors started to live in Japan.

Most of the Japanese Archipelago within a warm temperate zone and warm currents run into the Sea of Japan. Owing to this mild climate, the land is covered with vegetation of the temperate zone, such as chestnut trees, oaks and Japanese beech and rich in nuts and acorns. Yams are also available. River fish like salmon and trout also abound. The sea is rich in bonito, sea bream, sea bass and a large variety of clams and shellfish, while the mountains are a niche for wild boars, deer, wild ducks and pheasants. Food has always been in sufficient quantity. After all, it was not necessary to start large-scale farming or cattle-raising. All of this was quite a satisfactory result and truly worth their continued and steady efforts to keep moving towards the east.

Again, this reminds me of Japanese mythology. I have mentioned that there were conflicts between “the people of the mountains” and “the people of the sea”. That was

the confrontation between those aborigines who had already lived inland and those newcomers who finally arrived after the long journey eastward from the distant land beyond the sea. The memory of these initial struggles is reflected and relayed to later generations in the mythology.

From stoneware to earthenware

First, simple stones were used as tools and then they were changed into more elaborate ones with a polished surface, which were convenient for cutting trees and making tools out of them. Also, by finding fruit bearing wild plants, people began to cultivate plants. People dug into the ground, made floors and built homes supported with pillars and covered by a grass-covered roof and lived in them, which are called *Tate Ana* (vertical hole) *Jyukyo* (residence) or “shaft home”.

We can imagine how they lived in those archaic days through findings excavated from various archeological sites and through shell heaps or kitchen midden.

First, pieces of earthenware were uncovered. Many kinds of earthenware have been found at ruins and sites all over the world, most of which were used for storing food. Interestingly, it is known that earthenware discovered in Japan had other usage as well. Besides keeping food, our ancestors used them for cooking from very early times. In fact, the oldest cooking earthenware in the world was found in Japan. Our ancestors liked devising things in their daily life and were, indeed, very good at doing so.

What significance does the rope pattern inscribed on the Jomon earthenware have?

Many earthenware had straw-rope patterns inscribed on the surface. Hence, they were called the Jomon (straw-rope pattern) earthenware.

Why, then, did the early Japanese put straw-rope patterns on earthenware? Scholars cannot give a clear answer to this, for they don't have evidential records to rely on. In those prehistoric days, people did not need writing characters with which to keep records, and therefore, there was no written record left. However, we can make a fairly good guess through things which have long been part of our Japanese life.

For instance, straw-rope reminds me of *Shimenawa* (straw festoon) which is used to decorate the front of a shrine. We can also see straw festoon around the huge trunks of divine trees planted in the precinct of a shrine. On New Year's Days, it is a familiar custom that we decorate the front door of our homes with straw festoon. These rituals demonstrate the sacred belief that the inside marked by the straw-rope is pure and divine. The straw-rope is supposed to form a boundary, to fend off the impure and filthy from

entering inside, from the outer world.

Whether the purpose was for storage or cooking, what was inside the earthenware was precious food. Anything filthy or unsanitary must not be allowed inside. The straw-rope pattern on the surface of the earthenware was intended to keep away the unwanted. At the same time, it symbolizes people's sentiment that the earthenware itself was pure and divine. Our ancestors wholeheartedly cherished what is pure.

Among the Jomon earthenware, some are called *Kaen Doki* (Fire Flames Earthenware). (Refer to the picture on Page). They are very decorative, dynamic and lively with the vivid imagery of fire. I have visited a number of museums all over the world and have seen innumerable earthenware pieces. But I have never seen one as beautiful and exquisite as the "Fire Flames Earthenware". It is no exaggeration to say that this earthenware is the first and oldest piece of art in the world. Besides flames, Jomon earthenware represents movements of water and clouds, and the horns of giant deer. Through these, we can almost touch the hearts of our ancestors who loved nature and felt perfectly at home in it, and at the same time respecting it with great awe. They wonderfully succeeded in materializing their awe of Nature in simple but artistic forms.

Clay figures of Jomon

Along with the Jomon earthenware, *Doguu* (clay figures) were also unearthed at various sites. These clay figures represent mostly women. Pregnancy was viewed as mysterious. Another characteristic is that there are many abnormal and deformed figures among the excavated clay figurines. Why is this so? In those times, marriages among near relatives were rather common practice, as seen from descriptions in mythology, which mentions such marriages as if they were natural and in a matter-of-fact way. As a result, there must have been many illnesses. These factors are reflected in the abnormal forms of clay figures. Fear and respect for abnormally figured people would have been a major motive for people making oddly-shaped clay figurines.

A typical example of this is the clay figure that was found at the Tanabatake ruins in Nagano Prefecture. The figure models an abnormally obese woman, who is nicknamed the "Jomon Venus". This popular figure symbolizes a pregnant woman, and plump women were believed to be sacred. This trend seems to have been world-wide and we can find another famous example in Europe: the Venus of Willendorf.

The clay figure unearthed at the Kamegaoka ruins in Aomori Prefecture shows disproportionately emphasized eyes, which is given the nickname of "Light Blocking Clay Figure". Some say, half-jokingly, that it represents an alien or ET (extra-terrestrial). Most likely, the figure probably depicted an extremely deforming eye disease. Why was

such deformation made? There is no ground to the popular theory that the deformed figures simply represent souls.

All in all, our ancestors were truly superb expressionists.

Figure on top: Kaen Doki (Fire Flames Earthenware), housed at the Uozu Historical Folk Museum

Bottom right: The Jomon Venus, stored at Togariishi Jomon Archeological Museum, Chino City, Nagano Prefecture

Bottom left: Venus of Willendorf, stored at the Museum of Natural History of Vienna, Austria

Real image of the Jomon people witnessed at the Sannai Maruyama site

The Sannai Maruyama site was discovered in Aomori Prefecture. It is the site of a large-scale village where more than five hundred people lived as a group about 5,500 ~5,000 years ago. Traces of huge buildings, of which the time of construction was estimated to be around 4,700 years ago, were found, together with those of many individual dwellings.

There are mounds, where people were thought to have discarded earthenware. By digging in these mounds, we can vividly see how our ancestors lived during those distant times.

Their staple food was chestnuts, on which they lived, rather than grain. They actually grew chestnuts—they planted and then enlarged the number of good trees which bore good chestnuts and eliminated those that bore poor nuts, thus improving the quality of their products. They also ate fish caught in Mutsu Bay. In addition to many earthenware pieces, woodenware coated with Japanese lacquer, stone whistles made of jade, many clay figures and tools made of bones and horns have been found.

At the Sannai Maruyama site, we find huge construction and a well-aligned graveyard, which shows that it was a village with social order. One of the most amazing facts is that they had a unit of measure called a “Jomon length”, which is roughly equivalent to 35 centimeters. So, they were actually able to measure things, which enabled them to do architectural work—design and construct buildings according to a plan.

All these wonderful facts tell us that there was a community. Our ancestors lived in a community from the very early stage of history. Their graveyard was close to where

they lived, not in a faraway, lonely place. They lived a peaceful life in harmony as a family with souls of the deceased. We know that there existed, as far back as then, worship of their ancestors' souls.

Large pits, one meter in diameter and arranged in rows, neatly and orderly, were also excavated. Huge trees are thought to have been erected in these pits. It is possible that original forms of shrines, like Ise Shrine and Izumo Shrine, might have been already built here.

And certainly, our custom of greatly admiring gigantic trees was already established then. At present, as you see huge "divine trees" decorated with straw festoons around the trunk at shrines, this primitive form of nature worship will lead to the formation of the Shinto religion in a later era.

It is not only at the Sannai Maruyama ruins that we see that nature was worshiped. From the Sengo site at the foot of Mt. Fuji a stone resembling Mt. Fuji, the divine mountain, was unearthed. There was clearly worship of the mountain. This is another factor that related to Shinto.

By widely examining various Jomon sites, we find that the Jomon people grew chestnuts, beans, buckwheat, hemp, sesame and trees that made the resin for Japanese lacquer, and in some regions, cultivation of rice began, with the planting of upland rice and growing rice in natural paddies, though on a small scale.

At sea, oysters were cultivated and dried fish were carried from sea-shore villages to villages in the mountains. They understood how the sun moves and had skill to row log boats out into the outer sea.

It is wrong to regard the Jomon Period as primitive and uncivilized

A larger number of Jomon sites have been found in the eastern part of Japan than in the west. There were many villages in the Chubu (central) area and the Kanto (around Tokyo) area, as well as in the northern Tohoku region. In Nagano Prefecture (in the central part of Japan) alone, over two thousand sites have been found. The Uenohara site and others were found in Kagoshima Prefecture. It is certain that a larger population lived in the eastern part of Japan, but on the whole our ancestors lived all over Japan. Owing to milder natural conditions, it would be easier to live in the east.

The Jomon Period spanned from 15,000 or so years ago to some 2,400 years ago. According to recent estimate, it lasted until about 3,000 years ago.

During this period, people lived without written characters. It was mostly through spoken words that people communicated with each other. Accordingly, there were no written records.

No writing. No traces of large scale farming or raising domesticated animals. No unified nation. No palace of stone. Absence of these factors may easily make some believe that the Jomon Period was primitive and uncivilized.

On the other hand, on the Continent, around 5,500 years ago, the Mesopotamian civilization emerged along the Tigris-Euphrates River Valley and 5,000 years ago, the Egyptian civilization was born along the Nile River. At about the same time, 4,500 years ago, in India, the Indus civilization came into being along the Indus Valley, where agriculture was introduced using land that was made fertile by occasional flooding. Also, about 6,000 years ago (the date may vary according to different theories), agriculture started along the Yellow River in China. This is the Yellow River civilization. Many of us must have learned in the past that these are the Four Great Civilizations of the world.

In comparison with these Civilizations, the Japanese Jomon Period is thought to have been primitive. In fact, not a few history books have stated so. But I will say that this is wrong.

First, let's look at these particular regions where the Four Great Civilizations emerged on the Continent. In all these regions, the climate drastically changed, becoming much colder and making the land dry. Entirely dependant on nature, people would have starved to death. It was highly necessary that the land be irrigated via a large river and to obtain food by means of farming and cattle-raising. A shortage of food often caused competition and conflicts. To defend themselves from raiders, people had to form groups and lived together, standing on their guard and making steady preparation for defense. Thus, cities were formed and defensive walls were built around these cities. A powerful leader was needed in order for people to live in safety together, keeping guard against enemies. A king came to rule the people, and a palace was constructed in the center of the city. A communal religion was born to spiritually unite the people together. Thus, a nation was founded.

People living in a nation had different origins and ways of life. Their spoken language varied and communication was often difficult. If people could mutually exchange what they have in abundance for what they were lacking, this exchange would be beneficial to both parties. And they needed means for communication in order to facilitate negotiations for trade. If mutual communication was poor, a promise made through such communication would be undependable. So, to secure promises, characters were invented.

Now, let's look at the Yellow River civilization, which is geographically the nearest to Japan.

The Han people lived along the Yellow River, which runs in the north of China,

from the very early stage of pre-history. They developed farming and cattle-raising under rigorously cold and dry natural conditions. After establishment along the Yellow River, about 3,600 years ago a state called the Shang (Ying) Dynasty was established. They used bronzeware and inscribed on bones and tortoise carapaces, which later evolved into Chinese characters. The various hardships and disadvantages urged the various peoples to create all of these cultures in order to sustain their lives.

However, around 3,100 years ago, the Shang Dynasty collapsed and the Chou Dynasty came to rule over China. The Chou Dynasty became very powerful, using iron weapons and farming tools, and consequently, agriculture and commerce flourished. But eventually the state broke up due to local conflicts and led to the Age of Warring States, which lasted for a long time.

As it is clear from what I have so far mentioned, the Four Great Civilizations developed out of very rigorous natural conditions. It truly shows the great trait of humankind, in that they were able to develop civilization in order to overcome adverse circumstances. And, of course, humanity made wonderful achievements.

But I should add here that the civilizations developed by mankind did not always undergo the same process as seen in the Four Great Civilizations. There are civilizations that emerged which are completely different from them. The Japanese Jomon civilization is such an exception.

The Jomon culture is equal to the Four Great Civilizations of the world

As I have explained before, the Japanese Archipelago was gifted with a rich natural environment which provided the Japanese with abundant food on which to live. It was truly a dream land, worth the long and enduring efforts people had made in yearning and searching for that ultimate place where the sun rises.

Under these lenient conditions, there was no need to compete. In fact, no ruins or sites were found which indicate that there were large-scale wars during this period. There was no need to fight for food and consequently no need for tight security against enemies or to develop weapons. Nor there was no need for the people to combine and unite under a powerful leader. It was perfectly sufficient to form a loosely-knit community, where people helped each other.

In such a community, speaking would do for communication. It was not necessary either, to secure written promises. Oral promises would do. This factor is largely reflected in modern Japanese traits. The Japanese word *Kotoba*, which means “word”, is made up of two parts—*Koto* meaning “matter”, which is important and *Ba* meaning “leaves of a tree”, which will wither and fall. From this word, we know that the

Japanese people already had a custom of not trusting words nor relying blindly on writing. Of course, not all of the people were honest and kind. Some may have been rough and savage, who are reflected in such figures as Susano-o no Mikoto and his descendants as depicted in Japanese mythology.

But, then, these savage-natured people may have gradually turned more tender-minded after they encountered and lived together with the aboriginal mountain people who lived a stable, peaceful and optimistic life within a mild climate, abundant water sources and a soothingly rich, natural and green environment and amid a culture nourished in a strife-free Takamagahara (the Plain of High Heaven). They would no longer be belligerent, calmed among these tender people and eventually become accustomed to the mountain people's way of life.

In a wonderful harmony brewed between the newcomers from the sea and the old inhabitants, the prototype of the tender-hearted Japanese or the original Japanese was gradually formed.

The Jomon Period was far from primitive. As early as this period, on the Japanese Archipelago, a solid civilization was established. It was different from the Four Civilizations of the world, harmoniously interwoven with nature in its own unique way.

Rice cultivation develops across Japan—the Yayoi Period or Bronze and Iron Period

The period of transition from the Jomon to the Yayoi is a topic which is the most hotly debated by scholars in recent years.

It was commonly believed that Yayoi pottery started to be made around 300 BC, and rice cultivation was brought from the Continent and the Korean Peninsula to Japan around 500~400 BC, by people who had fled from the disorder and confusion caused during the Age of Warring States. However, according to research conducted by a study group of the National Museum of Japanese History, the date of the origin of the cultivation of rice was set earlier, by about five hundred years, to 1,000 BC.

This was confirmed by radiocarbon dating conducted on pottery excavated in northern Kyushu. In the dating process, 32 pieces were examined and there was no discrepancy among the years obtained, which certainly indicates that the obtained date is correct. This discovery was a breakthrough, and upset the popular view held hitherto, which had been based on a sweeping analysis built on the style of the bronze and earthenware in question. To begin with, Jomon pottery was believed to have been made as early as 2,500 BC, but radiocarbon dating has confirmed that it was over 10,000 BC, and this date has recently become popular.

Such preconception, as cultures have always emerge first on the Continent and thus Japanese culture was imported from China and Korea, made us believe that it was impossible for the Japanese people to begin making and using ironware simultaneously with the Chinese. However, if ironware found at an early Yayoi Period site in Fukuoka Prefecture was actually the oldest, the site would date back to 900 BC, which was earlier than the Chinese Spring and Autumn and Warring States Period (800 BC or thereafter). I think this is very likely. Further, if the importation of rice cultivation dates back to this early time, it would be the latter half of 1,100 BC, when the Shang Dynasty declined and was taken over by the Chou Dynasty. Also, it is a well-known fact that in Japan, rice cultivation had already begun in the late Jomon Period and was widely practiced during the Yayoi Period, which was to last more than one thousand years.

In either case, Yayoi pottery first appeared in northern Kyushu and a pot known as “Yousu style” was found at the same site where pottery from the late Jomon Period was excavated. This would be the earliest example. Next, in the early Yayoi Period, small pots in the Itazuke-style were found, perfectly shaped with four major parts consisting of the mouth, neck, chest and base. In the next Period, Yayoi pottery came to be made not only in Kyushu, but also in the Kinki District (Kyoto, Osaka, Nara, Hyogo, Wakayama, Shiga and Mie Prefectures).

American zoologist, Edward Sylvester Morse (1838—1925) excavated Jomon pottery at Omori Shell Mound in Tokyo in 1874 and ten years later, in 1884 (the 17th year of Meiji), a different type of pottery of the Jomon Period was found at a town called Yayoi in the Bunkyo-ku Ward, Tokyo, and the pot was named “Yayoi Pottery” after the town where it was excavated. Comparing this with the fact that “Jomon Period” was named after the straw-rope mark impressions on contemporary pottery, it seems to be a little odd that the name of the town where the pottery was discovered represents the ensuing Period.

“Jomon”, in a sense, symbolically indicates culture, while “Yayoi” doesn’t suggest anything related with culture. On the basis of the new theory that the origin of rice cultivation dates back to around 1,000BC, we might as well call this period the “Bronze and Iron Period”, instead of the “Yayoi Period”. Many of the Yayoi pottery practically took after the Jomon pottery with the familiar straw-rope mark pattern. In fact, more bronze bells, called *Dotaku*, as well as ironware were newly introduced during this period. While the Jomon civilization is represented by uniquely patterned earthenware, this later period should be represented by a new culture, typically related to newly introduced usage of bronze and ironware. And this period overlaps the time when rice cultivation permeated the entire nation.

Speaking of the cultivation of rice, it has been emphasized that rice growing originated in the Continent and then was brought to Japan. However, as far back as the late Jomon Period, ruins of rice paddies well-equipped with irrigation systems were excavated at the Nabatake site in Saga Prefecture as well as at the Itazuke site in Fukuoka Prefecture.

The two major characteristics of Yayoi culture are said to be agriculture based on rice paddies and use of metallic tools made of iron and bronze. Bronzeware symbolizes this period. Though there are small bronze bells found in the Korean Peninsula, the bronze bells unearthed in Japan are much bigger and these were also used for ritual purposes. So, the Japanese bronze bells are clearly of a different kind from that of the Korean ones. On the surface of the bells, a picture is drawn, depicting the way in which people lived at that time. Changes in the style of cords from which the bells hung indicate the time when the bronze bell was made, and in the later period, bells became bigger, about one meter long. These were mainly made in the Kinki District and Ise Bay area, and in northern Kyushu, bronze swords and halberds were used for religious ceremonies. They were not used as weapons, but they were ritual tools, which remarkably shows that a Japanese characteristic, of their belief in spirits and souls.

Among the villages of the Yayoi Period, some were very large, surrounded by multiple circular moats. The Karako, Kagi site in Nara Prefecture shows a large-scale village, surrounded by a moat about 300,000 square-meters, at the peak of prosperity. The Ikegami Sone site in Osaka Prefecture covers roughly 60,000 square meters, including several coils of circular moats and a huge building (6.9 X 19.6 meters) supported by 24 pillars, and a well, 2 meters in diameter. The Yoshinogari ruins in Saga Prefecture shows the formation of a large-scale village surrounded by double circular moats, and the area within the outer moat is approximately 400,000 square meters. It has been popularly stated that during this period, moats were built and battles often took place. However, among the remains of more than 300 bodies excavated at the site, only ten or so bodies indicate scars from arrows or from beheading. Though there were probably occasional small conflicts, no big war seemed to have taken place.

The Yoshinogari site is very important. Here, we can see transitions occurring in villages and graveyards throughout the entire Yayoi Period. At this site, graves of the Yayoi Period can be found here, including about 2,000 pot-coffin graves, simple holes in the ground, some 350 wooden coffin graves and 13 box-style stone coffin graves. In some graveyards, mainly pot-coffin graves were uniformly arranged, while graves in others were irregularly clustered. In either case, a strong worship of souls and spirits is remarkably manifested, in a manner similar as in the Jomon Period. About 600 meters

north of the village, there is a rectangular mound grave. From five coffins excavated from the grave, 78 pieces of bronze swords and a pipe-shaped glass ornament were found, which indicates that this grave might have been the grave of a powerful ruler or land lord. Some historians assert that classes emerged and class struggle began during this period. Rather, it was not the formation of classes, but the emergence of a ruler, who nominally played a role in uniting the people. In other words, a role-sharing society came into being.

Thus, small states were founded here and there, which led to the description “Having been separated into one hundred and some nations” in the Chinese books: *Hanshu (Book of Han)*, *Geography* and *Hou-hanshu (Book of the Later Han) Account of East Savages*. From Shikano-shima (Shikano Island) in Hakata Bay, a gold seal was found with an embossing of five Chinese Characters--Han, Wa, Na, Guo and Wang--during the Edo Period. The seal is said to have been given by Guang-wu Di of China to the envoy from the state of Na of Wa (Japan) in AD 57. This state of Na was supposedly one of then hundred and some states. But I don't think Na actually existed. For, Na is a despised name. It might have been a small state on the Fukuoka Plain, to which this island belonged.

It is commonly believed that during the Yayoi Period, agriculture started and small states were founded and then wars constantly took place among them. Three pieces of evidence often cited to support the notion that war was common are: 1) the bones excavated at the Yoshinogari site indicate beheaded bodies and scars from arrows, 2) a circular moat around the village promoted safety within, and 3) the village was located in the highlands to keep away invaders.

But in reality, there were only a few examples of scarred bones. As for weapons, blades of polished stone spears and stone swords had grown thin, and bronze weapons became bigger and came to be used mainly for rituals, and iron weapons which replaced them were also larger, for use in rituals. Weapons imported from the Continent turned out to be ritual tools.

Regarding the circular moats around the village, earthwork was built outside the moat, which would have only benefited outside attackers. The Yoshinogari site clearly illustrates that. (Refer to Page). Inside, forts were unearthed from ruins representing the later part of the Period, but still it is highly unlikely that many battles were fought. The most reasonable explanation for fences and moats is that they were likely built to keep away wild animals.

Also, from villages built in the highlands, no remains of weapons were unearthed. If there had been watchtowers, they would have been for the sake of communication and

relay of information. Some scholars try to explain this period in terms of a historical view based on “class struggles”. I should state, however, that such a concept is very unlikely and unrealistic.

Left: Bronze bell (B front of Sakuraga-oka #5 Bronze Bell) Photo, stored at the Kobe City Museum

Right: Bronze bell (B front of Sakuraga-oka #5 Bronze Bell) Illustration, reprinted from *Research Report on Sakuraga-oka Bronze Bell and Bronze Halberd*

Top: The Yoshinogari ruins North inner quarters

Bottom: The Yoshinogari ruins Outer circular moat and castle fence

Photos by Department of Education, Saga Prefectural Government

Column 2: A Nation of “Culture of Forms”—Japan

“In the beginning was the Word,” says the Bible. This is one of the characteristics of Western culture. They believe that culture is what is recorded with written words. The Chinese hold the same idea. First, they began using inscriptions on bones and tortoise carapaces, and then developed Chinese characters, eventually creating an elaborate Chinese character culture. Both Europeans and Chinese emphatically put writing at the center of culture.

How about Japan? Japanese people used Chinese characters imported from the Continent, cleverly applying them to the spoken and narrative language which the Japanese had been using until then. They invented *Hiragana* Syllabary and *Katakana* Syllabary and, thus, succeeded in creating the Japanese written language. The first books written in Japanese are *Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters)* and *Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan)*.

Probably, for this reason, it is quite widely believed that the origin of Japanese culture dates back to the 8th century, when the two books of *Ki-Ki* were completed. Before that date, if there was any culture, it would have been very poor and primitive. In fact, so many history books have stated that the Jomon, Yayoi and Old Tomb Periods are primitive. This thinking is greatly the result of Western and Chinese ideas.

However, this is not true. In Japan, long before the 8th century, there existed a very rich “culture of forms.” Forms do not need to be translated into characters to convey the message. Forms and shapes themselves eloquently tell all that there is to be told. Japan should certainly be proud of this unique “culture of forms.”

Take Jomon pottery for instance. On the surface of the pottery are inscribed straw-rope patterns. These patterns were made by pressing a straw-rope on the surface while the clay is still soft and rolling it.

Why did they do this? Archeologists say they have no idea, because there is no written record left. But stop relying on characters. See the object in terms of the “culture of forms” and you will be able to vividly imagine and feel the very heart of the people in those ancient times.

Think of these unique things which I have already mentioned. The Shimenawa or straw festoon placed in the front shrines or around giant trees esteemed as divine in shrine yard and The New Year’s Days decorations on the front door of our homes. Rope is a boundary to clearly delineate the inside, which is regarded as awesome, reverend, divine and pure, from the impure outside. That is the Japanese mind, symbolized in the straw-rope. Pots are used for storing and cooking food. What is inside the pot is vital food to sustain our lives. That must be pure. It must not be soiled or get dirty. The straw-rope pattern illustrates this belief.

Also, the Fire Flames Pottery mentioned before has a very dynamic, lively, decorative form, just like actual flaring flames. Jomon pottery has various other forms such as those representing the movement of water and clouds and a deer’s antler. These forms express people’s reverential fear of the terrible forces of nature, which far exceeds human power, and at the same time, deep gratitude and respect for the wonderful gifts nature gives us with such power.

Bronze bells, which were mainly used for rituals during the Yayoi Period, are beautiful in form themselves and on the surface is depicted a part of the Yayoi people’s life such as deer hunting, rice grinding and buildings with high-raised floors (unearthed in Kagawa Prefecture) in geometric, linear patterns. They are so self-evident and impressive that there is no need at all to explain or discuss them using words. From very early times, richness of the “culture of forms” made Japan a mature society. The geographical circumstance of being an island state may have partly contributed to this development. The ability to identify things in common solely by means of forms has been Japanese heritage.

How about a Japanese “culture of words,” then? Compared to the rich “culture of forms,” is it inferior or poorly developed? No, it is not at all poor. This is proved by the fact that almost as soon as the Japanese language had been equipped with characters, the two books of the *Ki-Ki* were completed and the compilation of *Manyoshu* (*Collection of the Ten Thousand Leaves*) was under way. Before the culture of words, there was the culture of narration and verbal transmission.

Among peoples who came from the Continent, there were many Altaics from Northeast Asia and Central Asia. They were people who preferred direct conversation. There were also people from Southeast Asia and through mixing and mingling of these various tongues, naturally a language came to be formed.

“The culture of forms” is clearly incorporated in a culture of verbal transmission. For instance, *Waka* is compact, of five and seven syllables, using the rhythm of the Japanese language. The most important factor of *Waka* is the form of 5 and 7 syllables.

The Japanese culture of words or characters began by using the Chinese characters and developed into the fine form as it is now through the elaborate process of digesting Chinese characters perfectly as Japanese language. The ensuing literary works, one after another, most eloquently tell of the wonderful result.

In a matured culture of words, the “culture of forms,” free from words, has been inherited and alive. In later years, the typical Japanese cultural forms of the Tea Ceremony and Noh drama were born. The documents supposedly teaching the secret and essence of these cultural assets are indeed very simple and don’t tell much, far from allowing us to grasp the essence. Take the Tea Ceremony for instance. A very narrow space for the tea room. The atmosphere created by the *Tatami* floor. *Shoji* paper sliding doors. Earth walls. The delicate Tea Ceremony kit. Strictly regulated manners. These “forms” tell all about the Tea Ceremony. A million words would hardly achieve what these forms do.

It is our important task to inherit and cherish this culture of forms, which is the basis of Japanese culture. And at the same time, this will enable us to conceive the Japanese spirit nourished in our long history and tradition.

Story III Mammoth Ancient Mounded Tombs Speak—The Kofun Period

Why were the mounded tombs built?

February 11 marks Japan's National Foundation Day. This date was designated by applying, to the modern calendar, the day when the first Emperor, Jinmu, was enthroned. The day was formerly called *Kigensetsu*, meaning a holiday to celebrate the date of national foundation and was widely celebrated as such at schools and many other places. Nowadays, however, no school in Japan officially remember this day as such, saying that there is no clear evidence to actually prove the existence of Emperor Jinmu. The very reason for the denial of Emperor Jinmu's actual existence is that Emperor Jinmu acceded to the throne in 660 BC, which belongs to the Jomon Period. Well, at present, some may say the year 660 BC belongs to the Yayoi Period. They say that whether the period was Jomon or Yayoi, a state could not have been founded as early has been stated.

However, let us carefully think about this point. We say that this year is 2012 of the 21st century. But this is only according to the Western calendar, which sets the year of Jesus Christ's birth as the first year, or Year One. Here again, no one knows for sure that a person named "Jesus Christ" was actually born that year. Jesus Christ clearly exists according to the descriptions in the New Testament, but none of us can tell if these are factual stories. Only Christians firmly believe that Christ was born in that year and that he actually lived. Christ, just like Emperor Jinmu, lives in the world of mythology.

Owing to the popular recognition that Christianity has obtained world-wide, it became popular to use a common calendar for convenience sake worldwide. So, we Japanese use the Western calendar and this year is 2012. I should say it's odd to blindly accept Western ideas as factual and, on the other hand, to reject Japanese mythology as groundless and without proof. If the Japanese people can perceive what the myths try to convey and understand what is really vital and important, that will be perfectly sufficient. Take *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*. Though these two books may slightly differ in some parts, both of them state that Emperor Jinmu lived to be 127 years old and that Emperor Sujin passed away at the age of 120. The early period emperors tended to live to a ripe old age.

Of course, we moderns think that these descriptions of old ages are quite unrealistic, and indeed, the longevity of Emperor Jinmu is the very reason for denying his actual existence.

Here, I should explain many reasons for the extraordinary longevity.

Some scholars maintain that in those ancient times, one calendar year was counted as two years of age. Others bring up the theory of the Chinese Xin You Revolution and apply this theory to the year of Emperor Jinmu's accession to the throne. According to this theory, every 1,340 years a sea change takes place in society. It was in 681 (the 10th year of Tenmu) that Emperor Tenmu decided to compile *Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan)* and exactly 1,340 years before that year was the year 660 BC, which was designated as the year of Emperor Jinmu's enthronement. From that year on, the reigning years of the early Emperors who followed him were allocated, which resulted in the unrealistic longevity of several Emperors. Another idea is that out of deep respect for the great first Emperor, they gave him such a long life.

However, meddling with figures like this won't do. What matters are the things that Emperor Jinmu did and whether there are any ruins and artifacts to support his stated achievements.

First, let's look closely at *Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters)* and *Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan)*. We will see those emperors who were long-lived were from the first Emperor Jinmu to the 16th Emperor Nintoku, while the 17th Emperor Richu and onward had an ordinary life-span. In fact, Emperor Richu reigned for five years. Among the Emperors following him, the longest reign was for forty years or so. The average reign is about ten years. At that time, the average life-span of the Japanese was much shorter than that of present-day people. Besides, considering that the Emperors didn't reign for life, a reign of ten years, on average, is pretty reasonable.

Recently, adopting this theory of ten-year reigns of Emperors, some people assert that Emperor Jinmu actually lived around 280 AD. In my opinion, the time was a little earlier, probably at the beginning of the 3rd century. There are good grounds for my belief, and that is the ancient mounded tombs.

It was at this time that mammoth tombs, such as the front-square and rear-round mounds, were built and mounded tombs spread all over Japan. From this fact, we can see that ancient tombs united Japan in terms of culture, which could not have been achieved without having a ruler who united Japan as a state, during such period. And that ruler was supposedly Emperor Jinmu.

This will be further clarified as we follow the achievements of Emperor Jinmu.

Eastern Campaign depicted in *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*

According to mythology, at first, Emperor Jinmu was in Kyushu. It was on Mt. Takachiho of Himuka (Miyazaki Prefecture) that Prince Ninigi-no Mikoto descended, in what is called "Heavenly Offspring Descending on Earth." This heavenly descendant

was our ancestor and it is natural to think that Emperor Jinmu was in Kyushu.

Ninigi-no Mikoto married Princess Konohana Sakuya Hime and Princess Iwa Naga Hime. They were sisters. But elder sister Iwa Naga Hime was ugly looking and was soon sent back to her parents. Iwa (rock) Naga (long) means to “live long and stout like a rock”. On the other hand, Konohana Sakuya means a “short life like a fragile flower”. This relates to a story that from then on, Emperors would live a limited life. Although from the first to sixteenth, Emperors enjoyed a very long life-span, they were not given eternal life, which indicates that Emperors were human.

Remember the previously-mentioned story of Yama Sachi Hiko subjugating Umi Sachi Hiko. That was a story about how the people who had come from the sea came to follow the aboriginal mountain people and gradually assimilated with the natives, eventually to form the Japanese people. This process concerning the origin of our ancestors overlaps the description that Princess Tamayori Hime, who was Emperor Jinmu’s mother, was a daughter of the Sea Deity.

Geographically close to Korea and China, Kyushu has been closely related with the Continent. Many people came from the sea. Hikohohodemi, descendant of kami who descended on Mt. Takachiho-no Mine, quite understandably thought that Japan should become a powerful nation to survive, on learning about the situation in the Continent. This Hikohohodemi was exactly Emperor Jinmu.

According to *Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan)*, the story goes like this:

Shio Tsuchi-no Oji (Old Man of Salt and Earth) said to Emperor Jinmu, “There is a good place in the east. Blue-green mountains surround the land. On the land someone descended from the Plain of High Heaven aboard a boat as firm as a rock.”

Hearing this, Emperor Jinmu said to his older brother and princes, “That land will be a suitable place for a powerful leader to reign. It’s the center of Heaven and Earth. The kami who descended on the land from the Plain of High Heaven must be Nigihayahi-no Mikoto. Shouldn’t we go there and make the land the capital of the nation?”

Thus, Emperor Jinmu set out on his campaign. By following a sea route along the Seto Inland Sea, he headed for Yamato. This is called Emperor Jinmu’s Eastern Campaign.

On his way to the east, the Emperor met many sea people and made them his men and kept moving eastward. But, according to *Chronicles of Japan*, when he was about to enter Yamato after climbing over Mt. Ikoma, he and his army were stopped by a powerful army led by Nagasune Hiko (Long Legged Man).

Then Emperor Jinmu said, “I am a direct descendant of Sun Deity Amaterasu

Omikami. Now, if we should shoot at our enemy, facing the sun, it is against the virtuous way of Heaven. Let's go back and retreat. Enshrine heavenly kami and earthly deities as well. With the sun on our back, this is the suitable way to attack and strike an enemy, in line with the sun as it shoots its powerful ray. Thus, we will have our enemy defeated without our swords smeared with blood.”

Then, with his words, Emperor Jinmu's army made a detour and moved on, led by Yatagarasu, the big three-footed raven which Amaterasu Omikami sent. Landing on Kumano (Wakayama Prefecture) from the sea, they fought against Nagasune Hiko's army, with the sun to their backs and successfully beat them.

Though myths tell of victory obtained in such an easy manner, the actual battles that were fought must have been much tougher and attaining victory must have been far more difficult. In fact, Nagasune Hiko's army seems to have been overwhelmingly strong, as ruins of a very firm fortress there tell us.

The important point is that the authenticity inherited from Amaterasu Omikami and her supportive patronage gave strength to Emperor Jinmu, which enabled him to grasp a glorious victory.

Did Himiko actually exist?

Kojiki and *Nihon Shoki*, the oldest books in Japan, were compiled long after Emperor Jinmu started his Eastern Campaign at the beginning of the 3rd century. It is commonly believed that if we have some documentary evidence from that era, we would be able to know more precisely about that campaign. So, people often refer to the Chinese book entitled *Wei-zhi Woren-chuan* (*History of the Wei Empire and Account of Japan*).

After the Han Dynasty declined early in the 3rd century, China broke up into many small states and consequently, national power drastically weakened. Probably because of this domestic instability, from the late 3rd century to the early 5th century, no written records were made about Japan, which at that time was referred to as “Wa”. The only exception, however, was the book, *Wei-zhi Woren-chuan*.

Being the only clue available, many scholars have taken up this book and hotly debated about its contents. Arguments have gone on and on, without ever reaching any clear conclusion.

According to *Wei-zhi Woren-chuan*, Wa was not a unified nation, but many separate clan-based states competing with each other. Then a female named Himiko became leader of Yamatai-koku, and this state succeeded in uniting all of the states. Where was Yamatai-koku? *Wei-zhi Woren-chuan* minutely described the route by which to reach Wa.

If we faithfully follow the route described in the book, we will end up nowhere, in the middle of the ocean, far away from Japan. So, scholarly tricks have been used to fiddle with the figures used in describing the route, as they have done with the year of Emperor Jinmu's enthronement and his age. Then, whenever new discoveries of ruins and artifacts are made, they argue again, using the "new discoveries" as if related to Yamatai-koku, and triumphantly claim that they are right in saying Yamatai-koku was in Kyushu, while others argue back that it was definitely in Kinai (Kinki region).

I cannot help but wonder why on earth they never have doubts about the credibility of the *Wei-zhi Woren-chuan*.

In China, the idea that China is the center of the entire world has been firmly rooted since antiquity. The Chinese believe that China is culturally superior to the rest of the world and that other neighboring states are utterly savage. This concept is totally conceited and arbitrary, conceivable only by immature minds who know little about the world around them. However distorted and far from the truth it may be, this idea of "China at the center" has been passed on from generation after generation, throughout the long history of China.

Wei-zhi Woren-chuan uses "邪", which means wickedness, in describing *Ya* of Yamatai-koku and "卑", meaning baseness, to indicate *Hi* of Himiko. As the respective meanings of "邪" and "卑" indicate, appellation of the state and its ruler are expressed in despicable terms, which clearly manifests the idea that "China is the center of all." Not knowing at all what Japan was really like, the Chinese book unilaterally states that there is a savage nation across the sea, referring to Japan.

Here in Japan, however, connecting Himiko to Reverend Deity Amaterasu Omikami, some scholars maintain that the Hashihaka Tomb in Makimuku of Yamato belongs to Himiko. The Chinese book describes Himiko as "being in the service of the devil and leading people astray." How is it possible that such a woman is related to noble Amaterasu Omikami?

Wei-zhi Woren-chuan contains nothing that has anything to do with Japanese mythology. Nor are there ruins or artifacts that exist that could be used as evidence to back the claims that a state called Yamatai-koku or its queen named Himiko actually existed.

The ancient Japanese people knew of this Chinese book, *Wei-zhi Woren-chuan*. *Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan)* touched very lightly upon this book, just briefly. Evidently, they knew full well the real value of the Chinese book as documentation.

Is it really necessary to refer to the state called Yamatai-koku or Queen Himiko in examining the history of Japan? We may well be hesitant in thinking that Himiko

actually lived.

Giant front-squared, rear-rounded tomb evidence of the existence of Emperor Jinmu

In Japan, in the middle of the 3rd century and onward, many mounded tombs were constructed. Surprisingly, there were more than one hundred thousand mounded tombs built, almost throughout all of Japan, from present-day Kagoshima Prefecture in the south to Iwate Prefecture in the north.

Particularly among these are the strikingly huge mounded tombs that were constructed in Yamato (Nara Prefecture) and Kawachi (Osaka Prefecture) in the Kinki Region. The shapes of these mounded tombs vary, such as round, square, rounded in front and squared in the back tombs. The most attractive of all are front-square, rear-round tombs. This kind of tomb is typical of Japan.

The nation-wide distribution of the typical mounded tombs means that Japan was culturally unified. Emperor Jinmu achieved the unification of Yamato, establishing the Yamato Court and other clans living in various regions were also closely related, which shows the dawn of the Period of the Civilization of the Giant Mounded Tombs.

People built mounded tombs for their ancestors, and families related to the Imperial Family united the local clans and eventually established a government called the “Yamato Court”. At the center of the Court sat successive generations of Emperors who had settled to live in Yamato after Emperor Jinmu conquered and united Yamato. The many gigantic front-square, rear-round mounded tombs symbolically prove that.

And this is exactly the evidence that proves that Emperor Jinmu actually lived. Though, at present, the Imperial Tomb of Emperor Jinmu stands in a flat plain, it used to be in the area of present-day Kashihara Shrine, halfway up Mt. Unebi, and supposedly much smaller in scale.

This kind of tomb consists of two parts: a rear-round part that looks like a hill and a front-square part that is supposed to represent a village leading to the hill. The bulging hill-like round part, as if reaching for heaven, reminds us of Takamagahara (The Plain of High Heaven). The square part represents earth, which could indicate this world called *Ashihara-no Nakatsu-kuni* (The central country of reed beds). The Imperial coffin sits in the round section, and so, precisely speaking, the tomb should be rather called “front-round and rear-square”.

The reason why people at that time built such a tremendously grand tomb is because they cherished the souls of the deceased, and people in those times must have thought that man becomes *kami* after death. This is called “worship of the souls of the deceased”

and is the basis of Shinto.

The mammoth mounded tombs were built from the 3rd to the 7th centuries. Among the tombs, front-square and rear-round tombs, in particular, did not exist in China and only a very few examples are found in Korea. This type of tomb is typical of Japan. In a community based on kinship, worship for the soul of their chief pervaded throughout Japan, and the unified Japanese spirit, one could call a prototype of Shinto, was clearly there. This religious fruit was borne from the Eastern Campaign led by Emperor Jinmu.

Nowadays, most of these ancient tombs are covered with trees and look like oblong hills. But at the time when they were laboriously constructed, the surface was covered with cobblestones and all around and on the top, various clay images modeling humans, horses and other cylinder-shaped sculptures were neatly arranged. The clay images are very simple in design, but they tangibly and clearly tell of interesting phases of the creator's life and times to those of us who live in modern times. In the rounded section is a stone chamber to house the coffin, and together with the coffin, mirrors, decorative stones, swords, equestrian equipment, and farming tools were also kept in the same chamber.

Many mirrors called *Sankaku Buchi Shin Ju Kyo* (Triangular Framed Gods and Beast Mirror) have been found in the ancient tombs (Refer to Page). These mirrors were first thought to have been presented from China. Strangely enough, however, not one mirror of this type has been discovered in China. According to this fact, the mirrors must have been originally made in Japan. As the appellation indicates, the mirror's frame has a triangular-shaped section. This triangular shape is most likely to represent mountains. And here, we can see another representation of worshipping mountains, which is also a basis of Shinto. It is not too much to say that within the mammoth ancient tombs is the crystallization of the integrated Japanese spirit, as shown by the forms and artifacts that are housed within the tombs.

The world's largest mounded tomb, Emperor Nintoku's Mausoleum

The largest mounded tomb in Japan is the 16th Emperor Nintoku's mausoleum (Daisen Kofun Ancient Tomb) (Refer to Page). This front-squareed, rear-rounded tomb measures 486 meters at the base of its longest side. In fact, it is larger than the Great Pyramid of Giza (also known as the Pyramid of Khufu), the largest in Egypt, or the tomb of Shi-huang-di of the Qin Dynasty in China.

Let alone the largest in Japan, the tomb is the largest in the world! Furthermore, the tomb is surrounded by three coils of moats.

It has been estimated that it would take 2,000 workers 16 years, working every day,

to complete the construction of this tomb. So many men cooperated and worked together to achieve this grand construction work, which shows that the Emperor must have possessed tremendous power to hold a great number of people together. It is also simply amazing that they had the skills and technique to plan and construct the tomb as planned, without resorting to written words. Those ancient people inherited through oral transmission not only the worship of their ancestors, but also highly scientific technology.

Regarding Emperor Nintoku, there is some description of him in *Kojiki*. At that time, there was no title of “Emperor”, and they were called *Sumera Mikoto* or *O Kimi*. Then Sumera Mikoto Nintoku said, “When I go up to the top of the hill and look around and far beyond, I see no smoke rising in the villages. Alas, peasants are so poor that they cannot afford to cook rice in their homes!” and then he ordered, “For three years hence, no taxation or forced labor shall be imposed on peasants. Promptly remove their daily suffering.”

And, true to his word, the Emperor wore his clothes and shoes until they were no longer wearable, and ate leftover cooked rice and soup until they were too sour to eat.

After three years, Emperor Nintoku stood on the hill-top again. Looking over the villages, he could see smoking chimneys everywhere, and felt greatly relieved to know that now peasants were living a good life. Thus, voices praising the Emperor for his benevolent deeds were heard all over the land.

Even then, the Emperor did not resume the construction of his palace, which had been stopped half-completed and postponed. After an additional ten years had passed, he finally resumed construction, for which the peasants worked together so laboriously and willingly that the palace was completed well ahead of schedule.

“In the first place, Heaven will have kimi (Emperor) reign solely for the sake of the peasants,” said Emperor Nintoku. We know from his words that the principle of the emperorship is to serve the people, which was already firmly established during his time. On the contrary, the idea that the power is used to exploit people is purely the product of modern minds.

Though, in actuality, many archeologists raise doubt whether the largest front-square, rear-round mounded tomb in Japan truly belongs to Emperor Nintoku, its scale and the description in *Kojiki*, describing the people’s love and gratitude for the Emperor will easily have us believe that the mammoth tomb was constructed for him.

Importation of Chinese characters and Buddhism

As a state is united, trade and diplomatic relations with other states also commence

and grow.

The Japanese people originally had relationships with people living in the southern part of the Korean Peninsula, in search of iron resources. By that time, a state called *Goguryeo* (Kokuryo) became powerful in the northern part of the Korean Peninsula. Simultaneously, in the south, states such as Baekje (Paekche) and Silla (Sinra) came to power. At the beginning of the 4th century, Goguryeo invaded a part of Chinese territory and also tried to put Baekje and Silla in the south under its control.

On the occasion of this crisis, Baekje asked the Yamato Court for help. Late in the fourth century, the Yamato Court sent its army across the sea to Korea. Presumably, they set a military base at Daegaya (Gaya Confederacy). The stone monument of Gwanggaeto the Great still remains today, which was built by king of Goguryeo Gwanggaeto the Great in 414. The epitaph of the monument says that the army from the Yamato Court helped Baekje and fought fiercely with Goguryeo.

As trade and exchange with Baekje prospered, more and more people came and went between the two countries. Through people on the Korean Peninsula, Chinese culture began to enter Japan. Farming tools and weapons were made of iron and Chinese characters came into use. Confucianism was also imported.

In 552, or Emperor Kinmei's 13th mizu-no-e saru year (according to another record, in 538 or Emperor Kinmei's tsuchi-no-e uma year), Seong-wang of Baekje dedicated Buddhist images and scriptures to the Japanese Emperor. This was the importation of Buddhism. This imported Buddhism played a significantly important role in forming the Japanese mentality both in depth and width. Especially, Buddhist images were called "*Hoto* (Buddha) *Ke* (shape)" and came to be greatly worshipped.

People who came from the Korean Peninsula and transmitted these skills and culture were referred to as naturalized citizens and were treated with honor and respect. The Yamato Court had them live mainly in the Kinki Region and allowed them to join the administration.

San Kaku Buchi Shin Ju Kyo (Triangular framed god and beast mirror)

Stored by Agency for Cultural Affairs Photograph by the Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo

Emperor Nintoku's Mausoleum (Daisen Ancient Tomb) Photo by Sakai City

Comparative models of the three largest mounded tombs in the world

Stored by Sakai City Museum Photograph by Sakai City

Column 3: Shinto and ancient mounded tombs

From around the middle of the 3rd century to the 7th century, mounded tombs were built in great numbers. Their shapes vary from round, square, round-top and square-bottom to others. And among them the most significant were front-square, rear-round mammoth mounded tombs. There are only fifteen or so examples of this type of tomb confirmed in the Korean Peninsula and this type can be said to have been typical of Japan. Therefore, within the front-square, rear-round tombs is enshrined the origin of the Japanese mentality, which uniquely worships the deceased as kami.

As I have already mentioned before, at the time of the construction of these tombs, the surface was covered with cobblestones and around and on the top of them, clay figures of men, houses and horses, reminiscent of the deceased, as well as cylinder-shaped figures, were regularly arranged.

Burials in such beautiful and grand manner were intended, not only as condolence for the deceased, but also for the reverential idea that deceased become kami. Man becomes kami after death and the kami takes good care of this world. This firm faith motivated people to bury and worship the deceased with respect and gratitude.

Among all people, the chief, in particular, who united and led the community, was held as kami in this religious belief. The deceased chief would continue to be closely related to the community as their guardian, just as he was in this world. That is why those who were buried in the mammoth mounded tombs such as the front-square, rear-round ones were respected chiefs of the community.

The highest chief of communities was *O Kimi* (Grand Lord). The front-square, rear-round tomb in which to enshrine O Kimi was huge and was actually larger than the base of the Pyramid of Khufu in Egypt or the Tomb of Shi-huang-di of the Qin Dynasty in China. This O Kimi came to be called Emperor during the Hakuho Period and thenceforth.

Nature worship, which holds that kami is ubiquitous in the natural world, souls and spirits worship, which is based in the belief that the deceased become kami, and especially, the worship of the Imperial ancestors' souls, as the highest form of souls—these three factors of faith represent the mentality of the ancient Japanese people ensconced in the giant front-square, rear-round mounded tombs. And Shinto is exactly the religion that has these three characteristic beliefs. Ancient tomb culture is closely related to Shinto, at the root of the Japanese mentality, and is the very manifestation of ancient beliefs.

Afterwards, one religious faith after another came over from abroad and duly

influenced the Japanese mind. Taoism came and so did Confucianism. And the most influential of all the imported religions was Buddhism. A very serious conflict actually occurred between Soga-shi, who faithfully held to Buddhism and Mononobe-shi, who by contrast believed in Shinto.

This conflict ended up with the victory of the Soga-shi's side, which did not necessarily mean that Shinto was no longer believed. Shinto coexisted with Buddhism. But how? It was Prince Shotoku that played a very important role in keeping both religions prosperous (Refer to Page).

As well-known for having founded Horyu-ji Temple, Prince Shotoku was a faithful Buddhist. Shinto is a communal religion which centers on a community composed of families and clans, as seen from the way the front-squared, rear-rounded mounded tomb was built. Every person in the community, together, were Shinto faithful. Prince Shotoku held to Buddhism at an individual level. As the souls of deceased in the community become kami, an individual becomes Hotoke (Buddhist kami) after death. That is what Prince Shotoku believed in. While Shinto is a communal religion, Buddhism can be said to be an individual religion.

Though the terms may be different (kami and hotoke), the idea that the souls become kami or hotoke is the same. So, it was easy for the Japanese people to equally accept both Shinto and Buddhism faithfully.

This is what is called unification and co-practice of Kami and Hotoke and it is beyond our comprehension, to understand to what extent this unification and co-practice of the two religions have made the Japanese mentality so rich. At the root of the Japanese mental culture lies Shinto. Though the roots are unseen, Shinto may not be so clearly perceived externally, or sometimes may not even be recognized at all, it firmly braces and supports the branches and leaves of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. This is exactly the original root of the Japanese mind and I call this “*Yamato Gokoro*” or “Heart of Yamato”. The Buddhist theory of the manifestation of kami on Earth, which states that Japanese kami-gami appear in the land of Japan as various avatars of Buddhist Hotoke, was conceived in much later years when Buddhism became very popular. In actuality, it was the opposite and Shinto was at the foundation of all.

Ancient mounded tombs held many clay figures. One theory based on *Nihon Shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*) states that a large number of clay figures were made in lieu of martyrdom which prevailed then. The clay figures did not just represent humans, but also homes, animals and cylindrical shapes. So, it would be more reasonable to conclude that the clay figures manifest nature worship and the worship of souls, both of which reflect the belief that kami exist in all things. To distinguish souls from the

actually living form, clay figures bear innocent and childlike appearances. They do not represent actual living things. With the original current of Shinto based on the three factors of nature worship, the worship of souls and worship of Imperial ancestors' souls, which were demonstrated via ancient mounded tombs, co-practice of Shinto and Buddhism richly brewed the Japanese mentality.

As temples were built, mounded tombs disappeared. The Goju-no-to or five-tiered pagoda is a sacred place where the Busshari (bones of Buddha) are kept. Temples also provided burial place for people's souls, thus substituting for ancient mounded tombs.

Story IV The Origin of the True Japanese—The Asuka Period

Prince Shotoku and Hohryu-ji Temple

The civilization of the mounded ancient tombs was a manifestation of the worship of the Imperial ancestors' souls centering on the Emperors. Mounded tombs in general are also based on the worship of their deceased ancestors' souls. As a religion of the community composed of related families from the same ancestors, Shinto was born in Japan and throughout the generations, from the Jomon Period to the period of the civilization of the ancient tombs, Shinto continued to form.

Then, Buddhism, which originated in India, came to Japan, via Korea. *Nihon Shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*) tells the following interesting story: Emperor Kinmei, who was totally amazed at the sight of a beautifully glittering Buddhist image, asked his men, "Is it permissible if we worship this image?" The target of Shinto worship is souls and nature. Shinto does not incorporate concrete human images, such as Buddhist images. This story well conveys how amazed the Emperor was when he came into contact with Buddhism for the first time.

It was so alien and different that various opinions came up over the sensational new religion, and the Emperor's men split down the middle into two groups: those who were for and others who were against accepting Buddhism. The Soga clan was willing to accept the new religion while the Mononobe clan was determined to reject it. The two parties conflicted, and in the end the Soga clan won, holding the leadership of the government. Empress Suiko acceded to the throne and her nephew, Prince Shotoku (547?-622), became regent. Prince Regent Shotoku ran the state, with the Empress at the center, and accepted Buddhism as a state policy in co-operation with the Soga clan. Some scholars even doubt as to whether Prince Shotoku was a real figure. Though *Nihon Shoki* clearly states that Prince Shotoku did exist, skeptical scholars suspect that the description itself is highly dubious, upon examination of remaining ruins.

Hohryu-ji Temple was built by Prince Shotoku. This fact is clearly stated in the book. There is also a record which says that the temple was burned down in 670 (the 9th year of Emperor Tenchi). All of us can clearly see Hohryu-ji Temple standing right there in front of us with our own eyes. Then, another theory asserts that present-day Hohryu-ji Temple was rebuilt during the Hakuho Period, which has now become a popular theory. History textbooks also say that this is so. If present-day Hohryu-ji was actually rebuilt, we cannot be so sure that the old Hohryu-ji before the fire was actually built by Prince Shotoku, and therefore, the description in *Nihon Shoki* will turn out to be quite dubious.

So this line of reasoning continues with the conclusion that we do not know for sure whether a person called Prince Shotoku actually lived.

Recently, however, a precision examination was conducted, using the method of dating by counting annual rings. It is a measurement taken by counting annual rings of trees, and is the most precise way of measuring passage of years so far. The Shin Bashira or central pillar, which stands at the center of the Goju no To (Five-storied Pagoda) of Hohryu-ji, was measured by this dating method. As a result, it has been discovered that the original tree which was used for the central pillar had been cut down in 594 (the 2nd year of Empress Suiko) during the Asuka Period.

Then, how about the record that says Hohryu-ji was once burned down? This has also turned out to be true. Burnt soil was discovered. But this soil was not from Hohryu-ji. It was actually from another building called Waka Kusa Garan (Young Grass Temple), which used to stand next to Hohryu-ji. It was the former that burned down, rather than the latter.

So, there is no longer a shred of doubt about it. Hohryu-ji, we can now see, was never rebuilt, but it is the very original that Prince Shotoku built. Of course, no one can possibly doubt the existence of Prince Shotoku either.

Furthermore, the method of constructing Hohryu-ji evidently belongs to the Asuka Period and is different from that of the ensuing Hakuho Period. “Shaka Sanzon Zo” (The Shaka Triad) and “Kudara Kannon” (Baekje Kannon), both of which are enshrined in the Kondo (Central Hall) of Hohryu-ji, also belong to the Asuka Period.

True as it is, however, those insistent scholars on the “rebuilt Horyu-ji theory” will not willingly believe this. They so obstinately stick to the reconstruction theory that they even claim that Hohryu-ji was rebuilt after the Asuka style on purpose.

History should be seen simply as it is. Hohryu-ji was a building constructed while Prince Shotoku was alive. The central figure who concretely and practically introduced Buddhism to Japan was Prince Shotoku.

Shinto as a community religion and Buddhism as an individual religion

Prince Shotoku said, “Seken koke yuibutsu zeshin,” meaning that “This world is transitory and the only truth is what *hotoke* (Buddha) says”. If they believe in *hotoke*’s teachings, people will be free from their various woes and sufferings.

Prince Shotoku himself published a book titled *Sangyo Gisho* (*Commentaries on the Three Sutras*.) The book consistently interprets Buddhism as always being with us, the living people of this world, and is not at all difficult scholarly meditation that is to be pursued exclusively in temples. Humans are called *Bonpu* (mediocre people), who are

ordinary, worldly folks. *Bonpu* can become *hotoke* if they truly understand what Buddhism teaches them. At the same time, how difficult it is to truly understand it!

Shinto is a religion based on family and community. All members hold the faith in unison. This common attitude became the foundation for nourishing the love for the community to which they belonged and ultimately led to the unification of Japan as a community or a state.

Initially, also in Buddhism, the sutra called *Konko Myo Kyo (Golden Bright Sutra)*, with its purpose of protecting the state, was much appreciated. But that was not all. Prince Shotoku accepted Buddhism as a religion which individuals can practice.

Each person is different in his thinking and suffering. This individual difference is very important and therefore, respecting this difference, Buddhism enables each individual to endeavor to realize Buddhist thinking in his own way. By equally accepting both religions—Shinto as community religion and Buddhism as individual religion, the Japanese mentality has matured all the more richly and deeply.

Very interestingly, as the construction of temples began, huge, ancient mounded tombs disappeared. Temples came to serve various purposes in place of the tombs.

The Goju no To (Five-storied Pagoda) enshrines Busshari (Buddha's bones), and with the construction of temples, people's souls were also ensconced there. As temples accommodate graves, people's belief that man becomes kami after death changes to the belief that man becomes *hotoke* (Buddhist kami) after death. Whether the terms may be *hotoke* or kami, what people believed in was the same—the worship of souls. It was perfectly natural and easy for people to accept Shinto and Buddhism with equal faith and enthusiasm.

The spirituality of the Japanese people has been crystallized in Hohryu-ji Temple

Let's get back to the subject of Hohryu-ji Temple, which Prince Shotoku built.

Hohryu-ji is the oldest wooden structure in the world, remaining intact to this day. The shapes of the well-balanced Five-storied Pagoda and the Central Hall, the most characteristic allocation and simply breathtaking architectural beauty—equaling the Parthenon in Greece and Saint Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, this temple is a great treasure for all humanity. It should be known more, both domestically and globally.

There are a number of beautiful Buddhist images housed in the temple. *Shaka Sanzon Zo* (Shaka Triad) by Tori Busshi, *Shitenno Zo (Statue of Four Heavenly Kings)* by Yaguchi no Ohguchiatai, *Kudara Kannon Zo (Baekje Kannon Statue)*, *Hanka Shii Zo (Statue of Sitting Buddha in Reflection)* and *Guze Kannon Zo (Savior Kannon Statue)* by Tori Busshi, just to mention a few. These are all masterpiece sculptures.

Works of handicraft are equally exquisite and beautiful beyond expression. For example, *Tamamushi no Zushi (Tamamushi Shrine)* and *Tenju-koku Shucho (Paradise Depicting Embroidered Curtain)* demonstrate the most artistic expression.

It was such a great loss that the mural in the Central Hall burned down after the last War, whose solemn appearance is unforgettable. Lively sculptures housed in the Five-storied Pagoda are breathtakingly magnificent, and there are just too many gorgeous works to mention here.

I prefer to call the art style during this period “Archaism,” which commonly refers to Greek art. (Refer to the chart on Page).

All of Hohryu-ji reflects Prince Shotoku’s noble character. His high mentality nurtured the fundamental trait of the Japanese people, and his various political achievements gave shape to the ideals born out of his great mentality. It is not too much to say that Hohryu-ji was constructed as a crystallization of what Prince Shotoku was. Without purity and great qualities of its leader, the quality of a community and that of its art and culture cannot be noble.

It was perfectly natural for people to have rendered profound homage to Prince Shotoku. Soon, the homage took the form of worshipping Prince Shotoku. Images were made, pictures were painted, and temples and shrines came to enshrine Prince Shotoku, which has continued to be practiced through generations in later years.

We should be duly proud that our history embraces such a great figure.

The Central Hall and Five-storied Pagoda seen from the Great Auditorium (Hohryu-ji Temple, Photo by Asuka-en)
Parthenon

Hohryu-ji Temple and Parthenon

The former being constructed by Prince Shotoku of Japan, and the latter by prominent Greek statesman Pericles, both are great forms of world architecture. Prince Shotoku promulgated the Seventeen-Article Constitution and brought “WA” (peace and harmony) to politics, while Pericles established democracy in Athens’ political world. Both of styles of architecture produced by both great statesmen have a golden section, which is the secret of the artistic beauty of the structures, and for their beautiful proportionality, they have become models of classic architecture. The only difference is that one is still in use, while the other lies in ruins.

Column 4: Prince Shotoku's idea of "WA"

The Japanese word of *shu-kyo* is translation of the English word of "religion", which derives from the Latin word *religare*, (to unite or to fasten). And in that center of uniting and fastening there must be something absolute. It is premised that at the basis of religion, one deity, a particular founder or scripture must exist. Christianity, Islam and Judaism definitely have such a central figure. In Buddhism, Buddha is the center.

By this definition, it is quite a natural conclusion that any religion is, by its nature, essentially exclusive of others. For an ancient example, anti-Islamic Christian Crusaders and the constant terrorism inflicted upon the non-Islamic world by Islamic Fundamentalists at the present time. Nearly all religions emphasize how important and vital peace and love are, and yet it is totally ironic that conflicts and strife among the different religions have never ceased.

When Buddhism first entered Japan, there were some collisions, but fortunately they never led to decisive struggles. That was mainly thanks to the generosity of Yaoyorozu no kami (Eight million kami) of Shinto. This is a particularly important and unique feature among religions, worthy of special attention. But this is not the entire picture. We must not forget that in the miraculous religious fusion, a great thinker named Prince Shotoku was there to handle matters.

Every religion has its founder. But there was no one else in the entire world who reasoned for the importance and merit of religious union and for humans to be beyond the barriers and restrictions presented among religions.

Some scholars say that Japan has never produced a great philosopher on a global scale. That is not at all true. Prince Shotoku was one of the most profound thinkers of world history, and his idea of "WA" –the idea of co-existence and co-practice of Shinto and Buddhism—is an immortal feat to be remembered by all of humanity.

Prince Shotoku's idea is clearly shown in his *Seventeen- Article Constitution*.

Article 1: "WA" should be respected as a fundamental value and must be observed by all. Every individual has his sect, but few understand the truth. (This article generally explains the importance of humanity and the "sect" here referred to includes religious and political sects, let family and friends. He emphasizes that whether in religion or politics, it is important and vital to share the idea of "WA".)

Article 2: Faithfully respect the three treasures. They are hotoke, Buddhist teachings and the priesthood.

(Here, Prince Shotoku states that people should respect teachings of hotoke, as for peoples' thinking and as a model to run the state.)

Article 3: Once an Imperial edict is received, never fail to follow it. Kimi (Emperor)

is heaven and his subjects are earth.

(He explains Imperial government but more emphatically shows the way that governing by Shinto should be. As heaven and earth move in order, so do kimi and his subjects—; spiritual and material matters are all in harmony, which clearly describes the way Japan should be as a state.)

This constitution advocates democracy. Democracy is said to be product of modern thinking, but modern only in terms of law. At the very least, there must be humanity and morality at the basis of democracy. What matters is not the system or law, but a basic idea of how man should live. And Prince Shotoku states that the fundamental idea is a mentality which puts emphasis on “WA”. The *Seventeen-Article Constitution* should be greatly appreciated as describing the fundamental basis of democracy.

As mentioned before, Prince Shotoku wrote *Sangyo Gisho (Commentaries on the Three Sutras)*. The three sutras are *Hoke-kyo*, *Yuima-gyo* and *Shoman-gyo*. Both Yuima and Shoman were secular Buddhists. This fact shows Prince Shotoku’s idea that Buddhism is not a religion to be pursued exclusively after one enters the priesthood, but is a religion for everyone which is to be experienced and learned through everyday life in society. In terms of sensibility, Buddhism is familiar with Shinto, which is closely entwined in the Japanese people’s daily life, and naturally and easily enters people’s hearts, without resistance.

Consequently, the Buddhist idea of the manifestations of Buddha or hotoke in this world derives from Prince Shotoku’s idea. This idea centers on hotoke and is expressed in the figures of Japanese kami as avatars, who cultivate and save people. However, Japanese kami represent nature, souls and the souls of Imperial ancestors, and it might be stretching to associate kami with hotoke. I like to think that the anti-thesis of the Buddhist manifestation theory, the idea of the *Root, Branch/Leaf and Flower/Fruit* proposed by Yoshida Kanetomo in the fifteenth century, is closer to Prince Shotoku’s idea of “WA”, and more reasonable and persuasive. Namely, the idea is that the “Root” is Japanese Shinto, “Branch” and “Leaf” are Confucianism and the “Flower” and “Fruit” are Buddhism. This idea eventually led to *Shin-gaku* (Heart Learning), advocated by Ishida Baigan during the Edo Period. He maintains that any religion useful for cultivating our mind should be adopted.

Now, let me briefly introduce Ernest Francisco Fenollosa (1853-1908). He was an American and graduated from Harvard College. He came to Japan as a hired foreign scholar and lectured at Tokyo Imperial University.

In his book, entitled *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art: An Outline History of East Asiatic Design*, Fenollosa evaluates Prince Shotoku as follows: an uncommon

person competently ranging with the great, creative, saint sages of East Asia.

These East Asian great sages include Buddha, Confucius and Mencius. His assessment is on the mark!

Story V Establishment of the Japanese National Consciousness--The Hakuho Period

During the era of Emperor Tenmu's reign, the basic custom of Japanese daily life was formed

After Prince Shotoku died, the Soga Clan reestablished dominance and raided and ruined Prince Shotoku's family, now headed by his son Prince Yamashiro no Oe. Against this brutal movement, Prince Naka no Oe conspired with Fujiwara no Kamatari and eventually succeeded in getting rid of the Soga Clan. Following Prince Shotoku's ideals, the new leader Prince Naka no Oe embarked on the grand task of building a nation centering on the Emperor. This was the *Taika* (Great Reform). Up until that time, the Imperial family and powerful clans had controlled the land and people. Thus, the principle of direct ownership and government of the land and people by the state was established. In a sense, a kind of socialistic policy was implemented.

Incidentally, Tang Dynasty China invaded the Korean Peninsula, joined with Silla and raided Baekje. In this emergency, Baekje asked Japan for assistance and accordingly, Japan sent a large army to fight in the battle of Paekchon-gang in 663 (the second year of Emperor Tenchi), but it was defeated by the combined forces of Tang China and Silla. Back at home, Japan set up the Dazaifu government in Kyushu and stationed defensive troops called *Sakimori* to prepare for prospective attacks from the Peninsula. Here, however, we should know that this battle was not fought for Japan to advance onto the Korean Peninsula, but rather Japan fought for Baekje, who were invaded, out of moral obligation. Consequently, many people came to Japan from Baekje.

Prince Naka no Oe moved the state's capital to Otsu no Miya in Omi (presently Shiga Prefecture), and became Emperor Tenchi, who implemented many significant reforms such as creating the nation-wide household register.

After Emperor Tenchi passed away, conflict occurred over succession to the Imperial throne, which was called the Jinshin Disturbance. As a consequence, Emperor Tenchi's younger brother, Prince Oama, ascended the Imperial throne and became Emperor Tenmu. Rather than posing as a setback to the Imperial family's authority, this disturbance turned out to strengthen it.

Also, we must not forget the significance of Emperor Tenmu's era, in that during this era, the life of the Japanese people had acquired its basic pattern and customs as a guideline for later generations to follow.

The traditional diet of the Japanese people has long been characterized as healthy and highly nutritious by taking a lot of protein mainly from fish. This dietary custom

began during this era. *Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan)* states that meat from cattle, horses, dogs, monkeys and chickens must not be eaten. This was a national policy toward dietary habit.

This dietary habit made our ancestors choose a different way of life from the peoples of Europe and other parts of the world who mainly engaged in raising livestock and hunting. Instead of cutting down trees in the forests and clearing vast land for raising livestock, the Japanese became agriculturalist. With this way of life, a moral obligation toward nature of not recklessly taking grass and trees out of mountains and forests was also established.

Luckily, in the long run, this led to the present happy environmental state in Japan. In China and European countries, as raising livestock developed, people continued to cut down trees in the woods and in the mountains and created pastures in order to feed a large number of cattle and sheep. Soon all the grass would be eaten up and the procedure would have to be repeated in order to keep their livestock alive, further damaging and destroying nature. The result of this destructive process has now become apparent. The land has turned bare, dried-up and barren, which poses a very grave environmental problem today.

How about Japan? On the contrary, our country is abundantly green. This rich land has been preserved thusly, due to a policy stipulated during the era of Emperor Tenmu. We should be most grateful to our ancestors for their wisdom and foresight.

The Japanese Emperors were totally different from the Chinese Emperors, who executed absolute and despotic power over their people. On the other hand, the Japanese Emperors governed on the balance of powers among the powerful clans of the lineage from the Yamato Court. By respectively giving suitable positions to the clans and having officers execute their ability to the full, the Emperor's power to govern the nation gained further strength.

By this time, the former central clans had all risen to high ranking offices of the Yamato Court, and they had come to be called "nobles". With the consensus of these nobles, the nation was orderly governed. The Emperor thus functioned as spiritual authority of the government, rather than possessing strong political power of his own.

We know that this system has continued well to this day. This is the way Japan is as a state.

Emperor Tenmu reconstructed Ise Shrine, which enshrines Amaterasu Omikami. He must have firmly borne in his mind how Japan came to be made. The Emperor's daughter, a princess, became "Itsuki no Miko", who served Ise Shrine. "Shikinen Sengu" is a famous Shinto ritual of moving the enshrined souls to the newly built shrine

every twenty years. This time-honored ritual also started during this era.

The Emperor's concern was not limited to Ise Shrine alone. Emperor Tenmu had shrines in various regions fixed and had local festivals celebrated as annual events. Our New Year's celebration on January 1 through 3, seasonal ceremonies of March 3 and May 5 also began around this time.

As we have seen so far, the national system established during Emperor Tenmu's era has long been inherited through countless generations to this day, and is an active presence in every phase of the Japanese way of life.

The era when the status of Emperor was secured

Emperor Tenmu also built many Buddhist temples.

Daikandai-ji Temple was built with the Emperor's invocation. This temple was three times larger than Hohryu-ji Temple. It had also a nine-storied pagoda. Prior to Daikandai-ji, there was a temple called Kudaradai-ji, which was run by the state. Daikandai-ji was larger than Kudaradai-ji. It is a pity that we can no longer see Daikandai-ji now, for it was destroyed in a fire.

It is a well-known fact that Emperor Tenmu built Yakushi-ji Temple, praying for the recovery of his sick wife, who later became Empress Jito. This temple was initially built in the Fujiwara Capital, but now it has been moved to the West Capital of Nara. The east pagoda stands today, demonstrating the graceful beauty of Hakuho architecture. The Yakushi San Zon (Three Statues of Medicine Buddha) housed in this temple was made of wonderful bronze. The upright statues are very elegant and sacred as harbinger of classical beauty and had influenced the creation of the Great Buddha of Nara.

This period is characterized by its refined culture and is distinct from other periods. Especially for this cultural factor, it is blissfully called the Hakuho Period. Hakuho is a legendary large bird, said to appear and celebrate in the presence of a great Emperor.

Now, let me quote a poem from *Manyoshu* (*Collection of the Ten Thousand Leaves*), written by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro.

“Okimi wa Kami nishimaseba Amakumo no Ikazuchi no ueni Ioriserukamo”
(Okimi, being kami indeed, may reside in a temporary palace above the thunder among Heavenly clouds.)

Here, kami refers to a great lord with extraordinary power, who looks like kami. At the same time, this poem also indicates that people then firmly believed kami lodged in the Emperor's body as his soul. There are five poems among the collection which use the same phrase of “Okimi being kami, indeed.”

Everyone believed that the souls of kami derived from mythology lodged in the

bodies of Emperors. This belief led to one of the major factors of Shinto worship, which can be referred to as worship of Imperial ancestors' souls.

It is generally said that during this period, the term *Tennoh* (Emperor) came to be popularly used. The word comes from Taoism. Some scholars assert that the popular use of the honorable title of "Emperor" during this period proves the establishment and confirmation of the emperor system then. However, prior to this, "Emperor" had been called "Okimi," "Sumera Mikoto" or "Sumeragi". Changes of appellation will not change the essential content, and it is hardly necessary to call it the emperor system anew.

Nevertheless, we cannot deny that the great entity named Emperor Tenmu had made the status of Emperor firm and indispensable. Politically, the Emperor governed and administered Japan so perfectly that he certainly deserved admiring praise. We must firmly inscribe on the pages of Japanese history the names of the two great Emperors: Emperor Tenmu and Emperor Shomu. I will explain the latter later.

We may as well say that the memory of this great Emperor was the original source of the unfathomable spiritual authority with which the ensuing Emperors have been endowed.

The birth of Japan as a "Ritsu Ryo state" (centralized autocracy based on comprehensive legal codes)

In the first year of Taiho (Great Treasure), in 701, Taiho Ritsu Ryo (Legal Codes of Taiho) was enforced.

Ritsu stipulated what should not be done, and so, in present-day terms, it is criminal law. *Ryo* was administrative law, stipulating what should be done.

While *Ritsu* resembled laws of Tang Dynasty China, *Ryo* was in accord with Japanese society. On the basis of these *Ritsu Ryo* laws, a centralized autocratic state of Japan was formed.

The system of Offices then implemented had lasted for as long as nearly 1,200 years, up until the Meiji Era. The Office of Daijin (Ministers) was also introduced then for the first time.

How Japan differed most from the Tang is that in Japan's system, there were two major Offices that functioned separately: The Office of Dajo-kan (the Grand Council of State), which administered the government of the state as a whole, and the Office of Jingi-kan (Office of Shinto Worship), which was in charge of rituals and ceremonies of kami-gami. Besides governing the state, the Emperor also held a role of performing religious rites. In actual practice, Jingi-kan aided the Emperor in religious matters, but

in political matters Dajo-kan was given overwhelming authority and power and very often the top official played a dominant role in the government, in place of the Emperor.

Making full use of experiences obtained through more than fifty years since the Taika Reform, the new Ritsu-Ryo state intended to realize an ideal state of public land and citizens. One of the measures was the law of farmland ownership called *Handen Shuju*. Farmland was officially divided throughout the country, and every six years the household register was renewed. Males and females aged six years or over were given a field called *Kubun Den* (field divided by the mouth to feed). It was stipulated that when a person died, the field allocated to him or her should be returned to the state.

People paid tax according to the area of their field and were subject to *Cho* (taxation) and *Yo* (military service) as citizen's duty. This system changed taxes, hitherto randomly levied on the people, into a uniform and standardized taxation system across the nation, and contributed much to remarkably advancing the people's quality of life. Thus, an ideal, equal society was realized.

Around this time, farming tools made of iron came into widespread use and rice harvests greatly increased. A new administrative system was also introduced, and officials from the central government were sent to various regions as Governor of State, under whose supervision powerful local clans participated in the local administration as Local Governor. Main roads were constructed, connecting the Capital with local cities, stations were built and horses were kept for the transporting of officials.

It is estimated that the population of Japan during the Nara Period was roughly 6 million and that of the Fujiwara Capital was about one hundred thousand with approximately ten thousand officials, of whom two hundred were nobles.

A system very similar to that of a modern state was already established way back then.

In the Tohoku (Northeastern) Region, there were people called *Emishi* and in the southern part of Kyushu, there were *Hayato* people. In earlier times, they would not come under the control of the Yamato Court. However, as the Ritsu-Ryo State developed and traveled on the right track, the regions both in the north and south gradually came to be governed by the State. People from Shinkaku (Ishigaki Island) and Kumi (Kume Island) in the southernmost part of the Ryukyu Islands visited the Heijo Capital and paid tribute to the court early in the 8th century. In the north of Kyushu, the Dazaifu government was set up as a local agency of the Imperial Court and engaged in the important task of national defense and diplomatic intercourse.

One thing we must not forget is that the national flag of the sun, which is identical with the present-day one, was already created and used. The lyrics of our national

anthem of *Kimi ga Yo (Your Excellency's Era)* was also written and sung. The song was later included in *Kokin Waka Shu (Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems)* as composed anonymous.

First having started in order to cope with the urgent situation of a crisis arising from looming war due to conflicting diplomatic relations, the efforts to solidify the national structure successfully produced a great state regulated by law. It can be said that Japan is the only nation in East Asia that has made original laws and on the basis of those laws produced the great country that it is.

Column 5: Envoys to Japan

Shosohin Storehouse stands to the southwest of the Great Buddha Hall of Todai-ji Temple in Nara. It is a grand warehouse built in the ancient architecture style called *Azekura*, with raised-floors and walls of wooden timbers fitted in a crisscross manner. This magnificent treasure house of cultural assets stores Imperial property belonging to Emperor Shomu and Empress Komyo.

The Imperial property there includes foreign treasures brought from Tang Dynasty China and Western Region and also as far away as Persia. Due to this international color, Shosoin is often referred to as the east terminal of the Silk Road.

This appellation is quite right. Certainly, many items of learning and art were brought to Japan directly from the Chinese Continent or via the Korean Peninsula. But, wait. Was it a one-way introduction? Was there anything at all which was taken from Japan to foreign lands?

Looking at the historical view concerning Japan in this period, the utterly dominant view is that Japan at that time was poorly developed in terms of culture and that by learning from China and Korea and absorbing foreign cultures, Japan was able to become a cultured nation. Especially in the post-war years, this historical view was widely accepted.

Typical examples are Envoys to the Sui Dynasty and to the Tang Dynasty. In the 15th year of Empress Suiko (607), Envoy Ono no Imoko was sent to the Sui. The first Envoy to the Tang was sent in the 2nd year of Emperor Jomei, namely, in 630. From then on, sometimes ships were wrecked on the way and the total number of Envoy missions sent may vary depending on the method of counting. Some say that envoys were sent twenty times, while others may say sixteen times. In either case, it was emphasized similarly that envoys were sent to the Tang very frequently and they learned a lot about overseas advanced cultures, which greatly helped Japan develop her own culture.

However, the truth is the opposite. Take Envoy Ono no Imoko for instance. When

Ono no Imoko went to the Sui, high-ranking officials like Pei Shiqing and others also came to Japan aboard as many as 32 ships. They may well have been called “Envoys to Japan”. During the era of the Tang Dynasty, Chinese people came to Japan even more frequently. What counted was not just how many visits were made, but the number of visitors was absolutely astounding. For example, in the 8th year of Emperor Tenchi (669), over two thousand of them came. Two years later, in the 10th year of Emperor Tenchi (671), another two thousand came. Besides Tang Dynasty China, Silla was very much interested in Japan at that time and people from Silla visited Japan thirty-something times. There was a state called Bohai whose dominion then ranged from Manzhou of present-day China and the northern part of Korea to the Coastal Province of Russia. Envoys from Bohai came to Japan thirty-three times. As it is clear now, envoys to Japan far outnumbered Envoys to Sui and to the Tang.

For what purpose, then, did all these people come to Japan? Nothing more than to absorb Japanese culture in person. Economically, there was good demand for silver and silk which Japan produced then. In the latter half of the 8th century, Japan began to produce gold, which attracted further oversea attention toward Japan. Culturally, it was also important for them to learn Japanese Buddhism and Prince Shotoku’s ideas.

Ganjin (Jianzhen) failed five times in his voyages to Japan. It is a famous story that this unfortunate Buddhist monk barely made it to Japan on his sixth attempt after five bitter failures. Why was Ganjin so deeply attached to Japan? That was because deep in his heart, he highly admired Prince Shotoku’s noble ideas and the Buddhism which had successfully rooted in Japanese life. Ganjin was not alone in yearning for Japan. Monks from India and Viet Nam as well as Sogdians from Central Asia all came to Japan to learn Japanese Buddhism.

During the Nara Period, culturally, Japan, Tang Dynasty China and the rest of the nations were all equal and learned from each other, exchanging goods. So, terms such as “Envoys to Sui” or “Envoys to Tang Dynasty China” are quite misleading. Strictly and precisely speaking, they should rather be called “interchangers” or “exchange messengers.”

Let me explain another case. In the first place, when the history of Japan began, people from beyond the sea came to be assimilated with the Japanese environment and native tradition and gradually they became the original Japanese. Also in later years, people never ceased to immigrate to Japan from the Chinese Continent and the Korean Peninsula. When Baekje was defeated in the battle of Paekchon-gang in Korea in the second year of Emperor Tenchi (663) and eventually sacked, many Baekje people exiled themselves in Japan. The Japanese government had them live in the Kansai area and

eastern provinces. One estimate asserts that at the beginning of the 9th century, one-third of the population of the Kansai area were immigrants or their descendants.

Partly proving the feasibility of this estimate, there was a book called *Shinsen Seishi Roku* (*Newly Collected Record of Surnames*). It was compiled in the sixth year of Konin (815) and was a kind of household registry book. A part of it is extant today and we learn that out of 1,100 families recorded there, at least, 82 families were descendants of immigrants. Globalization is not an exclusively present-day issue. How colorfully international the Capital of Tempyo culture and its neighborhood were!

Humans flow culturally from low to high. This is the iron rule of demography or population shift. This is quite understandable when we just glimpse at the present-day situation of the international community.

The influx of such a great number of foreigners into Japan is the very proof that the level of the Japanese culture at that time was so high and attractive.

Story VI Internationality and Universality of the Tenpyo Culture—The Nara Period

Classical Japanese culture blossoms in the Heijo (Nara) Capital

What kind of time was the Nara Period like, when Japanese culture most elegantly blossomed?

The spirit of “WA” (peace and harmony) advocated by Prince Shotoku was then widely understood and practiced by contemporary people. Being human, surely there were grudges and strife. But I strongly feel that we must stop harboring a negative historical view of exaggerating trifles and overreacting to negative factors. Even though we humans can never be perfectly free from conflicts, with the mentality of “WA” and cultural creativity, such human struggles become too insignificant to bother with at all. Ancient Greece with a flowering Greek culture proved it. So did Italy during the Renaissance Period with the Renaissance culture in full bloom. And Japanese cultural history from the Asuka Period to the Nara Period perfectly matches that of Greece and Renaissance Italy. Therefore, it is such a joy to refer to this Period in particular when we narrate our national history.

Japanese Capitals, up until this period, changed almost every time the Emperor changed and moved around Yamato (Nara Prefecture) at the center.

Japanese houses are made of wood. They were far easier to build than those made of stones. There exist rituals to newly re-build large historical shrines like Ise Shrine and Izumo Shrine at regular intervals, say, every twenty years or sixty years. These big architectural building works can be done, solely because they are wooden works. In those days, as the number of officials was fairly small and the number of office buildings were not so many, either, frequent changes of the site of the Capital would not have caused much trouble or inconvenience.

However, after a national legal system was completed, the State became larger and it became urgent to set up the Capital in accordance with the national size and function.

In the third year of Wado (710), the Heijo (Nara) Capital was constructed. An area of approximately 16 square kilometers was divided into two rectangles, which were slightly longer in the north-south direction. Wide roads divided the rectangles regularly into sections, which were further divided into blocks. In the central section in the north, the Emperor’s Palace and officials’ residences were built. Temples were moved from Asuka and state-run markets were opened.

The Nara Capital is said to have been constructed after Zhang-an, the capital of Tang Dynasty China. However, there is a distinct difference. Chinese cities were surrounded

by firm castle walls. Zhang-an was doubly protected by surrounding outer walls to fend off enemies from outside and inner walls for surveillance of people living within. The Nara Capital had none of these. There was no need for defensive walls against invading enemies or fear of public uproar against the government. It was truly peaceful inside and outside. The spirit of “WA” was there.

Marketplaces in the Nara Capital were busy and lively. Products and goods came in from various regions and were traded there. In local provinces, gold, silver, copper and other metals were produced and they were dedicated to the Court. Currency was minted in the style of the Tang. This, however, did not immediately lead to a currency-based economy while staples such as rice and cloth were used for barter in local regions.

Higher education also developed. In the Capital, a university called Daigaku Ryo was established and in local cities, colleges called Kokugaku were founded.

Lessons in Confucianism, legal codes, calligraphy, arithmetic and other disciplines were taught at these educational institutions. They were mainly for training of prospective government officials. It is worth mentioning that Japan already had university and colleges in the Nara Period. Those who completed the nine-year long university education were eligible to take the government examination, and according to the results of the examination, ranks and positions were conferred on those who had passed the exam. With a few exceptions of nobles who were supposedly provided with privileged positions, most applicants were given positions in order of merit. Japan had already introduced an effective adoption system for government officials, ahead of the well-known Chinese system of *Keju*, which was developed during the era of the Song Dynasty. It can be said that the system of national and municipal universities of the present day had been already established during this period.

The Army organized the complete conscription of all citizens. It was obligatory that one soldier should be conscripted from each household. Thus, all of the nation would bear the responsibility of shouldering national defense.

Envoys to Tang China continued to be sent. On an average, an Envoy was sent once in fifteen years or so. Each time, the mission carried one hundred fifty or some five hundred at the most, crossing the East China Sea on board a fleet of ships. Through these envoys, Continental Buddhism, politics and cultures were actively adopted. Japanese were avid students and using these rare opportunities, they purchased many books abroad and brought them back home to Japan.

However, the Envoy was not a one-way mission from Japan to Tang China. As I have explained in the previous column, Envoys from Tang and Silla also came to Japan, which should have been duly called “Envoy to Japan”. In frequency envoys to Japan

outnumbered Japanese envoys to the Tang. Excellent Japanese literary and art were exported to the Chinese Continent and the Korean Peninsula. Many visiting envoys stayed on in Japan and eventually naturalized and assimilated into Japanese society.

Voyages at that time were made closely along the coastline so that sailing ships could keep land within sight. However, as the relationship between Japan and Silla in Korea got worse, sailing along the coastline became very dangerous, and so ships had to take a southern route in the East China Sea, which was also very risky and difficult, due to poor marine transportation skills at that time. Voyages were so hazardous that it would have been considered successful if one out of four ships made it to China.

Among hapless envoys was Abe no Nakamaro. The young man was exceptionally brilliant and was selected to study abroad in Tang Dynasty China. Once in China, his ability, learning and personality were so highly evaluated that Abe no Nakamaro served the Tang Court as an official.

He decided to return home to Japan after thirty years when he was over fifty years old. But the ship carrying him was wrecked on the way and he was obliged to go back to Tang China. In the end, he could never return to Japan and passed away at the age of seventy in the land of the Tang. He left the following poem.

“Amanohara Furisake Mireba Kasuga naru Mikasa no Yama ni Ideshi Tsuki kamo”
 (“Looking up in the Heavenly sky and far beyond, I see the moon. Oh, is that the same moon that rose over Three Hats Hill in Kasuga of Nara!”)

This poem was a most nostalgic cry of homesick Abe no Nakamaro.

These progressive and curious minds ventured on to the rough sea without regard to risks and difficulties. How much we owe it to the knowledge, learning and art these brave pioneers brought home to Japan that Japanese culture has so richly matured!

Self-awareness as a nation and Emperor Shomu

The reign of Emperor Shomu, spanning from the first year of Jinki era (724) to the first year of Tenpyo Shoho era (749), should be rightly said to have been the apex of the Nara Capital.

Nevertheless, postwar historians do not pay due attention to this period.

There were, of course, political conflicts during this period. The people were plagued by epidemics and natural disasters. These were common events seen in any given period of history. Putting too much emphasis on minor negative factors will blur the true picture of the period. However, historians in the postwar years characterize this period as if nothing but human and natural mishaps occurred. They conclude, with exaggeration, that in order to pacify the nation against countless calamities, the Hall of

the Great Buddha was constructed along with Kokubun-ji Temples (provincial temples) all over Japan. People were urged to toil on construction projects, becoming totally exhausted and miserable.

We should not discuss history based on preconception. We must see the facts. People willingly and gladly cooperated in the grand national enterprise. There may have been a few who complained and held grudges, but they were never in the majority.

The Imperial Court also encouraged people to put land under cultivation, and wild land, which had hitherto been out of the state control, was reclaimed into fine fields. Above all, the most effective was the decree given in the fifteenth year of Tenpyo (743) called *Konden Einen Shizai Ho* (Law of permanent private property of reclaimed land). By this law, private ownership of newly cultivated land was granted. The law encouraged and propelled people to cultivate land and consequently, the total acreage of rice paddies remarkably expanded. Influential nobles, temples and provincial clans eagerly expanded their privately-owned land.

In discussing history, we should pay particular attention to new movements such as this.

Another interesting movement was the compilation of the origin and history of the nation. This was the reflection of self-awareness as a nation, now that a lawful government was established. Thus, before-mentioned *Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters)* was completed. Narrator Hieda no Are memorized and orally transmitted *Teiki (Records of Emperors)* and *Kyuji (Former Words)* and other histories including the origin of the Emperor, which Oh no Yasumaro transcribed. The compiled book was dedicated to the Imperial Court in the fifth year of Wado (712).

On the other hand, *Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan)* was compiled as an enterprise undertaken by the Imperial Court. Prince Toneri, son of Emperor Tenmu, became the chief compiler and it was a history book based strictly on records. The book was completed in the fourth year of Yoro (720).

Fudoki (Records of Climate), describing local legends, topography and locally made products, was also compiled in the sixth year of Wado (713).

The appearance of these valuable records and writings eloquently demonstrates a highly matured culture of this period.

Tenpyo culture became classical Japanese

Starting from the Asuka culture and through the cultural era called “Hakuho culture” in late seventh century, a new culture brilliantly blossomed. This was Tenpyo culture. The Asuka Period represented archaic culture and the ensuing Hakuho Period was

decorated with early period classical culture. The solemn mural in the Central Hall of Hohryu-ji Temple, the sculptures stored in the Five-storied Pagoda, the Three-storied Pagoda of Yakushi-ji Temple and the bronze *Shaka San Zon (Three Statues of Buddha)* demonstrate the essence of early period classicalism.

Inheriting this essence, the classicalism of the Tenpyo period further matured.

From archaism through early classicalism to matured classicalism—this was exactly the same cultural development as seen in Greek culture and Italian Renaissance culture.

The Fujiwara Clan built Kofuku-ji Temple, in which are stored magnificent works of classical beauty such as the *Statue of Ashura*, with a face of a brave young boy (Refer to Page), *Hachibushu Zo (Statues of Eight Guardian Deities and Inhuman Entities)* and pure *Statue of Subodai* or, in Sanskrit, *Sumeru Bodhisattve*.

In order to protect the nation, Emperor Shomu built Todai-ji Temple in the middle of Nara Capital, and had the Great Buddha (Roshana Buddha) made of bronze, which was 16 meters high.

The Buddhist image maker in charge of the production of the Great Buddha was Kuninaka no Muraji Kimimaro. This craftsman with supreme skills was greatly applauded in the official document called *Shoku Nihongi (Continued Records of Japan)*. The Great Buddha of China was carved out of rock in the hills. The Great Buddha of Todai-ji was made of bronze. It was a grand Buddhist undertaking that required great technology. So Kuninaka no Muraji Kimimaro, who had achieved this extraordinary feat, was certainly worth abundant praise. Strange enough, however, his name is rarely mentioned in history. This is indeed a strange phenomenon, worthy of a thousand regrets. Kuninaka no Muraji Kimimaro deserves far more attention and appreciation.

At the same time, to raise funds far and wide from the public for the vast expense that will be needed to construct the Great Buddha, a popular monk named Gyoki was entrusted with the task of finances.

Emperor Shomu gave the following Imperial decree:

Short as I am of virtues, I have most gratefully succeeded to the Imperial throne.

My desire always is to save my people and I have loved them as much as I can. While my love and loving benefits must have permeated into the very end of our land, I have to say regrettably that all the beings under the heaven do not universally enjoy the benevolence of Buddha. Hence, relying on the divine authority and inspiration of the three treasures of Buddha, Sutra and the priesthood, I will launch a grand undertaking that will bring peace to Heaven and Earth and everlasting happiness for ten thousand generations to come, and hereby wish prosperity for all the living things.

Thus, in the fifteenth year of Tenpyo, I made a great desire to be enlightened and so decided to have a golden and copper statue of Rushana Buddha (Vairocana) constructed. Using plenty of copper collected from all over the nation, we will cast a great statue and build a temple to house the statue, carving out a big hill so that Buddhist Sutra will be universally permeated. This will be my role in the cooperation for Buddha. And lastly, let us all, myself and my people, equally enjoy the benevolence of Buddha and be enlightened enough to naturally understand the true Buddhist way.

I am the one that possesses great wealth under the Heavens. I am the one that possesses mighty power under the Heavens. With my wealth and power, it would be easy to construct this reverential statue, but my faithful wish will not be so easy to realize. Merely imposing painful toil on my people for construction would be far from meeting the divine meaning of this grand work. I fear, also, forcible enforcement will only invite abuse and repulsion, and then the work will become a sinful act. State and provincial officials shall never threaten or upset the people's daily life, nor forcibly confiscate their property or goods for the construction of the Great Buddha.

Regardless of the distance, let this decree be known throughout the nation so that the people will fully understand my true desire and intention.

From Emperor Shomu's words, we can see his proud recognition of his own power and at the same time his love for the people. And with these two forces, the Emperor addressed the nation, "Let's construct the Great Buddha together." His message so well conveyed his sincere wish that all the living things under Heaven may equally be bathed in the glorious benevolence of Buddha, by constructing the Great Buddha, all in one.

Furthermore, praying for the lasting prosperity of the nation, Emperor Shomu had Kokubun-ji Temples (provincial temples) and Kokubunni-ji Temples (provincial nunneries) built across the country. Seven-storied pagodas were built in local provinces. This period was called "Tenpyo", because the Emperor wished that things under heaven (*ten*) might be peaceful (*hei* or *pyo*). We know that in fact things were exactly as the era name intended.

Dedication of the Great Buddha took place, reflecting the realm of broad international cultural exchange at that time

In order to construct the Great Buddha, tremendous sums of money and a lot of copper were needed. In the first year of Tenpyo Kanpo (749), gold was discovered in present-day Miyagi Prefecture. The Emperor was so very pleased with the discovery

that he changed the era name to *Tenpyo Kanpo*, which means “Heavenly Peace Responding to Treasure”.

Kuninaka no Muraji Kimimaro accomplished the excellent work of constructing the Great Buddha in the fourth year of Tenpyo Shoho (752). The era name had been changed again and this time the new name means “Heavenly Peace Winning with Treasure”. To our great regret, however, the Great Buddha was destroyed by fire during an attack by the Heishi (Taira) Clan in the fourth year of Jisho (1180). We can now get an idea of how magnificent the Great Buddha was through the pictorial scroll of *Shigisan Engi Emaki (Picture Scroll of Miracles of Mt.Shigi)*. Kuninaka no Muraji Kimimaro also made such great images as *Nikko-Gekko Bosatsu Zo (Statues of Moonlight-Sunlight Bosatsu)* stored at Hokke Hall of Todai-ji Temple (Refer to Page), and rigid-looking *Shitenno Zo (Statues of Four Heavenly Kings)* stored in the Lecture Hall of Todai-ji Temple. Luckily, these magnificent images are extant today and we can easily imagine the splendor of the Great Buddha.

These Buddhist images are equipped with dignified posture indicating composure and movement simultaneously, along with venerability. Clearly, they share artistic characteristics with classical Greek sculptures, which are highly praised for their quiet greatness and noble simplicity. Buddhist sculptor Kuninaka no Muraji Kimimaro also made *Statue of Ganjin* and *Statue of Gyoshin*, both of which are very realistic. So, our genius artist mastered the modern technique of realism as well. I totally agree that this Buddhist sculptor should be called the “Michelangelo of Japan”.

The act of drawing eyes on the statue as a finishing touch at the very end is called *Kaigen* (Enshrinement). The enshrinement ceremony of the Great Buddha was most grandly celebrated. Also, it was characteristically very international. This indicates the status of Japan at that time in terms of global political and cultural spheres.

During the ceremony, Asian music was played, e.g. Indian, Mongolian, Chinese and Korean tunes, songs and dances were performed. They were performed by hundreds of musicians and dancers. Such a ceremony must have been joyfully spectacular.

At the time, there was a government office called *Gagaku-ryo* (Office of Court Music), which was known to be staffed with 350 musicians dancers and singers. There were musicians who played drums, stringed instruments and wind instruments and they formed an orchestra to perform Japanese music and occasionally played court music.

Shoso-in Storehouse of Todai-ji Temple houses many artifacts that were dear to Emperor Shomu and Empress Komyo. Many of the various artifacts, such as musical instruments, masks for the first Japanese musical dance of *Gigaku* and dress ornaments, came from China, West Asia and Central Asia. Initially, Tang China was not a state of

the Han people, but of the Xianbei tribe from Central Asia. Therefore, Tang China was strongly influenced by Central Asian culture. We can vividly imagine the colorful internationality of this period.

The Shoso-in Collection covers ten thousand pieces and the catalogue (the List of the Collection) is also well preserved. Shoso-in can be said to be the oldest museum in the world.

Image of Ashura (A gyo or inspiration form with the mouth open) Stored at Kofuku-ji Temple Photo by Kanai Morimichi

Moonlight Bosatsu Stored at Todai-ji Temple Photo by Asukaen

Pieta by Michelangelo Exhibited at Saint Peter's Basilia

Moonlight Bosatsu and *Pieta* by Michelangelo

One is a Buddhist image and the other is a sculpture of man and woman. At the first glance, Michelangelo's *Pieta* seems to display love, more so than Moonlight Bosatsu. Now, let's closely look at the Bosatsu image. The image looks like a woman. And yet, it does not show perfect feminineness. It is sensuality and beyond sexuality. The image conveys the meaning of overcoming the evil passion of sex. The male and female duo is actually mother and son. The two faces look alike. Both of these great works most movingly tell us how deep love can be.

***Manyoshu* (Collection of the Ten Thousand Leaves) profoundly appeals to the mind of modern people**

Such voluminous poems and poets, such a wide range of poets' status and occupations, versatile and free poetic styles, richness in vocabulary and abundance in subject matters are all contained within *Manyoshu*. I can never emphasize enough that *Manyoshu* is an unparalleled collection of poems, second to none. One of the reasons why this nearly 1,300-year-old collection of poems grabs and moves readers so enchantingly is, I believe, the pure individualism in the true sense of the term which runs through entire pages of this dear anthology. We will discuss this through some of the poems composed by Otomo no Yakamochi, who is believed to be one of the compilers of the Collection and who contributed the most number of poems, comprising nearly one-tenth of the entire volume.

Uraurani Tereru Haruhi ni Hibari Agari Kokoro Kanashimo Hitori shi Omoeba.

(Spring sunshine warmly showers and a lark is flying in the sky. So peaceful and yet so sad, for here I am alone, deep in thought, indeed, all by myself.)

As the line “Alone, I’m deep in thought” indicates, this poem expresses his own personal feeling. That’s precisely individualism. It is often thought that individualism is a product of “modern times” and never existed in “ancient times”. That is not so. At all times in the past, there was individualism. Without it, works reflecting excellent individuality would have never been created.

Hisakata no Ame no Furu Hi o Tada Hitori Yamabe ni Oreba Ifusekari keru.

(On a rainy day over a long moment, sitting alone in a hut in the mountains, how melancholic I feel!)

This poem is also very personal. The word *Ifusekari* is now obsolete and you may find it difficult to understand. The word means “melancholic”. The poem expresses the poet’s melancholic feeling: On a rainy day, if you stay at home alone in the mountains, you feel helplessly melancholic with nothing to lighten up your heart.

On the other hand, however, Otomo no Yakamochi composed poems of a completely different type as well.

Umi Yukaba Mizuku Kabane Yama Yukaba Kusamusu Kabane Okimi no He ni koso Shiname Kaerimi wa Seji.

(We shall die in the sea. We shall die in the mountains. In whatever way, we shall die beside the Emperor, never turning back.)

These lines are a part of a very lengthy poem which Otomo no Yakamochi composed in the jubilation of the Emperor’s luck on the occasion when gold was discovered in Mutsu Province, which was urgently needed for the production of the Great Buddha. These lines also became the basis of the military song of *Umi Yukaba (If We Go to the Sea to Fight)*, which was commonly sung during the last War. This wartime song stated that even if one was to die a tragic death in war, one will never regret dying for the Emperor.

As clearly seen from his song, Otomo no Yakamochi’s sentiment was not solely individualistic. At the same time he also felt such strong loyalty toward the Emperor and the community centering on the Emperor that he would willingly risk his life and do his very best for their sake.

Totally caring for oneself while oblivious of or indifferent to other things is far from individualism in the true sense of the word. If you want to think dearly of yourself, you must think equally dearly of the community which allows you to live as you wish, and contribute to it as much as you can. This is true individualism. Otomo no Yakamochi, a man of the past, had precisely true individualistic sentiment. We modern people can

certainly share this worthy sentiment.

When we think of people of the past, we tend to think that they are very different from us, almost as if they were another species. This is not so at all. Ancient people and modern people are the same as humans. That is why poems in *Manyoshu* are easy for us moderns to understand and are so moving. For this reason, I try not to use such terms as “Ancient”, “Medieval” and “Modern”, which are concepts born from Western culture, in discussing the history of Japan. For, in these terms, there underlies an idea that the modern age is superior and best.

Japanese poems composed during this Period so beautifully and eloquently describe individual feelings of the Japanese people, love for nature and precious relations among the people, that they became standards to other literary works in later years.

Aoniyoshi Nara no Miyako wa Saku Hana no Niouga gotoku Ima Sakari nari.

(The Capital of Nara, like the brilliant fragrance of flowers in bloom, now flourishes.)

The above poem, which was composed by Ono no Oyu and compiled in *Manyoshu*, excitingly and proudly tells how people in those times admired and loved their great Nara Capital.

Column 6: Individualism seen in *Collection of the Ten Thousand Leaves*

According to the book called *Eiga Mongatary (Story of Glory)* compiled in the eleventh century, Emperor Koken ordered Minister of the Left Tachibana no Moroe to compile *Manyoshu* in the fifth year of *Tenpyo Shoho* (753). However, studies in later years strongly suggested that poet Otomo no Yakamochi, whose poems total one-tenth of all poems in the Collection, is most likely to have been the compiler.

In either case, *Manyoshu* is a truly admirable anthology. The voluminous Collection contains four thousand five hundred and sixteen poems which were composed in the seventh and eighth centuries by such a wide range of people, from the Emperor to common people.

The accomplishment of such a difficult work of literature, of critically selecting a vast number of poems and compiling them, is proof of the high cultural level of this Period and the contemporary people. Also, it makes me dizzy just to imagine how many more poems were actually composed beyond the 4,516 poems that were selected for the anthology. I am truly impressed with the width and depth of the range of culture at the time.

Manyoshu is not only the oldest collection of poems in Japan, but we can also proudly say that it is the oldest and the most voluminous anthology in the world at the time when it was compiled and the number of poems it contains.

Of course, there are other anthologies throughout the world, which are older than *Manyoshu*. For example, *Stephanos* compiled by Greek poet Meleagros collects poems dating to the times between the 7th and 3rd centuries B.C. But the number of poems in this Greek anthology is only forty-seven.

Chinese *Shijing* or *The Classic of Poetry* is also older, which covers poems composed during around 1,100 to 600 years B.C. But this book also contains fewer poems, about three hundred and eighty-one. *Manyoshu* goes well beyond this.

Speaking of volume, *Greek Anthologies* contains over four thousand poems written by some three thousand poets. But this book was completed in the 14th century.

Whatever the case, numbers don't matter much. What matters is content.

Literary historian Donald Keene (1922~), who recently became a naturalized Japanese citizen, discusses *Manyoshu* in the global context. Mr. Keene is most interested in the richness in vocabulary and subject matters, in addition to a wide variety of poetic patterns. On a global scale, the richness in vocabulary is utterly exceptional. Mr. Keene adds that such a rich diversity of subject matters, ranging from the Emperor's look-see of the nation to lovers and everyday life, is rarely seen in the rest of the world.

That is not all. We are equally amazed at the diversity of people who composed poems. Emperors composed poems. So did government officials. So did *Sakimori* or border guards. So did people in various locality and farmers. Women on a picnic made poems and beggars were also poets. And their poems were selected to be included in the great anthology. Of course, there was no sexual discrimination. It is wonderful to learn what an equal and free society ancient Japan was.

But saying this much is not enough. As I have already mentioned, what I regard as the most important element of *Manyoshu* is the individualism that is freely expressed in the poems. Most of the poets put forth their own emotions, sentiments and experiences, all of which are very personal. Yamabe no Akahito sang of his unity with nature. Otomo no Tabito composed poems in great grief at the time of the death of his beloved wife. Yamanoue no Okura frankly described his daily life of poverty.

Nameless men and women composed songs of love's jubilation, of missing their far-away lovers, at times irritated and upset at not getting their love reciprocated, lamenting over a lover's change of heart, tenaciously in love, so happy to see each other and so desperate on parting.

All these poems are generous, free and honest expressions of the individuals themselves.

This is exactly individualism. But it is slightly different from present-day individualism as we understand it today.

To be able to express themselves through the words of Japanese poems means that they are firmly grounded as individuals. The establishment of an individual is the basis of individualism. In other words, you must fully realize who and what you are.

What, then, is the individualism we refer to now? Without full awareness of who we are, we make demands purely out of our own self-interest, in the name of “individualism”. Can this be true individualism?

What made the *Manyo* poets realize who they really were? I have already discussed this in this chapter. The key factor was community, the nation called Japan. There was a community and people knew or realized that they were living out their lives in that community. And this recognition or awareness made the *Manyo* people conscious of their existence as individuals and led them to feel free and generous. Also, I have mentioned that typical representatives of the *Manyo* spirit were Kakinomoto no Hitomoto and Otomo no Yakamochi. Both of these poets wrote of their sensitive emotions and melancholic feelings and at the same time, of absolute loyalty to the Emperors, whom they believed to be “kami”, and of their willingness to die without regret for the Emperor.

True individualism is to firmly conceive that one lives within a community as an integral part of it. We should learn this valuable concept from the wise and affectionate *Manyo* people.

Story VII The Apex of Japanese Culture Brought about by Aristocrats—The Heian Period

Moving to the Heian Capital and the rising power of the Fujiwara Clan

The Heian Period can be said to have been exactly as the period name “Heian” (peace and stability) meant. Although toward the end of this period there were struggles for power among warriors, the stability of the Court government lasted for nearly four hundred years until the establishment of a new government in Kamakura (in present-day Kanagawa Prefecture).

Four hundred years! This was longer than the duration of the Edo Period and it was the longest lasting government yet.

The Heian Period dawned when Emperor Kanmu moved the capital to present-day Kyoto, which was called the Heian Capital. In the thirteenth year of Enryaku (794), a new capital was built in present-day Kyoto.

In the latter half of the 8th century, after Emperor Shomu’s demise, the struggle for power among nobles got out of hand and the power of shrines and temples increased, which led to grave political chaos. After Emperor Shomu’s daughter succeeded to the throne and became Empress Shotoku, a monk named Dokyo was held in deep trust by the Empress and had overwhelming power, and even aspired to one day sit on the Imperial throne. One famous story mentions Wake no Kiyomaro, a loyal subject, who prevented the realization of this evil plot. Under such circumstances, Emperor Kanmu tried to renew the government by moving the capital to a new site.

Under Emperor Kanmu’s superb leadership, political reforms were actively promoted. He expanded government rule to over the southern part of Kyushu and the Tohoku (Northeastern) Region, which had remained ungoverned by the laws of the nation. When an insurgency occurred, instigated by the Emishi people living in the Tohoku Region, the Emperor sent Sakanoue no Tamuramaro, as Eastern Subjugating General at the head of the Imperial army, to suppress it. He succeeded in suppressing the insurgency and in bringing the region under greater control.

Afterwards, the reigns of Emperors Daigo and Murakami were called “the Great Era of Engi” and “the Reign of Tenryaku,” respectively, and during these reigns great governance by the court and courtiers was carried out, which were greatly appreciated as models of ideal court governance by later generations. The *Ritsu-ryo* (penal and administrative codes) system, which was implemented during the previous period, was supplemented with the stipulation of a new system of *Kyaku-shiki* (adjusted Ritsu-ryo

and its procedures). A land-ownership system of *Handen* (land distribution to the people by the government) was thoroughly promoted, while significant increases of private land, of *Shoen*, by nobles, powerful clans, temples and shrines were to be strictly restricted.

The history of the nation, *Sandai Zitsuroku* (*Veritable Records of Three Reigns of Japan*), and an anthology sponsored by Imperial decree *Kokinwakashu* (*Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*) were compiled.

As the system of the Imperial court increased in efficiency and the authority of the Emperor became stabilized, there was little need for the Emperor to directly show his intentions in political matters. Consequently, the power structure behind the government began to change. The new scheme of stabilizing government, by dividing the sacred and the secular, came into being, thus distancing the Emperor as a sacred entity from secular politics.

The central figure of this new order became the Fujiwara Clan.

Light and shadow of Fujiwara no Michinaga and Sugawara no Michizane

In the middle of the ninth century, the Fujiwara Clan became Regent to the infant Emperor. After the Emperor reached the age of maturity, they assisted the Emperor as Imperial Regent and held substantial power in the national government. Such governing by a Regent and an Imperial Regent continued from the latter half of the tenth century to the middle of the eleventh century. This kind of government is called *Sekkan Seiji* (Regent and Imperial Regent Government).

This type of government reached its height of prosperity during the time when Fujiwara no Michinaga and his son Yorimichi lived. The Fujiwara Clan monopolized high positions in the court, owned vast land of *Shoen* in various locations and executed their power to the fullest.

Fujiwara no Michinaga composed the following poem, utterly complacent and boastful of his power and prosperity:

Konoyo oba Wagayo tozo Omou Mochizukino Kaketarukoto mo Nashi to Omoeba
(*No waning in the glory of the full moon, this world is indeed my world*)

(This world seems as if it were my own world. As the full moon is perfect with nothing missing, I'm perfectly satisfied, for all my wishes have come true!)

While the Fujiwara Clan enjoyed their heyday with unprecedented power and prosperity, there were, in a sense, victims of their glory. The most notable example of

such tragedy was Sugawara no Michizane.

Now, Sugawara no Michizane is enshrined as Tenjin (Heavenly deity). Nowadays, he is better known as “Kami-sama” for entrance examination takers. I suppose there are many students who have visited Kitano Tenjin Shrine (in Kyoto) or Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine (in Fukuoka), where Sugawara no Michizane is enshrined, to pray for success in passing their entrance examinations.

This Michizane was born into a learned family that studied classical Chinese. He was an excellent student himself and his superb talent was highly recognized by Emperor Uda. Michizane served in court politics and eventually rose to be the Minister of the Right. Then, suddenly, his fortune reversed. Minister of the Left Fujiwara no Tokihira was not pleased with Michizane’s success and held him in contempt. Through a vicious plot, the latter was demoted to Vice Governor of Dazaifu (Government Headquarters in Kyushu).

Sugawara no Michizane excelled in literature, was well read and a magnificent writer. I confidently think his Chinese poems expressing deep reflection upon and insight into his own life were the best that have ever been composed by a Japanese poet. His personal sentiment itself gave reality to his Chinese poems. Let me mention one poem here. This Chinese poem, entitled *Light Is Gone*, was written several months before he died. It may look difficult, but do read it anyway:

*Shiko mazu Tsuku Kaze ni Yorazu,
Kotoni Uramu Hikari no Ichiya o Tosukoto Nakikoto o,
Urukoto Katashi Kaishin to Kaiseki to,
Kanso Okite Tsuku Tsukiakari no uchi.*

(The light is gone, because the lamp oil is used up. It’s not the wind’s fault at all. Sleepless, I particularly regret that the light could not illuminate me all night long for such a trifle reason. I find it so hard to make myself insensitive or oblivious of myself like ashes after the fire is out, nor to live a hermit life, secluded from the world, like hiding in the darkness. After the light was extinguished, I got up from my bed and walked to the window, cold in the midnight, to bathe in the moonlight.)

We can vividly sense how miserable and sad Michizane felt through his long, sleepless night!

After Michizane’s death, a number of natural disasters, such as thunderbolts, a solar eclipse and earthquakes, visited the Capital. Rumor had it that all calamities were caused by Michizane’s soul. As if to verify this, Fujiwara no Tokihira fell seriously ill in

bed and those who had proposed to demote Michizane all died tragic deaths. The rumor shows that Michizane's greatness was widely known and appreciated.

New Buddhism introduced by Saicho and Kukai

Buddhism during the Nara Period was firmly connected with the nation and its politics. Thus, the major role of Buddhism was to pacify and protect the nation.

New movements took place in Buddhism. The central figures of these movements were Saicho (Great Master Dengyou) and Kukai (Great Master Kobo). The influence given by these two great monks to Buddhism in Japan was tremendous. Let us more closely discuss this point.

Saicho was born in Omi (Shiga Prefecture). At the age of 19, he climbed Mt. Hiei, where he read *Tendai* (Heavenly Platform) Sutra and trained himself in a small hall called Ichijo-Shikan-in. In the 23rd year of Enryaku era (804), he went to Tang Dynasty China as a member of the Envoy to Tang. There, he studied the teachings of the Tendai Sect and the following year he returned home to Japan with many copies of the Lotus sutra. Subsequently, he opened the original Japanese Tendai Sect on the basis of the Hokke (Lotus) Sutra, which is one of the major sutras of Greater Vehicle Buddhism, at Enryaku-ji Temple in Mt. Hiei.

It is worth noticing that he built a temple in a mountain, not in the Capital. This may be partly attributed to the influence of Shinto, in which one of the objects of worship includes mountains.

Saicho established a set of rules called *Sange Gakusho Shiki* (*Procedures to be followed by students of Mountain Buddhism*) and had student monks observe them. He also tried to found an organization to designate positions of monks called *Daijo Kaidan* (*Greater Vehicle Podium*), which was met with complete objection from all Buddhist Sects in the southern capital of Nara, and did not materialize in Saicho's lifetime.

Saicho wrote a book titled *Kenkai-ron* (*Discourse on Apparent Buddhist Teachings*) in which he lectures on Greater Vehicle Buddhist teachings. Up until this time, in spite of Prince Shotoku's emphasized belief in secular Buddhism, Buddhism was studied mainly by those who entered the priesthood and its main goal was to save and lead individual monks. However, Greater Vehicle Buddhism dealt with all people, with the belief that everyone has Buddhist inspiration in his heart. Saicho sided with this belief and ardently told people that the Buddhist mission is to save all people, regardless of their religious faith or occupation. That is the teaching of Greater Vehicle Buddhism.

Thus, Mt. Hiei came to be one of the centers of Japanese Buddhism.

After Saicho, another monk named Ennin (Great Master Jikaku), who returned from

Tang China, became head priest of Enryaku-ji Temple. He was also a great contributor in further raising the position of Mt. Hiei. Great Master Jikaku is known as founder of many temples in the Tohoku (Northeastern) Region and the Kanto (Metropolitan) Region. This is probably because he was from present-day Tochigi Prefecture which is in the Kanto Region.

He authored a book entitled *Nitto Guho Junreikoki (Pilgrimage in Tang Searching for the Way)*. This book describes ninth-century Tang China in such full detail that it greatly helps us in learning about Tang China at that time. For these merits, he is called the “Marco Polo of Japan,” which I think is a perfectly suitable honor for him.

Another great figure in Heian Period Buddhism was Kukai. Kukai was from Sanuki Province (Kagawa Prefecture, Shikoku Island). At first he entered university and learned Confucianism and other scholarly subjects. Then, he wrote a book titled *Sango Shiiki (In Pursuit of and Obedience to the Best of the Three Teachings)*. This book clearly states how Kukai decided to enter Buddhism after he concluded that Buddhism surpasses Confucianism and Taoism, both of which deal with this world and think much of actual deeds and ways of thinking, while Buddhism deals with much more. The book is written in the style of a conversation and is very easy to understand, which reminds me of Greek philosopher Plato’s books. Kukai was twenty-four years old when he wrote this book. It is exactly a crystallization of young Kukai’s meditation.

When Saicho went abroad to Tang China as a member of the Envoy to Tang in the 23rd year of Enryaku era (804), Kukai also joined the Envoy in order to study in Tang China. His purpose was to learn the depth of *Shingon* (True Word).

Shingon means the true word of Dainichi Nyorai (supreme Buddha) in the Secret Sect. Supreme Buddha’s true word is profound and secret and thus it was called “Secret Tantric Buddhism”. It originated in India in the latter half of the seventh century and was then transmitted to China in the 8th century.

There was a monk called Huiguo at Qinglongsi Temple in Zhang’an, the Capital of Tang. He was one of the inheritors of Secret Tantric Buddhist teachings, and Kukai met this great monk. Kukai remained in Tang after Saicho and other members returned to Japan and learned Tantric Buddhism under Huiguo. Soon Huiguo found Kukai so talented and remarkable that within three years Huiguo appointed Saicho as his successor.

Huiguo was a Chinese monk in Tang China and it was most likely that he had no command of the Japanese language. Instead, Kukai mastered the language of the Tang Chinese. And it was not only good enough for daily conversation. Kukai had complete command of the language to understand the profound teachings of Secret Tantric

Buddhism. I cannot help but wonder when and how Kukai managed to obtain such an excellent command of a foreign language, just out of curiosity. That's all the more interesting for the lack of historical sources to even remotely suggest an answer.

After having completely satisfied his teacher's, Huiguo, expectation, Kukai came home to Japan and immediately built Kongobu-ji (Firm Peak) Temple in Mt. Koya in Kii Province (Wakayama Prefecture) and opened the Shingon (True Word) Sect. His temple was further from the Capital than Saicho's Mt. Hiei, way in the mountains. Here, we can feel the tradition of Shinto mountain religion run through this new sect.

The teachings of Secret Tantric Buddhism are mysterious and intricate. However, what Kukai actually did was simple and concrete—to do whatever he could for people's sake. He set up a school called Shugei Shuchi-in (school for all kinds of arts and knowledge), promoted public education and devoted himself to restoring Manno Pond in Sanuki Province (Kagawa Prefecture) to secure water for farmers.

The idea of Revelation of Buddha on Earth to save people as a symbol of the unification and co-practice of Shinto and Buddhism

The impact which the idea of Secret Tantric Buddhism had on Japanese culture in the ninth century was tremendous. Secret Tantric Buddhism had strongly mysterious hues and reflecting such features, Japanese art in the 9th century tended to be very intellectual, rather than emotional.

One of the typical examples of this trend was the *Statue of Yakushi Nyorai (Curing-all Buddha)* of Jingo-ji Temple in Takao (Kyoto Prefecture). Its austere-looking eyes and twisted mouth show a mysterious inclination and in this statue we can also discern influence of Mountain Religion.

Many of the sculptures of Kyoo Gokoku-ji Temple (To-ji), which was founded by Kukai, reflect Secret Tantric Buddhist influences. Saying, "Only art can convey the true teaching of Secret Tantric Buddhism," Kukai had artists paint a number of complex mandala pictures depicting the truth of the universe and essence of Buddhism. In Toji Temple, sculpture versions of mandala pictures are also stored.

The *Statue of Fudo Myo O (Firm Vidraraja or Guardian Deity of Buddhism)* is angry-looking. While angry-looking statues of the Tenpyo Era somewhat had an air of naturalness, the mandala pictures were void of this naturalness, which was changed into cold anger. *The Statues of Shiten Myo O (Four Great Guardian Deities)* surrounding *Statue of Fudo Myo O* also wear exaggerated angry looks, which seem rather unnatural. Statues such as *Bonten (Supreme Creator Deity of This World)* and *Taishakuten* (one of the twelve guardian deities of Buddhism) look unnatural.

To be excessively adhesive to forms is called mannerism. These statues surely show a mannerist's inclination. And we cannot deny that this mannerism is one of the charms of the art works of this period.

During this period, statues of angry-looking Bishamonten (one of the Four Heavenly Kings) were produced in large numbers. *Bishamonten Statue* in Narushima of the Tohoku Region is four-meters tall, with a magnificent posture and is one of the masterpieces of this particular period.

As I have previously mentioned, both Tendai and Shingon Sects built temples and training fields in the mountains, in apparent contrast to other sects located in the former urban Capital in Nara. Clearly, they had characteristics which differed from the hitherto urban Buddhism. Closely connected with the mountain religion, there was a foothold of Shugendo (ascetic Buddhist training).

Shugendo is a way of ascetic pursuit of Buddhism in which monks climb mountains, and by using the rigorous topographic features of mountains, they made the mountains their training ground in order to acquire superhuman power and enlightenment. The mountains which were revered for religious mountain training were the three mountains of Kumano in Wakayama and Mie Prefectures. Following prestigious religious tradition, a lot of people visited these mountains as sacred temples.

We can say that this was a movement of unification and co-practice of Shinto and Buddhism. The idea of *Honchi Suijaku* (Revelation of Buddha to save the people in this world) came to be asserted. Honchi here means the very entity. Kami's entity is Hotoke and Hotoke appears in this world to save humans. This is how Shinto perceives its kami. Shinto tries to assign each kami to corresponding hotoke. The entity of Amaterasu Omikami is Dainichi Nyorai (Supreme Buddha), that of Iwashimizu Hachiman is Three Reverend Amida (Amitabha, Savior in Pure Land) and so forth.

As I have already explained, to begin with, Shinto and Buddhism had different characters. The former was a religion for the community of the Japanese people, and the latter targeted the salvation of individuals. However, for a person to live as an individual in the community and at the same time as a member of the community, it was necessary to spiritually rely on both Shinto and Buddhism. Even though Buddhism also tried to argue the importance of pacifying and protecting the nation as a whole, nothing was able to change its essential quality.

The unification and co-practice of Shinto and Buddhism was totally natural for the Japanese people. It was not a question of which was superior or which came before the other.

In the latter half of the ninth century, in Tang China, Buddhism was suppressed by

Emperor Wu-di and at the same time, Tang China declined in power as a nation. As consequence, the office of the Envoy to Tang was abolished in the sixth year of the Kanpyo era (894) by none other than Sugawara no Michizane, whom I have just discussed.

This turned out to be a good opportunity for Japan and court culture to blossom on its own, apart from the influence of Tang culture. This was exactly original and genuine made-in-Japan culture. This Japanese culture reached its height during the period of the regent and Imperial regent governance by the Fujiwara Clan.

People in the Imperial Court lived in grand residences which were built in the style of Shinden Zukuri, which was an architectural style completed in the middle of the Heian Period. The area of one Shinden mansion usually covered 1 *cho* (110 square meters) and in the center there were main living quarters of the master of the house, and annexed buildings stood in the east, west and north, with a pond in the south and a tasteful natural garden which at the same time was full of grandeur. Facing the pond was a fishing house and each building was connected by corridors. The people of the Court decorated the interior of their magnificent home with sliding doors and folding screens, which were exquisitely painted in the *Yamato E* style, depicting Japanese natural scenery and people.

Sei Shonagon and Murasaki Shikibu (Lady Murasaki)—the Golden Age of female writers of literature

In order to write *Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters)* and *Manyoshu (Collection of the Ten Thousand Leaves)*, Manyo-kana Syllabary was used, which was a linguistic rendition in Japanese, phonetically applying the Chinese “*on*-reading” and the ideographically-corresponding Japanese pronunciation, called “*kun*-reading,” to the syllables of the Japanese language. Gradually, the Manyo Syllabary came to be simplified into *Katakana* and *Hiragana* Syllabaries. The invention of the new Kana Syllabary had a tremendous impact on Japanese culture and further refined the original Japanese culture.

With the epoch-making invention of our own characters, Japanese culture further developed its uniqueness, in the forms of Japanese poems and story-telling in the latter half of the 9th century and thereafter.

Hiragana Syllabary, in particular, was popularly used by aristocratic females. Among them, Sei Shonagon wrote *Makura no Soshi (The Pillow Book)*, with its sharp observations about the life in the Imperial Court.

Sei Shonagon was a talented and intelligent woman.

*Haru wa Akebono Yoyo Shiroku nariyuku Yamagi wa sukoshi Akarite
Murasakidachitaru Kumo no hosoku Tanabikitaru*

(In spring it is the dawn that is most beautiful. As the light creeps over the hills, their outlines are dyed a faint red and wisps of purplish clouds trail over them.)

Like this poem, at the beginning of *Makura no Soshi*, the most agreeable aspects of the four seasons were rhythmically recited: spring at dawn, summer in the evening, autumn at dusk and winter on an early morning. This rhythmic tempo together with the wit and humor towards the lives of people, written by a woman on equal terms with a man, made *Makura no Soshi* a literary masterpiece.

Similarly, a woman serving the court as a lady-in-waiting of Empress, Murasaki Shikibu (Lady Murasaki) wrote *Genji Monogatari (The Tale of Genji)*. It was a story of Prince Hikaru Genji, son of Emperor Kiritsubo (Paulownia Court) and women around him. This is the world's oldest long novel. It is no exaggeration to call this book the all-time best literary work in Japan, comparing even those of modern times. The book excellently describes each charming character using such tasteful, incisive and elegant sentences.

Murasaki Shikibu lived during the height of the Fujiwara Clan. She was a daughter of Fujiwara no Tametoki and lost her mother when she was a little girl. She was raised by her scholarly father, who taught her Chinese verses while she was a girl and she grew up to be a woman perfectly versed in scholarship and literature. She married Fujiwara no Nobutaka, but her husband died after three years of marriage. Then Murasaki Shikibu was appointed as a lady-in-waiting to the second consort of Emperor Ichijo, who was later called Jotomon-in. The Empress was Shoshi, daughter of the most powerful Fujiwara no Michinaga. Around this time, Murasaki Shikibu wrote *Genji Monogatari (The Tale of Genji)*.

Let's run through the story.

There are many women romantically involved with Hikaru Genji. Murasaki no Ue, a niece of Hikaru Genji's mother Fujitsubo, who died when Genji was a little boy, is described as an ideal woman. Women of strong and colorful personalities appear one after another: Genji's legitimate wife Aoi no Ue, and Yugao, Rokujo no Miyasudokoro, Suetsumu Hana and many others.

At one time, the atmosphere of the court became unfavorable to Genji. Genji moved to Suma by himself and lived a solitary life there. Eventually, he is allowed to return to Kyoto, the Capital, and rises to the height of glory as the Minister of the Interior.

In his late years, however, he is bereaved of Murasaki no Ue. Genji bitterly reaps the rewards of his rash behaviors compelled by his youthful devotions and desires, and finally passes away in loneliness.

Hereafter, the story proceeds to the generation following Genji. Kaoru, Genji's son, unlike his father, is honest but gloomy. Kaoru loved Okimi, daughter of Uji no Miya, who died, leaving him alone.

Then, Kaoru falls in love with his deceased wife's stepsister Ukifune, who, however, kills herself later. Thus, the novel does not close with a happily-ever-after ending, but a very sad one.

Motoori Norinaga, a prominent thinker during the Edo Period, commented that *Genji Monogatari* describes "*mono no aware*" (deep feeling over the things). He probably meant "*aware*," deep and calmly-impressed sentiments of humans.

It is true that *The Tale of Genji* rarely refers to political and social issues. Lacking epic elements, the book may appear as a kind of lyrical story. That is why it uniquely stands out in Japanese literary history, in contrast to classical works, and presents itself as highly refined court literature. And particularly interesting is that the major character, Genji, is described as a most talented genius of all trades, excelling in not just learning, but in all fields of human activities, so to speak, such as Japanese poetry, painting, music, musical dancing and incense matching (a graceful competition in which incenses are burned and participants evaluated the odors). In the volume entitled *E Awase (Picture Match)*, a picture painted by Genji is judged to be superior over others done by professional painters. In other words, Genji is presented as an ideal Japanese, perfectly equipped with graceful and beautiful culture. In the Italian Renaissance some five hundred years later, Castiglioni described people at that time in the *Book of Courtiers*. But Genji surpasses the cultural learning of these Italian nobles. For his artistic talent, Genji reminds us of Leonard da Vinci.

It is particularly worth our attention that the authors of many literary works written in Hiragana Syllabary were women in the Imperial court. Women were free. As an example, let me introduce the following poem by Ono no Komachi:

Hana no Iro wa Utsurinikerina Itazurani Wagami Yo ni Furu Nagame Seshi Mani
(Alas, the colors of flowers turned vainly, while my life in the social spotlight is gone all too soon!)

She deplores the changes of her beautiful appearance while she was busily devoted to love affairs. What an honest sentiment of a woman who was much adored as a

peerless beauty!

Great literary works appeared one after another

In the field of Japanese poetry, the first Imperial collection, *Kokinwakashu* (*Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*) was compiled by the Imperial decree of Emperor Daigo in the 5th year of the Era of Engi (905). An Imperial collection is an anthology compiled according to an Imperial decree.

Ki no Tsurayuki was among the compilers of the Collection and some 1,100 poems were selected. Poems on the four seasons are most numerous and appear at the beginning of the Collection.

Ki no Tsurayuki wrote the preface to the Collection in Kana letters to the following effect:

Poems of Yamato shoot out of the seeds embraced in human minds and grow thousands of leaves of words.

He means that human feelings are the very source of every poem. His preface tells us how the Japanese people cherished most poems born spontaneously out of their daily life. Most of the poems in the world praise of the tribe's powerful gods, the heroic valor of their warriors as well as moral and political truths. Here, he makes his point perfectly clear, saying, "When we hear the warbling of the mountain thrush in the blossoms or the voice of the frog in the water, we know every living thing has its poem." What is most important in poetry is the sense of love and admiration toward nature.

Interestingly, in *Manyoshu* (*Collection of the Ten Thousand Leaves*), the plum is most sung of, while in *Kokinwakashu* (*Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*), the cherry blossom is the most loved object of poetic inspiration. Here is one of the typical cherry blossom poems, in which Ariwara no Narihira expresses his sentiment.

Yononaka ni Taete Sakura no nakariseba Haru no Kokoro wa Nodokekaramashi
(Were it not for cherry blossoms in this world, we would appreciate the spring more calmly, indeed!)

We can see that such changes of taste were brought about as the original Japanese culture developed. In the bottom of *The Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems* lies "linguistic technique" or usage of words in the most ingenious and creative ways. This committed usage of refined words forms a striking contrast to the frankness and spontaneity characteristically seen in *Manyoshu* poems. Here is the trait of the Mannerist's inclination toward classical styles (Refer to Page). Manner or style

counts more than the richness of the contents.

Ki no Tsurayuki, the compiler of *Kokinwakashu* (*Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*), also wrote *Tosa Nikki* (*The Tosa Diary*). It was a private travel diary, but the uniqueness of the diary is apparent from the very beginning as he starts with the following sentence using Kana letters:

“It is generally a man who writes what is called a diary, but now a woman will see what she can do.”

Men usually used Chinese characters in writing and women wrote using Kana letters. Based on this trend, he pretended to be a woman, who would try to keep a diary as men do. This is good reflection of the literary trend of his day, which regarded technique as most important.

Many other great literary works were also produced.

Taketori Monogatari (*The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*) was a fantasy. It was rewritten in easier to understand contemporary Japanese so that children could enjoy it, and this book to this day is still read by many. A rough outline of this story is as follows.

A moon princess was born in a bamboo tree. She is so beautiful that many noble men proposed marriage to her—in exchange for marriage, she requests that they obtain unobtainable objects. After every effort on the part of her courtiers fails, the princess returns to the moon.

It is just amazing that this story was created at the end of the ninth century and still attracts, to the present-day, many devoted readers.

Another book entitled *Utsubo Monogatari* (*The Tale of Utsubo*) was a long story written at the end of the 10th century. It starts with a fantastic story of a man named Toshikage: The Envoy to Tang's ship, carrying Toshikage meets with a storm on the way and the ship drifts to a distant place called *Hashikoku* (Persia), where he learns how to play the *kin* (a seven-stringed instrument); he finally returns to Japan. The latter part of the book evolves into a romantic story of Toshikage courting a beautiful princess named Atemiya and court life is described accordingly.

Ochikubo Monogatari (*The Tale of Ochikubo*) is a story of romance and vengeance. A girl named Ochikubo is bitterly treated by her stepmother, but she is saved by a noble prince named Michiyori, and then she extracts revenge on her stepmother. The story somewhat reminds us of *Cinderella* from Western literature.

Ise Monogatari (*The Tale of Ise*) is a kind of poem story. Famed poet Ariwara no Narihira is supposed to have been one of the authors. The story consists of 125 episodes and describes the life of a man, from the *Genpuku* (coming of age ceremony) to his death, in sequence, of sentences and poems, written in Kana letters. Incidentally,

in olden days, coming of age was celebrated at the ages between 12 and 16.

What is illustrated by *Genji Monogatari Emaki* (Pictorial Scroll of The Tale of Genji) and Byodo-in Temple's Hoo-do (Chinese Phoenix Hall)

During this period, a new painting style of *Yamato E* (picture) was established, which dealt with Japanese scenery, of mountains and rivers and human characters as well. This is original Japanese culture in the form of paintings. The Yamato E pictures were painted to decorate sliding doors and folding screens inside the grand Shinden-Zukuri residences of the aristocrats. Folding screens of painted "Sansui" (Mountains and Waters) were a collaboration of Buddhist pictures and Yamato picture painting. Characteristic soft lines and elegant colors of Yamato pictures had tremendous impact on pictorial scrolls. The most prominent example is *Genji Monogatari Emaki* (Pictorial Scroll of the Tale of Genji). This work, while pursuing graceful beauty as a picture, experiments on stylizing such techniques as simple rendition of human faces with "linear eyes and a hooked nose" and a bird's-eye view of the interior of houses. Here again, Mannerism is apparent (Refer to Page). Thus, supposedly beautiful faces of Hikaru Genji and Murasaki no Ue are drawn after the same style and pictures remain mere illustrations of the story. I think this may be because the literature itself is too great to allow any rivalry in artistic excellence.

However, Yamato pictures are not limited to the description of the life in the Imperial court.

Choju Giga (Satiric Renditions of Birds and Animals) is an excellent attempt to satirically depict society at that time, effectively borrowing animal forms. *Shigi-san Engi Emaki* (Pictorial Scroll of Miracles of Mt. Shigi) excellently depicts how devoted people are to Buddhism. *Ban Dainagon Emaki* (Pictorial Scroll of Major Counsellor Ban) dynamically illustrates such forceful scenes such as roaring fires and the lively activities of people. All of these are certainly wonderful masterpieces.

From the 10th century onward, the Jodo (Pure Land) Sect became popular. Up until that time, Buddhism was generally thought to be incomprehensible by the public. In order to make Buddhism easier to approach, this new Jodo Sect was established. To worship Amidabutsu (Supreme Buddha), to recite the Sutra and to wish to live in the Heavenly Pure Land are their principal teachings. These teachings were not new, but once Kuuya Shonin (Master Kuuya) spread the Sutra of "Namu Amidabutsu", people thought they heard the voices of a new savior. His influence quickly spread wide and deep.

Master Kuuya built Rokuharamitsu-ji Temple in Kyoto and walked all over Kyoto,

chanting the Sutra.

Besides Kuuya, Genshin (abbot Eshin) wrote *Ojoyoshu (The Outline of Heavenly Afterlife)* at Mt. Hiei in the first year of Kanwa era (985). This book propelled people to yearn for Pure Land and, especially among aristocrats, Jodo Sect became very popular. The two worlds of Heaven and Hell described in this book appear to be so real, reminding us of Heaven and Hell in *The Divine Comedy* written by Dante in Italy three hundred years later.

Popularly spread Jodo Sect had great impact also on contemporary fine arts. In shrine architecture, Hojo-ji Temple was famous, which was built by the then Regent Fujiwara no Michinaga, with the Amida Hall in the center. To our regret, the temple was burned down and we cannot see it now.

Extant today are Hoo-do (Phoenix Hall) of Byodo-in Temple in Uji, Kyoto and Amida Hall of Hinohokkai-ji Temple in Yamashiro, Kyoto. The Hoo-do Hall was built by Michinaga's son, Fujiwara no Yorimichi. The inside of the Hall was so exquisitely beautiful, depicting the Heavenly Pure Land that we can immediately feel people's strong yearning for the Heavenly Pure Land.

The Amida Statue enshrined in Hoo-do was done by Buddhist sculptor Jocho. Its graceful beauty is beyond comparison. Also enshrined in the Hall are Unchu Kuyo Bosatsu Zo (Statues of Bosatsu Performing Among the Heavenly Clouds). There are 52 statues altogether, playing music, dancing and singing. Looking at these lovely statues, we feel as if we were the audience in front of an ancient orchestra playing the music of that time. (Refer to Page).

In fact, music was very popular. There was a special court office called *Gagaku-ryo* (office of court music), specializing in music and in charge of the music of the court. Singers, dancers, players of Tang China music, performers of Goguryo, Baekje and Silla music, and performers of *gigaku* (the first Japanese musical dance) and *tsuzumi* (Japanese hand drums) all belonged to this music office and the office was filled with Asian music.

In the second year of the Enryaku era (948), a new music office was set up and the Music of the Left and the Music of the Right were organized. Japanese original scales of *Ryo* (Tang-like minor melody) and *Ritsu* (Japanese major melody) were designated. There was an orchestra playing music with stringed instruments, wind instruments and percussion instruments. What a wonderful experience it would be if we could hear the Heian Orchestra perform now!

By the way, there is an expression in Japanese “*roretsu ga mawaranai*” (Roretsu won't turn) when one cannot speak well because of drunkenness or something, as if the

tongue wouldn't move smoothly. This expression derived from these two scales of Ryo and Ritsu. When one couldn't play the instrument well, one would say, "Ryo Ritsu won't turn", which then turned into "Ro Retsu won't turn."

Among the pictures of the Jodo Sect, scenes of playing music are often painted. For example, *Shoju Raigo Zu (Picture of Buddha Meeting People)* which is stored in Yushi-Hachimanko-Juhachika-in Temple at Mt. Koya depicts Buddha playing music and coming from the Pure Land to meet people. We can see that music was popular among people and loved in everyday life at that time.

On the other hand, Secret Buddhist pictures were also painted. The picture of *Ao Fudo* stored at the Jakuren-in Temple depicts two children with very lively touches. Another masterpiece is *Zennyō Ryūō (Good Female Dragon King)*, stored in Kongobu-ji Temple at Mt. Koya, which excellently depicts the Dragon King moving on clouds springing upwards. *Fugen Bosatsu* stored at The Tokyo National Museum shows merciful Bosatsu looking back with a beautiful face tilted a little on the back of a white elephant. *Karitei Zo (Portrait of Kishibojin or Mother Goddess)* of Daigo-ji Temple depicts mother and child in a quiet and calm posture, hinting at something in common with the popular Virgin Mother and Child theme of Christian pictures.

The end of this world—the latter days of Buddhism

Jodo Sect worship during the Heian Period eventually led to the latter days of Buddhism. In Buddhism, there are three stages of development: first, Orthodox Buddhism, which lasts for 500 years after the death of Buddha, then comes Practical Buddhism, which continues for the next 1,000 years, and finally, the Age of Decadence, which follows for 10,000 years, when with the decline of Buddhism, many natural disasters and human-made disasters such as riots take place, causing people to fear that the end of the world is imminent.

In fact, as the 11th century set in, with national politics in total disarray and frequent diseases and fires, people began to think that the latter days of Buddhism is coming true. The latter days of Buddhism started in the 7th year of the Eisho era (1052). Realizing that the time of the Age of Decadence, or the Latter Day of the Law, Terminal Buddhism was setting in, with the grim prospect of the end of this world, people desperately wanted something to believe in. Belief in fortune-telling, like *Onmyōdo* (Ways of the positive and the negative), rapidly spread among the aristocrats, and Onmyōdo preachers appeared, among whom was Abe no Seimei. According to Onmyōdo, this world consists of the positive and the negative with the five essential elements of tree, fire, earth, metal and water. By combining these elements with the movements of the

sun and the moon and the arrangement of the animal zodiac of *Eto*, fortune tellers predict good and bad luck in the future and try to keep disasters from falling upon the people.

To get rid of disasters and pestering evil spirits, people increasingly attended the religious ceremony of *Goryo-e* (Pacification of evils) held at Shinto shrines such as Kitano Shrine and Gion Shrine.

During the latter half of the Heian Period, the population increased. However, the area available for rice paddies did not increase as much. The control of people by the government reached the dead end and the Imperial Court drastically changed local governance. Collection of tax was to be entrusted with the provincial governors and, thus, they were in charge of the local government. In practice, however, provincial governors did not engage in tax collection themselves, but instead, they left the task to prominent farmers. Subsequently, some farmers became much more powerful, working with the governors. The land these powerful people owned was called “Shoen” and this vast private land came to be ruled by local clans. And they eventually became warriors. Long and stable aristocratic rule was nearing its end and preparation for the coming of the time of warriors was well under way.

Insurgences in the Johei and Tengyo eras by Taira no Masakado and Fujiwara no Sumitomo, respectively, were actually battles between powerful local families and provincial governors. Masakado was from the family of Kanmu Heiji, who claimed to be descendants of Emperor Kanmu. In the 5th year of Johei era (935), Masakado attacked the Provincial Office of Hitachi (Ibaragi Prefecture) and put eight small fiefdoms in the Kanto region under his control, over which he claimed to be new Emperor. But even before the Imperial Court set out to suppressing him, he was defeated and killed by the families led by Taira no Sadamori and Fujiwara no Hidesato. On the other hand, Fujiwara no Sumitomo raided Provincial Offices of Awaji (Hyogo Prefecture) and Sanuki (Kagawa Prefecture) and Dazaifu (Government Headquarters in Kyushu), but he was also killed in battle by Ono no Yoshifuru in the 4th year of Tenkei era (941). People in local areas, far away from the capital, were equally loyal to the Emperor.

During the 11th century, the Fujiwara Clan remained politically stable, but as the *Insei* (Rule by a Retired Emperor) began, the Fujiwara started to decline. Replacing the Fujiwara Clan, powerful local families and warriors began to further expand their influence.

Temples also became very powerful. Major temples, such as Enryaku-ji, Todai-ji and Kofuku-ji Temples, owned vast tracts of Shoen and had an army of warrior monks.

These warriors included low-ranking monks and laymen called *Doushu* (temple people).

As the local powers increased, culture also spread to local regions. In Tohoku (Northeastern Japan), the Fujiwara family of Oshu (Iwate Prefecture) built magnificently-looking Chuson-ji Temple at Hiraizumi (in Iwate Prefecture), with over 40 halls and towers and 300 monasteries. The prosperity of the three-generation-long Fujiwara family of Oshu is often talked about, even today. In Kyushu, Amida Hall was built as an annex to Fuki-ji Temple in Bungo Province (Oita Prefecture). It was around this time when Itsukushima Shrine of Aki (Hiroshima Prefecture) was built, which was to be a guardian to the warrior family of Hei-ke.

Historical stories were also written during this time. *Eiga Monogatari* (*Glorious Tales*) narrates history of the time, from the middle 10th century to the death of Fujiwara no Michinaga in the 4th year of the Manju era (1027). In *O Kagami* (*Grand Mirror*) Japanese history from the middle of the 9th century to the 2nd year of Manju era (1025) is narrated by two old men. Both are biographies of Fujiwara no Michinaga. Though on a lesser scale, these histories resemble the Chinese history *Shiji* (*Historical Memories*) written by Si-ma Chien.

Masakado Ki (*Record of Masakado*) depicts Taira no Masakado, a warrior general from the eastern region, who plotted an insurgency in an attempt to become Emperor, in vain. *Mutsu Waki* (*Narrative Record of Mutsu*) is a record of war, describing how Minamoto no Yoriyoshi conquered Father and Son Abe in the Oshu region in the north of Japan. This was the first time a war record came out as literature. Another new literary genre of folktale also appeared. *Konjaku Monogatari* (*Collection of Ancient and Modern Tales*) contains 1,000 folktales from Tenjiku (India), Shintan (China) and Japan. All of the tales start with the same phrase of “Now, it was a long time ago,” and they are mainly Buddhist folktales.

People liked to read historical transitions as literature.

Top:*Unchu Kuyo Bosatsu Zo* (*Statue of Bosatsu Performing among Heavenly Clouds*)
South #1

Bottom:*Unchu Kuyo Bosatsu Zo* (*Statue of Bosatsu Performing among Heavenly Clouds*) North #25

Both are stored at Byodo-in Temple

Column 7: The world's first long novel—*Genji Monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*)

In a newspaper, I read a letter from a reader in his fifties who works for a municipal office.

His wife was completely fascinated by *The Tale of Genji* after she read the novel, and she ardently insisted that he read it himself as well. At first he didn't feel like it at all, thinking to himself, "What's the use of reading such old literature now?" But his wife was so insistent that one morning he started reading the novel in the modern Japanese version during his commute by train. Instantly, he was absorbed in Genji's world. Reading on, he was especially moved, almost to tears, when he read the part describing Genji's lonely life in his late years, which overlapped with his own sentiment just before his retirement from his job. He concluded his letter by saying that he is proud of Japan's greatness for producing such a literary masterpiece that perfectly portrays humans as early as the Heian Period.

This may be a small episode, and yet this exactly grasps the essence of the old novel. *The Tale of Genji* is a classic and at the same time it is a very modern long novel.

The Tale of Genji appeals strongly to modern readers, first because the description of each character's personality is so real. Murasaki no Ue, Aoi no Ue, Rokujo no Miyasudokoro, Tamakazura and so on—there are many female characters and sentiments portrayed through their words and actions vividly reflect the personality of each character. They are so interestingly diversified that readers never cease to be charmed.

As time goes by, the characters get older and the author follows the aging process so realistically and masterly that once again we cannot help but appreciate the greatness of the novel. In Japanese classical literature there is a tradition of diary literature. Maybe the novel was based on this tradition.

There are some unrealistic scenes. For example, when Hikaru Genji spends a night with Yuugao in an old mansion, Yuugao is possessed by a specter and she dies. But readers will not feel uneasy or feel that the scene is unrealistic at all. That is because the feelings of Genji and Yuugao in the scene are described so realistically that we feel as if it were actually happening. Murasaki Shikibu's writing is simply amazing—such is the masterly power of the author.

This becomes all the more evident when we compare it with the Chinese book of *Zhanghege (Long Lament)* written by Bai Ju-ji (Pai Lo-tien). Empress Yang-gui-fei captivates the Emperor with her beauty, but then she is executed. She tries to send her ever-lasting love to the Emperor from the world of the afterlife. The unrealistic emptiness of the scene can hardly be disguised.

Mr. Donald Keene, literary historian on Japanese literature, compares *The Tale of Genji* to the long novel *In Search of Lost Time* written by French novelist Marcel Proust (1871-1922).

Mr. Keene writes in the book entitled *History of Japanese Literature* (published by Chuokoron-sha) as follows:

The author [Murasaki Shikibu] was so deeply impressed by an event that she felt uneasy, realizing the event would soon be forgotten. So she was compelled to record the event by an impulsive obligation. Thus, a great work was born. In this respect, Murasaki Shikibu is said to be an associate of Proust.

Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* is regarded as the best of the new psychological novels. But it was in early 20th century when Proust's book was first published. Already in the 11th century, 900 years prior to his publication, Murasaki Shikibu wrote a novel comparable or even superior to Proust's. We can surely understand why *The Tale of Genji* has universality that makes the novel always fresh and popular, transcending time and space.

One of those who have made *The Tale of Genji* known to the world is Mr. Arthur Waley (1889-1966), English Orientalist and sinologist. Mr. Waley translated the Japanese novel into English.

Mr. Waley states as follows:

Murasaki Shikibu is more interested in how the characters feel in response to each happening than what happens in the story. Works like *The Tale of Genji* truly deserve to be called 'novels'.

Before modern novels appeared in Europe, novels were mainly written about what took place. An event would be followed by yet another event and a story developed in sequence of uniqueness or rareness. That was the style of literary works prior to modern times. Even Shakespeare, the English literary giant, was no exception.

However, Murasaki Shikibu was different. Many things happen in *the Tale of Genji*, but they are never central. Murasaki Shikibu focused her eyes on the sentiments of her characters, caused by or in response to the events.

Nothing is more universal than human sentiments. That is why *The Tale of Genji* never ceases to be read, ever fresh and enchanting, by so many people regardless of nationality, age or sex.

The Tale of Genji is the world's masterpiece novel, eternally read and loved.

Story VIII New Culture Created by Warriors—The Kamakura Period

The Age of warriors begins

The family name of Genji (meaning “original clan”) was created to indicate that the bearer of the name has the same origin as that of the Imperial family. Among the Imperial house, apart from princes who remained in the Imperial Court, those who descended to become lay aristocrats and were sent to local regions to serve as Provincial Governors were the first generations of the Genji (Minamoto) clan.

It was the same with the Heike clan. Saga Genji or Kanmu Heiji (Heike) was named after the respective original Emperors. And these people became warriors. Therefore, warriors never acted against the Imperial Court.

However, toward the end of the Heian Period, there broke out two battles in the Tohoku Region. The first, a nine-year campaign (1051~62), was an incident in which Minamoto no Yoriyoshi (father) and Yoshiie (son) subjugated Abe no Yoritoki of the powerful local clan in Mutsu Province (Fukushima, Miyagi, Iwate and Aomori Prefectures), for they failed to submit taxes imposed upon them to the provincial governor. And the second, a three-year campaign (1083~87), was conducted when another powerful Kiyohara family in Mutsu Province fomented a rebellion. Minamoto no Yoshiie, who came as Governor of Mutsu Province, finally suppressed the rebellion after many hard struggles. Through these successful campaigns, the Genji (Minamoto) clan secured their foothold in the Northern Provinces. Fujiwara no Kiyohira in Hiraizumi, who aided Minamoto no Yoshiie during the campaigns, enjoyed prosperity for three generations, ruling over Mutsu Province and Dewa Province (Yamagata and Akita Prefectures). It can be said that here and then that the age of warriors dawned. This government in the Northern Provinces never intended to counter the Imperial Court, but rather supported it from remote local provinces.

In the Capital, the Hogen Rebellion in the first year of Hogen era (1156) and the Heiji Rebellion in the first year of Heiji era (1159) broke out because both the Genji clan and the Heike clan were descendants of the former Imperial houses, respectively, and they were intricately involved with the Imperial Court that was run by the reigning Imperial family. They were not at all battles fought between court nobles and warrior clans. These two rebellions ended with victory going to the Heike clan.

Taira (Heike) no Kiyomori became Chancellor (the highest government appointment) in the 2nd year of Nin’an era (1167) and established a government run by the Heike clan. This government replaced one run by the Fujiwara clan, but Kiyomori’s

thoughtless attempt to move the capital from Kyoto to Fukuhara (Kobe in Hyogo Prefecture) accelerated the Heike's downfall.

The particularly fatal misdeed was that the Heike clan set Nara on fire and destroyed the Great Buddha, the national symbol of pacification and protection, and many other temples, shrines and houses, which greatly caused sheer anger and revolt among the people, not only in the capital but also all over the country, further fueling anti-Heike movements. Upon Minamoto no Yoritomo's request of rising against the Heike, the Genji families in various regions mobilized their armies and joined with Yoritomo. The Heike clan fled along the Seto Inland Sea, but was defeated by an army led by Minamoto no Yoshitsune in the battle of Dan-no-ura Bay of Nagato Province (Yamaguchi Prefecture) in the 4th year of Juei era (1185). The defeated Heike sank into the sea with their infant Emperor Antoku.

Yoshitsune returned to the capital Kyoto, victorious and was awarded rank and appointment by the Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa, which made Minamoto no Yoritomo so displeased that the two half-brothers had to confront with each other thereafter. Minamoto no Yoritomo sent his army to Kyoto and reproached the Retired Emperor for his favor that he extended to Yoshitsune and made the Emperor to allow a system of Provincial Constables and Stewards in order to appoint his vassals as such in various regions and capture Yoshitsune at large. Yoshitsune fled to Hiraizumi (in Iwate Prefecture) and asked for the protection of the Fujiwara clan in Northern Provinces. However, contrary to his expectation, unfortunate Yoshitsune was destined to meet a tragic death, brought about by the betrayal of the Fujiwara clan, who in turn was ruined by Yoritomo.

In the 3rd year of the Kenkyu era (1192), Minamoto no Yoritomo was appointed Great Shogun (Commander) of the Barbarian-Quelling Headquarters of the East, upon which he moved the capital from Kyoto to Kamakura (in Kanagawa Prefecture) and established the Kamakura *Bakufu* (Military Government).

From then on, governance by warriors was to last until the Meiji Restoration. In Kamakura, efforts were made to inherit the culture of Hiraizumi of Northern Provinces, in such tasks as construction of temples and shrines. Minamoto no Yoritomo worked hard to restore the Great Buddha Hall of Nara and went up to Kyoto when a ceremonial service was held in the 6th year of Kenkyu era (1195) with an army of several tens of thousand men. Out of gratitude for this act on the part of Yoritomo, temple soldiers of Todai-ji and Kofuku-ji Temples did not follow the call to mobilize by Retired Emperor Toba when the Jokyu Rebellion took place.

After Yoritomo's death, his father-in-law, the father of his wife Hojo Masako, Hojo

Tokimasa took over leadership and henceforth he governed in Kamakura. This is called a “regent government”. Retired Emperor Go-Toba tried to defeat the regent government in the 3rd year of the Jokyū era (1221), but he was defeated by the Bakufu army and was banished to Oki Island. Afterwards, the Imperial Court was put under the surveillance by the Bakufu. They set up a policing office called Rokuharatandai in Kyoto.

Warriors who became provincial stewards held the authority to collect taxes from the private domains called Shoen and came to contend with the owners of the Shoen domain over control of the land. Gradually they became the top local administrators and had farmers cultivate fields. In the 1st year of the Joei era (1232), during the time of Hojo Yasutoki, *Goseibai (Joei) Shikimoku (Governing Principles)*, stipulating regulations of warriors’ society and judicial standards, was established and observed widely among the warriors.

New movement in Buddhism and culture

The time of instability prompted warriors and the common people to further worship Buddhism. Monk Honen spread the teachings of the Jodo (Pure Land) Sect and persuaded people to chant the Sutra of “Namu Amidabutsu” so that they could be reborn in the Supreme Pure Land, which is said to be promised to all worshipping people. Honen’s apostle, Shinran, spread the Jodo Shinshu Sect (Pure Land True Sect) or “Ikko” Sect and taught that the sinful are the best saved by Buddha. Monk Ippen opened the Ji-shu Sect (Time Sect), visiting various provinces and permeating the Sect’s teachings by performing the Sutra dance. Meanwhile, Master Nichiren was critical of these new sects and opened the Nichiren Sect (Lotus Sect), advocating that, based on the Lotus Sutra, chanting “Namumyo Horengekyo” will turn people into hotoke and the nation to be saved.

Monks Eisai and Dogen, who had been abroad to Song Dynasty China, brought home the teachings of the Zen Sect, and became founders of the Rinzaï Sect and Soto Sect, respectively.

Sutra and Lotus worships were supported by the common people and local warriors, while the Zen Sect became very popular among the intellectuals. The Zen Sect instructed people to reach the enlightenment through intently engaging in the act of *Zazen* (sitting upright in silent meditation with the eyes closed). In Kamakura, the second Shogun Yoriie and Hojo Masako were faithful adherents of the Zen Sect, which then spread among warriors.

Thus new movements in Buddhism developed. To compete with these new trends,

the powerful families of the established Tendai (Heavenly Platform) and Shingon (True Word) Sects also tried to strictly observe their precepts and strengthen their influence.

During the Kamakura Period, warriors and the people became powerful, which certainly would have influenced the development of new culture. In addition to the aristocratic culture that had been cultivated and blossomed, a powerful culture reflecting the warrior spirit came into being.

In literature, war histories powerfully depicting battles and collections of folktales transmitted through generations were compiled. *Hogen Monogatari (The Tale of Hogen)* and *Heiji Monogatari (The Tale of Heiji)* describe the Hogen and Heiji Rebellions respectively, excellently contrasting the fates of victorious warriors and decaying aristocrats by portraying vivid and distinctive characters, some triumphant and others despondent. Both of these are truly superb literary works.

Heike Monogatari (The Tale of Heike) is the best of the war histories. Blind Monk Biwa narrated the story in various places and the tragic story spread across the nation. The story tells about the prosperity and decline of the Heike clan, but never praised Minamoto no Yoritomo, who claimed victory. The story focuses on people agonizing in continuous battles. The story of Minamoto no Yoshitsune is one such example. That is why the book profoundly moves a great many people to heartfelt sympathy.

On the other hand, folktale literature started with *Konjaku Monogatari (Collection of Ancient and Modern Tales)*, compiled at the end of the Heian Period. It can be called the literature of the common people. The common people described in the tales are so energetic and full of life that we can feel the living breath breathing of the period. Now, they provide us with valuable historical records that describe these times.

Among court nobles, the Japanese poetic style of *Waka* was continuously popular. The Retired Emperor Go-Toba ordered Fujiwara no Teika and others to compile *Shin Kokinwakashu (New Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems)*. As for poetic style, technicality was thought to be the most important. Sometimes, some became too technical, but most poems were more refined than those in *Manyoshu (Collection of the Ten Thousand Leaves)* and *Kokinwakashu (Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems)* and were filled with delicate and sad sentiments. They seemingly reflected the decline of aristocratic society.

The Kamakura Period produced superb essays as well. Essayist and poet Kamono Chomei wrote *Hojo-ki (Essays from Small Square Hut)* and poet Yoshida Kenko wrote *Tsurezuregusa (Essays Written as Time Passes by Leisurely)*. Both essays discuss fleeting times and the transience of human life. People then must have thought surely that nothing is certain and unchangeable in life.

The Epoch of Kamakura Baroque

Now, let us look at the fine arts. The Kamakura Period can be said to be the Baroque Epoch (Refer to Page). The term “baroque” is used in the Western fine arts, referring to the art style of realistic rendition with lots of movements, and the baroque style is colorfully illustrated in scenes of European art in the 17th century. This baroque trend already appeared in the fine arts of the Kamakura period.

One example is the rebuilt Great South Gate of Todai-ji Temple. The gate was reconstructed using the style which was newly introduced from Song Dynasty China. Huge *Statues of Kongorikishi* (men with giant’s strength) installed at either side of the gate are Baroque itself, showing powerful bodies with violent motions.

In the restoration project of Todai-ji and Kofuku-ji Temples, Unkei played a major role in producing many Buddhist statues. The most prominent is *Muchaku Zo* (*Statue of Muchaku*) stored in Kofuku-ji Temple. (Refer to Page). It is an excellent portrait-sculpture of a monk full of dignity and sorrow. This statue resembles *Statue of Saigyō* (MOA Museum of Art) and we can guess that Saigyō is probably the model of the former sculpture. Also, *Statue of Seshin* looks so much like Master Bunkaku of Jingo-ji Temple that it may be considered to represent masters who were major fund-raisers for the reconstruction project. Looking at these real-life monks as portrayed by masterly sculptors, people may have actually felt Buddhism take human forms.

Let me add a few more examples. *Hachidai Doji* (*Eight Great Children*) of Kongobu-ji Temple at Mt. Koya demonstrates another wonderful artistic expression. *Nidoji Zo* (*Statue of Two Children*) of Ganjouju-in Temple in Shizuoka and *Bishamonten Zo* (*Statue of King Bishamon*) of Gokuraku-ji Temple in Zushi are both in the Kanto area and reflect the new movement of the eastern warriors in artistic expression.

Unkei’s sons Tankei and Kosho, Unkei’s father Kokei and Kokei’s pupils Kaikei and Jokei were all excellent Buddhist sculptors and left many masterpieces.

Statues of *Basu Sennin* (*Hermit Basu*) and *Mawaranyo* (*Woman Mawara*), which are extant today at Thirty-Three-Gen (one *ken* or *gen* is roughly 1.8 meters in length) Hall of Myōhō-ji Temple in Kyoto, were done by Tankei, excellently depicting perseverance, deep personality and reverential respect toward hotoke engraved on the wrinkled faces of these old Japanese. *Jugen-shonin Zo* (*Statue of Master Jugen*) is thought to have been created by the same sculptor and the deep wrinkles engraved on the statue eloquently tell the wisdom and perseverance of this old monk, who devotedly served as a fund-raiser for the reconstruction of Todai-ji Temple.

Kongorikishi Zo (*Statue of a Man with Giant’s Strength*) expresses the stoutness of

the Japanese body, but it clearly differs from Greek sculptures of the West. Here, we can feel the lively power emit from the tight figure.

The sculptors of these times studied closely the classical sculptures of the Tenpyo Period, and on the basis of the results of their study, produced new-styled Buddhist sculptures with realistic and lively touches.

The contemporary paintings also strongly reflected realism.

Realistic portraits called *Nise-e* (Resemblance paintings) became very popular and many masterpieces were painted. *Portrait of Minamoto no Yoritomo* of Jingo-ji Temple masterly manifests the dignity of the character with simplified lines. It is said that the portrait was done by the master resemblance portraitist Fujiwara no Nobuzane.

Portraits of Zen monks called *Chinzo* (top portrait) were frequently painted. *Daito Kokushi* of Daitoku-ji Temple and *Muso Kokushi* of Myochi-in Temple were among them. They masterly depict the personalities of these great priests. In Zen Sect there was tendency to find the true meaning of Zen in the portraits of these high priests, rather than through Buddhist statues, which led to the popularity of Chinzo portraits. The most prominent Chinzo portraitist was Muto Shui.

Many great pictorial scrolls depicting battles, the origins of temples and shrines and biographies of great monks were also created during this period.

Heiji Monogatari Ekotoba (*Pictorial Scroll of the Tale of Heiji*) excellently depicts scenes of fires and processions. Especially superb is the composition and it is so perfect in its excellence that it is not too much to say that it is the compilation of the preceding scrolls. It was presumably done by Sumiyoshi Keion.

Jigoku Soshi (*Book of Hell*) describes the terrible scenes of Hell in a manner so real and serious that we can guess what kind of the end-of-the world view the people in these times had in mind.

Mokoshurai Ekotoba (*Pictorial Scroll of the Mongolian Invasions*) had a unique episode concerning its conception. A warrior who had actually participated in the defensive actions against the Mongolian invasions had a painter depict how the warrior fought in the battles and what kind of martial merits the warrior achieved. In this sense, it conveys, almost as live-action, the battle scenes in which Mongolians attacked and the Japanese warriors fought back. Besides its artistic value, it is very valuable as a historical source to learn about the time.

Thus, a very lively Japanese Baroque Epoch blossomed, producing many energetic art works and well preceding the West, 400 years prior to the European Baroque Epoch with an equally lively and decorative style in the 17th century. Surely, anyone can see what advanced forerunners Japanese artists were!

The Mongolian Invasions and the role of Japan

At the beginning of the 13th century, the Great Genghis Khan (1167-1227) established an empire on the Mongolian steppes, expanded the territory and reached not only Asia but also a part of Europe. During the era of the 5th Emperor Khubilai Khan (1215-1294), the empire was renamed Yuan and the capital was set at Dadou (present-day Beijing). In an attempt to put Japan under its rule, Yuan sent an envoy from its subordinate state of Goguryo to Japan, urging immediate compliance. When the Imperial Court and regent Hojo Tokimune refused the request, the Yuan army of some 30,000 men with soldiers from Goguryo invaded Tsushima Island and Iki Island in the 11th year of Bunei era (1274), and further proceeded to land in northern Kyushu. Against this invasion, the Shogun's subjects from all parts of Kyushu gallantly fought back and drove the enemies to retreat. A natural phenomenon was also favorable to the Japanese side. A fierce rainstorm sank most of the Mongolian battleships. Then again, in the 4th year of Koan era (1281), the Mongolian army of 140,000 men attacked northern Kyushu. After nearly two months of fierce battles, the Yuan army was obliged to withdraw due to a terrible rainstorm. Japan successfully prevented the Mongolian invasions twice in a row.

It is extremely important that Japan, a small nation in the East, single-handedly defeated the powerful Yuan army--which had been triumphant with one victory after another and much feared in the West for its violence--albeit with the help of rainstorms. It is often mentioned that this Mongolian empire of Yuan united East and West for the first time in the world and thus created world history. We can also add that Japan made a grand debut in world history on this very occasion. As the pictorial scroll of the Mongolian Invasions indicates, the Japanese army defeated the Yuan army. Japan's military strength well proved to be one of the most powerful in the world. It was not the Russo-Japanese War during the Meiji Period that showcased a strong Japan to the world for the first time. Actually, as early as in the 13th century, a strong Japan was known to the world. The existence of *Jipangu* (Cipangu), which Marco Polo referred to in his *The Book of Marco Polo*, was exactly a reflection of this fact.

Domestically, however, the Mongolian invasions put the Japanese national economy in utter chaos and degraded the Bakufu Government's credibility. Consequently, the rule by the Kamakura Bakufu began to decline.

Right: *Statue of Muchaku* (Stored at Kofuku-ji Temple Photo by Kanai Morio)

Left: *Statue of Kongorikishi (Man with Giant's Strength)* by Jyokei (Stored at

Kofuku-ji Temple photo by Asuka-en)

Column 8: Buddhist Statues in Japan

In Japan, originally, there was no custom of idolatry, of worshipping human statues.

Shinto is the practice of worshipping souls. Shrines are where “Kami-gami” descend and not a place for idols worship. If there ever is something symbolic, that may be a physical sign substitution to indicate “Kami-gami” descend and stayed there. Kami-gami, shapeless souls, descend and so a shrine is not the only place for worship but the whole sacred area is divine.

The target of worship is formless and cannot be seen by human eyes. This is exactly the reason why Shinto was able to become a community religion, uniting people spiritually together.

With such a religious background and tradition, Buddhism came with Buddhist images to Japan. Hotoke is *Hoto* (Buddha) and *Ke* (Shape). Buddhist images are statues of Buddha and in Japan Buddhist statues became rich in variety and contents. And no one will deny that Shinto with its worship of souls had a profound influence on Japanese Buddhist statues.

In Buddha’s human form, the Japanese people felt spirituality and at the same time tried to see an individual human die, agonize and confess anxieties as ordinary people do. This is the characteristic of the Japanese Buddhist statues.

Above all, the Japanese Buddhist images clearly demonstrate humanity and at the same time transcend all living things. Buddhism based on individuality and Shinto based on commonality combined to produce very human and yet transcendental Buddhist images.

There is a large variety of Buddhist images, rich in human nature. Some are meditative and others are transcendental. There are also indignant ones. They all respond as if infused with human sentiments and emotions. Buddhist statues show us how varied human emotions are.

As a consequence, Japanese Buddhist images came to be equipped with artistic traits, the likes of which are not present among other religious images throughout the world. In other words, Japanese Buddhist images embody art, by expressing human nature, which never ceases to yearn for something higher and transcendental.

As we have already seen, the rich variety of Buddhist images are truly the world class: *Kudara (Baekje) Kannon* of Horyu-ji Temple; *Todai-ji Temple’s Statues of Sunlight and Moonlight Bosatsu* (Refer to Page) and *Four Heavenly Kings* of Kaidan-do Hall; *Toshodai-ji Temple’s Statue of Ganjin*; *Kofuku-ji Temple’s Statue of*

Asura (Refer to Page) and *Ten Great Apostles*; Unkei's sculptures; the statue of an old man by Tankei and *Kongorikishi Zo (Statue of Man with Giant's Strength)* by Jokei of Sanjusangen-do Shrine.

Facing these profound images, people see themselves reflected as they think and stand in this world. They look at themselves anew, with a modest and calm mind.

The relationship between religious images and humans is never closer than in the Japanese case. It is a world created by very human and yet transcendental Buddhist images, precisely responding to various human sentiments.

It is often pointed out that Buddhist images produced after the Kamakura Period were rarely as good as their predecessors. This may be partly true. And many people mention that the main reason is the modernization of society. They say modernization deprived the Buddhist images of their wonderful expressions.

However, in my view, it was largely because in our daily life people stopped thinking much and things tended to become superficial.

In the global perspective, great religions and philosophies sprang forth from ancient times, in the 5th or 4th century B.C. at the latest. Then over the times, they gradually deteriorated and the more modern they became, the weaker they became and the more superficial they tended to be. Practical ideas permeated the world and culture followed such practical trends, bringing about a shallow and superficial social atmosphere.

We tend to think that in old times people lived in a primitive and underdeveloped world. However, speaking of religion, philosophy and idea, in other words, in terms of the human soul, ancient people may have been far richer and more profound than we imagine or more so than we modern people are.

This is shown most adequately by Japanese Buddhist images.

Whenever the chance arises, I would recommend that you face Buddhist images and stare at them. The experience will surely make you realize how human souls should be and how rich human nature is, always seeking something great and transcendental.

Story IX The Origin of Present Day Japanese Culture—The Muromachi Period

There was no “Middle Ages” in Japan

Open up any Japanese history textbook and on its pages you will see that the Kamakura and Muromachi Periods were the “Middle Ages”. Every textbook says that is so. Here, the “Middle Ages” means a period of feudalistic, crude and behind-the-times culture. *NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai* or Japan Broadcasting Corporation) *TV* recently aired a spectacular drama entitled *Taira no Kiyomori* and depicted exactly such world. Sordid and soiled warriors filled scene. However, was this true of the Kamakura Period, which I have discussed so far and also of the Muromachi Period, which I am going to discuss now?

In Western history, the “Middle Ages” refer to an intermediate time between the “Ancient” Greco-Roman era and the “Modern” era. During this time in between, after the Great Migration of the Germanic tribes, the Western world became Christianized, gradually forming the Modern West. Those who led this period were peoples other than the ancient Greeks and Romans. Their religions and languages were fundamentally different from their Greek and Roman predecessors. Therefore, The Middle Ages in the West did not develop from the ancient Greco-Roman era, but rather there was a clear separation from them.

Furthermore, a Marxist historical view was created in the 19th century based on the law of three periodic divisions used in the study of Western history. The “Ancient Age” was that of “slavery”, the “Middle Ages” was of feudalism and serfs, and the “Modern Age” is of capitalism and workers. And common in all these ages, the people were always exploited. The Marxist historical view asserts how contradictory the production system was all through human history. This view combined with the “historical view of progress” produced the historical view of the “Dark Middle Ages”. Today such views are still held by many historians. However, if such exploitation and slavery were mainstream history, the great cultures I have so far discussed would have never been born in the first place. Force cannot produce anything great. Freedom guarantees the creation of various “cultures” and instead of a class-based society, a role-sharing society has played a key role in maintaining a stable world for such a long time. Rulers have been required at all times of human history, and workers have not always been oppressed.

Speaking of cultures, Western scholars boast that they are inheritors of the Ancient Greek and Roman world, and intentionally inserted the “Middle Ages” between the

“Ancient Age” and the “Modern Age” to show off, as if there was continuity throughout the history of Western culture. The “Age of The Renaissance” is said to be the renaissance (rebirth) of the “Ancient Age”. In actuality, however, it was not a renaissance.

The “Middle Ages” in the West is also referred to as the “Dark Ages”. If the West had inherited Ancient Greek and Roman cultures, they could never have been a “Dark Ages”. What they refer to as the “Middle Ages” of Western history should be called the “New Primitive Age of Western culture,” to be exact. For, it was during this age that the cultural world of the West that continues to this day was actually formed.

On the other hand, the cultural style of this period is called “Romanesque”. Romanesque means Roman-like. According to their thinking, the West inherited Ancient Greek and Roman cultures, but clearly they did not. Romanesque style, quite contrary to the naming, is a totally new Christian culture. Anyone can see that the cultural forms are simple and primitive. The Western culture termed “Romanesque” is equivalent to the archaic culture of the Asuka Period in Japan.

The true inheritor of the Ancient and Roman cultures or, rather preservers, who were under their influence, was the “Islamic World.” Through the Islamic world, the West came to know Ancient Greek and Roman cultures.

The Western “historical view based on progress” was introduced to study Chinese history by Mr. Miyazaki Ichisada, a leading post-war scholar on East Asian history who was not very-well versed in Western history and did not know that this historical view was in fact produced by Westerners. Moreover, historians during the Meiji era even tried to apply this false view to Japanese history. The truth is, there was no such history as to back up the view in the first place.

Though during the Kamakura Period, the government changed hands from aristocrats to warriors, warriors were not at all newcomers who suddenly appeared out of the blue to take hold of political power. Warriors were born as a result of aristocratic politics. People called warriors were all originally from the Imperial families or Imperial regent families as they were referred to such as Seiwa-Genji or Kanmu-Heishi (Heike). To give a direct example, *Shin-Kokinwakashu (New Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems)*, compiled during the Kamakura Period, is equipped with characteristics that further refined those characteristics which developed from the aristocratic *Kokinwakashu (Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems)* of the Heian Period. Clearly, there is the continuation of culture.

Also, in the religious circle, new Kamakura Buddhism created by Honen, Shinran and others did not overturn the old Buddhism. The former had only limited power yet

and the latter continued to have a strong following. Kamakura sculptures were made through developing classical Tenpyo sculptures. In this sense, it was a “Renaissance.”

As we have seen, Japanese culture has been related in sequence from period to period. There was no discontinuity, unlike the Western culture. Blindly swallowing the historical divisions used in the West, Japanese scholars labeled the Kamakura and Muromachi Periods as the “Middle Ages”. However, this is wrong and may easily end up discrediting the originality of the Japanese culture.

Japan’s “Modern Age” began during the Muromachi Period, indeed!

When the Muromachi Period dawned, the culture directly connected to present-day Japanese life clearly appeared. In this sense, I think it wrong to regard the “Modern Age” as the Meiji Period onward. Rather, it began during the Muromachi Period. Let me explain this in terms of politics, industry and culture.

The Kamakura Bakufu Government was constantly plagued with internal troubles, and was eventually overthrown by Nitta Yoshisada in the 2nd year of Shokei era or the 3rd year of the Genko era (1333). Upon this, Emperor Go-Daigo, who had been banished to Oki Island, returned to Kyoto and began to govern the nation, combining the court nobles and warrior houses with the ultimate goal of establishing a government by the Emperor. He tried to restore the Emperor’s reign in Japan. A year after the Kamakura Bakufu fell, the era name was changed to Kenmu, and accordingly, this movement is called the “New Governance of Kenmu”. In the sense that the military government was ruined and court nobles regained political power, this was also called the “Restoration of Kenmu.”

Kitabatake Chikafusa, a loyal subject of Emperor Go-Daigo, wrote *Jinno Shotoki (A Chronicle of Deity Emperors and Sovereigns)*. The book explains that Japan needs the Emperor at its center as far as the nation and government are concerned. Let me partly convey the book’s thesis.

It starts from as far back as Japanese mythologies and discusses Sovereigns from the first Emperor Jinmu to the latest at that time, Emperor Go-Murakami. It maintains that governing a nation always requires spiritual support and that Emperors bear this central role, which has continued to be exercised from generation to generation. Emperors are equipped with the “Three Sacred Regalia”. According to the divine edict, the three primary virtues of honesty, benevolence and wisdom are represented by the Mirror, the Jewel and the Sword of the Regalia, respectively. This is the original and fundamental concept of Japanese morality and is consistently observed to this day.

On the other hand, politics is a matter of realism. The New Governance of Kenmu

was, after all, a hasty reform which intended to make much of the court nobles, while lacking a systematic organization to effectively use the strength of the warrior clans. Rewarding meritorious warriors was not satisfactorily carried out. Another movement by those who attempted to recover their lost domain further caused social confusion, resulting in discontent toward the government, which became too much to contain. Viewing this troublesome situation, Ashikaga Takauji raised his army to restore the Bakufu, upon which the New Government of Kenmu ended its much too brief duration of rule of merely two years.

In the third year of the Kenmu era or the first year of the Engen era (1336), Ashikaga Takauji's army defeated Kusunoki Masashige and other faithful warriors who sided with Emperor Go-Daigo in the battle of Minatogawa in Kobe of present-day Hyogo Prefecture. Subsequently, Ashikaga Takauji set up the Bakufu government in Kyoto with the prospect of restoring the military government and stipulated laws of Kenmu. But the Emperor's authority was absolutely indispensable at the center of the Japanese government. For this reason, Ashikaga Takauji had no option but to enthrone a new Emperor.

Meanwhile, Emperor Go-Daigo fled to Yoshino (Nara Prefecture), upon which two Imperial Courts were to be independently established. The Imperial Court in Yoshino was called the Southern Court, while the Imperial Court in Kyoto was called the Northern Court. The Southern Court confronted the Northern Court, calling for warriors throughout the country to rise against the Kyoto Court. The conflict between the two Courts lasted for some 60 years. This period is called the "Era of the Northern and Southern Imperial Courts."

In the 1st year of the Reiki era or the 3rd year of the Engen era (1338), Ashikaga Takauji was appointed the Commander of the Barbarian Quelling Headquarters of the East by the Emperor of the Northern Court. Ashikaga Takauji claimed that the Bakufu government would have the authority to govern by his appointment by the Emperor of the Imperial Court in Kyoto.

In order to unify warriors throughout the nation, Ashikaga Takauji gave Provincial Constables the authority to collect half of the yearly tax imposed on private domains of "Shoen" as well as the public domain. Using this privilege, Provincial Constables gained more power by making Shoen land their own property and local warriors their own subjects. Eventually, they absorbed the function of the Provincial Governorship and became powerful Provincial Constable Lords in their respective provinces.

By the time of the 3rd Shogun, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, the Southern Court lost its power and the conflict between the two Imperial Courts ended with the unification of

the two Courts.

The Bakufu government run by the Ashikaga Clan came to be called the Muromachi Bakufu, for Ashikaga Yoshimitsu built a gorgeous mansion dubbed the “Flower Palace” in the Muromachi District of Kyoto and there he engaged in governance.

Shogun Yoshimitsu was appointed Chancellor by the Emperor, for the first time as a Shogun. With Imperial authority behind him, Yoshimitsu tried to solidify rule by his Bakufu, by securing the legitimacy of the Bakufu and putting powerful Provincial Constable Lords under his rule. Furthermore, Shogun Yoshimitsu partly transferred functions of the Imperial Court, such as the governance of Kyoto and tax collection, to his Bakufu, and tried to achieve nation-wide unification.

As we have seen so far, during this period, the two Imperial Courts stood and functioned, in parallel with each other, shaking up the orthodox way of the Imperial Court. However, one thing was never uncertain. That is the fundamental principle that the Emperor alone appoints his subjects. Shogun can be appointed to office only by the Emperor. This is very noteworthy. The Government is stable when there is Imperial authority. This is precisely how Japan is as a nation. This point has been consistently maintained, unchanged, since the time when the Ritsu-Ryo laws were implemented.

The system and function of the Muromachi Bakufu almost entirely followed those of the Kamakura Bakufu. The only difference was that a Vice-Shogun was appointed in order to assist the Shogun, instead of the regent. Powerful Provincial Constable Lords from the Ashikaga Clan were appointed Vice-Shogun.

Additionally, in order to govern the Kanto Region, the Kamakura Headquarters was set up. The Kamakura Headquarters was made much of as the birthplace of the military government and enjoyed great authoritative power, acting almost independently. Owing to this, the Kamakura Headquarters gradually came to confront the Bakufu Government in Kyoto.

Chanoyu (Tea Ceremony) and Renga (Linked Verse)—the Common people’s culture developed

During the Muromachi Period, both the Imperial Court and the Bakufu Government were in Kyoto, which led to a fusion of cultures between nobles and that of the warriors. The *Kango* (Token of Permit) trade between Japan and Ming Dynasty China brought Chinese culture to Japan. Influence by prospering Buddhist Zen Sect further spread. All these combined to create a new culture.

Kinkaku (Golden Pavilion) or Rokuon-ji Temple, which was built by the 3rd Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu at Kitayama in Kyoto, well represents characteristic of the

culture in this period—the blending of various cultures.

Yoshimitsu also contributed to the creation of new theater. The Shogun became a patron of father and son Kan'ami and Ze'ami, who created Noh-Drama by elaborating the art form based on popular folk plays of *Sarugaku* and *Dengaku* which were enjoyed since the Heian Period. Noh-Play and *Kyogen* (Farce), which was a comical speech acted during the intermission of the Noh-Play, performances became very popular among warriors and the common people.

The culture during this time with Shogun Yoshimitsu as the central figure is called Kitayama Culture.

The 8th Shogun Yoshimasa built Ginkaku (Silver Pavilion) or Jisho-ji Temple at Higashiyama in Kyoto. By this time, the simple and elegant culture of *Wabi Sabi* was born and came to be admired. Ginkaku Temple embodied this trend. This is called “Higashiyama Culture”.

This period was also the time when the direct ancestor of modern Japanese culture, the culture of “WA,” made a robust appearance. The most remarkable example, I think, is the development of the architectural style called *Shoin-Zukuri*. Tatami floors, *Tokono Ma* (a solemn alcove in a guest room usually decorated with a hanging scroll), *Chigai-dana* (fancy shelves) are well-known features of a Japanese-style room and they were created during this period. With this architectural accomplishment, *Ikebana* (flower arrangement) and *Chanoyu* (tea ceremony) also came to flourish.

On the other hand, other art forms became obsolete or deteriorated. One of them was Buddhist art. It is not that Buddhist art works were no longer produced. Some were made. But they failed to express overwhelming spiritual power. This can be partly explained in the context of the social trend at that time. As the common citizens became more efficient members of society and their playing field widened significantly, they longed for material happiness more than spiritual satisfaction. Their top priority in life was no longer “heart”, which was sharply reflected in the decline of Buddhist art.

Of course, some attempts were made, by any means, to stop this materialistic trend. Zen art was a good example of such endeavors.

At Zen Sect temples, a special garden called *Kare Sansui* (Withered Mountain and River) was created, using inorganic materials such as stones and sand to express a deep and reflective state of mind.

In paintings, many pieces of *Suibokuga* (Brush paintings using only India ink) paintings were produced. Suibokuga painting eliminates colors and uses only India ink. This art will not work without compelling spiritual power.

Zen Sect monk Sesshu went abroad to Ming Dynasty China and learned the

technique of Suibokuga painting there. After he returned home to Japan, he painted many excellent Suibokuga paintings in present-day Yamaguchi. Sesshu's *Sansui Nagamaki (Long Scroll of Mountain and River)* and *Shuuto Sansui-zu (Picture of Mountain and River in Autumn and Winter)* were truly masterpieces. Sesshu is said to have established the art of Japanese Sansuiga painting. However, he stayed in China for only two years, which was hardly long enough to acquire the essence of Sansui painting. So, it has to be admitted that Sesshu could not go beyond the romanticist world filled with admiration toward China.

After Sesshu, the Kano school was to reign over the Japanese artists circle, using the technique of Yamato-e painting in Sansuiga painting.

Most remarkable about this period was the birth of a culture in which wide groups of people enjoyed. Warrior houses, noble clans and ordinary common people all got together and enjoyed various art forms. Among them were Noh Kyogen (Noh-Drama Farce) and Chanoyu (tea ceremony). Especially interesting was *Waka* (Japanese poetry). A person was to compose the beginning part of a poem and then another person to compose the latter part and participants repeatedly composed poems in this manner. This was called *Renga* (Linked verse) and was widely enjoyed. Even during a village meeting, people really had a good time, composing Renga poems. Literary art became a delightful pastime and social function, the likes of which are to be seen nowhere else in the world. This clearly shows the high cultural quality level of the Japanese people.

Picture books called *Otogi Soshi* (Fairy Books) were also published. Fairy tales such as *Issun Boshi (One-inch Bonze)* and *Urashima Taro (Fisherman Who Went to Dragon Palace in the Sea)* were popular and widely read among people.

Culture was enjoyed by all and no longer a pleasure monopolized by the ruling class.

The Shogun's political power was meager and conflict and troubles were rampant between the Vice Shogun and Provincial Constable Lords. Fed-up with the situation, court nobles and monks escaped to various local regions, thus spreading a new tide of culture nation-wide. This was another characteristic of the period.

Subsequently, castle towns became prosperous in various regions. Yamaguchi, for instance, where Sesshu lived under the Ouchi Clan, was among them. In Ashikaga (Tochigi Prefecture), the Ashikaga School was founded and became the center of learning. Also, at temples across the country, education for the children of warriors and common citizens alike came to be implemented.

With widespread culture reaching local regions and common citizens, the fundamental customs of life concerning dressing, eating and living, which have been

generally observed to this day, were formed. Annual events such as village festivals and *Bon*-dance gathering, the habit of eating three meals a day and the use of seasonings like *Miso* (soybean paste) and *Shoyu* (soy sauce) all began during the Muromachi Period.

In other words, Japanese modern life already started as far back as the Muromachi Period. So, it is certainly wrong to say that the Modern Age in Japan began with the Meiji Restoration.

Humanism as the basis of Japanese culture

When discussing Japanese culture, people often use such words as *Mono no Aware* and *Wabi Sabi*. The phrase “*Mono no Aware*”, meaning “sentiments of things”, was extracted from *Genji Monogatari (The Tale of Genji)* by Motoori Norinaga, a classical scholar of the Edo Period, in explaining creativity based on human sentiments and sensitivity, which abundantly runs through the Japanese classics including *Manyoshu (Collection of the Ten Thousand Leaves)*, *Kokinwakashu (Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems)* and *Genji Monogatari (The Tale of Genji)*, and, therefore, it is considered to be the most eminent characteristic of the Japanese culture. However, the expression “*Mono no Aware*” itself is only a partial understanding and to think “*Mono no Aware*” is all there is to Japanese culture is quite misleading.

In European cultures, humanism refers to, first and foremost, acts, will and the strength of the will in human life. In this sense, the Renaissance is the very manifestation of humanism.

On the other hand, the term “*Mono no Aware*” totally drives such human deeds, such as will and strong energy, to the side-line. But then, doesn't Japanese culture have such elements? Of course, it does. For, “*Mono no Aware*” comes only after these human actions and will are demonstrated to the fullest. “*Mono no Aware*” is felt most strongly when there is impressive behavior or energetic will in the background. This is no different from the Western humanism.

Only, the Japanese do not like to show brazen humanism. Instead, the Japanese people express humanism coated with the delicate wording of “*Mono no Aware*” and connote the sentiment. Certainly, the Japanese cherish this proclivity.

This is the same with “*Wabi Sabi*”.

The following Japanese poem composed by Fujiwara no Teika is often quoted in order to typically illustrate “*Wabi Sabi*.”

Miwataseba Hana mo Momiji mo Nakarikeri Ura no Tomaya no Aki no Yugure
(When I look around, there are no beautiful scenes of cherry blossoms of spring or

colored leaves of autumn at this lonely hour of an autumn dusk. Alas, I can only see humble seaside huts!)

An autumn dusk without cherry blossoms and colored leaves—in this scenery of nothingness, “Wabi Sabi” spirit finds something good and touching. But it is only a superficial perception that this nothingness is totally the characteristic of Japanese culture. This would not at all be on the mark.

Scenery without cherry blossoms and the colored leaves of autumn can be fully understood only when one has seen with delight cherry blossoms and colored leaves. With the spiritual energy to appreciate flowers and colored leaves, the forlornness is all the more contrastingly felt at an autumn dusk, humble seaside huts in view. To perceive “Wabi Sabi”, we cannot do without humanism which is identical with Western humanism.

In tea ceremony, “Wabi Sabi” is also mentioned. When Sen no Rikyu established a sublime ritual of the tea ceremony, the aesthetic terminology “Wabi Sabi” was used in describing tea cups. It was explained in connection with Zen culture. However, in order to have “Wabi Sabi” truly express the aesthetic awareness of the Japanese people, an understanding of the entire cultural background, which is of Shinto and Buddhist cultures, is absolutely necessary. We must realize that Shinto and Buddhist cultures are precisely the hot magma of humanism and that this magma is always in the bosom of the Japanese people who have continuously created Buddhist statues. This is also true of the world of painting up until the time of painter Katsushika Hokusai. This culture can be founded on the basis of human actions, will and the very energy that compels them.

“Mono no Aware” and “Wabi Sabi” are mere instruments to express powerful humanism in the background, delicately coating it with words that the Japanese favor and, I repeat, this humanism is nearly the same as Western humanism. Differences arise due to differences in religion. It is absolutely important to acknowledge that Japanese culture is firmly based on humanism.

However, there is a popular view that “Mono no Aware” and “Wabi Sabi” are exclusively Japanese aesthetic concepts and that Westerners have neither of them. This view is in the same line with such widespread views held during the Meiji Period and thenceforth, that culture belongs to the Western world and that Japanese culture originated in China and developed through learning from China. These views believe that the concepts of “Mono no Aware” and “Wabi Sabi” are the essence of Japanese culture in terms of aesthetic consciousness, serving to supplement Western culture.

These views define Japanese culture in a narrower sense and depreciate its value.

Instead, we must grasp the powerful humanism, which is the undercurrent of “Mono no Aware” and “Wabi Sabi”, as the basis of Japanese culture. The responsibility to voice this fundamental fact about our culture absolutely lies on those living now in the present.

Cultural foundation nurtured by generals of the Warring Era

The Ashikaga Shogun of the Muromachi Bakufu had an intrinsically feeble footing, in terms of fiefdom and military strength, which was no different from that of Provincial Constable Lords. The Shogun’s firmest ground was the Imperial authority that was bestowed upon them by the Emperor.

When Shogun Yoshimitsu passed away, Provincial Constable Lords gained further strength, and among them the Vice Shogun of the Hosokawa Clan and the Yamana Clan, of a Provincial Constable Lord, came into competition with each other over the control of the Bakufu. Dispute over a successor for the Shogunate triggered a war in the first year of the Onin era (1467). This is called the “War of Onin”.

Warriors throughout the entire country split up into two forces, the Eastern Army led by the Hosokawa Clan and the Western Army under the Yamana Clan and a long and devastating war was fought nonstop, without a pause, in Kyoto as a main battle field for 11 years. Thus, the once beautiful Capital of Kyoto was totally ruined and burned to ashes.

Riding on this chaotic confusion, a new military trend was born in which lower ranked warriors outdid their superiors based solely on their own military strength. This is called *Gekokujo* (those below overcoming those above). This kind of rivalry rarely happens in the history of Japan. So, this period can be said to have been quite unique.

There were also other interesting cases in which warriors and farmers united to repel the rule of the Provincial Constable Lord and govern the province by themselves. Yamashiro Province (Kyoto Prefecture) was such a case. In Kaga Province (Ishikawa Prefecture), followers of the Buddhist Ikko Sect instigated a riot and subsequently governed the region for nearly 100 years.

Independently from the Bakufu, some War Lords tried to rule their provinces on their own. The War Lords may sound like a belligerent lot, always busily engaged in battles. But they were not. War Lords could not afford to wage a war unless their fiefdom had enough wealth. Once War Lords got hold of power by turning Shoen domain and public land into their own fiefdom, they launched large-scale irrigation and river improvement projects and endeavored to enlarge farmland. They enthusiastically set to such tasks as developing mineral mines, protecting commerce and industry and

improving transportation systems. They built a castle on a mountain or on a hilltop, using nature as a fortress. In the flat lands at the foot of the mountains or hills, they built their residences, and having their subjects and people, who were engaged in commerce and industry, live in the perimeter, thus forming a castle town. Castle towns became the center of politics, finance and culture of their fiefdom.

Prominent War Lord clans were the Hojo Clan of Sagami Province (Kanagawa Prefecture), the Asakura Clan of Echizen Province (Fukui Prefecture), the Imagawa Clan who ruled Suruga (Shizuoka Prefecture) and Mikawa (eastern part of Aichi Prefecture) Provinces, the Uesugi Clan of Echigo Province (Niigata Prefecture), the Takeda Clan of Kai Province (Yamanashi Prefecture) and the Mouri Clan, whose influence was vast, from Aki Province (Hiroshima Prefecture) to all over the Chugoku Region, Kyushu and Shikoku.

They formed the basis of a new society.

Eventually, appearing among the powerful War Lords were those who grandly aspired to rule all of Japan by first going into Kyoto, then seeking with the Emperor's approval to assume authority, and eventually being appointed Shogun, the highest ranking appointment for warriors, by the Emperor.

As the Muromachi Bakufu deteriorated, trade between Japan and Ming Dynasty China came to be conducted exclusively by the Hosakawa Clan, who cooperated with merchants of Sakai (Osaka Prefecture) and by the Ouchi Clan, who worked with merchants of Hakata (Fukuoka Prefecture). The "*Kango* trade," using a tally as a trading permit, was resumed and monopolized by the Ouchi Clan until it was finally stopped by the middle of the 16th century. Japanese pirates (*Wako* as referred to by the Chinese) were intermittently active at one time and slack at other times, but they never totally disappeared. And official trade between Japan and the Ming continued without interruption.

In the Korean Peninsula, Koryo fell at the end of the 14th century and the state of "Joseon Dynasty Korea" or "Yi Dynasty Korea" was founded. For the first time, the appellation of "Joseon" entered history.

Joseon Dynasty Korea was also harassed by rampant *Wako* activity, as was the Ming, and asked Japan to crackdown on the pirates and to establish an official relationship regarding commerce. The Bakufu accepted the request. For some time trade between Japan and Korea seemed to carry on splendidly. However, probably fed up with the never-ending piracy on the part of *Wako* pirates, Korea suddenly attacked Tsushima, with a force of 200 ships and 17,000 men at the beginning of the 15th century. This incident was called "Invasion of Oei". Because of this, trade between Japan and Korea

was interrupted. Thereafter, Korea concluded a treaty with the So Clan of Tsushima and agreed to resume trading solely through the So Clan. It looked as if, for a while, trade was going well. But then again, an adverse situation arose. At the beginning of the 16th century, Japanese people who had settled in a Korean port town protested unjust treatment by Korean officials, which sparked a riot that was later suppressed (The Riot of Nimpo). After this incident, trading with Korea gradually declined.

In Okinawa, during the early half of the 15th century, the Sho Clan united three powers to establish the Kingdom of Ryukyu. With the Capital in Shuri, the Kingdom prospered by trading with Japan and the Ming, and going further to far-away Southeast Asia, facilitated trade as intermediaries.

Column 9: Charm of Noh

The world has many masked theater performances. They are masques and masquerades.

What sense does wearing masks make? First of all, you can hide yourself behind the mask. You can feel free from your everyday self, and be spiritually liberated. So people can act quite licentious and indecent during a masked festival. However, as far as theater and dance are concerned, which are performed for a definite purpose of expressing something, licentiousness and indecency cannot be the vital message. In most Western masked plays, masks are used to exaggeratingly emphasize a certain trait that we humans have. Putting it in reverse, the mask scrapes out the variety which an individual possesses, spotlighting a certain feature.

Italian masked theater of Commedia dell'arte is an extremely comical act from beginning to end. Greek masquerades are known for their extremely radical exaggerations. There are many masked dances in the East. They chiefly represent entities severed from humanity. As a result, in general, masked plays and dances tend to be ridiculous with limited artistic expression.

However, the Japanese masked theater of *Noh* is the sole exception. Exactly contrary to expectation, in Noh performances, masks that conceal astoundingly reveal the hidden core of human nature.

It is said that Noh was created by combining various elements of diversified cultures: first, *Sarugaku* (comical and acrobatic acts), based on *Sangaku*, which was introduced from the Continent, was combined with Japanese *Bugaku* (dancing to court music), Buddhist elements were added which finally developed into the refined art that is Noh. During the era of the Northern and Southern Courts, under the patronage of Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, Noh was established as an art form. Kan'ami and his son

Ze'ami were the greatest contributors to the establishment of Noh art.

Ze'ami wrote *Fuushikaden (The Transmission of the Flower of Acting Style)*, in which the essence of Noh is fully explained. The book is listed as one of the most important books on theater.

Ze'ami says that Noh life is flowers and asks what flowers are. He also explains that flowers, excitement and rareness come from the same mind. The performer (a flower) is described as the “beauty of *Take* (length or width),” meaning the dignity of the art. The supreme form of beauty is “*Yugen*” (sublime beauty), which is a gift of nature. Therefore, when an actor who has this natural gift performs something exciting, exceedingly magnificent beauty is brought forth.

Then, what is something exciting? Ze'ami defines it as *Mono Gurui* (a lunatic and disturbed state of mind). There are two types of this: one is lunacy caused by being cursed or bewitched by deities, hotoke, living spirits or the dead and, for the other, a lunatic state brought about by sentiments people feel on such occasions as separation from parents, a desperate search for the missing child, desertion by a husband or the death of a dear wife.

He also emphasizes that it is absolutely indispensable for an actor to practice acting over and over again in order to perfectly play a lunatic character.

Ze'ami continues to state that the actor can actually embody deities, living spirits and the dead by becoming lunatic himself through repetitious practice. The actor must be an intermediary who communicates with the world of deities, hotoke and the dead, thus becoming a bridge connecting this world, the real world, and another unreal world.

Lunacy brought about by extremely disturbed sentiments means that the extreme point of the human mind leads into a world of deities and hotoke. Here lies the origin of Noh's most profound spiritual depth, which is completely different from other masked plays in the rest of the world.

I have already mentioned that Noh is a kind of masked theater. However, in Noh, not every actor wears a mask: the *Shite* (the leading actor) wears a mask, while the *Waki* (the supporting actor) does not. This has great significance. The masked “Shite” interacts with deities and the dead of the unreal world, while an unmasked human of the real world, the present world, enters the same stage and also interacts with them. This mixed and yet strangely harmonious world is exactly “Yugen” (sublime beauty).

In Noh performances, “Shite” is *Okina*, an old man. This old man appears on the stage. This is also of great significance. The old man wears two masks: one with a mild, smiling expression and the other with a stern contour. These are called *Jo* (尉) and indicate that the old man is equipped with the qualities of both a deity and human. The

old man is a curse-citing monk, deity of a paddy or *Monjyu* (wisdom) *Bosatsu*, hinting at something divine, but he does not represent a specific deity. Equipped with both divine and human qualities, the old man is an intermediary between deity and human. When “Shite”, whom I have just described, and “Waki,” who represents man in the real world, interact on the stage, this stage of Noh performance becomes the world of “Yugen” (sublime beauty).

There are many people throughout the world who were fascinated and influenced by Noh. Just to mention one, William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), an Irish poet and playwright of early 20th century, comes to mind. Under the influence of Noh, Yeats wrote many books and one of them was *The Well of the Hawk*. This is the story of a girl who is possessed of the spirit of the hawk and falls into lunatic state.

Story X Encounter with Heterogeneous Cultures—The Warring States and Azuchi-Momoyama Period

Encounter with southern barbarians (visiting Europeans) and Christianity

In the 12th year of Tenbun era (1543), a Portuguese ship drifted ashore on Tanegashima Island. This was the first time that Westerners came to Japan.

At that time, organized European maritime explorations began in the Western world. To the European mind, they may have been explorations, but to Asian eyes they were nothing less than invasions by Western powers.

In Europe, having driven out Islamic rule from the Iberian Peninsula, Spain and Portugal passionately competed in an race of expansion toward the East. They had two goals in mind: to promote Christianity in Asia and then, with this spiritual foothold, to eventually colonize Asian countries, and to bring home rare Asian goods such as pepper and other spices.

The Mediterranean Sea was still under Islamic control and so the new powers discovered a new sea route, sailing southwards along the African coasts and then out into the Indian Ocean. Among these explorers, some sailed out into the Atlantic Ocean and reached America. Christopher Columbus (1451?-1506) of Spain was one of them. In either case, their final destination was the East.

In 1494, Spain and Portugal concluded between themselves an arbitrary treaty called the “Treaty of Tordesillas”. This was an outrageously absurd treaty in the eyes of Asians. The treaty stipulated that Spain and Portugal split the entire world in half and that both acknowledge each other’s territorial rights.

This treaty put Japan in Portugal’s “territory”. That is why the first Europeans to reach Japan were Portuguese.

The Portuguese who landed on Tanegashima Island brought firearms with them to Japan. The Japanese people immediately sensed that this new weapon would become a real threat to them. The ingenious Japanese instantly mastered the technology and produced firearms themselves. In fact, Japan became the world’s largest manufacturer of firearms at that time. And this abundance in firearms facilitated a remarkable national advance during this period.

In the 18th year of Tenbun era (1549), Jesuit (of the Society of Jesus) missionary Francis Xavier (1506-1552) came to Japan. The Society of Jesus was one sect of Christianity that ardently engaged in proselytization, the promotion of the Christian faith, and at the same time they were a missionary army, putting firearms on their altar.

Xavier came to Japan with a definite purpose in mind, unlike those previous Portuguese who had happened to drift ashore on a Japanese island and accidentally introduced firearms to Japan.

On landing upon Japan, Xavier was amazed to find that Japan already had a high-level culture of her own, remarkably different from other regions where he had promoted Christianity up until then. Therefore, he also realized that it would not be an easy task to convert the Japanese people to the Christian religion.

It was explained that in Christianity the absolute Almighty God created everything. So, the Japanese people tried to understand this Almighty God as the same entity in essence as their Dainichi Nyorai (Supreme Buddha). In Secret Tantric Buddhism, Dainichi Nyorai is akin to the Sun deity, sitting at the center of the entire universe. However, Christians believe that even the Sun deity was created by their God Almighty. Japanese Shinto believes, as clearly shown in Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters), their deities of “Kami-gami” are not absolute creators of all, but the universe was there in the beginning. Nature existed before kami-gami.

Japanese people were shocked to see the image of Crucifixion (Christ was killed on the cross, crucified). They could not understand why Jesus Christ had to be killed in such a brutal manner. They could not understand either that man carried the “original sin”. Man was born from nature, so how could man possibly be sinful to begin with? They did not know what Adam and Eve did to feel guilty of betraying their God. Furthermore, Jesus Christ was crucified and died on the cross, shouldering the burden of the original sin which Adam and Eve were said to have committed. These things are totally European in thinking, unique to Western people, and the Japanese people could hardly accept any of it as truths. In fact, images of the cross, the Crucifix, Christ and Mary do exist in Japan, but symbolically the crucifixion itself was made in Europe, and not in Japan.

I believe that there was a significant difference between European thinking on religion and Japanese ideas about religion. Thereafter, Christianity was promoted in Japan to a certain extent, but it was far from a successful mission. Many attribute the failure to the anti-Christian suppression policy implemented by Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu. Of course, that was a big factor. But far greater or even the most decisive was the difference between the respective religious ideas that lay at the core. Japanese religion—unification and co-practice of Shinto and Buddhism—or *Yamato Gogoro* (Japanese mentality) was firmly rooted in the bosom of the Japanese people.

Larger European influence was felt, rather, in material matters when Japan encountered the Western world.

Calling the newcomers “southern barbarians” since they came from south, the Japanese people engaged in trade with the southern barbarians.

Gunpowder, clocks, and goods made of glass were imported into Japan, while silver was exported from Japan. It may be unbelievable to us today, but at that time Japan abundantly produced silver and became a world power in terms of producing of gold and silver. Iwami Silver Mines, which is designated as a World Heritage site, used to be pinpointed on world atlases of the time.

Lords who were engaged in trade with the southern barbarians came to protect Christianity and some even became converted Christians themselves, in order to continue favorable trade relationships. One of them, the Christian Lord of the Omura Clan opened the port of Nagasaki and donated land to the Jesuits.

Thus, religious promotion (proselytization) expanded from Nagasaki to Yamaguchi and Kyoto. In these places, churches called *Nanban-dera* (Southern Barbarians Temples) were built. Further, in the 10th year of the Tensho era (1582), three Christian Lords in Kyushu sent four boy students to the Pope under the auspices of the Jesuits in Japan. The boys were most ardently welcomed in Rome. However, after they returned home to Japan in the 18th year of Tensho era (1590), they could hardly promote Christianity in Japan. It was too late. By that time, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (Refer Page) had banned Christianity in the 15th year of Tensho era (1587).

One view asserts that Hideyoshi’s attempt to expand overseas was a reckless aggression. On the other hand, others may say that Hideyoshi’s attempt was to avoid the risk of invasions from Western powers. By then, the Asian state of what is today The Philippines was under Spanish rule since Ferdinand Magellan’s (1480-1521) visit in 1521 and was occupied as a colony, which was named after the Spanish King Felipe II (1527-1598). This information somehow reached Japan. Prior to this, Hideyoshi had sent letters asking The Philippines and Taiwan to become subordinate to Japan. Japan thought that unless Japan stood up against the movements of European invasions, Japan’s neighbors in the East would all end up as Western colonies.

Hideyoshi’s plan to send his troops to Ming China was conceived out of his recognition that Japan is the leading power of the East, at a time when an imminent Spanish invasion was looming. It was a grand plan to prevent Ming China from following the fate of the colonized Philippines. In Hideyoshi’s mind, it would be most unlikely for Ming China to become Western colony as the Philippines did, if Japan, using her overwhelming power of fine firearms, was to protect Ming China. As a first step, Hideyoshi asked Korea to be subordinate to Japan and to guide the mobilization into Ming China. However, Korea refused this request, upon which Japan attacked

Korea. In the 20th year of the Tensho era (1592), Hideyoshi sent a 150,000-strong army and forced the Capital of Hansong to surrender. Nevertheless, with a strong Korean maritime force and Ming China sending troops to assist Korea, the situation became unfavorable to Japan. For the time being, Japan concluded a peace treaty with the Ming. This incident was called the “Campaign of Bunroku”. Afterwards, negotiations with the Ming failed. Once again, Japan sent a huge army of over 140,000 strong. This was called the “Campaign of Keicho”. The basic motivation for sending troops to Korea was to counter an imminent Spanish invasion. However, Japan was unable to share her intention to prevent Spain from invading and colonizing Asia with her neighbors Korea and Ming China.

When Hideyoshi died the following year, no one would follow through with his grand plan and Japan was obliged to withdraw her troops from the Peninsula.

Nobunaga with his Azuchi-jo Castle and Hideyoshi with his Osaka-jo Castle

It was by the ingenious use of firearms brought from Europe to Japan that Oda Nobunaga of Owari Province (the western part of present-day Aichi Prefecture) stood out most prominently among the War Lords of the period.

In the 3rd year of the Eiroku era (1560), Nobunaga defeated Imagawa Yoshimoto of Mikawa Province (Shizuoka Prefecture) in the Battle of Okehazama and entered center stage of history, further expanding his power.

In the 10th year of the Eiraku era (1567), Nobunaga went up to Kyoto and arranged for Ashikaga Yoshiaki to ascend to Shogun, setting out on an ambitious plan for nation-wide unification. However, in the first year of the Tensho era (1573), Nobunaga expelled Shogun Yoshiaki, the very one of his own choosing, and destroyed the Muromachi Bakufu.

Furthermore, Nobunaga attacked Enryaku-ji Temple at Mt. Hiei, which had joined forces with anti-Nobunaga lords, and set the entire sacred mountain on fire to totally and mercilessly annihilate the enemy. He also fiercely fought against armed protesters during the “Ikko Sect’s Riot,” who were of the Buddhist Jodoshin-shu (Pure Land True Sect), and eventually suppressed them. Nobunaga was extremely harsh and brutal when he attacked Buddhist forces that intervened in secular politics.

On the other hand, Nobunaga accepted Christian missionaries with leniency. This was not because he intended to be a Christian himself, but rather he was compelled, on purely political motives, to get to know the Christian world better. Likewise, his ambition to unite all of Japan was indispensable in ultimately expanding overseas.

In the 3rd year of the Tensho era (1575), using his powerful squads of gunners to the

fullest, Nobunaga defeated troops led by the Takeda Clan of Kai Province (Yamanashi Prefecture) in the Battle of Nagashino. The following year, Nobunaga built a magnificent castle of five tiers and seven stories called Azuchi-jo Castle at Azuchi on the eastern lakeshore of Lake Biwa. The unification of all of Japan seemed to be well under way.

However, halfway through conquering the Mouri Clan of the Chugoku Region, Nobunaga was betrayed and ambushed by his most “loyal” retainer, Akechi Mitsuhide. On the occasion of this unexpected tragedy, Nobunaga was left with no other option but to kill himself at Honno-ji Temple in Kyoto. This was called the “Incident at Honno-ji Temple.” Nobunaga was 49 years old at the time of his death.

Nobunaga’s successor was Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a retainer of the House of Oda. Hideyoshi was in the midst of fighting against the Mouri Clan when the Incident at Honno-ji Temple occurred. Hideyoshi lost no time in making a temporary truce with the Mouri Clan and hurriedly returned to Kyoto to attack and kill traitorous Akechi Mitsuhide. After destroying Akechi Mitsuhide, Hideyoshi also defeated other retainers of the Oda Family who were rivals over leadership and thus secured his status as successor to Nobunaga.

In the 11th year of the Tensho era (1583), Hideyoshi built gigantic Osaka-jo Castle. It had five tiers and nine stories and the interior was covered with gold foil. Hideyoshi was given the title Imperial Regent by the Imperial Court and authorized by the Emperor to govern the entire nation. The Emperor’s authority made Hideyoshi’s status officially clear. From this, we know how much Imperial authority was esteemed.

In the 18th year of the Tensho era (1590), Hideyoshi had put all of the Great Lords under his control and completed the unification of Japan.

Hideyoshi carried out an important nationwide land census, which was called *Taiko Kenchi* (Taiko’s land survey). “Taiko” generally meant “retired top adviser to the Emperor”, but it often refers to Hideyoshi, as in Taiko Hideyoshi or just Taiko.

By Hideyoshi’s order, the amount of rice production by land division in each region was evaluated and a land census book was made in order to grade each section of land and to record the amount of rice crop produced by each piece of land, in terms of *koku* (approximately 180 liters in volume). He put in order complicated and duplicated rights and privileges of Shoen previously managed by court nobles, temples and shrines, and established the principle of “one portion of field for one farmer”. Thus, farmers were granted ownership of their farmland. A system of overall taxation was established, in which yearly taxes were to be submitted by the village as a whole, according to the amount of production of rice by the “*koku*”. A decree to confiscate swords was issued

and weapons owned by farmers were confiscated. The separation between farmers and soldiers was clearly made. This was partly intended in order to prevent armed farmers from joining in riots, but more significantly, it was meant to maintain social order and safety by removing arms from laymen.

This may well be called a “rationalization” of Japanese society, rather than “modernization”. A clear distinction from the West is that Japan did not allow the free use of weapons. In Europe, improvements in weaponry became a compelling point of power in “modernization”, but Japan clearly rejected the notion that weapons served such a function.

Grand culture created by War Lords

What do the Japanese people have in mind when they picture a castle? A high, raised stone base structure, surrounded by white-walled fences, corner turrets magnificently looking down upon the world below and the surrounding moats. These were precisely products of the Azuchi-Momoyama Period. Besides Nobunaga’s Azuchi-jo Castle and Hideyoshi’s Fushimi-jo (in Kyoto) and Osaka-jo Castles, many grand and beautiful castles were built in Himeji, Okayama, Hiroshima and Matsumoto, just to mention a few. The grandeur and beauty are well preserved in extant Himeji-jo and Matsumoto-jo Castles and we are lucky to enjoy them to our heart’s content. These castles were built mainly for their architectural beauty, to proudly compete among various fiefdoms, rather than as military fortresses. This is clearly seen from the characteristic beauty of each castle. If castles had been built with a strong military purpose, Japanese castles would have all been uniformly constructed.

Inside the castle mansion, sliding doors and folding screens were decorated with gorgeous wall pictures. Talented artists such as Kano Eitoku and Sanraku were employed by Nobunaga and Hedyoshi and they produced a great number of aesthetic productions. They tended to be a little too decorative in character. Above all, Hasegawa Tohaku was a leading artist of this period with his strong brush touches. *Shorin-zu Byobu (Painted Pine Forest Folding Screen)* (Tokyo National Museum) is particularly famous. Tohaku’s excellent brushes also created *Jumoku-zu (Picture of Trees)* and *Nehan-zu (Picture of the Death of Buddha)* painted on the sliding doors of Chishaku-in Temple.

On the other hand, very few Buddhist statues and pictures were produced. This is highly noteworthy. No one will deny that the scarcity of Buddhist works during this period certainly reflected the atmosphere of the time.

Though the promotion of Christianity was eventually banned and died out, the fact

that the Christian faith sprouted in Japanese soil remained very important, for it meant that the Japanese people came into contact with European people and their culture for the first time. We can have a glimpse of Western influence through extant folding screens depicting the southern barbarians' characteristics.

Foreign goods such as *Pan* (bread), *Kastera* (Portuguese cakes), *Kappa* (raincoat), *Karuta* (cards) and tobacco were introduced into the daily life of the Japanese. Clocks and organs were especially prized. Material matters were readily accepted.

Typography was also introduced. It was used to print Christian-related books and brochures. However, it was not probably fit for printing books written in Japanese, and did not develop further—it soon disappeared. In this matter, Japanese society went back to wood-block printing once again.

When we hear the term “the Warring States Period”, we are apt to think that it was a bad and adverse time, when the people lived under hardship, suffering and living a miserable life. In fact, history books that discuss this “difficult period” have been written, one after another. However, the truth is, as I have already explained, that War Lords did their best to secure power by expanding cultivated land and improving the infrastructure so that crop production would rise as well as promoting industries and commerce. So, economically, the period was awash in high productivity and the people's life became rich and satisfying.

The richness was directly seen in clothing. Many people could afford to wear *Kosode* (small-sleeved kimono) and they enjoyed choosing colors and patterns for their kimono. The production of cotton increased and cotton became popular clothing material, replacing the hemp that was hitherto used.

New culture of Chanoyu (tea ceremony) came to be popularly enjoyed by prominent merchants in big cities and Great Lords. Tea ceremony experts such as Sen no Rikyu were prized.

The role played by the Envoy to Europe of Keicho era

The Envoy to Europe of the Tensho era left Japan in the 11th year of Tensho era (1583), accompanying four boys. This turned out to be a plot devised by Jesuit priest Valignano to claim the successful Christianization of Japan, which was not at all the case. On the other hand, the Envoy to Europe of the Keicho era, which set off in the 18th year of the Keicho era (1613), was a diplomatic mission with the aim of trade and exchange with Catholic nations of the West by the Tokugawa Bakufu in alliance with Date Masamune, a prominent Lord in the Tohoku Region. Up until now, this mission has been described as religious mission, because the mission has been studied and

interpreted by exclusively Christian-related scholars. And in this sense, it was regarded as a totally fruitless mission. For, the Tokugawa Bakufu had already banned and oppressed Christianity in the 18th year of the Keicho era (1613), and the general trend then was leaning towards strengthening relationships with Protestant nations rather than Catholic nations, like Holland.

However, I must say that this is quite a superficial interpretation. Once seen apart from religious and commercial perspectives, it was far more likely to be a political attempt at expansionism. Relying on the abundant financial strength of Date Masamune's Sendai Clan, the Tokugawa Bakufu had a galleon of 500-tonnage made, the same as those the European powers used in their great maritime voyages of expansion, and on completion of the ship, sent a diplomatic mission to Mexico and European countries. This was certainly a very timely incident. Therefore, we can highly regard this as a grand overseas achievement—the Japanese Envoy, aboard Japan's first home-made oceangoing ship, which was navigated by the Japanese themselves, and crossed the vast waters of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. But we never can reduce this voyage to another failed fruitless mission, the same as before. In older times, there were Envoys to Tang, but they were never received on equal terms. This latest Envoy to Europe was carried out on perfectly equal terms with the West.

In fact, this Envoy was composed of some 180 men (including thirty or so Spaniards who were visiting Japan), out of whom nearly 20 people went as far as Spain and Rome. Warrior Hasekura Tsunenaga and merchants from Sakai, Kyoto and Nagoya were among them. While visiting their host countries, they attended baptisms out of courtesy, but in actuality, they were a diplomatic mission with the major purpose of assessing the situation in Western countries. In support of this, Hasekura wrote 19 books that recorded his travels, and through these firsthand written books, the Bakufu was able to correctly grasp the situation in the West. (These travel records had been preserved until the Meiji Period, but were lost in later years. My guess is that someone within a religious circle read the records and found that they were against their interests and disposed of them, claiming that they have been “lost”.)

Hasekura dropped by Manila on his way home to Japan, where he witnessed a battle between Spain and Holland, in which Spain lost. It is quite understandable that the Bakufu decided to trade with Holland, rather than with Spain or Portugal on the basis of the information brought by the Envoy to Europe. Finally, in the 6th year of the Genna era, Hasekura returned to Nagasaki aboard a “red-mark ship,” which was officially granted by the Bakufu, together with a retainer of the Date House, Yokozawa Shogen. In Nagasaki, they were interviewed by the Governor of the Bakufu. It is thought that

Hasekura, in as much detail as possible, reported his experiences to the Bakufu. With conditions that he should refrain from proselytizing and live in seclusion and so forth, Hasekura was finally allowed to go back to Sendai under the reign of the Date Clan.

Column 10: Castle Towers

The largest castle extant now in Japan is Himeji-jo Castle. This grand castle was constructed by Ikeda Terumasa who fought the Battle of Sekigahara on Tokugawa's side. With 520,000-koku Himeji fief to his name, it took him eight years to complete construction of the castle, starting from the 6th year of the Keicho era (1601). It stands on a hill 46 meters above sea level, with a five-storied castle tower of similar height and three small towers in the east, northeast and west, which are connected with passage turrets, corner turrets, gates and northern turrets and surrounded by white-walled fences. What a grand and gorgeous structure! Nicknamed Shirasagi-jo Castle (*shirasagi* being a beautiful and elegant white heron), whoever looks up this most splendid castle, the castle leaves no one unmoved by its utter beauty and dignity.

Castles are essentially military products and fortified defensiveness is the most vital factor. To meet this military requirement, beauty and dignity are not so important, or rather unnecessary.

At present, there are 12 castles altogether which are preserved and stand nearly as they used to be. All of them were built after the Warring States were pacified and stabilized. Himeji-jo Castle is not the only one filled with breathtaking beauty and dignity. The rest are as beautiful and dignified and at the same time, each has its own characteristic. The first castle to realize the drastic change from the drab, military defense-emphasized conception to an aesthetic concept centering on beauty and dignity was Azuchi-jo Castle, built by Oda Nobunaga. It is a thousand pities that we can no longer see and appreciate this legendary castle today. Fortunately, however, some sources concerning the castle are extant and relying on them, efforts are well under way to restore the old castle.

Documentation written by Luis Frois (1532-1597), who came to Japan and actually saw Azuchi-jo Castle himself, exist. Though it is an account that is a little lengthy, let me quote from it:

He [Nobunaga] built a seven-storied castle, which is said to be the most magnificent that has ever been built in Japan up until this time, at Mt. Azuchi in Oumi Province [Shiga Prefecture], 14 *ri* [56 kilometers] away from the Capital. All was made of uncut stones. The castle stands on such high and thick walls. In the

construction of the highest building on top, it took 4,000 to 5,000 men to lift several stones up there. One stone, in particular, was pulled up by 6,000 to 7,000 men. [Hereafter omitted.]

Walls and fences are astoundingly tall and a suitable technology was deftly employed. The castle is made of uncut stones and they are as solid and gorgeous as our Western stone architecture made of cut stones and mortar.

Gorgeous palace and halls; exquisitely beautiful windows; glittering gold inside; wooden pillars painted red with lacquer and the rest of pillars sprayed with gold; huge warehouse for storage of food; beautiful garden with a variety of shrubs, fresh greens, natural rocks and stones arranged with unique artistic taste, and ponds for fish and birds; doors painted black with lacquer and studded with iron; roof-tiles framed with gold spray on the top of the entire architecture as well as on the houses in the town; numerous forts equipped with watch bells in the perimeter; the new splendid palace (built adjacent to Nobunaga's mansion, together with a recreation house); countless rooms decorated with pictures in gold; fresh greenery everywhere you look, and extremely vast and spacious land. Looking beyond the endless spread of land, there is a big lake on one side with many kinds of boats coming and going, while on the other side, farmland stretches as far as eyes can reach. In between, castles and a number of villages are spotted. And penetrating and covering all of these is unparalleled purity. (*Frois—History of Japan II* by Luis Frois)

From Frois' description, we can vividly picture Azuchi-jo Castle as a grand palace, with its military purpose left far behind.

Certainly, at first, castles were built for battles. A castle used to be the last resort for retreating brave warriors and at the end they happily died heroic deaths within the castle. In his movie entitled *Ran (Insurgency)*, Director Kurosawa Akira typically depicts a gloomy, singularly military-minded castle. But when continuous battles were finally over and a bright prospective of peacefully governing all of Japan at hand, a castle became a peaceful place where the Lord lived a quite every-daily life, his subjects assembled, visiting guests were welcomed and entertained, rituals and ceremonies were performed and the business of governance was conducted. In this sense, a castle had to be grand and dignified to display the power and authority of the residing Lord. Azuchi-jo Castle promptly became a forerunner of this new trend of castle building, perfectly bringing forth a completely new peace-time castle.

At this particular point in time, Nobunaga was fully confident that he would have all of Japan under his rule. However, Nobunaga's confidence turned out to be slightly

premature. For, this was clearly shown when all-too-soon the fatal event took place—Azuchi-jo Castle was completely burned down and gone for good.

Incidentally, in sheer contrast to the grandeur of Azuchi-jo Castle as was described by Frois, how humble Kyoto Palace, the residence of the Emperor, is! And how simple, indeed! And in this reserved simplicity, we can infallibly see distinct beauty and dignity.

On the other hand, as far as the castles of the Great Lords are concerned, they had to look, first of all, gorgeous, though not completely ignoring beautiful and dignified aspects. Otherwise, they could not boastfully demonstrate their power and authority.

Here again, the difference is apparent between the Emperor's spiritual authority and the superficial authority Great Lords pretended to possess.

Himeji-jo Castle and the Palace of Versailles

No two castles more vividly contrast than the two architectural giants built simultaneously in the 17th century in the West and in the East, The Palace of Versailles and Himeji-jo Castle, respectively. The former was built by French King Louis XIV in 1682.

One stretches horizontally and symmetrically, while the other stretches upward unsymmetrically. Their gardens are similarly different. A symmetrical garden is un-natural gardening, emphasizing that humans control nature. The other garden, a Japanese garden, is designed to illustrate the harmonious co-existence between nature and man. These two architectural masterpieces show precisely the difference in the conception of nature between Westerners and the Japanese.

Story XI Lively City People's Culture Nurtured by Pax Tokugawana—The Edo Period

Edo became the largest city in the world

After Hideyoshi's death, Tokugawa Ieyasu confronted Ishida Mitsunari, who tried to uphold Toyotomi Hideyori, successor to the Toyotomi Clan, as the leader of Great Lords across the nation, and consequently the Battle of Sekigahara was to be fought between the two in the 5th year of Keicho (1600). This was a truly decisive battle, with a 104,000-strong Eastern Army against an 85,000-strong Western Army, which ended up as a victory for the East. Upon this victory, Ieyasu established the Edo Bakufu government. Appointed Commander of the Barbarian-Quelling Headquarters by the Emperor, Ieyasu made it perfectly clear that Ieyasu was the ruler and the rest of the Great Lords were his subjects by ordering them to engage in the construction of Edo-jo Castle and the development of the new castle town. In the 19th year of the Keicho era (1614), Ieyasu attacked Hideyori at Osaka-jo Castle and the following year, in the first year of the Genwa era (1615), he destroyed Osaka-jo Castle and made his rule as solid as a rock. The Edo Bakufu stipulated *Bukeshohatto* (*Regulations for Warrior Houses*), and introduced the system of *Sankin Kotai* (*Alternate Change of Residences of Great Lords*: all the Great Lords were obliged to live in Edo every two years, which was later changed to "for 100 days in every three years," while their wives and children were to remain in Edo at all times.). Thus, the Edo Bakufu Government regime was further consolidated.

Though earlier in the Edo Period, disasters such as earthquakes and fires frequently occurred, a period of peace and stability had finally arrived.

In agriculture, the development of new rice fields was ardently promoted and during the first 100 years since the beginning of the Edo Period, the area of cultivated land doubled. Agricultural productivity had been remarkably increased by improved farming tools and manure.

The mining industry was also very prosperous, producing abundant gold, silver and copper. New mines such as Sado (gold), Ikuno (copper) and Ashio (copper) were developed. These minerals were exported to Europe across the sea and so were china and lacquer-ware.

Edo had a population of over one million at the dawn of the 18th century and became the largest city in the world. Osaka was also very busy and prosperous in trading of rice, cotton, soy sauce and *sake* (Japanese wine), and came to be called the

“Kitchen of the Entire Nation”. Kyoto, the site of the Imperial Court, produced excellent industrial arts products. The prosperity of these three cities continued on.

With the development of cities, the transportation infrastructure was also highly improved. On the Five Main Roads—Tokai-do, Nakasen-do, Koshu-kaido, Nikko-kaido and Ohshu-kaido—checkpoints were created to keep an eye on passing travelers. And between cities, stages were built, where 35 horses were always kept ready for changing horses. As traffic became busier, villages in the neighborhood were organized to help supply men and horses. General travelers increased and accordingly, poststation towns were formed and various kinds of inns such as “*Kichin-yado*”, “*Hatago*” “*Shonin-yado*” and “*Ni-yado*” were established. At *Kichin-yado*, people paid only for cooking fuel and cooked their own meals by themselves, while *Hatago* served meals. Tea serving shops along the way also became popular, providing refreshment for travelers on foot.

As famously depicted by Utagawa Hiroshige in his pictures of *Tokaido Gojusan-tugi* (*Fifty-three Stages of the Tokaido*) and of *Kiso-kaido*, stage towns developed characteristics that reflected their respective locality to a remarkable extent.

People of the Edo Period loved traveling and they traveled a lot on business and for religious pilgrimage or fun. Not only men, but also women enjoyed traveling. This is especially noteworthy. On the contrary, in Europe at that time, traveling was out of the question for women, because of safety reasons. So, this can be considered proof-positive of how safe and stable Japan was during the Edo Period.

However, in the 3rd year of the Meireki era (1657), the disastrous “Big Fire of Meireki” occurred and thenceforth, the finances of the Edo Bakufu fell into deficit. On this financial crisis, the incumbent fifth Shogun Tsunayoshi implemented a very rigid policy of monetary contraction.

At the same time, he carried out a strange and unfamiliar policy called *Shorui Awaremi no Rei* (Decree to pity living animals). This was originally a decree based on Buddhism, which prohibited the desertion of children, sick people and cattle and horses. It also restricted the use of guns in order to prevent hunting of wild birds. However, Tsunayoshi went too far in protecting animals or he might be too dotting on dogs. He issued a decree to love dogs and built a large-scale kennel. Naturally, people living in Edo did not like his idea at all, feeling disgusted with the extravagance of the decree.

Spread of education through “*Tera-koya*” (private school), “*Han-ko*” (Han or Domain school) and “*Shijuku*” (private institution)

It must be mentioned that one of the basic factors which facilitated stable society was widespread education during the Edo Period.

It is often said that public education started during the Meiji Period after the school system was officially established. But this is not true. Education spread most remarkably during the Edo Period. Schools called *Tera-koya* played a major role in this accomplishment. At that time, these schools were called *Tenarai* (learning of basic writing), *Shuseki-shinan* (teaching of calligraphy) and *Hitsudo-shinansho* (training school of calligraphy). There were about 16,560 schools all over Japan throughout the Edo Period.

Small schools had 20 to 30 students, while schools in big cities taught over 100 students. People were very enthusiastic about educating their children.

At first, monks mainly taught classes and in big cities, gradually, low-ranking warriors and ex-warriors called “*Ronin*”, who quit being warriors for various reasons, also became teachers. During the Genroku era (1688~1704) when education spread among the common people, learned townspeople also came to teach, and especially noteworthy is that the number of female teachers increased. Particularly in Edo, one out of three teachers was female. It is simply amazing that there were so many educated women then.

Customarily, students’ parents were to pay *Sokushu* (entrance fee) and *Tsukinami* (monthly tuition), and on special occasions such as New Year’s Days, Bon (Buddhist summer ceremony), year-end and annual festivals, they sent tokens of gratitude to the teacher. The time of school entrance was not definite, but in Edo it was a custom to enter school on the first “Day of *Ushi* (cow)” in February. The age of admission to school was not regulated either. It was up to students when to start school, and in general, ages of seven or eight were most popular, which was nearly the same as in the present day.

Textbooks were oddly called *Oraimono*, which literally means “things coming and going”. This was because textbooks were based on letter-writing. If you send a letter, the receiver will return a reply and vice versa. Letters come and go. Therefore, they were called *Oraimono*.

The model for letter writing existed already at the end of the Heian Period and letter writing developed remarkably. There were 7,000 kinds of letter writing instructions during the Edo Period. Reading, writing and *Soroban* (wooden arithmetic tool), or abacus, were main subjects and geography, history and martial arts were also taught.

Classes were held every day, usually starting between six to eight in the morning and finishing at three in the afternoon. On the desk were paper, brush, *Sumi* (Indian ink stick), *Suzuri* (ink stone on which to rub *sumi* with water), paperweight, water pail and calligraphy kit. The teacher gave students a model sheet and they learned by

reproducing the model over and over again.

In the classroom, students were not taught uniformly. Their ages and learning abilities varied in the same class, and so each student was given a suitable textbook according to his or her progress in learning and was individually instructed by the teacher. Sometimes older students taught younger ones in the class.

Thus, grading was done according to individual progress, which was not at all uniform as well.

Calligraphy works were often exhibited not only at *Terakoya* class, but also at the teacher's home or a restaurant for parents and other people to appreciate.

In addition to a common education, higher education was also popularly promoted. There were *Han* or Dominion schools all over Japan, amounting to over 255 schools nationwide. The Han schools were intended to educate warriors' sons, but they were also open to brilliant townspeople or farmers to enroll and learn. At the top of these Han schools stood government-run *Shohei-zaka Gakumonsho* (Learning Institute at Shohei-zaka of Edo). Young men with great aspirations for learning worked very hard in order to enter this great school.

The entrance examination consisted of *Sudoku Ginmi* (evaluation of reading skills of Chinese classics) and of *Gakumon Ginmi* (evaluation of learning ability). The former was an oral examination in which applicants recited *Sishu Wujing (the Four Chinese Classics and Five Canons)* by heart, while the latter was a written test on the interpretation and explanation of *Sishu Wujing*.

Chinese scholarship was the main discipline, but mathematics, medicine, Western and Japanese studies were also taught.

Private schools were built in large numbers. Toju-shoin by Nakae Toju, Kaitoku-do established by merchants of Osaka and Tekitekisai-juku by Ogata Koan were famous among them. Throughout the nation, there were 14 well-known private schools.

Learning was propelled by practical, positivistic spirit

There were no longer battles and a time of peace arrived. Warriors were required to respond to the new necessities of the time. They needed to be equipped with both martial and academic skills. Development of Confucianism had much to do with this new requirement.

The central figure of this trend was Hayashi Razan. After having finished his studies at Kennin-ji Temple, Razan established a unique Japanese doctrine of *Shushi-gaku* based on the Confucianist Chinese Doctrines of *Zhu-zi*. He was very critical of Buddhism and old Confucianism. Razan's *Shushi-gaku* respected order most of all and

none other than Tokugawa Ieyasu acknowledged that this new study would contribute greatly to realizing a period of stability. Thus, since the 10th year of the Keicho era (1605), Shushi-gaku became the center of the Bakufu's educational policy and came to have great influence over other policies.

Kogaku (Study of Classics) also came to be widely practiced. This was another academic trend of returning back to the original current established by Confucius and Mencius.

Yamaga Soko openly criticized *Shushi-gaku* for being too conforming to forms. Yamaga ardently asserted that Japan is the center of the entire world with the Imperial Court of the world.

Ito Jinsai explained that the reasoning of the sage lies within a "theory based on experiences." He highly respected knowledge obtained through experiences, and denied learning for the sake of learning. His assertion was a kind of realism and rationalism. His teaching was especially appreciated among those who were engaged in real business, merchants in particular. It is said that three thousand students learned under Ito.

Ogyu Sorai studied Chinese classics dating back to the time of Xian-wang, prior to Confucius, and tried to clarify the sage's reasoning.

The general trend was toward realistic, practical and usable approaches and efforts were made to prove things by facts and experiences. This attitude was reflected in historical views. *Honcho Tugan* (*History of Japan*) written by Hayashi Razan and his son Gaho, and *Dainihon-shi* (*History of Great Japan*), compiled by Tokugawa Mitsukuni well represent this trend. Compiling interpretations and commentaries since ancient times, these books became the basis of the national study of Japan. This may well be called the dawn of historical study based on evidence and using facts.

This practical academic approach to proof by facts was greatly useful in the field of natural science and led to new valuable discoveries.

In the field of botany, remarkable work and research were done by Kaibara Ekiken, who published *Yamato Honzo* (*Botany of Japan*) and by Inou Jakusui, whose study was highly appreciated as a compilation of natural historical botany.

Nogyo-zensho (*Complete Collection on Agriculture*) by Miyazaki Yasusada minutely explained not only agricultural skills, but also cultivating methods of many agricultural products, and was widely used.

In medicine, Nagoya Gen'i advocated the return to medicine based on clinical practice, and his medical thinking, called *Koikata* (Classical Medicine), widely spread.

In Japan, mathematics was called *Wasan* (Japanese mathematics) and reached an extremely high level. Seki Takakazu established *Tenzan-jutu* (algebra) by using

calculation on paper, and engaged in the study of the ratio of a circular area and circumference called *Enri*.

Since the Heian Period, Japanese people used an novel calendar, called *Senmyo-Reki* (*Senmyo* Calendar), which was devised during the Heian Period. However, as time moved in to the Edo Period, the calendar became inaccurate with increasing numbers of errors. Yasui Santetsu conducted a thorough astronomical observation and made a new calendar called *Jokyo-Reki* (*Jokyo* Calendar), which was adopted by the Bakufu.

Genroku culture—the common people’s culture blossomed during the era of peace and stability

Speaking of the Edo Period, many people will first think of *Genroku* culture. It can be said that Genroku culture blossomed to maturity in the peaceful and stable soil of Japanese society.

One of the most prominent cultural figures of this time was Tawaraya Sotatsu, a town artist who lived in Kyoto during the Kan’ei era (1624~1643). Not fully satisfied with the total conformity to forms of the Kano School, Sotatsu developed his own painting style, combining movement and decorativeness and giving new life to contemporary painting, and produced masterpieces such as *Fujin Raijin* (*Wind Deity and Thunder Deity*) and *Bugaku-zu Byobu* (*Folding Screen of Music Playing and Dancing*).

In pottery, Sakaida Kakiemon of Arita in Hizen Province (Saga Prefecture) completed a unique technique of *Akae* (Red Picture), in which patterns are painted on the glaze.

Remarkable architectural works were also produced. A Mausoleum to enshrine Ieyasu was built—Nikko Toshogu Shrine. The magnificent main shrine became a most prominent representation of *Gongen Zukuri*, a shrine architectural style, in which the front shrine, middle shrine and main shrine are housed under the same ridge. On the other hand, as the art of Chanoyu developed, a new architectural style was born—*Sukiya-Zukuri*, which was a combination of *Shoin Zukuri* (a prototype of modern Japanese homes, composed of a vestibule and a drawing room with *Tokono-ma*, etc.) and hermitage-type tea house. The best example of this style is Katsura-rikyu (Katsura Detached Palace) in Kyoto.

In culture, townspeople became the central players. Here came the trend of pursuing humanity in this world called “*Ukiyo*” (transitory world). This inclination was most excellently revealed by Ogata Korin, who succeeded to Tawaraya Sotatsu. Korin painted very decorative pictures by devising design and simplifying the composition.

Kakitsubata Byobu (Folding Screen of Irises) (Nezu Museum) and *Kohaku Bai-zu Byobu (Folding Screen of Painted Red and White Plum Trees)* (MOA Museum) are made so lively and active by ingenious composition on a two-dimensional painted surface.

Hishikawa Moronobu spread pictures describing manners and customs of Edo life by wooden prints. He is said to have been the founder of the art of *Ukiyo-e* Picture.

In literature, a new poetic form of *Haikai* was born. It was in the same line with *Renga* (Linked Verse), connecting poems among several people and appreciating each other's taste. Matsuo Basho made the first phase of Haikai an independent poem, which was perfectly worth appreciating as a literary piece.

Natsukusa ya Tsuwamonodomo ga Yume no Ato
(Summer grass, just traces of brave warriors' dreams)

This poem, which is contained in *Okuno Hosomichi (The Narrow Road to the Deep North)*, Basho's anthology of Haiku poems, was composed when Basho saw an old, deserted battlefield on his visit to Hiraizumi in the Tohoku Region. How eloquently expressed in such short words was his deep sentiment over the history of old times! Also, there was an occasion when Basho shed tears. That was when he saw *Tsubo no Ishibumi (Monument of Pot)* at Taga-jo Castle in the north in Sendai (Miyagi Prefecture). This monument was written way back during the reign of Emperor Shomu of the Tenpyo Period. Basho's heart found solace through remembering and feeling united with the ancient people's hearts by visiting old places and things. His trip was also intended to follow the paths trod by Saigyō and Monk Noin of the late Heian Period.

Under Basho, Enomoto Kikaku, Mukai Kyorai and other excellent poets appeared. Yosa Buson was among them.

Ihara Saikaku wrote realistic novels called "*Ukiyo Soshi*" (Books of Transitory World). He masterfully described joys and sorrows of townspeople living in this world.

It was characteristic of this period that culture enjoyed by the common people wonderfully developed. *Joruri* (Narration performed to the sound of the *Shamisen*) and *Kabuki* reached their height of prosperity as theater for the common people. Playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon collaborated with *Shamisen* player Takemoto Gidayu and wrote many scripts for *Joruri* and *Kabuki* plays. These have become all-time masterpieces and are often played today.

The historical view of "Dark Edo" is wrong

Speaking of the Edo Period, what do you think of? Feudalistic society. *Shi-no-ko-sho*—the rigid status distinction with warriors at the top of the ladder, then farmers followed by craftsmen and merchants at the bottom. I presume these are among your thoughts.

In fact, many history books claimed that with a rigidly defined system of discrimination, *Shi-no-ko-sho*, Great Lords, Bakufu Governors and great land owners brought suffering to townspeople and farmers, and the people's unbearable hardship ultimately led to rioting against the ruling class. However, recent advanced studies demonstrate that people were much freer than previously thought and that they were not financially weak, miserably bound by distinctions in status.

If people had been obliged to live a hard and slave-like life, the rich and lively common people's culture, which I have just explained, would never have blossomed at all.

The concept of a "feudalistic dark ages" prior to modern times must have created an image of the Dark Edo Period. We must not forget that history is not a product of ideology.

The Shogun and Feudal Lords were not at all mighty land owners. They collected taxes from their fiefs and using the money they ran the administration. Instead, merchants and farmers were land owners. They were allowed to sell or buy land. By selling land, a land owner could obtain money and by investing that money, he could start a new business such as Japanese-wine making or weaving. People were not chained forever to a particular status like serfs, and they could be active capitalists if they chose to.

Though not many, there were tenant farmers who did not own their own land. However, they had the right to obtain half the harvest. If they worked hard enough to increase the crop, they could quit being tenant farmers.

Local Governors portrayed in Japanese TV dramas are uniformly wicked, always pestering innocent villagers. Yes, there actually were some like that. But they were far from the true local governorship. In reality, local governors were similar to present-day municipal officers, instructing farmers about agricultural improvement measures, educating villagers, raising productivity and smoothly collecting taxes.

The Bakufu administration was not controlled by a Shogun's dictatorship, but was run by conference. At the base was the idea that "Farmers are a great asset," and various measures were taken to take good care of farmers. Taxes were set at reasonable and payable rates, using a collection system of *Kenmi-sei*, in which tax was set according to crop evaluation or *Jomen-sei* in which tax was assessed on the basis of past records.

Farmers were allowed to engage in a side business, which was tax-free. Therefore, by the Kan'ei era at the end of the Bakufu, the income from yearly tributes submitted by farmers was merely 10% or 30% at most of the total revenue.

These yearly tributes were mainly used to furnish infrastructure for public facilities in order to improve people's quality of life. Among the projects were constructing river banks in preparation of flooding of large rivers, improving roads to facilitate transportation of goods and enlarging port facilities.

There was a privilege exclusively given to warriors called "*Kirisute Gomen*" (No excuse required to kill by sword). However, this was no longer permissible after the middle of the Period. If a warrior was to blame, the Governor's Office duly executed the warrior.

When a farmers' riot broke out, perpetrators were never one-sidedly repressed nor executed at once. After the circumstance and story behind the riot were closely examined, the one(s) who was (were) responsible for the cause of the riot was (were) burdened with attainder such as discharge or confiscation. As for the rioters, in most cases, all participants except the mastermind were set free without charges.

The status system of *Shi-no-ko-sho* was first established in order to secure a stable society. However, in practice, it became flexible. This was an all too natural consequence as people lived varied lives under varied circumstances, no matter what social status they were born into.

Ishida Baigan was from a farmer's family. However, he traveled to Kyoto, where he served at a merchant's home. He studied and learned that merchants and farmers were never inferior to warriors. In later years, he came to be called the "Founder of *Shin-gak*" (Heart Learning)". Centering on *Shushi-gaku* which emphasized the distinction between upper and lower and adopting Buddhism and ideas of Lao-zi and Zhuang-zi, he advocated that each person has his own social responsibility and that there is no difference in its importance.

In Nagaoka Han, Han retainers left part of ruling to hands of merchants, who greatly contributed to restoring villages with their abundant wealth.

Even some farmers became village headmen and were allowed to bear swords and publicly use their surname. There were many cases of sons of Gokenin, low-ranking warriors among the Shogun's subjects, being adopted into a merchant household or marriages between sons of warriors and daughters of wealthy farmers. Furthermore, it was sometimes possible to purchase the status of warrior. If a person excelled in learning, martial arts or technical skills, he could be accepted into the warrior class. Mamiya Rinzo and Ninomiya Sontoku were good examples of such marvelous

promotion. They were both from farmers' families.

Social status was not an absolute criterion.

Uesugi Yozan and Ninomiya Sontoku symbolize the Japanese people's diligence

Uesugi Yozan was the Lord of Yonezawa Han (Yamagata Prefecture). In order to recover the totally distressed finance of his Dominion, he started living a strictly thrifty life himself. He cut his living cost to one-seventh, eating a simple meal of one soup and one side dish, and wearing cotton kimono. At the same time, he took up a hoe and labored in the fields. He had his subjects cultivate deserted fields and develop new fields. He made a grand plan to plant a million each of lacquer, mulberry trees and paper mulberries and others, and actually planted them. Introducing weaving technology, he created *Yonezawa-han Ori* (Yonezawa Han Weave) using *Aoso*, which was peeled stem skin of hemp, dipped in water and then cut up into pieces. Hemp was abundantly grown there. This industry helped greatly to restore the Han.

Thus, Yonezawa Han under the superb leadership of Lord Yozan and with hard-working people succeeded in overcoming their poverty-stricken circumstance. As the Lord of the Domain, Yozan always desired to be *Tami no Fubo* (Father and Mother of the people), thinking that governance is to be done, first and foremost, to enrich the peoples lives, and he actually carried out his principle.

Here is a well-known poem composed by Yozan when he was appointed Dominion Lord.

Uketsugite Kuni no Tsukasa no Mitonareba Wasuremajiki wa Tami no Fubo
(Succeeding the responsibility of Lordship of the Dominion, I must never forget to always serve as father and mother of my people.)

Ninomiya Sontoku was another great agricultural pioneer who devoted himself to restoring farm villages in the late Edo Period.

Sontoku's principle was "modesty," "thrift" and "hard work" and advocated the idea of repayment for someone's kindness to farmers. By modesty, he meant that we should know ourselves well and decide on expenditure within the range of our own income.

This idea can be said to be traditional morality in Japanese life. The Japanese people have lived with the heart, thinking that it is important to spend whatever profits they may obtain through working, not for themselves, but for making people around them happier. Sontoku described this as *Suijo* (push and transfer). He advocated the importance of social contribution by transferring part of what one has earned to society.

Sontoku was from Sagami (Kanagawa Prefecture), and with this idea he successfully restored some 600 farm villages from distress in Odawara, Karasuyama, Soma and other Hans.

Before World War II, statues of Boy Sontoku walking and reading a book, carrying firewood on his back were built in large numbers and installed mainly in elementary school yards across the country, teaching children the importance of diligence. He was a symbolic figure of the Japanese people's diligence.

During the Edo Period, the people were not entirely concerned with domestic matters. There were those who looked abroad and did their best in dealing with overseas matters.

Hayashi Shihei was a retainer of Sendai Han. From a very early time in the Period, he warned against a southward advance by Russians and wrote a book entitled *Kaikoku Heidan (Discourse on Maritime Defense)*, advocating a strong maritime defense.

In the 18th century, Russia asked Japan to establish a trade relationship with them, but the Bakufu government refused. On Japan's refusal, Russia attacked Japanese people living in Sakhalin and Iturup Island. The Bakufu made East Ezo (the eastern part of Hokkaido) its direct domain and prepared for Russian attack.

I mentioned Mamiya Rinzo as a prominent example of a farmer becoming a warrior. This same Mamiya Rinzo surveyed Ezo land including Sakhalin around this time. He discovered a strait lying between Sakhalin and the Continent and further explored it, which was then named the Strait of Mamiya, after him.

From Kamigata to Edo

In terms of culture, *Kamigata* (literally meaning Upper Region and referring to the Kinki Region) was, by far, the center. But by the latter half of the 18th century, Edo replaced Kamigata and it was in Edo that the characteristic culture blossomed. Especially in fine arts, world-class masterpieces were created during this time.

In Ukiyo-e picture, multi-colored wooden printing called *Nishiki-e* (*Nishiki* meaning "brocade or beautiful things") produced many excellent pictures, which were widely admired.

Suzuki Harunobu gave a poetic rendition to portraits of beauty, while Torii Kiyonaga created a splendid world of female portraits. Kitagawa Utamaro described women's natural and unintentional actions and heightened artistic independence of pictures. Toshusai Sharaku was famous for his pictures of Kabuki actors, masterly catching each actor's character and expressions.

To tell the truth, this Sharaku was an enigma. A recent study finally solved this

long-time riddle: Katsushika Hokusai, who had been painting Kabuki actors under the pseudonym of Katsukawa Shunro, turned out to be the mysterious Toshusai Sharaku who worked exclusively for only 10 months.

After 10 months passed, Hokusai changed his paintings sceneries, which were truly of world-class quality. Besides the well-known *Fugaku Sanjuro-kkei* (*Thirty-six Scenes of Mt. Fuji*), *Hyakunin Isshu Uba ga Etoki* (*One-hundred Poems by One-hundred Poets Nurse Solves Picture Puzzles*) and *Shokoku Taki Mawari* (*Visiting Waterfalls around the Country*) attracted people with their striking compositions and colors. In these pictures, space was most effectively depicted in perspective and shading, Western artistic techniques, which were introduced early in the Edo Period and perfectly adapted by Japanese artists for use in their pictures.

Utawaga Hiroshige painted *Tokaido Gojusan Tugi* (*Fifty-three Stages of the Tokai-do*), emotional and moving scenery pictures, learning Hokusai's technique.

These *Ukiyo-e* pictures went abroad to Europe on such occasions as the World Exposition in the latter half of the 19th century, where they were exhibited and gave tremendous influence over the formation of Western painting known as "Japanism". This fact has been popularly known.

While *Ukiyo-e* pictures were loved by the public, among intellectuals, pictures called *Bunjin-ga* (Literary men's painting) were admired, whose ideals were after Chinese natural scenery painting of *Sansui-ga* (Mountain and River Painting).

Ike no Taiga penetrated literary man's attitude of "Walking ten thousand *Ri* (40,000 kilometers) and reading ten thousand volumes of books," and painted scenery pictures of strictly Japanese figures and scenes, though subjects were in the Chinese style.

Yosa Buson excelled in composing Haiku poems and drawing pictures. After he turned fifty, he produced many works. Uragami Gyokudo was born to a retainer family of Okayama Han, and he played the *Koto* instrument. In his late years, he enjoyed reading and painting. He painted pictures expressing the grand atmosphere of mountains and rivers.

Aoki Mokubei, starting from dying of china, created a unique world of *Sansui-ga* pictures, painting deformed mountains. Tanomura Chikuden resigned as headmaster of Yuugaku-kan School of Oka Han in Bungo Province (Oita Prefecture) at the age of 37, and set out traveling and established a high-quality painting style, depicting impressive Japanese scenery.

In literature, around the time between 1772 and 1788 (the An'ei and Tenmei eras), two genres of new Edo novels—*Share-bon* (short novels) and *Kibyoshi* (short novels with pictures on every page) appeared. The former described life in gay quarters and the

latter dealt with people's lives and society with satire and puns. Santo Kyoden was good at both and was called the "Founder of light literature of the Edo period."

The period referred to as "Bunka-Bunsei eras" (1804~1830) was called Ka-Sei period, when culture blossomed. In *Kibyoshi* novels, Ryutei Tanehiko was a top writer and in another genre of *Kokkei-bon* (novels describing humor in the everyday lives of the people of Edo), Jippensha Ikku and Shikitei Sanba were prominent authors. *Tokaidochu Hizakurige (Traveling the Tokai-do on Shank's Mare)* was a funny and exciting travel account of two Edo men Yajirobei and Kitahachi on their trip to Ise Shrine, while *Ukiyo Buro (At Public Bath of Transitory World)* by Shikitei Sanba conveyed comic conversations among ordinary townspeople. In *Ninjo-bon* (following *Share-bon*, this genre realistically described love-related affairs among Edo people), Tamenaga Shunsui was the most popular writer of this genre.

Many novels depicting ordinary people's life were written and popularly read. This clearly shows that ordinary people were the leading characters of the time.

Fantasies relating to history and legends were called "*Toku-hon*" (or *Yomi-hon*) and also became very popular. The most famous among them was *Ugetsu Monogatari (Tales of Rain and Moon)* written by Ueda Akinari. *Nanso Satomi Hakken-den (Stories of Eight Warriors of the Satomi Clan of Shimousa)* written by Takizawa Bakin carried readers further into an exciting world of fantasy.

Poet Yosa Buson, who was also a painter, became the leader of Haikai after Basho, with his sketchy and picturesque expression. Meanwhile, Kobayashi Issa was loved by people for his poems of strongly sympathetic descriptions about everyday life.

Satirical poems of *Kyoka* and *Senryu* were also very popular for their spicy and timely satire against society.

In theater, until the middle of the 18th century, *Ningyo Joruri* (Dolls Joruri) enjoyed popularity and Takeda Izumo wrote great plays of *Sugawara no Denju Tenarai Kagami* and *Kana Dehon Chushingura*. In the former a story develops around the life of Sugawara no Michizane, and the latter deals with the famous story of revenge by ex-warriors of Akou.

Entering the latter half of the 18th century, in Edo, Kabuki actors performed popular Joruri plays and charmed many ardent fans. During the Ka-Sei Era, Tsuruya Nanboku wrote *Tokaido Yotsuya Kaidan (Horror Story of Tokaido Yotsuya)*, in which Iemon poisoned and killed his wife O-Iwa out of lust and greed and troubled by furious and lamenting O-Iwa's spirit night and day, he ruined himself in the end. From this extraordinary story, we can perceive an air of decadence.

Literature, too, was awash with anticipation of the Bakufu coming to an end.

Western learning and technology were already adopted well in Japanese society

It has been a common notion that the Westernization of Japan began with the Meiji Period. But that is not true. At the beginning of the 18th century, the eighth Shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune encouraged practical science and permitted people to freely learn Western concepts and technology that had nothing to do with Christianity. Thus, Western study developed among the Japanese people and Aoki Konyo obtained knowledge and information from overseas documents and spread the cultivation of *Satsuma-imo* (sweet potatoes) to be used in the time of famine, while Noro Genjo introduced Western natural history (zoology, botany and physical geography).

Maeno Ryotaku, a doctor noted for his translation *Kaitai Shinsho* (*New Book of Anatomy*), introduced fundamentals of Western thinking on natural science in his book *Kanrei Higen*. In terms of scientific knowledge, the Japanese people are said to have achieved a remarkable scientific revolution, equal to the Western level. German doctor Philipp Franz Balthasar von Siebold (1796-1866) came to Japan to serve as a doctor at the Dutch Trading House in the 6th year of Bunsei (1823), and the following year, he opened Narutaki-juku School in Nagasaki and began teaching medicine and natural history. Ninomiya Keisaku and Takano Choei were among the 37 Japanese scholars of Western study across the country who came to learn at his school.

When Commodore Matthew Galbraith Perry (1794-1858) came to Japan in the 6th year of Ka'ei (1853), the Bakufu was not unnerved at all. They were already informed of current circumstances overseas, including the "Opium War" (1840~42) through *Oranda Fusetsu-shu* (*Collection of Dutch Rumors*). Thanks to this up-to-date information, Japan was able to adequately handle this national crisis by avoiding an immediate confrontation with Perry's fleet and instead enhance the armament of the nation. Abe Masahiro, a member of the council under the Shogun, concluded a US-Japan peace and friendship treaty on the basis of a national consensus in the first year of Ansei (1854). On this occasion, Commodore Perry presented, as gifts to the Bakufu from the American Government, a unit of a model train, telegraph machine, copper-plate photographic machine, rifles, pistols, farming tools, etc., which were the latest advanced U.S. technology. As gifts in return, Japan gave America furniture, interior goods, woven silk products, dolls, etc., emphasizing the high quality of the Japanese industrial arts.

In the same year, Commodore Perry and his expedition party performed a demonstration run of the model train with an engine car, coal car and carriage on a makeshift railway of about 110 meters in circumference. It was said that the train ran at

approximately 32 kilometers per hour. However, this was not the first train demonstration in Japan. Prior to this occasion, when a Russian named Putjatin came to Japan, asking for the opening of the country to the world, he brought with him a small model train. So, the Japanese people had known about the things called “trains”. Instantly, building railroads became an urgent project and in the first year of Meiji (1868), a railroad was installed and in the 5th year of Meiji (1872), a railroad business was officially launched between Shinbashi in Tokyo and Yokohama.

The striking news that China was invaded by Great Britain in the Opium War urged the Japanese people to grasp the importance of armament. The message was conveyed to each Han and in Saga Han, a cannons manufacturing factory was established in the 13th year of Tenpo (1842) with the help of Dutch technology. In order to melt iron for use in the factory, Japan’s first reflecting furnace was built. The factory produced some 200 cannons by the end of the Bakufu. Saga Han further advanced in manufacturing technology and organized a refinery agency and mastered the technology to build a steamship. In Satsuma Han, a research institute named Shusei-kan was established and a reflecting furnace, a steel factory, Western-style sailboats, etc. were actually built. Likewise, in Mito Han, the operation of a reflecting furnace started in the 3rd year of Ansei (1856), and produced over 10 cannons.

Following Commodore Perry’s visit, the Bakufu came to regard maritime defense as its top priority and established a gunnery factory at Yushima in Edo and built a reflecting furnace in Izu. The reflecting furnace casting then made can been seen now at Nirayama in Izu. At the Yushima factory, Western small arms were manufactured and at Uraga (Kanagawa Prefecture), a shipyard was constructed in 1853 and in Nagasaki, Nagasaki Steel Factory was established in 1861. All these were done using Dutch technology. In the north, Nanbu Han and the Governor’s Office of the Bakufu in Hakodate (Hokkaido) ran a Western-style casting factory using blast furnaces, respectively. By the time up to the Meiji Restoration, the Bakufu possessed a fleet of 45 Western-style ships, roughly 40% of which were made in Japan. So, armament of Japan was sweepingly completed by the time of the so-called the Dawn of Civilization of Meiji and thereafter.

Progress was not only found in armament. At Shusei-kan Institute of Satsuma, there were glass and china factories and a machine-operated spinnery. Of course, during the Edo Period, manual industry was the mainstream. Many products made in manual factories became local staples, which were widely circulated throughout the country. In the Izumo Region, a *tatara* (bellows) refinery of iron sand was operated, and from the refined iron, swords, farming tools and technical tools were manufactured.

Steel-manufacturing using iron ore was done in Kamaishi of Rikuchu (Iwate Prefecture) and the furnace was powered by coals. Coals were mined in the Chikuho Region (Fukuoka and Oita Prefectures) and even oil was produced in Echigo (Niigata Prefecture).

In production of Japanese paper, a method using paper mulberry was developed, exquisite quality paper branded as Echizen *Hosho-shi* Paper and Sugihara-shi Paper of Harima were widely used. The paper making technology called *Nagashi-suki* made it possible to use mulberry as material, which was abundantly grown. As a result, inexpensive paper went into market and made a mass consumption by the common people a reality, which in turn contributed greatly to the development of learning and culture. Above all, *Ukiyo-e* pictures were produced, using Japanese paper, which made pictures a hobby for the public.

Column 11: Japanism—*Ukiyo-e*

Italy led, at foremost, the European world of art since the Renaissance movement of the 16th century. The driving force behind the artistic dominance was the introduction of the technique of “perspective”, which drastically changed the way of depicting space in pictures. And also, by using one-point perspective technique, it became possible to describe figures and scenery in one perspective. At the same time, this also made shading possible, and the contrast of light and dark between objects was deftly expressed.

However, once new techniques were completed, art having an essential inclination to dislike blind repetition, another new movement was born which ignored perspective and shading techniques. Mannerism emphasizing reduction and Baroque over-shading were among such movements. But these, too, came to stagnate in due time. Then, themes became detached from formerly popular Christian themes and classical mythology and came to be chosen freely.

At such a time, *Ukiyo-e* paintings came to Europe from Japan. In the 19th century, *Ukiyo-e* pictures were introduced on exhibit at the World Exposition and immediately they sent a tremendous shock wave through the European art world.

Take Katsushika Hokusai’s *Kanagawa-oki Namiura (Lining of a Wave in the Offing of Kanagawa)* for instance. A close-up of a huge wave is dynamically emphasized, the middle view is skipped and Mt. Fuji, way in the distance, is drawn small. Having perfectly mastered perspective, Hokusai demonstrates his own technique well beyond that. Furthermore, combining perspective and overlooking techniques, he succeeds in creating free space effectively in one view.

This is not all. Ignoring shading, which naturally accompanies the perspective, he painted colorful scenery. It is not that Hokusai was not familiar with shading. In fact, he tried to express shades in some of his works. He also fully understood that essentially, Japanese pictures are drawn with moving viewpoints, unlike the visual point of the perspective, and therefore, shading from a certain set viewpoint could not be drawn. That is why Hokusai removed shaded darkness and instead used bright colors.

Additionally, Ukiyo-e pictures simplify shapes. In Western fine arts, realism is the mainstream. It is utmost important to paint objects as they are. On the other hand, Ukiyo-e simplifies forms using lines and creates a completely new formational force beyond realistic forms.

It is simply unfathomable how tremendous the impact of Ukiyo-e was on the contemporary Western fine arts at that time. Vincent van Gogh (1853-90) copied a Ukiyo-e picture by Ando Hiroshige and, in a letter, expressed his great admiration of the wonderful Japanese picture. Andre Malraux (1901-76), who was well versed in fine arts of the world, repeatedly extolled Hokusai's excellent talent. And these are but a few examples of ardent admirers.

In Europe, Paul Cezanne (1839-1906) is called the Founder of Modern Paintings. However, he never mentioned Ukiyo-e in his conversations or correspondence. Did he have nothing to do with Ukiyo-e? In fact, he did.

Around Cezanne, there were many friends and acquaintance such as painters Edouard Manet (1832-83) and Camille Pissarro (1830-1903), and writer Emile Zora (1840-1902), who were all fascinated by Japanism. Cezanne could not have been the only exception. Rather, I suppose, he was greatly shocked and influenced by Ukiyo-e, learning a lot from it at the same time that he remained reticent about commenting about Ukiyo-e.

There is actual evidence to prove this. Cezanne changed his painting style after he had seen *Suiboku-ga* paintings on exhibit at the World Exposition in Paris in 1889 Or, far more convincing is Cezanne's famous series of *Mont-Saint-Victoire with Large Pine Trees*. No one can deny the apparent influence from Hokusai's *Fugaku Sanjuro-kkei*.

At the same time, Ukiyo-e profoundly influenced Western fine arts in another way.

The Japanese people have kept to mountain worship as prescribed by Shinto, and Mt. Fuji, in particular, is perceived as a sacred mountain. Mt. Fuji painted by Hokusai is infused with sincere worship.

On the other hand, Cezanne's Mont-Saint-Victoire has no such feeling of worship. What had caught him most was the shape of the mountain and delicate coloring variations of Hokusai's Ukiyo-e, and nothing else. And this resulted in the reformation

of Western paintings.

Western pictures, up until that time, were believed to be painted for a definite theme and have a definite story behind them. However, when Western painters saw Japanese Ukiyo-e pictures for the first time, they only received the message of forms and colors, partly due to lack of knowledge about Japan. Certainly, there is no need for stories to be told from expressions of females described in Ukiyo-e pictures painted by Suzuki Harunobu and Kitagawa Utamaro. So, this impression led to a new artistic movement to detach storytelling from Western modern paintings.

Afterwards, Western modern and contemporary paintings are an extension of this line. Pablo Picasso's (1881-1973) two-dimensional descriptive world of simple lines, bright colors, and childish drawing all lie as extensions of Hokusai's caricatures. Called Art Nouveau, the decorativeness of Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) of Austria would have been unthinkable without Utamaro's portraits of beauty. From "reformation" of modern paintings to "destruction" of 20th century contemporary paintings, drastically changing paintings of the world exactly started from Ukiyo-e and Japanism. It is indeed not an exaggeration to say as much.

Fugaku Sanjurok-kei Kanagawa Oki Namiura (The Great Wave in the Offing of Kanagawa (Stored at Tokyo Metropolitan Edo-Tokyo Museum)

Fugaku Hyakkei—Mt. Fuji on a Fine Day (Privately owned)

Cezanne, Mont-Saint-Victoire (Stored at the Pushkin Museum)

Story XII Struggle with the West—The Meiji Restoration

What are Japanese characteristics that helped to attain a successful Meiji Restoration?

In the 3rd year of Keio (1867), the 15th Shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu announced that he would return authority to the Imperial Court at Nijo-jo Castle in Kyoto. This was what was called the “Return of Power to the Emperor.” Upon this, the restoration of Imperial rule was surrounded by great fanfare and the Imperial Court declared that a new government centering on the Emperor is to be established. However, this new government was composed mainly of anti-Bakufu members, which triggered a battle between dissatisfied pro-Bakufu forces and the army of the new government. This was the War of Boshin, which took place in the Boshin-year of the Japanese calendar (1868). The battle was won by allied forces of Satsuma and Choshu of the Government Army. Representing the Bakufu, Katsu Kaishu met and had talks with Saigo Takamori from the allied forces of Satsuma and Choshu. As a result, Edo-jo Castle fell without bloodshed. Both sides knew better than to fight between themselves, when foreign powers were biding their time to rule Japan. A civil war would only benefit Western enemies.

In the 4th year of Keio (1868), Emperor Meiji promulgated the Five-Article Imperial Oath, in which Emperor Meiji declared national policies of the new nation under a pledge to Kami-gami.

- I. Assemblies shall be convoked widely, and decisions made by open assembly.
- II. Whether high or low, all shall unite in carrying out affairs of state.
- III. Civil and military officials, as well as the common folk, shall be free to choose and achieve their own goals. It is important that people do not lose their desires.
- IV. Wicked customs of the past shall be eliminated, and all shall be based on proper morals in common use in all places.
- V. Knowledge shall be sought from the whole world, for it is essential for the prosperity of the foundation of Our Imperial government.

In these words, the spirit of democracy is applauded and the harmony between tradition and culture is stated. In later years, advocates of equality such as modernists and Marxists criticized the wording “Whether high or low, all shall unite in carrying out affairs of state”. However, reflecting on the fact that Communism aspired to create an

egalitarian society, which ended up in failure and ruin in the 20th century, we need to recognize that these criticized words ring true. While distinctions such as high class and low class are observed, these words do not mean that in human society these distinctions must exist, but they nonetheless do within a society that shares roles and responsibilities. Otherwise, no organization would properly function.

In September of the same year (1868), the name of the era was changed to Meiji, and Emperor Meiji moved from Kyoto to Tokyo, where Edo-jo Castle became the Imperial Palace. Thus, the Meiji Restoration began. But it was not a revolution. A revolution is drastic reform, completely separating the present from the past, while this reform was achieved in sequence with past events. The existence of Emperor Meiji himself was the very proof of continuity.

In the 23rd year of Meiji (1890), the first general election of the House of Representatives was held and the first session of the Imperial Diet was convened. Prior to this, the Imperial Rescript on Education was promulgated in the name of the Emperor. It goes as follows:

“Our Imperial Ancestors have founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting and have deeply and firmly implanted virtue.”

The first line clearly indicates that the root of the nation is the existence of the Emperor and the Emperor is the center of Japanese tradition.

The Imperial Rescript on Education continues to state that the people should practice filial piety towards their parents, love one another as brothers, care for each other as husband and wife, hold friends in mutual trust, be modest and never be arrogant. The citizens' moral duties are to permeate love, pursue learning, acquire skills, improve knowledge, heighten personal character, be willing to contribute to furthering national interests and in times of national crises, serve the public as much as possible. To sum up, morals and education are of vital importance to the citizen.

This rescript shares the same idea with Prince Shotoku's Seventeen Articles Constitution. It is rightly said that moral codes come before anything else.

In the 2nd year of Meiji (1869), *Hanseki Hokan* (Return of the Dominion) and *Haihan Chiken* (Abolition of Hans and Establishment of Prefectures) were carried out. The land and people throughout Japan were returned to the Imperial Court and in the place of Hans, Prefectures were introduced. Renders hitherto submitted to Domain Lords became public taxes to be collected by the Government.

In the postwar years, many history books have written that the Meiji Restoration was Imperialism with the Emperor as its absolute head. Many of you readers may have read similar criticisms about an absolute Emperor. However, it is very important to

know that Japan's national principle lies within the vein of a time-honored tradition.

With this firm principle, we Japanese have lived a free and generous life. If we think that this freedom and generosity is of utmost importance, we must duly respect the tradition that backs up the principle.

This principle continues to live today. Terms such as democracy, which was imported from America after the War, and socialism, which came from the former Soviet Union, pushed the Japanese fundamental principle from our vision and dimmed it. All the same, it has always been here in Japan and the Japanese "Modern Age" shines in response to continuity with the traditional past.

Japanese culture of Meiji born out of struggles with the West

In the 10th year of Meiji (1877), the University of Tokyo was established as the first university and foreign teachers came to teach. Through this institution, Japan tried to introduce "modern" European learning. In the private sector, universities such as Keio Gijuku (established in 1868), Doshisha (established in 1875) and Tokyo Senmon-gakko (established in 1882 and later renamed Waseda University) were founded and the promotion of higher education was ardently advocated.

However, this movement had a negative side as well, which might lead to an unquestioning, blind acceptance of Western-centered historical views and the theory of evolution.

The vital fact was forgotten that Japan already had a university called Daigaku-ryo as far back as in the Ritsu-Ryo period and also during the Edo Period there were many Hanko (Han schools) throughout the country. They were all good schools and contributed much to promoting higher education. We cannot deny that the new trend tended to idealize Western learning and to underestimate Japan's intrinsic culture and history.

To the intellectual tendency of these universities, journalism as exemplified in newspapers and magazines at the time was very active in promoting the free voicing of opinions. Fukuzawa Yukichi emphasized that progress of civilizations is to be accomplished not through government, but by the efforts of the people. Nakae Chomin adopted Confucian ideas and ideas of French social philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) and asserted that democracy is a system which aims to accomplish human moral perfection.

During the twenties of the Meiji Era, Tokutomi Soho declared that a new age of equality had arrived, in which commoners would play a major role in society, instead of the people of the upper class. His idea was popularly accepted among the young

generation. Also, in criticizing negotiations to adjust treaty terms with foreign countries by Inoue Kaoru, Miyake Setsurei and Kuga Katsunan advocated an awakening of national consciousness of the citizens of Japan.

In the thirties of the Meiji Era, socialist ideas appeared. Socialism was said to be founded on the basis of matured capitalism, which was not the case with Japan at that time. However, this fact was not taken into consideration. On the other hand, some advocated imperialism, in which they meant a foreign policy of imperialism, and socialism was advocated domestically. Uchimura Kanzo advocated a spiritual resurrection of the Japanese people through the Christian faith.

A new starting point of Japanese literature was marked by Tsubouchi Shoyo's *Shosetsu Shinzui (Essence of Novels)*. Apart from the idea of *Kanzen Choaku* (reprove vice and promote virtue), Tsubouchi asserted the importance of realism. Influenced by this movement, Futabatei Shimei wrote *Ukigumo (Floating Clouds)* in colloquial Japanese.

Romanticism, which makes much of freely expressed human sentiments, became popular at the time before and after the Sino-Japanese War. Kitamura Tokoku, Shimazaki Toson and Higuchi Ichiyo were well-known writers, representing this movement.

Mori Ogai introduced European literature and in his later years wrote novels with subjects from Japanese history. Natsume Soseki wrote *Wagahai wa Nekodearu (I Am a Cat)* and *Meian (Light and Shade)*.

Both Ogai and Soseki studied abroad, in Germany and England, respectively. From their experiences in foreign countries, they sought the true identity of the Japanese people. With the wide gap between Western individualism and the Japanese mentality, their struggles were extremely painful and agonizing.

Japan has succeeded in building a modern nation without losing her traditions

In fine arts, in the midst of the trend of Western-worship, Japanese traditional arts were restored by the instruction of Ernest Francisco Fenollosa (1853-1908), who was a visiting professor at the University of Tokyo, and Okakura Tenshin.

Okakura Tenshin founded the Tokyo Art School with Kano Hogai, Hashimoto Gaho and others. From this school, new Japanese style paintings were created by Yokoyama Taikan, Hishida Shunso and other artists, incorporating Western painting styles.

In Western-style paintings, Takahashi Yuichi under Charles Wirgman (1832-1891, an English artist and cartoonist who came to Japan at the end of the Bakufu and published Japan's first cartoon magazine, the *Japan Punch*) and Asai Chu, who was

taught by Antonio Fontanesi (1818-1882, an Italian artist who taught Japanese artists Western painting), tried to paint realistic pictures. It was a new attempt in Japan, but not completely free from the evil of blending--they could not produce powerful pictures. Kuroda Seiki returned from France after he had studied French academicism and painted pictures filled with bright light, which put him the school of outer lighting. These artists had a difficult time, adjusting European art styles to the Japanese fine arts.

On the other hand, following in the tradition of Bunjin-ga pictures and simultaneously using Western expressionism, a unique artist named Tomioka Tessai appeared. It is very interesting that this artist was the very inheritor of traditional Japanese fine arts and at the same time he became one of the world's vanguard artists. His expressionist line drawings were in the same lineage with Vincent van Gogh. Bruno Julius Florian Taut (1880-1938, a German architect who wrote such books as *Nippon* and *Rediscovery of Japanese Beauty*) called Tessai, Cezanne, and Francisco Jose de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828) the "Three Greatest Artists" of the 19th century. I perfectly agree with him.

In sculpture, Takamura Koun produced realistic wooden sculptures. Ogiwara Morie, who was apprenticed to Francois Auguste Rene Rodin (1840-1917), made Western-style modern sculptures. Yet, these could not help but remain compromises with Western techniques.

In music, with the introduction of Western music, Japanese songs were composed and written imitating Western songs and were adopted in elementary school education. Japanese people came to enjoy these songs. Taki Rentaro deserves particular admiration. He composed such popular songs as *Kojo no Tsuki (The Moon over the Deserted Castle)* and *Hana (Flower)*. These moving songs captured to the core Japanese hearts.

On the whole, however, the culture during the Meiji Period was still in the process of digesting Western culture and therefore, much of it was regarded as imitations. This modern Japanese culture was yet to mature, in order to be recognized internationally. Surely there were many efforts made to understand Western culture, but unlike the remarkable achievements during the Edo Period, Meiji culture did not succeed in reaching a higher level of creation beyond its model.

Even so, Okakura Tenshin certainly deserves special attention. He wrote *The Ideals of the East* in English in the 36th year of Meiji (1903). This book was also translated into French and German and widely appreciated by European and American readers. The book contains profound understanding of the Japanese fine arts, stating that in Japan there is a great museum of the Eastern fine arts with the concept that "Asia is one." This concept became the basic ideology to support Asian unification and further

developed to form the theoretical basis of the Greater East Asian War.

In the 37th year of Meiji (1904), a book entitled *The Awakening of Japan*, written by Okakura Tenshin, was published in New York, and immediately it became a best seller. The President at the time, Theodore Roosevelt, was reportedly moved by the book. It is easy to imagine how much attention was paid to Japan at that time.

It was clearly stated at the time that Japan succeeded in building a modern nation without losing her time-honored traditions. The same kind of opinion of high regard toward Japan, such as that expressed by Master Fosco Maraini (1912-2004) who I mentioned in the introduction of this book, actually existed during this period. It was a time when thinking in terms of the “Yellow Peril” was rampant, which claimed that the yellow race would heap disaster upon white peoples, and yet Okakura Tenshin boldly refuted this unjust analysis, stating that it was white people who were the very ones that brought evils to Asia.

We must not forget that we had an excellent controversialist speaking up for the cause of the Meiji Restoration.

Hired foreigners and the Envoy to Europe

An urgent diplomatic task was to adjust the unequal treaty that had been concluded at the end of the Bakufu period. The new Meiji Government sent a large mission, of over one hundred personnel, with Iwakura Tomomi as the head, to Europe and America in the 4th year of Meiji (1871). This was called the “Iwakura Mission.” The most urgent business was to modernize and Westernize Japan. The information obtained through this large-scale mission concerned the methods of imperialist European countries and America. Japan’s aim was not to join the Western imperialist aggressor powers, but to systematically prepare for coping with foreign aggressors. Okubo Toshimichi, one of the mission members, implemented the policy of increasing industrial production through governmental initiative and finance.

In the 5th year of Meiji (1872), the calendar was changed from the lunar calendar to a solar calendar, and Christianity was legalized. In practical matters, Westernization of Japan was rather welcomed. Western clothes and hats were worn and Western buildings were constructed. At about the same time, many newspapers and magazines were published. *Gakumon no Susume (Encouragement for Learning)*, written by Fukuzawa Yukichi, was widely read and the spirit of independence and self-respect was advocated, emphasizing individual abilities, instead of social status.

An industrial revolution took place in Japan after the Meiji Restoration. Not only was mass-production realized in modern factories equipped with machinery, but also the

social system itself was geared toward maintaining the new system of production.

The Bank of Japan was established and the financial system was adequately organized, leading to the development of capitalism. Transportation and information networks were developed and social and industrial infrastructure were completed.

With these developments, the number of workers increased, and after the Sino-Japanese War, a labor movement began.

Entering the Taisho era, social movements such as universal suffrage became very active and a women's movement also appeared.

In the 14th year of Taisho (1925), the Universal Suffrage Law was promulgated and all the men aged 25 and over were given the right to vote, regardless of the amount of the tax that they paid. Three years later, the first popular election was held and a system of party politics began.

So, as readers may well know by now, democracy did not begin after the War. It began well before that. But this was democracy in terms of laws and systems. A democracy in terms of morals and spirit had started way back with the Seventeen Articles Constitution of the Asuka Period, as I have previously mentioned. This is exactly my point. Japanese traditions never cease to exist nor discontinue.

With the development of modern industries, more and more people came to live in big cities and a new lifestyle centering on city life formed. This also heralded the popularization of culture. And at the same time, it meant cultural uniformity.

Buses and private railways carried people, department stores were opened, women dressed in Western clothes, dishes such as curry rice, croquette and *Tonkatsu* (fried pork cutlet) became favorite meals, and the prototype of city life, which carried over to this day, was then formed. Thus, superficial Westernization and modernization of Japan went on. Yet, the Japanese mentality never changed.

In the 12th year of Taisho (1923), the Great Kanto Earthquake hit the central part of Japan. This disaster claimed over one hundred thousand lives and subsequently came to drastically change the capital Tokyo from the Edo-flavored Tokyo to a modern city.

Even during times of war, the uniqueness of Japanese culture stood unshaken.

Japan maintained the uniqueness of her culture even in times of Great Wars.

The Taisho culture was an attempt to exactly embody such a city culture.

While Meiji culture was greatly influenced by a concept of a nation confronting the West, the Taisho era was characterized by a stronger perspective focusing on individuals under Western influence. Western knowledge was readily adopted as culture.

Taisho culture produced such great figures as Shiga Naoya and Mushanokoji

Saneatsu of the Shirakaba (White Birch) School advocating humanitarianism; Tanizaki Junichiro with aesthetic style; and Akutagawa Ryunosuke, who wrote intelligent novels. Proletarian literature depicting workers' lives from the Marxist point of view was also born. *Kani Kosen (Crab Boats)* was written by Kobayashi Takiji. Many were written in similar patterns and fell short of the great literary works.

Other genius pioneers were scholars Nishida Kitaro, who tried to explain Japanese Zen in Western languages, and Yanagida Kunio, who established Japanese ethnology, and artist Fujita Tsuguharu, who studied in Paris and eventually became a popular figure of Ecole de Paris.

All of these people passionately sought the uniqueness of Japanese culture while under Western influence.

Entering the Showa era and overlapping with the War, the movement never changed its nature. While American and French movies were popular before the War, Japanese film directors began working on their original films.

Column 12: Natsume Soseki and Mori Ogai

Natsume Soseki and Mori Ogai were two great writers who represent modern Japanese literature.

Both lived through the Meiji Period, but they were very different from each other in birth and character. Soseki called himself *Edo-kko* (dyed-in-the-wool people of Edo) and was brought up as a common man with a sense of open-heartedness. Ogai was born into the family that were hereditary physicians to the Tsuwano Han of Iwami (Shimane Prefecture). He grew up in the atmosphere of a warrior tradition.

They went abroad as scholarship students granted by the Meiji government—English literature scholar Soseki to England, and army doctor Ogai to Germany. It can be said that this was the beginning of their life-long struggles.

Soseki referred to the two years he had spent in London as “the gloomiest two years in my entire life.” He encountered a heterogeneous Western culture that was completely different from Japanese culture. Between the two cultures, in which the Japanese trust each other as individuals and in harmony with the society as a whole, while Westerners make themselves secure by doubting and criticizing others, Soseki certainly agonized, desperately seeking how he and other humans should live.

This was the same with Ogai. But unlike the gloomy Soseki, Ogai was active and lively. He ardently discussed life with Germans and criticized Western culture. However critical of Western culture Ogai was, he too, was in agony between Japanese and Western cultures.

Their respective lives in foreign countries made a clear contrast, owing to differences in their origins and characters.

After returning home to Japan, both started writing novels.

Natsume Soseki's first novel was, needless to say, *Wagahai wa Nekodearu (I am a Cat)*. This is generally regarded as a humorous novel, but that is not all. Seen through the eyes of a cat, the family of an English teacher is observed. Soseki's true intention was to pursue a proper path for humans, by contrasting the Japanese people, who always make the most of harmony as a whole, sometimes sacrificing individual life for the sake of total harmony, and Westerners, who believe always and under all circumstance that individuals count most.

Soseki did not flatly disparage Western individualism. At the same time, however, he always asked himself if individualism is all that the Japanese people need. So, in the book, he had his characters discuss Japanese thinking and Western thinking, ironically criticizing those who blindly worship the West, one character saying that "I believe that the Japanese people in old times were far superior to Western people."

Soseki's next book entitled *Bocchan (My Dear Boy)* and early books were filled with his humor. It was his open-hearted Edo-kko character that did it. But as he went on writing *Sorekara (Then after That)*, *Michikusa (Hanging About)* and *Meian (Light and Shadow)*, what Soseki pursued in the disguise of humor—the heterogeneity between Japanese and Western cultures—became deeper and his conviction that the Western way of struggle for survival is not fit for the Japanese people became all the more certain.

Meanwhile, Mori Ogai contrasted attitudes toward death between Japanese people and Westerners in his book entitled *Moso (Delusion)*, in which an old man reflects on his experience of studying abroad in Germany, remembering a Japanese student who became ill and died in Berlin. The author came to find himself not at all convinced of the Western idea that only barbarians typically do not fear death.

Also in his other book *Konoyoni (Like This Way)*, he describes himself as one who is skeptical about everything, such as Westerners, and yet ultimately finds himself perfectly comfortable with the inherited household tradition centering on the Emperor.

Where, then, were these writers, standing in agony between Japan and the West, heading?

Following the death of Emperor Meiji, General Nogi Maresuke and his wife died. Ogai was profoundly moved by their martyrdom and wrote *Okitsuya Goemon no Isho (The Will of Okitsuya Goemon)*. And in his late years, he expressed his insatiable admiration for the unchanged mental tradition of the Japanese people by writing historical novels such as *Abe Ichizoku (The Clan of Abe)* and *Shibue Chusai*.

Soseki described a story of a man who became inclined to die after learning about the martyrdom of General Nogi Maresuke. In his later years Soseki entered the world of Chinese poems and expressed his irritation toward people who uncritically catered to the West in search of newness and novelty of the Period.

Currently, the trend of globalization predominates throughout the world. This trend makes us Japanese feel as if we will become new and different humans, apart from the traditional Japanese.

However, we should take heed of the paths trod by these two great writers, who searched, struggled and agonized and never gave up their writhing pursuit of the true Japanese way in the midst of the West and Japan. We should know that both Soseki and Ogai found themselves as true Japanese by returning to the Japanese tradition, which has continuously existed unchanged since ancient times. In the end, Ogai said, "I want to die as Mori Rintaro (Ogai's real name) of Iwami origin." This is the words expressed out of true recognition and appreciation of his origin.

Now that various foreign cultures have rushed into Japan, it is especially important that we should clearly and definitely recognize what our origins are.

Story XIII How Japan Fought—From the Sino-Japanese War to the Greater East Asian War

What led to the Sino-Japanese War?

The first half of the 20th century meant wars to Japan, entangled in global conflict and instability. In the history of Japan, it was the first time since the victories in the Genko incidents that Japan took center stage of world history. It is very important and vital to see how Japan coped with difficult circumstances of the time, in order to understand the Japanese national character and history. So, I will explain this in detail.

It is said that world-wide casualties from the wars of the 20th century surpassed 100 million and well over the total number of victims of war up until the 19th century. The “modern age,” with its finest and highly developed technologies, underwent the most violent of wars in all of human history. This meant that the “progressive spirit” was not at all effective in preventing human-created calamities, but did accelerate progress in military efficiency. It is often mentioned that the Middle Ages was time of darkness. In reality, it was the opposite. Nonetheless, it was the time of severe trial for Japan. The fact is clearly recorded in history that in the shadow of aggression by European and American powers, Japan, standing alone as the only modern state in Asia, competed with the Western powers and managed to occupy a strong position in the world.

This period of Wars started with the battle between Britain and Russia in the 19th century. It is particularly necessary to point out this fact and emphasize that it was not the Sino-Japanese War that started a war-studded period. With the intention of impressing feelings of guilt, that Japan invaded the Continent, on the part of some scholars and others in the postwar years, it was often argued that the Sino-Japanese War started the horrible War Period. We must correct this wrong thinking of accusing Japan of waging war on the Continent. The time was characterized by Wars, for which Japan cannot be totally blamed. Britain waged the Opium War against China and made Hong Kong her colony. Since then, Britain began advancing aggressively northward in Asia. On the other hand, Russia tried to invade southward, in search of ice-free ports. In 1891, Russia started construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway, which was supposedly intended to facilitate the finding of ice-free ports. Russia was surrounded not only by China, but also by Korea and Japan. In order to cope with these neighbors, Japan was said to have concluded the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce in the 27th year of Meiji (1894).

Korea, under strong control by China, often confronted Japan and occasionally

circumstances would arise which could put Japan in a crisis. Domestically, in Korea, there were pro-Chinese and pro-Japanese forces fighting each other. After riots took place in 1881 and 1884, Qing China enhanced its strength and began threatening Japan. The Joseon Dynasty in Korea asked Qing China to send troops to repress a civil war which was waged by farmers in the south in 1894 (the Donghak Peasant Revolution). Judging that this was a great danger, Japan sent troops to Korea and the Sino-Japanese War started.

The War was fought not only in Korea, but also spread to Manchuria. Japan overwhelmed Qing China both in naval and land battles. As I have already mentioned, after the Opium War, Japan formed military forces and armed them with modern weapons. The decisive battle was fought by the Japanese Navy in the 27th year of Meiji (1894) called the Naval Battle of the Yellow Sea. Japanese naval equipment was faster than that of China, and with a column formation called “single column squad”, the Japanese fleet crossed diagonally in front of the enemy fleet, attacked its rightwing and won the battle. Also, big rapid-fire guns with higher rates of firing contributed greatly to the overwhelming victory.

A French newspaper applauded the humanistic treatment of Qing soldiers on the part of the Japanese military:

“What should be announced widely and loudly to the entire world is that while Qing soldiers acted cruelly toward Japanese soldiers, the Japanese soldiers did not pay back in kind, but rather they treated Qing prisoners of war well and generously. All of sick POWs received appropriate medical treatment as the wounded.” (*Le Figaro*)

Until then, it was a common military practice among the Western powers to ignore International Law and massacre prisoners of war.

What led to the Russo-Japanese War?

In the 28th year of Meiji (1895), Japan and Qing China concluded the Treaty of Shimonoseki and the Sino-Japanese War was over. Qing China acknowledged the independence of Korea, paid a huge sum of compensation to Japan and conceded to Japan the Liaodong Peninsula and Taiwan. By this time, however, China was occupied by many Western countries. So, in an attempt to secure the occupied Liaodong Peninsula, Russia, Germany and France intervened in this territorial matter (The Tripartite Intervention). Japan failed to cope against these powers and was obliged to

leave the Peninsula. Russia invaded as far south as the Korean Peninsula and had the Koreans establish a pro-Russian government in the 28th year of Meiji. Japan tried to resist, in vain, this Russian movement. The Russian control of Korea further solidified.

Riding on the opportunity of the xenophobic movement called the “Boxer Rebellion”, which took place in the 33rd year of Meiji (1900), Russia sent troops and occupied Manchuria. As the Russian intention of a southward advance was obvious, Japan naturally felt gravely threatened after Russia occupied Manchuria and Korea. Japan had no option but to cooperate with Britain and fight against Russia. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was concluded in the 35th year of Meiji (1902) and the Russo-Japanese War broke out in the 37th year of Meiji (1904).

The battles were fought in Korea and Manchuria. Japan occupied Port Arthur and won the Mukden campaign. Russia tried to fight back, sending a fleet of 38 ships from the faraway Baltic Sea in Europe, which took nearly seven months to arrive and deploy in the theater. Japan’s Combined Fleet led by Admiral Togo Heihachiro counterattacked the Russian fleet. How, then, did Japan defeat the last European fleet? A big difference lay between Japan and Russia. The former had full knowledge of the Sea of Japan, while the latter was totally overcome with fatigue after the long voyage all the way from Europe.

Commander Togo divided the waters from offshore of Cheju Island to the coast of Vladivostok into seven sections and attacked the Russians around the clock, using his unique tactic of repeating frontal and surprise attacks by turns. This maneuver was commanded by Akiyama Saneyuki. Against the vertically moving Russian Baltic Fleet, the Japanese Combined Fleet adopted the “crossing the T” tactic attacking the enemy fleet at full port the helm, and sank 19 battleships and cruisers in total. Thus, Japan claimed a victory in the Naval Battle of the Sea of Japan. At this time, Japan held more than six thousand Russians as prisoners of war, including commanders. As a whole, Japan accommodated as many as 73,000 Russian prisoners of war at 26 facilities throughout Japan. Internationally, it is a well-known fact that Japan took good care of these POWs.

However, Japan was obliged to spend an excessive amount of money for prosecuting the War and could no longer afford to continue fighting a long war. Through the United States as an intermediary, Japan concluded the Treaty of Portsmouth. In paying expenses for the War, Jewish capitalist and banker Jacob Henry Schiff, who was opposed to the Russian Romanov Dynasty, helped Japan. This aid was realized through efforts made by Takahashi Korekiyo, the then vice-President of the Bank of Japan. Through the treaty, control of Korea was transferred from Russia to Japan. Furthermore,

Japan succeeded in obtaining leasehold right of the Liaodong Peninsula, together with rights and interests of the Southern Manchurian Railway and territorial rights over South Sakhalin.

Japan's victory had a tremendous impact on the entire world. First of all, Japan successfully maintained her national security on her own. The fact that Japan, an Asian nation composed of the yellow race, defeated one of the great powers of the white West, awakened the spirit of independence among the peoples of various nations and regions in Asia who had long been arbitrarily controlled by the Western great powers. On the other hand, in the West, thinking in terms of the "Yellow Peril" further aggravated groundless fears of the yellow race.

Moreover, the War had another effect, of vindicating the honor of Asian nations which had long been under the control of the great powers of Europe and America. Indian Premier Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) said, in retrospect, that "the victory won by Japan was a great salvation for Asia," and an Indian newspaper at that time reported that Japan was the only state in Asia that saved the honor and dignity of Asia. Indian newspapers praised Japan, saying, "We sincerely congratulate the Japanese people on the victory they have obtained with their courage, discipline iron will and fortitude" (*The Samay Newspapers*). "Japan's victory has awoken the Indian people and made us realize that India is equal with Great Britain" (*The Hitabatey Newspaper*).

India was not the only country that had been suffering from being colonized by Great Britain. China's Sun Yat-sen said, "Japan defeated Russia. This is the victory for all the Asian peoples over the Europeans. All of the Asians were extremely exultant and came to have a great hope for their future." After that, the number of Chinese students who came to study in Japan increased. It is not too much to say that the slogan "Learn from Japan" resounded all over Asia. In Vietnam, a movement of "Study in the East" began and young people came to study in Japan, saying "The Tiger (the United States) and the Whale (Europe) have been stopped by the yellow race for the first time. How was Japan able to accomplish this great feat? The answer lies in Tokyo."

Not to remain in East Asia, this wind of influence spread far and wide, to the distant Arab world as well. In Egypt, a book on Japan entitled *The Rising Sun*, written by Camille, was published. The book emphasized that becoming united as one as Japan did, Egypt would be able to win independence from Britain. In Iran, a book entitled *Mikado Nahme (The Book of the Emperor)* was published, in which Japan was applauded as having united as one with the Emperor at the center, defeated formidable Russia and brought a bright light of hope to the entire world. The Iraqis and Lebanese followed suit. Books in praise of Japan were published.

Especially in Turkey, which had been tormented by Russia, many books regarding the Russo-Japanese War were published. Above all, the book by Pertev Pasha was the most influential, maintaining that “If Turkey is to promote modernization, learning from Japan, the Turkish future will never be pessimistic. Our national fate lies in our people.” This message is said to have triggered the Turkish Revolution in later years. A diplomatic mission ordered by the Turkish Emperor came to Japan and reported that “Japan’s progress and development is the wish of the entire East, and today the Oriental people share the same sentiment as with the Japanese.” Even believers of Islam looked up to Japan as the leading power of Asia. In fact, Islamic Representative Conference was held in Japan in 1921. This clearly showed that all the nations in Asia and Africa were suffering greatly from colonization by the great powers of Europe.

During the era described in the book *Saka no Ue no Kumo (Clouds over the Slope)*, modernization of Japan was accomplished

Japan’s modernization, which paralleled that of the Western world, became one of the ideals in Asia. Writer Shiba Ryotaro once wrote a book entitled *Saka no Ue no Kumo (Clouds over the Slope)*, in which he compared a “modern state and great power” which Japan had aspired to reach, just awakening from the long sleep of feudalistic reign, to clouds over the slope which are to be grabbed after climbing up the slope. However, it was never flimsy and evasive clouds, but the goal was there and Japan actually had grabbed that goal and was further advancing toward a higher one. I must say that author Shiba was not able to conceive the whole picture.

After the Sino-Japanese War, many Asian students came to Japan to study. Among the foreign students from Qing China was Sun Yat-sen. He formed the United League of China in Japan and began a campaign to overthrow the Qing Dynasty, advocating the principle of *Sanmin* (Three principles of the people). The literary scholar Lu Hsun was also a foreign student in Japan. He first studied medicine in Sendai and under the influence of Natsume Soseki and others he became a writer keenly conscious of “modernization.”

Domestically in China, an uprising called the Xinhai Revolution, aiming to overturn the Qing Dynasty, took place, and the Republic of China was established. Among the pro-revolutionary delegates who gathered in Nanjing, Sun Yat-sen was chosen as an interim Governor General. Influential Yuan Shih-kai of the Qing Dynasty joined the pro-revolutionaries and sided with the anti-Emperor forces, trying to overthrow the Emperor. However, once Yuan Shih-kai was conceded the title of Governor General by Sun Yat-sen, he reversed course and set out to suppress the revolutionaries and China

fell into total chaos. Local governments with military power came to be controlled by all kinds of war lords.

Some people call Japan's annexation of Taiwan and Korea colonization. But the fact is that then Emperor Gojong of Korea promoted the treaty with Japan and cooperated in the annexation.

“At the time of the annexation, it was not rare for one country to assume control of another if the latter could not survive on its own, for the perspective of preserving international order. The Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty was not illegal in terms of international law.” (This view was maintained by Professor Crawford of Cambridge University on the occasion of a 2001 conference titled “A Reconsideration of the Annexation of Korea,” sponsored by Harvard University.)

In fact, in order to fulfill annexation, Japan built vast railway and telecommunication networks and constructed factories and schools as facilities for public use. Keijo (Seoul) University was established in a manner similar to that of the national universities in Japan. For these efforts on the part of Japan, agriculture and commerce significantly developed and the amount of exports tripled in five years after the annexation and Korean ports by all accounts became very busy.

On the other hand, following defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, Russia gave up its policy of southward advance toward East Asia, and instead turned to reengage in advancing toward Europe. Britain and France approached Russia and the Triple Entente was concluded in 1907. Germany formed the Triple Alliance with Austria and Italy to counter Russian maneuvering. These two parties gradually came to confront each other, accelerating international tension, which ended in an explosion in the Balkan Peninsula. When Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated by a pro-Russian Serbian nationalist on June 28, 1914 in Sarajevo, Bosnia, the two sides engaged in war. It was initially an incident in Europe, but the international colonial network of the great powers made it a world war and thus World War I broke out.

Japan, at the behest of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, entered the War on the side of the Triple Entente and declared war on Germany. Japan advanced toward the Shandong Peninsula, Chingtao and Pacific islands north of the Equator, all of which Germany had leased. China also declared war on Germany and demanded that Japan withdraw from Chingtao. As a counter, Japan presented China with several demands, which included taking over rights and interests of the Shandong Province in the 4th year of Taisho (1915). China called these Japanese demands “The 21 Demands” and claimed that they were totally unjust.

The War dragged on and in totally exhausted Russia, citizens in cities suffered from

food shortages and frequently started riots, which were joined by soldiers. Under such chaotic circumstances, the Romanov Dynasty was overthrown. Riding in on this occasion, the Communist Party led by Lenin launched armed uprisings, expelled other parties and factions from the Parliament and established a new government under control of Soviets (conference of delegates) composed of workers, farmers and soldiers. This Soviet Government ended the War with Germany, waged a civil war against anti-revolutionary forces within Russia and killed and injured a great many people, executing many enemies of the Communist Party as anti-revolutionaries. A government that purges opposing parties is despotic. The dark face of the Soviet government seriously frightened and alarmed European nations and Japan as well. Japan sent troops to Siberia in the 7th year of Taisho (1918) and kept a 72,000-strong army there until the 11th year of Taisho (1922). This alarm towards the Communist revolution turned out to be quite reasonable and appropriate. After all, this dark society called the Soviet Union collapsed just under 70 years after the revolution.

The economic boost brought by the War and the Manchurian (Mukden) Incident

World War I lasted for four lengthy years and engulfed the lives of people of every participating country in total war. New weapons such as airplanes, airships, tanks and submarines were used and countries participating in the War were air-raided. In the 7th year of Taisho (1918), the War ended in defeat on the part of Germany and the Tripartite Alliance. Europe was a battlefield and was left severely scarred by the War.

On the other hand, the homeland of Japan and the United States never became battlefields. It can be said that these two countries benefited geographically. Consequently, these two became dominant voices within the international community after the War. In the 8th year of Taisho (1919), the Paris Peace Conference was held, in which Japan attended as one of the five great powers (the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan), and the Treaty of Versailles was concluded.

Japan enjoyed an unprecedented economic boost, called a “War Boost.” Not only was the export of munitions robust, but heavy industries also developed with a remarkable increase in exports to Asian regions.

Japan became an Asian economic superpower. This led to a conflict with the other superpower, the United States, which aimed to advance into newly opened Asian markets. In the 10th year of Taisho (1921), the Washington Conference was held with the support of the U.S., and nine countries including Japan met at the conference. The main agenda items were naval disarmament and the China issue. The conference was an attempt to bring order to East Asia. At the conference, the ratio of holding major naval

vessels was decided as 5:5:3 among the United States, Great Britain and Japan, in that order. As for China, the nine participating countries discussed conserving the territorial status quo and the opening of China's doors to the world, and the treaty was officially formalized (Nine Power Treaty).

The reason why I am explaining the transition of European and American histories is that they closely relate to and overlap the history of Japan. The time has come when we have to place Japan in the context of world history in order to understand the flow of Japanese history. Globalization did not begin in contemporary times but much earlier. War is never waged unilaterally by the government of a single nation.

In China, an anti-Japanese movement aimed to expel Japan from China gained further momentum and the Chinese Communist Party, under the influence of the Russian Communist Party, became very active. At the beginning of Showa Era, over 200,000 Japanese people lived in Manchuria, and as many as 10,000 military troops (the Guandong Army) were stationed there. Though the Japanese government and the military authorities took a non-expansionist policy, the Japanese people, surrounded by these threats, began a movement to take positive measures for the purpose of self-defense. Strong discontent grew against the partisan government which was incapable of coping with the crisis in Manchuria.

Under these circumstances, the Manchurian (Mukden) Incident broke out in the 6th year of Showa (1931). The Guandong Army occupied key parts within all of Manchuria, and the following year, in 1932, the new state of Manchukuo was established. Pu Yi the last Emperor of the Manchurian Qing Dynasty became Emperor of Manchukuo and was to build a nation of their own with the cooperation of the Japanese people. Since antiquity, China was never a single-ethnic country (there were more than 50 ethnic groups in China), and according to the power relationship among the multiple ethnic nations at the time, the government varied. At one time, China was divided into many small states. At present, under the rule of a single race, many other races were kept under a state of oppression. The Autonomous Regions of Tibet and Uyghur present good examples. Considering present circumstances, the establishment then of Manchukuo should not be rebuked.

Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi, who took an ambiguous attitude toward Manchukuo at that time was assassinated (The 5/15 Incident). Naturally, the United States and other countries with interests in China opposed the establishment of Manchukuo and the League of Nations sent an investigative team (the Lytton Commission), headed by Victor Bulwer-Lytton, to Manchukuo. We must bear in mind that the Lytton Report clearly stated that the Commission understood the then critical

situation in which Japan's national security and interests were threatened. However, the report recommended that Japanese Army should withdraw from Manchukuo and the new state should be put under international management, which Japan refused and consequently in the 8th year of Showa (1933), Japan withdrew from the League of Nations. After that, a cease-fire was concluded with China and Manchukuo achieved rapid economic growth. With the influx of a large population, the slogan, that "five ethnic peoples in cooperation and harmony build a realm of peace and prosperity," actually came true.

In July of the 12th year of Showa (1937), an incident at the Marco Polo Bridge occurred in the suburbs of Beijing, and Chinese troops took shots at Japanese troops. In August of the same year, Japanese officers and soldiers were shot to death in Shanghai, which worsened the conflict between Japan and China. In December, the Japanese Army raided Nanjing, the capital of the Kuomintang Government. Chiang Kai-shek shifted the capital to Chongqing, which was deeply inland, and continued to fight back.

The "China Incident," or the Second Sino-Japanese War, broke out. In the 13th year of Showa (1938), Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro proposed the establishment of a new order in Asia, with the concept of an economic sphere incorporating Japan, Manchuria and China. Here was the emergence of the concept of the Greater East Asian Co-prosperous Sphere. The United States took a neutral stance toward the Chinese Incident, but would not allow this economic concept and came to support Chiang Kai-shek.

In Japan, the government was run by the military authorities. As long as the world was in a state of War, this was the trend of the time. After the War, the military government was entirely blamed for Japan's ill-fated war. However most of the Japanese people had supported it in one way or another, though not too willingly. It was not wise to simply criticize the military-led government. In the 13th year of Showa (1938), the National Mobilization Act was issued and in the 15th year of Showa (1940), Japan's national economy began to be state-controlled and political parties were dissolved, upon which *Taisei Yokusan-kai* (Imperial Rule Assistance Association) was formed. Almost the entire nation supported it.

In the 14th year of Showa (1939), the United States abrogated the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between Japan and the U.S. Japan heavily relied on petroleum and many other goods imported from the U.S. The renunciation of the treaty was a tremendous blow to Japan. In search for oil resources, Japan prepared a plan to advance to Southeast Asia, which brought about another serious situation in which Japan was to go head-to-head against Great Britain, the United States, Holland and

France, all of which had colonies there.

Japan came to play a “leading role” in world history

In the 15th year of Showa (1940), in order to raise Japan’s position in Asia, Japan concluded the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy, which was an extension of the Anti-Comintern Pact between Japan and Germany. This was a foregone conclusion that reflected Japan’s conflicting relationships with Great Britain, the U.S. and other countries. In the 16th year of Showa (1941), Japan concluded a Neutrality Pact with the Soviet Union, further making Japan’s anti-American inclination clear. The United States of America, Britain, China and Holland formed the “ABCD” encirclement to isolate Japan.

In the same year (1941), Japan’s Army and Navy entered Saigon, the capital of Vietnam, which became a *point d’appui* for Japan’s southward advance. To counter this action, the United States froze Japanese assets in the United States and placed a total embargo on oil exports to Japan. The U.S. staged an economic blockade. In August, the U.S. and Britain advocated what was called the Atlantic Charter and tried to check Japan’s advance. Japan desperately negotiated with the U.S. in Washington, D.C., but no breakthrough was to be seen.

This was clearly a natural consequence of previous actions. The United States at that time was in no way a normally functioning country. There were a large number of unemployed workers and out-of-control labor movements, and on top of these problems, President F.D. Roosevelt himself was highly disposed towards the Soviet Union and did not know how to cope with the critical domestic situation. Though being called the “New Deal,” his policy was tinged with socialism. Unable to stimulate the national economy, with mounting discontent among Americans, the U.S. was stuck in a quagmire and the only possible way out was by waging a war. However, President Roosevelt had won the Presidential election by promising U.S. citizens that the U.S. had no intention of entering into a War fought by other countries. So, the President secretly connived to have Japan start a war. I have analyzed the circumstances in my book entitled *The OSS’s “Japan Plan” that Made Japan Take the Wrong Path after the War* (published by Tenten-sha). The most decisive historical source I quote is from the book titled *President Roosevelt and the Coming of War, 1941* (published in 1948), written by then historian Charles Beard.

In November of 1941, a proposal from the U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull, which is referred to as “Hull Note”, which demanded Japan to withdraw from China and Indochina unconditionally, was indifferently presented to Japan. The note was actually

written by Harry Dexter White, a spy working for the Soviet Russia. It was an absolutely irreconcilable proposal, solely intended to put Japan “into the position of firing the first shot” (President Roosevelt).

On December 8th, 1941 (the 16th year of Showa), the Japanese Navy attacked Pearl Harbor in the U.S. territory of Hawaii. Rather than “Japan attacked”, Japan was enticed into attacking. On the same day, the Japanese Army landed on the Malay Peninsula and struck and defeated the British Army, and then headed for Singapore. The plan was to secure the transportation of oil from Southeast Asia to Japan. However, this was the largest British colony in Asia and huge battleships, such as the *HMS Prince of Wales* and *HMS Repulse* were anchored there. A squadron of Japanese Navy fighter planes took off on December 10 and attacked the British battleships three times, in the end winning the Naval Battle off Malaya, sinking the two British battleships. It was the Japanese military that demonstrated the power of aircraft in battle for the first time in the world.

Negotiations for a cease-fire were held by Commander Yamashita Tomoyuki in Singapore and the British Army officially surrendered. Prime Minister Churchill was deeply disheartened. The Royal British Navy was defeated in Asia for the first time. Consequently, this became a significant incident, in which Western countries, other than the United States, were expelled from Asia. By this feat, Japan came to play a leading role in world history.

Column 13: The Greater East Asian War

In retrospect, it should be emphasized that the Greater East Asian War, which drove Western countries out of the East, precisely brought the period of World Wars to a close. The complete European withdrawal from Asia totally changed the pattern of global dominance by the West since the 19th century. Western dominance in the East, which began with the Opium War, ended except in the case of the United States. Though the War cost Japan dearly, absorbing every cost, Japan changed the world through the War. In this sense, the War was appropriately called the “Greater East Asian War,” instead of the Pacific War.

Up to now, the World War Period has been discussed and interpreted as if Japan actively waged a war against Western Powers, compelled by thoughtless and reckless actions on the part of the Japanese military authorities, the fact that Japan was manipulated into getting involved in the war being ignored. We must change this wrong notion. The Japanese people are never a belligerent people nor cruel and cold-blooded enough to commit atrocities. The wars Japan fought against other countries were not

initiated by Japan. Of course, during the Wars, Japan was often very aggressive in carrying out operations. But, that was how a war was fought. However, in initiating war or regarding reasons for wars, Japan was always passive.

On hearing of the outbreak of the War as reported by the media, the majority of the Japanese supported the War as something that was inevitable. In the war against the United States, everyone felt it was impossible to win in terms of material quantity. Even if it meant fighting a losing war, Japan had no other option but to fight. There was no way to accept the Hull Note. Of course, in terms of military infrastructure in Asia, Japan was ahead of the United States. At that time Japan outweighed other powers with respect to aircraft, battleship, etc. In this sense, War was never thought to be reckless. However, when it came to a long-term war, things were quite different. Nonetheless, Japan lasted longer than Germany in the War.

Japan chose the path of preserving her pride and dignity, rather than living in disgrace and humiliation by avoiding War. Japanese pride was well understood by the United States. The Americans knew that if the Emperor was condemned as war criminal, the war would be further prolonged, bringing greater destruction to Allied Forces. The OSS (Office of Strategic Services) was established immediately after the start of the War. According to a recently discovered document, it was revealed that the OSS had a firm policy from the beginning that the Emperor was never to be held responsible for the War. On the other hand, the OSS manipulated the public by disseminating false information, that the Emperor and military authorities were against each other and tried to accelerate discord among Japanese citizens.

According to this newly discovered source, a policy was devised to have the Emperor remain a national symbol and make Japan a socialistic state after the War. It turned out that under the OSS, many socialists cooperated and worked to actually decide vital policy.

Story XIV The Japanese Cultural Assets Handed down to the Modern Age

The Japanese people have always lived in unity with the community

During the time of the War, the Japanese people lived a very hard life under the National Mobilization system, with sheer shortage of goods, but they endured well and patiently. Outside the country, the unprecedented War was being fought, but peace was kept within Japan. This presents a striking contrast to European countries in which civil disturbances, such as partisan and resistance movements, caused great confusion and instability. In Japan, though many citizens were killed in frequent air raids, survivors met the end of the War in tranquility. This was shown clearly by how the people lived after the Imperial broadcast of August 15, in which the Emperor himself addressed the entire nation.

It was the words of the Emperor that started the War and it was again the words of the Emperor that ended the War. The continuity made the people feel safe and secure.

Many opinions proclaim that the postwar years are completely different from the prewar time. But that is not true.

Umi Yukaba Mizuku Kabane Yama Yukaba Kusamusu Kabane Okimi no He ni koso Shiname Kaerimi wa Seji

(We shall die in the sea. We shall die in the mountains. In whatever way, we shall die beside the Emperor, never turning back.)

This is a song called *Umi Yukaba (If We Go to the Sea to Fight)* which was widely sung during the War.

This was originally a poem composed by poet Otomo no Yakamochi of the Nara Period, indicating his pride in his family lineage, serving as guards for the Imperial Family, and his willingness without a shred of repentance to die for the Emperor. After the War, an attempt was made to suppress this popularly-sung song and make it obsolete for being “feudalistic”. Well, now, look at the following poems.

Uraurani Tereru Haru Hi ni Hibari Agari Kokoro Kanahimo Hitori shi Omoeba

(Spring sunshine warmly showers and a lark is flying in the sky. So peaceful and yet so sad, for here I am alone, deep in thought, indeed, all by myself.)

Hisakata no Ameno Furu Hi wo Tada Hitori Yamabe ni Oreba Ifusekari keru

(On a rainy day over a long moment, sitting alone in a hut in the mountains, how

melancholy I feel!)

The sentiment of loneliness and melancholy felt on a fine day or a rainy day alike is honestly expressed. These poems were also composed by Otomo no Yakamochi. Here we can perceive the same loneliness that “modern people” feel. Yakamochi is equipped with an extremely “modern” sense.

At the same time, he also had a spirit of co-existence with the community to which he belonged. This spirit is effectively demonstrated by the poem *We Shall Die in the Sea*. To willingly die for the Emperor and not to regret this at all is neither feudalistic nor archaic. It is a spirit and a sentiment as a human being who lives within the community in unity and harmony. And this has been nurtured through the history of Japan. The Japanese people are equipped with this time-honored spirit.

Young men of the Special Attack Squads, which were formed toward the end of the War, shared the same spirit. That is why they did not hesitate to risk their lives for the cause of their country and for their dear family.

Here is another popular War-time song:

Kisama to Ore to wa Doki no Sakura Onaji Heigakko no Niwa ni Saku Saita Hana nara Chiru no wa Kakugo Migoto Chirimasho Kunino Tame

Kisama to Ore to wa Doki no Sakura Hanarebanare ni Chiru tomo Hana no Miyako no Yasukuni-jinja Haru no Kozue ni Saite Awo

(You, buddy, and I are cherry blossoms of the same class. We bloom in the garden of the same naval academy. We blossoms are ready to fall after full-bloom. Let's fall gloriously for our country.)

(You, buddy, and I are cherry blossoms of the same class. If we fall in different places, when spring comes, let's bloom and meet at Yasukuni Shrine in the flowery Capital.)

The phrase “naval academy” was changed to “air squadrons” and so on, and this song was sung everywhere.

If they die, their spirit will meet at Yasukuni Shrine—with this hope of reunion, Japanese soldiers fought in the War.

A nation managed to avoid the fate of historical extinction—Japan

As I have mentioned in the previous Story, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) had a policy, from the start, of not condemning the Emperor for war crimes and of retaining him as a symbol. It was not a decision made by General Douglas MacArthur

or General Headquarters of occupied Japan (GHQ). Similarly, it was not initially planned that Japan was to surrender unconditionally. It is certainly true that following the occupation of Japan, one reform after another was implemented, within a period of two years or so, such as the making of the Constitution, the Shinto Directive, the purging of public officials, the dissolution of financial combines, farmland reform, and so on, which had the cumulative effect of denying Japan's past history. The OSS was dissolved immediately after the War, and former OSS staff entered GHQ. The Second Government Section, led by General Courtney Whitney, carried out these reforms.

Three points were particularly important: 1) The Emperor remained safe and preserved, 2) The Government remained and continued to run the administration and 3) U.S. Forces did not land on Japan proper. We must remember that except in the case of Okinawa, not a single land battle was fought in Japan proper. It was true that toward the end of the Greater East Asian War, Japan proper was exposed to devastating bombardments and Japan lost the War. However, land battles were never fought in Japan proper, which spared Japan the fate of becoming a killing field. Thus, there was no separation between Japan of the past and Japan today. It is felt that we Japanese are living our everyday life in the same manner as has been since the Meiji Period. It is of particular significance that both Kyoto and Nara were spared bombardments. The national entity was, anyhow, preserved. This was a decisive difference from that of Germany. In Germany, the German government collapsed completely and the land was totally destroyed by fierce land battles.

However, through postwar reforms conducted by the OSS and GHQ, the Japanese people were urged to change their thinking. A media blackout to control Japanese expressions of opinions was thoroughly implemented without the Japanese people being aware of U.S. control. European and American influences became more profound than in pre-war years. In the name of democracy, various ideas such as equality, rights, individualism and the importance of self-assertion were imposed on the Japanese people.

They seemed to be right and proper things at first glance, but the U.S. intention was to break traditional Japanese society based on and supported by the spirit of "Wa". An organization called Nikkyoso (Japanese Teachers' Union) and other socialistic educational groups, led reforms, particularly in education. Another radical push was made to spread Christianity and many Christian faith-based universities were established in the postwar years. During the 15 years or so after the end of the War, strikes and demonstrations frequently occurred. It was also thanks to this so-called democracy that labor movements became very active. The actual situations in the Soviet

Union, China and North Korea were not made known, while false, idealized images were publicized. All at once, Japanese intellectuals disseminated speeches and writings under influences of modernism and socialism.

Particularly significant was the leftist inclination among Japanese universities. Things went too extreme and in liberal arts departments of some universities, the faculty was restricted to members of the Communist Party. Educated under such faculty, students tended to be pro-leftist in their thinking, speeches and conduct, whether they liked it or not. Those who were born in the postwar years were especially obliged to be strongly indoctrinated by biased teachings. Many of the postwar generation, called *Dankai no Sedai* (Baby Boom Generation), are among them.

However, in the general community, the radical attempts at postwar reforms were gradually absorbed into Japanese life in a manner suitable to Japan.

Japanese communal society changed from the state to corporate companies and same-trade bodies, but never disappeared. Individualism and individual rights were ardently advocated, but these ideas, too, were made effective within the framework of the common community in the same way as in the pre-war years. In various fields, imitation was the first step, followed by the principle of technical improvement. It was this principle of technical improvement that greatly boosted the Japanese economy during the high-growth era.

Economic advancement did not occur by itself. Politics and philosophy followed suit.

In international politics, the United Nations was newly established. However, for forty years after the end of the War, a cold war was waged between the liberalistic camp led by the United States and the socialistic camp headed by the Soviet Union. Over time, the socialistic bloc gradually weakened and finally collapsed. Countries still claiming to be socialist states are practically capitalistic now.

However, the concept of socialism has yet to be properly criticized and reviewed, and it remains in Japan, smoldering and barely escaping extinction.

In Socialist states, where the dictatorship of the Communist Party ruled, many people who were critical or opposed rule were cruelly murdered. In Japan, such ideological influences still remain. Its totalitarian ideology, free from full-scale criticism, tends to control the Japanese mass media such as newspapers and TV stations.

Irreplaceable assets called Japanese culture

In the name of postwar democracy, postwar Japan began with a new tendency of denying Japanese culture of the past without the people's realization that they were

under the control of an OSS-GHQ scheme, as I have already mentioned. It was meant to plant ideas of materialistic Americanism and Soviet-worshipping socialism in the Japanese mentality.

Quite naturally, postwar literature and thought were either warmed-over versions of imported ones or artificial self-denial. “Modernism” and “individualism” were loudly advocated and under these principles, imitating Europeans and Americans was a popular trend. In literature, writers like to write in the style of translation. Works by Oe Kenzaburo and Murakami Haruki are good examples. They looked as if they presented a new literary style and people admired its artificiality. This trend seems to continue now. However, this artificial world denies the Japanese tradition and instead tries to describe the state of *deracine* (uprooted).

Of course, in the postwar years there were literary writers such as Kawabata Yasunari, Kobayashi Hideo and Mishima Yukio, who tried to demonstrate typical Japanese sensibilities. In movies, directors Ozu Yasujiro, Kurosawa Akira and Mizoguchi Kenji made pictures reflecting traditional Japanese stories. In painting, Munakata Shiko produced many avant-garde paintings, incorporating Japanese culture of the past. However, as this talented generation is gradually disappearing, it seems that Japanese culture is on the decline.

Japan has become a world economic superpower. Considering the small size of the country, compared with the United States and China, the real Japanese power is likely to be the greatest in the world. Statistics show that Japan alone equals more than half the European Union in terms of economic power.

Diligence and the spirit of cooperation are still preserved in the Japanese people and many shrines and temples are also extant today. On the tragic occasion of the Great Earthquake Disaster of 3/11, the Japanese moral order was well kept, which was applauded all over the world. Reverence and respect toward the Emperor and Empress, who cordially visited to comfort people in the devastated regions, are newly cherished by the Japanese people.

One big drawback is that in the disguise of “democracy,” the minority has as loud a voice as the majority. Conservatives who oppose a materialistic or socialistic minority have no “words of their own” in response. Tradition and culture exist as facts and not as mere words. It is vital for Japan to logically constitute unchanged thought and a historical view of her own.

As clearly seen from what I have so far discussed, Japanese culture is based on a valuable legacy from the past, the likes of which are not to be found anywhere else in the world. From now on, we must re-recognize the importance of this legacy. This is not

at all biased nationalism. The legacy itself constitutes international culture worth sharing with the peoples of the world. To preserve it means to preserve the cultural assets our ancestors created.

Let's speak about Japan with our own words

I'll close my story soon. At the beginning of this story about our history, I mentioned that taking walks in the neighborhood, I see many shrines and temples. There are three times as many of them as convenience stores. Whenever we go to these shrines and temples, we naturally put our hands together to pray, awestruck. We feel at ease emotionally. This is exactly how our Japanese religion is. Not quite conscious of religion, we naturally appreciate our ancestors for creating these shrines and temples. To sense the presence of kami-gami and hotoke there, we feel relieved and solaced, accepting human weakness and pathos as they are. At the same time, we feel spiritually stronger, our lives made more vigorous. Unlike artificial Western religions and thoughts, ours are deeply rooted in the land and climate of Japan.

In thought, there was a wide-spread trend of denying Japan's past under the U.S. occupation after the War, and its influence still continues to be felt today. It is a premise of modern times to separate politics and religions in discussions considering the state. However, this is not right.

Today, the Japanese are rather reluctant to speak about religion. This is clearly the consequence of the separation of politics from religion.

However, we must not forget that the United States and Russia imposed the idea of the separation of politics from religion on the Japanese, in spite the fact that they are themselves Christian states. When we visit their countries, we see churches everywhere. Humans cannot live without religion. This has been proved since antiquity. Concerning life, humans can be patient and optimistic, but when it comes to death, no one has the privilege of escaping from it. Death infallibly visits everyone.

Japan has Shinto since ancient times. When a person dies, he or she becomes kami. When Buddhism came, it brought the idea of man becoming hotoke. When people die, they become great hotoke. This kind of Buddhism exists only in Japan. The idea is the same with Shinto.

On March 11, 2011 (the 23rd year of Heisei), big earthquakes accompanied by huge tsunami killed a great number of people in the Tohoku Region. On that day, I was inside a violently shaken building in Tokyo and anticipated death. Fortunately, the building was safe and did not collapse after shaking. What I felt then was the overwhelming power of nature beyond human knowledge and totally unpredictable by science, and

genuine awe toward nature. Train and bus service being completely halted, I walked all the way from the central metropolitan area to my home. I felt the importance of walking anew. Afterwards, I saw the horrible scenes of tsunami swallowing the coasts of Tohoku on TV. I was totally at a loss for words upon seeing devastatingly huge tidal waves beyond imagination. Appalling scenes of destruction and loss appeared, overwhelmingly impressing us humans with the power of nature. Ancient people would have said that they had seen a powerful kami-gami there. We also saw “kami” there.

There is no need to make distinctions, that ancient Japan was a religious state while recent Japan is a political and economic state.

In the first place, the periodical distinction, such as “Ancient Times” “Middle Ages” and “Modern Times” is a mistaken concept, poisoned by a progressive view of history. The history of Japan is characterized by the presence of the Emperor consistently from the very start and, therefore, it is not necessary to demarcate the past from the present. In fact, it cannot be done. In the undercurrent lies the view of humans, typical to the Japanese people who have lived in the natural environment of *Oyashima no Kuni* (Great Land of Eight Islands of Honshu, Shikoku, Kyushu, Awaji, Iki, Tsushima, Oki and Sado). This view is hard to express in words. There is nature worship, the worship of souls and the worship of the Imperial souls. Though science has made great leaps and advances, these natural forms of worships have never been driven away. As long as death stays as it is, these forms of worships will never disappear.

Nearly twenty thousand lives were lost to the Great Disaster of 3-11 in the Tohoku Region. People secretly believe that the victims became kami. They were not victims of nature’s violence, but rather nature led them to Heaven as kami. With this thought in mind, the Japanese people do not bear a grudge against nature nor hate it.

Death is an individual matter. But it is not an individual death. It is a death as one of the Japanese people. The deaths brought about by the tsunami this time were deaths within a community. It is not that each individual died an individual death. A person dies as a member of the Japanese community.

This teaches us that we can live as Japanese as long as there is a community called Japan. There is a strong, spiritual tie as the Japanese people.

However, to my regret, there seems to be too wide a gap between Japan as it is and the Japanese spirit. There is too great a difference between what we Japanese feel in our everyday life and what the Japanese newspaper and TV media as well as academic circles tell us. Those who are engaged in these fields have lost their identity as Japanese due to the influence of postwar education. Most thinkers are too preoccupied with Western thoughts. A world full of words written in *katakana* has been too recently

acquired with a rush, far from the intrinsic Japanese spirit.

The recent tragic disaster clearly proved the emptiness and fictitiousness of their speeches and writings. We must recover our own words.

Column 14: A civilized state of invariability and movement—Japan

Japan is the only country in the world, which remains in the same place, the same territory, within which the same race has been living for more than two thousand years.

Let's look at Europe. In old times, the Celts lived there. As described in *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* (*Commentaries on the Gallic War*) by Julius Caesar, the Latin Romans arrived and expelled the Celtic people. At that time, the Germanic peoples moved westward, pushed by the pressure of the Huns who dominated Central Asia and Central Europe. Various Germanic tribes settled in various parts of Europe, which became prototypes for many European countries.

This is not all. In the 13th and 14th centuries, the Mongols began to invade Europe. Europe was bitterly shaken. National borders shifted frequently from west to east, and from south to north.

This is the same with the Asian Continent. The history of China is a history of repetitious changes of many dynasties. And there has been no continuity between dynasties. There are distinctive severances. The remarkable technology manifested in the Terra Cotta Warriors and Horses sculptures of the Qin Dynasty had no influence at all on later Chinese sculptures. The change of dynastic regimes means not only a change of the name of the Dynasty, but also the change of ruling peoples, from the Han to the Xianbei people, to the Mongols and to the Manchus.

Changes in dynasties invariably brought wars. Invaded by other ethnic nations, driven out of their homeland, expelled to unfamiliar regions, some disappeared and others founded new settlements. These cruel transitions were repeated over and over again, becoming China as it is today.

All other countries in the world have experienced these changes and discontinuities, except Japan.

Japan alone is spared such history of transitions. Only once, Mongols tried to invade Japan, but they failed to land on Japanese soil.

Some people tend to call the period after the Meiji Restoration the "Modern Age," claiming that everything changed. What, then, is it that changed? The Japanese people remain as they are. Japan lost the War against the United States. However, U.S. Forces did not interfere with the Emperor, nor land on Japan proper. As a result, fundamental things never changed. The Japanese people still live in the same territory as Japanese

citizens. The most obvious proof that Japan has remained unchanged from more than two thousand years ago is the presence of the Emperor. The modernization waves which washed over Japan during the Meiji Period did not change Japan. The War turned out to be just a defeat in terms of the military and furthermore did not change Japan fundamentally.

In world history, the modern age is said to have formed the conception of the state, nurtured national consciousness among its people and the establishment of the state. However, in the case of Japan, with the benefit of its geographical condition, of being islands separated from the Continent, the Great Land of Eight Islands came to be recognized as a nation at one with nature from the very early stage of her history and with no intention of doing so, a national consciousness was cultivated quite naturally, which continues to this day without interruption.

As a very good example of the Japanese people's unchanged continuity, let me mention *Manyoshu* (*Collection of the Ten Thousand Leaves*) again. These poems continued to be composed and appreciated at the same time as Japanese mythologies were born. People of all calibers and status equally composed and contributed poems, surrounded by nature, farming in the fields, traveling, enduring the difficult task of being border guards far away from home, or in ordinary everyday life. When we read these poems now, we feel utterly moved and sympathetic. We can feel the sentiments and feelings expressed in the poems as exactly the same as ours. The 5-7-5-7-7 syllabic rhythm, which people in the 7th and 8th centuries felt was soothing, sounds soothing to our ears now. *Manyoshu* is widely read not only by a small number of experts, but also by ordinary people.

This kind of thing never happened anywhere else in the world. It is an exclusively Japanese phenomenon. This is a product of the same system, the same language, and the same culture that continues unchanged from antiquity to the present.

In the world, there are many shrines, theaters, arenas and aqueducts that demonstrate high culture of previous centuries, but they are all in ruins and the remains are no longer in use. The cultures are extinguished and are alive no more. Japan is different. Worship still occurs at Emperor Nintoku's Mausoleum. Changing shrines by building a new shrine every twenty years, which originated 1300 years ago, is still carried out solemnly, and people pay visits to shrines, stepping on round pebbles, filled with awe and feeling solemn and divine. Hohryu-ji Temple, a wooden structure built 1400 years ago, stands as it used to be and Buddhist ceremonies take place precisely as before. These are all alive today. This is clear proof that Japan is a nation of invariability and movement.

With the ongoing trend of globalization, some movements are seen to weaken the

national view. However, we must not be pushed by the current. Clearly recognizing that Japan is a historical great power, proud of its invariability and movement, and standing on this position, we must strongly address the world on what we have experienced and what we think. We must know that this is exactly the way in which Japan must deal with the world. After all, Japan is a great civilized nation.

Conclusion

When French anthropologist Claude Levi Strauss (1908-2009) came to Japan, he stated to the following effect:

“Isn’t it art that most remarkably demonstrates that Japanese culture created the unique system of her own, accepting various foreign factors? Affected greatly by China, and yet Japan accomplished art that is different from Chinese and is seen nowhere else in the world. Aesthetic sense is the most profound.” (*Japan Seen by an Anthropologist: The Collection of Claude Levi Strauss’s Lectures in Japan on Structure, Mythology and Labor*) published by Misuzu Shobo.

These suggestive words tell us that this famous anthropologist has found and perceived something accomplished in Japanese art, which is to be seen nowhere else in the world.

“The aesthetic sense is the most profound” is aptly pointed out, because art is the most suitable subject by which to explain Japanese characteristics, as this book precisely does. That is why I repeatedly mention Japanese art in this book. Many books on the history of Japan have been written, but I am quite dissatisfied with the lack of reference to Japanese art in these books. In fact, very few books mention art. Art is the best tool to explain the uniqueness of the Japanese system.

“Since a little boy, I have been familiar with Japanese Art. But I always thought that the sceneries depicted in Japanese paintings were depictions of nature as seen by painters’ imagination. However, coming to Japan, I found out that they were not dreamy images of nature, but real scenes.

Real as they are, the paintings of nature, all the same, have symbolic and philosophical significance. Japanese paintings have created a system to illustrate nature by using actual natural factors.” (*ibid.*)

The system that refers to the structure of Japanese art explains the origin of Japanese culture and bears resemblance to the system of Japanese poems of Waka and Haiku. In literature, the system needs verbal renditions. This also relates to Japanese religions.

Levi Strauss on his visit to Ise Shrine said the following and sharply pointed out the core of how Japanese religions should be:

“I felt strongly that this simplicity, sublimity, and purity contain things intrinsically Japanese. Though Japan is said to be a Buddhist country, it is heterogeneous from Buddhism that originated in India. In Japanese life, it is quite natural for people to have weddings at shrines and funerals at temples.” (*ibid.*)

Ise Shrine and Buddhism have respective characteristics, different from each other as religions. As I have explained so far, the difference is that one is a communal religion of Japanese origin and the other is a religion for individuals, which originated in India. What we feel at Ise Shrine is a noble sentiment which is brewed by a mixture of nature worship, worship of souls and worship of the souls of our Imperial ancestors. This is different from a religion centering on enlightenment brought by an individual named Buddha. This is closely related to the Japanese custom of weddings at shrines and funerals at temples. A wedding has a role of initiation for a young couple to start a new life together in a community, while a funeral is for paying respect to an individual death. The Japanese are very good at harmonizing community religion and individual religion.

“Apart from the fact that there are no separated divisions between Shinto and Buddhism as well as between intrinsic Japanese culture and foreign culture imported from China, I have also noticed that there is no absolute division between religious life and everyday life. The sacred and the secular are not very distinctly separated. In Europe, whether Catholic or Protestant, the distinction between the sacred and the secular is very strict.” (*ibid.*)

At the present day, shrines and temples have the same sublime atmosphere as before. Not only in relationship between Shinto and Buddhism, but also between one’s religious life and daily life, there is not a division or border. This is how the Japanese people live and it is very difficult to clearly define this borderless world. So, we tend to think that we live indifferently to religions.

In fact, many Europeans state that they rarely go to church and that their lives are distant from religions. In modern days, it is taught that science is almighty and solves everything. Our TV media and books also give us the illusion that their scientific programs or books on science can answer every question. But this is only partly true.

To be sure, scientific technology has led to highly developed transportation and communication networks. But this high level of development has changed nothing in terms of nature, human life and fundamentals of human nature. Being human has not changed a bit since antiquity. That is to say, we must not neglect the importance of

religions. The reason why I heavily emphasize the significance of religion is because religions seem to exist as something formal and awe-inspiring, but actually they exist naturally within our everyday lives.

After the War, we have been thinking of the history of Japan only in terms of economics or the struggle for power. We were made to think that humans are merely economic creatures and lust for power. But think again and we know that this, too, is a one-sided view of history, just like the illusionary worship of science. These remain strictly secondary matters and are not at all primary things. Not money or lust for power, but the true way of how humans should be and the history of culture certainly deserve our primary concerns. That was exactly what Levi Strauss saw in the history of Japan.

The original draft of this book was published as a series in *Kokubungaku (Japanese Literature)* from the October, 2007 issue to the July, 2008 issue. To my regret, this magazine is now out of publication. The editor-in-chief then was Mr. Oshima Keiichiro. After publication, I added many parts, mostly on cultural history. Mr. Okoshi Masahiro of Ikuhoshu helped me greatly with this book. I offer my most sincere gratitude to both Mr. Oshima and Mr. Okoshi for their devoted assistance.

Tanaka Hidemichi

About the Author: Tanaka Hidemichi

Mr. Tanaka was born in Tokyo in 1942. He graduated from the department of French Literature as well as the department of aesthetics and art history at Tokyo University. He studied abroad at the University of Strasbourg in France and obtained his doctorate there. He has Ph.D. and is Professor Emeritus of Tohoku University.

Working enthusiastically as an expert on the study of French and Italian art histories, he also is energetically promoting the study of Japanese art, emphasizing its world-class quality and value. At the same time, advocating the importance of the uniqueness of Japanese culture and history, he greatly contributed to the foundation of the Japan National History Society (established in 2010), and now serves as its chairman.

His many books include: *Nihon Bijutsu Zenshi (The Entire History of Japanese Art)* (Kodan-sha), *The Establishment of a New Historical View of Japan* (Bungei-sha), *What is Yamato Gokoro?* (Minerva Shobo), *The OSS's Japan Plan that Made Japan Take the Wrong Path after the War* (Tenten-sha) and *Sharaku Question is not yet Over* (Shoden-sha). He also co-authored *Nihon-tsu (Japan Experts)* (Ikuho-sha), etc.