

Now, turn to Japan. According to the orthodox conception of the history of Japan the date of the foundation of the Empire is put in the year 660 B.C., but the Japan we call modern in its full significance dates from the very recent year 1865, in which she adopted the open-door policy towards foreign countries and thus she has ever since come in contact with the West. The civilization of Japan in the past was somewhat homogeneous; its main elements were entirely limited to the production of Eastern mind. There were three elements or factors of civilization in Japan. One was a traditional code of morality prevalent among the whole race; the second was directly introduced from China, and the last from India, through the introduction of Chinese culture. Now let us have a look at these elements.

(1) The first element, though traditional in itself, has played a great part in the formation of the national character of the Japanese race. It is very difficult to say positively what it is. It is not religion, but a moral doctrine apart from the religious conviction of the existence of the Supreme Being. It is not philosophy, but practice. It is not the formulation of scientific theories but spiritual culture. It may roughly correspond to "gentlemanship;" it is the core of what may be called the racial "Sittlichkeit" of the Japanese. Some writers designate it as Japanese chivalry. Filial piety, loyalty, patriotism, bravery, honour, benevolence, veracity, politeness—all these are considered to be the cardinal virtues, although there are some minor ones. And all these virtues should be practised, according to the doctrine, not from the idea of individual or selfish gain, but from that of self-sacrifice. In order to comply with the requirements of this doctrine even suicide is justified under certain circumstances.

(2) The second element is represented by a great variety of the Chinese element which first came to Japan in 285 B.C., as is recorded in the chronicle of Japan. In those days China was a very flourishing community in the far East. Literature, art, philosophy, politics, social institutions—all these were introduced from China into Japan. We should not look on Chinese civilization at that time from the point of view of China at present. The China which effected a great influence on Japan is all but dead; nothing is left in the mother country, except the empty form and the skeleton without any spirit or life. Let us take, for example, the doctrine of Confucius. The true teaching of Confucius was a very rigorous, moral doctrine which was very much like the stoic philosophy which brought up some representative characters of Rome. This spirit of Confucius is still living in the Japanese mind, and was very conducive to the moulding of Japanese chivalry in the feudal age. In China, however, it has taken on a form of religious creed which is nothing but superstition. Some famous literary works have been lost, or have been even destroyed by the hand of Emperors in China; it was only recently that copies of them could be brought back from Japan to their native land.

(3) Lastly, let us look at what Japan owes India. Whatever Japan might have borrowed from India, it was not directly from India but through the medium of Chinese civilization. And this Indian element is represented by Buddhism, which is the historically reformed creed of Vedic doctrines, re-