

been frequent enough. The myth of the sun goddess has also had a generally favorable influence on the condition of women. The chief deity of Sintoists is a female. The most gorgeous temple in Japan is the Sinto temple, reared to the sun goddess in the Province of Ise. She is regarded as the giver of all life in nature, and therefore the goddess of spring and of harvests. In the springtime festivals and processions are instituted in her honor.

Of the long succession of sovereigns nine have been women. Naturally, therefore, the female sex escapes the degrading estimate which obtains in most Asiatic countries. Women are not secluded as in China or India, and there is in Japan something which approximates to our ideas at home.

A religion which is so strangely naturalistic might be expected to be weak on its ethical side. It is not a creed of strong moral power. There is less of "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" than in most faiths. The sexual relations, especially among the rural populations, are lax and the protest of conscience is feeble. Yet in the common ethics of life in all that concerns mutual rights, Sintoism presents a better record than many systems of more rigid law. It is always the sin that breaks over a strong moral code that becomes the most heinous. Sintoism has no positively corrupting doctrines or ceremonies like those of Hinduism or the old Baal worship. It has no vile and demoralizing promises like that of the Mohammedan's heaven. It has no legends of vicious conduct in its gods as have most heathen systems, ancient and modern.

BUDDHISM.

Buddhism entered Japan about 552 A. D., and from that time interesting changes occurred mutually between it and the Japanese faith. The two systems were alike in dispensing with a Creator. Sintoism, as well as its new

neighbor, considered the universe as eternal, subject only to development by natural growth or by generation. Though the Japanese, unlike the Indian faith, recognized the existence of a supreme deity from whom the two divine progenitors emanated, yet it made no practical account of him. He was never worshipped.

The two systems appear to have exercised a degree of mutual toleration, and both admitted the claims of Confucianism, which in Japan, as in China and Korea, became largely the faith or cult of the intellectual classes. The favorite illustration by which this tolerant spirit was expressed ran thus: There are many paths which lead to the top of Fusyama, each approaching from a different side, but when they reach the summit, they all alike command a view of the world.

In some respects Sintoism and Buddhism rendered to each other a mutual service. The former, like other systems of sun worship, developed a great aversion to death and corruption. As with the followers of Zoroaster, so with all Sintoists, the contact of the dead was considered polluting. And there was but slight attention given to the hereafter.

Buddhism, on the other hand, magnified the issues of the future. It was more sombre in spirit and looked upon death as only a transition to other forms of life. But on the other hand Buddhism held an awkward relation to marriage. It was essentially opposed to the reproduction of life. Its celibate priesthood were out of place at the marriage feast, while Sinto priests, themselves fathers of families, were in full sympathy with it.

For a thousand years, therefore, marriages were under the direction of Sinto priests, while the Buddhist bonzes officiated at the funerals. The arrangement was finally broken off through the jealousy of the Government. As with the Church of Rome, so with the Buddhist Sangha: the power over the dying and the dead