CHAPTER 8

THOUGHT AND RELIGION: 1550-1700

Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, Japanese society underwent fundamental changes that led to the dissolution of the traditional state structure and the appearance of new forms of state and social organization. This chapter focuses on the period from the middle of the sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century. It begins with the final stages of the era of social upheaval and ends a century after the formation of a unified political regime. During these 150 years a new state structure became firmly established, and the stable social environment that evolved led to a relatively steady improvement in the lives of the people. The factors that brought about this social change and the precise nature of its impact on the structure of society and the lives of the people are issues about which the opinions of researchers continue to differ. In this chapter, I would like to touch first on one social phenomenon that is central to the development of religion and thought in this period but has not received from researchers the attention it deserves. I refer to the establishment of the *ie* (house or lineage) as the basic unit of social organization among both the *bushi* (warrior class) and the rest of the population.

What I refer to here as the "house" is centered on the family. But the house was not identical with a consanguineous family unit; it incorporated as members unrelated persons such as employees (*hōkōnin*), and it was possible for an adopted heir who had no blood relationship to the other members to succeed to its headship. Rather than a natural kinship grouping, the *ie* may be described more accurately as an artificial functional entity that engaged in a familial enterprise or was entitled to a familial source of income.

The research of sociologists and anthropologists has made clear that beginning in the seventeenth century, "houses" of this kind constituted the basic units of Japanese society, and indeed the house has come to be recognized as a characteristic feature of Japanese society. It is believed that among the court aristocracy and the upper stratum of bushi, the house pattern took shape between the eighth to tenth centu-

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ries, but it probably did not become characteristic of the ordinary population until the fifteenth century, a period of widespread social upheaval that had a far-reaching impact on thought and religion.

The social structure that became established after the upheavals of the late medieval period was based on a system of functionally differentiated status categories: the bushi, peasant, artisan, and merchant classes. Within each category the house was the unit that performed the function associated with that status. In other words, the principle of a society organized around family units, each pursuing a hereditary "house occupation" (kagyō), emerged from the disintegration of the social structure of earlier times.

That the house became a characteristic phenomenon of the commoner stratum of society, a category that also encompassed the lower levels of the bushi class, was closely linked to an improvement in the standard of living of the ordinary populace. Researchers have found that from the fourteenth century the agricultural population began to establish solid ties to a particular piece of land, while merchants, artisans, and those engaged in various arts shifted from an itinerant to a more settled life-style. This development, as well as the closely related rise of cities during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, may be regarded as consequences of the spread of the house structure throughout society.

To be sure, not everyone could establish a "house" of his own. As late as the seventeenth century many people in the poorer strata of society were unable to form a house, and not all of those who were born into a house were able to preserve a place for themselves as regular members of it. The number of members that a house could accommodate was limited by the family enterprise and its total income. But even for those excluded from one house there remained the possibility of affiliating with another as an employee, servant, or adopted heir. And if one secured the economic wherewithal, one might eventually form a new house. The existence of various ways of pursuing a living within the framework of the house structure is evidence of the economic development that characterized the age.

Bushi enjoyed far fewer opportunities for economic advancement than did peasants and townsmen. The stipends and fiefs that constituted the bushi's sources of familial income were rigidly fixed according to hereditary criteria that allowed little room for expansion of the house or its division into separate branches. To rōnin (unattached samurai) or those second and third sons who faced exclusion from the house

structure of bushi society, the world may indeed have appeared closed. However, if they did not cling to their bushi status, they could be adopted into the house of a peasant or townsman. Likewise, by taking up scholarship, religion, or one of the arts, they could establish a new house of their own. Society no longer assumed, as had often been the case in earlier ages, that birth into a particular lineage or social status was a prerequisite for making a living through cultural activities. The professional pursuit of such activities thus came to be regarded as a legitimate occupation, comparable to any other family enterprise. Consequently, regardless of one's birth, if one had scholarly or artistic talent, one could advance in one's field and thereby establish a house of one's own. This was true not only for bushi but also for those of townsman or peasant origin. The transformation of cultural activities into enterprises engaged in by the individual houses influenced in various ways the thought and religious outlook of this period. We shall leave fuller discussion of this influence for later, noting here only that the range of social activities expanded within the framework of the house structure.

As a result of the spread of the house structure throughout society, the majority of people were able to enjoy a modicum of security and even to look forward to a future improvement in their lives. Not surprisingly, then, much of the thought and religious writings of this period were characterized by a "this-worldly" outlook that basically affirmed reality and was primarily concerned with the question of how one should live within the existing society. This outlook found expression in an emphasis on ethics on the one hand and in the pursuit of hedonistic pleasures on the other. With the rise of a this-worldly outlook, the hold of the other world on the minds of the populace weakened, resulting in a relative decline in religiosity, as may be seen in the literature and art of the period.

We should not conclude, however, that religion itself had lost its vitality. To the contrary, it was in this period that Buddhism and Shinto first penetrated the populace as a whole and came to have a significant influence on the everyday lives of the people. What we regard as the traditional religion of Japan, which has survived even into the postmodern era, took shape at this time. Inevitably this religion took on a this-worldly coloration that constitutes its most distinctive feature. We should remember that a similar religious consciousness functioned as the spiritual backdrop to the seemingly secular thought and cultural activities of the age.

Although the dominant trend of the day was toward a this-worldly outlook, not everyone, needless to say, adopted such a perspective. What is of importance to us here is the link between this dominant trend and the individual's consciousness of himself or herself. If we assume that the rise of the house as a general social phenomenon sustained the trend toward a this-worldly outlook, then in what ways did the individual, reflecting these changes in religion and thought, actually perceive himself or herself in this relationship to the house?

The social conditions that enabled even the ordinary person to pursue a stable life within the framework of the house also brought about a general improvement in the lives of the house's members. The house system fostered in its members a growing awareness of themselves as individuals: not as free and independent entities but, rather, as discrete members of a particular house. As a result, the individual's perception of himself or herself was shaped by the dual role of the house as a unit of social organization.

On the one hand, the house was expected to carry out a particular function, to act as a gesellschaft. At the same time, it also had the characteristics of a familylike organic social unit, or gemeinschaft. As a gesellschaft, the house necessarily had to define its internal human relations in such a way as to fulfill the purpose (the conduct of the family enterprise) for which it was formed. Hence, each individual was assigned a role relative to the purpose of the group as a whole, whose successful performance became the guiding aim of his or her life. Roles within the group were diverse, and in many cases the relationship among members of the group was that of leader and follower. To that extent, the house's internal human relations were discriminatory and stratified. Discrimination and stratification also characterized the relationship between one house and another. The house as a unit carrying out its hereditary occupation was incorporated into the larger entity of the village and town or, in the case of samurai, the retainer band. But within that larger unit, the house was still responsible for performing its designated function. Even within the overall organization of the state, the house had a specified place within the structure of statuses, similarly based on function.

The clearly defined nature of the house fostered in the individual an awareness of his or her role as a member, and a consciousness of the responsibility in fulfilling his or her assigned role. However, that responsibility was rooted less in an objective perception of the individual function than in a sense of obligation to other members of the household, a moral obligation of devoted service typical of the rela-

tionship between parent and child or lord and retainer. Consequently, it was expressed not as an awareness of a clearly defined and demarcated accountability but, rather, as a feeling of unlimited responsibility.

The function of the house as a gemeinschaft was also conducive to the development of this sense of unlimited responsibility. Insofar as unrelated individuals were readily incorporated as full-fledged members of the house, the house as a gemeinschaft rested on the principle of equality, or commonality, among its members, as opposed to that of an innate hierarchy. As the representative of the house to the outside world, the house head exercised a functional authority over the other house members. But within the house, he did not enjoy any special privileges that set him above the others.

The premise of commonality rested on the understanding that each member of the house stood on equal ground and was responsible for some aspect of the underlying function of the house. This made it possible for each member of the house to regard the pursuit of his or her particular function as a self-generated responsibility rather than as something imposed from outside. The same premise was true of the external relations of the house. Although each house held a position within the village or town or state defined by its designated function within the hereditary status order, there was at the same time a sense of a commonality that linked houses, giving rise to a feeling of equality between members of different houses and thereby fostering the solidarity of the group.

Historians are intrigued by the questions of whether this sense of commonality was based on something more than the mutual bonds formed among those belonging to a particular organization and whether it could transcend the limits of an organizational framework and develop into a universal perception of the innate equality of human beings. This leads to the question of the extent to which this society could tolerate or guarantee freedom of the individual outside the bounds of the organization.

Scholars who study the history of Japanese social consciousness and thought have usually argued that this sense of commonality could not be extended beyond the particular group. Consequently, most have held that a universal notion of respect for the individual as such did not exist in traditional Japanese society. Such interpretations, however, may have resulted from facile comparisons with the individualism and universalistic systems of thought found in Europe and America. Although it can be argued that the sense of commonality that

bound individuals in Japan was based on their mutual affiliation with a particular group, the scale of that group could be expanded from the house to the village, town, or retainer band and beyond that to the entire nation.

Given the gemeinschaft-like nature of the house, in which no fundamental distinction was made between those who were linked consanguineously to the house and those who were not, the sense of commonality in fact could transcend the state or ethnic group. Similarly, viewed from one angle, the consciousness of social responsibility as something that, rooted in direct affective ties, could not be sharply demarcated carried certain dangers. It might result in overly heavy demands on the individual and thus lead to the impairment of his or her sense of selfhood. However, considered from another angle, the very fact that the scope of responsibility was not rigidly defined meant that it was left up to the individual to decide how to accomplish his or her task. Thus it was also possible for the feeling of limitless responsibility to foster a sense of autonomous judgment. Whether or not that potential was realized within the actual historical context of early modern Japan is another question. Our aim is to try to answer this question, by examining Tokugawa society and thought.

RELIGION

The social upheaval during the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries had a profound effect on Japanese religion, for it was during this period that what may be called a national religion was established in Japan. The religious beliefs and institutions regarded as characteristically Japanese reached maturity during this period and have continued to exist, with relatively little modification, until recent times. If one were to seek the origin of these religious beliefs, one undoubtedly could trace them back to antiquity. But it was only during the period under consideration that religion came to penetrate the lives of the general populace, not just as a primitive faith, but also as a system of beliefs that had undergone considerable intellectual refinement while sustained by the teachings and rituals of Buddhism and Shinto. The same period saw the establishment of a common religious institution throughout the country. And it is the spread of a common pattern of religious practice both geographically and socially that can be cited as evidence of the establishment of a national religion. We shall next look more closely at the specific features of this religion.

The structure of religious life

We have seen that a common pattern of religious practice spread throughout society in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, encompassing diverse lineages of faith. One of its identifying external features was the establishment of one shrine and one temple in each village. This made possible the simultaneous adherence of community members to Buddhism and to the worship of the native deities (*kami*). These disparate elements were brought together into a single entity by a common thread: the general desire of the populace to link themselves to something eternal while yet pursuing their everyday lives.

For the individual, religion served two basic functions. One was concerned almost exclusively with satisfying the needs of daily life, the other with the individual's fate after death. *Kami* worship, or Shinto, was largely oriented toward the former, Buddhism the latter. Once the two were identified with separate functions, a person could concurrently adhere to both. Although syncretism was practiced from antiquity, the practice of distinguishing between the customs and forms of worship that could be performed at Shinto shrines and at Buddhist temples, as well as the compartmentalization of these two religions into separate religious spheres, was essentially a post-sixteenth-century phenomenon.

To be sure, within the world of religion the inclination toward amalgamating Buddhism and Shinto continued to be strong, and it is not always easy to draw a line clearly separating the two. Although syncretistic practices were associated primarily with Shinto, the main form of religious activity at shrines remained *kami* worship.

Kami worship was believed to help achieve benefits in this world. At least two types of *kami* worship can be identified – one centering on the community and the other on the individual. For example, the shrine dedicated to the village's tutelary deity (*ujigami* or *chinju*) served as the center of village social life and was the focus of prayers for good harvests and a secure and peaceful existence. The shrine's significance in the lives of the villagers was largely limited to these functions, and the original religious nature of the object of worship was of no particular consequence. The deity worshiped may have been associated originally with syncretistic practices, such as Hachiman, but a deity's provenance had little bearing on the form in which it was worshiped.

The communal worship of *kami* could be called customary worship. People also engaged as individuals in a form of *kami* worship

with a strong magical component, in the hope of obtaining good fortune or longevity for either themselves or their family. In this individual form of *kami* worship, prayers were normally directed at some specific deity whose spiritual authority was grounded in syncretistic beliefs. Gradually *kami* worship based on an amalgamation of Shinto and Buddhism (including Shugendō) came to be limited to the latter type of worship.

The new schools of Buddhism that arose in the Kamakura period were opposed in principle to the fusion of Buddhism and Shinto. The trend away from syncretism, in turn, influenced the older schools of Buddhism that had traditionally condoned such practices. The growing popularity of the Kamakura schools from the fourteenth century led to the further rejection of syncretism.

The new schools, unlike the traditional schools that were oriented primarily toward the concerns of the aristocracy, taught a new form of Buddhism that was concerned with the salvation of all people. This development in turn fostered the formation of a dual-structured, rather than syncretistic, religious outlook based on simultaneous faith in the *kami* as the protectors of one's day-to-day life and faith in the buddhas as entities who guided the individual to salvation in the other world.

As the new Buddhist schools spread among the populace, they began to accommodate themselves to the prevailing conditions of society, a process that inevitably led to changes in their orientation. More specifically, there was a significant shift in their interpretation of what salvation of the individual entailed. That is, salvation came to be understood principally as the salvation of the spirits of the dead. Therefore, greater emphasis was placed on guiding these spirits to the realm of the buddhas, and less attention was paid to the question of how the individual should seek salvation during his or her own lifetime. As a result, people came to regard the holding of funerals and masses for the dead as the main religious function of temples and priests.

"Funerary Buddhism" is the name often given to the type of religion that developed around these practices, and most of those who have written on the history of Buddhism in Japan have regarded it as marking a degeneration of Buddhism's original purpose. From the standpoint of Buddhist doctrine, such a conclusion is perhaps inevitable. A broader perspective, however, is necessary to understand the actual historical role of Buddhism as a social force. The founders of Kamakura Buddhism aimed to present Buddhist teachings in a form

that would be accessible to the "ignorant masses," and therefore they were forced to make accommodations that would enable them to disseminate Buddhism as widely as possible.

The dissemination of Buddhism

The most prominent evidence of the establishment of Buddhism among the populace on a national scale in this period is the fact that a majority of the Buddhist temples surviving into the modern era were founded during this time. For example, studies based on records of the late seventeenth century have shown that a preponderant number of the temples of the Jōdo sect, one of the largest in Japanese Buddhism, were founded or reestablished between the late sixteenth and mid-seventeenth century. In the late seventeenth century, there were 6,008 Jōdo temples throughout the nation. A founding date can be ascertained for 4,435 of these temples; approximately 65 percent of them were established in the seventy-one years between 1573 and 1643. Because another 15 percent were founded between 1501 and 1572 and 10 percent were established between 1646 and 1696, all together about 90 percent of these Jōdo temples were established over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Moreover, the total number and the geographical distribution of these temples changed very little in the following centuries. A survey in 1941 recorded 6,974 Jōdo temples with a geographical distribution similar to that of the 6,008 temples that existed in the late seventeenth century. This evidence suggests that the main outlines of the Jōdo temple network as we know it today were established in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[1] The results of other case studies suggest that a similar pattern of temple construction applies to other schools of Buddhism.[2]

The temples established during these two centuries fall into two major categories in terms of provenance. One type of temple can be traced back to the Buddhist sanctuaries (*jibutsudō*) set up by a local proprietary lord or influential warrior peasant within the grounds of his residence for the performance of funerary services for the repose of the spirits of his relatives and ancestors. The other type grew out of

1 Takeda Chōshū, *Minzoku bukkyō to sosen shinkō* (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1971), pp. 1171–91.
2 See Suzuki Taizan, *Zenshū no chihō hatten* (Tokyo: Unebi shobō, 1942), pp. 378–457; and Tamamuro Taijō, "Chūsei kōki bukkyō no kenkyū – toku ni sengokuki o chūshin toshite," *Meiji daigaku jimbun kagaku kenkyūjo kiyō* 1 (1962): 20–7.

the communal sanctuary (sōdō) established as a place of worship for the members of the local community. A local sanctuary was often transformed into a temple with a particular sectarian affiliation when a professional priest assumed responsibility for its affairs. The sanctuary was usually incorporated as a branch temple (matsuji) of the main temple of the school to which the priest belonged. This development also entailed a change in the priest's life-style. Before this time, most priests led an itinerant existence, traveling throughout the provinces to proselytize and carry on other religious activities, but with the proliferation of local temples, priests were able to take up permanent residence in a particular locality.[3]

The separation of warriors from the countryside carried out on a national scale during the last decades of the sixteenth century also had an impact on local sanctuaries, because it transformed most of rural society into agricultural communities made up solely of peasants. As a result, the local temple, even if formerly a personal sanctuary of the local proprietary lord, came to function as an institution serving the religious needs of all village members. At the same time, a large number of temples came to be established in urban areas where the bushi and commercial classes gathered after being driven from the land. Some existing temples were moved from the countryside to the city to serve the religious needs of the burgeoning urban population. But in most instances, the urban temples were new, a phenomenon that helps account for the expansion in the total number of temples across the nation during this period.

In both the village and the city, the religious function performed by these temples was different from that of the shrines. Whereas the shrines served as the center of communal life, the temples usually were linked to individual houses, and their main function was to serve as a venue for funerary services and masses for the dead performed on behalf of these houses. Hence, the establishment of houses among all social classes, as we just discussed, can be seen as another factor contributing to the dissemination of Buddhism.

The temple with which a particular house was affiliated was called a hereditary temple (bodaiji).[4] The families belonging to such a temple

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3 Takeda Chōshū, "Kinsei shakai to bukkyō," in Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1975), pp. 265–8.

4 The term bodai (Sanskrit: bodhi) originally indicated the state of enlightenment. The latter state came to be equated with that of nirvana, and nirvana, in turn, came to mean death. Consequently, the recitation of prayers for the successful passage of the souls of the dead into the realm of the Buddha was referred to as "offering prayers for enlightenment" (bodai o tomurau). The bodaiji was the place where such prayers were offered.

were its parishioners (*danka*).[5] Houses at all levels of society, from the ruling classes down to the ordinary populace, formed ties to hereditary temples. The imperial family's *bodaiji* was Sennyūji, a Shingon temple in Kyoto, and that of the Tokugawa shogunal line was the Zōjōji, a Jōdo temple in Edo. These temples contained, respectively, the graves of members of the imperial family and the Tokugawa shogunal line.[6] Similarly, members of bushi and commoner families had tombs in the graveyard attached to their family's *bodaiji*. It is particularly noteworthy that even ordinary members of the populace came to have a temple and graveyard that they could regard as functioning on behalf of their family.

This development had an important influence on the system of grave construction within the Japanese village. Typically, two "graves" were established, one at the actual burial site (*umebaka*) and the other at a place set aside for the performance of rituals on behalf of the spirits of the deceased (*mairibaka*).[7] Centered on the Kinki area, this practice extended westward to the Chūgoku–Shikoku region, and eastward to the Kantō and has continued into recent times.

In 1854, S. W. Williams, the chronicler of Commodore Matthew Perry's expeditions to Japan, noted the existence of this custom in Yokohama, which at that time was still a small fishing village.[8] Japanese ethnographers and specialists in religion began to research the subject from around 1929. Today it is widely believed that the custom began in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, partly because dates on the stone steles erected at the site of the *mairibaka* date from that time.

We should note also that the appearance of this custom coincides with the establishment of the village as a cohesive community.[9] It came to be regarded as obligatory to be buried in the graveyard shared communally by the villagers. At the same time, the autonomy of the

5 The term *danka* (*danna* house) derives from the term *danna* (an abbreviation of the Sanskrit *dana-pati*), meaning alms-offering believers. The *bodaiji* was also referred to as the *dannadera* (*danna* temple).

6 "Family" is used here in the narrow rather than the extended sense. For instance, in the case of the Tokugawa, Zōjōji was the *bodaiji* of only the immediate shogunal line, not of the Tokugawa family as a whole. The other branches of the Tokugawa family each had their own *bodaiji*. For example, the Owari branch of the Tokugawa had as its *bodaiji*, the Kenchūji, in Nagoya.

7 Although much research has been published on the dual-grave system, the most significant works have been collected in Mogami Takayoshi, ed., *Haka no shūzoku*, vol. 4 of *Sōsō bosei kenkyū shūsei* (Tokyo: Meicho shuppan, 1979).

8 Samuel Wells Williams, "A Journal of the Perry Expedition to Japan (1853–1854)," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 37 (1910): 116 (entry for February 25, 1854). The Japanese translation may be found in Hora Tomio, trans., *Perii Nihon ensei zuikōki* (Tokyo: Yūshōdō shoten, 1970), p. 191.

9 Satō Yoneshi, "Ryōbosei no mondaiten," and Mogami Takayoshi, "Sōsō," in Mogami, ed., *Haka no shūzoku*, p. 99 and pp. 144–6, respectively.

house as a constituent unit of the community grew stronger. People thus felt an increased need to maintain a sense of connection with the deceased members of the house, by conducting rituals for the repose of their spirits at a place specifically designated for that purpose. Such Buddhist funerary rites were performed to convey the spirits of the deceased to Amida's Pure Land or some other Buddhist paradise and thereby to transform the spirits into something pure. Because the actual burial site, which was associated with a state of pollution, was not regarded as a suitable venue for the performance of such rites, separate ritual graves were eventually established.

The changes in the common people's religious life that were occurring at this time can be understood only as a complex interaction with other developments. These we have noted as the evolution in ancestor worship, the spread of Buddhism among the populace, and the growth in the number of temples. Before this time, the ordinary people did not have clearly demarcated graves but simply disposed of their dead by abandoning corpses in uncultivated uplands or along riverbeds.[10] The legacy of this practice was apparent in the *umebaka*. Indeed, in some regions, the *umebaka* was referred to as the "dumping grave" (*sutebaka*). Corpses were generally placed in shallow pits, and after only a short interval the same ground was often dug up and used to bury another corpse. Thus, the site of the *umebaka* functioned less as a grave and more as a dumping ground for corpses. By contrast, the *mairibaka,* which first appeared in the late medieval period, usually was located within the sacred grounds of the village temple. Thus, whereas the *umebaka* preserved the traditional customs regarding disposal of the dead, the *mairibaka* marked the emergence of a new conception of the burial process and enabled even members of the ordinary agricultural population to possess graves.

Various attempts have been made to explain why the dual-grave system was most commonly practiced in the Kinki region and less frequently in outlying regions. Its emergence may have paralleled the appearance of the early modern village communities that developed first in the economically advanced Kinki region.[11] Judging by the dates engraved on village grave stones, it appears that individual houses did not begin to erect steles or stone markers for their

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10 In ancient Japan the practice of disposing of the dead by exposing the body or burying it summarily was widespread, even among the aristocracy. See Tanaka Hisao, *Sosen saishi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1959).
11 Satō Yoneshi, "Ryōbosei no mondaiten," and Takeda Chōshū, "Ryōbosei sonraku ni okeru mairibaka no nenrin (II)," *Bukkyō daigaku kenkyū kiyō* 52 (March 1968):152.

mairibaka until quite late. Before the eighteenth century, only prominent families in the village seem to have erected individual grave stones; the majority of villagers made do with wooden memorial slips at the village *bodaiji*, or with a communal stele or stone marker. This indicates that both the *umebaka* and *mairibaka* were originally communal in nature, and it supports the hypothesis that the dual-grave system emerged in conjunction with the maturation of the communal structure of the village.

Such a hypothesis also helps explain why the dual-grave system was less likely to take root in peripheral areas. There the social stratification was more rigid, which tended to hinder the development of a sense of community. Nonetheless, even in remote villages, similar relationships developed at about the same time between the hereditary family temples and its parishioners. Hence, the ordinary population in remote regions also came to possess graves, even if they did not adopt the dual-grave system.

It is important to note also that graveyards appeared at the same time even among segments of the population that preferred a single grave and so practiced cremation, namely, the townspeople and adherents of the Shin sect of Buddhism. Shin believers were among the first to introduce the custom of cremating the dead and establishing a single grave for both burial and ritual.

These changes in the role of the temple and that of burial customs suggest that faith in Buddhism had come to play an important part in the everyday life of most of the population. Accordingly, from the 1650s, the governing authorities began to use these developments for various political purposes. For example, authorities seeking to enforce the bakufu's prohibition of Christianity established a temple registry system based on the relationship between the *bodaiji* and its parishioners. Bakufu officials sought to regulate the affairs of religious institutions by recognizing the authority of a main temple over its many branches. Although the civil authorities were merely co-opting existing relationships (between parishioner and *bodaiji*, and main and branch temple) to achieve their own goals and not creating social institutions anew, such manipulation brought about various changes in these religious institutions, many of which were ultimately detrimental.

For temples and priests to have taken on as their main function the performance of funerary rites and ceremonies for the spirits of the dead may have been a distortion of Buddhism's original spiritual intentions. However, by reassuring people about their own fate after death, such practices fostered a sense of well-being that comes from knowing

that one has already been blessed with salvation, a development that was not without religious benefit.

It is significant as well that the practice of referring to the deceased as *hotoke* seems to have become common about this time.[12] The use of the term *hotoke*, which means buddha, indicates that people believed that the deceased would enter the realm of the Buddha as a result of the religious ministrations performed by the priest on the parishioner's behalf. The belief also developed that the spirits of the deceased returned to his or her family home every year during the Bon festival held in the summer and at the spring and autumn equinoxes, to receive the religious solace offered by his or her descendants and by priests engaged for this purpose. The regular performance of these seasonal religious ceremonies came to be a distinguishing characteristic of Japanese Buddhism.

From the perspective of Buddhist doctrine, it was contradictory to expect that spirits freed from the bonds of human existence would periodically return to this world.[13] Yet it was not perceived so because Buddhist beliefs had fused with the beliefs of traditional ancestor worship.[14] As a result, the deceased was regarded not simply as a *hotoke* but also as one of the ancestors who protected the house and preserved intimate ties with its living members. Likewise, the conviction that even after death one could continue to act as a member of the house offered further reassurance to the living about their own fate after death. This constellation of beliefs was reinforced by the spread of the custom of maintaining a Buddhist altar (*butsudan*) in each house, dating from about the seventeenth century.[15] The *butusdan* contained such objects as a Buddhist image and mortuary tablets of deceased family members, and it acted as the repository of the spirits of the ancestors (who had become *hotoke*).

Thus, Japanese Buddhism fostered a this-worldly orientation in two ways: It did not demand that ordinary believers pursue a particular religious regimen, which would set them apart from this world, and it sought to preserve ties with this world after death. The outlook characteristic of Tokugawa Buddhism linked the everyday life and human

12 Aruga Kizaemon, "Hotoke to iu kotoba ni tsuite," in Takeda Chōshū, ed., *Senzo kuyō*, vol. 3 of *Sōsō bosei kenkyū shūsei* (Tokyo: Meicho shuppan, 1979).

13 Hirayama Toshijirō, "Kamidana to butsudan," in Takeda, ed., *Senzo kuyō*, pp. 229–31.

14 Much research has been done on the fusion of Buddhism and the veneration of ancestors. Representative works are Yanagita Kunio, *Senzo no hanashi*, vol. 10 of *Teihon Yanagita Kunio shū* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1963); Takeda Chōshū, *Sosen sūhai*, vol. 8 of *Saara sōsho* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1957); and also Takeda, ed., *Senzo kuyō*.

15 Hirayama, "Kamidana to butsudan," and Takeda Chōshū, "Jibutsudō no hatten to shūshuku," in Takeda, ed., *Senzo kuyō*.

relations that centered on the house with the sacred. Although the evaluation of the spiritual quality of such a religion is not our task, we should note that what often is described simply as a secular outlook in fact rested on religious sentiments of this sort.

New forms of kami worship

Although Buddhism, which was by origin a foreign religion, did not take root among the ordinary population before the fourteenth century, *kami* worship was an indigenous religious practice that was widely disseminated much earlier. From ancient times, the formation of a social group was accompanied by the belief in the existence of a deity that would protect the group, and the members of the group assumed it to be their natural duty to conduct regular ceremonies honoring that deity. However, the form of such ceremonies and the popular understanding of the characteristics of the deities they honored changed over time. Let us examine these changes that resulted from the transformation of society characteristic of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The most important change was the emergence of the local tutelary deity (*ujigami*) as the center of the religious life of small regional communities like the agricultural village.[16] The word *ujigami* means the *kami* that protects a particular *uji* (a family or social group originally based on consanguinity). Although the *uji* often included people who were not blood relations, the tie among members of the *uji* was nevertheless usually conceived of as a blood tie. The custom of referring to the tutelary deity of such *uji* as *ujigami* existed from ancient times, and the practice continued into the medieval age. We see evidence of it, for example, in the Minamoto worship of Hachiman as its *ujigami*. However, the local *ujigami* that appeared in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were quite different. They had no connection with a particular lineage but instead were regarded as the protective deities of groups formed on a purely regional basis.

Early evidence of the use of the term *ujigami* in this new sense may be found in an entry for the year 1447, from the diary of the Zen priest Zuikei Shūhō. He wrote: "It is the general custom of people to refer to the deity who presides over the place in which they were born as their

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16 The *ujigami* was also known as *ubusuna no kami* (natal deity) and as the *chinju* (protector); these names would seem somewhat more appropriate to the character of the *ujigami* as a local tutelary deity. However *ujigami* is the oldest and most generally used of these terms; the other two seem to have appeared later.

ujigami." Having been born in Sakai in Izumi Province, Zuikei noted that his own *ujigami* was the deity of Sumiyoshi. In this case his natal home lay within a *shōen* that already had become urbanized. Moreover, the shrine of the deity of Sumiyoshi that he identified as his *ujigami* was not located in Sakai itself but in the neighboring province of Settsu.[17] But though the *ujigami* of which Zuikei spoke was thus slightly different from the later village *ujigami*, his usage indicates that it had become the general practice to refer to the protective deity of a social unit with ties to a particular locality as a *ujigami*. In essence the *ujigami* to which he referred was the same as the *ujigami* of rural communities that existed from the seventeenth century on.

No fully convincing answer has been offered to the question of why a term that originally indicated the deity of a consanguineous group came to be used for a regional deity. Based on current information, my tentative hypothesis is that such a usage developed because the residents of a particular regional community regarded the *kami* in question as their common ancestral deity.[18]

The *ujigami* of antiquity – that is, the tutelary deity of a particular *uji* – was not necessarily the ancestral deity of that *uji*. This is clear from the fact that the Fujiwara *uji* of the Nara period took the *kami* of the Kashima and Katori shrines (located respectively in the provinces of Hitachi and Shimōsa) as their *ujigami*, whereas the Minamoto *uji* adopted Hachiman. None of these *kami* was regarded as the ancestor of the *uji* in question. At the same time, each *uji* had its own "parent deity" (*oyagami*) which it took to be its ancestor. Over time, the *ujigami* was also seen as an ancestral deity. With the dissolution of the *uji* and the emergence of the house as the fundamental unit of society, the belief that the souls of the dead ancestors of the house would act as a kind of deity to protect their descendants became widely held.

According to folklorists, one of the distinctive features of ancestor veneration in Japan is that in Buddhist services, the dead are first worshiped as *hotoke*, or spirits, but eventually (typically thirty-three

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17 The deity of Sumiyoshi was the object of special veneration by those involved in sea commerce and fishing. It was presumably for this reason that it was worshiped as the protective deity of a port like Sakai. Sakai (literally, "border") was located on the border of the provinces of Settsu and Izumi; it combined within it what had originally been two separate *shōen*, Kita no shō (Settsu) and Minami no shō (Izumi).

18 Yanagita Kunio expresses a similar view in *Shintō to minzokugaku*, vol. 10 of *Teihon Yanagita Kunio shū*, originally published in 1943, and in *Ujigami to ujiko* (vol. 11), pp. 405–7, originally published in 1947. However, he holds that each house previously had its own *ujigami* and that these became combined into a common village *ujigami*. In fact, however, it appears that the concept of the village *ujigami* as the common ancestral deity of the villages existed before the practice of each house having its own *ujigami* became clearly established.

or, in some cases, fifty years after death), the soul of the deceased is believed to lose its individual characteristics. At that point, it becomes fused with the spirits of the ancestors in general and, as the ancestral deity of the house, enters the realm of the kami.[19] Although such beliefs are commonly referred to as "traditional folk religion," it is likely that this particular form of ancestral veneration, combining elements of both Buddhist and kami worship, spread widely throughout society only in the last several centuries.

We can assume that from antiquity people shared the vague notion that the spirits of the ancestors would protect their descendants. However, in an age when people simply abandoned the corpses of the dead instead of making a grave for them, the soul of a deceased individual was presumably not singled out for particular attention. But with the spread of Buddhism, which took the salvation of the individual as its mission, the idea took root that Buddhist services should be performed, for a certain length of time, for the dead as individuals. That period generally corresponded to the time during which family members retained a personal memory of the deceased. In other words, for that span of time the deceased "existed" simultaneously as an individual who needed the religious ministrations of his descendants and as one of the ancestors of the house. Eventually, however, the souls of the deceased became totally subsumed into the latter category.

Finally the question remained as to where the ancestors who had been transformed into kami should be enshrined. There were two plausible choices: the "god shelf" (kamidana) maintained by each household or the ujigami worshiped by the local community. Of these, the ujigami probably existed earlier. The relationship between the ujigami and the kamidana seems to have been similar to that between the temple and the butsudan in Buddhist practice. Just as the emergence of the temple as a communal site for funerary services and enshrinement of the dead appears to have preceded the establishment of butsudan in individual houses, it is likely that the members of the community gave priority to the ujigami that they worshiped as a community. They referred to this kami that served as the focus of the solidarity of their community as their ujigami, precisely because they regarded the kami as their common ancestral deity.

The people (actually the houses) who worshiped the ujigami were known as ujiko. Because the word ko (child) forms a natural pair with the word oya (parent), reference to the worshipers of a particular

19 See Yanagita, Senzo no hanashi.

ujigami as *ujiko* lends further support to the hypothesis that people saw the *ujigami* also as an *oyagami* (ancestral deity).[20] Treating the *ujigami* as an ancestral deity thus assumed the existence of an exclusive bond between the *ujigami* and the *ujiko*. The *ujigami* was believed to protect only its *ujiko;* likewise it was worshiped only by its *ujiko*. In the same way, the *ujigami* of ancient society had been worshiped only by those who belonged to the particular *uji* associated with that *ujigami*.

The worship of local *ujigami* began around the same time as did the formation of the village community. Initially, it is likely that the *ujigami* were enshrined not in permanent edifices but in *yashiro,* an ancient word that originally referred to a place where a temporary altar was erected to conduct services honoring a *kami*.[21] Agricultural villages traditionally held ceremonies to summon the presence of the *kami* only on particular occasions, such as before planting in the spring and after harvesting in the fall. During the rest of the year, the *kami* was believed to reside not in the village itself but at the top of a nearby mountain.

It is difficult to determine just when villages began to build a permanent shrine in each village or group of villages and to regard the *kami* as residing there permanently. The change may have occurred as the content of communal life grew more complex and as susceptibility to disasters such as drought, floods, and epidemic diseases fostered a need among the people to offer prayers to the *kami* on more than the traditional fixed occasions. The increased tendency by the individual house or village member to pray for the *kami*'s personal assistance could also have spurred the change.

In any case, permanent shrines were probably not constructed before the emergence of the house as a constituent element of the community was quite advanced, and thus we can safely date their establishment to sometime around the sixteenth century. The local *ujigami,* however, may have appeared somewhat earlier in economically advanced areas like the Kinki region. There large communities known as *sōshō,* which encompassed an entire *shōen* or an area of comparable size, had already emerged by the thirteenth century. The deity of the

20 The word *ko* originally meant one belonging to an occupational group, and the term *oya* meant the leader of that group; see Yanagita Kunio, *Ie kandan,* vol. 15 of *Teihon Yanagita Kunio shū.* However, because from antiquity on, the family or familial organizations such as the *uji* or *ie* functioned as the work group, it became common to refer as well to a blood parent or ancestor as *oya* and a child or descendant as *ko*.

21 The *ya* of *yashiro* means a building or altar, and *shiro* means the place where such a structure was erected. Originally the combination of these two linguistic elements seems to have referred to a space reserved for the construction of a temporary altar. Yanagita, *Shintō to minzokugaku,* and Hirayama, "Kamidana to butsudan."

shrine that formed the religious center of the *sōshō* was also referred to as its *ujigami,* and permanent shrines were built quite early. Another important feature of *sōshō ujigami* worship was the existence of the *miyaza,* an organization made up of bushi and petty proprietors acting as representatives of the community, which took responsibility for conducting and managing the religious ceremonies of the shrine.[22]

Whereas the formation of villages was the end result of communal efforts for economic survival, the *sōshō* (which may have consisted of groups of villages) was a political institution. Consequently, although the *sōshō* disappeared with the final disintegration of the *shōen* system in the sixteenth century, the village survived as the fundamental unit of social organization. These political developments were mirrored in the religious realm as the *ujigami* of the *shō* evolved into the *ujigami* of the village and the *miyaza* of the *shō* became the *miyaza* of the village.[23] The *ujigami* of a *sōshō* became the *ujigami* of a particular village or the common *ujigami* of a particular group of villages, and the ceremonies centering on that *ujigami* were handled by a *miyaza* made up of influential peasants from that village.

The same pattern of evolution in *ujigami* worship occurred among the urban commoner population. In place of a communal structure encompassing the entire city, various subdivisions of the city (referred to as *chō* or *machi*) became the locus of social activities, and several of these *chō* jointly managed the rites for a common *ujigami.*

In many ways the evolution of the *ujigami* resembled the evolution of the Buddhist temple. The difference is that the presence of a professional priest was a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of a temple. In the case of the shrine, however, the *miyaza* or a comparable local organization of the parishioners played the central role in the religious activities focused on the shrine. Even when a shrine functionary such as the *kannushi* had become responsible for the conduct of shrine rituals, in many cases the villagers had originally rotated the post among themselves. Shrines with a notable pedigree, like the *ujigami* of the *sōshō,* tended to have professional shrine functionaries. In ordinary villages the normal practice was to appoint a professional shrine priest only if the ritual to be performed grew too complex.

With the appearance of shrine priests in various parts of Japan, the need arose for some entity to oversee their activities. In response, the

22 Higo Kazuo, *Miyaza no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1941); Hagihara Tatsuo, *Chūsei saishi soshiki no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1962).
23 Imai Rintarō and Yagi Akihiro, *Hōken shakai no nōson kōzō* (Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 1955); Andō Seiichi, *Kinsei miyaza no shiteki kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1960).

Yoshida family, whose original base was the Yoshida Shrine in Kyoto, supplied a doctrine of *kami* worship (known as either Yoshida Shinto or Yuiitsu Shinto) and came to exert great influence over the administration of shrines throughout the country.[24] Yoshida Shinto was founded by Yoshida Kanetomo (1453–1511), who established himself and his descendants as authorities who determined the proper way to perform shrine rituals and granted ranks and certificates to shrine functionaries. The Yoshida family also granted ranks and titles to shrines. Between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Yoshida family succeeded in bringing under their supervision the majority of the country's shrine functionaries.

Originally, the people's *ujigami* had no distinguishing characteristics, but from the eighteenth century onward it became common for local *ujigami* shrines to be identified as a branch of some major shrine, such as those devoted to Hachiman, Inari, or Tenjin (Sugawara no Michizane). In most cases, the affiliation of the local *ujigami* with a major central deity had relatively little impact on the actual content of *ujigami* worship. The spread of Ise worship among the populace, however, did have a major influence on local religious life.

The missionary activities of priests (*oshi*) associated with the Ise shrines were at first directed primarily at important local figures and bushi. However, from the end of the sixteenth century, the *oshi* began to enroll members of the ordinary populace as "parishioners" (*danna*), and as a consequence the number of both *oshi* and parishioners increased greatly. The number of Outer Shrine *oshi*, which had been about 150 at the end of the sixteenth century, grew to about 550 by the beginning of the eighteenth century. In addition there were about 140 Inner Shrine *oshi*. According to a document from the year 1777, the Outer Shrine *oshi* alone counted 4,961,370 households as parishioners, a figure nearly equal to the country's entire population.[25]

In contrast with communal worship of the *ujigami* as the tutelary deity of the community, Ise worship rested on the faith of the individual or his or her house. This was clearly a new development in popular *kami* worship. Worship of the Hachiman, Inari, or Tenjin deities, which became fused with the local *ujigami*, also entailed the selective worship of a particular deity for its distinctive spiritual authority.

24 Hagihara Tatsuo, "Yoshida shintō no hatten to saishi soshiki," in his *Chūsei saishi soshiki no kenkyū*, pp. 611–718; Emi Seifu, "Yuiitsu shintō ron," in Emi Seifu, *Shintō setsuen* (Tokyo: Meiji shoin, 1942).
25 Miyamoto Tsuneichi, *Ise sangū* (*Gendai kyōyō bunko*) (Tokyo: Shakai shisōsha, 1971); Shinjō Tsunezō, *Shinkō shaji sankei no shakai keizaishi-teki kenkyū* (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1982).

Notably it was from the sixteenth century onward that faith in a particular Hachiman, Inari, or Tenjin shrine, apart from one's *ujigami*, spread among the general populace. The parallel existence of two types of *kami* worship, one at the level of the community and the other at the level of the house or the individual, became a new feature of the religious life of this period, and Ise worship was the most representative example of the latter type of *kami* worship.

From the eighteenth century it became common for households to set up *kamidana* (god shelves) and to place in them talismans from their local *ujigami* and from the Ise Shrine. The *kami* worship conducted at the level of the individual house thus retained a magical component, as did individual worship of *kami*. However, *kami* worship sustained by the individual's growing sense of self-awareness also came to acquire a rational, ethical orientation among some worshipers. This development may be seen in the appearance of religious teachings that stressed rectifying oneself in order to conform to the *kami*'s desire.

A key example of such teachings is the "Oracle of the Three Shrines" (Sanja takusen), which is believed to have been formulated some time in the fifteenth century.[26] The "Oracle of the Three Shrines" consisted of a piece of paper on which the names of the Ise, Hachiman, and Kasuga shrines were written. Below that was recorded the claim that the deity of each of these shrines taught the virtues of complete sincerity (*shōjiki*), purity (*shōjō*), and benevolence (*jihi*). From the sixteenth century onward this oracle was widely circulated, and it was common for ordinary people to mount a copy of it on a scroll that was placed in the alcove of their houses. This form of *kami* worship could be a denial of the efficacy of magical prayers and rituals. The popularity of the saying "If one's heart conforms to the way of complete sincerity (*makoto*), even if one offers no prayers, the *kami* will provide protection" may have reflected a trend away from magic.[27]

An example of yet another new form of *kami* worship that took shape in this period was the practice of enshrining human beings as *kami*. A key date in the development of this practice was the enshrinement in 1599 of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who had died the previous year, as Toyokuni daimyōjin, at a shrine built in his honor in Kyoto. Before this time, historical figures had become the object of worship at cer-

26 Watanabe Kunio, "Sanja takusen no shinkō," in Watanabe Kunio, *Shintō shisō to sono kenkyūsha tachi* (Tokyo: Wataki, 1957).
27 In his *Yōttuki*, written in 1650, Watarai Nobuyoshi argued that despite the prevalence of this formulation, it still was necessary to offer prayers to the *kami*.

tain specific shrines. Emperor Ōjin was identified with the deity Hachiman, an existing object of worship, and Sugawara no Michizane was deified as Tenjin, because he had died in a state of anger over a wrong done him. It was believed that enshrining his spirit would keep it from acting malevolently. But it was unprecedented for someone who had died under normal circumstances to be enshrined in his own right, and all the more unusual for the enshrinement to take place shortly after his death.[28]

Hideyoshi is said to have left instructions for his enshrinement. But why should he have had such an idea? And why was this new arrangement readily accepted by the court and other contemporary political and religious authorities? The traditional explanation that Hideyoshi's deification was due on the one hand to a grandiose sense of his own importance and on the other to a general adulation of him as a heroic figure is unsatisfactory. Perhaps the motive should be sought in the new kind of religious outlook just described.

In the new religious outlook, the *kami* and *hotoke* were not necessarily regarded as inhabiting a realm far removed from this world. If the dead became *hotoke* and the ancestors *kami*, it was also plausible to assume that the *kami* and *hotoke* were human, or at least a transformation of what once had been human. Further, although in name and form the *hotoke* and *kami* may have been different, the idea became widely established that fundamentally they were the same.

Both the view advocated by Buddhist Shinto (Ryōbu Shintō) that the *kami* were local manifestations of buddhas (*honji suijaku*) and the opposite assertion of Yoshida Shinto that the *kami* were fundamental and the buddhas secondary manifestations served the notion that the *kami* and the *hotoke* were essentially the same. This idea was further reinforced by the fact that Buddhist priests often assumed responsibility for performing shrine rituals. That a human being of extraordinary ability and accomplishments should have become a *kami* rather than a *hotoke* after his death was not perceived as particularly strange.

The teachings and ritual developed under the aegis of Yoshida Shinto unquestionably contributed to the acceptance of a recently deceased person as a *kami*. At the same time, from Hideyoshi's personal perspective, there were various reasons that he should have wanted to become a *kami* rather than a *hotoke*. As the founder of a new house rather than a successor to one with a long pedigree, it was

28 Miyaji Naokazu, "Hō taikō to Toyokuni daimyōjin," in his *Jingi to kokushi* (Tokyo: Kokon shoin, 1926); Katō Genchi, *Hompō seishi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Chūbunkan, 1934); Miyata Noboru, *Ikigami shinkō: hito o kami ni matsuru shūzoku* (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1970).

necessary for him to create an *ujigami* protector of his house, in the same way that Hachiman, for instance, protected the Genji and the Ashikaga houses. Moreover, as one who died fearing for the political future of the Toyotomi house, it was quite natural that Hideyoshi should wish to become a *kami*, capable of directly influencing this world, rather than a *hotoke*, whose power over this world would be limited. These various factors contributed to the creation of a new type of shrine, dedicated to the Toyotomi house. Apart from such factors particular to Hideyoshi, the general religious consciousness of the day was already prepared to accept the practice of enshrining a human being as a *kami*.

The enshrinement of Tokugawa Ieyasu, who succeeded Hideyoshi as the nation's dominant political figure, was a further manifestation of this religious trend. Ieyasu was deified as Tōshō Daigongen the year after his death in 1616, and the Tōshōgū Shrine at Nikkō was built to enshrine him. Moreover, from the seventeenth century on, not only political figures but also people of lesser stature came to be regarded as *kami*. Daimyo, Shinto teachers, and people who had accomplished some deeds of particular social merit frequently were enshrined as *kami* after their death or even during their lifetime. Connections might also be drawn between the growth of this religious consciousness that assumed a close linkage between this world and the world to come, and certain social phenomena of the seventeenth century. For example, there was the practice of self-immolation on the death of one's lord (a practice known as *junshi*), which achieved a certain currency among bushi in the first part of the century, and the wave of double suicides (*shinjū*), which swept commoner society in the latter half of the century. Both phenomena rested on the assumption that one could achieve after death what was unattainable in this world and hence may have been nourished by the same religious consciousness that sustained the practice of enshrining humans as *kami*.

THOUGHT

Ever since humans first became conscious of their own existence, they have posed the question of how they should live. When efforts to answer this question focused on the state of the human spirit or of a soul, which was presumed to survive the death of the individual, it was primarily a religious question. By contrast, when the issue of how the individual should behave within actual society was emphasized, it became mainly a matter of morality or ethics. The question of morality

was inextricably bound up with the nature of the society or state within which the individual acted. Consequently, the discussion of morality extended naturally to the question of the kind of government needed to ensure social and political order. Discussions of morality also had a significant religious dimension, particularly when addressing the question of humanity's basic nature. And in the premodern world, speculation about the social or political order usually entailed the premise of some link between that order and a transcendental authority. Thus, the discussion of politics cannot be separated completely from religion. Nevertheless, in what follows I shall focus on thought in the sense of more or less systematic ideas about the problems of morality and politics, as distinguished from more purely religious conceptions.

In Japan, from the sixteenth century on, thought in this sense developed independently of religion. From antiquity, Confucianism, transmitted to Japan from China, had served as the source of ideas about morality and politics. However, up to the fifteenth century, Confucianism had remained a branch of scholarship of interest almost exclusively confined to Buddhist clergy and intellectuals of the upper, aristocratic, stratum of society; it had virtually no impact on society as a whole. Rather, the general population turned to religious teachings, in particular those of Buddhism, for intellectual guidance. Then, during the fifteenth century, a fundamental reorientation took place in the nation's religious life that reassured people concerning their fate after death and shifted their interest toward questions of politics and morality. The stabilization of people's livelihood and the possibility for future improvement that accompanied the spread of the house structure throughout society also encouraged such a shift in emphasis.

The development of thought in a form independent from religion sometimes is explained as the result of the separation of religion and thought, or even as the result of a trend toward the rejection of religion. More accurately, however, the new interest in the question of how to live in actual society should be seen as a consequence of the permeation of religion into the lives of the general populace. Confucianism, which played a central part in this intellectual activity, had a certain religious dimension, and several prominent Buddhist and Shinto clerics entered the debate over politics and morality from their own specialized, religious point of view. What distinguished the activities of these figures from those of both earlier and later periods is that they, like the Confucian thinkers of this era, characteristically took up as individuals rather than as the leaders of a religious movement the question of how to live in

society. They may have attracted followers who were influenced by their ideas, but those followers did not form a religious sect. It as only in the nineteenth century that we would see the formation of such sects and the emergence of new religious movements.

One of the most noteworthy characteristics of the development of thought in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was that it was generally addressed to the concerns of society as a whole rather than to those of a particular social status or occupation. It was therefore able to achieve wide penetration into society. This phenomenon parallels the spread, noted earlier, of a common pattern of religious life throughout society, regardless of distinctions in social status.

In China, Confucianism was studied almost exclusively by officials and those who prepared for official examinations. In antiquity it was the aristocracy and, from the tenth century on, the scholar-gentry class who carried on the Confucian tradition of learning. Undoubtedly in part because of the difficulty of mastering the written language, Confucianism appears not to have been absorbed by the population at large. The situation was essentially similar in Korea, where Confucianism was established as the official school of learning in the fourteenth century. It remained a preserve of the upper stratum of society, the *yangban* class.

By contrast, in Japan from the seventeenth century on, not only did Confucianism serve as the medium for educating the rulers, the shogun and daimyo, but also its moral teachings spread widely among the populace. The publication of large numbers of didactic works (*kyō-kunsho*), written in simple Japanese, and the establishment throughout the country of private Confucian academies (*shijuku*), brought a large percentage of the population into direct contact with Confucian teachings and ethics. Whereas in China and Korea Confucianism provided the subject matter for the examinations used to select officials, no comparable system of selection existed in Japan. Hence the study of Confucianism could not be expected to open doors to important political positions. Instead, scholars came to see their mission as the ethical training of not simply the rulers but society as a whole, including the ordinary bushi and commoner population.

A similar situation may be seen in the case of Zen Buddhism. In China, Zen was principally the religion of the educated elite, and temples relied on the financial support of the government and prominent aristocratic families for their maintenance. In Japan, Zen followed the Chinese example and established a network of official temples patronized by the government. But on the other hand, Zen priests

from the fourteenth century on proselytized widely among the populace and, through the support of local bushi and commoner adherents, succeeded in establishing many small temples throughout the country. This latter phenomenon, which resembled the developments in other branches of Kamakura Buddhism, such as the Jōdo sect, led eventually to the popularization of Zen to a degree that did not occur in China.[29]

This development also had important repercussions in the area of thought. The tradition of Zen as the religion of the literati in China led Japanese Zen priests to acquire a general familiarity with Chinese culture, especially through the study of Confucian learning. By means of their missionary activities, then, these priests spread an awareness of Confucianism among the people. Moreover, by the early seventeenth century, many significant Confucian thinkers emerged from among the ranks of Zen priests in Japan.

The spread of Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianism

Sung Neo-Confucianism, exemplified most fully in the writings of Chu Hsi, was introduced into Japan in the twelfth century. Incorporated into the education of the aristocracy and Zen monks, it exerted a visible influence on the historical writings of the Nambokuchō period (1333-92), such as the *Jinnō shōtōki* by Kitabatake Chikafusa and the historical chronicle *Taiheiki*.[30] Its practical character as a system of thought that stressed the precise moral evaluation of political acts and human behavior further encouraged its diffusion to all reaches of society, a trend that accelerated in the middle of the sixteenth century.

As a result, Confucian learning spread from the traditional cultural center of Kyoto into the provinces. The Ashikaga *gakkō*, a notable institution of Confucian learning based in eastern Japan and founded in 1439 by Uesugi Norizane, reached the peak of its eminence under its seventh head, the monk Kyūka, around 1550.[31] The number of

29 On the differences in the social situation of the Zen sect in China and Japan, see Tamamura Takeji, "Nihon no shisō shūkyō to Chūgoku: Zen," in Bitō Masahide, ed., *Nihon bunka to Chūgoku* (Tokyo: Taishūkan, 1968). The same work later was republished in Tamamura Takeji, *Nihon zenshūshi ronshū* (Tokyo: Shibunkaku, 1976), vol. 1.

30 On medieval Confucianism, particularly Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianism, see Ashikaga Enjutsu, *Kamakura Muromachi jidai no jukyō* (Tokyo: Nihon koten zenshū kankōkai, 1932); Ōe Fumiki, *Hompō jugakushi ronkō* (Tokyo: Zenkoku shobō, 1943); and Wajima Yoshio, *Chūsei no jugaku* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1965).

31 Ashikaga Enjutsu, *Kamakura Muromachi jidai no jukyō*, pp. 586-664. Norizane is traditionally held to have "restored" rather than "founded" the school. But records concerning the school before 1439 belong more to the realm of legend than history.

students who gathered at the school during this period is said to have numbered three thousand. From about 1560 the school was supported by the Go-Hōjō, the Sengoku daimyo who at that time controlled most of the Kantō region. This circumstance further enhanced the school's stature. Most of the students were Zen priests, but their studies centered on Confucianism, if not pure Chu Hsi thought. Particular emphasis was given to the study of the *Book of Changes*, a text of central importance to the practice of divination, and thus of interest to the daimyo, who were constantly confronted with the uncertainties of warfare. However, the interests of daimyo like the Go-Hōjō were not limited to divination but also encompassed Confucian teachings about morality and government.

For example, the *Hōjō godaiki*, which records the history of the Go-Hōjō house, describes the successive heads of the family and the major Go-Hōjō vassals as having emphasized the importance of Confucian moral values. A similar interest may be observed in the case of another major eastern daimyo, the Takeda of Kai. Apart from the fifty-seven-article legal code compiled under the direction of the famous general Takeda Shingen, there also exists a set of ninety-nine admonitions compiled in 1558 by Shingen's younger brother Nobushige, which cites references from Confucian texts such as the *Analects*.

Other Sengoku daimyo exhibited an interest in Confucianism as well. Known particularly for their influence on the intellectual world were the schools of Confucianism that developed under the sponsorship of the daimyo of Tosa and Satsuma. The Tosa school (the so-called Southern school) of Confucianism got its start under the Zen priest Nanson Baiken, who came to Tosa around 1548 or 1549. The Satsuma ("Satsunan") school claimed the fifteenth-century Zen priest Keian Genju (1429–1508) as its founder but began to flourish only under a later Zen priest, Nampo Bunshi (1556–1620). These priests all studied Confucianism at the Gozan temples in Kyoto, which stressed Chu Hsi's interpretations of Confucianism.

In both Tosa and Satsuma, Confucianism received the patronage of the daimyo and exerted an influence on the retainers of the house. In Satsuma, Shimazu Tadayoshi (1492–1568), the father of the domain lord Shimazu Takahisa, showed a deep interest in learning and composed the "Iroha uta," a set of forty-seven poems (*waka*) that conveyed Confucian moral principles in an easily comprehensible manner. The first poem states: "Merely to hear or study the way of antiquity is insufficient; merit derives from one's own practice of the way." Other poems propagated Confucian ethics together with faith in Buddhism

and the qualities necessary for military success. The "Iroha uta" continued to play an important part in domain life until the end of the Edo period. Recited on various ceremonial occasions and used as a text at the *han* school and in *terakoya* (temple schools), it served as a central source of ethical teachings for all residents of the Satsuma domain.[32]

The formation of a new political and social order under the aegis of the Sengoku daimyo helped foster the spread of Confucianism. The warfare of the Sengoku period destroyed the court-based social order, and in its place arose a new political structure centered on the daimyo domain and resting on the new rural communal social structure, consisting of the house and the village. People living in this time of flux were conscious of having to take the initiative in deciding the course of their lives: The majority of the Sengoku daimyo and their major vassals had risen from a low social status. To be sure, there were those like the Shimazu who came from a notable lineage dating back to the Kamakura period, but even such daimyo as Shimazu Tadayoshi and Takahisa succeeded in consolidating their position only after a fierce struggle with rivals within their family. They differed little from the Sengoku daimyo in having to depend ultimately on their own ability. Most bushi were free to choose the lord they wished to serve, and the function they would perform depended to a considerable measure on their ability. For the upper stratum of peasants and townspeople as well, their occupation was not something imposed on them from the outside but, rather, depended on their own initiative. Living in such an age of both uncertainty and opportunity, people naturally felt the need for spiritual or intellectual guidance to how they should lead their daily lives. This perceived need was the major reason that Confucianism, which was concerned precisely with such issues, won wide acceptance among the people of the time, from the daimyo on down.

The teachings that circulated at this time were not necessarily pure Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianism. To read the classics, people tended to use the Han and T'ang commentaries as well as those of Chu Hsi. This eclecticism reflected the trends prevalent in Kyoto, the center of Japanese scholarship. Two groups dominated Kyoto scholarly activities: those who continued the tradition of the scholars of the court, and the Zen priests belonging to the Gozan temples. Whereas the former adhered rigidly to the traditions of scholarship preserved since antiquity, the latter were quite free in their approach. Because many Gozan priests had direct contact with China, they were influenced by trends

32 Ashikaga Enjutsu, *Kamakura Muromachi jidai no jukyō*, pp. 753-64.

in the continental scholarly world and thus tended to emphasize the latest interpretations of Chu Hsi, though they did not exclude other views. As might be expected, they did not draw a sharp distinction between Confucianism and Buddhism.

The trend toward eclecticism was also seen in the life-styles of the rulers. For instance, both Confucian and Buddhist paintings embellished the walls of Azuchi Castle, built in 1576 by Oda Nobunaga. Whereas the paintings for the topmost seventh floor depicted Confucius and the Confucian sages of antiquity, those for the sixth floor portrayed Sakyamuni and his disciples.[33] Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu, who carried on the process of national unification inaugurated by Nobunaga, employed court scholars as well as Gozan priests and priests from the Ashikaga gakkō in their personal entourages. Ieyasu actively collected and printed Buddhist and historical books, but the only Confucian texts printed under his patronage were the *K'ung tzu chia yü* (*Kōshi kego:* Records of Confucius) and the *Book of Changes,* neither of which had a particular connection with Chu Hsi thought.

However, as Confucianism spread throughout society as a system of thought suitable for guiding the daimyo, bushi, and commoners in their daily lives, the Chu Hsi component in the existing eclectic mix of Confucian teachings was increasingly emphasized. Several factors appear to have been responsible for this development. First was the need to simplify Confucianism in order for it to function as a broadly applicable guide to responsible social life. For professional scholars it was possible to use the older commentaries together with those of Chu Hsi, but ordinary people could not be expected to sort out the different interpretations. Second, the Neo-Confucian teachings that had taken shape in China from the eleventh century in response to the concerns of the emergent gentry class possessed a rationalistic and universalistic component, as may be seen in the Neo-Confucian emphasis on the relatively accessible Four Books in place of the more archaic and difficult-to-understand Five Classics. Despite important differences in China's and Japan's social conditions, these rationalistic and universalistic aspects suited in many ways the new, communally oriented social structure characteristic of Japan in this period. Whereas Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianism was regarded as the official state ideology in contemporary China and Korea, the state seemed to have played a lesser role in the spread of Chu Hsi's thought in Japan.

33 Ōta Gyūichi, *Nobunaga kō ki* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1963).

Scholarly opinion is divided on the question of whether Chu Hsi's thought was suited to the actual circumstances of early modern Japanese society.[34] Some hold that there was a close correspondence between the two, indeed, that the rulers of early modern Japan successfully promoted Chu Hsi's thought as an ideology to uphold the hereditary status order on which the society of this period was founded. Others point to the differences between Japanese society in this period and the Chinese social and political environment out of which neo-Confucianism emerged. For instance, the examination system, fundamental to Chinese society, was not adopted in Japan. These differences, they contend, limited the understanding and acceptance of Chu Hsi's thought in Japan.

These two polar views exist because both camps have focused primarily on institutional elements such as the social status system, and have not paid proper attention to the people's mental outlook. Clearly, there were substantial psychological reasons for those who lived in this period to be drawn to Confucian moral thought, particularly Chu Hsi's thought. On the other hand, the foreign origin of Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianism made its total absorption impossible. Eventually this led to the emergence of Japanized forms of Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianism and, on the other hand, to the appearance of new schools of thought that challenged the premises of the Chu Hsi school.

The key figure in both the diffusion of Chu Hsi's thought and the establishment of its independence from Buddhism was Fujiwara Seika (1561–1619), who came to be regarded as the founder of early modern Japanese Confucianism. Seika, descended from the Reizei branch of the Fujiwara family, became a monk and studied at the Kyoto Gozan temple of Shōkokuji. However, he later rejected Buddhism and became active in society as a Confucian scholar. He lectured on Confucian texts to Tokugawa Ieyasu and various other daimyo and, with the assistance of Kang Hang, a Korean scholar taken captive during Hideyoshi's invastions of Korea and brought to Japan in 1597, edited and punctuated for Japanese readers the classics as interpreted by Chu Hsi.[35] Later generations venerated Seika for his lofty vision of scholar-

34 The assumption that the premises of Chu Hsi thought were well suited to the circumstances of Tokugawa society was common among scholars from the mid-Tokugawa period on. It was given a theoretical grounding by Maruyama Masao in his *Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1952). The contrasting argument is developed in Bitō Masahide, *Nihon hōken shisōshi kenkyū: bakuhan taisei no genri to shushigaku teki shii* (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1961); and Watanabe Hiroshi, *Kinsei Nihon shakai to sōgaku* (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1985).
35 A biography of Fujiwara Seika may be found in Ōta Seikyū, *Fujiwara Seika* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1985). His works have been published in Ōta Seikyū, ed., *Fujiwara*

ship and his devotion to learning that led him in his last years to lead the life of a recluse.

Many of those who studied with Seika embarked on scholarly careers, opening academies in Kyoto and becoming teachers or gaining employment as scholars with one of the daimyo. The most famous of his disciples was Hayashi Razan (1583–1657).[36] The son of a *rōnin*, Razan entered Buddhist training at the Gozan temple of Kenninji but left the temple in favor of life as a Confucian scholar. When, in 1604, Razan became a disciple of Seika, he presented him with a list of books he already had read. The list, which contains more than 440 Chinese works, offers evidence of the high level of scholarship pursued at the Gozan temples of the day. The previous year Razan, together with some friends, had begun a series of public lectures in Kyoto. Razan lectured on the *Analects* while another scholar, Matsunaga Teitoku, lectured on works of Japanese literature, such as *Tsurezuregusa*. These activities constituted a direct challenge to the premise that scholarship was the special province of a few aristocratic families and Zen priests, and signaled an effort to disseminate learning widely throughout society, a symbol of the new intellectual atmosphere of the age. It is said that one aristocratic scholar appealed to Ieyasu to prohibit such activities as contrary to the traditions of the court, but he was brushed aside. From 1607 Razan entered the service of Ieyasu. In the following fifty years he served four shoguns, and for generations, his descendants continued to serve as scholars to the bakufu.

Although known for his erudition, Razan was not an original thinker. Nonetheless, he contributed to the spread of knowledge about Confucian moral thought through writings such as the *Shunkanshō*, an exposition of the tenets of Neo-Confucianism written in simple Japanese and published in 1629. A similar work attributed to Seika, the *Kana seiri*, was published in 1650. Earlier, in 1635, Asayama Irin'an (1589–1664), another scholar active in Kyoto, although not a disciple of Seika, published the *Kiyomizu monogatari*, which presented Confucian ideas in the style of a popular form of literature, the *kana zōshi:* It is said to have sold two thousand to three thousand copies.[37] Thus, the

Seika shū, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Kokumin seishin bunka kenkyūjo, 1938–9); and Kanaya Osamu and Ishida Ichirō, eds., *Fujiwara Seika, Hayashi Razan* vol. 28 of *Nihon shisō taikei* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1975). Regarding the influence of Korean Confucianism on Seika and other early Tokugawa Confucians, see Abe Yoshio, *Nihon shushigaku to Chōsen* (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1965).

36 A biography of Razan may be found in Hori Isao, *Hayashi Razan* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1964).

37 This figure is given in a similar work, *Gion monogatari*, published a little later.

development of the publishing trade also helped foster the dissemination of the ideas of Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianism.[38]

Views of politics and history

The concept of Heaven and the Way of Heaven (tendō, also pronounced tentō) had circulated even before the spread of Confucianism. First introduced to a wide audience through historical works and military tales, these concepts became part of the everyday vocabulary of the ordinary people as well as scholars and intellectuals.[39] In China there was widespread religious faith in Heaven as a transcendental entity that governed human destiny, and this faith had become an important element of Confucianism. The Japanese, by contrast, never developed a religious faith in the idea of Heaven. Nevertheless, the concept of Heaven and the Way of Heaven gained acceptance as an explanation for the vicissitudes of human existence.

From the thirteenth century on, the extreme shifts in political and individual fortunes caused a general anxiety among the populace. The first intellectual tradition to respond to their concern was Buddhism. For example, the Heike monogatari uses a Buddhist notion of fate in depicting the tragic destiny of both the Taira regime and the various individuals who figure in the tale. It propounds the view that however unfathomable the fate that one experiences in this world, by accepting that fate and putting one's trust in the Buddha, one can transcend this existence and obtain spiritual salvation. The spread of the Confucian concepts of Heaven and the Heavenly Way paralleled the emergence of this new concept of fate.

In Chinese Confucianism, the principles of Heaven regulated the entire universe, including the seasonal cycles. Adherence to the principles of Heaven made it possible to establish and preserve order in human society. The Heavenly Way provided moral guidelines for the individual, and the proper approach to governance. These principles were also linked to the notion of just retribution. If the individual behaved properly, eventually he or his descendants would be blessed with good fortune; conversely, improper behavior would bring misfor-

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38 Until around 1630 the emergent publishing trade used movable wooden type; thereafter it was more common to carve a separate block for each page.

39 For the concepts of ten and tendō and the historical thought of this period that drew from those concepts, see Ozawa Eüchi, Kinsei shigaku shisōshi kenkyū (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1974); and Ishige Tadashi, "Sengoku Azuchi Momoyama jidai no shisō," in Ishida Ichirō, ed., Taikei Nihonshi sōsho, vol. 2 of Shisōshi (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1976).

tune. The notion of heavenly retribution served to legitimize the premise of dynastic change. Heaven, it was held, would grant its mandate (Ch: *t'ien-ming*, J: *temmei*) to rule the people to one whose virtue showed him to be worthy of Heaven's trust. If his descendants continued to devote themselves to ensuring the welfare of the people, they would continue to enjoy the mandate received by the founder. But if they failed to uphold their responsibilities as rulers, then Heaven would withdraw its mandate. The fact that the process of retribution was believed to take place over an extended period of time made it possible to attribute both the fate of a particular individual and the historical course of society to the operation of a basically rational principle.

Though the Japanese may not have accepted all the ramifications of the Confucian concept of Heaven, historical works and military tales written in the Edo period frequently explained the course of history by referring to such notions. And because the concept of Heaven and its way spoke to a number of concerns particular to the late medieval period, it was widely diffused. For those living through an era of tumultuous change, the notion of a Heavenly Way provided a rationale for ignoring the constraints of an outmoded social order. A challenge to that order or to one's lord could be justified in the name of *tendō* which thus provided an ideology for the phenomenon of *gekokujō* (the overthrow of the superior by the inferior).[40] The concept of Heaven and its way presumed, however, not the absence of order but, rather, the realization of an ideal social order. Thus it could be used not only to attack the old social and political structures but also to legitimize the creation of a new order in their place. The rationalistic view of history and human fate associated with the concept of Heaven gained support in this period in considerable measure because the people perceived the possibility of creating a new order and found in *tendō* an ideology appropriate to that endeavor.

The term *tendō* appears in various literary sources such as accounts of battles and biographies dating from the second half of the sixteenth century to the start of the seventeenth. The phrase "*tendō* is fearsome" appears frequently in *Nobunaga kō ki* (or *Shinchōki*) (Life of Lord Nobunaga) by Ōta Gyūichi (b. 1527), expressing the idea that human fate is frightening because it is unpredictable. Ōta Gyūichi regards Nobunaga's political success as extraordinary but legitimate and from that perspective, seeks to explain the historical process of his rise.

40 See Ishige, "Sengoku Azuchi Momoyama jidai no shisō," pp. 3–8.

Whereas most people fail to achieve their potential because of some sudden encounter with misfortune, Nobunaga, blessed with good fortune, repeatedly escaped unscathed. Moreover, although Gyūichi portrays the life of the individual as controlled by the fearsome power of fate, he also interprets *tendō* as a force that moved society as a whole toward the establishment of a new order centered on Nobunaga.

Nobunaga's successor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, also employed the term *tendō* in his declaration of war against the Go-Hōjō. Their resistance to his efforts to unify the nation opened them up to the charge that they were going against "the principles of *tendō*." Hideyoshi simultaneously asserted that the new political structure he sought to create accorded with those principles.[41] Both Nobunaga and Hideyoshi were fond of referring to the entirety of Japan – the object of their policy of unification – as *tenka* (the realm, literally, "all under heaven"). Implicit in their use of this term is the premise that the unified state, the *tenka,* was the political structure that accorded with the will of Heaven. In Chinese thought, the will of Heaven was regarded as a projection of the popular will. Thus, the term *tenka,* as employed by Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, implied that the unification of the state under their authority was a reflection of the popular will.

From the seventeenth century on, the concept of *tendō* acquired an increasingly Confucian coloration. For example, in the *Kana seiri,* the term *tendō* was used to explain Chu Hsi's idea of principle (*tenri*) and human nature. A firmer grounding in Confucian theory enhanced the utility of these concepts as norms to guide the conduct of government. The phrase "The realm is not the realm of one person; it is that of the multitude" (*tenka wa hitori no tenka ni arazu, tenka no tenka nari*) frequently appeared in popular histories and didactic writings, and it served to remind the rulers of society that they should govern with the welfare of the people rather than their own interests in mind.[42]

The infusion of Confucian concepts imbued the political thought of this period with a new universality. A representative example of the political thought of the seventeenth century, the *Honsaroku* – said to be the work of the influential bakufu vassal Honda Masanobu – uses the conceptual framework of works like the *Kana seiri* but is noted for its discussion of various concrete political issues.

41 See the vermilion-seal edict issued by Hideyoshi in 1689 (Tenshō 17/11/24). Hideyoshi had copies of this edict sent to a large number of the major daimyo as well as to the Go-Hōjō, in effect promulgating it nationwide.
42 Regarding the wide diffusion of this phrase, see Tsuji Zennosuke, *Nihon bunkashi* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1949), vol. 6, pp. 1–3.

The *Honsaroku* begins by declaring that the ruler of the realm is called the "son of Heaven" (*tenshi*) because he had been singled out by *tendō* as the man capable of ruling the realm and thus had been appointed "master of Japan" (*Nihon no aruji*). The *Honsaroku* does not specify whether this "son of Heaven" must be the emperor or the shogun; it simply sets forth in general terms the qualities that a ruler of the realm must possess. However, because the *Honsaroku* was intended to serve as a guide to governance, the term *tenshi* by implication referred to the shogun.

A similar premise may be found in the instructions that Ikeda Mitsumasa, daimyo of Okayama, handed down to his vassals in 1656. Mitsumasa declared that the shogun had been entrusted by Heaven with governing the people of Japan, that the daimyo had been entrusted by the shogun with governing the people of their respective domains, and that the retainers of the daimyo, from the elders on down, were responsible for assisting the daimyo with that task.[43] Both Mitsumasa and the author of the *Honsaroku* regarded a universal authority – heaven or *tendō* – as directly responsible for entrusting the ruler with the reins of government. Both ignored the traditional political role of the emperor as the source of the authority to govern.

The complex relationship between the court and bakufu and the legitimization of the actual political order cannot be explained simply in terms of abstract premises, and the *Honsaroku* remained vague on the issue of the locus of sovereignty. Nevertheless, when writers of this period dealt with this subject, they did not feel compelled to appeal to distinctively "Japanese" political traditions, in contrast with later political theorists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. History as a motive force that adhered to the universalistic principles of *tendō* was often used to explain the shift in the locus of effective authority from the court to the bakufu. The *Honsaroku* simply declares that Emperor Go-Shirakawa (r. 1155–8; exercised authority as retired emperor 1158–92) lost the realm because he did not adhere to the "principles of Heaven," and it limits further discussion of governance of the realm in subsequent periods to the actions of the military (*buke*) rulers. Other political writers of the period generally recognized that a transfer of authority from the court to the military had occurred either with Go-Shirakawa (that is, at the time of the establishment of the Kamakura bakufu) or during the Nambokuchō period (namely, with the establish-

43 Hampō kenkyūkai, ed., *Okayama han*, vol. 1 (*Hampōshū*, no. 1) (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1959); Taniguchi Sumio, *Okayama hanseishi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1964).

ment of the Muromachi bakufu). In their view, while the military regimes that came and went contributed to social turmoil, their rule eventually led to the establishment of a stable political order and a peaceful society.

The idea of restoring order by replacing the sovereign had much in common with the traditional Chinese notion of the "just revolution" (Ch: *ko-ming*, J: *kakumei* [literally "change of mandate"]). Although they did not necessarily employ the term revolution (*kakumei*) or explicitly declare that actual dynastic changes had taken place, Japanese writers depicted a historical process implicitly regulated by "changes of mandate" sanctioned by *tendō*. The Tokugawa bakufu was presented as the outcome of this historical process, which endowed it with an effective legitimacy transcending the more formalistic legitimacy it received through recognition by the court.

Among the major historical works of the early Edo period manifesting this view are *Honchō tsugan*, compiled under the auspices of the bakufu, and the *Dai Nihon shi*, compiled by the Mito domain. Both presented a comprehensive view of the history of Japan from ancient times. That both were official undertakings signaled a new awareness by the rulers of that time of the value of history as a mechanism for substantiating the contemporary political order. Previous military governments had not shown a comparable interest in the compilation of histories.

The *Honchō tsugan* was begun by Hayashi Razan. After his death, the bakufu ordered his son, Gahō, to continue the work of compilation. Working with a team of disciples, Gahō completed the some 300-volume enterprise in 1670. Written in Chinese and in the traditional Chinese chronological annals (*hennen*) style, the *Honchō tsugan* covered the period from Jimmu (the legendary first emperor who, according to the traditional account, established his reign in 660 B.C.) to the end of the reign of Go Yōzei (1611). In choosing the *hennen* style, Razan and Gahō followed the example of the six national histories, beginning with the *Nihon shoki*, that had been compiled in the Nara and early Heian periods.

As the name *Honchō tsugan* (Comprehensive mirror of Japan) indicates, Razan and Gahō also sought to emulate the *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* (J: *Shiji tsugan*, or Comprehensive mirror for aid in government), the great comprehensive history of China compiled by the Northern Sung scholar and statesman Ssu-ma Kuang. However, unlike the latter work, the *Honchō tsugan* did not incorporate those sections in which the author expressed his own evaluation of the recorded events. In

addition, the restrictions of the *hennen* style, which aimed at an objective presentation of the facts, made the *Honchō tsugan* a somewhat bland work rather than one conveying a distinct historical viewpoint.

By contrast, the *Dai Nihon shi*, compiled under the auspices of the Mito domain, employed the *kiden* style, consisting of annals, biographies, and treatises. Developed by Ssu-ma Ch'ien in the Han period, it was used in the Chinese dynastic histories.[44] The *Dai Nihon shi* was begun in 1657 at the direction of Tokugawa Mitsukuni (1628–1700), the second lord of the Mito domain. The work, in 397 volumes, was completed only in 1906. A large number of scholars participated in the collection and collation of data for the project. As a result, the project has had an important influence on the development of the study of history in Japan. At the same time, the historical perspective projected by the *Dai Nihon shi* had a direct influence on society. Moreover, the historical perspective that governed the compilation changed significantly between the first stage of writing in the seventeenth century and the second stage which began at the end of the eighteenth century. The perspective employed initially adhered closely to the Chu Hsi Neo-Confucian historical views held personally by Mitsukuni.

The *Dai Nihon shi* eventually incorporated four sections: the main annals, biographies, treatises, and chronological charts. However, the first stage of compilation dealt only with the annals and biographies. In the *kiden* style, as it developed in China, the annals were devoted to events centering on the emperor. Thus those whose lives were discussed in the annals were established *ipso facto* as legitimate rulers. The biographies, by contrast, took up the lives of those active during the reigns of the rulers discussed in the annals. The biographies were grouped by categories, and the inclusion of a historical figure in a particular category served to pass judgment on him. In addition, from the time of Ssu-ma Ch'ien, the compilers of this genre of history followed the practice of appending explicitly evaluative passages (*ronsan*) to both the main annals and the biographies. One of the premises of the Chu Hsi historical outlook was that these evaluations should clarify as meticulously as possible the moral issues illustrated by the life of the subject being evaluated.

Reflecting on his historiographical endeavors in his last years,

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44 Regarding the compilation of the *Dai Nihon shi* and its intellectual background, see *Mito shishi, chūkan,* nos. 1,2,3 (Mito: Mito shiyakusho, 1968, 1969, 1976); Bitō Masahide, "Rekishi shisō," in Bitō Masahide, ed., *Nihon bunka to Chūgoku* (Tokyo: Taishūkan, 1968); and Bitō Masahide, "Mitogaku no tokushitsu," in *Mitogaku,* vol. 53 of *Nihon shisō taikei* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1977).

Mitsukuni wrote that he had sought to clarify which emperors were legitimate and whether the behavior of the emperors' subjects had accorded with the principles of morality.[45] In setting forth his own views on the first issue, Mitsukuni stressed three points. The first was the shift of Empress Jingū, the consort of Emperor Chūai – who was said to have exercised regnant authority after the death of her spouse – from the main annals to the biographies, to emphasize the impropriety of her exercising sovereign powers.

The second moral issue that Mitsukuni emphasized was the relationship between the later Emperor Temmu and his nephew, Ōtomo, at the time of the Jinshin rebellion in 672. In Mitsukuni's account, Ōtomo had succeeded his father (Temmu's brother) as emperor and was thus the legitimate ruler at the time of the rebellion. He thus included Ōtomo in the main annals, thereby indicating that the military contest between Ōtomo and Temmu in 672, which ended in victory for the latter, was in fact a rebellion by Temmu against the legitimate monarch. Mitsukuni's treatment of both Jingū and Ōtomo ran counter to accepted historical opinion, which adhered to the view of the Nihon shoki, the first of the official six national histories.

Mitsukuni's third innovation concerned the fourteenth-century division of the imperial line into the Southern and Northern courts. Diverging from the conventional view, the Dai Nihon shi treated the Southern Court as the legitimate line, and according to original plans the history was supposed to end with the absorption of the Southern line in 1392. Although this plan was subsequently modified, its basic contours shaped the content of the Dai Nihon shi.

What were the implications of terminating the Dai Nihon shi at the point when the Southern Court came to an end? In accordance with Confucian historical thought, it indicated that at that point there had been a "change in the mandate" and, consequently, the replacement of one dynasty by another. The Dai Nihon shi, then, was the history of a single dynasty that began with Emperor Jimmu and came to an end with the extinction of the Southern Court. Because the Northern Court did not possess sovereign authority, it could not be considered the legitimate successor to its southern counterpart. Neither could the Ashikaga, the military house in power at the time of the Southern Court's demise, because its power had not been acquired in a morally appropriate fashion.

Although the Dai Nihon shi does not explicitly designate a legitimate

45 *Bairi sensei hi*. After his death, Mitsukuni's account of his life and historiographical endeavors was inscribed on a stele erected in homage to him.

successor, it implicitly endorses the Tokugawa as heirs to the mandate, in the evaluative passages appended to the main annals and biographies, particularly in its depiction of the Nitta family, the putative ancestors of the Tokugawa. The Nitta, who had loyally served the Southern Court, the legitimate dynasty by Mitsukuni's account, had met with misfortune at that point. However, in accordance with the principle of Heaven's just retribution, their moral propriety was appropriately and eventually compensated when their descendants, the Tokugawa, assumed authority over the realm. Thus the emphasis on the legitimacy of the Southern line served indirectly to provide a historical grounding for the legitimacy of the Tokugawa.

A *tour de force* analysis of Japanese history according to Confucian historiographical principles is the *Tokushi yoron* by Arai Hakuseki (1657–1725).[46] This work was based on notes of lectures that Hakuseki gave before the sixth shogun, Tokugawa Ienobu, in 1712. Though dating from the eighteenth century, the work exemplifies the seventeenth-century historical outlook just discussed. *Tokushi yoron* traces the start of the decline of the ancient court to the succession of the eight-year-old Emperor Seiwa in 858 and the subsequent establishment of the Fujiwara regency.

Hakuseki divides the period between those events and the end of the Southern Court into nine eras, which he treats as a process of the steady disintegration of the imperial dynasty. He separates the rise of the military into five eras spanning the time of the establishment of the Kamakura bakufu to the founding of the Edo bakufu. After the demise of the Southern Court, Hakuseki writes, the people were not even aware of the emperor's existence. The emperor of the Northern Court was no more than an "empty vessel" set up by the Ashikaga to further the shogun's interests, and not a legitimate ruler. By contrast, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, the third Ashikaga shogun, acted in effect as the king of Japan, and with the appearance of Tokugawa Ieyasu, who possessed the virtues of a true Confucian king, the military state was fully established.

According to Hakuseki, the Southern Court represented the legitimate line, but it failed to survive because of Go-Daigo's "lack of virtue." Instead, the warriors fell heir to the heavenly mandate forfeited by the Southern Court because in the Muromachi period their

46 Regarding Hakuseki's historical thought, see Bitō Masahide, "Arai Hakuseki no rekishi shisō," in Bitō Masahide et al., eds., *Arai Hakuseki*, vol. 35 of *Nihon shisō taikei* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1975). In English, see *Lessons from History: Arai Hakuseki's Tokushi Yoron* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982). Translation & commentary by Joyce Ackroyd.

leaders were relatively more virtuous than the emperor was, and they eventually produced a truly virtuous ruler in the Edo period. Whether or not Hakuseki's account of these developments corresponds to the historical record, it completely fits the Chinese concept of dynastic change through a "just revolution." Hakuseki does not explicitly take up the ties between the Tokugawa and the Nitta, but he does frequently refer to the concept of "Heaven's just retribution" to explain the rise and fall of various other regimes and political figures.

Both the *Dai Nihon shi* and *Tokushi yoron* contain well-developed arguments, though marred perhaps by excessive abstraction. People generally were responsive to the notion that the flow of history followed the principles of *tendō* or the logic of the concept of just retribution, but the association of those notions with the idea of dynastic change (through the transfer of Heaven's mandate) did not, in fact, fit well either the actual events in Japanese history or the general perceptions of history among the people. Historiographical developments in the eighteenth century would better mirror historical circumstances. They also would reflect a shift away from the universalistic political thought of the seventeenth century exemplified by the notion of Heaven and *tendō* toward an emphasis on the political traditions particular to Japan.

New directions in ethical thought

The growth of the individual's self-awareness that spurred the seventeenth-century diffusion of Chu Hsi's thought sustained as well the activities of various other original intellectuals who concerned themselves with matters of morality and ethics, that is, with the question of how the individual should live in society and of what spiritual qualities were needed to lead a proper life. Like the Chu Hsi thinkers, when considering governance and other sociopolitical issues, they tended to give priority to the moral qualities of the ruler rather than to questions of structure and function. This emphasis, together with their universalistic outlook, may be considered a general characteristic of the thought of this period. Their expression of a consciousness grounded in the particularities of Japanese society but based on universalistic ethical premises exhibits a historical significance comparable to the emergence of Kamakura Buddhism.

A number of Zen priests were among the first major intellectual figures to put forth original views in the area of ethics. Compared with the Confucian scholars, who were inclined to become caught up in a

pedantic quest for academic knowledge, the Zen priests, having personally submitted themselves to a rigorous discipline in pursuit of spiritual enlightenment, tended to be more conscious of the need for an intellectual outlook geared to the actualities of human life. To be sure, the tradition of Zen discipline had not continued uninterrupted from the medieval age. In the latter half of the medieval period (the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries), the social power and influence of Zen had increased greatly, but its religious appeal had declined.

In the big central monasteries like the Gozan temples, Zen priests became specialists in Confucianism and Chinese literature, and in the local temples, priests initiated disciples into the "correct" responses to the questions intended to ascertain whether they had attained enlightenment. As a consequence, Zen acquired an increasingly esoteric orientation.[47] But from the seventeenth century a movement arose within Zen to reject such tendencies and to restore the original religious spirit of Zen. One of the representative figures in this movement was Takuan Sōhō (1573–1645), a monk from the Kyoto temple of Daitokuji.

In 1628 Takuan played a central part in the so-called purple vestment (shie) incident in which the temples of Daitokuji and Myōshinji mounted a resistance to the bakufu's efforts to regulate their activities and restrict their links to the court.[48] The incident was touched off by the bakufu's revoking all grants of the privilege to wear purple vestments awarded by the court to priests of these two temples, between 1615 (the year the bakufu issued comprehensive regulations to major temples) and 1627. It also entailed the temples' rejection of bakufu directives specifying, among other things, the standards of spiritual accomplishment that a monk in training should achieve. For instance, the regulations handed down to Myōshinji and Daitokuji declared that a monk could not be regarded as having completed his training unless he had answered seventeen hundred kōan (Zen conundrums). This formalistic approach to Zen spiritual discipline assumed a continuation of the esoteric tradition of "secret transmission" that had developed in the preceding centuries.[49] However, to Takuan, such formalistic regulation was meaningless. The resolution of one kōan alone, if it

47 Tamamura Takeji, "Nihon chūsei zenrin ni okeru Rinzai Sōtō ryōshū no idō: rinka no mondai ni tsuite," Shigaku zasshi 59 (July–August 1950); later this article was included in the author's Nihon zenshūshi ronshū (Tokyo: Shibunkaku, 1979), vol. 2, no. 1.
48 The "purple vestment" incident is discussed in detail in Tsuji Zennosuke, Nihon bukkyōshi (kinsei 2) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1953).
49 This interpretation of the "purple vestment" incident was developed by Tamamura Takeji, "Takuan sōhō: shii jiken ni taisuru ichi kenkai," in his Nihon zenshūshi ronshū, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shibunkaku, 1976).

reflected true spiritual insight, should be sufficient testimony to a monk's religious achievements.

Takuan fiercely criticized the bakufu's interference in the temples' religious affairs. His overt rejection of the bakufu's regulations was in turn condemned by the bakufu as disrespectful, and he and several other monks were sentenced to exile. But although the leaders of the bakufu felt compelled to uphold their authority to issue such regulations, they did not necessarily object to Takuan's religious position. That the dispute was as much a matter of face as a fundamental disagreement may be deduced from the fact that Takuan's forced exile was retracted three years later and that thereafter the third shogun, Iemitsu, showed him great favor, summoning him regularly to Edo for consultation.

The Zen reform movement attempted to institute more rigorous training for the priesthood, but it also attempted to make Zen accessible to the general populace, teaching the lay believer the true spirit of Zen. Takuan's efforts to make Zen an effective guide to life for the individual may be seen in such works as *Riki sabetsu ron* (On the distinction between *ri* and *ki*), in which he set forth the similarities shared by Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism, and *Fudōchi shimmyōroku* (Miraculous records of the immovable spirit), in which he declared that the ultimate essence of swordsmanship was the same as the spirit of Zen. These works advocate "nothingness" or "no-mind," that is, a state of mind unimpeded by outside constraints, as the essential foundation for all human activities.

Suzuki Shōsan (1579–1655) was another monk who sought to make the essence of Buddhist teachings accessible to ordinary people.[50] Shōsan originally served and fought for the Tokugawa as a bushi. Later, at the age of forty-two he became a Zen monk. He wrote several works for the edification of the general public, such as *Bammin tokuyō* (Teachings for the multitude), which argued that the occupations pursued by those living in society were universally endowed with religious significance.

According to Shōsan, one's ideal as a human being should be to live in a spiritually free, autonomous fashion. To achieve that ideal, unremitting and determined commitment to a spiritual regimen was essential. For a bushi, that spiritual regimen was none other than the correct pursuit of his daily duties as a bushi. Moreover, by pursuing those

50 Nakamura Hajime, *Kinsei Nihon ni okeru hihanteki seishin no ichi kōsatsu* (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1949).

duties he would in some manner contribute to the functioning of society, thereby conforming to the intention of the Buddha, who had sought to be of use to the people of the world. In other words, the performance of one's allotted function or vocation was a spiritual means of attaining one's true nature, that is, becoming a Buddha; at the same time it constituted a realization of the will of the Buddha. Shōsan held the same to be true for peasants and tradesmen.

The attempt to present Buddhist truth not as something attainable only in the distant future or after death but as something to be used in the context of one's daily life was common at this time. In the Pure Land tradition, for example, there was a widespread saying: "The Pure Land exists within one's heart; in this form one is Amida."[51] Shosan regarded Zen and the *nembutsu* (invocation of the name of Amida), as nearly the same.

Another figure who tried to elucidate the lofty state of enlightenment in a simple manner for the people was Bankei Eitaku (1622–93).[52] Bankei expressed the spiritual state attained through rigorous Zen training as one of "nonbirth" (*fushō*). "Nonbirth" referred to the mind in its original, unadulterated condition, and Bankei held that because all beings were endowed with "the Buddha-nature of nonbirth," the individual needed only to become aware of that innate endowment. The straightforward manner in which he presented his teachings and his personal integrity won Bankei some fifty thousand followers, ranging from daimyo to ordinary people.

The efforts of Shōsan and Bankei to carry the teachings of Zen to the general population were inspired by religious motivations and had a significant social impact. Nevertheless, considered from the perspective of traditional Zen doctrine, their approach might lead to the misconception that a rigorous religious discipline was not needed to achieve enlightenment. The figure who took on the task of resolving this problem was Hakuin Ekaku (1685–1768).[53] Revitalizing the traditional Zen discipline based on *zazen* (meditation) and the use of *kōan*, Hakuin established the approach that has characterized Rinzai Zen from the latter part of the early modern period to modern times.

Religious figures belonging to the Shinto tradition also made intel-

51 Ōkuwa Hitoshi, "Bukkyō shisōron: shokyō itchi ron no keisei," in Hongō Takamori and Fukaya Katsumi, eds., *Kinsei shisōron,* vol. 9 of *Kōza Nihon kinseishi* (Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 1941).
52 *Bankei zenji goroku* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1941); Suzuki Daisetsu, *Zen shisōshi kenkyū,* vol. 1 (Iwanami shoten, 1942); Suzuki Daisetsu and Furuta Shōkin, eds., *Bankei zen no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sankibō busshorin, 1942).
53 Tsuji Zennosuke, *Nihon bukkyōshi (kinsei* 3).

lectual contributions in this period. The most noteworthy of these was
Watarai Nobuyoshi (1615–90), a priest attached to the Outer Shrine
(*gekū*) of the Ise Shrine, who endeavored to reform Ise Shinto as it was
established in the medieval period. In works like *Yōfukki,* Nobuyoshi
argued in a clear, rationalistic fashion that devoted performance of
one's allotted social function conformed to the teachings of the *kami*
and that on this point the moral philosophy of Shinto and Confucian-
ism were the same. Nobuyoshi's attempt to free Shinto from a ritualis-
tic, magical orientation paralleled the efforts of reformers like Takuan.
It also fit in with the ethical dimension seen in the popular *kami*
worship of this period and encouraged its further growth.

In addition to Nobuyoshi, other contemporary figures who contrib-
uted to the development of Shinto include Yoshikawa Koretaru (1616–
94), who came out of the Yoshida Shinto tradition, and Yamazaki
Ansai (1618–82), also active as a Neo-Confucian scholar, who founded
the Suiga school of Shinto. All three thinkers, however, adhered to a
Confucian interpretation of Shinto; it was only in the next century that
scholars of "national learning" (*kokugaku*) broke out of this Confucian
framework and presented Shinto as a religion indigenous to Japan. In
this connection we may note that the foundations for the emergence of
kokugaku also were established in this period through the accumula-
tion of scholarly studies of the Japanese classics. Particularly Keichū
(1640–1701) broke new scholarly ground through his adoption of a
philological approach to the study of the classics.

In this period, Buddhist and Shinto thought shared the view that
the individual's committed pursuit of his or her allotted social function
would ensure his or her autonomy and thus would serve as a means of
spiritual salvation. To a certain extent this notion coincided with the
premises of Chu Hsi's thought, which helps explain its successful
diffusion and the acceptance among Zen and Shinto thinkers of the
essential unity of their teachings with those of Chu Hsi's thought.

According to the premises of Chu Hsi's thought, the fundamental
principles of reason and morality (Ch: *li,* J:*ri*) were identical with
humanity's original nature (Ch: *hsing,* J: *sei*). Consequently, the pur-
suit of *ri* was at the same time a means of developing the potential of
one's inner nature to guide one in behaving correctly. Through sus-
tained effort, one would eventually succeed in making the principles
of morality one's own and be able to act appropriately simply by
following the promptings of one's mind.

Moreover, because all beings were endowed with the original na-
ture, they possessed the potential of achieving this ideal state of hu-

man existence. To fulfill that potential, it was essential to carry out faithfully one's moral duty as a member of society. The diversity of social roles meant that these duties differed from individual to individual, as did the principles underlying them. But did this mean that through the performance of one's duty, one could grasp only the principle specific to it? To the contrary, because these diverse specific principles derived from the general principles of human morality present in each individual's innate nature, they were fundamentally different manifestations of one principle. The distinctive feature of Chu Hsi's moral view lies in this positing of a universal entity common to diverse circumstances and in the premise that pursuit of the latter is the proper means of achieving the former.

An example of one who correctly understood this essential feature of Chu Hsi's thought and sought to put it into practice was Nakae Tōju (1608–48).[54] At the age of twenty-seven, Tōju abandoned his bushi status and returned to his native village to devote himself to scholarship. In *Okina mondō*, which he wrote at the age of thirty-three, he explained in a simple fashion the essential points of Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianism as they applied to actual life.

Beginning with a discussion of the familiar virtue of filial piety, Tōju went on to show that whether one was lord, retainer, or commoner, to pursue one's vocation in an appropriate manner was to practice the tenets of Confucianism. Moreover, because all were endowed by nature with "illustrious virtue" (*meitoku*), if the individual took into account the "time, place, and his or her status" and acts on this innate virtue, he or she could respond spontaneously in a correct manner to any situation. Through the criteria of "time, place, and status," Tōju sought to establish a basis for the individual to carry out his or her allotted social function while preserving his or her own spiritual autonomy.

The postulation of the simultaneous pursuit of these ends as the ideal way of life corresponded closely to the premises of Chu Hsi's thought. At the same time Tōju sought through the principle of "time, place, and status" to reduce some of the alien dimensions of Confucianism as a product of Chinese social experience, thereby making the essential elements of Chu Hsi's thought more applicable to the circumstances of Japanese society. For example, Tōju held that the principle of conforming to "time, place, and status" made it unnecessary for contemporary Japanese to adhere rigidly to the formal rules of behavior stipulated by the Chinese Confucian tradition.

54 Regarding Tōju, see Bitō, *Nihon hōken shisōshi kenkyū*, pp. 136–216.

To be sure, there was a contradiction between Tōju's assertion that one should not feel unduly constrained by formalistic rules of behavior and the Chu Hsi school's position that rectification of the self through the study of "principle" (kyūri) depended on scrupulous observance of the moral criteria specific to a particular circumstance. Inevitably those criteria were the product of social custom and tradition. Seeking a means of resolving this dilemma, in his last years Tōju turned increasingly to the Wang Yang-ming school of Neo-Confucianism. As a consequence, he frequently has been called the founder of the Wang Yang-ming school in Japan. But this tag is somewhat of a misnomer. Tōju's grasp of Wang Yang-ming's ideas remained incomplete; moreover his work that circulated most widely and had the greatest impact on society was *Okina mondō,* which belongs to the period of intellectual searching before his turn to the thought of Wang Yang-ming.

The most influential of those who inherited Tōju's intellectual tradition was Kumazawa Banzan (1619–91) who served for a time as adviser to the daimyo of Okayama.[55] Adopting Tōju's advocacy of acting in accordance with "time, place, and status," Banzan applied that principle to the actual conduct of government. He criticized the growing trend toward autocracy in the politics of the day and tried to expand the possibilities for individuals to act autonomously. Such views, however, made Banzan the object of suspicion, and bakufu officials ordered him to be kept under strict supervision, an order that remained in effect until the end of his life.

The respective fates of Tōju and Banzan suggest that there were major obstacles to incorporating the full dynamics of Chu Hsi's thought into Japanese society. Both men understood the essential Chu Hsi ideal of perfecting one's inborn potential to act as an autonomous being. However, Tōju failed to find an effective means to realize that ideal, and Banzan's efforts to act in accordance with these principles led to his political isolation. For this reason, although Tōju and Banzan were acclaimed by later generations, they had no immediate intellectual successors.

Other contemporary figures were more successful in gaining a large following. Particularly notable in this regard was Yamazaki Ansai (1618–82), a fervent believer in the Chu Hsi tradition who emphasized putting the tenets of that tradition into practice.[56] Ansai started out as a Zen monk but turned to Neo-Confucianism under the influence of

55 For Banzan, see Bitō, *Nihon hōken shisōshi kenkyū,* pp. 217–76.
56 For Ansai, see Bitō, *Nihon hōken shisōshi kenkyū,* pp. 40–99. In English, Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570–1680* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.)

the Tosa Southern school of Confucian scholars. In 1655 he established a private school in Kyoto that attracted a large number of disciples. Besides instructing students, Ansai published works by Chu Hsi and wrote commentaries on them. He also traveled regularly to Edo where he lectured before a number of daimyo.

To Ansai, practicing the tenets of the Chu Hsi tradition meant that one should endeavor, to the best of one's abilities, to carry out faithfully the moral obligations specific to the social circumstances in which one was placed. This required an attitude of "reverence" (Ch: *ching*, J: *kei* or *tsutsushimi*), a mental state characterized by stability of mind and circumspect behavior. The emphasis that Ansai put on the cultivation of an attitude of "reverence," as opposed to the "plumbing of principle," is one of the distinctive features of his approach. In Chu Hsi's thought, reverence was originally held to be a precondition for the plumbing of principle. Ansai, however, interpreted reverence as summing up the essence of the Chu Hsi tradition. He did not explicitly deny the importance of principle, but he believed the plumbing of principle to be something not readily attainable by the average person and so relegated it to a place of secondary importance.

As a consequence, the ideal that Ansai delineated differed substantially from that of Tōju. Tōju envisioned an individual enabled by the process of self-cultivation to choose on the basis of his or her own innate reason the proper course of action. By contrast, Ansai regarded the ultimate goal as preservation of the correct social order, which consisted of the totality of specific moral standards, and he called on each individual to contribute to this goal by striving unremittingly to uphold the particular moral standard appropriate to his or her situation. This task was described by the term *meibun*, or action in accordance with "names," in other words, action appropriate to the relative social status of all parties concerned. The stricture to uphold *meibun* was stressed particularly in the context of the relationship between lord and vassal, leading to the exaltation of an attitude by the retainer of devotion and unquestioning loyalty to the lord. However, Ansai did not see the person of the lord as the sole object of such commitment. Rather, he emphasized the extension of devoted service to the social organization that the lord represented and to the function that the individual was expected to perform within that organization. This expansion of the object of service constitutes one of the distinctive features of the moral outlook associated with Ansai.

The mysticism inherent in this outlook may have stimulated Ansai's deep interest in Shinto. The conviction that one could find the basis

for the proper moral stance in the myths of ancient Japan led Ansai to engage in an elaborate reinterpretation of the language of the myths and eventually to formulate a new school of Shinto, the Suiga school. That development resulted, in turn, in the split of Ansai's disciples into two opposing factions, Shinto and Confucian, and the expulsion from his coterie of disciples of the two leading representatives of the Confucian camp, Asami Keisai (1652–1711) and Satō Naokata (1650–1719). Ironically, however, most of Ansai's school (said at one time to number as many as six thousand followers) coalesced around the Confucian faction rejected by Ansai. Naokata, Keisai, and a third scholar, Miyake Shōsai (1662–1741), came to be known as the three exemplars of the Ansai school (kimon sanketsu), and their teaching exerted a substantial influence on society. Ansai's interpretation of Chu Hsi's thought, calling for devoted performance of one's particular social function, obviously responded effectively to the actual circumstances and needs of Japanese society in this period.

If the meaning of existence is identified with one's contribution to society through the performance of one's particular function, the "plumbing of principle" advocated by Chu Hsi not only ceases to be necessary, but its emphasis on the development of the rational faculties may even come to be regarded as wrongly encouraging the individual to separate himself or herself from society at large. Ansai sought to overcome this dilemma by stressing will instead of reason. Eventually, however, scholars appeared who rejected the premises of Chu Hsi's thought as such and sought to establish a new intellectual system in its place. Foremost among them were Yamaga Sokō (1622–85) and Itō Jinsai (1627–1705) who, together with the early-eighteenth-century scholar Ogyū Sorai, are known as the formulators of the Ancient Learning school (kogakuha).

The term "Ancient Learning" refers to the effort to approach directly the Confucian classics of antiquity, without relying on the commentaries and interpretations of later scholars such as Chu Hsi. On this point, all three of these scholars were in agreement. However, in regard to questions of actual methodology and the theoretical implications they drew from their studies, each followed his own path. Their successors likewise formed distinct groups. Thus, despite the common denomination of these scholars as adherents of Ancient Learning, they did not constitute a single, consistent school of thought.

The Tokugawa Ancient Learning scholars are often likened to the Empirical Learning school which arose in Ch'ing China, and indeed the philological studies of Jinsai and Sorai achieved results comparable in

many ways to those of the Empirical Learning scholars. Where the Ch'ing and Tokugawa scholars differed, however, was that the former, while rejecting the commentaries of Chu Hsi, tried to clarify the original meaning of the classics by using earlier commentaries written in the Han period. By contrast, the Tokugawa Ancient Learning scholars rejected reliance on all commentaries, including those of the Han period. To interpret accurately works written more than two thousand years earlier, even Chinese scholars found it necessary to use the oldest commentaries available. It inevitably was difficult for Japanese scholars, working with a foreign tradition and setting aside all commentaries, to reach the same level of scholarly achievement. But if the Ancient Learning scholars may be faulted on the point of scholarly precision, considered from the perspective of the history of Japanese thought they achieved much. They succeeded both in developing a systematic interpretation of Confucianism that accorded with the actualities of Japanese life and, to a considerable degree, in providing plausible textual support for that interpretation.

Both Sokō and Jinsai began as followers of Chu Hsi, but around 1662–3 each shifted to an Ancient Learning position. The two lived in different circumstances and were not in contact with each other. Of bushi origins, Sokō was active primarily in Edo, while Jinsai grew to maturity in a townsman's family in Kyoto – Thus it was coincidental that each shifted to a new intellectual stance at approximately the same time. Yet this very coincidence points to the intellectual trends of the time.

Sokō acquired a notable reputation in his youth, not so much as a Confucian, but as a specialist in military affairs (*heigakusha*).[57] Confucianism, in essence, served as the theoretical foundation for his approach to military affairs. According to Sokō, the Confucian sages put particular emphasis on "knowledge" (J: *chi*, Ch: *chih*). The object of this knowledge was the concrete standards of correct behavior specific to the individual human relationships, such as those between lord and vassal and father and son. In their totality those relationships formed the structure of society and the state. Consequently, the standards of behavior specific to each such relationship derived from the public purpose of maintaining the social order. Because the human relationships that formed the larger social order were different, the criteria of behavior proper to each must also be different; that is, one could not "know" them by extrapolating from one general principle. It was

57 For Sokō's biography, see Hori Isao, *Yamaga Sokō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1959); and for his thought, see Bitō Masahide, "Yamaga Sokō no shisō teki tenkai," *Shisō* 560–1 (1971).

necessary, therefore, to build up a concrete knowledge of particular relationships and the standard of behavior specific to each.

"Knowledge" in the context of Chu Hsi thought was directed internally toward the heart or mind. It referred to the effort to perceive directly through a spiritual awakening the original nature of the mind, that is, the general principles of morality. By contrast, for Sokō what was to be "known" were things that could be perceived objectively, such as the social order and human relationships as they should exist within the framework of that order. By correctly understanding such things the individual would realize more precisely the social function allotted him or her and also would obtain a concrete knowledge of how to carry out that function.

Seeing the dissemination of such knowledge to be his mission as a scholar, Sokō wrote many books. These included not only works setting forth the fundamental principles of his intellectual approach, such as *Seikyō yōroku* (The essential teachings of the sages), but also historical works such as *Chūchō jijitsu* (The records of the central nation), which dealt with the ancient history of Japan, and *Buke jiki* (Account of the military houses), which dealt with the period of military rule from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. The last covered various topics like methods of warfare, weapons, and the construction of castles. In essence it was a kind of encyclopedia – a *heigaku* textbook – intended to give the bushi, whose function was to fight, systematic knowledge of the matters necessary for the performance of that function. In Sokō's eyes, those who like himself belonged to the bushi class had to acquire this kind of historical and practical information in order to fulfill appropriately their social role.

Sokō looked to the surrounding social order, rather than the individual's inner being, to provide the criteria for action. In this regard, Sokō's intellectual outlook resembled that of Ansai. However, Ansai's emphasis on the need for an attitude of devoted service to the social order in effect postulated a kind of religious transfiguration in which the individual became one with the social order. On this point Ansai drew from the Chu Hsi premise that the individual's original nature (*sei*) and the principles of morality (*ri*) were one and the same and that the individual should seek to unify subjective and objective knowledge through the realization of this identity. Sokō, by contrast, sharply divided the object of intellectual perception from the individual engaged in the act of perception. As a consequence, although Sokō's concept of knowledge offered a rational foundation for the standards of behavior demanded of the individual, it lacked the appeal to the

emotions necessary to stimulate the drive to fulfill those standards. It presumably was for this reason that compared with his military and political writings, Sokō's interpretation of Confucianism itself had little social impact.

Itō Jinsai also held that the meaning of life was to be found in the performance of the role allotted to one in the context of specific human relationships such as those between lord and subject and father and son. He saw those relationships as constituting the actuality of human life and Confucianism as what taught the correct way of living in accordance with that actuality. He further assumed that as human relationships as a whole formed the social order, the manner of life of an individual should properly be considered within the framework of society as a whole (literally, the "realm," *tenka*). Up to this point Jinsai and Sokō held essentially the same ideas. But then Sokō focused on how to grasp objectively and concretely one's position in the total structure of society and one's corresponding responsibilities (*shoku-bun*). Jinsai, by comparison, concerned himself primarily with the problem of the inner moral sense which he believed should guide the individual in his or her relations with others.[58]

On the surface Jinsai would seem to resemble the Chu Hsi school in his emphasis on a moral sense rooted in the heart of the individual. Yet Jinsai was highly critical of the Chu Hsi outlook. According to Chu Hsi, the foundation of morality lay in the "original nature," something akin to an intellectual capacity for moral judgment that constituted one aspect of the human heart. If it were allowed to function unimpeded by the passions or selfish desires, this capacity for moral judgment would enable the individual not only to act appropriately in his or her own life but also to exert positive influence on others, thereby helping bring society into conformity with its proper form. Although the Chu Hsi moral view thus started with the individual, indeed with the intellectual dimensions of the individual's mind or heart, Jinsai argued that morality transcended the level of the individual. By this he meant that morality existed within society as the overall structure in which were subsumed the multiplicity of human relationships. In that this overall structure reflected social purposes and desires common to all people, it broadly accorded with the individual's natural sentiments. However, Jinsai held, the moral judgments reached by the individual through intellectual reasoning were not always congruent

58 Bitō Masahide, "Itō Jinsai ni okeru gakumon to jissen," *Shisō* 524 (1968); and "Itō Jinsai no shisō ni okeru jō no igi," *Tōhō gakkai sōritsu yonjūshūnen kinen tōhōgaku ronshū* (1987); Koyasu Nobukuni, *Itō Jinsai – jinrinteki sekai no shisō* (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1982).

with what was appropriate to society as a whole. Thus to follow un-swervingly one's own judgment, regardless of the general movement of society, might well be morally improper in the larger sense.

Jinsai did not mistrust the human mind as such; to the contrary, faith in the propriety of people's natural sentiments is a major characteristic of his intellectual outlook. But he did fear that overdependence on the intellect might lead one to regard others coldly and to distance oneself from society, and so he opposed the Chu Hsi moral view as susceptible to such tendencies. In place of the intellect, Jinsai saw feelings, particularly the capacity to love and sympathize with others, as the essence of the human mind. Moveover, because human relations and the social order were founded on these feelings of love and empathy basic to the human heart, morality, in his view, should not be regarded as something lofty and difficult to achieve. Instead, it was rooted in the context of ordinary social life, and to conduct one's life properly in accordance with one's natural feelings of love for others was to practice morality.

Among the Confucian classics Jinsai gave particular emphasis to the *Analects* and *Mencius*, which he interpreted in light of his concept of morality. In addition to commentaries in which he set forth this interpretation, he also wrote works such as *Dōjimon* (Dialogue with a child), which systematically elaborated his own ideas. His approach to scholarship, which was continued by his son Itō Tōgai (1670–1736), attracted many followers to the private academy that he founded on Horikawa Street in Kyoto and had a major influence on the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century intellectual world. The disciples of Jinsai and Tōgai formed what is known as the Horikawa or "Ancient Meaning" (*kōgi*) school of scholarship.

The Confucian thought exemplified by the *Analects* and *Mencius* was essentially an intellectual abstraction and systematization of the human relations characteristic of the family-oriented community of ancient China. Jinsai likewise tried to articulate a moral consciousness geared to the mentality of those living in the new communal social structure of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Japan. In that the social base of early Tokugawa Japan and ancient China were different, Jinsai's interpretation of works like the *Analects* did not always conform entirely to the meaning of the original text. But by the same token, his interpretations fit closely the mental reality of his own society. As such, they represent one culmination of the intellectual endeavors of the Confucian scholars of the seventeenth century.