

## ARTICLE VII.

## JAPANESE BUDDHISM.

BY THE REV. J. L. ATKINSON, A. M., MISSIONARY OF THE AMERICAN BOARD.

JAPAN has long been regarded as a remarkably vigorous stronghold of Buddhism. The many and costly temples, the numerous priests, and the great masses of devoted worshippers, have been considered as furnishing sufficient evidence of this. Christianity has been spoken of by some as essentially weak in comparison, and as having a task before it, in the conversion of the people, that may be truly spoken of as appallingly great and well-nigh hopeless. The writer has no intention of discussing the relative value and power of the two religions, in the present paper. His purpose is to give some account of Japanese Buddhism and of the teachings of some of the leading sects.

Mr. Takahashi Goro, a native scholar well versed in the Buddhism of his country, has somewhat recently written a book in Japanese on the various great religions of the world. He has devoted one section of that work to an exhibit and brief exposition of Japanese Buddhism. This article is a free translation of that section of Mr. Takahashi's book. A few historical additions, and brief statements of the present condition of some of the sects, and of Buddhism in Japan as a whole, have been added by the translator, from his own knowledge and from other sources. A perusal of the article can hardly fail to give considerable satisfaction to American readers, to show the real and inherent weakness of Japanese Buddhism, and at the same time greatly to encourage all who are interested in the propagation of Christianity in Japan.

The reader will learn that Japanese Buddhism is not that compact and "appallingly formidable" body that it has often been supposed to be; but that it is, on the contrary, disrupted, divided, and subdivided into a large number of sects advocating principles, doctrines, ritual, and practices that are mutually antagonistic. For instance: the Zen sect is broken up into three, and one of these, the Rinzai-ha, is again broken up into ten sects. The Nichiren sect is broken up into eight factions, while the Shin—or Protestant sect as it is sometimes called—has broken up into ten bodies. These conflicting sects may unite for a time, in order to face and fight a common foe; but they are so mutually at variance on so many vital points, that their union cannot endure. The experience recorded on the last pages of this article indicates this very clearly.

Buddhism was originated and first taught by Gotama Shaka-muni of India. His father's name was Jobon. His mother's name was Maya. Buddhism spread east from India. It first reached Japan in the reign of the Emperor Kinmei Tenno, in the thirteenth year and tenth month of his reign—about 550 A. D. Buddhism was introduced into Japan by a Korean named Omei, who was a son or retainer of the king of the part of Korea called Hiyakusai Koku. At that time Korea was divided into three kingdoms, over each of which a separate king held sway. The king of Hiyakusai Koku despatched Omei to the emperor and court of Japan as special envoy. With him he sent Buddhist sacred literature and golden idols. He also wrote an autograph letter to the emperor, explaining the virtues of the religion, and recommending it to his illustrious consideration. The emperor does not seem to have gone any farther than a "consideration" of the matter; but of his two chief retainers, one accepted the new religion as being a teaching for which one cannot be sufficiently grateful. He resigned his high office, forsook his home, donned the garb of a recluse, and became

a priest. The other retainer ridiculed both the religion and the conduct of his colleague, saying, "Japan has its own gods and has no need of others." Buddhism, however, gradually gained adherents, and temples were erected. A few years after its introduction a great pestilence broke out in Japan, which, by the Shintoists, was attributed to the anger of the native gods at the defiling presence on their sacred soil of a foreign religion, with places, objects, and paraphernalia of worship. At Osaka the temple in which the idols brought from Korea were lodged, was forcibly entered, the idols were hurled into the canal, and the building was burned. After this, and during the reign of the Empress Suiko Tenno, in the twenty-third (?) year of her reign—593 to 628 A. D.—at the beginning of the year, a priest named Yei Kwan came from another of the three kingdoms of Korea—Korai Koku—and brought with him three Buddhist works, entitled respectively, Hiyakuron, Jinnimonron, and Chiuron. The doctrines of these books he promulgated, and established a body called the Three-book sect. The empress openly declared herself in favor of the religion, and aided it.

During the interval between the first and second coming of Buddhism to Japan, and from the second coming to its final establishment at the time Kyoto was elevated to the position of capital,—about the ninth century A. D.,—the fortunes of the religion were exceedingly varied. On the part of most there was jealousy of it as being a foreign religion, and great enmity. On the part of some there was strong belief and earnest zeal. A pestilence again broke out among the people, which, as before, was attributed to the anger of the national gods at the presence and encroachment of the foreign religion. A fierce persecution broke out. The priests were driven away and the temples burned to the ground. After this second introduction, a son of the Empress Suiko, named Umayado-no-Koji, aged 16, became a devoted Buddhist. A high official, in his zeal for the national

religion, sought to assassinate the young man, but was not successful. After this the strife between the two religions developed into open war, the Buddhists ultimately coming out victorious. The name of the official who attempted the murder of the emperor's son was Mononobé-no-Moriya. He is honored and worshipped by the Shintoists to this day.

During the ninth century A. D., there were born in Japan three men who have exerted a lasting influence on the fortunes of Japanese Buddhism. They are named respectively Dōsho, Dengiyō, Kōbō, and have had given to them the posthumous title of *Daishi*, or "Great Teacher." Each of these men visited China for advanced study of Buddhist literature, and on returning to his native land originated a new sect. Up to this time the number of sects in Japan seems to have been five, but of these not one is now left. After the death of the three celebrated men just named, there arose two other noted priests, each of whom also originated a new sect. The name of the one was Shinran, and of the other Nichiren. The total number of leading sects thus became ten. Of these, however, six only now remain; namely, the Tendai, the Shingon, the Zen, the Jōdo, the Shin, and the Nichiren.

The principles of Buddhism are deep, broad, and high, and the reasons adduced for accepting them are great and many. Occasionally, on considering only the surface of the doctrines, it is difficult to think of Buddhism as being a religion of harmonious teachings at all; yet, if we push our inquiries to the depths, we see that at the heart it is really one harmonious whole. For illustration: there is the nature of a bodily organization and its outward clothing. The body and its nature are one; but the outward appearance and dress are different, and vary according to time, place, circumstance, and climate. As to its nature and outward form, Buddhism is as this illustration indicates.

Buddhism has three sacred works, entitled respectively,

the Daijo Kyo, the Chiujo Kyo, the Shōjo Kyo; that is, the great, the middle, and the small teachings—the Tri-pitaka of oriental writers. In these works there are, as to principles, conflicting and antagonistic teachings when considered by a mere glance; but profound investigation discloses the harmony of the whole. In Buddhism taken as a whole, there are two general lines of instruction; the one being called the *gon* or *kari* (the fictional), and the other the *jitsu* (the real, the true). The “fictional teaching” is largely contained in the Daijo Kyo, and is used as a pious device (*hoben*) to induce the ignorant masses to accept Buddhism and to abide in it. The “true” teaching is largely contained in the Shōjo Kyo. According to this “true” teaching, the ultimate end of individual being is *ku-ku jaku-jaku* (empty, vacuous, silent extinction).

Buddhism is established upon principles some of which are most profound, while others are exceedingly shallow. To the intelligent, the patient, the persevering, the “true” doctrine of *jaku metsu* is taught; the term *jaku* meaning empty, vacant, silent; while the term *metsu* means ruin, destruction, extinguishment. The terms united express the idea of vacuous extinguishment, total annihilation. To the ignorant and unpersevering the “fictional” doctrine of an earth prison, a hell, called *jigoku*, and of a Paradise, or place of superlative ease and delight in the realms above, called *gokuraku*, are taught.

The three works Daijo Kyo, Chiujo Kyo, and Shōjo Kyo are not in all their contents teachings from the lips of Shaka (Buddha), yet their relation to his personal teaching is such that it may be illustrated as follows: The personal teachings of Shaka were as the bud of a flower. The bud was the product of Shaka's mind, which during his lifetime did not develop into full bloom and beauty, but which after his death, in the hands of his followers, bloomed out entirely. If we compare the bud with the unfolded flower, a

great difference is observable, though the nature of the thing is by no means changed. The flower is the natural unfolding of the bud, and whatever difference there may be between them is only such as that which is natural to the flower in bud and the same when in full bloom. Consequently if one should question or doubt the Daijo Kyo, he must inevitably question and doubt also the Shōjo Kyo; the reason being, that, although the contents of the books were not in their entirety taught by Shaka personally, yet, since the source of Buddhism is Buddha, it follows that the three sacred works named above, constitute unitedly one Buddhist teaching, and are to be equally accepted or rejected. The teachings of Buddhism did not all come from Shaka's lips, as has already been said. Shaka had many disciples, who after his death gathered from many parts of India and formed an assembly. Kasho, being the chief among them, was elected chairman of the convocation. Each and every disciple then recited the teaching he remembered. Thus, of those who had forgotten a part, their memory was refreshed and of those who had not heard all the Founder's teachings, they received instruction as from his very lips. The whole body of teaching was then discussed and constructed into a system, but was not at that time committed to writing. Some five or six hundred years after the meeting of the council, a book was published which we call the Shōjo Kyo.

After this, learned priests in promulgating the doctrines gradually developed a number of profound arguments and principles which ultimately became the book Daijo Kyo—the great teaching or “vehicle.” Between this and the former work, a book—or books—consisting of views, interpretations, and discussions of the teachings of Buddha was constructed, and entitled the Chiujo Kyo. Accordingly, from the Shōjo Kyo to the Daijo Kyo, all being produced long after Shaka's death, it is inevitable that some of his original teachings have been lost or confused and the system

of doctrine thus become as a mixture of gold and sand. Thus, while the doctrines of Buddhism in their entirety are to be spoken of as the personal teachings of Shaka, yet, at the same time, the Dai, Chiu, and Shōjo Kyo works must not be regarded as contrary to his mind; for the reason that those who interpreted, discussed, and promulgated Shaka's personal teachings made his heart and mind their own heart and mind in doing the work. It may therefore be truly said that Shaka produced the bud of the flower, and that his followers developed it into full bloom. Thus, during a space of several hundred years, the various works already named, containing the "fictional" and "true" teachings, were produced, and taught to the intelligent and to the ignorant respectively. Because of this method of constructing the Buddhistic sacred writings, the Buddhist priests of Japan, being misled, have failed to understand the real mind of Buddha. It is because of this misunderstanding that the Buddhists of Japan have been divided into a variety of sects.

The leading and most vigorous sects in Japan to-day are the Tendai, the Shingon, the Zen, the Jōdo, the Shin, and the Nichiren. The following is a brief summary of the teachings of each of them:—

#### THE TENDAI SECT.

This sect was originated in China by a priest named Chisha Daishi, who extracted from the Daijo Kyo the portion entitled Hokke Kyo, and made it the basis and guide of the sect. This is as though one should extract from the Bible one book only, and, ignoring all others, found a sect on that. This sect was established in Japan by the priest Dengyo Daishi in the ninth century A. D. The Tendai sect employs both the "true" and the "fictional" teaching to accomplish its object. To those who have neither the patience nor the ability to understand and conform to the "true" teaching, of vacuous extinguishment as the ultimate aim, hope,

and end of being, yet who wish to be followers of Buddha, the more easily understood "fictional" instruction, of a place of superlative happiness after death for the faithful believer, and a place of superlative anguish for the faithless and unbelieving, is taught. A heart of faith to trust in Amida Niyorai for salvation is thus awakened and perpetuated by this *hōben*, or pious device. This doctrine of salvation through Amida Niyorai was invented by the priest Yeishin and is written in the book *Hōjō-yo-sho*. The book says of itself: "This teaching concerning a place of superlative happiness on the one hand and of superlative anguish on the other, and of salvation through Amida Niyorai, is, to those living in this defiled and turbid world, as eyes to the blind and as feet to the lame. This teaching, being foolish, is taught only to the ignorant masses, yet the wise and noble also may readily accept it. The principles of Buddhism are so numerous, so profound, and so mysterious that none but the truly enlightened and persevering can fully understand them. I also am ignorant," continues the priest Yeishin, "and find it exceedingly difficult to fathom and understand them. Therefore to call on the name of Amida Niyorai in the way recorded in the book *Shikinan* is equivalent to calling on and confiding in myriads of *hotoké*"—saints, invisible and perfected beings. This prayer consists of the words "Namu Amida Butsu." The priest Yeishin seemed to regard the repetition of this prayer, not only as an equivalent to calling on and confiding in myriads of *hotoké*, but also as a full equivalent for the lack of studying into and acquiring a knowledge of the numerous, profound, and mysterious teachings of genuine Buddhism. The priest continues: "If to this prayer, passages of vital importance are selected from the sacred writings,—passages easy to remember and easy to observe—and are faithfully intoned and observed, entrance by another birth into the place of superlative happiness is, without doubt, sure. This is the "fictional" teaching, called

*hoben*, or pious device. Those therefore who patiently investigate and understand the original and "true" teachings of Shaka do not accept this "fictional" teaching, nor repeat the prayer "Namu Amida Butsu," neither do they seek for any place of superlative happiness nor fear one of superlative anguish. They regard *gokuraku*—heaven—as but an ornament or condition of the heart of every believer; and they regard Amida Niyorai as but another name for the individual's own heart. This is the heart and essence of the teachings of the Tendai sect. Those therefore of the intelligent who unite with this sect do not accept as true the doctrine of the reality of a future state. The ignorant and foolish only, being beguiled and misled, wander on in search of a heaven that does not exist, fearing a hell that has no reality.

#### THE SHINGON SECT.

This sect, also, was originated in China and by a priest named Yeikwa. The Japanese priest Kōbō Daishi, who invented the native syllabary, on visiting China for the purpose of studying Buddhism more thoroughly—as Japanese for various purposes visit America and Europe in our day—met with and received instruction from Yeikwa, and accepted his teachings as true. On returning to Japan Kōbō promulgated those teachings and established the sect called Shingon. The original idea of this sect is that each believer becomes an *hotoké*—a perfected intelligence having absolutely clear perception of all causes and effects—by the exercise of his own powers unaided by any exterior assistance. In explaining all the principles of the sect, much that is secret, mysterious, and profound is evolved. Hence it is also called the Misshu, or Mystery, sect. There is also so much in the interpretation of its principles that is easily apprehended and truth-like, that it is called the Shingon, or True-word, sect. According to this sect there are three kinds of *hotoké*, or three ways of attaining to the condition of *hotoké*. One—*Riguno-*

*jobutsu*—regards everything at present visible to the eye, in fact all existence, as *hotoké*. Earth, air, fire, water, together with all other substances and living beings, are each and all *hotoké*, there being in their essence no difference whatever. Because of this, all animate and inanimate objects, together with Dainichi Niyorai, are but one essence, one object, one *hotoké*. Another—*Raji*—says that “entrance into the state and condition of *hotoké* is dependent on the individual observance of the laws taught in and commanded by the sacred books.” A third—*Kentoku*—says that “it is by the use of magic (*witsuin wo musubi*) as taught by the sacred books, and by the repetition of magical formulas, that the condition of *hotoké* is attained into, and the fleshly body absorbed into, Dainichi Niyorai.<sup>1</sup> The book *Bodai Shu Ron* says, “The teaching of the Shingon sect as to the way of becoming *hotoké* is such as is not taught by any other of the Buddhist sects.” Truly this is so, for only the Shingon sect makes grass, trees, earth, countries, peoples, and everything in connection with them, into one object, one perfected or perfecting intelligence, one *hotoké*. Because of this doctrine of the absolutely clear perception, intelligence, and oneness of all nature, Kōbō said, “Even the little green frog sitting on the leaf of the lotus plant perceives this truth; and the cicada screeching out from under the shadow of a wide leaf is of itself perceiving and preaching the fact.” Thus humanity and all things animate and inanimate are without any essential difference, each and all constituting but one object, one full, clear-perceiving, sentient existence, one Dainichi Niyorai. Accordingly, if, in one’s perplexity or bewilderment in thinking the matter out, hell is thought to be hell, then it is indeed hell. If, however, on coming to a clear apprehension of the essence of things, it is discovered that hell is not hell at all, but that it is, on the contrary, the place of superlative happiness,

<sup>1</sup> Dainichi Niyorai is the Buddhistic title for the Japanese sun-goddess *Amaterasu* or *Ten Sho Ko Dai Jin*.

then it is really so. An extract from the work Kongojomi Kyo confirms this statement. "Shaka said to his disciple Monju, 'From whence spring up the ideas of hell?' Monju replied, 'All things without exception are the product of the vain, human heart. People foolishly, according to the leadings of their heart, bind themselves fast with self-made fetters. Because of this there is a hell though no hell in reality exists. Such people, being misled and self-bound, suffer and are in anguish just as if there were an actual hell. For instance, in a dream one has the feeling of falling into hell and of being consumed in the myriads on myriads of fires, or of being thrown into the caldrons of boiling water and suffering untold agonies and of screaming out in anguish and pain. If now such an one should be asked, 'Why are you so distressed?' he would reply, 'Oh! I am burning in the fires or boiling in the caldrons of hell.' If on this the questioner should say, 'You are asleep and only dreaming,' and should then arouse the sleeper, how would it be? The awakened sleeper would at once clearly perceive that the dream was but an unreal and empty thing, and then both mind and body would be at rest. Truly hell does not exist at all; yet if a person, through bewilderment or self-delusion, thinks he has fallen into, or will fall into one, it is a mere matter of belief or fancy only. This is true not of hell only, but of all other things as well; for all things are but emptiness and nothingness; all things, including the heart and mind of man, being as empty and unreal as a dream." Shaka replied, "You have well said. All hells being so regarded, hell does not in reality exist at all." The "clear perception" of all this is the "enlightenment" taught and sought after by the Shingon sect—the *hotoké*-hood so much praised and desired.

The usual prayer of the sect is a repetition of sacred words, the meaning of which is secret, and the effect magical. They are as follows: "On abokiya, beirosha no makabo, da-

rama ni handoma, jimbara harabaritaya un." The title of the prayer is Komiyo Shingon.

#### THE ZEN SECT.

This sect is based on the teaching that Shaka just before his death imparted to his follower Makakasho, and contains his most profound doctrines. It was promulgated in China by Daruma Daishi, who was the third son of a king of Southern India. The Chinese priest Yeikwa received the teaching directly from Daruma. A famous Japanese priest named Yeisai Zenshi, visiting China for study, received the doctrines from the priest Hei Zenshi, and on returning to Japan promulgated them. The heart of the doctrine of the Zen sect is so profound that weak and foolish people—the masses—are incapable of fathoming and understanding it. In interpreting the doctrines the instruction given by Daruma Daishi is that the surface meaning of the sacred books is not to be so much regarded as the human heart. The heart of man, together with his natural constitution, is to be carefully considered, and man, prior to his death, to be regarded as a potential *hotoké*. Each individual therefore is to be self-illuminating, and by the workings of his own consciousness to arrive at a clear perception of the unreality of all things. Illustrating this point, Shaka said, according to the book *Riyoga Kyo*, "*Hotoké* is the I, the myself. From first receiving the doctrine up to entrance into Nirvana I have not interpreted either a single verse or character of the sacred works; yet now, for the benefit of those who lack wisdom and the power of patient perseverance, I say, 'These principles are not of various discernments: they are all one. That one is this: This my own body and the body of *hotoké* are one and the same, and alike are non-existences. I myself am *hotoké*, and *hotoké* is nothing but I myself. I perceive then that I do not exist: I am not. *Hotoké* also is not. The East is not. The West is not. The North is not.

The South is not. Having received this discerning mind, I understand that *ingwa*—retribution visited in the present existence for deeds done in a previous state of being—is not. *Hotoké* also, all life also, are not. Even the perception of perplexity and bewilderment is not; for from within to the outermost limits of the ten sides of the universe there is nothing else but absolute vacancy and nothingness."

In view of this statement, one deeply instructed in the doctrines of the Zen sect, and known as Riyoju Bosatsu, said: "Man is not a witness even to himself." That is, being a non-existence, he is incapable of testifying to himself that he exists, or thinks, or hopes, or fears, or suffers, or enjoys.

As to the ritual used and the austerities practised by the sect, their value may be illustrated as follows; One coming to a closed gate or door picks up a bit of tile and beats long and loudly on it until it is opened. When the door has been opened and entrance made free, the bit of tile is thrown away as being of no further use or value. Thus ritual and austerities are nothing more than means to a desired end; that end being the "clear perception," as through an open door, that there is no such thing as existence or reality—nothing but absolute vacuity, emptiness, nothingness. This state of "clear perception" being attained, then ritual, austerities, prayers, thought, everything, cease to have use or value. In order to attain to this "clear perception," this condition of *hotoké*, Daruma Daishi sat for nine long years, with folded limbs, and in one attitude, with eyes fixed to one spot on the wall. This form of sitting—*sazen*—and of contemplation is yet taught, and whole nights without sleep are so passed by novitiates for the Zen sect's priesthood.

#### THE JODO SECT.

This sect was established by the Japanese priest Honen Shomi during the twelfth century A. D. Before establishing

the sect Honen had searched and profoundly studied the doctrines of all the sects of his day. It is said of him that during these forty years of arduous study he never slept. On one occasion, while studying the book *Oyō-yo-shu*, written by the priest Yeishin of the Tendai sect, that a great thought occurred to him, and that on this thought he established the sect. The "great thought" seems to have been as follows: The people of these latter days have but little wisdom and power of patient perseverance, hence they can not possibly understand the profound principles of Buddhism. In order therefore that every one may be born—reborn into the blissful paradise, let them constantly repeat by the lips the sacred name of Amida Niyorai. This prayer—*nembutsu*—is the familiar one "Namu Amida Butsu." This teaching of Honen's is written in the book *Muriyōjin Kyo*, and is based on the vow and oath of Amida Niyorai to hear and save all who call on his name.

It is not assumed that this prayer arises from any mental perception or assured conviction resulting from profound study or thought. Honen himself said of it, "My prayer—*nembutsu*—is neither the product of the mind of a Chinese sage, nor of the deeply wise of my own country. It is only a prayer for salvation that the ignorant and foolish can at any and at all times repeat. By its constant repetition rebirth into the blissful paradise is assured."

The believers of the Jōdo sect hope for and trust in a salvation secured for them by the help of another,—that is, through Amida Niyorai. In this respect of hoping in and relying on another, not themselves, for salvation, this sect differs from the Shingon and Zen sects, both of whom look for the attainment of their hopes through the exercise of the unaided powers of each individual. The believers of the Jōdo sect consequently repeat without intermission the prayer "Namu Amida Butsu! Namu Amida Butsu!" and

hope and expect through its virtue to be reborn in due time into the blissful paradise.

#### THE SHIN SECT. •

This sect was originated by the Japanese priest Shinran Shonin, during the thirteenth century A. D. His teacher was Honen, the originator of the Jōdo sect. Shinran took the general principles taught by Honen, but modified them to suit his own ideas; hence his method of obtaining salvation through the help of another is essentially the same as that of the Jōdo sect. The great differences of the Shin sect are the allowance of the use of animal food by the priests and the possession of wives. These things are certainly at variance with the original Buddhistic teachings. The ancient laws of Japan say that "Priests or nuns drinking liquor, eating flesh or garlic, or any other onion-like vegetable shall for the space of thirty days be subject to painful discipline." They also say that "if a priest shall carnally associate with one of the other sex, he must suffer exile, and be driven away to a distant and lonely land." The priest Shinran, thinking deeply over the deterioration of the people of the later days—his own times—and of how difficult it seemed for the best of them to overcome the fleshly appetites—a difficulty shown by the reproach and shame brought on Buddhism by the openly adulterous relations existing between even the most celebrated priests and nuns—he gave himself up to the thought and to the study of the Kengu Kyo, the Bisaba-ron, and other works, and then originated the Shin sect on the principles he thus discovered. It was in view of the evil conditions of his time, therefore, that Shinran was led to allow the eating of animal food by the priests, and the possession of wives. Thus Shinran based his sect on the great laws of the nature of humanity. He did so, however, only as a concession to the weakness of humanity, and out of necessity. Yet, although he allowed

the priests of his sect to marry, he expected them to use the marriage relation only as a more convenient and comfortable method of attaining to salvation; it being understood that the husband and wife were to advance in "the way" together. The permission to eat animal food was given for the same reasons. Total abstention being painful and the appetite difficult to overcome, liberty to use was granted. Shinran said of this, "The eating of animal food is no hindrance to entering on the way of salvation: the only hindrances are in the heart. If therefore one does not himself take life, where is the evil in the eating?"

By these teachings of this sect we see how fearfully Buddhism has deteriorated in Japan. If Shaka the Indian should return to life and come to Japan, he would not be likely to recognize the Shin sect as a branch of Buddhism at all. If however, through observing the teachings of this sect, entrance into the blissful paradise can be secured, the method is certainly an improvement on, and a step in advance of, the methods of the Jōdo sect, from which it arose. The foolish people who accept these teachings do so simply because the way seems easy for the accomplishment of their desires and because the number who go with them is great. They do not accept the teachings because of any study or knowledge or clear perception of the teachings of Buddha.

The Shin sect uses the "Namu Amida Butsu" prayer, but repeats it more slowly than the believers of the Jōdo sect; the thought in the mind, and the desire in the heart, during its repetition, being regarded as a full equivalent for any loss in the number of repetitions during a given period. The Jōdo believers repeat the prayer rapidly, thinking that, as an unskilful marksman by using but one or two shots may miss his aim and lose his game, yet by rapid and repeated firing may accomplish his object; so they, in a similar manner, may attain the object of their heart's desire by a rapid reiteration of their *nembutsu* (prayer).

The meaning of the prayer is obscure. *Namu* seems to be an exclamation only. *Amida* is the name of the Buddha they rely on for salvation. He is regarded as an older Buddha than Gotama Shaka-muni. *Butsu* is the equivalent for *hotoké*, which has for its meanings the ideas of clear perception, transparent, luminous, shining. Thus the "Amida" whose name they constantly repeat and on whom they rely for salvation, they also affirm to be possessed of perfect knowledge and of clearest perception of all causes and effects, that is, omniscient in the Buddhist sense. The virtue of the repetition of this name and attribute is regarded as all-sufficient for one who hopes to attain the blissful paradise *gokuraku*.

In olden times this body was also called, by way of contempt, the Yeta sect; the reason being that Shinran and his followers were the only ones of all the Buddhists of Japan who received the Yeta to fellowship (that is, the outcast, or Pariah, class, which during the reign of the present emperor has for the first time in their existence been enfranchised. They are now called the *Shinheimen*, i. e., the new subjects or people). On this account the sect suffered much and long from villification by the other sects. This burden of opprobrium, however, has been removed by the present emperor. In the tenth year of his reign (1887) he expressed himself as much gratified at the principles on which Shinran had founded the sect; and to express his profound approbation he gave to Shinran by autographic tablets the posthumous title of Kenshin Daishi, i. e., the great teacher who perceived the truth. The Shin sect may now be regarded as not only entirely destitute of reproach, but as being both honorable and illustrious. It is numerically the largest sect in the Empire, having 19,210 temples and a corresponding number of priests. It is this body that is building the large new temple in the city of Kyoto at a cost of several millions

of dollars; and it is on a corner of the wide verandah of this temple that large coils of hawser-like rope, made of the hair of the devout women of the sect, by which the massive timbers in the roof were raised to their position, can be seen. It is this sect which some writers speak of as "The Protestant Sect," and which they think to be nearer to Christianity than any other of the Buddhist bodies. The true nearness in this case is the nearness of two opposing armies that thunder their guns and flash their steel in each other's faces. It is more than probable that the longest and hardest conflict that Christianity in Japan will have with the Buddhistic bodies will be with this so-called Protestant sect. One of its leading priests is a graduate of Oxford University, England, who had for his teacher in Sanscrit the celebrated oriental scholar Max Müller. The body is adopting all the methods of the most active Protestant missions in fortifying itself and in carrying on its warfare. It may yet sweep its temples clean of idols, and use them only as places in which to call on the name of "Amida Butsu" and to preach its interpretation of his doctrines.

#### THE NICHIREN SECT.

This sect was established by the Japanese priest Nichiren during the thirteenth century A. D. Nichiren had received his training in the Shingon body. One peculiarity of the sect is that it is addicted to villifying all other Buddhistic bodies. They say that, if one repeats the widely used prayer "Namu Amida Butsu," hell will open its mouth and swallow the reprobate. They call the Zen sect a "sect of devils." The Shingon sect they call "The destroyer of our country." The Risshu, a sub-sect of the Shingon, they call "National traitors." In this way the Nichiren sect not only denies to other sects the right to the Buddhistic name; it calls them evil doers of the worst order. If one asks the reasons for all this, the reply is: "Because all the other sects

use the *hoben*, or "fictional," and misleading teachings of the Buddhistic sacred books. The priest Nichiren set the bulk of those books aside, and established his sect on the teachings of Shaka (Buddha) as written in the book Hokké Kyo. In this book the following saying of Shaka is recorded: "For over forty years I have largely taught the 'fictional' doctrines, and have not revealed the full truth; but now for the first time I fully set forth and explain that, and only that, which is 'true.'" Because of this statement this particular book is regarded by the Nichiren sect as of greater value than all other of the Buddhistic sacred books put together. As a natural consequence no other sect is regarded as equal to, or as in any good way to be compared with, their own. They say, "All other sects are founded on the Daijo Kyo, the Chiujo Kyo, and the Shōjo Kyo, and those works are only as steps leading up to our sacred book, the Hokké Kyo." The position they take is that Shaka by the teachings of this book corrected all his previous instructions, some of which, when advanced in life, he saw to be false or foolish. The sect never wearies of thus representing their position, nor does it weary of villifying and treating with contempt their fellow-sects. They affirm, however, that this conduct is not because of any ill-will or hatred which they bear to others, but rather because of the good-will and love which they entertain for them. They claim that all such conduct of theirs is exceedingly pleasing to the heart of the *hotoké*—the perfected ones. They also add that "all who speak evil of our Hokké, or Nichiren, sect are great sinners, and enemies of the 'perfected ones.'"

The sacred book of the sect is not outside of the three works already named—the Tri-pitaka—but is a section or chapter of the first one, the Daijo Kyo.

If one asks what the particular benefits of the meritorious conduct and virtue of the believers of the sect consist in, the reply is: "The benefits are great and many. The believers

of this sect, though reborn into this world a hundred thousand myriads of times, will never be born dumb, nor with fetid breath, nor with flat nose, nor with a black skin: but as to the villifiers of the sect it happens to them as the sacred book declares, namely, when they die they fall into a bottomless hell, and when they have endured the fulness of the horrors and anguish of this hell, they fall into a hell to be endlessly devoured by loathsome beasts and reptiles." The Nichiren sect therefore constantly cries out with a loud voice, "All other sects but this are of devils, and are devilish."

Nichiren in providing a prayer to be used by his followers decided to call on and honor the sacred *Law* rather than Buddha: hence the prayer of the sect is "Namu miyo horenge kyo"—Hail to the sublime law. Rein in his work on Japan gives the free translation of the prayer thus: "Honor to the salvation-bringing book of the law." This prayer Nichiren is said to have recited for the first time as he faced the rising sun on the 5th year, 3d month, and 28th day of the reign of the Emperor Kencho.

Mr. Takahashi Goro says: "It may be that the prayer of the Nichiren sect is a profound mystery, and a testimony to the real truth, yet it is quite certain that the principles of Buddhism are not as this sect affirm. These people only know that Buddhism had a noble origin: the principles on which it is based they do not understand. If they truly understood them, they would see that there is no need whatever for their sect. To illustrate: though one should receive and keep in one's possession an extraordinary prescription from the historically celebrated Indian doctor Kiba, or from the equally celebrated Chinese physician Henjaku, and should not put them into use, what real good would their actual possession be? Again, what though the celebrated gem Renjono-tama (a gem emitting a bright, shining light in the darkness) should be received in a casket, and the casket only constantly admired and applauded without any inves-

tigation of the interior to see and know whether the gem were really there, or whether a false gem had been put in its place,—this would be to do as this sect does with its sacred book. The believers of this sect do not know the real worth of their Hokké Kyo. The portion of the sacred books they exalt is that which explains the difference between the 'fictional' and the 'true' in Buddhistic doctrine, and which reveals the true principles of the various laws of the Daijo-Kyo—a part of which is their Hokké Kyo. In discussing the teachings concerning a future state of rewards and punishments, they affirm that it is all 'fictional,' misleading, untrue. If this is conceded, then it follows, as a matter of course, that there is no such a thing as falling into a bottomless hell, or into a hell full of beasts and loathsome reptiles, on the part of their villifiers; nor can there be any reward as sweet breath, high nose, fair complexion, for those who are devout and faithful to the teachings of the sect. Their interpretations are all foolish, yet they lay fast hold of this foolishness and exalt it into the truth. They vainly exalt the name of their sacred book, but do not understand its teachings.

“Thus, as has been said from the very beginning of this summary, there are in Buddhistic teachings principles which are both profound and extraordinary: there are also those that are shallow and foolish. It is not strange therefore that the priest Nichiren should found a sect on his own interpretation of the sacred writings. Moreover there is so much that is dim, vague, and uncertain that it need not surprise one that thinkers on the matter should form individual and peculiar opinions and interpret the sacred books in ways satisfactory to themselves.

“While the teachings of Buddhism seem to be exceedingly profound, yet they are vague and exceedingly difficult to understand. If, however, we consider their very essence, we find them to be after all but empty things. Their highest summit of excellence and being for the individual reaches

only to a return or entrance into the conditions of nonentity—nothingness,—even as a burning lamp dies out into utter darkness and vacuity: or, to change the figure, it is like myriads of rivers emptying themselves into one vast ocean, and so losing themselves and their individuality forever.

“If now the principles and teachings of Buddhism are in harmony with nature (as some say), they certainly are not at all satisfactory to the human heart. The ordinary, unlearned Buddhist believer, not perceiving nor understanding the real principles and true teachings of Buddhism, sets out in pursuit of a heaven that exists only as a pious fraud, dreading hells which exist only as a phantasm or a dream. Thus, from bewilderment to bewilderment, he wanders on deeper and deeper into an endless maze!”

The present condition of Buddhism in Japan is one of active opposition to Christianity on the part of the Shin sect; but the other sects, although not utterly indifferent to their future, do not seem to have any enthusiasm of hope or of purpose in contending with the incoming foe. For a time many of the sects united in inviting the notorious Colonel Olcott to come from India to Japan to help them in the struggle. Colonel Olcott accepted the invitation, and during the year 1889 he visited many of the cities of Japan, speaking to large audiences in both temples and theatres. He began his lecturing career by attempts to expound the doctrines of Buddhism as he understood them, but he was very soon informed that the Buddhist priesthood of Japan did not care for any profound or theosophic interpretations of esoteric Buddhism—all they wanted of him was aid in combatting and overthrowing their dreaded and active foe, Christianity. The Colonel labored for a while in a half-hearted fashion and then took his departure for India or Ceylon. After he left, the “great union” dissolved like a rope of sand, and the various sects returned to their former relations to each other.

The Japanese priest, Noguchi Zenjiro, who was sent to

India as a committee-man to invite Colonel Olcott to come over to Japan to help them re-establish Buddhism, that is, to oppose Christianity, said, speaking of the conditions of Buddhism in Japan, in a public address delivered at Adyn, Madras, Dec. 28th, 1888: "Many have become free-thinkers and materialists: and 72,164 temples are going to decay, while many are already in ruins and cannot be rebuilt. About 170,000 Buddhist priests are disturbed from their long sleep by the many opposing forces which are now in motion in the phenomenally excited atmosphere of Japan. They are now in a state of confusion. Some have become laymen. Some temples are rented to the public. Some have been changed into European hotels. Buddhist writings and Pitakas, proudly kept in possession of the temples, and in veneration, are being sold. Old Japan is no more! The old grandeur and prosperity of Buddhism, alas, are no more visible. What shall we do? What steps must we take to reform the Buddhists and give life to Buddhism? How shall we wipe off the rust accumulated on the solid gold structure of Buddhism, so that it may outshine the new-made, brass structure some are trying to erect? We must unify all the sects of Buddhism. We must educate every priest and layman. We must reconvert the Japanese to Buddhism. We must encourage the Japanese to take all that is good from Europe and reject all that is bad. Two opposing forces are now working to influence and mould the intellect of the educated Japanese—one asserting that everything European is good, and the other the contrary. The balance of thought must change towards one scale or the other, and on that the destiny of Japan hangs. What shall we do? This is the echo of the cry which is now reverberating throughout Japan. Our Buddhist brothers have been aroused from their long drowsiness, but there is no help within.

"The Japanese emperors have hitherto believed in Bud-

dhism and built many Buddhist temples; and many princes and princesses became priests and nuns, of whom some still remain in Kyoto. But the present emperor does not really believe in Buddhism. He has subscribed large sums to the temples, but it is not for the advancement of the cause of Buddhism that he has given the money. He has given it only as wages to those who guard the former emperors' tombs, and the ancient relics and monuments which are kept in those temples. Rank which was bestowed by former emperors has been taken from us by the present emperor. The Buddhist priests of the present day, basking in the sunshine of wealth given by previous emperors, are spending much of their time in playing the flute, chess, drawing, and occasionally (only) repeat the Pitaka before the image of our Lord Buddha—they are ignorant of religion. Moreover the feeble priests have made many opponents of the millions of Buddhists.

“You may suppose that, as the old emperor has changed into a new emperor, and an old government into a new government, the people who stand under their chairs must be expected also to get new knowledge, that is to say, European knowledge. Well, all Japanese are now beginning to mould their minds according to European models of thought. Smoke curling up from many chimneys, telegraph lines spreading like spider's webs, long trains of cars looking like houses in motion, large steamers like iron castles upon the surface of the sea, balloons that make every one think of enormous birds, the smoking of cigarettes, the drinking of whiskey, the wearing of gold watches, playing piano and organ (no matter how much harmony is destroyed by their own odd sounds), the undergoing of great suffering by wearing small shoes, the hanging of gold medals on the chest—all these are outward signs of our change. To learn Optics, Physics, Electricity, Photography, Magnetism, Chemistry, Biology, Archæology, Surgery, Geology, Palæontology, Mathematics, Mechanical Science, Economy, Astronomy, Geography, Phi-

lology, Anthropology, History, Logic, Philosophy, Moral Philosophy, Metaphysics, Materialism, Christianity—these are the dominant subjects now engaging the attention of Japanese to disguise a civilized country in modern garments. Thus, you see, all our people wished for European knowledge—were in haste and eager for it. The country however could not obtain sufficient means to meet the need. At this time of (intellectual) want and hunger, American missionaries supplied them with their wants and bribed them with money. They established the Dōshisha, which is a very large Protestant University, and many schools, nurse schools, libraries, and churches. They are scattered over almost all parts of Japan, and the missionaries are converting many people and giving them elementary instruction.

“To rescue our Buddhists from the thralldom of Western vices, we have thought of only one way. I have hinted to you what that is: it is to obtain the unselfish help of Colonel Olcott, the founder of the Theosophical Society, and reformer of religions. We have heard of the name of this esteemed and honorable man, and of the good work his society is doing for Buddhism in Ceylon and elsewhere. All Japanese Buddhists are now awaiting his visit, and they have named him *Ima Shaka*—Bodhisah of the Nineteenth Century—and they have sent me to this twice blessed country to . . . escort him to Japan.”

The bright hopes entertained by the priests of the many sects over the visit of Colonel Olcott were blighted, and the sighs of vexation and of disappointment by many were no doubt deep and real. The reed proved to be a frail one: it broke, and pierced the hand that leaned on it. The Shin sect, however, maintains an active warfare. It also has established schools, hospitals, and other missionary agencies. To these honorable weapons of warfare it adds the dishonorable, namely, the “viler sort” of fellows for the annoyance and intimidation of their Christian opponents. This sect has a strong hold on

the masses, and it will doubtless be long before it yields to the inevitable. It is quite certain, however, that Japanese Buddhism is hasting to its setting, even as the cold and lifeless moon sinks and fades away before the rising of the ardent and life-giving sun.