Preface

As H.M. Van Loon phrases in *The Story of Mankind*, history is “the mighty Tower of Experience, which Time has built amidst the endless fields of bygone ages.” (p.xii) In ancient times Japan had enriched valuable experiences to assimilate foreign cultures, particularly through Buddhism from India, which led to the formation of the Japanese civilization. Thus Japanese interests in ancient India have been traditionally focused on Buddhism, the Sanskrit language and the Indian philosophy. Further the comparative study between India and Japan has been intensively pursued in Buddhist arts. In India, on the other hand, Japan seems to have been placed just as a part of the Far East in relation to the propagation of Buddhism. Hence the overall comparative study of the two civilizations has been rarely taken up in either of the countries. Probably this may be due to the difficulties to abstract the Indian elements in Japanese culture, mostly hidden behind the influences of China and other intermediary regions. Yet the recent closer relationship between India and Japan attracts more attention to the search of their histories for deeper mutual understanding. This thesis, *Ancient Indian Influence on Japanese Culture – A Comparative Study of Civilizations*, may provide a timely contribution to the current matter of concern. Namely, the relevant phenomena of ancient Indian influence on Japanese culture have been investigated in this thesis through fact finding of interactions and identification of influences so as to abstract the commonness and peculiarity of the two civilizations.

The work has been divided into seven chapters besides the final chapter of conclusion. The First Chapter contains the *Introduction - Background of Ancient Culture of Japan and India*. Attempt is made to clarify the peculiarity of ecological
background, origin of culture, characteristics of culture, and the periodization and
chronology of ancient cultural histories of Japan and India as the basis of comparative
study. The Second Chapter contains the Influence of Intermediate Regions. Attempt is
made to pick up the foreign cultural elements in ancient Japan, the human interchanges
with foreign countries, the inland and maritime trade routes over Eurasia, particularly
Silk Routes, in relation to cultural propagations, and the peculiarity and influence of
intermediate regions, i.e. West, Central and North Asia, Southeast Asia, China and
Korea. Overall the importance of cultural interchange sphere and the large contribution
of Buddhism are emphasized. The Third Chapter contains the Comparison of Political,
Economic and Social Movements. Attempt is made to clarify the peculiarity and
similarity between the two ancient histories through the overview of political, economic
and social movements in each period. The Fourth Chapter contains the Comparison of
Metropolises as Core of Civilization. Attempt is made to search for the peculiarity and
similarity between the two ancient urbanizations on the basis of the criteria of
urbanization and the concept of city plan, i.e. the formation and shift of capitals in Japan,
and the process of urbanization with archaeological features of settlements in India. The
progress of urban planning and infrastructure, and the interaction with religious and
cultural centres are emphasized. The Fifth Chapter contains the Development and
Influence of Buddhism. Attempt is made to trace the development of moral culture of
Japan through the propagation and assimilation of Buddhism, particularly the
amalgamation of esoteric Buddhism with native faiths like Shintō and Shugen-dō. It is
clarified how Buddhism became Japanized with manners and customs and cultural
traditions. The Sixth Chapter contains the Comparison and Influence of Form, Style and
Pattern of Architecture and Fine Arts with Emphasis on Materials. Attempt is made to
pursue the development of material culture of Japan in architecture and fine arts under Indian influence with particular attentions to wood and stone materials. Comparison is made in wooden architecture, rock-cut architecture, sculptures, paintings, patterns, potteries, terracotta figurines, metalware and glassware. The stone monuments in Japan and the treasures of Shōsō-in and Hōryū-ji are emphasized. The Seventh Chapter contains the Overview of Types of Japanese and Indian Civilizations. Attempt is made to analyze the characteristics of the two civilizations through cultural traditions, social customs, Indian influence on Japanese way of life, pilgrimage, social classification and foreign influence. The significance of interchanges among civilizations is emphasized.

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