Chapter II

Trade Routes and Influence of Intermediate Regions

Introduction

Efforts are made to reveal how original cultures had been propagated and amalgamated by various cultural supplements and changes through intermediate regions until they reached Japan. The first half, the *Trade Routes to Stimulate Interactions across Barriers*, grasps various trade routes across Eurasia from India to mainland China, contiguous to the sea across Japan, changing major routes along with regional movements through periods but with close interrelations between inland and sea routes. The latter half, the *Influence of Intermediate Regions*, searches for peculiar cultures, amalgamated between indigenous and foreign elements through intermediate regions, which stimulated ancient Japanese culture directly or indirectly. Before discussing relevant subjects, the overall Eurasian influences on ancient Japan are briefed from archaeological, mythological and human exchange points of view to understand the position of ancient Japanese culture within Eurasia. In conclusion, the cultural zone and interchange sphere and the impact of Buddhism are focused as key factors to have stimulated cultural propagation.

Eurasian Dynamism

The Japanese culture had been largely influenced by China, yet various cultural elements both from the north and the south had flowed into Japan prior to the introduction of Buddhism. In the Jōmon period, there appeared a cultural stream from northern Eurasia, e.g. Wood Circle, burdock cultivation, comb-patterned pottery, stone sword and round ear-ring made of agalmatolite or steatite. They were common around...
Siberia, Coastal Province, north-eastern China and northern Korea. Also, there remained southern cultural elements, e.g. high-floored building and cultivations of calabash, bean sprouts, beefsteak plant, upland-rice, wet-rice, etc. They may have been presumably introduced from southern China, Southeast Asia and southern Pacific islands. The culture of Coastal Province contained so similar artifacts to the ones of Yayoi culture, e.g. pottery, stone sword, arrowhead, knife and axe, bronze mirror with multi-straps, sword and halberd, etc. They may have been possibly introduced in Japan across the Sea of Japan as well as through the Korean Peninsula.

The history of East Asia was moved primarily by the struggle between agrarian Chinese and nomadic tribes from the Steppes. Nomadic tribes had constantly contributed to the propagation of technologies, e.g. copper smelting, iron tempering and producing bronze and iron implements. The Scytho-Siberian culture spread over eastern Eurasia from the sixth to second centuries B.C. to create the Western Nomadic Han culture. This mixed culture was also introduced in Japan through Korea. The inflow of horse-riding nomadic culture threw a strong impact to change entirely the ancient Japanese society. Several artifacts uncovered from tombs indicate the influences of Korea and further north, e.g. gilt-bronze crown-hat, large iron sword with plain circular head of hilt, horn-shaped pottery cup, and tombs with stone-piled mound, stone grave chamber with passage and four projected corners. The ritual of sacrificing cattle or horse to pray for rain has been kept in some areas of north-central Japan, associated with Korean gods and derived from horse-riding nomadic custom.

**Human Interactions**

In fact, major and direct propagations of foreign cultures into ancient Japan were made
through the human intercourses with China and Korea, yet several ancient chronicles of Japan record about the human interactions with India, Southeast Asia and further western regions. The *Nihongi* (Chronicles of Japan) and the *Fudoki* (local gazetteer of certain regions) record about the visit or migration of foreign people in the seventh century A.D. like *Tokara*, *Shaei* and *Dara* (presumably identified with some places in Southeast Asia, India, Afghanistan, etc).

Āryadhamma, Tien-tai Buddhist from Rājagṛha, entered Japan via China in A.D. 645. He initiated to build Ichijō-ji temple in Banshū, western Japan, in which he built a Gion-sha shrine, originated from Jetavana vihāra in Saheth. He was called Hōdō sen‘nin (hermit of Dharma) to cure common people and even the emperor. He was invited to perform at the court the Musha-e (praying for prosperity and Dharma) and the Issai-kyō-e (reciting every kind of sūtras). He taught Sanskrit language, instructed various ceremonies like a festival of the *Tripiṭaka* (Daizō-e), the Gion rituals, a holy procession by Dashi (Dasi-yantra) and Chigo (a little child), and the reception of Okera flame (Āndhara). The Gion-sha shrine was shifted to Yasaka shrine in Kyoto during the Heian period as a guardian to protect from the prevalence of epidemic disease. This became the origin of the Gion Festival, one of three greatest festivals in Kyoto. He further initiated the ancient rituals of Konpira (Kumbhira, a holy vehicle of river goddess Gaṅgā). Later the proposal for this god was offered by a temple in Shikoku as guardian deity, which motivated the foundation of Konpira-miya shrine, one of most popular pilgrimages in Japan.8

Bodhisena, Indian Buddhist priest, reached Japan in A.D. 736 in order to pursue the way of Bodhisattva Māṇjuśrī further eastwards after he visited Mt. Wutai in China. He accompanied the Japanese envoy to T’ang on their way back together with Buttetsu,
the Champā (Vietnam) monk who instructed Gagaku music. In A.D. 752 he solemnized the consecration ceremony of Daibutsu (a huge gilt-bronze statue of Vairocana Buddha) at Tōdai-ji. As he was appointed dai-sōjō (archbishop), he was called Baramon-sōjō (Brāhma bishop). He taught Sanskrit that showed the way to a phonetic system to suit the needs of Japanese language. He died in A.D. 760 and was buried at Ryōsen-ji of Mt. Tomi, west of Nara, which was once pointed out by him to be quite similar to the Vulture’s peak in Rājagṛha. A stone pedestal to hold a memorial service for him has been uncovered in the precincts of the temple.9 The Man’yōshū (anthology of ancient poems) refers to Brāhma as his name in a poem, and the Konjaku monogatari-shū (Collection of Tales of Times Now and Past) tells about him in a tale, called Samantabhūda Bodhisattva.10

The Shoku Nihongi (Continuation of Chronicles of Japan) also refers to several foreign interchanges in the eighth century A.D. For instance, an assistant ambassador to T’ang returned to Japan, accompanied by Persian people. An ambassador to T’ang returned to Japan after he was cast ashore to Vietnam. Ganjin (Chien-chen), Chinese priest, reached Japan, accompanied by a monk named Nyōhō. Nyōhō later reversed to worldly life, renamed as An Nyōhō. From this surname An in Chinese character he was presumably a native of Bukhara in Central Asia.11

The Nihon-kōki (Later Chronicles of Japan) and the Ruijū-kokushi (Classified National History) mention that in A.D. 799 Tenjiku-bito, an Indian man, was washed ashore in Mikawa Province, central Japan. He had cotton seeds with him and they were offered to the court. The court instructed several provinces to plant cotton. Later cotton became the most important clothing materials in Japan. The Japanese word wata or hatā for cotton has been derived from Sanskrit pata.12 His personal characteristics are
precisely reported. He covered his shoulder by cloth. He wore a loincloth. On his left shoulder he put on a dark blue cloth similar to a surplice.\textsuperscript{13}

Shinnyo, Prince of Emperor Heizei, may have been mostly the first Japanese to attempt reaching India via China where he entered in A.D. 862, but ended in failure to be killed by a tiger around a southern headland of Malay Peninsula. This episode has been recorded at the \textit{Nihon-sandai-jitsuroku} (Real Record of Three Eras in Japan) as a case related to the \textit{jūtaka} of casting a body for starving tigers from his destiny.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{Trade Routes to Stimulate Interactions across Barriers}

First, overall trade routes across East and West, North and South are discussed. Then, main routes are examined from ecological background, traffic course and trade activities. Further, the trade activities are examined from human network, product speciality, and value and information exchange. (\textit{Map 1})

\textbf{Pan-Eurasian Trade Routes}

The Pan-Eurasian interactions had been proceeded across three ancient worlds, i.e. the Western World to cover Graeco-Rome, Egypt and Mesopotamia, the Middle world to cover India and Central Asia and the Eastern world to cover China and peripheral areas. Central Asia was located at crossroads through overland routes and India played a major role in both coming and going cultures through maritime routes. As the oldest, longest and most active overland trade route, Silk Route had been trod by merchants, missionaries, pilgrims, etc. who carried with them materials, information, ideas, value systems, social norms, etc. The religious propagation, particularly of Buddhism, played
the most significant role for universalization, often carrying science and technology together. The establishment of vast empires provided security for traders. When empires disintegrated, routes became unsafe to limit trading activity on land and instead to increase trade activity on sea. Thus land route and sea trade were complementary. Urban centres and ports grew together with trade expansion as market place and production centre. Luxury and special products were main items in long-distant trade as exchange of gifts among rulers.¹⁵

**East-West Trade Routes**

Silk Route had connected the East-West traffics across Asia, Africa and Europe. Trade activities stimulated human traffics, religious propagation and cultural interchanges. Buddhism was introduced in China as an integrated culture with Greek, Iranian and Central Asian elements throughout propagation. In ancient Japan the cultural propagation through Silk Route gave the large influences on the Asuka and Tempyō cultures, e.g. the nomadic culture through the Steppe route, the Persian, Buddhist and T’ang Chinese cultures through oasis route, and the esoteric Buddhist culture through sea route.¹⁶ Those three trunk lines are detailed as below.

1. The Steppe route across northern Eurasia passed over northern China, Mongolia, Aral Sea, northern coast of Caspian Sea and eastern coast of Black Sea.

2. The oasis route, in a narrow sense of Silk Route, connected oases of Central Asia over Quilan Shan Corridor, Tamir Basin and Pamir Plateau. The northern traversing route reached Fergana and Russian Turkistān. The southern traversing route was en route divided into two ways, southwards to India and westwards to Afgānīstān. Reaching Iran, the route was again divided into two ways, north-westwards to
Constantinople and south-westwards to the Mediterranean Sea.

3. The south sea route, or Sea Silk Route, connected among southern China, Southeast Asia, Śrī Lankā, India, Persian Bay and Red Sea up to Alexandria of Egypt.

The construction of the Great Canal may have been aimed by Sui China to monopolize foreign trade by connecting between Hangzhou, a major port to south sea, and Binzhou (modern Beijing), a terminal of the Steppe route.17

North-South Trade Routes

As branch lines, North-South routes linked southern sea ports and oasis towns along Silk Route. For instance, one line connected Orhon Gol River Plain, eastern side of the Steppe route, Ch'ang-an and Binzhou, for silk trade as well as for the struggle between northern nomads and southern Chinese. Other line connected Tibetan Plateau, Tamir Basin and Dzungaria Basin, for the traffic of T'ang envoys and pilgrims to India. Another line connected western Turkistān, Afgānistān and India, as a route of invaders into India as well as mission and pilgrimage of Buddhism. The regions along the route were largely influenced by Hellenic and Indian cultures.18

Sino-Indian Trade Routes

There were three major routes between India and China, i.e. the great overland route through Afgānistān, Hindū Kush, Bactria, Central Asia and western China, the Yunnan route through eastern India, upper Myanmar and south-western China, and the sea route through coasts of Indo-China and islands of Indonesia.19

The Sino-Indian commerce had been exchanged through three phases, i.e. the first phase till the ninth century A.D. mainly with the Chinese demand of Buddhist artifacts,
the second phase till the tenth century A.D. with the decline of trade caused by the upheavals both in Central Asia and Yunnan area, and afterwards the third phase with the revival of vital trade to lead the third urbanization in North India.²⁰

### Trade Routes in India

In the subcontinent, two major grand routes had evolved by the sixth century B.C. The northern grand route, *Uttarāpatha*, stretched from Hindū Kush Mountains to the mouth of River Gaṅgā with several feeder routes and combinations. The southern grand route, *Daksināpatha*, was divided into two sectors from Narmadā Valley, southwards to the peninsula and westwards to Konkan Coast.²¹ The grand routes linked both domestic and international trades with Silk Route.

#### Overland Silk Route (Oasis Route)

The route passed through the northern and southern rims of Taklamakan Desert. The northern branch, called Tien Shan South Route, linked oasis towns (Hami, Turfan, Kuchā, Aksu, etc) with Dunhuang to east and Kāşgar to west. It became a major route to replace Tien Shan North Route in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., when a Chinese commandery was opened at Kara-Khoja in Turfan as an advanced base to East-West trade. Whereas the southern branch, called South Route of Western Region, was opened in the second century B.C. during the Former Han. It connected Kāşgar, Yarkand and Khotān, and joined with the northern route in Dunhuang. The route entered Pamir Mountains from Taškurgan, crossed mountains to reach Wakhan, Kurduz, Balkh, Bamiyan and Kapiša, and entered Gandhāra through Khyber Pass. Also the route from Yarkand, Khotān, Gilgit and Chilas to Kāşmir connected Central Asia with North-West
India.\textsuperscript{22}

Yuan Chwang, in the first half of seventh century A.D., took a long pilgrimage by overland route, went around India for fourteen years to stay mainly in Nalanda. He carried back with him many Buddhist texts to devote his rest of life to remarkable translation works.\textsuperscript{23}

During the period between the fifth and ninth centuries A.D., Sogdiana had become an important intermediate region, and Iranian Sogdian merchants took the most active part of Silk Route trade. They brought Sassanian culture into China.\textsuperscript{24} The stream of Indian and Iranian cultures was flourished in the Sui and T’ang eras with various religions, life styles, arts and crafts. Soon Buddhism became fully Sinicized.\textsuperscript{25}

**Sea Silk Route**

NV.B.S. Dutt throws out a hypothesis that ancient Indian people reached Japan during the Yayoi period to bring with them Indian religion, social customs and cultures. He points out various similarities between India and Japan, e.g. Shintō pantheon comprising all deities of nature, Shintō laying a great emphasis on ritual purification and Japanese language much closer to Telugu.\textsuperscript{26}

R. Kiyokawa proposes a unique idea about the origin of *Zenpō-kōen-fun* (keyhole-shaped tomb) that its prototype came from Hindu *Yoni*. The tomb structure may have been associated with the concept of Hindu temple to symbolize the universe, e.g. the stone chamber for a soul of the dead to keep rest till re-birth and the tomb surrounded by moats looking like a floating island in the centre of universe. He further suggests that in the fourth century A.D. the group who possessed the funeral tradition of *Zenpō-kōen-fun* migrated into Japan, considering a similar shape of the tombs found
around Kwangju in Kyŏnggi Province, south-western Korea, and the Maoutai tomb at
Changsha in Hunan Province, southern China. A Chinese record mentions that Indian
monks inhabited at the mouth of Yangtze River around the beginning of the Christian
era. Accordingly he presumes that the ancient Indian culture may have been propagated
through Southeast Asia, southern China and Korea to Japan during the Yayoi and Kofun
periods.27

Ancient Chinese records, the Shan-hai chin (Classic of Mountain and Seas), etc.,
mention that a country located in the eastern sea was named Chŏsen-tendoku, literally
Korea-India. An ancient Korean record, the Samguk yusa (Past Matters of Three
Kingdoms), mentions that a queen of the founder of Kinkandan, one of Kaya states in
southern Korea, came from Ayodhya, capital of Kośala.28

Those presumptions and records draw an attention that the sea routes may have
been used effectively by seafarers and travellers moving between Southeast Asia and
Far East.29

The East-West trade had been passed through three sea zones, i.e. Arabian Sea, Bay
of Bengal and South China Sea. The Han-shu (Record of the Former Han) mentions in
its geographic record about the sea route between South China Sea and Bay of Bengal.
A ship embarked from Hue in Vietnam, reached Nakur in western Sumatra, Thatung at
the mouth of Salween River, Sillah near Pagan along Irawaddy River, and finally
disembarked Kaneipura Congeveram in Coromandel Coast for about one year.30 There
were several inland routes across Malay Peninsula as shortcut way round the peninsula,
i.e. one route from Mawlamyine or Tavoy on the side of Gulf of Martaban, going up
along Ataran River, across Three Pagodas Pass and down along Mae Khlong River to
the northernmost point of Gulf of Thailand, the other route from Takua Pa across
Isthmus of Kra to Chumphon, and one more route from Kedah (Kilah) through Singora (Songkhia), Thalang and Phatthalung to Nagara (Ligor) or Ban Don (Surat Thani).31

I-tsing, in the late seventh century A.D., stayed 25 years abroad mainly in India and Śrīvijaya via sea route. He took about 75-day voyage from Canton to Tamralipti. He also contributed largely to the Chinese translation of Buddhist texts.32

Arikamedu prospered as an international sea port from the end of the first century B.C. to the second century A.D. A warehouse and a handicraft block with water tank have been excavated with Arretine Ware, Amphorae, Rouletted Ware, etc.33

From the first century A.D., the migration of Indian merchants and followers into Southeast Asia became vitalized. They introduced Indian religions, cultures and political and social systems to lead the formation of Hinduized states. From the second to seventh centuries A.D., Funan (Champā) was active in seafaring by building Konron large ships. Oc-Eo flourished as an external trade port. Gilt-bronze or tin Buddhist images of Gandhāra or Amarāvatī style, Viṣṇu images, etc. have been excavated. From the seventh to ninth centuries A.D., the international trade was boosted by the formation of the Sui and T’ang Empires, and the Strait of Malacca became a trunk line of sea route. The hegemony of the strait was first seized by the Śrīvijaya Empire of Sumatra and then moved to the Śailendra Dynasty of Java. Palembang flourished as the capital and centre of the Mahāyāna. In the eighth century A.D. Japanese envoy to T’ang took a southern route to traverse South China Sea directly and reached Kantou at the mouth of Yangtze River. In Kantou the products of southern China and foreign trade articles were gathered and numerous foreign merchants like Persians inhabited. Japanese envoys purchased Buddhist images, sūtras, altar materials, aromatics, remedies, etc.34 In the late eighth century A.D., The Angkor of Khmer (Cambodia) emerged to unify both
marine and inland trade network in South China Sea and eastern Southeast Asia. In the ninth century A.D., Chinese ships became vitalized to reach Persian Gulf without any dependence on Konron, Indian and Persian vessels. By the eleventh century A.D., celadons had become a leading export item of Sung China to be transshipped in the Indian Peninsula. The sea route was essentially changed to Ceramic Route. Japan kept on contacting with the southern sea route through China both by envoys and merchants.

Highland Silk Road

The Highland Silk Route passed across Tibet Plateau as the shortest overland route between India and China. In the middle of the seventh century A.D. since the rise of T’u-fan, the route was officially started by Wang Xuance, the ambassador dispatched to Kanauj by T’ang Emperor Gaozong. The route had been used by the pilgrims as another propagation route of Buddhism. The propagation of Buddhism stimulated the formation of Lamaism which later gave a great influence over the Mongols. Around the ninth to tenth centuries A.D. when other overland routes were broken up by warfare, the route attracted Buddhist monks and merchants. Further in the tenth century A.D., under the firm Buddhist relationship among East India, Tibet and Buddhistic states in northern China, the route was widely used by Buddhist monks. The route started from Kathmandu, through Manyu (Giron), Zongga, Tingni, Shigatse, Gyantse Lhasa, Neggu, Tanggulashan Pass, Tongtian He, Yagradaze Shan and Zhutuokalun, to Ch’ang-an.

In the eleventh century A.D. Tibet came to control major trade routes between China and Central Asia by developing the horse-for-tea trade with Sung China. People used to overcome the geographic barriers of high mountain ranges across steep passes over Karakoram and Himalayan Ranges by maintaining traditional routes.
A few passes are exemplified as Shipki Pass along Sutlej River, Parikrama Lipu/Lekh Pass from Kumaon, Khardung Pass over Ladakh Range, Saser Pass over Karakoram Range and Karakoram Pass over Aghir Range by Yak caravan as the highest route in the world. Moreover, even those highland people in Tibet and Yunnan may have been able to reach Japan only by boat down from headstreams of Yangtze River.

**South-west Silk Route (Yunnan Route)**

According to the *Shih chi* (Records of the Historian), in the second century B.C. Zhang Qian (or Chang Ch’ien) was dispatched by the Former Han Emperor Wu to Central Asia. When he was in Daxia (Bactria), he saw silk fabrics of Shu in Sichuan Province in a market place. He was told that those products were obtained from a market of Shu merchants in India. Then he proposed the development of a southern route from Shu through India. Following his proposal, the emperor sent an expedition to the Kunming Kingdom in Yunnan. In the first century A.D., the Later Han developed an inland route to connect Yongchang commandery, west of Kunming, with upper basins of Irrawaddy, Salween and Mekong Rivers. This route was one of the oldest and most difficult routes connecting East India with south-western China. It started from Yangqumie (Dali), passed through Yongchang commandery across Salween River, Gaoligong Mountains, Zhugeliang (Tengchong), then southwards along Irawaddy River, again westwards into Hailingyi, a capital of Pyu Kingdom, and extended to Assam. Thousands of cowries dated to the second century B.C. have been discovered in Yunnan Province of China. The Cowry Trail was traced from Maldive Islands through the east coast of the peninsula, lower Bengal and overland along Brahmaputra Valley to Yunnan.
Steppe Route

The traffic route through the Steppes and deserts area in North Asia was the origin of inland trade route. The single microlithic cultural zone in the Pre-historic Age extended from the Orient to the north coast of Africa through the Steppes. Scythians, an Iranian horse-riding nomad, are said to have originated from somewhere between southern Russia and Central Asia in the seventh century B.C., and their culture was propagated over Eurasia through the Steppe Route. Herodotus in the fifth century B.C. already mentioned in the *History* about the Steppe route, i.e. from Tanais at the mouth of Don River, across Ural Mountains, up along Irtish River, to the area between Altai and Tien Shan mountains. Both Ural and Altai were the famous sources of gold.45

The eighth to tenth centuries A.D. were the period of “East Asian World” under the dominant influence of T’ang Empire, which overlapped the period of envoys between P’o-hai and Japan. The route passed through great plain and Tundra in mainland China and Manchuria and across the Sea of Japan to reach the opposite coast to the Pacific Ocean. Various cultures deeply mixed up, e.g. Byzantine, Sassanid, Hellenic, Buddhist, Hindu, oasis, and horse-riding nomad cultures.

On the other hand, the maritime course to mainland China by Japanese envoys was changed according to navigational development, i.e. initially the north route along the west coast of Korea, then the south islands route through Tane-ga-shima and Ryūkyū Islands, and finally the ocean route directly across the East China Sea from Gotō Islands, west of Kyūshū.46

P’o-hai (A.D. 698 - 926) was founded by Koguryō exiles. It occupied north-eastern China (Manchuria), northern Korea and Coastal Province. The state established traffic routes by the system of five capitals, i.e. east capital reaching to Japan, both west and
north-west capitals to T’ang, and south capital to Silla. Their trade activities were closely associated with Sogdian merchants who supported the Turks, protector of P’o-hai, as advisory group. P’o-hai assimilated T’ang culture by adopting Chinese characters, Confucian philosophy and state Buddhism, yet maintained their original tribal culture to succeed to the tradition of Koguryŏ. Their influence on Japan can be exemplified by twin Buddhist images seated side by side and the earthen mound of stone grave room with lantern roof and mural paintings, though not their originals.

P’o-hai envoys arrived in Japan thirty-four times, and in return Japan dispatched envoys to P’o-hai fifteen times. Its frequency was three times more than the envoy to T’ang, and even the envoy to T’ang sometimes used the route through P’o-hai. The voyage followed monsoon winds, i.e. in autumn and winter coming to Japan by north-western wind and in spring and summer going to P’o-hai by southern wind. P’o-hai dispatched envoys to Japan initially in order to enter into a military alliance with Japan against T’ang and Silla, but from the latter half of the eighth century A.D. under the political stability among neighboring countries they changed the main purpose into trade exchange. The trade relationship was carried out on a tributary form offered by P’o-hai to Japan. In fact, after they exchanged tributes and gifts officially, they willingly went into private trades with officials and elite nobles, and further with ordinary nobles and merchants at a market place. The Yamato court tried to regulate P’o-hai to send an envoy every twelve years, yet they came often to Japan as they could perform trade at a port even though not permitted to enter into the capital as state guest. In A.D. 771 they sent a big delegation with 325 persons by 17 vessels.

The trade items from P’o-hai were furs, ginseng, tangle, handicrafts, Buddhist sūtras and altar things, etc. Particularly furs became fashionable among nobles in the
Yamato court. From Japan high-graded textiles of brocade, silk, raw silk and muslin, camellia oil, lacquer, gilt lacquer, gold, mercury, etc. were traded. Particularly the high-graded textiles were sold immediately once the envoy reached back P’o-hai. The largest advantage for Japan was to obtain new information and culture from the continent, e.g. Gukyū (polo), Bokkai-gaku (P’o-hai musical dance), Aya-kiri of Gagaku (elegant musical dance), Fumi-uta (dance), Nyo-gaku (female dance) and Senmyō calendar. Diplomatically the Yamato court could be content themselves to appeal the central world system by Ten-nō against the only one ‘savage’ country.47

**Influence of Intermediate Regions**

Relevant intermediate regions are discussed on their regional and cultural peculiarities in conjunction with the influence from India to Japan through cultural zones, Buddhism, Indianization, etc. Beforehand, the mythology of world creation to trace common cultural roots over Eurasia and the concept of “East Asian World” as fundamental structure consolidated by China over surrounding countries are touched upon.

**Mythology of World Creation**

The mythology of world creation may provide useful viewpoints to examine regional interchanges to lead cultural diffusions under common background. By and large the Japanese myth described both in the Kojiki and the Nihongi derived from the continent through the peninsula with mixed cultures. Particularly during the Kofun period, the ruling class chose suitable myths to represent their imperial status among Korean myths which contained largely Altaic nomad elements, inclusive of the ones of Indo-European
linguistic group. The following Japanese myths may exemplify large influences from neighboring regions.

1. At initial stage the earth was a floating island in the ocean just like a jellyfish. This myth has been widely diffused around Korea, the east coast of China and Indonesia.

2. The marriage between Izanagi and Izanami has been associated with the myth of birth of humankind by the marriage between a brother and a sister after catastrophic flood, being spread over southern China and Southeast Asia.

3. The cutting of Kugatachi, a born baby of Izanaki, has been associated with the myth of slash-and-burn cultivators in Southeast Asia.

4. The birth of Amaterasu (sun), Tsukuyomi (moon) and Susa-no-o (storm) by Izanaki’s washing a left eye, a right eye and a nose has been associated with the myth of birth of sun and moon from eyes of giant. Relatedly, the Banko myth in southern China is framed by the separation between the heaven and the earth, and the world created from a dead body of giant. This idea has been originated from western Eurasia and spread over Southeast Asia and Oceania.

5. Foods for the populace were created by a dead body of Goddess Ohogetsu-hime is one variation of Hainuwele myth in the tropical culture of taro horticulturists, propagated from southern China. On the other hand, foods for ruling class were descended from the heaven, with a similarity to the myth of Koguryō.

6. The story that Goddess Amaterasu granted an ear of rice to Ameno-oshiho-mimi has a similarity to the myth of Koguryō for a head of wheat.

7. The transfer of imperial sovereignty from the heaven down to the earth (tenson-kōrin) that Ninigi-no-mikoto, the grandson of Amaterasu, descended to a peak of Mt. Takachiho of Hyūga to become a ruler on the earth is a vertical-type descent myth.
spread over North Asia. It also contains a similarity to the myth of Thai tribes spread over southern China and northern Indo-China.

8. The marriage between Prince Yamasachi and Princess Toyotama (alligator in a real figure) is one of marriage myths with beast as compared to the myth of Dankun in Korea.

9. The story that Sukuna-hiro arrived by boat is one of arrival myths of foreign god far from the ocean as compared to the myth of King Dakkai in Silla.

10. The story of eastward expedition tells that when two brothers landed at Naniwa (modern Osaka), an elder brother was attacked and died at a battle, whereas a younger brother later landed at Kumano and defeated local clans in Yamato where he was enthroned as the first Emperor Jimmu. This resembles the myth of state foundation of Paekche.48

11. The story that sunshine shot the private parts of sleeping woman who soon became pregnant to bear a red ball is one of pregnancy myths in association with the state foundation prevailed in North Asia. The Sunray shooting myth has spread over southern China and Southeast Asia. The Mahābhārata also has a story of Kuntī to get a son, Karṇa, from the sun.

12. Ame-no-hiboko (literally heavenly sun-spear), son of Silla king, sailed to Japan, went around Kinai and stayed in Tajima, north-west of Kyoto. He brought with him the ritual materials for sea god like Tama-tsu-takara (seashore treasure of gem), Hirei (sorcery implements for navigation), mirror, etc. The transmitted places of his visit overlap the distribution of Heishu-jinja. The God of Heishu (literally military head) was originated from the Shandong Peninsula in China. At the beginning of the fourth century A.D. when both Lo-lang and Fai-fang commanderies were destroyed
by Koguryō or Paekche, Chinese inhabitants originating from the Shandong Peninsula escaped to southern Korea and further crossed to Japan. This immigrant group may have been called Ame-no-hiboko, being engaged in manufacturing metals and worshipping the God of Heishu. The gem of his possession suggests the interchange with the Neolithic culture in Liaoning and Shandong Provinces. The sorcery implements for navigation suggests the contact with seashore livers in the same area and southern China.49

East Asian World

The “East Asian World” developed and spread on the axis of diplomatic relationship between mainland China and neighbouring countries under the enclosure of Chinese dynasties through such common indices as Chinese characters, Confucianism, Buddhism and Ritsu-ryō (penal and administrative law) institution. The Chinese Han race had kept the peculiar notion that central China was highly civilized as ‘insider’ and overwhelmed by the virtue of emperor as heavely son, whereas the surrounding savage countries were inferior culturally as ‘outsider’ and were not yet prevailed by the virtue of Chinese emperor, and he was believed to change ‘outsider’ into ‘insider’ by his virtuous governance. The savage countries offered tributary goods to appeal their sincere faith to Chinese emperor and in return the emperor recognized to appoint the chieftains of those countries formally as kings to hold sovereignty and gave them highly advanced and civilized things through diplomatic ceremony.50

The Yamato court tried to follow the above notion of civilized centre over savage countries based on the Ritsu-ryō institution that the Ten-no as a pinnacle of civilized centre reigning over savage countries like T’ang, Koguryō, Silla and Paekche; and
barbarians like Emishi in north-eastern region and Hayato in southern region. However, Japan was immediately faced with the problem how to treat T'ang in its real position so that T'ang was placed as ‘neighboring state’ later. In fact, Japanese envoy to T'ang was treated by T’ang court as one of savage and tributary countries. The Ōsawa-Sugaomi Moto-Mibu Bunsho (Record of Ōsawa-Sugaomi at Moto-Mibu) mentions that when T’ang envoy visited the Yamato court in A.D. 778, the Ten-nō descended his royal seat to meet the envoy as a king of savage state. Also Japan did not actually confirm any agreement from neighboring countries about their subjugations under the enclosure of Ten-nō as Chinese emperor drove home so that Japanese world of civilized centre was under the incomplete institutional system just for their own sake.51

On the other hand, even under the strong influence of civilized world of China, Japan had kept more distance and peculiarity from China than other neighboring countries like Korea and Vietnam. In the relationship between political power and religious authority under the Ritsu-ryō institution, Chinese emperor emphasized his virtuous governance based on Confucianism, whereas the Yamato court had kept the indigenous tradition of the Ten-nō admired as kami incarnated or descendant of Sun Goddess Amaterasu. Hence, two great councils of roughly equal status were placed directly under the Ten-nō, i.e. Daijō-kan (Council for State) and Jingi-kan (Council for Kami Affairs) even in the administrative structure under the Ritsu-ryō institution.

In the capital system, though Heijō-kyō (modern Nara) and Heian-kyō (modern Kyoto) were built with great reference to Ch’ang-an, they were not fortified but only surrounded by walls with gates in respective blocks. This was mainly because capitals were topographically protected by surrounding mountains, rivers and ponds in narrow basins and not so required ecologically to differentiate from rural areas by centralizing
metropolitan facilities. Though the doctrine of Taoism was introduced, its religious body and lookout platform called Dōkan have not been identified yet in Japan. Essentially the religious standpoint of Japanese has been based on the pantheism of Shintō, namely the world of Yaorozu-no-kami (literally eight million gods) and coexistence with nature, animals and plants. 

In East Asia, from the fourth to sixth centuries A.D., states were unified by respective races in accordance with the unification of China by Sui after the fierce upheavals caused by the nomadic movements in northern Eurasia. Those movements of mainland China largely influenced the Korean Peninsula, causing the three-cornered contest among Koguryō, Silla and Paekche. The Wo (Wa) mentioned in several Chinese records in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. was actually separated into small tribal states in western Japan which kept on making efforts to assimilate advanced cultures from the continent. Immigrants played a great role to evolve the Japanese civilization.

West, Central and North Asia

Central Eurasia was the world where Ural-Altai linguistic group of nomadic races had inhabited. The nomadic tribes like Scythians, Kušāṇas and Huns from time to time confronted or interchanged with the civilized world like Han, T’ang, Gupta and Saracen Empires. The Tibetan Buddhism and Islamic cultural zone have been continued up to the present as regional traditions.

The Scythians initiated the Steppe world. The Huns unified over the Mongolian Plateau in the third century B.C. The great racial movement stimulated Huns and Hsienpei to invade northern and central China, followed by the struggle among nomadic states and the unification of northern China by the Northern Wei in the fifth century
A.D. On the other hand, the oasis world had been developed as an intermediary region between West Asia and China, linked with India southwards. Sogdian merchants took an active role around the fourth century A.D., centred in Samarkand. Buddhism, Nestorianism, Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism propagated and prospered. The Tarim Basin was the cradle to form the integrated cultures in oasis metropolises. Popularized by Chinese characters and Chinese Buddhism, the Turfan Basin had kept prosperous as the show window of Cathay culture.

Between the fifth and third centuries B.C., the Scytho-Siberian culture propagated into Mongolia to influence Chinese bronze craft. The Scythian culture comprised three basic elements, i.e. bronze or iron arm, horse gear and harness, and Animal Style pattern. The Animal Style pattern contained various variations, e.g. rounded-off fierce animals, rounded edges of feet, folded-up front and rear legs of herbivore and neck of herbivore bent backwards. In the later stage, the animal fighting pattern gained popularity, influenced by Greek and West Asia. The standing image of sheep and the combination of tree with bird, deer, sheep horn, goddess, etc. were also popular to express vital power and symbol of rebirth. At Pagirik tomb No. 5 in Altai in the fourth to third centuries B.C., the painting on felt cloth covering up a mummy draws a female image having by hand ‘tree of life’ with sword-rhombic flower buds, one upwards and the other downwards, quite resembles the pattern of sword-rhombic ornaments of gilt bronze diadem unearthed from Fuji-no-ki tomb, Nara Prefecture. The Kurugan, a tomb mound with a large stone grave room, may have given the influence on ancient tombs in Japan as well as in the Korean Peninsula. Stone human images, mostly male images of ancestors carved as guardians, may give a hint to the origin of Saru-ishi (monkey stones) found in Asuka, Nara Prefecture.54
The pattern of bird had come into fashion also over Eurasia. Bird was worshipped as a symbol of the next world to which a soul of the dead became a bird to fly over. Water bird was worshipped as the embodiment of god, and eagle as the symbol of sun. The motif of bird tying round a scarf on neck or holding a necklace in bill was remarkably noticed in textiles. The *Raden-shitan-no-genkan* (*Genkan* lute) in the Shōsō-in repertory depicts two parrots putting a long string of beads, and the bird-shaped ornaments of gilt bronze crown have been unearthed from Fuji-no-ki tomb.55

The oasis metropolises in Afghanistān and Tarim Basin in the western region of China most flourished along Silk Route. Bamiyan has preserved some twenty thousands Buddhist caves which suggest much more population of monks than ten thousands estimated in Nālandā.56 The tradition of two colossal images of the Buddha at Koh-i-Baba Caves, originated from India like Kānheri Cave, may have reached Japan like the Great Buddha statue at Tōdai-ji.57 The Lantern Roof Design (*Laterndendecke* or *sankaku-yosumi-mochiokuri-tenjō* in Japanese) was created from an imitation of wooden ceiling where corbels are laid diagonally across corners of square and the process is repeated in successive tiers to remain a small square at summit. This architectural design was propagated through Central Asia and North China to the stone grave rooms of tombs in Korea and Japan.58 The niches and lower vaults of two colossal images were entirely decorated with paintings of Buddhas, Bodhisatvas, and other celestial beings. The aesthetic representations comprised three styles from India including Gandhāra, Sassanian Persia and Central Asia.59 Kapiśa (Begram) most flourished during the Kuśāṇa period both as its western capital and Buddhist centre. More than a thousand pieces of ivory and bone carvings have been excavated. Representing an Indian style, they comprise plaques and bands either engraved or in relief, and sculptures in high
The region of Tarim Basin became prosperous as the centre of cultural interchange along Silk Route, e.g. Persian gold and silver utensils, Gandhāran art like a winged child drawn in mural painting, Indian style of stūpas, monasteries, terracotta images and mural paintings, and Chinese pattern of bronze implements and brocades, etc. Loran has unearthed Kharoṣṭhī documents in wooden plate form. Khotān was an important place through Tien Shan south route. Nephrite was an exclusive material available around this place. Kāşgār was a strategically important traffic point where north and south routes met together towards Pamirs. Kuchā was one of the largest oasis metropolises along the north route. There remain the largest numbers of cave temples in the western region. Kizyl caves also hold numerous rock-cut temples fully covered by mural paintings under Indo-Iranic style. Turfan was located in a great basin, north-east of Tarim Basin, as the strategic point through the north route, connecting eastwards with Quilan Shan Corridor. The old fort of Yarhoto was uniquely constructed by digging down the earth to shape walls. The temples and stūpas were designed according to the five-tower plan based on Indian style. Numerous Turfan documents at Yarhoto of Astana, and mural paintings at Manichaean and Nestorian temples of Karakhojo and Bezeklik caves are other notable outcomes of culture.

Tibet
Prior to Buddhism, an indigenous religion called Bön flourished in Tibet. In the latter half of the seventh century A.D at a zenith of T’u-fan, Buddhism became a main stream of religious movement. The concept of Bodhisattva King was formulated and consolidated in Tibetan Buddhism. Indian and Tibetan monks worked together to translate Sanskrit sūtras into Tibetan language. Tibetan Buddhism has paid an equal
respect to all the doctrines of Hiṇayāna and Mahāyāna inclusive of Tāntrism.\textsuperscript{67}

Being blocked by mountains of Himālaya, Karakoram and Kunlunshān and jointed with Pamir Plateau, the Tibet Plateau is centred in four directional worlds, i.e. India, Central Asia, China and Southeast Asia, holding the headstreams of great rivers. Around this zone two geo-historical dimensions were traced, i.e. the advent of Homo erectus, e.g. Ramapithecus in India and Yuanmou Man in China, and two civilizations of India and China. Both the civilizations interacted intensively to create the cultural synergy and synthesis with local elements. This centralized zone of cultural synergy is named “Himalayo-Centrism” by Tan Chung.\textsuperscript{68}

**Southeast Asia**

The Neolithic expansion impacted Southeast Asia and East India around the third millennium B.C. mainly from southern China, especially the lower and middle Yangtze Plain. Together with agriculture, two linguistic groups reached Southeast Asia, i.e. Austroasiatic group and Austronesian group. The former group spread to mainland Southeast Asia and East India, and the latter to islands Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{69}

The Indianized phenomenon was an outcome of continuous interchange across Bay of Bengal around the middle of the first millennium A.D.\textsuperscript{70} The penetration of Indian merchants and immigrants in the second and third centuries A.D. activated the Hinduization by building up Hindu kingdoms. This Indian penetration, however, was expanded by socio-cultural influences through Brāhmaṇism and Buddhism.\textsuperscript{71}

Buddhism in Sumatra and Java were prosperous in the seventh century A.D. when numerous monks both from India and China gathered there. The amalgamation was deepened between Buddhism and Brāhmaṇism through the coexistence of Buddhist

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monasteries with Hindu temples. The brilliance of the Śrīvijaya and Śailendra Empires has been manifested by the prosperity of Palembang and numerous temple architectures of Candi.72

As the magnificent stone monuments in ancient times, Angkor Wat, representing Indo-China, and Borobudur, representing Indonesia, were both definitely originated from Indian culture, yet refined and evolved by indigenous characteristics through the amalgamation between Brāhmaṇism and Buddhism. Angkor Wat was built as Viṣṇu temple and graveyard of Śūryavarman II in the early twelfth century A.D. As the characteristics of Khmer architecture, it was a sacred territory surrounded by moats like Mt. Meru in which gods reside in the centre of the world surrounded by a primitive ocean. After the capital was demolished in the fifteenth century A.D., it was renovated into Buddhist temple. All gallery walls are covered with continuous friezes of bas-reliefs and sculptures. The subject matter is taken mainly from the epics of Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata. Exceptions are the procession of Śūryavarman II and the Heavens and Hells. One remain directly related with Japan is a brush writing of one Japanese warrior named Morimoto Ukon-dayū Kazufusa from Hishū Province in Kyūshū dated to A.D. 1632 who donated Buddhist images, believing to have reached Jetavana vihāra at Saheth. The Bayon temple in the centre of Angkor Thom is another masterpiece of Khmer architecture of three-storied pyramid crowned with towers and surrounded by galleries.73

Borobudur, north-west of Yogyakarta in central Java, was constructed under the Śailendra Empire sometime between A.D. 750 and 850. This cut-stone structure comprised ten gradually receding terraces covered by bell-shaped stūpas and a large stūpa on top. Originally 504 Buddhist stone images were allocated geometrically, with
one more Buddha image inside a great stūpa. The successive galleries of lower five terraces contain eleven series of more than 2,000 sculpted panels, depicting the life of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, pilgrimages, etc. They may have overall symbolized the three Worlds of Passions, Material and Spirit. In other words, Borobudur may have symbolized ten steps that one must pass to reach the Buddhahood. Other theories about the object of this structure are the embodiment of universal truth or original principle, the place for ascetic practices, three-dimensional maṇḍala, stūpa, graveyard and temple. Among ornamental inventions of Javanese, kāla makara derived from Indian kirtimukha, makara toraṇa from dvārapāla types and rākṣasa from gana figures.

China

The envoy to T’ang was started by the Yamato court to acquire advanced things and information from China as well as to upgrade its international position in “East Asian World”. It became most activated in the eighth century A.D., when one fleet of four vessels with 150 passengers each was prepared strenuously. However, by the middle of the ninth century A.D., Japanese diplomacy had changed into a passive stance to pay more attention to its own interior matters, as witnessed by the last envoy to T’ang in A.D. 838. Afterwards, only envoys from P’o-hai came to Japan.

The advanced things of China brought back by envoys were primarily aimed to be monopolized by the Yamato court in which the Ten-nō bestowed his retainers the tributaries to reaffirm the relationship between the lord and his subjects. Therefore, though called tributary trade, the interchange was just like the reception of jewels in political ceremony. Yet envoys purchased several materials in markets, e.g. Buddhist scriptures, images, calendars, books and arms.
The human interaction in China enriched and advanced Japanese literature. The wholesale adoption of both Indian and Chinese cultures in Buddhism from the sixth to ninth centuries A.D. was the joint work among Buddhist monks of India, China and Japan mostly in the T’ang era. In the seventh century A.D., Wang Hsuan-tse, Chinese envoy, copied frescos of monasteries in India. Later those paintings were compiled in several fascicules. Some of them were taken to Japan by Honjitsu, Korean artist, and they became models of Hōryū-ji murals. Kūkai, founder of Shingon sect in the ninth century A.D., is said to have invented Japanese Kana syllabary of fifty sounds. The entire alphabet was woven into a poem (Iroha) in which every syllable occurred once with reference to the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra. The Japanese Kana syllabary owes its origin to Siddham scripts and Sanskrit alphabet. Kūkai taught his followers how to write dhāraṇī in Siddham script. Prajñātārā handed over to Enchin the palm-leaves bearing a series of dhāraṇī.

China succeeded to the Indian tradition of rock-cut temples through Silk Route, yet refined and evolved Buddhist art and architecture by their own tradition in Buddhist images, mural painting and architectural plan. The Thousand-Buddha Caves of Dunhuang were located at the western end of Quilan Shan region as the entrance towards eastern Turkestân. It had been a great centre of Buddhist culture for more than one thousand years from the latter half of the fourth century A.D. The rock cutting started in the era of Northern Wei and had continued till Yuan through Sui, T’ang, T’u-fan, Uighurs, Sung, etc. The mural painting arts and architectures amalgamated both Indian and Central Asian traditions with Chinese origins. The Indian painting technique like non-outline, absolute symmetry, full face of images, fully painted background, etc. was amalgamated with Chinese expression to draw outline,
non-symmetry, harmonious colour groups, special effectiveness of vacancy, etc. The heavy head ornaments, thickly decorated zone of patterns, etc. were influenced by esoteric Buddhist art.\textsuperscript{80} Yungang rock-cut temples started construction west of the first capital of the Northern Wei in Shanxi Province in the latter half of the fifth century A.D. Three colossal Buddha images were erected to glorify the dignity of state Buddhism.\textsuperscript{81} Longmen rock-cut temples started construction south of Loyang immediately after the Northern Wei shifted its capital in A.D. 493. Until the eighth century A.D. in the T’ang era, temples had been aggressively constructed. The large-scale images with round heads and arms and detailed relief carvings were created in a thoroughly Sinicized style like the Buddha pentad at Binyang cave. The piled garments concealing a body line and the long and loose robes hung down on a pedestal are typical features of Longmen style of the Northern Wei, which directly influenced the early Buddhist sculptures during the Asuka period of Japan.\textsuperscript{82}

**Korea**

Korea and Japan had shared almost the same root of culture till the Nara period, but continuously changed and finally formed their own cultures in early modern times.\textsuperscript{83}

In ancient times there were three big waves of immigrants from the Korean Peninsula. The first wave came from the end of the fourth century to the beginning of the fifth century A.D., impacted by the southward movement of Koguryŏ. The second wave washed from the latter half of the fifth century to the early sixth century A.D., oppressed by the attack of Koguryŏ against Paekche. The third wave beat in the latter half of the seventh century A.D., occasioned by the ruins of Paekche and Koguryŏ. Korean immigrants were later focused in Kinai, allocated into job descriptions of organization.
in the Yamato court. The migrating clans from Korea played a great role in the Daibutsu project of Tōdai-ji. Three major contributors, i.e. Kuninaka-no-Muraji-Kiminmaro (Buddhist sculptor), Gyōki (archbishop) and Rōben (superintendent), all originated from Paekche.

The names of ancient Korean kingdoms have been preserved in the names of places and Shintō shrines, e.g. Kōrai, Kara and Komae. One theory suggests that the word of Shintō shrine, Jingū or Jinja, derived from Korea. Namely, the Samguk sagi mentions about Hyōkkōse (or Hyakukose) as the first priest-king of Silla, whose ancestral graveyard was named Jingū.

T. Saitō makes the folkloric and archaeological comparison between Korea and Japan. Similarities are found as follows.

1. Manners and customs, and religious tradition, e.g. the thanksgiving festival for harvest (Niiname-sai), the election of provincial lord (hiko) for worshipping the heavenly god, the evergreen plants (sakaki) or large wooden pillar displayed in front of altar, the pottery sherds placed on top of tomb used in a ceremony to pray for the dead, the fortune-telling by the crack of shoulder bone of deer (bokusen) or cattle’s hoof, and the worship or sacrifice of white bird and animal.

2. Funeral customs, e.g. the heavy burials of all precious metal articles and money, the grave structure with coffin, the building of mourning lodge, the expressing of sorrow by hurting body, the bone-washing and re-funeral, and the bone spreading after cremation.


Peculiarities or differences are found as follows.

1. Funeral customs, i.e. the tomb with mural stone grave room in Koguryō, the tomb
with burnt-brick grave room in Paekche, the twin circular tomb in Silla, the underwater rock mausoleum of King Munmu in Unified Silla, and the Zenpō-kōen-fun and Zenpō-kōhō-fun (both square shapes in front and rear parts) in Japan.

2. Buddhist monuments, e.g. the octagonal *pagoda* tower in Koguryō, the stone tower in Paekche, the multi-layered stone tower in Silla, and the wooden multi-storied tower, wooden miniature *stūpa* (*Hyakuman-tō*), and *kyō-zuka* (mound to contain *sūtras*) in Japan.87

The rock-cut Buddhist temples and images flourished in Silla and Unified Silla between the sixth and eighth centuries A.D., succeeding to the styles of the Southern Courts and the Three Kingdoms of China. In the Heian period, esoteric Buddhist monks brought back from T’ang to Japan the rock-cut tradition of Buddhist images. The cliff-rock images centred in Usuki of Ōita Prefecture, eastern Kyūshū, are the most important as the terminal of East Asian traditions of rock-cut temples. The migrating stone masons from Korea activated rock-cut arts particularly around Usuki. Other remarkable rock-cut Buddhist images are the *Kokuzō-ishi* (Ākāśagarbha stone) and *Miroku-ishi* (Maitreya stone) at Mt. Kasagi, south-east of Kyoto, in close association with Unified Silla, and the Komasaka cliff-rock images at Mt. Konze, Shiga Prefecture, with some resemblances to the ones of the South Mountain in Kyōngju, Silla. Another example of contribution of Korean masons has been found at the White Stone Plates engraving the anaglyph of four deities and twelve animals in Shōsō-in treasure. Related to stone-cut tradition, two stone monuments near a stone tower of Ekizan Miroku-ji in south-western Korea may have been associated with *Saru-ishi* (monkey stones) in Asuka, Nara Prefecture.88
Koguryŏ dispatched envoys to Japan five times between A.D. 516 and 668. They expected a military alliance against Silla and Paekche. Ruined by the allied T’ang and Silla, they went into exile to migrate towards Japan. They were moved into several places over eastern provinces to set up Kŏrai (Koguryŏ) District. The influence of Koguryŏ culture was remarkable in the coastal area facing to the Sea of Japan, e.g. lantern roof, mural painting and stone-piled mounds. Silla sent envoys eight times between A.D. 668 and 779. Silla’s envoys were mostly forced to be driven back from Dazaifu commandery, yet could accomplish satisfactorily the purpose of trade. Gamō region of Shiga Prefecture, north-east of Kyoto, has preserved many Buddhist temples and ancient tombs built by the immigrants from Paekche, e.g. the stone tower at Ishidō-ji and the great temple complex of Kudara-ji (Paekche temple). In A.D. 669, more than 700 people from Paekche, headed by Kwisil Chip-Sa (Kishitsu-Shūshi), lived in exile and shifted to Gamō District. He was assigned to a head of scholarly function with Buddhist sūtras and medical science.

Cultural Zone and Interchange

A.J. Toynbee points out several aspects of encounters among civilizations. For spacious encounter, the cradles of advanced religions were mostly focused on two regions and their peripheral areas, i.e. the one in the Oxsus-Jaxartes (Amudarya-Syrdarya) River Plains where Zoroastrianism was born, and further south-eastwards the Mahāyāna, original Buddhism and Brāhmanism emerged; and the other in Syria region where Judaism and Christianity were born, and further southwards Islam appeared. The both regions played the role of “roundabout” to switch over traffics for every direction. For contemporary encounter, the interchange between India and China represents a peaceful
exchange. From the fourth to seventh centuries A.D. Indian missionaries and Chinese pilgrims for Buddhism went and came through Silk Routes.93

F. Yoneda emphasizes the relationship between cultural propagation and assimilation. For instance, the horse-riding implements and arms were propagated eastwards through the Steppe route, and the *tsubo-abumi* (jar-shaped riding-step) was invented through assimilation in Japan. Through propagation from India and West Asia, a certain cultural elements were developed at oasis metropolises. For instance, the lantern roof design was further refined in the western region. Relatedly, the peripheral zone is to be paid more attention to. Like ripples, cultures expand from a centre point over circumferences. The original elements of cultures have been accumulated and preserved in peripheral zones. A typical example is the treasures of Shōsō-in. Further, peripheral cultures sometimes flowed back to the original place like Tibetan Buddhism to its homeland India.94

M. Kobayashi suggests that keen attention is to be paid to the combination between interchanges and self-reformation among civilizations. He points out that the Japanese civilization has been formed by the multi-layered amalgamations with foreign civilizations on relatively a small core of proto-Japanese elements. The everlasting greedy assimilation of foreign civilizations has vitalized Japan to reform its civilization. The propagation and transference of cultures are remarkable in consideration of commonness. Hence, those theories as T. Umesao’s “Autogenic Succession” from “Ecological Historical View” and A.J. Toynbee’s Western Civilization Model under a linear pattern of self-progress can hardly meet the reciprocal actions among civilizations in Eurasia. Various influences have been integrated within civilization by its own way to establish its own characteristics. The Japanese civilization has constantly made a

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self-reformation by assimilating new cultures of the continent. The trade activities played an important role for cultural interchanges. It may be essential to conceptualize the “Interchange Sphere of Civilizations” where civilizations came to link together in common area and network. The Steppe route, Silk Routes, Bay of Bengal, South China Sea, East China Sea, Sea of Japan, etc. – all the “Interchange Spheres of Civilizations” closely connected each other.95

T. Izumi proposes the concept named “Fan-shaped Cultural Zone” as Asian Cultural Model with emphasis on the sea route for propagation of Indian culture. He also stresses the characteristics of Japanese culture in which foreign cultures have been drifted upon a basic layer of Southeast Asian culture under wet monsoon climate. He categorizes six cultural zones in Asia, i.e. the Steppes (symbolized by ‘Horse’), the Indus River Plain, the Gaṅgā River Plain (origin of wet-rice cultivation), the Yangtze River Plain (the other origin of wet-rice cultivation on top of “Forest Culture of Shinny Leaves”), the Huang Ho River Plain (Chinese Han culture), and the Southeast Asia and southern Pacific islands (“Fan-shaped Cultural Zone”, symbolized by ‘Boat’). The Indian culture was presumably propagated to Japan through “Fan-shaped Cultural Zone” along southern coasts of China and islands from the southern sea.96

Tansen Sen argues about the cultural interchanges among regional sub-systems through trade activities with emphasis on Buddhism as cultural stimulus and common notion like conversion, pilgrimage and organizational movements to interpret and learn mutual traditions.97

S. Gupta emphasizes the “Bay of Bengal Interaction Sphere of Civilization” through the processes of human dispersals, techno-cultural diffusions and short-term movement of men and materials by trade activities. The Bay of Bengal Sphere covers
the complex maritime and techno-cultural processes which contributed to the integration of the Indian Ocean world. The Indo-Pacific micro-beads deposited at Yayoi tombs represent an early extensive market across India, Southeast Asia and Far East through active maritime networks from the third century B.C. The demand for prestige items from the Bay of Bengal Sphere, e.g. cowries, etched stone beads and pendants, and glass micro-beads, resulted in the common aesthetic and ritualistic customs in funerary over Southeast Asia. This concept may exceed the Indianization to broader network to integrate the Indian Ocean and neighboring maritime regions.

The cultural diffusion is just like the relays of interchanges with neighboring regions. By and large the cultural progress moves with indigenous and foreign elements through propagation, assimilation, amalgamation, acculturation, transformation and finally to the creation of new culture. The direct influence or preservation of original cultural elements remains limited and the cultural elements added in intermediate regions throughout propagation become more essential. The gradual process of assimilation was more common and effective rather than the sudden cultural change by foreign conquest. The headstream zone incubated primitive cultures like in “Forest Culture of Shinny Leaves” around Yunnan. The intermediary area, e.g. Central Asia and Southeast Asia, refined original cultures in the course of propagation. Finally, the major ancient civilizations assimilated and amalgamated various cultures just like ant lion’s hole or melting pot, evolved new cultures and extended branches of civilization, e.g. Southeast Asia from India and Japan and Korea from China. The natural environment has provided the fundamental background to create cultural peculiarities through diffusions. The peripheral zones accumulated multi-layered cultures and have preserved original cultures under topographical conditions. Namely, Japan has preserved artistic
traditions over West Asia, India, China, etc. Bali Island has maintained Hindu culture. Śrī Lankā has consolidated the Hīnayāna. Tibet has succeeded to Tāntric Buddhism.

Impact of Buddhism

The Sinification of Buddhism was completed through three stages, i.e. firstly Chinese terms and notions used to explain Buddhist ideas, secondly Indian scriptures translated into Chinese, and lastly fully Sinified schools like Tientai, Chan and Pure Land emerged during the T’ang era.102

From the third century A.D., the relic worship in China was widely venerated and finally became a key element of rituals for esoteric Buddhism. On the other hand, the Chinese prophecies about the appearance of Mañjuśrī at Mt. Wutai in Shaanxi Province, Avalokiteśvara at Mt. Putuo in Zhejiang, Samantabhadra at Mt. Emei in Sichuan and Kṣitigarbha at Mt. Jiuhua served to transform China into a true Buddhist realm. Particularly Mt. Wutai emerged as one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites outside the Indian subcontinent.103

By the end of tenth century A.D., Buddhism in India and China had taken two separate ways. While Indian Buddhism developed its own philosophical and ritualistic traditions, Chinese Buddhism formulated and propagated its own indigenous doctrines. This division led to end the Sino-Indian intercourse stimulated by the transmission of Buddhist doctrines and pilgrimages for a millennium.104 Finally, three distinct cores came to exist in the Buddhist world, i.e. the Bihār-Bengal region from which esoteric Buddhism was propagated to Tibet, Śrī-Lankā from which the Hīnayāna was spread to Southeast Asia, and China which became the doctrinal source for the Steppe region, Korea and Japan.105
In ancient Japan, the introduction of Buddhism became an epoch towards civilized society. To unify the state, an advanced and sophisticated religion was expected as organizational principle. The Japanese civilization took long strides by receiving Buddhism together with Chinese characters and the Ritsu-ryō system to organize a high state of civilization.  

The propagation of Buddhism to China stimulated frequent human contacts through missionaries, pilgrimages and trades with Buddhist-related things to spread new information, trends and technologies among neighboring countries. Then, those regions of India, Central Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia were unified into one universal world under Buddhist notions. Thus, Japan became linked with India.

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on January 26, 2006


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