CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

INDIAN CULTURE IN JAPAN

India and Japan have a unique cultural affinity inspite of the wide geographical distance and the absence of much historical contacts. This cultural closeness could be realised in ancient times due to the superior accomplishments in the different fields of religion, philosophy, art, architecture, political economical and administrative spheres etc. associated with the advanced civilization. Thus Japan, where such accomplishments were realised much later, looked up to the culturally advanced countries with great reverence and endeavoured to imbibe all those accomplishments. In the case of India and Japan, the geographical distance would not have made it possible to realise any such contact but for the interest of China in Indian culture especially Buddhism and its related aspects which worked as a kind of moderator between the two distant and nearly alien societies. The quest of China for Buddhism and its peripheral areas was so much that it paved the way for the exchange of scholars between the two, engaged in the spurious activity of translating the numerous volumes of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese. Around this time Japan regarded China as a model in all spheres of administration, art, architecture not to talk of the religions and philosophies. Hence China served as a conduit of
Indian culture to Japan and so much was the extent of ignorance in Japan about India that initially Japanese considered China itself as the place of origin of Buddhism and not India. In India also there was no awareness about such developments taking place in Japan and it was in turn preoccupied with handling the various invasions starting with that by the Huns. Japan's borrowings from China in the field of culture, was predominated by Buddhist art, architecture, sculpture, as well as religion and philosophy, these being promoted under state patronage. Incidentally these spheres of Buddhist art etc. had not developed in India suddenly but were an extension of the existing traditions that could be called Pre-Buddhist traditions.

In Japan the credit for introducing Buddhism formally goes to Korea. It was in the form of a diplomatic gesture rather than a religious propaganda. It was to appreciate Japanese aid sent to the military expedition by the Emperor of a Korean kingdom named Kudara who had ordered a gold image of Buddha to be made by his craftsmen as early as the sixth year of Kimmei viz., 545 A.D..

This event is recorded in the work Nihon Shoki, the earliest annals of Japanese history written in 720 A.D. According to it "Buddhism came to Japan in the thirteenth year of the Emperor Kimmei, i.e., 552 A.D. when the Emperor of Kudara had gifted a gold image of Buddha (Joroku Hotoke) and scriptures to the then Emperor Bidatsu". This statement does not imply that this single gesture would have had the resultant effect of dissemination of Buddhism in Japan because changes in cultural sphere do not take place overnight and evolve over a period of time. In other words the atmosphere in Japan must have appeared to be conducive to the new faith since such a gift was planned by the Emperor nearly
seven years before its presentation, the time taken for the making of a sixteen feet tall gold image. Conversely speaking any such gift on a diplomatic level would have been planned carefully considering its evident appreciation by the recipient as otherwise it would have amounted to a diplomatic disaster.

This point could be explained by the presence of numerous Korean migrants in Japan. It is a known fact that initially it was these Korean migrants who introduced Chinese characters to the Japanese who in turn used it as designs to decorate swords etc. Likewise they must have contributed to the spread of ideas and beliefs of their own faith thus sowing the seeds of Buddhism in Japan. In this respect *Nihon Shoki* relates the arrival of technicians from the kingdom of *Kudara* in the chapter on "Emperor Yuryaku" (457-459). The period is given to be Yayoi period (3 B.C. to 3 A.D.) and the *Kofun* period (4 A.D. to 7 A.D.). Further accounts suggest that the objects associated with the new faith were found in the tombs dating back to the second half of the fourth century onwards especially in the regions north of Kyushu that had active contact with the main land. Thus it suggests that in the areas where the migrants from Korea settled Buddhist faith was prevalent even before its official arrival. Incidentally in Korea Buddhism was introduced in the later half of the fourth century.

Further more not only Korea but the official contact with China too that was established as early as 57 A.D. would have contributed to the conditions conducive to the acceptance of Buddhism. Once such contacts were established several official missions went to China some even headed by the Japanese Emperors
themselves. These are accounted in the Japanese historical annals.

According to Gishiwajinden, the work accounting the history of Gi dynasty (one of the three ancient dynasties of north China), the queen of 'Wa', Wa being the name given to Japan by China, sent a tribute of four male slaves and six female slaves along with gifts of cloth to the Wa emperor in 239 A.D. This gesture was appreciated by the Chinese court and it conferred upon her the title of the ruler of Wa friendly to Wei. This title together with a yellow banner bearing the imperial seal and tied with purple strings and the other gifts of pearls and mirrors were sent in return. An official named Cheng Chen was designated with this task of handing over the gifts to Wa. By the time they reached, Empress Himiko of Wa had died and her successor received these gifts from Cheng and the others representing Wei. Similarly according to the accounts of the Southern dynastic histories of China there are thirteen recorded entries made by five Japanese Emperors between 412 to 502 A.D. Such an exchange of dignitaries accompanied by the officials etc. and the gifts of slaves would have resulted in the mutual exchange of ideas and accomplishments which would have included those related to Buddhism which had arrived in China by second century A.D. All these factors had contributed to some extent in forming the lobby in support of Buddhism when it was formally introduced in 552 A.D. through Korea. This support came from the chief of the mighty Sogo Clan named Sogo No Iname who due to the opposition to the newly introduced religion by Nakatomi family built a temple in his house and installed the idol there. The new religion had to face tough resistance its veneration being labelled as an
insult to the Japanese gods of Shintoism. This resistance was set off by ill omens upon the arrival of the new religion. In the subsequent year of its arrival natural calamities took place and the country was plagued with contagious diseases. The opponents attributed it to the vengeance of the angry native gods and they burnt the temple Kogenji in Iname's house where the idol was installed and threw the idol away. However when this resistance subsided, Sogo no Umako, the son of Sogo no Iname restored the idol and installed it again with the support of other officials. This resistance lasted for three years and with the defeat of the opponent Mononobe clan in 587 A.D. it completely subsided.

In 588 A.D. more objects associated with Buddhist veneration arrived from Korea and were given to Sogo no Umako who built a temple in his village in Ishikawa prefecture to install it. Subsequently during the reign of the Empress Suiko (592-628) Buddhism could develop to grand heights to become one of Japan's major religions, greatly due to the efforts of Prince Shotoku a fervent Buddhist who propogated it all over Japan.

As a result Buddhism was patronised as a state religion being regarded as the Protector of the State. In due course of time the simple practices of veneration by Shinto rites, which was a kind of animism, gave way to ostentatious and ceremonial practices. The magnificent ceremonies and rituals caught the fancy of the aristocracy as a means to exhibit their power. Thus several times Buddhist prayers were held and services performed for the benefit of the State or the Emperor as well as in the wake of natural calamities like epidemics, famines, earthquakes etc., as well as political upheavals and temples and idols were
constructed in dedication. This continued for several centuries but the most glaring example was the erection of a grand image of Buddha Vairocana by Emperor Shomu in 746 in the temple Todaiji in Nara. The installation ceremony of the huge image, 15.9 meters high, made of bronze in a seated posture was a grand event. For the Japanese it was an event of the magnitude of international scale as it was attended by not only the dignitaries from China but also from Korea, Cambodia and even India. The ceremony was presided over by an Indian monk Bodhisena while the Chinese priest Dosenritsu chanted sutras and led the procession of Cambodian, Korean and Japanese monks. The audience comprised of Emperor Shomu, his wife Empress Komyo another devout Buddhist besides other dignitaries.

So in Japan Buddhism could find roots due to the support and efforts of the Prince Shotoko which triggered off the process of assimilation associated with the new religion i.e., art, architecture, literature, philosophies etc. This task though initiated by the assimilation from Korea could be ultimately accomplished with the help of the practice of sending missions to China called Kenzuishi and Kentoshi named after the ruling dynasties in China respectively.

These missions started in 600 A.D were initially predominantly administrative and trade missions characterised by the presence of some monks and scholars started from 608. It ushered in a period of active exchange with China that lasted for more than two centuries till 895 A.D. when such missions were discontinued on the advice of the then famous scholar Sugawara no Michizane since the deteriorating conditions in China did not have anything to offer to Japan any longer. Almost all the famous scholars,
philosophers of the times like Kibi no Makibi, Kukai, Saicho to name a few were on these missions.

Owing to such developments, Buddhism in Japan flowered under the shade of Chinese Buddhism which in turn was based on Indian Buddhism. In India Buddhism developed by borrowing from the existing pre-Buddhist traditions extensively. Thus contacts between India and Japan entail three-fold dimensions and also present, at the same time, valuable insights into the intercultural developments in the past. Another marked feature of such contacts besides its three dimensional nature is that these were one sided without the other party being aware of its presence.

In Japan, as Buddhism spread, the monks learnt more about India and already desired to visit it. Some even attempted to undertake a trip to the land of Tenjiku located to the west of Japan but were unsuccessful. There are examples like that of Takaoka Shinno, an Imperial Prince and the third son of Emperor Heijo (806-809 A.D.), who earnestly wished to visit the birth land of Buddha. In 822 A.D. he was implicated in a conspiracy following which he became a monk and in 861 A.D. travelled to China. Six months later he attempted to visit India in order to study Buddhism but died somewhere on the way. The other person was the famous priest of Rinzai sect of Buddhism named Eisai who is credited for having introduced tea into Japan. He also planned a trip to India. He visited China in 1168 A.D. and again in 1187 in order to go further into India but had to abandon his trip due to climatic conditions. Yet another monk named Koben popularly known as Myoe who was orphaned at the age of eight, worshipped Buddha with full devotion, ardently believing him to
be his father. He planned a trip to India twice but could not undertake it and in the temple located on Mount Takao in Yamashiro province there exist documents showing the route he had planned.

This zeal for India had gradually died out by the Kamakura period, due on the one hand because of the emergence of several Buddhist sects and on the other the troubled conditions of the time. The enthusiasm for the land of origin receded to the background on reports from China that the religion no longer flourished in India which was at that time invaded by the Huns.

In India awareness about Japan was entirely of a different nature which started as late as the beginning of the twentieth century due to Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese war of 1903-4, regarded as a spectacular example of the victory of a fellow Asian country over a major power that boosted the morale of the Indian nationalist movement in its struggle against the British. However, turning back to the point of advent of Buddhism in Japan, another important feature is its predominance in the elite circles of society without spreading to the masses as the gap between the two was too wide to be bridged not only materially but spiritually also. Buddhism, after having attained the status of a state religion, was looked upon in awe and reverence by the common man and until the end of the ninth century, i.e. the end of the Heian period, it was beyond the reach of the common man who strove for basic existence in the physical as well as in the spiritual sense and was thus unable to practice Buddhism which was associated essentially with the aristocracy. This was the time when it consolidated its position and spread to the masses during Kamakura period.
Still several practices associated with it have continued till date. For example, the event of Kenbutsu E, the birthday of Buddha on eigth of April. On this day the ritual of washing the images of Buddha is observed, a custom which is supposed to bring luck and is prevalent among the Japanese. This ritual was first held during the reign of Empress Suiko (593-628) at Genkokuji temple in Nara. Another similar custom of the past still observed today is that of Urabon or popularly known as Bon.

According to the story originating from China Mudgalyayana, a disciple, dreamt his dead mother to be suffering in hell due to starvation. He was upset and consulted Buddha who advised him to hold a service in her name and offer food to the monks. He did so year after year and since then this practice is observed. Even now during Bon people visit the graves of their ancestors and offer food and around this time there is a mass exodus to the countryside. This custom dates back to 659 A.D. to the reign of Empress Seimei. By the Nara period it became an annual event (718-789).

Even looking cursorily at the Japanese customs and traditions bring forth several aspects which are obviously of Indian origin. The presence of several gods and goddesses of Indian origin in Japan gives one to realise the extent to which they must have been adopted in the Buddhist canons as the protector deities of Buddha. A remarkable evidence of this synthesis is the temple 'Sanjusangendo' or the hall of thirty three ken which enshrines one thousand and one images of the Bodhisattvas and is located in Kyoto. Built in 1164 A.D. it includes the statues of Kannon with thousand arms known as Senju Kannon besides others. Another remarkable example is the complex of Mount Koya which was the
cradle of Esoteric Buddhism developed by Kukai. Yet another testimonial of this are the floats decorated for the famous Gion festival of Kyo held every year.

Some of the popular Bodhisattvas of Indian origin which are generally considered to be twenty five in number in Japan are:

- **Fudo Myo-O** or Achala which guards the temple complex
- **Miroku Bosatsu** popularly known as Jishi, is the Maitreya Bodhisattva
- **Jizo Bosatsu**, the Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva, the saviour of people
- **Kannon Bosatsu** or Avalokiteswara who is the Bodhisattva of great compassion, mercy and love
- **Yakushi Nyorai**, the Bhaisajya Guru or Buddha of healing

In addition to the twenty five Bodhisattvas, several other related gods of pre-Buddhist age too are worshipped, being placed in the Mandala configurations. **Bonten** the Brahma is also not an unknown entity to the Japanese being regarded as the sacred god through whom the Sanskrit language Bongo is transmitted.

**Rumbhira** or **Kompira** is merely a crocodile, worshipped as the protector of sea voyages. Originally he was a crocodile who lived by the Ganges river.

Along with Brahma, **Taishakuten** or Indra is regarded as the tutelary god of Buddhism who lives on the top of Mt. Sumeru in the Tusita heaven. He keeps a track of the moral condition of the people on the basis of reports from Shitenno the four deva kings of the four quarters.

Similarly, **Kishimobojin** is popularly worshipped in Japan as the protector of children and pregnant mothers. She is originally
identified with Hariti, the daughter of a Yaksha in Rajagraha.

She holds a pomegranate in her hand which symbolises the treasure of children.

The Japanese gods of good fortune are represented by Shichifukujin the seven gods of fortune the concept being of Shinto origin rather than Buddhist. Out of these, three are associated with Brahminical gods and here too the presence of the Indian gods is conspicuous. The only female goddess Benzaiten is identified with Sarasvati and is the most widely popular goddess. There is a marginal change in the significance and it represents wealth besides beauty and musical accomplishments and longevity. It is a kind of combination of Sarasvati and Lakshmi. Like Sarasvati it holds a musical instrument in its hands. The Lakshmi in Japan is equated with Kichijoten or Sri, the goddess of good fortune. The arena of knowledge that is originally associated with Sarasvati in India is symbolised by Manjushri a Bodhisattva. The phrase like 'sannin yore ba Monju no chie' (three heads are better than one) speaks of the common awareness about these Bodhisattvas and gods in Japan.

The next god named Bishamonten is the god of treasure, fortune and happiness. He is one of the four guardian gods of Buddha. In India he is one of the four quarter kings being the protector of the north and is named as Vaisravana. Daikokuten partly identified with Mahakala, a gana of Lord Shiva and is regarded as the god of death. In Japan he is considered to be a Shinto god.

There are some interesting instances whereby the Buddhist gods are unified with the Shinto gods presenting a unique amalgam. The Dainichi Nyorai or Mahavairo Cana is regarded as the reincarnation of the Sun goddess Amaterasu no Omikami, the Shinto
god of war named Hachiman is regarded as the reincarnation of Daijizo Bosatsu, the Bodhisattva protecting the followers of Amitabha Buddha. Such attempts symbolise the synthesis of Buddhism with Shintoism in the form of Ryobu Shinto, a branch of Shinto conceived as early as the beginning of the ninth century. As these deities were incorporated in the Buddhist canons of Japan, idols were made for worship and structures were built to install them including the halls for prayers. The implements used for holding the prayers and other religious ceremonies or rites became a part of the common items of day to day use.

In the temples, a place for installing idols and for prayers was needed and so the term Garan or Shichidogarán the seven buildings came to be associated with the temple complex. Seven components regarded necessary for a temple complex were the stupa to place the relics, the main temple and discourse halls, the bell tower, corridors, the place for storing the scriptures etc. This word Garan originates from the Sanskrit word Sangharama that stands for the resting place for monks in a Buddhist monastery. The lotus, considered a symbol of Paradise and also as the seat of Buddha, is in evidence everywhere whether it is the sculptures, paintings or offerings etc. in the temples.

In due course of time with certain practices various kinds of implements also came into use, the most common example being Juzu or the Buddhist rosaries. These were originally made of wood or sandal wood of a hundred and eight beads that represent hundred and eight desires as per the pre-Buddhist beliefs. In due course of time the size has been reduced for the sake of convenience to twenty seven and at times fourteen beads. Now these are made of
different materials like iron, copper, gold, crystal, coral, amber, glass, alloys etc.

Another similar item is associated with incense burning i.e. the incense and the censors used for it. The origin is traced back to India, which in turn came down to China in the second century of the Christian era.

A hand book of sutras which is recited for the prayers is also a common posession which is a must for the monk along with the robe. This robe which was originally coloured saffron has been changed to black.

Similarly bells are a part of the Buddhist worship and so the bells and the bell towers constitute a section of the temple complex. In order to draw the attention of the gods Japanese ring the bells or clap with both hands and then pray. A common ritual is the ringing of bells hundred and eight times to mark the beginning of the year the number hundred and eight denoting the hundred and eight evils being dispelled.

_Butsudan_ or the altar for Buddha is synonymous with all households. It symbolises not only the worship of the idols of Buddha and the sect to which the family belongs but also the 'Ihai' or the tablets inscribed with the names of their dead ancestors. Japanese believe in the union of the departed souls with Buddha and this belief that the soul has become one with Buddha is manifested in the Buddhist names given posthumously. The worship before _Butsudan_ every morning is a kind of ancestor worship for them. This custom dates back to 686 A.D. when the Emperor Tenmu decreed that every family should be provided with a Buddhist altar and the book of sutra. Now different kinds of such altars are available with such objects and the whole range
of rituals and terminology is associated thereby, implying its overall impact.

One lasting effect of Buddhism in Japan was the change of the death rites. Originally Japanese buried the dead bodies along with other objects as per the Shinto rites, the evidence of this being the discovery of huge burial places in the earlier centuries. This fact has facilitated the naming the period of the mounds as the era Kofunjidai. This evidence of cremation is first found in the Ritsuryo code of 689 which stipulated that in exceptional cases like soldiers etc. who die in or during war should be cremated, a concept influenced by Chinese rites. It was first adopted officially in the case of Emperor Tenmu (673-686 A.D.) who favoured Buddhism. Later on it was adapted not only for emperors but for the monks also from 700 A.D. Gradually, along with cremation, such Buddhist death rites like recitation of sutras, holding of memorial services, making oblations to appease the souls of the dead etc were adopted and which are conducted generally by Buddhist monks.

This influence of Buddhism has not been in the physical sense merely but has contributed in moulding the thought processes and value systems of the Japanese, the most prominent one being the concept of karmic retributions or the law of cause and effect known as Inka. The Japanese too believe that good deeds bring forth good rewards and the evil ones bad. The first testimonial of this belief is the work Nihon Ryoiki written in 794 A.D. by a monk Keikai of the Yakushi temple in Nara. The concept of Rinne, very basic to the Buddhist philosophy, is not alien to the Japanese and denotes transmigration, the ongoing cycle of birth and death.
Equally basic is the term 'Anitya' which is synonymous with such phrases as 'Shogyo Mujyo' that means all things are impermanent denoting the transient nature of things.

The most striking example of this is the opening stanza of the work Hojoki a collection of essays on random thoughts by Kamo no Chomei an aristocrat turned recluse which reads as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Yuku kawa no nagare wa} & \quad \text{- The flow of river water is incessant.} \\
\text{taezushite} & \quad \text{ } \\
\text{Shikamo moto no mizu ni arazu} & \quad \text{- But the water never the same} \\
\text{Yodomi ni ukabu utakata wa} & \quad \text{- The floating bubbles disappear} \\
\text{Katsu kie katsu musubite} & \quad \text{- Some appear, some disappear} \\
\text{Hisashiku todomaritaru tame shi nashi} & \quad \text{- Without remaining for ever} \\
\text{Yo no naka ni aru hito to sumi ka to} & \quad \text{- The men and dwellings in this world} \\
\text{Mata kaku no gotoshi} & \quad \text{- are just the same}
\end{align*}
\]

Equally famous is the quote from the work Taihiki written around 1374, the title being translated as The Chronicles of Peace which covers the most turbulent period of the Japanese history.

This quote is given below:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Gionshoja no kane no koe} & \quad \text{- The bell of Gionshoja temple (Jetavana vihara) resonates} \\
\text{shogyo mujo no hibiki ari} & \quad \text{- the message that nothing is permanent in this world}
\end{align*}
\]
Besides 'Shogyo Mujyo' the concept of Ku also is derived from Buddhism and denotes suffering and hardships being synonymous with Dukha. In addition to these two, the third characteristic of the human world is kegare or defilement. This concept of Kegare in Japan is originally Shinto. It was known to Japanese already as Shintoism emphasises the ritual of cleansing the impurities through such things as water, salt etc.

The Buddhist concept of degeneration of law was widely prevalent and popularly known to Japanese during the middle ages. So much so that it resulted in the mushrooming of several popular sects during the turbulent Kamakura period (1192-1333). According to the prophecies of Buddha, after his demise, the period of righteous law Shoho will prevail for five hundred years. During this time the law will be sustained by those who heard it directly or from their ancestors. Subsequently in the next thousand years the teachings of Buddha would be destroyed but due to virtues of the residual law part of them would still remain. So by making efforts one can hope to attain the Buddhahood. This is called Zoho or the period of imitative law. Thereafter the period of degeneration of law, Mappo, will follow when the teachings of Buddha will cease to exist and there will not be any enlightenments further. Thereafter five billion and six hundred and seventy million years later Maitreya Buddha will come to the world to save those who upheld the law during this period. Those who died in this span will be rescued by the Maitreya Buddha and only if they pile up good deeds during this time.

The traditional concepts of heaven and hell also are obviously marked with Buddhistic influence. As per the Buddhist view Japanese believe in the concept of Sangai the three worlds,
Yokkai the world of desires, Shikikai the world of form and Mushikikai the formless world.
The world of desire i.e., Kamadhatu world is the abode of living beings with desires which has six realms one being hell. The conditions of these realms are vividly described in the work Ojoyoshu with detailed descriptions of the impure lands the foremost one being hell. These are eight in number being distinguished by the means of torments that people undergo. In these people are pierced by swords, hit by iron rods being crushed or chopped into pieces. In one of these hells the animal headed demons thrash the inhabitants while singing songs and the inhabitants are crushed between the two mobile iron mountains, their blood dripping on the ground. Some are crushed by the iron mortar and the demons and wild animals and vultures vie with each other to devour it. Some are made of walk on hot iron plates till they are roasted. Like this the accounts of these eight hells are dreadful. The size of the first one i.e., Samjiva is 1000 yojana in depth with 10,000 yojana in width and breadth. The others are Tokatsu Jigotin or Samjiva, Kokoyo, Shugo, Kyokan, Daikyokan, Shonetsu, Daishonetsu and Mogen each one being of the same magnitude as the first one.
Last but not the least in this context is the traditional view of the universe of the Japanese people which is based on the Buddhist concept. According to it Jambudvipa is one of the four major islands that surround Mount Sumeru rising from the middle of the earth, the other three being Purva Videha in the east, Apara Godaniya in the west and Uttarakura in north. Buddhism contributed in forming this cosmic viewpoint of the Japanese people who considered Jambudvipa as a holy place as Buddha choose
to be born on it. Japanese people also believed that the
inhabitants of Jambudvipa did not enjoy as many facilities as do
the people on the other islands but they are compensated by the
fact that this is the only place where Buddha could be born.
Jambudvipa is divided into sixteen large kingdoms, fifty medium
kingdoms and hundred thousand small countries and is like an
inverted triangle in shape. This is depicted in the old maps of
the country. One of these is engraved on the lotus pedestal in
the temple Todaiji in Nara where the giant statue of Buddha is
placed. Here the figure of Mount Sumeru is shown as rising from
the middle of the universe. Another such map is to be found in
the temple Horyuji again in Nara which is more detailed with the
markings in red on the travel route of the Chinese monk Genjo,
known as Huan Tsang, indicating the various places that he
visited during his travel. This map of Gotenjiku (the five
Tenjiku used in the sense of a wider India) has inspired the
later maps.
So far, the influence of Indian Buddhism on the life and style of
the Japanese social strata has been discussed in brief. The
other sphere of influence is in the context of the written word,
whether it be the classical Japanese literature or the Buddhist
scriptures or popular folk tales as well as the spoken language.
Linguistically too the influence of Buddhism has been deep and
diverse. When Buddhism arrived in Japan, the Japanese language
was in its infancy as far as development went, lacking even a
script. The Chinese characters were used phonetically in order
to decipher the Japanese sounds, yet the need for a Japanese
syllabary was felt in order to write the punctuation marks on the
Chinese text as per the Japanese syntax. Moreover the
phonetically used Chinese had its own limitations. Out of such
necessities the Kana script developed. The arrangements of
syllables called Gojuon has a striking resemblance with the
arrangements in Sanskrit. This classical Indian language came to
Japan along with Buddhism and was known as Shittan Moji, the
Siddham script. It's influence on Kukai and Kibinomakibi whose
names are associated with the development of Kana syllabary could
have attributed to this influence.
This existed as an independent field and many of the ancient
inscriptions in Japan, especially associated with the earliest
Buddhist sects of Shingon and Tendai which are esoteric in
nature, are written in this script. Several works also were
written like Shittan Zo (860) (Sidham Ratnakar) by Annen, Shittan
Sanmitsu a text book for Sanskrit, Bongaku Shinryo (1718-1804) on
the status of Sanskrit etc.
The fifty syllables of Japanese are arranged in the Iroha song,
composed by Kukai, without repetition of the same syllable twice.
It is arranged beautifully to portray the transient nature of all
in a poetic manner with the joys of spiritual awakening and is as
follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Iro wa nioedo} & \quad \text{Colors are fragrant} \\
\text{Chirinuru 0} & \quad \text{But fade away} \\
\text{Waga yo tare Zo} & \quad \text{In this world of ours} \\
\text{Tsune nara nu} & \quad \text{Nothing lasts for ever} \\
\text{Ui no okuyama} & \quad \text{This high mountain of life's} \\
& \quad \text{illusion} \\
\text{Kyo koete} & \quad \text{Cross it today} \\
\text{Asaki yume miji} & \quad \text{Abandon shallow dreaming}
\end{align*}
\]
Ei mo sezu - and indulgence

In addition to aiding the Japanese sound arrangement and giving a new arena of 'Siddham', the advent of Buddhism also enriched the weft and woof of Japanese language.

To begin with is a wide range of common nouns associated with the religion. Some of the commonly used ones are, Biku and Bikuni transliteration of the word Bhikshu and Bhikshuni meaning monk and the Buddhist nun. The Japanese word used for nun is ama which is based on 'Amma' used to address one's mother.

Likewise Bosatsu stands for Bodhisattva and Bodaiju for Bodhi tree or pipal. Shari is derived from the word Sharira, and is used to indicate relics. Mandara denotes Mandala the universe and Mandarake the red Mandarva flower. The Ashura means the Asurs or the devils while the goblins are called Rasetsuni the Rakshani and the ganas as Yasha. 'Shika', derived from its Sanskrit counterpart, means deer and last but not the least are the words Shakuson, Nyori, Butsu, Shaka used for Buddha. Besides such transliterations there are the words in which characters are used for actual value to coin the term related with the religious practices. For example in Nenbutsu suru the character 'Nen' means to pray silently and 'Butsu' is Buddha the word meaning to invoke the name of Buddha yearning for him. Kugyo suru is another word in which the characters used mean practise hardships and so it denotes Tapasya meaning penances while Shugyo suru, in which the characters used stand for conducting one's self well or to control one's self means ascetic practices. Satori O hiraku, is used as the achievement of enlightenment. Danjiki, or fasting is coined by combining the characters of prohibition and food.
This list is a long one which could be an independent theme of study in itself.

This process of linguistic borrowing facilitated by the Chinese scriptures must have been enhanced tremendously on the arrival of Indian scholars in Japan. The foremost one is Bodhisena. Although some other persons like Aryadharma are said to have visited Japan before him but no accounts are available about them. Bodhisena was a Brahmin from South India who came to China where he came in contact with the Japanese scholars. Later in 733 A.D. he came to Japan accompanied by some monks like Buttetsu, a Cambodian, one of his disciples who taught Sanskrit to the Japanese monks. As mentioned before Bodhisena acted as the head priest for the erection ceremony of the statue of Buddha of Todaiji by the Emperor Shomu. He lived at the temple Daianji which became the centre for studying Indian philosophy and scriptures along with Sanskrit. The title of Baramon Shojo, the reverent Brahmin was bestowed upon him and he died there in 760 A.D. at the age of fifty seven and was buried at Tomiyama in Nara.

Another Indian who contributed to this process of assimilation and influence although he never visited Japan is Bodhidharma. He was a prince from South India in Kanchipuram who introduced the dhyana tradition in China which became popular as Zen. In Japan such terms like Hekikan Baramon and Darumasama are associated with him. Hekikan means the wall gazing brahmin as Bodhidharma undertook meditation for nine years facing the wall and gazing on it. The word Dharma is pronounced in Japanese as Daruma and is used for Darumasama the typical Japanese dolls of papier-mache with a round body which are regarded as auspicious.