CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The present study based on primarily the work Konjaku Monogatari unfolds several points the foremost one being the transplanting of the Indian themes in Japan until the beginning of the medieval period. Such a study has significance only in the context of this period alone due to the absence of any direct intercultural relations between the two countries. Thus in the absence of any first hand knowledge about India, the Japanese writers rewrote the stories found in the Buddhist scriptures to be included in the Indian section of this work that resulted in several changes in the theme or locale or characters of the story which throw important light on the cultural contrasts between the two countries. Some degree of first hand information was provided by their contact with the Indian monks in China, from where one or two Indians even came to Japan, but this was limited as with the decline of Buddhism in China this exchange of monks between the two countries came to a virtual stop. Inspite of this the author's image of India was based on the information in scriptures, hearsay and the individual perception.

Due to this characteristic of the Indo-Japanese relations of the past, the present study is important, being derived from the study
of the Japanese mind at work while writing the stories of another land neither visited nor seen by them. The compiler has even gone so far as to include a tale from China titled as "The King Of Shintan (China) Gets The Rare Medicine of Akada" in the Indian section which is one of the many discrepancies discussed later on this chapter. The obvious fact that emerges here is the utter simplification of the descriptions of the places. In the geographically diversified country like India locale could be a mountain or a plain or even the sea-beach which would have seemed like a maze to the Japanese mind. Although the Chinese sources provide the information accurately including the details about the places, yet a reproduction of that would have undermined the originality and appeal of the work making it all the more complex and dry. So in each story the opening lines reads as, "Once upon a time in Tenjiku there was a rich man who had a son" or "The five hundred merchants from Tenjiku sailed to another country -------" and " In a small kingdom in Tenjiku there lived ---------" etc. At the same time some of the relatively wellknown places are mentioned albeit mechanically like Shaekoku (Sravasti), Haranakoku (Benares), Makadakoku (Magadha), Oshajo (Rajagraha). This stands in contrast to the Japanese section of this work in which such geographical details are present.

This trend is limited to the geographical details and is not necessarily seen in the case of common names as these are retained accurately and not generalised. For example the names of Buddha's disciples are not generalised by saying 'one of Buddha's disciples'
but are specified. In the entire Indian section most of the proper names of the characters in the story are retained, while in some cases the characteristics of some of the characters are changed to make the story more interesting or some characters are even done away with due to the disassociation of those particular characters with Japan. This change in the characters is more pronounced in the stories of Volume Five and especially the animal tales and is listed in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volume five</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Story 13</td>
<td>Monkey, Rabbit and Jackal</td>
<td>Monkey, Rabbit, Fox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story 18</td>
<td>Golden Deer</td>
<td>Nine Coloured Deer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story 19</td>
<td>Goldsmith, snake, rat, parrot</td>
<td>Turtle, snake, fox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story 20</td>
<td>Jackal</td>
<td>Fox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story 21</td>
<td>Jackal/ass, lion</td>
<td>Fox, tiger, ass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story 24</td>
<td>Turtle and pigeons</td>
<td>Turtle and cranes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story 25</td>
<td>Monkey and crocodile</td>
<td>Monkey and Turtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story 26</td>
<td>Elephant and his blind mother</td>
<td>Elephant and his blind mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story 27</td>
<td>Elephant, man, queen</td>
<td>Elephant, man</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This modification in the main characters is insignificant in some cases because it does not influence the plot. Like the golden deer is changed to a nine coloured deer and in the story of 'Rabbit in the Moon' the other associates of the rabbit are changed to a fox and a monkey whereas in the Indian stories these are a Jackal, a monkey and an otter. The otter is dropped and the Jackal is turned
to fox because of its closer affinity to the Japanese people but this does not interfere with the arrangement of the plot. Another fine example is the story of turtle and the cranes that was originally the story of the turtle and pigeons. In these cases the author, after selecting the characters suitable to the Japanese context, has gone on to describe the locale at length imagining it to be his own and does the same with the landscape, seasons and even the emotions and beliefs of the characters. By doing so he has extended the imagination wildly without even realising that he is supposedly relating the story of another country. For example in the story of the turtle and cranes of Volume Five the turtle pleads with the cranes saying, "We are related with each other since the previous births. Even in the scriptures our association is metaphorically quoted for comparison and moreover the Buddha has expounded the cranes and turtles to be one." This is the writer's imagination only who is trying to assert the close relationship between these two by tying it up with the scriptures and Buddha although no such references exist in either of them. He has done this merely to use popular Japanese beliefs to make his story acceptable to the Japanese mind.

Influenced by the locale, in some instances, even the objects are Japanised inadvertently. Like the offerings made for the Bhikshus are mostly of gohan (cooked rice) the staple food of the Japanese. Even the other references to the eatables are of the variety associated with Japanese culture like the Senbe (crisp rice cakes), persimmon, akebia and the fish varieties the Japanese are fond of. Moreover, the Japanisation of objects like the hair ornaments and

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clothes like kimono sleeves or the collar of the robe used for keeping needles are some of the examples. At times the word 'Tenno' used specifically for the Japanese Emperor is used in the case of Indian kings instead of 'Osama' which stands for 'King' in general.

The scenic descriptions and mannerisms also are portrayed in a similar manner. For example in the story of Rsyasringa it is given, "he rode on the clouds, could move the big mountains and tame the birds and animals". Here again the writer on being carried away by the native beliefs associated with ascetics goes on to describe Rsyasringa's extraordinary powers at length which are not necessarily a part of the main plot.

Furthermore it is given, "the women adorned themselves by applying sandalwood ----------- and sang all over place under the trees, between the cliffs and their emotional songs echoed on the mountains, in the valleys, inviting the celestial beings and the dragon gods." Again this application of sandalwood implies the typical Japanese style of women painting their faces white. Similarly the capture of the Dragon gods and the consequential drought indicates an obvious Japanisation as the Dragon gods stand for a good rainfall.

In the Indian context, the ceasing of the rainfall is not due to the capture of any Dragon god but due to the grim powers of Rsyasringa attained through his asceticism which shook the throne of Indra the god of rainfall thereby creating drought because of lack of rain. In the Japanese version it is therefore the physical
action of Rṣyasringa's capture of the Dragon gods which creates the drought, whereas in the Indian version it is more on the subtle level of his ascetic powers shaking the throne of Indra.

Another marked example is the view seen by the birds from above in the story of the turtle and cranes, describing the landscape of the four seasons typical of Japan.

In some cases the changes wrought in the story have far reaching impact on the theme or plot of the adapted story the foremost example being its complete disassociation with the original Jataka stories in these cases.

The story of Rṣyasringa has two variants in Jatakas and that of the monkey and crocodile has three. All of them have the Jataka characteristic of birth identification. In the Japanese adaptation the birth identification is omitted thereby affecting the outcome of the actions of the characters of Rṣyasringa and the monkey and crocodile. Whereas in the Jatakas, because of the birth identification of being born as Buddha in their previous life, they revert back to their original high status, in the Japanese version they suffer the consequences of their actions by falling from grace (Ikkakusennin) or by being made to look foolish (monkey and turtle).

Therefore even during the course of these modifications the entire theme of the story is altered. The table given below shows this thematic modification in the stories of Volume Five.
Volume five
Story no. 2
Japan
Virtues of the god Avalokiteswara
India
Eulogise the
Bodhisattva born as the white horse

Origin of the name of Simhala

Story no. 4
Fall from grace of an ascetic
Woman as distraction
Heterogenous parentage

Story no. 13
Origin of the presence of rabbit on the moon
Virtuous Bodhisattva and rabbit on the moon

Story no. 18
Covetous human virtues of Bodhisattva
Virtues of Bodhisattva
Origin of the placards

Story no. 20
The result of exceeding one's limits
Presence of mind of Bodhisattva
Origin of the custom of drying meat

Story no. 21
Birth identification of Dharani the earth goddess,
virtues of full devotion,
origin of the phrase 'fox Ass in Lion's skin
in lion's skin'

Story no. 24  
Buddha's teachings about Juakugyo, the ten evils, the close association of turtle and the crane origin of cracks on turtle's shell  
To admonish against excessive talk, wisdom of Bodhisattva

Story no. 25  
Wit of the animals  
Farsightedness of Bodhisattva

Story no. 26  
Ungratefulness of humans  
Origin of the animal festival.

In case of the above, the theme changes basically due to its objectives which in the case of India is to portray the extraordinary virtuous deeds of Bodhisattva. In the case of Japan this is not necessarily so. Here the concept of Bodhisattva is used in a diversified sense, the various gods being adapted in the Japanese Pantheons as Bodhisattvas, thus the stories of Konjaku also have a different tinge some relating the virtues of Manjushree Bodhisattva, the god of learning and others some other Bodhisattva. In fact in Volume Five, certain stories are identified as Jatakas which do not represent the Indian Jataka plots. On the other hand some of the famous Jatakas like Nalinika, Mahakapi, Valha etc. are accounted here as popular stories without any of the Jataka characteristics. Yet the Jatakas emerge in Volume Five in a systematic form being another proof of the writer's organisational
skill. These appear in the order relating to the birth identification of Buddha as well as that of his cousin, then the five hundred disciples, the five hundred arhats, the Bhikshu and Bhikshuni, besides that of other Buddhisattvas.

In fact this study throws some more light on the author who seems to be well versed in Buddhism and as a result even the style is affected by the Buddhist scriptures. Especially in itivuttakas each of the sutta begins with a set phrase i.e., "this has been said by the blessed one thus I have heard" and closes with, "this meaning was told by the blessed one thus have I heard".

In Jatakas too in each story the starting and concluding portions have a set phraseology with the opening lines beginning with, "at such and such time when ".

Moreover inspite of the vast information provided by the author about Buddhism the author does not seem to have much interest in the philosophical aspect of Buddhism which is surmised from the obvious simplification of the philosophical aspects of the religion. In the stories about Buddha's enlightenment and the path adopted by him there is ample scope to discuss the doctrine in detail but it is summed up as, "the prince was unimpressed with saint Bhargwa because he declared "I am undertaking the penances in order to be reborn in the heaven".

Even the tenets of Arada and Kalan, whom Buddha visited, is summed up in short in the words of Arada which say, in the sentient being the root cause is Moha which results in Atmamana the pride. This leads to Mudha or ignorance and from this springs the matratas goyui which cause the five mahabhutani i.e., the five elements of
earth, water, fire, wind, air. These produce various Klesas or illusions which result in the four types of suffering of birth, old age, sickness and death. Thus I have told you the doctrine in short.' The doctrine of Kalan is not given and it is simply mentioned that his dwelling was the abode of the five mendicants. Similarly at a later stage in his first sermon to the five monks he expounds it simply as accounted in the Konjaku version. Here he preached the catvarya arasatyani the four noble truths of Jujitsumetsu-do i.e., dukha, samudaya, nirodha and marga. Even the Margas associated with this eight fold path is similarly just mentioned without any details.

As mentioned before in some places there are inconsistencies. For example the stories point that Buddha visited the dwelling of three saints i.e., Bhargwa, Arada and Kalan when he went out in pursuit of the ultimate truth but after the attainment of Buddhahood when he contemplated about preaching his doctrine he thought of only the two of them i.e., Arada and Kalan and not Bhargwa. This appears strange since Bhargwa was the one who guided Buddha to the other two and yet there is no mention about him.

Likewise in the case of the five Bhikshus who became his first disciples the following discrepancy is seen. In Chapter One in the story about Buddha's discourse their names appear as Kyojinnyo, Mahakasho, Ahei, Bodai, Manokuri that stand for Kaundinya, Kasyapa, Asvajit, Bhadrika and Mahanama respectively. Here the name Mahakasho that was originally used for Mahakayapa, Buddha's disciple who was to take over after Buddha, has been used for
Kasyapa one of the five disciples whom Buddha preached to first. This could be a slip because both the names Kasyapa and Mahakasyapa resemble each other a lot but the actual name for Kasyapa is Jurikikasen. Besides at a later stage in Volume five in a story relating the previous lives of Buddha and the five monks in the Jataka tradition, the names given are Kuri Bhiku, Mesho Bhiku, Mahakanan, Jurikikasen and Kuri Taishi. Here a different set of names altogether is used for these five monks. Although they are called by different names in Japanese i.e. Asvajit is called by the names Mesho, Asetsuji, Ahei etc. yet all the five appear together. In the above case, the name of Badai is excluded and that of Kuri is repeated as Kuri Bhiku and Kuri Taishi since the full name of Badai is Badaikuri i.e. Bhadrika. It is likely that only Kuri is repeated considering it to be the family name and Badai as the first name which in actual case is not so. This instance suggests that the compilers of Volumes One and Five are two different people and also that he lacks indepth knowledge of Indian Buddhism. More examples exist which show that the compilation of the Indian section of the Konjaku Monogatari was done by more than one author. This is borne out in Volume three in the portion about the distribution of relics where it is mentioned clearly that the Magadha King Ajatshatru received a portion of the relics and constructed a stupa over it. Yet later in Volume four there is the story that mentions that the portion of relics meant for Magadha was taken by the Dragon Nanda which was later restored by

1 Konjaku Monogatari: vol.IV, 3
King Ashoka to Magadha indicating a confusion of facts which shows a misrepresentation of the same event by two different authors. Even if it is argued that the writer was attempting to present a true adaptation of the original and so retained these names rather than replacing them by the names used by him in the previous chapters, on the other hand he could have done away with the repetition of the names of Buddha's five disciples by using one name to be followed by the word 'etc' as used by him in many other contexts as for example 'the five monks of Kyojinnyo etc.' On the basis of this it could be surmised that the writer, although well versed in Buddhism, is not necessarily a scholar of at least the Indian Buddhism. This could also be attributed though remotely to the writer's (not necessarily a single person) preoccupation with some other works resulting from the long time intervals between the writing. However the former possibility is more convincing at least in the case of the Indian section under consideration here. The objective is definitely the popular discourse in accordance with the Setsuwa tradition closely associated with Sekkyo meaning sermons or preaching. Here there seems to be no reason to omit the philosophical aspects which otherwise could have been included in a more detailed but simpler manner. At the same time the overall arrangement is somewhat interlinked presenting a composite picture. The parallels are drawn in contents and the style of carrying forward the same character or theme is there. In the contents the writer has drawn parallels to the various episodes. For example the incident of Buddha's mother seeing an
Auspicious dream is accounted commonly. The *Konjaku* writer draws a parallel to it when he portrays the dream of Buddha's wife Yashodhara, which is an inauspicious one seen when Buddha resolves to renounce.

This pairing is typical of *Konjaku* version only and not found elsewhere and the writers who associated the perception through dreams with not only the auspicious events of Buddha's life but also the inauspicious ones, although the term inauspicious is subjective in this case. Similarly another common episode of Buddha's life is his ascent to the Tusita heaven to discourse with his mother there yet in *Konjaku* a parallel to this situation is drawn when queen Maya descends down to the earth at the time of his parinirvana. Thus the connected plots lead to a linked arrangement of the whole work for example the classification of pre-Buddhist themes is linked by contrast to the classification of post-Buddhist themes. In the following chart the pairs of the themes of Volume Five are shown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stories</th>
<th>Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Origin of Ceylon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>Birth of objects instead of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 &amp; 8</td>
<td>Jatakas of heretics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 &amp; 10</td>
<td>Jataka of virtuous people subsequently contrasted with that of the heretic Devdatta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 &amp; 12</td>
<td>Jatakas of Buddha and disciples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 &amp; 14</td>
<td>Sacrifice of animals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strange behaviours explained and strange demands met

Grateful animals and ungrateful men

Vanity of the fox

Affairs of the animal world

Virtuous elephant

The pair of fish born as a fish and the Buddha born as a fish

It speaks for the skillful management of the vast material available to the writer/writers which is suitably arranged in the blueprint formulated for each section.

This systematic planning is demonstrated even in the Japanese section where the starting point is the life of Prince Shotoku. The placement of this at the onset of the Japanese section as well as the contents of the story suggest that he is esteemed as a Japanese Buddha the creator more than a promoter on being compared with King Asoka of India. As mentioned before the Shaka no Honji version confirms this. Then the Japanese section accounts the stories of the Japanese who visited China and those who visited Japan from China in which the story, "The Baramon Shojo (Bodhisena) comes from Tenjiku to Japan in order to meet priest Gyogi" is included. As the title suggests the author's pragmatic attitude towards the Japanese Buddhism is reflected discounting the fact that Bodhisena had arrived from China. Apparently the attitude towards India is different from that of the Nara period which was filled with modesty and reverence. Again the writer has handled this historical fact with a casual attitude giving it a popular
character to show the extraordinary accomplishments of the famous Japanese priest Gyogi rather than the arrival of Bodhisena.

Obviously the Indian section presents Buddha and his disciples as well as the promoters of Buddhism in India in all glory but when compared with Japan, the Japanese writer tends to uphold the native traditions rather than the Indian ones.

The Indian section ends in the style of Jataka collection with the story of problem solving being placed at the end in the form of the story of the country where the old people above seventy were exiled, and being adapted in the Japanese folklore as that of the Ubasuteyama, the mountain where the old were abandoned. In Jataka it is not the old mother but the wise Mahasaddha, the Bodhisattva who solves the difficult tasks.

However regarding the transplanting of these stories a set pattern is seen whereby in those cases which are a true adaptation of some Buddhist text the tendency for such adaptation is less whereas in those themes which are presented in a vivid manner the cases of adaptation are more, the foremost one being that of Ikkakusenin followed by the animal stories.

The group of stories about the life of Buddha are adapted in the form of a single plot. Here too the writer has carefully planned the outline of the chapters by making them coherent. Inspite of the stories being completely chronological and lacking appeal in the first instance on second thought the diverse information provided here holds immense attraction. The Indian section of this work is a kind of miniature encyclopedia on Indian Buddhism, being a comprehensive and unique work. Although several other works are
written from the philosophical and religious point of view on the developments of Buddhism in India, China and Japan, there are others written from the viewpoint of history of religion for example Sangoku huppo denzu engi (1311). Incidentally, the image of Sangoku, the three countries, reflects the visualisation of the world by the Japanese restricted to these three countries of India, China and Japan. Out of this the distant India was viewed with the element of fantasy regarded as a holy land where the different Bodhisattvas and Buddhas were born, this image being invoked by such works like Daitosaiki which describes the Jambudvipa to be like a heaven with the golden sand and the golden mountains studded with jewels, and the divine pond inhabited by the dragon gods frequented by the celestial beings. The word Enbudai meaning Jambudvipa has other synonyms like Shogon shu, Kogon do and Ejujo, the former two meaning the island of gold and the other emphasising the Island of defilement having the odd growth of trees, that refers to the tall forests in the north. Thus the word Tenjiku, the word being a combination of the characters standing for heaven, root and tall trees, has been coined to represent the Japanese image of India, and in this image the character for heaven is predominant.

In the case of the last two sections of this study i.e. the stories about the life of Buddha, the central theme is to portray Buddha's life which is common to both the Indian and the Japanese versions yet the merit of Konjaku lies in its conciseness and is merely
skeletal in form, while the Indian version is of the length of an independent work.

Konjaku begins with the life of the past Buddha and relates the birth, youth and then his renunciation at the age of nineteen. Subsequently in the tradition of the eight stages, the stories of his penances in the forests, attainment of Buddhahood and spreading the dharma is accounted. Here Buddha's conversion of the five monks is followed by the conversion of the various people by himself or some of his disciples, but here again the order in which Buddha ordained different people is ignored and conversions are classified thematically. For example the cluster of stories of Buddha ordaining his relatives starts with Rahula his son. In Konjaku, Rahula's episodes emerge in a unnatural manner. In the episodes related to the worldly life of Buddha there is no mention of his birth. On the contrary the writer accounts that the prince and his wife were not seen in a compromising state which disturbed the king Sushodhana all the more. Then suddenly the conversion of Rahula is accounted and later in the section of Buddha's parinirvana the story of Rahula's presence at Buddha's death bed is incorporated. Such an episode is not there in the other accounts and represents the parental love and filial piety which are particularly regarded as the basic virtues in human relations by the Japanese.

Incidentally, in Konjaku 'Rahulmata' is given almost a negligible place in the plot. Even at his last moment although Rahula's presence as well as the presence of Buddha's mother and Buddha's close disciples is accounted there is no mention about Yashodhara.
Incidentally in the stories of Buddha's conversion the title of Yashodhara's conversion is present but the plot is missing. Her part in the Indian accounts too is not much. It is only the incident of Buddha's visit, after the attainment of Buddhahood, to the palace where he and the other monks accompanying him were fed by Yashodhara, which is often quoted in the stories of his previous lives when he declares, "this is not the only time when she has tried to entice me. She has done the same before also" and relates some incident of his previous life.

To sum up it is closer to the later tradition of the Buddhist biographies with the additional elements of myth and fantasy surrounding the core story like in Mahavastu.