

## Concluding Remarks : Religion in Japanese Civilization

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## Concluding Remarks: Religion in Japanese Civilization

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### 1. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL

A symposium on a topic like religion and civilization normally begins with an exercise to define basic concepts, and sometimes ends with the same exercise, with nothing much else in between. In this symposium, we side-stepped the issue of defining religion. In fact, no one seriously raised this issue throughout the meeting, which I believe was a blessing. While some might contend that not to define the beast is a serious omission, few concepts are more capable than religion of entangling otherwise useful discourse into a snarling quagmire of muddled and befuddling debate. Had we regarded consensus on a clear definition as a necessary prerequisite for further discussion of the relationship between religion and civilization, we might still have been debating what religion is to the end, who the religious are, how religion should be differentiated from magic, and a whole train of other definitional issues.

To be sure, by not grappling with definitional issues, and by forgoing an opportunity for offering an innovative and original conceptualization of the term, we may well have missed exploring novel areas of discourse. For example, if we had focussed on religion of the "communitas" type, and related it to differences in the civilizational make-up of Japan and other civilizations, we might have found interesting results.

Nor did we spend any time discussing what civilization might be—as against the nation or a culture. Is civilization co-terminous with a state, or a nation? If not, how shall we conceptualize a civilization? Perhaps a civilization should be defined flexibly, depending on the nature of the problem at hand. The boundaries defining a civilization may exceed or be smaller than the bounds of a state. The

question of boundaries is not by itself a relevant issue or a useful topic to debate.

Whatever the conception of civilization, it is a system comprised of ideation, devices, and institutions. It is important to remember the civilization should not be discussed in an organismic paradigm. The organismic analogy of society and other social entities was popular a few decades ago. However, this analogy has outlived its usefulness, and should be laid to rest.

When we think of the relationship of religion to civilization, we need to distinguish between religion as a system and individuals espousing religion. First, there is the relationship between religion as a system of thought and beliefs on the one hand, and the civilization incorporating it, on the other. Second, there is the relationship of the individual's religious attitude, behavior, beliefs, etc. and civilization in which he/she lives. For example, Chinese civilization exists even if some Chinese do not espouse Confucianism or have abandoned it. Conversely can ask whether a Chinese who abandons Confucianism is still a Chinese. The answer is most assuredly yes. These are issues having to do with relationship between civilization and its individual members. However, if we asked, "Would Chinese civilization without Confucianism still be Chinese civilization?" the answer is not so certain. At the very least, Chinese civilization without Confucianism would be vastly different. Here we are asking a question of the relationship of religion as a system to civilization.

## 2. CIVILIZATION, MODERNIZATION AND SPIRITUALITY

One of the fundamental issues we have been grappling with in this symposium series is the nature and impact of modernization upon civilization. Surichai Wun'gao raised a profound question, posed initially by Umesao in his keynote speech, but never taken up by other members of the symposium. We have thus far assumed in our past and present symposia that industrialization, accelerated in some cases by capitalism, is inevitable and that it is the engine of modernization. The underlying human motivation for this development seems to be hedonism—the never-ending quest for more and more material comfort and physical pleasure. But this quest, which has been accelerated through industrialization, has been made possible at a profound expense to our spirituality. It seems that in modern life spiritual contentment has been sacrificed for hedonistic pleasure. Modernization seems to be a force which surges forward at any cost, even that of impoverishing the spiritual life of humankind. Some may be tempted to put the blame on capitalism, as Marx assuredly would; but the same impoverished spiritual life is seen in socialist systems as well. Marx has declared religion the opiate of humanity. Perhaps we might counter by saying that modernization in this form is the opiate of civilization, for modernization creates increasingly efficient and effective devices (such as industrial technology), institutions, (such as capitalism and bureaucracy) to provide greater comfort and pleasure, but at the expense of maintaining "the self in a relationship of harmony and congruence with the body, the social order, the natural

world, and the cosmos,” as Hardacre puts it in her contribution to this symposium.

If we characterize civilizations on the basis of energy production, then hunting and gathering civilizations are “low energy” civilizations, and highly industrialized societies are “high energy” civilizations. The energy difference from foraging to the opposite extreme, “high tech” is, of course, a matter of quantitative gradation, with pastoral and agrarian societies somewhere in between. If we live in “high energy” civilization now, at one time humanity lived in a situation of low energy, but with a rich spiritual life. We may schematize the relationship between energy level and spiritual satisfaction as follows:

		<i>Spiritual Level</i>				
		High	:	Low		
<i>Energy Level</i>	Low	A	:	C		
	High	D	:	B		

Thus there are four combinations of energy and spiritual levels, with gradations between “high” and “low” in reality. Ancient and premodern civilizations were characterized by low energy and high spirituality (Quadrangle A). Modern high energy civilizations are characterized by low spirituality (Quadrangle B). What would be the example of low energy/low spirituality civilization (quadrangle C)? I submit that they are seen in many of the third world civilizations, especially in their hinterland pockets, where economic, political and military exploitations are rampant. Here, modernization has progressed enough to create efficient economic, political and military instruments for exploitation by former colonial and present day industrial powers, resulting in the erosion of spiritual life for the exploited.

Quadrangle D raises an important question: whether a civilization is possible which combines high energy and high spirituality. Granted that there are pockets of high spirituality—such as religious and secular communes—in present-day high energy civilizations, as a whole, highly industrialized societies manifest a loss of spirituality and a constant search for it in various forms and guises.

Religion was paramount in the days of a hunting-and-gathering economy. It was religion, not material comfort, which provided solace. Industrialization brought about a high energy civilization, but in doing so it robbed humankind of spiritual comfort. We have assumed that this was an inevitable trade-off, that one cannot have spiritual contentment in a high energy civilization. But Umesao and Wun’gao ask, “Is this, in fact, true? Is it inevitable for us to lose spirituality if we seek modernization? Is modernization necessarily accompanied by industrialization?” One might ask still further questions: “Do industrialization and modernization necessitate abandoning spiritual satisfaction in favor of material comfort? Is

it possible to have a civilization characterized by high energy and high spirituality, a civilization of the Quadrangle D type?" We did not have the time to address these profound questions at length; nonetheless, it is significant that we raised these issues and explored them to the limited extent allowed by the short time we had. They present momentous issues, for which we must seek answers.

### 3. RELIGION AND ECONOMY

Setting aside the controversial but by now well-known and well-worn Weberian thesis of religion as an instigator of capitalism, religion has basically facilitated the process of modernization in two additional ways. First, as Davis has argued, it has helped passively by opposing nor preventing a capitalistic economic system from growing over taking over the civilization. Second, after it did take over, religion has provided those marginalized by modernization—such as those in colonial or post-colonial regions, industrial workers, women and other victims of industrialization and a capitalist economy—ways of legitimating themselves, as illustrated in Hardacre's contribution.

Civilization requires a society to have as many members as possible subscribe to the mainstream values, remain within mainstream institutions and be "useful" to the society, rather than a burden to it. But, unfortunately, modernization creates a disparity in the distribution of wealth and power, and reinforces the inequality of status, thus depriving many of their material, psychological, and spiritual needs. When civilization thus creates discontents, religion comes to the rescue, the comfort and regenerate the the disadvantaged, ultimately returning them to the main stream, to be "useful" to the society.

In short, modernization necessarily creates problems which it cannot solve without the aid of religion, be they urbanization and creation of shanty towns, inhumane exploitation of workers by capitalists and consequent alienation of industrial workers, disenfranchisement of women, or increasing impersonalization of human relations. One of the tasks of religion is to minimize the social dislocation and psychological disruption attendant upon modernization by offering people salvation and solace. In Japan the so-called "new religions" are particularly effective in playing this key role for the society, as Hardacre's analysis of Ōmotokyō demonstrates.

One important question we must ask in this connection is whether religion is destined to be the servant of the economy, or, is the role of religion an artefact of historical circumstance peculiar to Japan and Western Europe (plus North America as its extension)? If so, the role religion plays elsewhere in relation to the economy may be very different. Our minds should be open to other possibilities of religion, for example, controlling economic development, as seems to be the case for Islam. Again, modernization may not necessarily spell the demise of religion, as Weber, bent on his theory of rationalization, believed.

In this respect, fundamentalist religions, whether it be Islam, as discussed by

Umesao, Christianity by Itō, or Buddhism by Wun'gaeo, may offer the world a different solution to modernization by playing a different role vis-a-vis the economy. Instead of being merely the economy's servant, it may be its master, or at least it may delimit economic development. For religion to be able to do this, it must retain the role of providing solace and salvation; it must not allow the economy to appropriate this role nor allow material comfort to substitute for spiritual salvation. We thus come full circle back to the issue we raised earlier. Whether religion in the future will succeed in this is anyone's guess. Perhaps when the earth's resources are exhausted through excessive exploitation by materialistically oriented civilizations, and when humankind has no choice but to take an alternative course of action to seeking material pleasure and comfort, religion may make a come-back as the guiding force of civilization by offering spiritual solace, as it did for millennia before the advent of modernization based on industrialization.

Hardacre's case suggests still another function of religion. Many new religions in Japan have been headed by women. This fact and the backgrounds of these women suggest that religion is doing more than merely providing a haven for the distraught, the malcontent and the like. It is also offering a new productive, reactive outlet of energy by allowing women to head a religious organization. Religion thus not only helps modernization's discontented to be rehabilitated and rejuvenated for further usefulness in the industrial economy, but it also creates a content in which the discontented and the troubled can find solace.

This is, from the point of view of institutions, religion may be a handmaiden of modernization. But from the point of view of the individual, may it not be creating a source for social change, where in this case, women, normally subjugated to men and to society, can gain a legitimate position of leadership?

#### 4. CONFUCIANISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Zeroing in on one particular example of the relationship between religion and the economy, I wish to consider the role of Confucianism in relation to the so-called NICS (Nearly industrialized countries) on NIES (Nearly industrialized economies), the latter term being more recently adopted to avoid the controversy over the problematic political status of Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Looking over the Pacific rim of East Asia, one notes that all the economies which have been most successful in industrializing in the past ten years or so, namely, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, are areas where Confucianism has played a dominant role. Thus, it is often maintained that Confucianism is the driving engine of economic development in East Asia. Here, religion is assumed to have a causal role vis-a-vis the economy.

We must realize that the correlation of Confucian zones and NIES is only a correlation: causality has not been demonstrated. And this correlation is an imperfect one. Mainland China is a major exception which needs to be accounted for. After all, China is the birth place and heartland of Confucianism. For millennia, Confu-

cianism ruled as the official religious and ethical doctrine, except for a brief Buddhist interlude early in the Christian era. The usual mode of explanation is to make China a socialist exception to the capitalist game of economic development. It is true that since China has been under a socialist regime, a religiously based ethic could not be expected to operate openly. However, the question may be pushed back to ask why economic development did not take place in the presocialist, imperial or nationalist regimes, when Confucianism was openly advocated. With perfect hindsight, historians can of course produce idiosyncratic reasons why pre-socialist China could not have experienced capitalist development. Whether this amounts to a scientific explanation is another question.

In considering the possibility of turning this correlation of East Asian NIES economic development with Confucianism into a causal scheme, we might examine the "civilizational principles," that is, the major premises of these civilizations governing various "Confucian" countries. For example, Chinese civilization's underlying theme is commerce, in spite of all the talk about Confucianism as the fundamental theme. For Japan, the warrior ethic is the guiding force of the civilization. For Korea Confucianism seems to be the fundamental principle of civilization.

Setting aside Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, for which research is lacking to determine their civilizational principles, Japan, the leader among East Asian economies, is in fact farthest away from Confucianism. Its religion cannot be characterized as Confucian without a considerable stretch of the imagination. On the other hand, Korea, espouses Confucianism as a social and moral value system much more seriously than Japan, while Buddhism and shamanism, (and recently also Christianity) have played the major roles in the religious life of the people. Thus, the argument from Confucianism to economic development must be modified. To what extent Japan can be shown to be driven toward economic development by Confucianism is also questionable. The warrior ethic which has served as the basic civilization principle for Japan is only in part Confucian. It derives its ethical and political bases from Shinto and Buddhism.

Another problem with the argument from Confucianism to economic miracles is that intervening variables are absent. The only correlation between the two is imperfect (witness mainland China), lacking a causal argument to link them. An argument linking the independent variable (Confucianism) and the dependent variable (economic development) with intervening variables, such as a value system, social structure, motivation and personality is needed before the "Confucianism-to-economic miracle" hypothesis can even be tested, let alone proved.

## 5. NATIVIZATION AND NATIONALIZATION OF FOREIGN RELIGION

When diffusion of religion occurs religion adapts, with varying degrees of "nativization." More often than not, syncretism is the result, whereby the new religion becomes blended into the old. At one extreme of this continuum, an "immigrant" religion retains its original form virtually intact, as Christianity in

Australia and New Zealand. Religion in this case came with its possessors, thus requiring minimum cultural adaptation in the immigrant country.

At the other extreme, religion is almost entirely coopted into indigenous religion. A case in point is Catholicism in Latin America, where among Indian peasants, Catholic saints are nothing much more than indigenous gods in Catholic guise. They may bear Catholic saints' names in Spanish, but the substance of these *santos* is the same as the indigenous gods. Catholic Church may think the natives became converted to Catholicism, but in reality peasants have not changed their belief system; to put it a bit extremely, they merely replaced the names of native gods with Spanish names of Catholic saints to please the church and political authority—but without changing their original belief. Thus it is probably more accurate to speak of a cooptation of Catholicism by the native belief system than to speak of Catholic conversion of natives. Or, one may speak of Catholic cooptation of the native belief system at its *tatema* level, and cooptation of Catholicism by native religion at the *hon* level.

According to Satō, the nativization of Christianity has occurred in China. One may say the same with even greater conviction about Judaism in China. Jews migrated to China centuries ago but became almost totally blended into the local culture. The same may be said of the so-called "hidden Christians" in early modern Japan (Tokugawa period, 1600–1868). Although Christian converts abandoned Buddhism and worshipped Christ and the Virgin Mary and were persecuted if discovered, the beliefs of "hidden Christians" were remarkably similar to Buddhism. The Virgin Mary simply substituted for Kannon, the Buddhist deity of mercy. Jesus was depicted in the form of a samurai, complete with swords and samurai hairdo. Christianity changed so much over the centuries that Catholic missionaries who came to Japan after the Meiji Restoration (1868) hardly recognized it as such. This process of immigrant religion blending into the local scene may be called "naturalization" or "nativization."

As against this process of varying degrees of syncretization at the folk level, we must also recognize another process taking place at the state level, when the political establishment uses or exploits a foreign religion for its own purposes. The establishment of the Anglican Church as the state religion in England is one example, and the adaptation of Confucianism in Korea as the official court religion during the Yi Dynasty is another example. Buddhism was adopted in the sixth century by the Japanese Imperial Court as the official state religion after an intense competition for power between the rival fractions of the Soga and their rivals, the Mononobe and the Nakatomi. The Soga perceived an advantage in using Buddhism as an instrument to gain power in the court, and succeeded in doing so.

Cooptation of religion by the state was at the same time a process of exploitation of the state by religion in the Meiji government's relationship to Shinto in Japan before 1945. The state created a state religion out of Shinto, making the emperor the central figure, setting him up as a "living god," and organizing thousands of Shinto shrines across the country into one pyramidal organization for



the efficient promotion of patriotism.

In analyzing the relation of the state to religion as discussed here, one might maintain, that a foreign religion took hold of the state, using an anthropomorphic figure of speech personifying religion as capable of human action. In reality, it is people who adopt or do not adopt, exploit or do not exploit religion. Seen thus, in 6th century Japan, Buddhism was willfully adopted by Japanese politicians themselves for their own advantage. The early Japanese used Buddhism much as the Meiji Japanese appropriated Western technology and adapted it for Japan's advantage. This process, then should be distinguished from the situation in Latin America, where a foreign power imposed its religion upon native peoples.

In the U.S., where a separation of church and state supposedly exists, religion is expected to be kept out of politics. Yet no President of the United States can afford to ignore religion in his political life. He constantly invokes the Christian God's blessing when addressing citizens. Presidents are all church members, and must be known as church-goers in order to win the confidence and support of citizenry. To be known, in fact, as an atheist is the kiss of death for any aspiring politician of any level, let alone the President of the country. The difference here between pre-1945 Japan and the United States is that in Japan, the state actively exploited, manipulated and controlled religion.

This is not to say that exploitation was strictly one way—exploitation of religion by the state. The creation of State Shintoism in Meiji Japan, in fact, was in part motivated by Shinto shrines seizing the opportunity of state interest to promote Shinto and encourage the national organization of shrines by the state. In the United States, the exploitation of religion by political leaders is in comparison less direct in most cases—no act of Congress is involved in this expropriation—not to say it is totally covert and implicit. In postwar Japan, blatant cooperation between the state and religion or control of religion by the state is prohibited by the Constitution. However, the conservative government controlled by the Liberal Democratic Party seeks an opportunity for liaison with religion in various guises, whether it be the prime Minister's visit to the Ise Shrine or to the Yasukuni Shrine, or exploitation of the imperial family as a national symbol for solidifying its own political foundation.

The case of Israel is different. Here the state and the Jewish religion are practically synonymous, in spite of the fact that citizens are supposed to enjoy religious freedom. Without Judaism, Israel as a state is practically meaningless. If on the other hand, Islam suddenly disappeared, the state of Israel would not alter one iota, in spite of a large number of Arabic population living in Israel. Religion and the state are thus like moody bedfellows, sometimes cooperating and collaborating, sometimes controlling and allowing to be controlled, and sometimes exploiting and being used.

## 6. MULTI-NATIONALIZATION OF RELIGION.

World religions are world religions because they intend to conquer the world, often with sword in one hand and sacred text in the other. Thus sometimes military conquest went hand in hand with forced conversion. In other cases, political entities remained independent or semi-independent while a world religion moved in to convert the native population through evangelization. One might say that world religion, not capitalist economy, was the inventor of the original multi-nationals.

Ethnically based religions, such as Shintō and Judaism, on the other hand, do not engage in missionarizing for propagation, but instead depend on ethnic communities for their perpetuation. Their rise and fall then are very much dependent on the rise and fall of the ethnic population. Their multi-nationalization is dependent on migration of the ethnics to different parts of the world. In the case of Judaism, the diaspora resulted in multi-nationalization of Judaism. In Shintō, on the other hand, voluntary migration of Japanese to North and South America resulted in creating outposts of their ethnic religions.

We include Buddhism in this case, besides Shintō, as an ethnic religion. Although Buddhism is, of course, normally treated as a world religion, in the context of Japanese civilization, Buddhism has become thoroughly nativized. This nativization, or "nationalization of Buddhism" is rather obvious for a nationalistic sect like Nichirenshū, but other Buddhist sects in Japan are also highly ethnicized. Thus a variety of Buddhist sects came to both North and South America with immigrating Japanese and established themselves on new soil, but they have remained ethnic, not accepting outsiders and not actively soliciting membership from non-Japanese. It is ironic that in this respect, it is Nichiren *Shōshū* (Sōkagakkai), a splinter sect from the militantly nationalistic Nichirenshū which, in addition to Zen, is most receptive to non-Japanese in the new world.

Shintō to date has remained totally ethnic, not sharing its faith with non-Japanese even in the new world. Shintō, because it derives its *raison d'être* from the physical environment of the Japanese archipelago, seems to have difficulty emigrating to other parts of the world. Its outposts abroad are few and far between. Its multi-nationalization has taken three basic forms. First, it followed immigrants, in small numbers to be sure, coming to the new world before the war. Second, before the Pacific War, Shintō followed Japan's imperial expansion, and established bridgeheads in such colonial territories as Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria. When Japan colonized these territories, they were defined as part of Japan, and thus under the jurisdiction of Japanese gods. Shintō shrines were thus erected in these territories as religious symbols of Japanese possession, and colonials, now defined as Japanese subjects, were forced to worship these gods. Third, in the contemporary period, as new industrial plants are opened abroad by Japanese multinationals, a Shintō ceremony is held to invite a Shintō god to reside in a new abode and protect outposts of Japan's economic imperialism. Religion thus continues to serve the political and economic purposes of Japanese civilization.

## 7. SECULARIZATION OF RELIGION

It is highly interesting that Buddhism is the only major world religion which was consciously imported by Japanese and succeeded in taking root as a religious faith. Yamaori's contribution in this symposium clarified the bases and the processes of this acceptance.

Both Confucianism and Christianity in Japan have definitely had major impact, but they are not religious in nature. Confucianism and Christianity have become secularized in Japan and have influenced Japan's intellectual, ethical and moral life more than its religious life. This is particularly true for Confucianism, as van Bremen showed in this symposium. In a thousand years of its history in Japan, Confucianism's religious component has disappeared without a trace. Something similar may be said of Christianity, whose history in Japan goes back to the 16th century. After the *bakufu* instituted a ban on Christianity in the following century, its impact was severely limited until the advent of the Meiji government in 1868. Missionaries were allowed to proselytize after the Meiji Restoration, but after more than a century of missionary work by churches of all persuasions, professed Christians in Japan still remain less than one percent of the total population. This is a remarkable fact when we consider the virtually indiscriminate acceptance, and indeed eager acquisition of Western culture in all other respects by Japanese from the early Meiji. Japanese literally went out of their way, going to Europe and North America in large numbers to bring back Western culture. But when it came to Christianity, they steadfastly refused. The Japanese who were so eager to take in Western culture demonstrated an active hostility toward the few Japanese who were converted to Christianity or worshipped in Christian church and in fact openly persecuted them in the early Meiji period.

This lack of receptivity to Christianity is remarkable also in comparison, for example, with neighboring Korea, where Christianity is sweeping across the country. Reasons for Christianity's lack of success in Japan are as much in need of explanation as the Korean success is. In Korea, the Christian church was able to take advantage of the perceived communist threat from North Korea by proclaiming itself to be the best guarantee for anti-communism, in addition to performing the "normal function" of religion in modernizing civilization, namely being the savior to those dislocated socially, physically, and economically by rapid economic growth and unplanned urbanization.

One should remember in this context that orthodox communist doctrine disavows all religions. While religion's hostility toward communism is thus understandable, Christianity above all others, including Buddhism and Confucianism, has long been an intense foe of communism. The success of Christianity in South Korea has to be comprehended in this light.

Japan was fortunate in not having been divided as Korea and many other countries were at the termination of the Second World War, creating a situation of intense political insecurity and fermenting a fertile ground for anti-communist

movement to grow and far an anti-communist religion like Christianity to Flourish.

Still, there must be something tenacious about Japan's indigenous religious beliefs to buck to tremendous effort of the Christian missionaries for conversion. One is reminded of Endō Shūsaku's *Silence*, in this respect, in which the failure of Christianity in 17th century Japan is attributed not so much to the *bakufu* ban of Christianity as to the infertile cultural soil of Japan for Christianity to take root. Of course, economically, politically and socially, the cultural environment of 20th century Japan is a far cry from that of medieval Japan. But is there not something enduring about Japanese religious attitudes which have persisted all these centuries, making Christianity as inimical to Japanese today as it was three hundred years ago?

In spite of all this resistance to accepting Christianity as a religious faith, its secular impact, primarily through the effort of missionaries and their Japanese converts, has been far disproportionate to the miniscule Christian presence in Japan. This impact is manifested, first of all, in the large number of major Japanese Christian intellectuals since the Meiji period, including such luminaries as Uchimura Kanzō, Uemura Masahisa, Kagawa Toyohiko, Niijima Jō, Nitobe Inazō, and Yanaihara Tadao. Secondly, the number of Christian educational institutions, commonly known as "mission schools" in Japan, from kindergraten to four-year colleges, is again disproportionately large. Already before the end of the Meiji era, dozens of mission schools, had been established especially for women. Today, we can name such well known schools as Dōshisha, Kwansei Gakuin, Tokyo Womens University, International Christian University, Sacred Heart (with many separate campuses throughout Japan), and Sophia, besides lesser known schools. While most mission schools do not require their entrants to be Christians or to be converted to Christianity during their matriculation, Christian influence on campuses, secular or otherwise, is definitely visible, whether it be in required or optional attendance of the mass, classes on Christian teachings, or the mere presence of a chapel.

Why is population so disinterested in Christianity as a religion willing to accept its social message and allow it to be part of Japanese intellectual life? Here one is reminded of what happened to Confucianism in Japan. Brought to Japan early in its history, it did not make any great impact until the Tokugawa period, when its teaching was accepted by the *bakufu* as the official doctrine. But here again, it was not *as* a religion that Confucianism was espoused, but as a secular political and moral philosophy. Is there not a parallel here between the fate of Christianity and the fortune of Confucianism in Japan? Investigation of the basis of acceptance in Japan of Buddhism, on the one hand, and rejection of Confucianism and Christianity, on the other, may well unlock the special character of Japanese civilization, not merely in relation to Japanese religious attitudes, but also in terms of its more fundamental premises, exploration of which should be the task of the future symposia.

