

FROM NATIVE TO CONTINENTAL: RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE IN EARLY MEDIEVAL JAPAN

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ABSTRACT

Japan is perceived to be a “unique” country not only by the general public but also by academics. Therefore, for a long time the idea that every aspect of Japanese history was unique setting it apart from its continental neighbors prevailed. History of religion and intellectual currents in Japan are no exception to this point of view. While Shinto is considered to be native to Japan, Buddhism, Confucianism and other intellectual and religious currents entered Japan via Korea and Japan, and they influenced shinto as much as they influenced the intellectual history of Japan. In this respect, while Japan retains some of the characteristics unique to it just as any country has its unique characteristics, Japan was closely linked to its continental neighbors intellectually and religiously despite its geographic isolation as an island. In this regard, putting the early medieval Japanese intellectual history within a geographically broader East Asian perspective in connection with Korea and China is essential to better comprehend both the similar and unique developments of Japanese intellectual history vis-à-vis its continental neighbors.

Keywords: Japan, Shinto, Buddhism.

YERLİDEN KITASALA: ERKEN ORTAÇAĞ’DA JAPONYA’DA DİNSEL MANZARA

ÖZ

Japonya yalnız genel kitle tarafından değil akademisyenler tarafından da “özgün” bir ülke olarak algılanmaktadır. Bu nedenle uzun süre akademisyenler arasında da Japon tarihinin her alanına yansıyan bu özgünlüğün Japonya’yı komşularından yüzeysel benzerlikler dışında farklı kılan benzersiz bir ülke olduğu görüşü baskındır. Şinto Japonya’nın yerel dini olarak sayılmaktayken Budizm, Konfüçyüsçülük ve diğer düşünsel ve dinsel akımlar Kore üzerinden Japonya’ya girmiş ve Japon düşünce tarihini etkilemiştir. Bu yönde Japonya her ne kadar diğer her ülkede bulunan kendine özgü yerel farklılıklar gösterse de coğrafi ve fiziki yalıtılmışlığına rağmen bu dönemde Kıta komşularına düşünsel ve dinsel açıdan yakın bağlara sahiptir. Bu açıdan erken ortaçağ Japon düşünce tarihini kıtadaki komşuları olan Kore ve Çin ile birlikte daha geniş bir coğrafi yerleştirmek Japonya’da bu dönemde meydana gelen dini ve düşünsel gelişimlerinin anakara ile olan benzerliklerini ve de Japonya’ya özgü farklarını anlamak için elzemdir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Japonya, Şinto, Budizm

1. INTRODUCTION

This article aims to make an introduction to the historical development and intellectual background of religions and intellectual life in Japan from the beginning of its emergence as a unified state until the establishment of the Kamakura Bakufu as well as Buddhism’s relations with Shinto and Confucianism in terms of becoming a syncretic religion. While the general views on Japan tend

to dwell on its “unique” path of development in every aspect of its history, a closer look will reveal the lively exchanges between Japan and its continental neighbors, Korea and China. In fact, there were also interactions between Japan and South East Asian states such as Thailand where the personal guards of the King included Japanese mercenaries in later times which do not fall under the topic of this article. But beginning from the earliest human settlements onwards, Japan was actually a country only geographically isolated from the Asian continent. Culturally and intellectually there always was a lively interaction between Japan and the continental states. Even during the so-called “closed country” policy of the Edo Shogunate, Japan regularly received diplomatic and commercial missions from Korea and China as well as the Ryukyu Kingdom, and scholars like Hayashi Razan were well aware of the Neo-Confucian and other intellectual and religious trends in China and Korea. Therefore, to better understand the intellectual and religious landscape in Japan, one needs to observe it in juxtaposition with Korea and to a certain degree China from the beginning until the Meiji restoration when Japan turned towards west for intellectual inspiration and interaction.

The Heian period which is the main period of examination on this paper however, is especially important as a formative period in Japanese history. While many of the Japanese and western historians turn to the Edo period or the Warring states when the valiant samurai roamed the battle fields or the streets of Edo whose popular culture ironically shaped the modern Japanese culture more than the samurai culture, Heian period is often dismissed or ignored by historians as Peter Duus puts it being less exciting when one takes a man crying over a poem is less attractive compared to a samurai with all the warrior regalia (Duus, 1993: 5). But Heian period is important as the period of Japanese history when religious and intellectual currents such as Zen, Confucian ethics, Shinto as a religion, not a folk belief system, imperial ideas of legitimacy such as descent from the sun goddess Amaterasu took root in the Japanese culture and thought which are today considered to be distinctly Japanese.

2. SHINTO

Shinto is the belief system native to the Japanese archipelago. Some scholars refer to it as a religion but its institutionalization as a separate religion of its own is a more recent phenomenon. Within the historical context of this article, Shinto is rather a set of belief systems native to Japan with some additional elements from the Asian continent such as the Daoist elements from China and more importantly Buddhism which first arrived via the route of Korea and whose different sects continued to come to Japan via both Korea and China. From the pre-historic times until the Meiji restoration, however; Shinto remained as a belief system rather than an organized religion. Thus the term Shinto will be applied for the native belief systems designated within this title by the Japanese people from the prehistoric times to the end of the Edo period. If Shinto had derived its importance from its merely being a set of local belief systems with cultural affiliations to the people believing and practicing it, it could have fallen into oblivion or insignificance as in the cases of other local shamanistic and animistic belief systems in East Asia after the arrival of Buddhism. Shinto had remained a source of legitimacy for the Japanese Imperial house as well as many other aristocratic houses and although it became syncretic with Buddhism and nearly all Shinto temples were absorbed into Buddhism in the course of time, it never died out completely and continued its existence alongside Buddhism which became the major religion in Japan after some centuries of struggle and missionary work (Totman, 1981: 8). Not being an organized religion until modern times, Shinto does not have a written holy book like the Bible, or the Quran. Many people mistakenly take Kojiki, and Nihongi as the holy books of Shinto but these are more like Illiad and Odyssey of the Greeks with some history added.

The roots of Shinto are ambiguous and whether it came from a single source is contested. There are even suggestions that Shinto was the belief system of the Ainu minority and was adopted by the Japanese people after their arrival to the Japanese islands (Nonno, 2015: 26). But in any case Shinto was essential for the Yamato clan's and other aristocratic families' legitimization of power and Shinto shrines and priests came under the patronage of the ruling elite (Atik, 2012a: 104). At the root of this patronage lay the Japanese myths that were associated with the Imperial and other

important aristocratic families. According to Kojiki and other written and oral sources, the Imperial Family descended from the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, other families also claimed descent from other kami or deities in these myths. It could be assumed that there are parallels between the Chinese Emperor who claimed to be the son of Heaven and the Japanese Emperor who claimed to have descended from the Sun Goddess. However, such a parallel is only artificial, even during the Nara and Heian periods when the Japanese held everything that is Chinese in high esteem; the Japanese monarchy never emulated the Chinese understanding of legitimacy to rule. The main difference was that the Chinese Emperors derived the legitimacy of their power not from bloodline but from the Mandate of Heaven. The Mandate of Heaven could shift from one individual or family to the other. On the other hand, the Japanese Emperors legitimized their rule through the native Shinto myths that portrayed them as descending from a divine bloodline. Therefore, their right to rule could not be taken away from the Yamato family. As indicated by Ivan Morris below, the Shinto myths were used to strengthen and legitimize the imperial household:

“[The land of Japan] is the region which my descendants shall be lords of. Do thou, my August Grandchild, proceed thither and govern it. Go! And may prosperity attend thy dynasty, and may it, like Heaven and Earth, endure forever. ' Such were the ringing phrases in which the Sun Goddess ordered her scion to descend from the Plain of High Heaven and to found the Imperial House of Japan. The heavenly grandmother's injunction is enshrined in the country's earliest chronicle (written in the eighth century) and provides the mytho-religious basis on which the same family has reigned over Japan from the beginning of her history to the present day. The main purpose of the founding legend was precisely to confirm this authority, which had certainly not been accepted in the country at large. During most of the early period the imperial family had been merely *primus inter pares*, one of the many powerful septs that held sway in different parts of the islands. The movement towards centralization, which culminated in the Great Reform of the seventh century, aimed at putting an end to clan rivalry and creating a centralized bureaucratic state on the Chinese model. In this state the emperor was to have supreme power over all the land and the people, including the former clan chieftains, who had been his rivals in strength; for, as the Reform Edict stated in good Chinese style, There are not two suns in the sky, nor two lords on the earth. ” (Morris, 1994: 56)

In this respect, the Japanese were different from their continental neighbors since they preferred to use the native beliefs of their country to solidify the legitimacy of the ruling elite while in China and Korea, concepts such as the Mandate of Heaven and Buddhism were employed to unify these countries and legitimize the power of the ruling elite. The reason for such a preference might seem odd especially taking into consideration the fact that the Japanese assimilated nearly anything Chinese into their administrative, cultural and religious practices and even Shinto was to a certain extent formalized after the Chinese Taoist models. Kojiki which is the oldest written Japanese source deals exactly with formalizing the Shinto myths and establishing a sacerdotal basis for the legitimacy of the Yamato rule. The emperor was not a mortal person as Hane describes, but rather an immortal in the body of a person, thus he was called “aketsu mikami (manifestation of god/kami), or arahito-gami (kami appearing as man)” (Hane, 1990: 47). This was a deliberate choice. The Chinese system was problematic in that, one could lose the Mandate of Heaven if he was not an able ruler, and thus, it was open for contenders of power to overthrow the ruling dynasty and establish a new one as Chinese and Korean history testifies. But in the case of Japan, the emperor was not the son of heaven and his power stemmed from his bloodline rather than the Mandate of Heaven. In this respect, Shinto remained as a key element for the legitimization of power throughout the Japanese history even up to the modern times (Hane, 1990: 28). Taking this into consideration, it is quite a sound question to ask how Buddhism managed to intercept so deep into the Japanese society and religious life even to the extent that it absorbed Shinto into its own establishment and became a national religion in a sense.

Although the writing down of the Shinto myths and further formulization in the Chinese style began to institutionalize Shinto, it was still not an organized religion by the time Buddhism reached Japan via the Korean peninsula. We do not have much documentation or knowledge about the state of Shinto during its early stages but a separation between the folk Shinto and state Shinto is apparent. While folk Shinto remained as an unorganized folk belief for a long while what we can name as an early form of state Shinto was more formal, with certain rituals and a degree of organization. But

even still Shinto lacked the organizational skills and the learned clergy that Buddhism possessed by the time it arrived in Japan. However, it also did not undergo any danger of extinction either. This was due to the nature of both Shinto and Buddhism. Unlike monotheistic religions, both Shinto and Buddhism were syncretic in nature. While Shinto was ready to adopt Buddha as a new deity in its pantheon, Buddhism was ready to adopt the Shinto kami as Bodhisattvas into its belief system (Como, 2007: 32). Thus, when Buddhism arrived in Japan, as will be discussed below, at the heart of the struggle between the court factions having pro and anti-Buddhist stances lay mere political advantages to be gained rather than a clash of opposing belief systems (Hane, 1990: 19). Contrary to the popular misconception about Japanese Buddhism, Buddhism came to Japan not from China but from Korea and for nearly a century Korea remained as the main source of Buddhist learning for the Japanese (Atik, 2012a: 106). Buddhism in Korea underwent some changes compared to the Buddhism in China and these changes made it easier for the Japanese to adopt it since the cultural and social structure in Japan was closer to Korea than China at this point (Sato, 1990: 32). But it would be beneficial to touch briefly upon the relation between Japan and Korea during its early formation till the unification of Korea under the Silla Kingdom and the weakening of the ties as a result before passing to the Nara and Heian Buddhism.

3. THE THREE KINGDOMS ERA IN KOREA AND RELATIONS OF JAPAN WITH THE PENINSULAR KINGDOMS

The Three Kingdoms Era was a time of formative era both in the Korean Peninsula and Japan. The tribal federations in both areas became kingdoms and more concrete political entities during this era. Although the name three kingdoms might refer to three political entities, there were more than three political entities in the region at this time. In the Northern part of the peninsula was Goguryeo, in the south were Baekje, Gaya and Silla in addition to the Jeju island in the south and Tungus tribes around the Yalu river. The three states were established in place of what are called as Samhan (three Han) by the historians (Ilyon, 2008: 17). The Han (韓) were an agricultural society organized in tribes. The language they spoke was different from the one spoken by the people of Goguryeo who were of Manchurian origin (Beckwith, 2004: 29). While the people of Goguryeo were semi-nomadic tribes extending from the Korean peninsula to large areas of Manchuria and related to the Altaic speaking Central Asia peoples, the origins of the Han people are obscure but their religion, language and lifestyle were different. The Han people were initially organized as tribes but later on they united around three confederations. The Mahan were the largest of them in the western part (Ilyon, 2008: 49). This confederacy was however, later replaced by the Kingdom of Baekje. The second confederacy was the Byeonhan which became the Gaya states in the southern tip of the peninsula and the last one was the Jinhan in the East (Ilyon, 2011: 52). One of the Jinhan tribes united the area of the Byeonhan confederacy as the kingdom of Silla. All three kingdoms were formed at around the same time during the 1st century BCE (Ilyon, 2008: 56). The Kingdom of Goguryeo was founded by a people from Manchuria. The Kingdom of Silla on the other hand was founded by one of the Jinhan tribes through unification of these tribes. The Kingdom of Baekje on the other hand was founded by a group of people immigrating from Goguryeo to Mahan as a result of conflicts within the Buyeo founding family of Goguryeo (Kim, 2012: 21). The Gaya States on the other hand, were never unified as a single kingdom but remained as a federation of city states and came under Japanese dominion until their gradual annexation by the kingdom of Silla. While the people of Goguryeo spoke a language related to other Manchurian and Tungusic languages, the people of Silla and Gaya spoke the language of the Han people. In Baekje, the ruling elite spoke the language of Goguryeo while the common people and the remnants of the Mahan aristocracy spoke the language spoken by the people of Gaya and Silla. As a result of this elite migration however, the culture and language in Baekje became closer to that of Goguryeo rather than Silla (Hong, 1988: 20). The first historical person thought to have ruled as the Emperor of Japan, was Homuda who immigrated to Japan from the Kingdom of Baekje as a chieftain. At this point, scholars think that a dynastic change took place in the Yamato Kingdom and the house of Homuda asserted itself as the ruling family and inserted other families of immigrant origin from China and Korea as families of divine origin in the Kojiki and Nihon Shoki chronicles' parts concerning the origins of the families (Hane, 1990: 31). In addition to these migrations from the Korean peninsula, the Japanese rulers began to intervene in the

Korean peninsula frequently and remained as a power to be reckoned with until the destruction of the Baekje and Goguryeo kingdoms by the united forces of Tang China and Silla Kingdom in the late 7th century. The Byeonhan were conquered by the Yamato and renamed as Minama at the southern tip of the Peninsula. At the early stages of the three kingdoms period, the bitter enmity between the Kingdom of Baekje and Goguryeo, between the Kingdom of Silla and Yamato. However, the most formidable of these Kingdoms was Goguryeo against whom the Yamato court aided the Kingdom of Baekje. In addition to this, the Kingdom of Silla also allied itself with the Kingdom of Baekje against Goguryeo at the initial stages of the struggle for power. As John W. Best mentions in his book, the Japanese *Nihon Shoki* is full of entries concerning the foundation as well as the dynastic ties of the Kingdom of Baekje to the aristocratic families in Japan (Hong, 1988: 24). While there are two founding myths, one cited in the *Baekje Annals of Samguk Sagi*, another in the Chinese Source of the founding family of Baekje, *Nihon Shoki* reiterates the Baekje version of *Samguk Sagi*, and touches upon the relations between Baekje and the Yamato court in a more historically relevant manner (Kim, 2006, pp. 17–19). The main Korean source for the developments during the Three Kingdoms Era of Korea is the *Samguk Sagi*, but the fact that these annals were compiled much later by Kim Pu-sik, a Confucian scholar appointed by the Goryeo court during the 12th century and the fact that Koreans during the 12th century viewed Japan with suspicious eyes and did not regard them in Confucian terms must be taken into consideration while observing these documents (Kim, 2006: 65). However, these annals contain the information relevant to not only the relations between the Yamato State and the Kingdom of Baekje, but also concern the spread of Buddhism first to the Korean peninsula and thereby to Japan. The earliest entry of Buddhism in the Baekje annals is in the passage concerning the reign of King Chimnyu and goes as:

“He was the oldest son of King Kūn’gusu [Keun’gusu], and his mother was Lady Ai-he succeeded his father on the throne.

[C.E.384] [1st year], Autumn, 7th month. The king sent an embassy to the court of the [Eastern] Chin [Jin] to affirm allegiance and present tribute.

_____, 9th month. The Serindian monk Malananda came from the domain of the [Eastern] Chin[Jin]. The king welcomed him and escorted him into the palace, where he was treated with ceremony and respect. The Buddhist Dharma was thus introduced into our kingdom.

[C.E. 385] 2nd year, Spring, 2nd month. The King had a Buddhist monastery erected on Han Mountain and caused ten men to enter the religion as monks.” (Kim, 1914, Chapter 17)

Although Buddhism might have infiltrated into the Kingdom of Baekje through the medium of commerce and Chinese immigrants much before this date, this date is accepted as the official introduction of Buddhism to the Kingdom of Baekje. The Baekje monarchs used Buddhism to their advantage especially in the state building process and institutionalization of their state. For the Chinese literati, Korean peninsula was a backwater of the Chinese civilization back then. And the few Chinese who happened to reside there were refugees and merchants or the descendants of the residents of the Chinese Commanderies that were established during the Han dynasty. But the main source of intellectually capable men who could be employed in the bureaucratic organs of these Kingdoms was the last ones. With the introduction of Buddhism to the Korean peninsula first by Goguryeo, and then to the south by Baekje, and lastly to Silla through Baekje and Goguryeo, these states found a clergy that was capable of helping their states to institutionalize and to function more efficiently. Thus the Buddhist clergy who were literate and who were already acquainted with organizational skills thanks to the Vinaya tradition that prevailed in Korea during the first phases of Buddhism helped to strengthen the state structure in these three kingdoms.

As mentioned in the Baekje annals, Buddhism officially arrived to Baekje after an envoy from Baekje went to the Eastern Jin court to pay tribute and homage as a vassal state (Kim, 2006: 72). Beginning from the Han period onwards, China began to view itself as the center of civilized World and demanded its neighbors to pay tribute and homage to the Chinese Emperors if they wished to trade and continue cultural exchanges with China. This system continued until the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1912. This system became very crucial for the international relations as well as the legitimacy of the rulers in East Asia until its collapse with the Qing dynasty. At its first stages, the

Han emperors forced the neighbor states to accept their suzerainty but later on the neighbor kingdoms of China mostly those with sedentary cultures willingly accepted the Chinese suzerainty since this system was also to their advantage in many ways. First of all, although the missions sent to China were named as tribute envoys, the Chinese court would reply with gifts in exchange and thus, in practice this was a barter commerce between the countries involved and this was a very lucrative commerce in deed. While the missions to China had the chance to acquire Chinese goods, they also had the chance to access the Chinese market for selling their local products at good prices. The Korean ginseng, paper, armors and herbs were sold at very good prices in China from the very early times onwards (Tamura, 2008: 40). Secondly, this tributary system became a source of legitimacy for the local rulers. By being recognized as the king of their region, the local rulers found a strong source of legitimacy for their rule. Thus, beginning from the Three Kingdoms era onwards, frequent envoys were sent to China. Even during times of civil strife in China, the Korean kingdoms continued to send envoys to China. As a result of this, the Chinese culture and Buddhism along with it had an enduring impact of the Korean peninsula. Japan on the other hand, began its intercourses with China from early times onwards, but due to the physical distance compared to Korea, and lack of sufficient shipping technology for direct voyages to China, Japan preferred to continue direct cultural exchanges with Korea rather than China until the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate. Of course physical distance and hazardous journeys were the initial reasons. Later on, the Yamato court styled itself in the Chinese model, and the Yamato rulers took the title of Emperor. Thus, accepting Chinese suzerainty would in theory undermine the legitimacy of the Japanese emperors. As a result of this, while Japan carefully continued cultural and commercial exchanges with the Tang China after the fall of the Kingdom of Baekje which was the main source of intellectual flow into the Yamato court, it retained its aloofness from the Chinese World order and saw itself as equal to China in terms of right to rule. While the Chinese emperors derived their power from the Mandate of Heaven as mentioned above, the Japanese Emperors had the blood right to rule and this could not be taken away from them, and they could not bow to or become the vassal of any human person since they were considered to be living gods. Thus, after the Tang era and by the end of the Heian period in Japan, Japan retained its relations with China at a minimum extent, limited to merchants and Buddhist clergy and this trend continued until the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate as mentioned before. On the other hand, Japanese rulers and elites did not see any problem in adopting the cultural practices of China while relations with Korea were denser since Korea did not pose any problems of legitimacy. As Micheal Seth asserts, the Japanese viewed the Korean peninsula as a threat whenever a strong alien force invaded it. The first case was the allied attack of the Tang and Silla forces which united the Korean peninsula and ended the Japanese existence there, for over a century, the Japanese expected an invasion force from China to attack its borders but there were only coastal raids from the Silla forces (Kim, 2006: 38). But much later, their fears of an invasion through Korea were confirmed when the Mongolians under the leadership of Kublai Khan attacked Japan twice in the 13th century. Thus, Japan had always kept a keen eye on the Korean peninsula as a source of both cultural and economic exchange but also a possible military threat while its relations with China remained aloof of the developments in China until the late Tokugawa times when western presence in East Asia became more threatening (Atik, 2012b: 219).

Taking this into consideration, it is not surprising that Buddhism arrived to Japan from Korea rather than China and until the Heian period, Korea remained as the main source of Buddhist scholarship for the Japanese. The official introduction of Buddhism to Japan was through an envoy from the Kingdom of Baekje to the Yamato court in 552. By this time the relationship between the Kingdom of Baekje and the Yamato court had changed drastically as a result of the decreasing military power of the Baekje kingdom and its increasing need for assistance from Japan. While Baekje became a vassal kingdom and the Baekje crown princes stayed in the Yamato court until they ascended the Baekje thrones beginning from the end of the 4th century onwards (Kim, 1914, Chapter 17). In return for the military aid that the Japanese court provided for the Kingdom of Baekje, the Baekje kings began providing the Japanese with more frequent technical, artistic and intellectual personnel (Totman, 1981: 13). This cultural exchange between the two kingdoms had a more

enduring effect compared to the military and political alliance that lasted when Baekje was invaded by the united forces of Silla and Tang China.

4. SPREAD OF BUDDHISM ALONG WITH CHINESE CIVILIZATION AND SYNCRETISM OF BUDDHISM AND SHINTO DURING THE NARA AND HEIAN PERIODS

The Yamato rulers of Japan did not have a permanent capital until they established a capital following the Chinese style in Nara in 710. Until then the capital was the place of residence of the Emperors, and the imperial palaces were abandoned after the death of each emperor due to the belief in Shinto that death polluted that palace. This practice of changing the capital at every generation was abandoned due to economic and political reasons. The Yamato state was a confederation of clans among whom the Yamato clan was the strongest. But the Yamato court underwent some revolutionary changes and remodeled the state in a more centralized manner. It would be wrong to say that the Chinese model of statecraft was wholly adopted. Prince Shōtoku was the pioneer in the reforms. Buddhism had already become already prevalent during this era. Since Shinto did not have an organized priesthood or did not engage in missionary activities as Buddhism did, their peaceful coexistence was not a matter of threat to the politically strong Buddhism, and also due to its belief in multitude of realities and flexibility to adopt the Shinto kami as Bodhisattvas into its belief system, the Buddhist clergy was tolerant and in fact, in time Shinto merged with Buddhism in many places. During the Heian period, different sects of Buddhism began to enter Japan first from Korea and later on directly from China with the establishment of direct links to the Tang Empire. However, the effects of most of these early sects were limited and did not leave a remarkable effect on the Japanese Society except for the Heian aristocracy whose fortunes would be overturned with the advent of the samurai class who preferred later sects such as Zen, Jodo and Tendai to the early esoteric teachings of Shingon and other sects.

The first permanent capital of Japan was Nara. As mentioned above, the reforms of Prince Shōtoku were instrumental in the establishment of a permanent capital in the Chinese style. Heian period is generally regarded as a more important period in terms of religious and cultural achievements compared to the Nara period. But the Nara period, along with the preceding Yamato and Asuka periods was important in the establishment and spread of Chinese cultural achievements to Japan. One important feature of this period was the arrival of Korean and Chinese immigrants from the continent in times of crisis. These people were referred to as *kikajin* in Japanese. Some of these people such as Wani who was a famous Korean Confucian scholar brought important cultural assets like the thousand character classic and their descendants became important followers of the Soga clan who were also *kikajin* and were also the first patrons of Buddhism in Japan (Ury, 2008: 397). Compared to the succeeding periods, the Nara period was short and the developments and the major political atmosphere of the Nara period continued well into the Heian period which caused many historians writing a general history of Japan to include the first within the latter. The Nara city was modeled after the city of Chang'an in China which was the capital city of the Tang Empire at the time. The Soga family as mentioned before became dominant in the Yamato court and continued the political ascendancy of Buddhism and until the end of the Heian period, Buddhism continued its rise until it became more dominant than Shinto. It can be argued that a possible clash between Shinto and Buddhism was possible in such a case. But as Sonoda argues in her essay, the relationship between Shinto and Buddhism was rather of a peaceful coexistence and in time what the Japanese call *shinbutsu shūgo*, merging of kami and Buddha, became a dominant pattern (Sonoda, 2008: 87). Initially, important Shinto shrines such as the Hachiman shrine in Northern Kyushu erected Buddhist chapels or temples within their grounds to have Buddhist sutras recited for the kami, and later on Shinto shrines were erected near the Buddhist temples to have the kami protect the Buddhist temples (Sonoda, 2008: 407). This process began with the erection of State temples which were aimed at guarding the state through the intervention of Buddhas and magical Buddhist rites as well as establishing a firmer control in the provinces through the state temples to be erected. The erection of state temples began during the reign of Emperor Shōmu in the early 740s and it was sanctioned that Buddhism could only be proselytized through the state temples built in every province (Sonoda, 2008: 83). However, by the end of the 8th century, the Buddhist temples built by the state began to

gather an increasing wealth, lands and political power. But it should not be interpreted in a way that Buddhism began to assert its power over Shinto or other social and political power groups. An interesting example can be given as a testimony to the still remaining power of Shinto during the Nara period. A Zen monk with the Buddhist name of Dōkyō became the favorite of Empress Kōken in 761 after he supposedly healed her in a miraculous way. After he became the favorite in court, he rose sharply and was even given the unique title of *Hō-ō* (Buddha King) for the first and only time in Japanese history. After his quick rise within the court ranks, he did not stop his ambitions and he set up an oracle in the Hachiman shrine in Kyushu the kami of which with the same name was famous for its oracular messages, stating that Dōkyō must become the emperor after the empress. However, his rivals warned the empress to have the oracle checked for a second time and this time the kami decided that he should not become the emperor (Sonada, 2008: 409). Even if his scheme did not work, it is worth mentioning that he used the intermediary of a Shinto deity rather than Buddha or a Bodhisatva which suggests that Shinto still retained its power but at the same time Buddhism and Shinto interacted with each other if necessary and there were not clear cut lines separating the two traditions apart at this stage. In fact, the two traditions began to merge more closely as mentioned above.

The Nara period did not see an institutionalized sectarianism, but it would be wrong to think that there was only the state Buddhism on the scene. State Buddhism was influenced from the esoteric teachings brought by immigrants from Korea and China. But there were two other groups who were preaching the words of Buddha in their own fashion. The first of these groups were the followers of Gyōki (668-749) who was a descendent of the famous Korean Confucian scholar Wani. He was preaching the Kegon sutra and its teachings and was more interested in missionary activities rather than lavish and magical ceremonies of the state temples. He and his followers became famous for their social work such as building bridges, digging ponds and other welfare activities. They became influential in the provinces far from Nara and in the rural areas around Nara. Another important group belonged to the Ascetic Mountain Buddhism. Gyōki was not persecuted by the government but he and his disciples were banned many times by the government. Although he did not preach anything against the imperial family or the government, he did not enter the established state temple system either. Furthermore, he built temples in addition to digging wells or building bridges which constituted the biggest threat for the state. Throughout the Nara period, the state first established the ritsuryō system the aim of which was to codify the laws in a Chinese model and establish a centralized state system (Kimura, 2009: 30). For the ritsuryō system to succeed, the state temples and shintō shrines were an important element. Tōdaiji temple was built as the central Buddhist temple to govern all the other temples in the provinces. The temples in the capital and the provincial centers were expected to provide protection for the state through their prayers. The main ideology behind this system depended on the Rushana Buddha who protected the state in return for the devotion of the ruler. During the reign of Emperor Shomu as mentioned above, the state temples (*kokubunji*) were erected in every province and Tōdaiji became the center of these state temples. The root for this belief lied in the Golden Light Sutra which promised that Buddha would protect the state and its ruler (Sonada, 2008, pp. 397–400). Thus, the state temples were seen as an essential religious institution to such an extent that Emperor Shomu became a Buddhist monk after his retirement and set an example for many other emperors who also became Buddhist monks after their abdication of the throne. Until the Heian period, Buddhism was a tool for the state and largely remained under state authority and patronage. It was seen as an institution for protecting the state and the Imperial court. This is not a surprising fact since introduction of Buddhism to China and then to Korea before Japan was also through the means of state support and it was possible with the ardent support of the Baekje Kingdom that Buddhism could be introduced and survive in Japan. However, as in China and Korea, the Buddhist temples began to gather wealth and power during the Nara period. Until the Heian period, Buddhism was a tool for the state and largely remained under state authority and patronage. It was seen as an institution for protecting the state and the Imperial court. This is not a surprising fact since introduction of Buddhism to China and then to Korea before Japan was also through the means of state support and it was possible with the ardent support of the Baekje Kingdom that Buddhism could be introduced and survive in Japan. However, as in China and Korea, the Buddhist

temples began to gather wealth and power during the Nara period. The nobility donated lands to the state temples and these lands were exempt from taxation. Thus the state temples headed by Tōdaiji became more powerful and in time more difficult to control by the state (Kimura, 2009: 56).

Another important phenomenon during the Nara period was the further spread of Buddhism to the provinces far from the capital. The state temples were not only aimed at praying for the well-being of the state and the emperor but also were a political tool at the hands of the Fujiwara clan and the Emperors who ousted the Soga clan from the political scene in mid-7th century. The state temples were one tool for spreading Buddhism, but since their main function was to protect the state and the imperial family with their prayers, their missionary activity was limited. Individual conversions were not so widespread and Shinto continued to be the most widely practiced religion. But the clan chieftains in the provinces saw the advantages of converting to Buddhism, and with them, their clans converted to Buddhism en masse (Sato, 1983: 45). These clan chieftains were at the same time head of the kami worship in their provinces and thus contributed more to the spread of Buddhism compared to the state temples. Their willing conversion by seeing the advantages that the religion brought also softened the conversion process and since the clan chieftains were the only group capable of opposing the spread of this new religion vis-à-vis their own Shinto cults, their cooperation was an important factor in the peaceful co-existence of the Shinto and Buddhism (Sonada, 2008: 404). While Buddhism was getting wealthier and less controllable in the capital, it was patronized and used more to the advantage of the clan chieftains and local aristocracy. The Fujiwara clan who were the strongest and most dominant of the aristocratic families patronized Buddhist and Shinto shrines in the provinces where they had cadet houses, and other strong families followed them. Meanwhile, the Tōdaiji and other temples in the capital were becoming more problematic for the imperial family and the aristocracy. The incident of Dōkyō showed the Fujiwaras that the Buddhist clergy could be dangerous if unchecked, and in order to curb the power of these temples surrounding Nara, the court decided to move the imperial capital one last time (Watanabe, 2014: 43).

The Heian period, on the other hand, was especially important in the codification of Shinto myths and Japanese history into the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* records as the most important two written sources belonging to ancient Japan. In addition to this, the institutionalization of Buddhism as a state supported religion began in earnest during this period and Confucianism, a third formative element for the Japanese society entered more firmly into the Japanese intellectual and moral thinking during this period. The capital was moved to Heian in 794 by Emperor Kammu. This marked a new beginning in the Japanese history in terms of cultural and religious developments (Atik, 2012a: 109). After the capital was moved to Heian, the Nara sects began to lose their grip on the political scene. At this point, two important persons entered the scene. Saichō who learnt the Tendai and some Esoteric teachings in China and returned to Japan in 805 and founded the Enryakuji monastery in Hieizan. The other important person to change the religious scene was Kūkai who brought a purely esoteric teaching of Buddhism to Japan for the first time and established the Shingon sect firmly in Heian. These two sects became more dominant in time compared to the state temples and in time they broke the monopoly of the Tōdaiji to ordain monks (Como, 2007: 61).

Most of what we know of religious practices of the time come from the records of the aristocracy. An amalgam of Shinto, Daoist, Buddhist and Confucian rituals were daily performed in minute detail in the lives of the Heian aristocrats. A good example of such a mixture of different religious practices comes from Fujiwara no Morosuke who advises in his Testamentary Admonitions to repeat seven times the name of the star of the year, to take a mirror and observe your own face, to look at the calendar and look for a good or bad omen, to brush your teeth and wash your face facing west chant the name of the Buddha and invoke the Kamis that you should revere daily (Grapard, 1999: 517). The aristocracy and as far as we know, the common people had a syncretic adaptation of all these belief systems in their daily observances and they did not see any contradiction in this despite some theoretical and theological problems that such a syncretism would pose. During this period, as mentioned above, Tendai sect brought from China by Saichō and Shingon sect, brought from China by Kūkai became the dominant Buddhist sects during the Heian period. The main change that they brought to the Heian Buddhism was the introduction of pure esoteric Buddhism and more

importantly sectarianism in a real sense. Before the establishment of the Tendai and Shingon sects, the Buddhist monasteries and temples did not distinguish and affiliate themselves with a certain sect. Tōdaiji for instance, was not a purely Kegon, Hosso, Jōjitsu, Sanron, Shingon or Tendai temple, the monks of all sects studied and preached together until the end of the Heian period (Kasamatsu et al., 1981: 91).

Although Tendai sect had the most enduring effects on Japanese Buddhism from the Heian Period onwards, the Shingon sect of Kūkai was the dominant sect of the day among the court circles. Kūkai was born into the aristocratic Saeki family in 774 in the Sanuki province of the Shikoku Island. He had initial difficulties due to the persecution that the Saeki clan underwent as a result of political clashes with the then dominant Fujiwaras. Even still, he was entitled to study in the state university in Nara. But he became a mountain ascetic after his introduction to the Buddhist practices. Especially the Bodhisattva Akasagarbha mantra was influential on him (Sato, 1990: 106). Although the mountain ascetics were banned under the ritsuryō system, he went to the mountains to recite and meditate on this mantra. He was also influenced by other Buddhist and Taoist texts and practices which were available to him in Nara libraries and monasteries. In 804, he joined an official voyage to China. This voyage became a turning point in his career. He went to Chang'an, the capital city of the Tang Empire with the embassy mission. In Chang'an he was to the Ximingsi temple where he began studying Chinese texts the language of which he was very fluent in addition to Sanskrit and Indian Buddhism. Especially a Pandit from Gandhara, Prajna, who studied in Nalanda University was helpful in teaching him Sanskrit and the Siddham script (Miyazaki, 1999: 108). In 805, a turning point in his life took place as a result of his meeting with the esoteric Buddhist master Hui Guo who was one of the most important masters of the time. Soon after they met, Hui Guo accepted him into the Qinlong monastery in Chang'an and bestowed upon Kūkai the first level of initiation to the Esoteric Buddhist tradition. Before Hui Guo died Kūkai learnt as much as he could and was anointed as a master by Hui Guo who urged him to return to Japan and spread esoteric Buddhism and his teaching there (Wang, 2016: 82). In 806, Kūkai returned to Japan where he found the political situation dramatically changed. Emperor Kammu who was a patron of Buddhism was now dead and the new Emperor Heizei was not so friendly towards Buddhism. In addition to this, Saichō, the founder of Tendai in Japan was in the same embassy mission but had opted for returning earlier (Miyazaki, 1999: 64). Thus he was already in a more pioneering position since he also brought esoteric teachings in addition to Tendai teachings and was granted the right to perform esoteric rights in the capital. But after Heizei retired and the new emperor Saga who was already corresponding and exchanging poems and calligraphy with Kūkai before his enthronement became the emperor Kūkai began to occupy a more important position. In 810, Kūkai was appointed as the head of the Tōdaiji temple which was, as mentioned before, the center of all state temples. He also was allowed to perform esoteric rituals for the well-being of the emperor and the state which was the duty of the established sects of Nara beforehand. To further consolidate his power, Saichō who had a very brief introduction to esoteric rites in China requested to be initiated by Kūkai and was initiated in 812 at Takaosan temple which was then the headquarter of the Shingon sect (Kimura, 2009: 85). This event confirmed Kūkai's superior learning in esoteric Buddhism vis-à-vis Tendai monks. From then on Kūkai's ascendancy continued to such a degree that Shingon sect began to dominate the established sects of Nara and Saichō's Tendai sect in the end had to focus on esoteric teachings more than on the original Tendai teachings to survive. But by the end of the Heian period, a new class of warriors called samurai began to emerge and gain importance and power (Kadıoğlu, 2018: 83). Nearly all the Buddhist sects were dependent on patronage or donations. Tendai sect which was reduced to poverty and starvation from Saichō's death until return of one of his disciples, Ennin from China after a longer stay than both Kūkai and Saichō and Enchin who further invigorated the sect within court circles and Heian politics. Ultimately, the Shingon sect's heyday was confined to the early and mid-Heian and afterwards was eclipsed by other sects and remained strong only among the ancient Kyoto aristocracy.

While Kūkai and his disciples complied with the established order collaborated with it in terms of religious organization, Saichō and his disciples acted just in the opposite direction. Saichō established the Hiei Monastery and fought for separate ordination rights for the Tendai sect until his

death, declaring that the other schools practiced Theravada ordination and Vinaya rituals and practices while his Tendai was a purely Mahayana sect. Saichō became more and more critical of the other sects, and after he was initiated formally into esoteric Buddhism, his wish to further advance his level was not granted by Kūkai which caused a split not only between the two but also amongst the followers of the two. While Kūkai was becoming more officially and religiously acknowledged by the court and the Nara clergy, Saichō was becoming more estranged especially to the Nara clergy (Kimura, 2009: 74). His wish to have a separate ordination hall in Hieizan was not granted until his death. But despite all his criticism against other sects being denied his wishes, he never resorted to militant ways during his lifetime. But his views had an effect on his disciples who became more violent and militant not only towards rival sects and temples, but even to each other which culminated in the burning down of rival Tendai temples by the monks of Hieizan many times in its history (Kimura, 2009: 77). In this respect, it is not surprising that the founders or the important personages of more militant sects which were to cause many problems to the unifiers of Japan in the late 16th century such as Jodo and Nichiren were graduates of Hieizan (Atik, 2012a: 112). By the time Ennin who became one of the most important figures for the Tendai sect came back from China in 847 after a long stay of 9 years, the Tendai sect was in a very weak position. But his superior learning even from Kūkai in esoteric Buddhism gained him great influence and fame. While Saichō and Kūkai stayed in China for less than a year, Ennin stayed for nearly a decade and advanced more than both patriarchs (Kimura, 2009: 41). His followers became the Sanmon branch of Tendai as they stayed in and dominated the Enryakuji temple. But after Ennin's death in 864, Enchin became the abbot in 873. The followers of Enchin lineage and the Ennin lineage became rivals over the abbotship of Enryakuji. Finally, the followers of the Enchin lineage had to settle themselves in Miidera in Kyoto as a result of violent clashes and began to be called as the Jimon branch (Watanabe, 2014: 32). The monks called sōhei were used in the clashes between the two lineages as well as the clashes with other sects. In time, this rare occasion to resort to violence by the Buddhist clergy became the norm and the temples gathered sōhei armies as well as mercenary armies and recruiting the peasants (Kadioğlu, 2018: 13). In this respect, the Tendai practice of settling disputes with violence was to be a feature of most of the other sects. But it should also be born in mind that the disputes ending in violence were not doctrinal disputes, they were mostly over the abbotship of a temple, land rights and other political or economic interests. Thus, the last decades of the Heian period saw a new and violent but also more vigorous Buddhism free of the State temple system and other restrictions imposed by the central government. It was not only the temples that the central government was losing hold of, but more importantly, the new class of military houses in the provinces were beginning to act more independently and encroaching over the land rights of the Heian aristocracy as they became stronger. Two major houses were leading them: the Taira and the Minamoto. These two houses appear during the late Heian period. The Fujiwaras were using them for controlling the other samurai houses. Although these new military houses were strong in their provinces, they lacked the legitimacy that the Taira and Minamoto had as descendants of imperial lines. Taira and Minamoto were the younger sons and grandsons of emperors who could not be given titles and were sent to the provinces to serve as military commander or governors there. Thus they were not a single family but rather a group of imperial descendants. A younger son who could not be given a title or a position in the court would assume one of the two surnames and become a Taira or a Minamoto. Mostly, those going to the eastern provinces became Minamoto while those going to the Western provinces mostly became Taira. Therefore, the clash that is to be described briefly below between the Taira and Minamoto was more of an economic and political nature than a feud between two warrior clans (Kadioğlu, 2018: 12).

5 CONCLUSION

The Heian period and the preceding periods were a formative period in Japan beginning from the 5th century until the Kamakura Shogunate. This was perhaps the period when Japan was connected to its continental neighbors intellectually and religiously. After this period, beginning with the Kamakura period, ties with Korea and China were gradually decreased and by the Edo Period (1600-1868) Japan had become a *hermit kingdom*. As a result of this connectedness, Japanese religious and intellectual landscape was in many ways an extension of the continent. During this

period, not only Buddhism and Confucianism arrived in Japan along with ideas of legitimacy and statecraft, but also these ideas influenced and shaped the native belief systems and ideas as well as the administrative structure and organization of the native religious institutions. As a result, despite the local differences, Japan was more like Korea and China not only politically but also religiously. Shinto, the native belief system of Japan which was originally an unorganized and without a sacred text or a unified rite became an organized and more formally ritualized religion rather than a belief system demonstrating sometimes opposing views according to the loci it was practiced. Buddhism, which entered Japan probably even before the Yamato period became the prevalent religion in the Japanese landscape by the end of the Heian period as a result of migrations as well as state support. Following the initial stages of introduction of Buddhism by the Korean émigrés, there were tensions but these were, as discussed above more about political leverage than belief centered polemics on the part of the aristocrats who partook in these struggles seemingly between followers of Shinto and Buddhism. But after the initial setbacks, Buddhism not only managed to permeate into every layer of Japanese society, but also influenced and eventually absorbed Shinto into itself resulting in a syncretic religious life in Japan with every Shinto shrine containing a Buddhist temple and every Buddhist temple hosting a Japanese *kami*. This was however followed by internal strife among different Buddhist sects. Until the Kamakura period which followed the Heian period and the arrival of the samurai, the local warriors in the provinces into the political and cultural scene, Buddhist sects imported directly from abroad by monks educated in China or sometimes even by monks of non-Japanese origin dominated the religious life. As a result, during the Heian period, religion in Japan was not only influenced by the developments in China and Korea, but had also become an extension the continental religious panorama until ties with the continent became erratic as a result of the political and economic upheavals that resulted in the take-over of power and wealth by the samurai who were not interested in importing high culture or religion from China.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Amaç

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı erken ortaçağ süresince Japonya’da meydana gelen düşünsel, dinsel ve kültürel gelişmeleri Asya anakarasını da göz önüne alarak daha geniş bir perspektiften ele almaktır. Japonya üzerine genel yaklaşım Japonya’nın tamamen kendine özgün bir ülke olduğu ve dışarıya kapalı adeta fanus içerisinde bir gelişim gösterdiği yönündedir. Oysa Japonya’da yerel inanç sistemi olan Şinto da dahil olmak üzere tüm düşünce ve din akımları özellikle Heian döneminde Asya anakarasından önce Kore daha sonra da Çin üzerinden gelen etkilere açık olmuştur ve Japonya aslında kapalı ülke olduğu çok sonraki dönemlerde bile Asya’daki komşularıyla etkileşimini sürdürmüştür. Bu çalışma birincil ve ikincil kaynaklara dayanarak bu bağları ve etkileşimleri Japonya’nın Heian döneminde içinde bulunduğu siyasi ve ekonomik dinamikleri de göz önüne alarak incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Böylelikle hem Japonya’da diğer komşularına paralel ya da diğer komşularının etkisiyle meydana gelmiş olan gelişmeler ile Japonya’da komşularından bağımsız olarak meydana gelen gelişmeler ele alınarak Japonya’nın din ve düşünce alanlarında gerek komşuları ile benzer ve bağlantılı gerekse kendine özgü yanları sergilenecektir. Böylelikle Japonya’da günümüze kadar süregelen dinsel ve düşünsel akımların temelinin atıldığı Heian dönemi daha geniş bir perspektiften ele alınarak *özgün ülke Japonya* (unique country Japan) paradigmasının ötesine geçmek hedeflenmektedir.

Yöntem

Bu çalışmanın hazırlanmasında temel yöntem olarak metin incelemeleri ve analizi kullanılmıştır. Elde olan yazılı veriler sağlıklı bir istatistiki ya da sayısal analize el vermemektedir. Bu nedenle tarih biliminde genel olarak kullanılan yöntemlere başvurulmuş ve metinlerin analizine başvurulmuştur. Japon kaynaklarının ne yazık ki Çin ve Kore kaynakları ile karşılaştırıldığında oldukça dağınıktır ve genellikle efsane ya da masal tarzında bir anlatıma sahiptirler. Çin kaynakları ise yüzlerce yıllık deneyime dayanan tarih yazımı geleneği ile Batı dünyasında yüzyıllar sonra ancak modern dönemde aşılabilen (Siku kısa adıyla anılan Ming dönemi ansiklopedisi ancak bundan birkaç yıl önce wikipedia tarafından aşılabilmiştir) bir kayıt tutma ve tarihçilik geleneğine sahiptir. Ancak Çinliler de kendileri için görece önemsiz olan v dahası kendilerine biat etmeyerek üstünlüklerini tanımayan bu ada devleti hakkında çok az kayıt tutma ihtiyacı duymuşlardır. Çin geleneğini kopyalayan Korelilerin ise kaynakları Çinliler kadar olmasa da son derece zengindir. Ayrıca Japonya’da bu konuda yapılan çok dereceli çalışma vardır ve bu makalenin yazımında Japonca ikincil kaynak ve araştırmalara da elden geldiğince yer verilerek kullanılan kaynaklar desteklenmeye çalışılmıştır. Daha sağlıklı bir tarihsel analiz içinse coğrafi ve kültürel açıdan olduğu kadar siyasi ilişkiler bakımından da Japonya ile derin bağları olan Kore’deki durum da kısaca ele alınarak buradan Japonya’ya dini ve düşünsel akımları taşıyan Koreli göçmenlerin (kikajin: 木歌人木歌人 geliş nedenlerine değinilmiştir. Ayrıca özellikle Budist tarikatların kendi aralarındaki siyasi ve düşünsel çekişmeleri ele alınarak erki nasıl ele geçirdikleri irdelenmiştir.

Bulgular

Japonya’da özellikle Nara döneminden (奈良時代: 710-794) genel kanının aksine Japonya Asya anakarasındaki komşuları ile başta Kore olmak üzere yoğun bir kültürel ve düşünsel etkileşime girmiştir. Yine genel olarak Japonya’nın pek çok kültürel ve dinsel öğeyi Çin’den aldığı düşünülmekteyse de bu makalenin de gösterdiği gibi Budizm’den Çin yazısına kadar pek çok kültürel, dinsel ve düşünsel öğe Japonya’ya her ne kadar Çin kökenli olsalar da Kore üzerinden girmiştir. Bunda coğrafi yakınlık nedeniyle iki ülke arasında iletişimin Çin ile karşılaştırıldığında daha kolay olması etkili olmuştur. Ayrıca Japonca ile Korecenin dil benzerliği ve kültürel ve sosyal yakınlık da Koreli din adamlarının ve aydınların Japonya’ya daha kolay adapte olmasını sağlamıştır. Daha sonrasında Japonya’da yetişen rahipler ise ancak Kamakura döneminden itibaren Japonya’ya özgü ve Asya anakarasından farklılıklar gösteren Nichiren gibi tarikatları oluşturabilmişlerdir. Heian dönemi boyunca ise Japonya’da din ve düşünce alanlarındaki gelişmeler aslında pek çok yönden Çin ve Kore’deki gelişmelerin aynası gibidir. Temel farklılıklardan birisi ise Japonya’da bazı tarikatlar devlet koruması altında yayılırken bazıları bu korumadan mahrum kalmış, sonuçta ise Tang döneminde Çin’de manastırlarda savaş sanatları çalışılmasını yasaklayarak “savaşçı rahip”

sorunundan kurtulan Çin ve Kore'nin aksine Japonya'da 16. Yüzyılın sonlarına kadar Budist tarikatlar ve manastırlar silahlı kolları da olan ve bazen başkentteki sarayı ve soyluları bile tehdit eden bir yapılanma oluşturmuşlardır. Yalnızca devlet ile değil kendi aralarında da savaşan bu manastır ve tarikatlar Japonya'da özellikle Zen gibi tarikatların da savaşçı sınıf olan samuraylar ile ilişkilerini daha geliştirmesi ve Nichiren ve Jodo Shinshu gibi Japonya'ya özgü tarikatların halk kitleleri arasında yayılması sonucunda Çin ve Kore'den ithal edilen bu tarikatler Kyoto aristokrasisi arasında sınırlı kalmış ve gücünü yitirmiştir.

Sonuç ve Tartışma

Japonya Yamato döneminden önce henüz tarihöncesi çağlarda iken kendisine özgün ve komşularından farklı bir ülke görünümünde iken önce Kore daha sonra ise Çin ile olan ilişkilerin artması sonucunda Japonya'da düşünce ve din alanındaki genel tablo değişmeye başlamış, Japonya'nın kendine özgü inanç sistemi olan Şinto bile Budizm'in ve Daoizmin etkisine girerek değişime uğramış ve bir halk inancından örgütlü ve sistematik bir dine evrilmiştir. Bu dönemde gerek Kore ve Çin'den Japonya'ya gelenler gerekse Japonya'dan Çin ve Kore'ye giden Prens Shotoku gibi aristokratlar ve Ennin ve Kūkai gibi rahipler Asya anakarası ile Japonya arasındaki köprüyü canlı tutmuş, yalnızca Çin'i model alarak yüzeysel bir kopyalama girişiminde bulunmamış, Japon toplumunu kökten değiştirerek kalıcı olarak Çin kültür çemberi içerisine sokan gelişmelere ön ayak olmuşlardır. Daha sonraki dönemlerde Japonya içine kapanmışsa d Çin ve Kore etkisi Japon düşünce ve din dünyasında kalıcı hale gelmiştir.