
UNIT 4 CONFUCIANISM AND SHINTOISM

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4.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit gives a brief picture about the eastern religions of Confucianism and Shintoism

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Confucianism is a complex religious, ethical, and political system built up on the ancient Chinese traditions, and had tremendous influence on the people of China up to the twentieth century. Confucianism had its glory and fall during the reign of different dynasties of China for almost two millennia until it was subdued by the rise of communism. Shintoism is such a religion of the people of Japan. It is a way of life rather than a set of religious concepts or dogmas.

4.2 CONFUCIANISM: AN INTRODUCTION

Confucianism has come to mean “The School of the Scholars” and is an ethical and philosophical system gradually originated from the teachings of Confucius in the Eastern part of Asia. It is a complex religious, ethical, and political system built up on the ancient Chinese traditions, and had tremendous influence on the people of China up to the twentieth century. Confucianism had its glory and fall during the reign of different dynasties of China for almost two millennia until it was subdued by the rise of communism. But there seems to be a recent revival of Confucianism as primarily derived from the neo-Confucians in the mainland China and the neighboring East Asian countries. To give a more comprehensive metaphysical concept, neo-Confucianism has come to integrate

the Taoist and Buddhist ideas into their own like never before, despite the fact that many forms of Confucianism has come to express their reservations against the Buddhist and Taoist traditions, irrespective of their importance and popularity to the Chinese life.

4.3 THE RELIGIOUS FRAMEWORK

As a religion, it is one without positive revelation, with minimum doctrinal dogmas, in which the worship is centered more on the offerings to the dead. The notion of duty lies much beyond the proper morals to include almost a detailed account of everyday life. The ancient times of China, during the life of Confucius, saw the prevalence of a nature-worship trending towards a monotheistic tradition and it is to this following that Confucius adhered to. While the nature gods were all respected and worshipped, the four quarters of the heavens, the moon, and the stars were all under the direction of the supreme-heaven god *Tien* or the *Shangti* (supreme Lord). The other spirits worked under him in this framework like ministers, in complete obedience.

The supreme lord, exercising a benign providence over men, upheld moral law, being aware of everything done even those in secret. He dictated punishments to the evil doers by natural calamities, or premature death, or by forcing misfortune on the impure and thus asserting moral order. The tradition of a strong patriarchal system was an offspring of the religious belief that the happiness and glory of the patriarchs depended to a great extent on the right conduct of their living offspring. It was considered the duty of the living descendants to contribute to the glory of their dead ancestors by right conduct. Though Confucius himself did not disregard this as a motive for rightful living, he stressed more on love or the doing of virtue for its own sake, in the lines of the Kantian concept of goodness. The principles of morality and their application to concrete human situations in varied relations as envisioned by great sages of the past, though not revealed, have been embodied in the sacred texts. The religion lacks positive divine revelation and thus is more of a wisdom that was providential, as promulgated by the sages who were born with the wisdom of the heavens to instruct men in good will.

Following the path of rightness, as laid down by these sages, is humanly possible considering the basic good nature of man which was not irreversibly corrupted by vicious influences. Confucius considered men to be good in nature and did not heed much even to the natural tendency for evil. Evil was considered to be an influence of the bad environments and an over impressive giving in to the appetites of the nature. But at the same time, these were something that the human will could easily afford to take control off. There are no references in the writings about any externally caused downfall of man and hence humanity standing in need of a redeemer to take him to his days of past glory, thus lacking any history of salvation. Though there is a mention of prayer at a few instances in the scriptures, no obligation is made as to the compliance of having everyday prayers. The Chinese notion of sacrifice is just the offering of food expressing the reverent homage of the worshippers, and the concept of propitiation through blood is not relevant. In honor of the spirit guests who are invited and are thought to enjoy the entertainment, solemn parties are held. This is celebrated with a variety of food and drinks accompanied by vocal and instrumental music and pantomimic dances. The officiating ministers in all these

practices are not priests but the head of families, feudal lords, and atop of it the king, as Confucianism lacks a class of priests.

Confucianism not only heeds to the immediate teachings of Confucius but also the pre-existing writings to which Confucius gave his approval. Thus, the sacred books as considered in Confucianism is a collection of sacred writings, including those venerated even in the days of Confucius, on traditional records, customs, and rites sanctioned under the patronage of Confucius. There are two categories of writings: the 'King' (Classics), and the 'Shuh' (Books).

The Five Classics are:

1. *Shu Ching* (Classic of History) - collection of documents and speeches dating from the Later Han Dynasty (23-220 CE)
2. *Shih Ching* (Classic of Odes) - collection of 300 poems and songs from the early Chou Dynasty (1027-402 BC)
3. *I Ching* (Classic of Changes) - collection of texts on divination based on a set of 64 hexagrams that reflect the relationship between Yin and Yang in nature and society
4. *Ch'un Ching* (Spring and Autumn Annals) - extracts from the history of the state of Lu 722-484, said to be compiled by Confucius
5. *Li Ching* (Classic of Rites) - consists of three books on the *Li* (Rites of Propriety)

The Four Books are:

1. *Lun Yu* (Analects) of Confucius
2. *Chung Yung* (Doctrine of the Mean)
3. *Ta Hsueh* (Great Learning)
4. *Meng Tzu* (Mencius)

4.4 A RELIGION OF VIRTUES (*DE*)

More than the making of virtuous men, Confucianism looks upon the formation of men of learning and good manners who combine the qualities of a saint, scholar and gentleman. By the religious practices, more of a comprehensive development of the humanness rather than a religious formation was envisioned. Hence, rite or rituals in the Confucian tradition has a different meaning of purpose than found in other religious traditions. It cannot be separated from the everyday life of man and from practices other than in his religious life. Though the books promoted rituals strongly, Confucius was for taking it more in their spirit, often even compromising them when necessary. Rite stands for a complex set of ideas and its Confucian meaning ranges from politeness and propriety to the understanding of everybody's correct place in society. This character of rites could even be traced to the religious meaning of sacrifice. Ritual has a twofold goal: at the external front, it is a way of letting people be aware of their status as to their societal set up and their relationships; from an internal point of view, it is to remind people of their duties amidst others and what is to be expected from them.

Formalized behavior becomes progressively internalized, desires are channeled, and personal cultivation becomes the mark of social correctness. The most powerful way of cultivating oneself in right living is the very sincere and obedient adherence to the rituals. Rituals can be seen as means to find the balance between the opposing qualities that may otherwise lead to conflicts. Rituals, by assigning status to everyone based on the situations and by creating a hierarchy of sort in relationships through protocols and ceremonies, divide people into their rightful groups. Confucianism believes in the basic goodness of man. Developing virtues in one's life is to be of ultimate importance, and there needs to be love for this exercise. Right knowledge and anything conducive to the development of the virtues has to be eagerly sought after. And in the line of Socrates, Confucius also made the same conclusion — that vices sprang from ignorance. The whole of the ethical teachings comprise of the following concepts in Confucianism.

Ren (Benevolence)

Ren is translated broadly into benevolence, goodness, or humanness. From the words of Confucius, it becomes clear that by cultivating goodness or humanness in oneself and assisting others in the same procedure one can be called humane. “As for humaneness—you want to establish yourself; then help others to establish themselves. You want to develop yourself; then help others to develop themselves. Being able to recognize oneself in others, one is on the way to being humane.” [*Analects*, 6:28 (SCT, 50)] Benevolence as a fundamental virtue in Confucianism is a kind regard for the welfare of others in need and the willingness to help them out. In the whole frame of an ideal man, this is considered to be a cardinal trait. In ‘*Analects*’, XV, 13, there is repeated mention of the golden rule of Confucianism, about the most fundamental source of all virtues. It is read thus — when a disciple asked him for a guiding principle for all conduct, the master answered: “Is not mutual goodwill such a principle? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others”. Confucius had a positive approach to dealing with injustice rather than just dealing with it in consideration and kindness. He taught to “Requite injury with justice, and kindness with kindness” (*Analects*, XIV, 36). He seems to have viewed the question from the practical and legal standpoint of social order. “To repay kindness with kindness”, he says elsewhere, “acts as an encouragement to the people. To requite injury with injury acts as a warning” (Li-ki, XXIX, 11). Thus, the proactive positiveness of dealing with injury rather than passively letting it happen and not letting the mind to take an offence due to the same, has to be emulated if the society had to be good and striding towards better life.

Li (propriety)

It is translated to be propriety, reverence, courtesy, or ritual and is another virtue of supreme importance in Confucianism. It is associated with the propriety rites or good manners. Confucius says, “Look at nothing contrary to ritual; listen to nothing contrary to ritual; say nothing contrary to ritual; do nothing contrary to ritual.” [*Analects*, 12:1 (SCT, 55)]. The concept of rites and ritual takes on a wide array of meanings in Confucianism, unlike the other religions, to include a holistic aspect of human life. Embracing the whole spectrum of human life, it promulgates man to do the right thing always at the right time and place. It is interesting to see how it enlarges its sphere to encompass Chinese etiquette in the vast number of conventional customs and usages, rather than limiting itself to religious rites or the moral conduct. Hundreds of rules of ceremony were

distinguished even in the times of Confucius; all of which one had to be well aware of in order to disperse the duties rightly, and more importance was given to the spirit of these rules than the blind following of the same. The sense of obligation to the conventional usages and the rules of moral conduct rested mainly on the sanction and authority of the saintly kings, and as a final resort like in any other religious set up it looked up to the will of heaven. The different rites in Confucianism like capping, marriage, mourning rites, sacrifices, feasts, and interviews have to be completed with the maximum of sincerity and loyalty as the omission of them itself is considered to be a thing of imprudence and vile.

Zhong (Loyalty)

Zhong or Loyalty is all about the Confucian Moral Hierarchy. In the moral hierarchy established with the purpose of constructing a moral structure for society, everyone is assigned to a particular role depending on how one is related to others. One's moral duties are defined in terms of the roles one plays in the political/social hierarchy. It keeps shifting as the same person comes into various roles of life in relation to others. But what is important is the loyalty with which he delivers what is expected of him. The position on the hierarchy hardly matters, be it the king or the minister or a normal citizen; the underlying principle remains the same, accounting for the realization of one's duties. The virtue of Loyalty is not a devotion directed specifically toward one's superior. Rather, it is directed toward the role one plays—being loyal means doing one's best in whatever one does. Thus, it becomes more of a moral assignment than a social assignment as *zhong* is doing just what one is expected to do in his present situation in life or according to the position that he/she is placed at in the society at that point of time. Loyalty, as applied in a deontological sense in the Confucian moral hierarchy, comprises a moral theory that focuses more on moral duties or obligations, rather than on rights or entitlements. It constitutes a basic tenet of Confucianism, which is an ethics built on demands on oneself rather than on others. Sincerity was much more than a mere social relation and extended up to include one's being truthful and straightforward in speech, faithful to one's promises, conscientious in the discharge of one's duties to others and even more. A loyal man in Confucian vision was a man whose conduct was rooted in the love for virtue without fail. From this innate goodness emulates right conduct towards others thus making him/her a right person, irrespective of the fact whether one is alone or in the company of others.

Shu – (Empathy)

Though Confucianism remains a deontological moral set up, coming to the very practical level of it, there needs to be some motivation as to why one should be good. Here is the importance of empathy popping up and Confucius pictures this beautifully in the promulgation of the virtue of empathy. It is in the lines of the supreme moral principle of Christianity like 'do to others what you wish them do to you'. Confucius, on being asked what was that single word which could propel people to do good for the entire life, replies it was *shu* or empathy and went on to elaborate thus, "Do not impose upon others what you yourself do not desire". Every person in the Confucian set up is bound in a multi-layered web of mutual relationships and is expected to dispense befitting duties in lieu of the position that he/she is at a particular point and place. It is here that empathy comes into play as the constituting principle of the Confucian moral

life. In the moral hierarchy, one is expected to be loyal to his/her role, and by intermixing this loyalty with the virtue of empathy one comes to know what the other expects of him. Thus with the combined force of loyalty and empathy, *zhongshu*, one comes to the awareness of the desire of the other in the opposing role and discharges now what becomes a duty with utmost sincerity and loyalty. Thus, a perfect picture of a rightful society takes form in the teachings of Confucius, in which the union of *shu* and *zhong* becomes indispensably interconnected.

Xiao (Filial Piety)

Filial piety, as goes its literal meaning, shows how the childlike reverence and respect has to be expressed to the elderly, extending even to the bygone ancestors. This has been considered supreme of all virtues and is analogically extended to the five relationships that a society has to take care of for its further functioning. In the following list of relationships envisioned, except for the relation in a friend to friend, all stand for the emphasis on respect to the elders that basically derived from a son's duties towards his parents. One of the most important virtues of Chinese life, filial piety, is considered to be the source of all other virtues and is given great emphasis in Confucianism. It is this virtue that prompts a man to pour forth love and respect towards his parents, contribute to their comfortable life, and bring honor and glory to their life by being successful in life. Being considered the supreme of all virtues, this had bias as well. At times, the son was to lead a slave-like life until his parents lived, with the supreme goal of pleasing them. The reciprocity could be manipulated by compelling the son to be good and obedient, and at the same time giving almost a free hand to the father. The son was to follow the words of his father in filial obedience and love, no matter how wicked he was.

4.5 RELATIONSHIPS IN CONFUCIANISM

Confucianism has a distinct and unique way of assigning importance to relationships. The hierarchy of status assigned to individuals, and the reciprocal obligations and benefits attached to them, by all means envision a just society and rightful living. The relationships as proposed in Confucianism have far reaching influences on ethical and social living. As the rituals and rites are mostly societal in nature, the hierarchy of relationships comes into focus too. Thus religious practices and the rightful living of the society remain inseparable, the affinity one has to others cannot be assigned to the social life alone. There is the government, when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son. (*Analects* XII, 11)

- Ruler to Subject
- Father to Son
- Husband to Wife
- Elder Brother to Younger Brother
- Friend to Friend

The same individual stands in several of these relationships simultaneously, discharging duties in different aspects of life. As reverence is expected of the juniors in the hierarchy towards the seniors, in its differing meanings the same

nature of benevolence and concern was a right of the juniors in all walks of life. This sense of mutuality is well prevalent and works as a binding force of relationships in many of the societies in the East Asian countries to this day. Specific duties were prescribed to each of the group, befitting their social standing and relation to others. The importance given to the social harmony of the people is what is to be seen in the relationships. The same filial love that binds a father and son duo is expected of the king and the subject. The beauty of life in its most sublimity becomes visible here. Even the law has to take its course depending on the position of the offender to the defendant. It is important here for us to note that this setup did not end with the stories of the living but extended up to the world of the dead, wherein the living were expected to carry out their filial duties toward their ancestors. This led to the veneration of the dead, which forms the most important part of the life of these people and the foundation of their religious practices.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) Give a brief account of history of Confucianism.

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- 2) What are the ethical virtues in Confucianism?

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4.6 SHINTOISM: INTRODUCTION

People in every culture have a way of living and a set of concepts about nature and life. The religious practices and beliefs of these people are to a great extent influenced and affected by this view about life. The outlook towards the world and dealings with nature often turn out to be religious principles and rituals attired in the mysterious beauties of religion. When religion is a transformation from or the modification of a particular way of life of the people, it will encompass their entire life. More than the mysterious and transcendental concepts, religious life then becomes grounded in the reality and closer to nature and other beings out there. Shintoism is such a religion of the people of Japan. It is a way of life rather than a set of religious concepts or dogmas.

4.7 ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF SHINTOISM

Shinto or *Kaminomichi*, or the way of the *Kami* or the gods, is the religion of the Japanese people, which they have been practising since time immemorial. Unlike the other major religions of the world, Shintoism did not have a founder; it did not develop any theological text or ethical codes. The systematic formulation of Shintoism as a religion can be traced to the sixth century CE when the local

practices and beliefs were threatened by the invading foreign religions like Confucianism and Buddhism. The people led a normal life unconcerned with the speculative and complex ideas of a systematic religious life until then; their life was their religion. Being the original way of life of the people of Japan, Shintoism fused both the material and spiritual aspects of their life.

In no way, did the primitive non-sophistry and minimalism in Shintoism nor the excessiveness of ideological and systematic complexities of the invading religions drain the original nature or the import of this tradition. The internal transformation that Shintoism took upon itself as a task to be fulfilled on the face of danger being imposed by the superiority of the external religions and the systematization of external religious icons, have stood the test of time through the danger of being consumed in the other religions. After the sixth century, though Shintoism got itself attired in the garments of a proper religion in the strictest sense with small and large temples and other prescribed rituals and ceremonies supervised by a designated priestly class, the basic naivety and the primitive uniqueness did not get considerably diluted. The Japanese being a comparatively more conservative society, preserving its music and art forms in the chest of its culture did well assist them in the preserving of the original beauty of their religion and spiritual beliefs and values. We should also take into account that the religion of these people was intermingled with their life and its daily practicability.

4.8 MYTHOLOGY AND BELIEFS

Much of the mythology that had heralded the arrival of a new religion of Shintoism, the stories of the origins of the world and gods, can be traced from two great works from the eighth century: the *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*) and the *Nihon shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*). It describes how *Izanagi* and his mate *Izanami*, the divine couple, created the islands of Japan followed by the creation of the myriad of gods and goddesses. *Amaterasu*, the sun goddess, is the chief among them and it is the descendants of the sun goddess that rule the earth to this day.

The Japanese world view was not particularly anthropocentric as it included the active interaction and sustenance of nature as a whole. It was characterized by the common perception of the spiritual forces animating and pervading the entire universe, both plants and animals. Having been blessed with marvelous landscapes, natural resources, a fertile ocean, and mild weather, the ancient Japanese rarely felt the need to imagine a happier world awaiting them to satiate all that they longed for and was not given in this world, as it happens with the other religions or ideologies. The emphasis on this-worldliness is one of the themes running through these narratives. The other worlds, like the High Plain of Heaven and the Dark Land which is an unclean land of the dead, get mentioned distinctly as a proof of their speculative nature of thinking taking them above the clutches of this world.

Another important theme spanning across the mythology is the close association between the gods, the nature they created, and the human beings. The sense of harmony ruling the cosmos and the intimate relation of the human, divine, and natural elements is very clear. Human nature is considered to be basically good, against which no war was to be fought. The origin of evil is thought to stem from the individual's contact with external forces or agents that pollute our pure nature and cause us to act in ways disruptive of the primordial harmony.

Unlike in some of other religions, the clash between the creator and the created does not exist in the Shinto mythologies. It may be due to them not requiring an explanation as to their perilous state of affairs in life, which was the very reason in the other religions, for people to search for an explanation of the suffering and an end to the same, bringing them unending happiness. We should consider that the better living conditions and happy life in a way saved the Japanese from speculating the possible nature of a happier eternal life and how to torment their already terrifying life more, in a visible attempt at attaining the lost paradise or as a way of hiding the pains of this life with a hope of a life eternal wherein the beauties and joys that were missing in this world was aplenty.

4.9 THEOLOGY AND WORSHIP

Shinto theology has its base in the belief in an Absolute Universal Self, corresponding in concept to the *hiranyagarbha* or the *sutratman* of Hinduism. Through the mysterious creating and harmonizing power (*musubi*) of *kami*, the visible world (*ken kai*) and the invisible world (*yu kai*) come into existence: Principle of Creation, Completion and the Controlling Bond between the spiritual and the material, the invisible and the visible, the real and the ideal. These attributes are to be understood only in the functional module, as the supreme self remains untouched by these contradictory attributes, strikingly similar to the attributeless Absolute (the *nirguna* Brahman). As *kami* transcends the cognitive faculty, the believers do experience *kami* through faith.

The celebration and enrichment of life being the ultimate aim of this tradition, Shintoism had an attraction towards the brighter aspects of life, the sun goddess being the main protagonist of divinity. At the same time, it is not that the people were unaware of the dark forces in nature and in man, and did not give due consideration to the other side of life. The Shinto deities are addressed as *kami*. Though it is translated into god or gods, it lacks the prime flavor of a god concept as in the western religions, transcendence and omnipotence not being the quintessential of being considered God. A *kami* could, in the most naturalistic terms, do anything that was superior to human reach and control, inspiring awe and fear; the spirits of the ocean, forest, or the animals were worthy of the name.

The *kami* could be localized as well, in the sense that it could be the guardian *kami* of particular locales and clans. They also considered exceptional human beings as *kami*, including Japan's long line of emperors, the descendants of the sun goddess. At the utmost abstract levels, the *kami* get denoted by the abstract, creative forces of nature. The concept of evil spirits is much milder as none of them were beyond the touch of reform. Though a *kami* may seek attention through cruel and unacceptable behavior, finally they end up being sustainers and protectors. Like in any other naturalistic religion, the worship in Shintoism is carried out as a thanksgiving event for the blessings received in the recent past and petitioning for future favors. These events are usually related to the agrarian setup, the festivities falling in place related to spring planting, or the fall harvest. The larger communal celebrations occur at fixed times of the year or in remembrance of the particular happenings in the history of a shrine, the festivities continuing for days together. The festivals could also be lighter and celebrated at individual capacities of the people, conducted at their homes as a private affair. Irrespective of the nature of the celebration, three

things most importantly mark Shinto festivals: the act of purification, offerings made to the *kami*, and the presentation of petitions. The act of purification is made complete with the use of water and offerings made mainly in terms of money. Future favours are sought for the continued wellbeing of the people and nature. The Shinto shrines where the worship is performed, other than at homes, is noted for the serenity and beauty of the place, the shrines being the abode of the *kami* rather than shelters for the worshippers, justifying the beauty and the glamour of these shrines. The *torii* represent the gateway of a Shinto shrine, which is often used to symbolize a shrine, or Shinto itself.

4.10 RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Shintoism transmits its teachings and practices through festivities and rituals rather than systematic studies or sermons. The physical features of the shrine are used in the continued safeguarding and transmission of the characteristic attitudes and values of these people. Most prominent among these are a sense of gratitude and respect for life, a deep appreciation of the beauty and power of nature, a love of purity and (by extension) cleanliness, and a preference for the simple and unadorned in the area of aesthetics. Also, as this religion lacks the complex nature of other religions like scriptures, dogmas, and creeds, the place worship is given in the religion is very important.

The ceremonies are intended at exploring the *Kami* for the benevolent treatment and continued sustenance and protection. The traditional worship consists of purification, offering, and prayers. A typical Shinto family may have two family altars: one, Shinto, for their tutelary *Kami* and the goddess *Amaterasu Omikami*; the other for the family ancestors, more in the Buddhist tradition. But more emphasis is given for all the practices to be held in the Shintoistic way, to keep up the purity of tradition and culture. The shrines are visited at the convenience of the people, though the concept of a daily visit to the shrine to pay homage is not alien to them. The celebrations are conducted on various occasions of importance.

The entry into the temple is preceded by the symbolic ablution at the entrance of the shrine, by the washing of the hands and the rinsing of the mouth. The visitor then may make an offering at the oratory and pray on his/her own, or ask the priest to make a special prayer for him/her. The initiation (as a new adherent) of a newborn baby to the tutelary *Kami* takes place 30 to 100 days after birth. The children (boys at the age of five and girls at the age of three and seven) come to the shrine to offer their prayers of gratitude for protecting them through their turbulent childhood and to ask for continued protection in the days to come. The Japanese have their wedding style in the traditional Shinto way and pronounce their wedding vows to the *Kami*. Due to Shinto concern for ritual purity, funerals are not so common and are usually conducted in the Buddhist style.

There are other Shinto ceremonies as well, related to the different happenings in the daily lives of its people. They include the ceremony of purification of the building site or new building before moving in, the purifying ceremony for the machinery of new establishments, or a launching ceremony of a new ship. Thus, the Shinto religion covers all aspects of a man's life with all its complex happenings, but at the same time not making it more complex with religious rituals and dogmas. Being a beautiful way of living, with love for nature and

its blessings, respect for the basic good nature of man, and respect and reverence for the society, Shintoism remains a religion propagating the goodness of man and nature to be emulated at a time of tyrannizing religious impositions and blinding dogmas, and the corrupt and superfluous religious practices.

4.11 LET US SUM UP

Confucianism sometimes viewed as a philosophy, sometimes as a religion, is perhaps best understood as an all-encompassing humanism that neither denies nor slights Heaven. Confucianism as followed by the people of China deeply influenced the spiritual and political life of the people of this nation. Confucius, though considered the founder of Confucianism, cannot be one in the same sense of what Buddha is to Buddhism. Confucius was someone who tried breathing fresh vitality into a system already existing, by rationalizing the practices and analyzing the meaning, and in the process making it more systematic and rational. He had profound love for the tradition and considered himself a master who was supposed to take the lead in preserving the culture and advancing it. Confucianism is a way of life encompassing all of human life rather than limiting itself to the religious values and practices. The socio-political aspects of one's life was taken into good account along with giving due importance to the rituals and religious traditions. The making of a true human being becomes the ultimate aim of codifying all these traditional values and customs for the people to learn and follow. Confucianism in this sense can be considered a great moral motivator in the formation of rightful living and a just society. The values with their deontological outlook have to offer what humanity is in need of – a true sense of religious life enshrined in the attires of spiritual and moral values.

Shintoism is an indefinable, universal way that is all-pervading. The way of the *kami* or *kaminomichi* or Shinto is the name of the religion formed out of the life of the Japanese people from the great past. This was codified into a religious format at the face of the threats posed by the invading religions, with an intention of organizing their codes and places of worship. Shinto, by implying the spontaneous following of the way of *kami* or god, differs from other religions as it is but a way of living and has still come to this day without much damage to its uniqueness and naivety. Understanding the religion of Shintoism, though it is not an '*ism*', will grant one a clearer understanding of the Japanese culture and the nation. Shintoism is devoid of the complex philosophical debates over grand dogmas and the imposing nature of the rituals. Shinto is a natural and real spiritual force which pervades the life of the Japanese; a religion of the heart.

4.12 KEY WORDS

<i>Zhong</i>	:	Loyalty
<i>Shu</i>	:	Empathy
<i>musubi</i>	:	the mysterious creating and harmonizing power of <i>kami</i>
<i>ken kai</i>	:	the visible world
<i>yu kai</i>	:	the invisible world

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