
Buddhism and Japanese Culture

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Abstract

One of the great scholars, *Matsuo* mentioned in his book '*A History of Japanese Buddhism*', religion has a healing effect like morphine for the sick, for those who face distress and difficulty in their lives and have been hurt. Among Asian countries, particularly in Japan, Buddhism is practiced in their own way with a culture of their own. Buddhism has influenced Japanese culture in many ways. Most of the existing literature that deal with the subject are either too concentrated and descriptive or too superficial and concise on the importance of historical facts related to religious and cultural history in Japan and a historical study on how Buddhism developed in each era in Japan. This study attempts to recognize how Buddhism and other various philosophies impacted the culture of Japan, and how Buddhism shaped people's lives to make a change in their attitudes, behavior, and character. The research gap is from the Nara Period (A.D. 710-784) to the Kamakura Period (A.D.1185-1333). The enquiry is based on primary and secondary data, and the primary data is collected through the primary sources, the *Kojiki*. Secondary data is obtained from both published sources and articles. Conclusive evidence brings to light that Buddhism and other philosophies, including Confucianism and Zen, have greatly contributed to the progress of Japanese people's attitudes, behavior patterns, personality and characters which one can still see in the remnants of Buddhist influence seeping through many practices in the modern Japan. Hence, the available data strongly indicates that Buddhism and other philosophies introduced from China have remarkably influenced Japan socially, economically, religiously, and culturally.

Keywords: *Buddhism, Confucianism, Culture, Japan, Zen*

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