13. A Japanese view of the Other World reflected in the movie “Okuribito (Departures)”

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Introduction

Religion is the field of human activities most closely related to the issue of death. Japan is considered to be a Buddhist country where 96 million people support Buddhism with more than 75 thousands temples and 300 thousands Buddha images, according to the Cultural Affairs Agency in 2009. Even those who have no particular faith at home would say they are Buddhist when asked during their stay in other countries where religion is an important issue. Certainly, a great part of our cultural tradition is that of Buddhism, which was introduced into Japan in mid-6th century. Since then, Buddhism spread first among the aristocrats, then down to the common people in 13th century, and in the process it developed a synthesis of the traditions of the native Shintoism. Shintoism is a religion of the ancient nature and ancestor worship, not exactly the same as the present-day Shintoism which was institutionalized in the late 19th century in the course of modernization of Japan. Presently, we have many Buddhist rituals especially related to death and dying; funeral, death anniversaries, equinocial services, the Bon Festival similar to Christian All Souls Day, etc. and most of them are originally of Japanese origin.

Needless to say, Japanese Buddhism is not same as that first born in India, since it is natural for all religions to be influenced by the cultures specific to the countries/regions where they develop. Japanese Buddhism, which came from India through the Northern route of Tibet and China developed into what is called Mahayana Buddhism which is quite different from the conservative Theravada traditions found in Thai, Burmese, and Sri Lankan Buddhism, which spread through the Southern route. Every major religion has shifted somehow in accordance with the local culture, and it is of this local culture of Japan I would like to present a glimpse of here. However, this is not a religious scholarly treatise but a study from the mundane viewpoint of common people as presented in a movie.

Introduction of the movie
The Japanese movie “Okuribito (Departures)”, was released in 2008, and won the 81st Academy Award as Best Foreign Language Film, as well as 96 other awards around the world, including the 3rd Asian Film Award for Best Actor in 2009, and Asia Pacific Screen Award for Best Actor also in 2009 for its main actor Masahiro Motoki. Consequently, it has English subtitle and has been shown in many Western, as well as Asian, countries. One of my motives of writing this paper is the remark of some Americans who saw the movie, to the effect that they were very impressed by the Buddhist concept of death and afterlife. However, the idea of afterlife seen in the movie is not exactly in line with the Buddhism doctrine, but with an older, animistic belief from the prehistoric era, though the latter now constitutes the base of ancestor worship which is an integral part of Japanese Buddhism through the influence of Shintoism.

The story of the movie focuses on a newly unemployed cellist who came back to his small hometown disappointed but happens to become an undertaker, the person who cleans the dead bodies and applies the make up to them, usually in front of their family and relatives, before placing them in the coffin, which are to be cremated later.

The English subtitles use the term “encoffiner” which may be the translator’s invention, as it is not found in any major dictionary I looked into. The role of an encoffiner is not the same as that of an embalmer whose primary task is to preserve the body to be buried. It is to allow bereaved families and relatives to bid farewell to their deceased and to remember them in as good condition as possible. So, the emphasis is on farewell as seen in the original title, Okuribito, which literally means the one who sends someone off.

It is also the task of an encoffiner to purify the contamination which is believed to be brought by death according to ancient belief. Therefore, he is at the risk of being considered contaminated himself and is likely to be the target of prejudice. This happens to the protagonist. His wife goes back to her family home when she finds out about his new job, and a boyhood friend casts a stone at him until his own mother dies and goes through the encoffinment rite performed by the protagonist. Through this rite, both his wife and his friend realize the solemnity and sincerity of his job and come to appreciate it. The story ends when the father of the protagonist who abandoned his wife and son a long time ago dies, and by performing the rite for him, the protagonist reconciles himself with the father against whom he has born a grudge ever since his childhood.

Using this movie as the principal material, I would like to present a view of “the
other world” found in the language of Japanese script, which we have inherited from our ancestors long before the arrival of Buddhism and is reflected in Japanese daily conversation along with Buddhist tradition.

Data and analysis: Introduction of categories and patterns

To start with, an analysis of the shift of underlying metaphors in the translation from Japanese to English and their causes is necessary in order to clarify how close the Japanese and English scripts are at the metaphoric level, which will affect the understanding of the movie. It may help clarify the cause of the remark by the American audience mentioned above.

In order to make the analysis, the expressions related to death and dying are extracted from the Japanese script and its English subtitles released abroad. There are 92 such expressions as “died”, “corpse”, “funeral”, “deceased”, “passed away”, etc. In order to analyze their underlying metaphoric patterns, they are extracted together with their contexts and categorized in the conceptual metaphoric frameworks which are primarily based on the works of George Lakoff et. al.(1980) and had been developed during our past researches on death and dying-related metaphors in Japanese and English. As described in other papers in Part II and III, six semantic categories have been established with several patterns in each of them.

Let me give a brief description of each of six semantic categories. As for the details of the conceptual patterns in each category, please refer “General Introduction on the Death and Dying Project” in Part II.

The first category is ACTION/EVENT: This category contains the expressions which are most descriptive, straightforward without metaphor such as “to die”, “dead”, “dying”. In this category, death is described as a mere fact with some emphasis on time, place, process and its result.

The second is CONTAINER: This category consists of 3 conceptual patterns. In the first pattern, to die is regarded as destroying a container, in the second, death is a phenomenon in which life in the form of liquid, heat, fire, flame or breath, goes out of a container, and in the third, death itself is regarded as a container. A Japanese popular euphemism for “to die”, *iki wo hikitoru*, literally meaning “breath taken out”, falls under the second pattern of this category, but no token is found in this script. No English
example, such as “last breath”, is found either.

The third is ENTITY: It consists of death as person, death as moving or fearful or heavy entity, and death as losing an entity. The examples of this category are “face their death”, “death nears”, etc. The third pattern in this category, E-3: DEATH IS LOSING AN ENTITY, is one of the 3 patterns which are found only in the Japanese script, which I will talk about later.

The fourth category is JOURNEY: It consists of death as departure with no return, death as the end of the journey of life, death as going to another place with certain destination in mind, and dying itself as journey. The expressions such as “pass away”, “deceased”, “departure” belong to this category. Given the theme of this movie, it is no wonder that a great many expressions in this category are found both in the Japanese script and its English subtitle which I found fairly faithful to the Japanese expressions. However, when analyzed by pattern, the differences do exist, on which I will also discuss later.

The fifth is STATUS: Included in this category, along with the typical Lakoffian metaphoric pattern of LIFE IS UP AND DEATH IS DOWN, are death as lack of movement such as sleep, as disappearance, as transformation into some other existence like angel and Buddha, and also as bondage. In case of death as disappearance, death can be understood as separation, loss or damage from the survivors’ point of view. S-3: DEATH IS DISAPPEARANCE and S-5: DEATH IS TRANSFORMATION are the other 2 patterns found only in Japanese, which I will also talk about later.

The last one is TIME: This is a rather small category with the cyclical concept of time such as day or year with such expression “the winter of life” as example. Since it is by nature poetic expression, it’s not easily found in the daily dialogues such as the one in this movie.

Results of the analysis 1: No. of expressions in each semantic category

The results of metaphoric conceptual analysis are as follows:

Firstly, vast majority of both Japanese and English expressions belong to either ACTION/EVENT or JOURNEY. A fair percentage of the Japanese expressions and their English translation falls under the category of ACTION/EVENT where death and dying are talked about in a plain, straightforward language. This result corresponds to
the results of several analyses my colleagues and I carried out for the past years of this project. It means that both Japanese-speaking and English-speaking peoples tend to use non-metaphoric language in various fields, registers and topics related to death and dying. In this study, 39 Japanese expressions out of the extracted 92 fall under this category, while in English, 46 expressions are found here.

Also there are the large number of expressions falling under the DEATH IS JOURNEY metaphor; 32 (more than one thirds) in Japanese and 41 (almost 45%) in English. This result is quite understandable when thinking of the theme of this movie. There are only 5 expressions in English which do not belong either to A or J, and their breakdown is two belonging to SS-3, one to S-1 as same as their Japanese counterparts, and two not belonging to any. It is those two which poses the issue of “the other world” most clearly.

Graph 1: Expressions in Each Semantic Category

![Graph 1: Expressions in Each Semantic Category](image)

**Results of the analysis 2: The issue of Kanji**

Secondly, there are some categorical shifts caused by Kanji. Kanji is one of 3 kinds of characters used in Japan, and since they were originated in the ancient China, they are also called Chinese characters as described in Part III. They were introduced into Japan in 5th to 6th century and used to notate Japanese sounds, and developed into 2 kinds of phonograms as well as continued to be used as ideograms, though their shapes might not be exactly the same as what are used in the present China. Now we have
about 2,000 Kanji/Chinese characters in daily use and about a half of them are taught in elementary schools for 6 years. Since they are ideograms, each of them has its own etymological meaning, sometimes more than one.

As pointed out earlier, there are 3 patterns which appear only in Japanese script and do not have any English counterparts: E-3: DEATH IS LOSING AN ENTITY (also the semantic category of ENTITY), S-3: DEATH IS DISAPPEARANCE and S-5: DEATH IS TRANSFORMATION. The Japanese expressions in these three patterns shifted metaphorically in translation due to their use of Chinese characters

The Japanese expressions in the first pattern use this (遺) Chinese character, pronounced [i] and means “passed down without being lost”, “leaving something behind” or “something that remains”, such as in 遺体 [itai], “remaining body” and 遺品 [ihin] “goods left behind”. “Leaving something behind” or something is “passed down without being lost” implies that something else is lost. In this case, it is considered LIFE as AN ENTITY is lost and therefore this expression is classified as E-3: DEATH IS LOSING AN ENTITY. They are all translated as “body” and “belongings” which have no overtone of being “not lost but left behind” and therefore simply categorized in the straightforward ACTIN/EVENT.

Similarly, the second one, S-3: DEATH IS DISAPPEARANCE, uses this (亡) Chinese character, which is pronounced [bou or na(-kunaru, -ki)], and its etymology is “leaving the visible field”. 亡くなる [nakunaru] is the most preferred euphemistic expression of “to die” in Japanese. Therefore, this euphemism is very often used not only in this movie but also in our daily dialogue, such as 亡き夫 [naki otto], “late husband”. In the English subtitle, “to pass away” is used, which belongs to J-1: DEATH IS DEPARTURE.

In the third one, S-5: DEATH IS TRANSFORMATION, this (故) Chinese character is used. It is pronounced [ko] and etymologically means “made old/ancient” as used in 故人 [kojin], “the person who made old/ancient by death”, indicating the change of status into “oldness”. They are translated as “deceased” in all cases, which came from the Latin word decessus, “to depart, to leave”, also belonging to J-1: DEATH IS DEPARTURE. Such metaphoric shift in translation attest the strong impact of etymology on the daily dialogue, especially that of Chinese characters on Japanese language.
Results of the analysis 3: Other categorical shift in translation

There are 23 expressions in the English translations which do not fall into the same category as original Japanese script. Seventeen of them are due to the etymological impact of Kanji, Chinese characters, as described above, while the shift of six remaining expressions is caused by two reasons, both of which pose interesting issues related to a Japanese view of death/dying and afterlife.

The first reason is the difference in emphasis such as follows:

1. 皆さま、どうかお近くでお見守りください。(minasama, douka ochikakude omimamori kudasai): falls under J-2, meaning “Everyone, please, close on and behold” In English, “Everyone, please see her off from up close.” This classified is in J-1.

2. 母を看取ってあげられなかった罰なのか？(hahawo mitotte agerarenakatta batsunanoka): falls under J-2 and means “Is this punishment for not being able to nurse mother[‘s last moment]?” In English, it is “Is this my punishment for not seeing my mother off?” And classified as J-1.

These two expressions reflect the different view of death in the JOURNEY metaphor in Japanese and English. In Japanese, the emphasis is on the last moment in life, that is, J-2: LIFE IS JOURNEY/DEATH IS ITS END. In English, both translated as “see her off”, the emphasis is on a new start, thus, J-1: DEATH IS DEPARTURE. These examples are too few to assume anything conclusive, but it may not be quite impossible to regard them as examples of the assumption that in an event or activity by which one thing ends and another thing starts, on which to place emphasis is also determined by cultures, and, if I dare say, it may be that the Japanese place emphasis on the end while the English-speaking people prefer the emphasis on the start. For example, the word “commencement” is often used in English to refer to a graduation ceremony and literally it is a start, while in Japanese, the ceremony is always called卒業式(sotsugyoushiki: finishing-work ceremony) with an emphasis on finishing.

Following is another example with a different emphasis:

3. 葬家のお名前は？(soukeno oname wa?): belongs to the straightforward category A and means “What is the name of burial family?” In the English subscript, it is “The name of the deceased is…?” J-1 pattern

In English, the dead who are going on JOURNEY is emphasized, while in Japanese, the emphasis is placed on the family who host the funeral rite. This script
could be easily translated as “The name of funeral family?” within the same screen space, but the translator must have thought this translation more natural for such scene in the English-speaking context. This is the matter of customs and conventions, rather than metaphor, and it indicates that a funeral is a personal rite among English-speaking people, while Japanese funeral as a rite backed up by family institution.

Here is another cause of shift: passive voice in Japanese

4. 9年前にな、死なれちまった。(kyuunenmaeni na, shinare chimatta) belongs to SS-3 and literally means “Nine years ago, I was died [by my wife]” It is translated as “Passed away 9 years ago”. J-1

This expression shows an interesting feature of the Japanese language. The passive voice is used to indicate damage, injury, or suffering, which is close to the English expression “something wrong/unwelcome happens on someone” such as “My car broke down on me when I was in a hurry” or “It rained on me when I had no umbrella with me”. The above example emphasizes that his wife’s death was extremely damaging to him, and thus is classified into SS-3: DEATH IS SEPARATION/LOSS/DAMAGE, whereas the English translation uses “pass away” (J-1: DEATH IS DEPARTURE) since, I suppose, it is very difficult to translate this expression with the same conceptual pattern in the limited length of the subtitle.

Expressions reflecting a Japanese view of the Other World

The last two expressions are most closely related to the central issue in this paper, a Japanese view of “the other world”.

5. おばあちゃん、ごくろうさま (obaachan gokurousama) J-2-a/J-3: “Grandma, (we appreciate all) your pains and troubles. It is translated “Thank you for everything, grandma.”

6. おつかれさまでした。(otsukaresama deshita) J-2-a/J-3: “(We acknowledge) your fatigue and weariness. = You must be tired. = Good work today.” Also translated as “Thank you for everything.”

The translation of 5 and 6 do not fall under any semantic category set for our research on death and dying. J-2-a: DEATH IS RELIEF FROM BURDEN/STRUGGLE may be the closest, but it does not reflect the sense of appreciation and/or acknowledgement these expressions have. So here, we must examine the expressions
per se rather than comparing them metaphorically with English expressions. They are the words of farewell to the dead and untranslatable into English. These expressions are commonly used not only to the dead but also to the living. Actually, they are very casual expressions used at a workplace. The former is used to express appreciation for any service, trivial or important, and the latter by those who stay at a place to those who leave there, for example, as the greetings from the workers who still have work to do in their offices/workshops to their colleagues who have completed the day’s work and are going home. Or it’s even used by the sport club staff to a club member leaving there after doing exercise. (In these expressions, the emphasis is placed on “the end”, completing some tasks or works, as in the case of 1 and 2 above, the examples of different emphasis.) In the case of the movie, these words are uttered to the dead by the bereaved family and friends at the crematory. The dead is considered to have completed her task in this world and so now she can leave there for another, better, place, or presumably go back to where she had come from. The similarity of the situation is conspicuous. That is why these expressions are classified as J-2-a or J-3. They are translated “thank you for everything” which express an appreciation, because there isn’t any other English speech formula to be used in the same situation.

Then, the capital issue arises; where is the grandma in the movie going? In the Buddhist belief at a common people’s level, she would be tried for her behavior during her lifetime. And if she passes the test, she could go to nirvana, but most likely she would fail as the vast majority of human beings do and would transmigrate into another life, either as human or as other creatures depending on her merit, and repeat the life in this world as shown in the following illustration Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Other World -1: Buddhist Transmigration illustrated by Bunpei Yorifuji (Shinikatalogu (Catalogue of Death), 2005, Yamato Shobou, Tokyo, p38, with coloring
If she is to face such a fate, would her family and friends use such words of farewell to her? No. They used these expressions because their idea of afterlife is not the Buddhist transmigration or reincarnation, but an older, animistic belief that the dead people would go to another world and live there happily as spirits who watch over their offspring, and even visit them once in a while. This belief has had a great impact on Buddhism during the process of its taking root in the soil of Japan.

There are more expressions supporting this point in the script such as また会おう (mata aou no), “See you again”, and いってらっしゃい (itte rasshai), polite expression of “go!”, “bon voyage”, “have a good trip”. The latter is a compound verb consisting of itte (go) and rasshai (come) implying that you go but are expected to come again. It is a speech formula often used to see off those who would come back soon such as going to school or to their work place. These expressions when used to see off the dead presume a place where you go after you die and where you can meet again the people who died before you. This does not coincide with the Buddhist teaching of reincarnation from one form of life to another before finally attaining enlightenment enough to go to nirvana. These expressions used for the dead imply the end of one
world/life and the beginning of another, not only in the metaphoric level but also as a creed to live by. They are translated literally “see you again” and “have a nice trip”, which are acceptable as a subtitle translation, and belong to the same J-3 pattern as in Japanese, but we must not forget what lies behind these expressions.

Japanese Other Worlds

So what is the other world referred to here? Let me give you the underlying notion of the Other World that Japanese have. Before the arrival of Buddhism, the ancient Japanese had believed the Other World was located either on the mountains or beyond the sea, depending on the different ethnic groups which composed the origin of the present Japanese. Some scholars proclaim that ancient Japanese can be roughly divided into 4 groups: proto-Japanese whose origin is unknown, those from the continent in the west who eventually gained the dominion over the most part of Japan, those from the north who presumably became the present Ainu people, and those from the south sea representing the cultures of Okinawa and other southern islands. The first 3 groups seemed to have the notion of the Other World on the mountains and the last group was said to have believed their Other World beyond the sea.

What is interesting is that the notion of the Other World of Ainu people in the far north and that of Okinawa and the southern islands seem very similar in spite of their geographical remoteness and the difference in their locations. Being outlying regions as seen from the center of Japan from where the impact of Buddhism had spread, they seem to retain well the prototype of the Japanese Other World, according to Takeshi Umehara, in a lecture in 1989 titled “The Japanese Vision of the Other World” at the International Research Center for Japanese Culture. He states that their Other World is a reverse of this world with no distinction between heaven and hell, where almost every soul, not only of human beings but also of other creatures, goes and lives with their ancestors’ souls, and such belief is still reflected in their funerals and festivals.

Figure 2: The Other World -2: Reverse World of Ainu, illustrated by Bunpei Yorifuji (Shinikatalogu (Catalogue of Death), 2005, Yamato Shobou, Tokyo, p32 with coloring
Whether on the mountain or beyond the sea, the Other World is very close to this world, unlike the Christian Heaven or Buddhist Nirvana which are supposed to be located at an unreachable distance or dimension from this world. Kunio Yanagida (1875-1962), the founder of Japanese folklore studies, stated in 1945 in his work Senzo-no-Hanashi (On Our Ancestors), Collected Works of Kunio Yanagida 13, 1990, by Chikuma Shobou, p61,

“The view of afterlife, the belief that the souls of the dead stay within the Japanese soil forever and won’t go too far away from us, has been considerably deep-rooted in the Japanese populace ever since the beginning of this land and is still persistent”.

The souls of the dead are believed to come back often to stay with their family and relatives for certain periods of time, the idea which was later incorporated into Buddhism and became the custom of the Bon Festival. This is a popular festival celebrating the return to homes of ancestral spirits in the mid-summer.

Although not found in this script, supportive expressions were found abundantly
in the data extracted for our previous researches. In the topic of abortion, in Part III, for example, one frequently-found example was 送り返す（okuri kaesu）or お返しする（okaeshi suru）I-3: which means, “to send back (in this case, an unwanted baby) to the place of its origin”. These expressions imply that there is a world from where a baby-to-be comes from and goes back when it dies either as a fetus or a human.

We can see a similar picture in other secular material, an old popular song called SENDOU KOUTA (Ballad of Voyagers), with the song by Ujo Noguchi, and the music by Shimpei Nakayama, composed in 1921, with original title KARESUSUKI (Dead Susuki Grass, a type of autumn grass weed often seen in plateaus and river banks), which goes:

Orewa kawarano karesusuki “I am blighted SUSUKI grass on the river bank”
Onaji omaemo karesusuki “you too are blighted SUSUKI grass just as I am”
Douse futariwa konoyodewa “Anyway we are both in this world”
Hanano sakanai karesusuki “dead SUSUKI grass which could never bloom”

This verse implies that they could blossom together in the Other World, and can be taken to suggest double suicide. As pointed out by Maeda in her paper in Part III, double suicide has been acknowledged, sympathized, and even glorified in Japan. There are ample examples of the lovers who could not accomplish their love due to the social conditions and committed double suicide found in the folktales, classic dramas, songs and other stories. They do it because they believe they would go to a better place after they die where they could realize their love. It’s not a taboo to commit suicide in the traditional Japanese culture in contrast to the Judaeo-Christian faith, and it is this ancient belief in the Other World that has made suicide, especially the ones caused by tragic love, acceptable and romantic in society. Those who are left behind would console themselves with the thought that the dead two would be having a happy life together in the other world.

The second verse of the song above goes:

Shinumo ikirumo nee omae “Whether to die or to live, my dear one”
Kawano nagareni nanikawaro “What’s the difference in the flow of the river”
Oremo omaemo Tonegawano “So you and I, together on the Tone River”
Funeno sendoude kurashouyo “May make a living pulling an oar”

The two in the song seem to have changed their minds and decided not to die,
because, obviously, the lives in this world and in the Other World do not make much difference from their viewpoint, but not because they believed in the Buddhist view of the afterlife which could not assure their being together after they die. Similarly, there are many examples in Japanese reflecting the more pristine and naïve animistic belief dating back probably to the Joumon Period (before BCE 1000) than the later Buddhist concepts of the transmigration of souls and nirvana.

Conclusion

This paper is an attempt to extract from such a popular media such as a movie and a song, as much information as possible on common Japanese culture regarding death and dying, which is closely related to religion. Firstly, the technique employed in the previous researches on the same theme, contrastive analysis of underlying metaphor, is applied in order to examine the metaphoric closeness of the Japanese and English scripts which influences the understanding of the movie. Movies reflect speech in a great variety of human activities and situations. Since the movie used here has the theme of “Departures”, sending off the dead people, it is natural that the underlying metaphor of a great part of the related expressions in both languages is that of JOURNEY. Though the underlying metaphor of the Japanese script and that of the English subtitle are not exactly the same, the English translation proved to be fairly faithful to the Japanese script even at the metaphoric level.

The causes of the categorical shift in the translation is in large part the impact of the etymology of Kanji (Chinese characters), as well as of the difference in the emphasis in accordance with the different views and customs among Japanese- and English-speaking peoples, and of the use of the Japanese passive voice which suggests receiving some injury/damage/suffering.

Secondly, focusing on two expressions which have no exact counterparts in the English subtitles and using a song as an additional material, an attempt was made to show that our present dialogues reflect the notion of the Other World not in the context of Buddhism, but in that of a pre-Buddhist belief.

Edward B. Tyler (1832-1917), sometimes called the father of anthropology, classified in his classic, Primitive Culture (London: John Murray & Co., 1871), the views of afterlife into three basic categories: otherworld or afterworld, resurrection, and transmigration. In the first one, the dead would go to the Other World where they live in
the same way as in this world. According to Bronislaw K. Malinowski (1884-1942), a Polish-born anthropologist and pioneer of ethnographic fieldwork, Kiriwina people in Trobriand Islands believed that Tuma Island where the dead would go and live was just another island in their neighborhood. (Baloma; the spirits of the dead in the Trobriand Islands, Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1916) The basic substratum in the Japanese concept of the Other World described so far is quite similar to this belief, and falls in this category. I believe every culture in the world had a similar concept of the Other World as its base layer before they were covered by such major religions as Christianity and Islam, the afterlife view of which is clearly the second one, “bodily renewal” as called by Tyler. The last category, transmigration, was divided by Tyler into transmigration and reincarnation. He considered the latter as a special case of the former, in which the dead transmigrates into a human being again, not into lower animals. This dualistic theory of body and soul is essential in Buddhist teaching.

Japanese do have a mixed heritage of Buddhism as well as reverence for the spiritual power of nature and ancestor worship, the mixture of the first and the third categories by Tyler. However, the afterlife view of the first category seems to be less recognized since modern Japanese tend to call themselves Buddhist, especially when they are abroad. Japanese people abroad, especially those who are in cultures with the strong influence of Christianity and Islam, tend to mistake this base layer heritage as Buddhist tradition. I hope the native and local beliefs and traditions, not only of Japan but also of any people or culture, under the veil of the major religions of the world such as Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, would be more acknowledged and appreciated in view of advancing the cause of understanding among all countries and peoples.

References

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